

**Board of Education  
Policy Committee Meeting  
June 16, 2010  
5:30 p.m.**

**MINUTES**

**Attendance:** Commissioner Cruz (Chair); Commissioner Powell (joined at 5:54PM).  
Commissioner Campos absent. District Staff: Chuck Johnson. Board Staff: Debra Flanagan

Commissioner Cruz convened the meeting at 5:41 p.m.

**I. Review and Approval of Minutes from May 18, 2010 Policy Committee Meeting**

**Motion** by Commissioner Powell to approve the minutes of the May 18, 2010 Policy Committee meeting. **Adopted 2-0.**

**II. Proposed Revisions to Code of Ethics Policy Proposal**

Chuck Johnson stated that he received feedback from District staff members regarding the initial Code of Ethics policy proposal. He explained that the primary concern was delineating the definition of conflict of interest too broadly so that situations which are not actually a concern might be included. As an example, Mr. Johnson noted that the Purchasing Officer happens to have a personal account with a bank with which the District does business. However, this does not necessarily represent a conflict of interest unless the Purchasing Officer was to receive a financial benefit from this arrangement. To more clearly target problematic situations, Mr. Johnson proposed revisions to define a prohibited conflict of interest when an employee has the authority to influence decision-making and the decision can result in financial benefit to the employee or their family.

**Motion** by Commissioner Powell to approve proposed revisions to the Code of Ethics policy proposal. **Adopted 2-0.**

**III. Development of New Finance Policies**

Debra Flanagan explained that she had researched finance policies in the Big Five districts and the school districts in Monroe County. As a result of this research, she presented a number of policy suggestions to the Committee to strengthen fiscal oversight and accountability: general fiscal accountability; internal controls specifically established by the Board (Audit Committee, Internal Audit function, Claims Audit function); fraud allegations; and use of various District resources (e.g. cell phones, P-Cards, meal and travel reimbursement, Extracurricular and Student Activity Funds, and District property).

Commissioner Powell recommended referring the internal control policies related to the Audit Committee, Internal Audit, and Claims Audit to the Board Audit Committee for consideration.

For a policy regarding general fiscal accountability, Commissioner Cruz suggested obtaining information from the New York State School Boards Association for a template or generic language that could be used as the basis for formulating such a policy.

Commissioner Powell offered to have the Finance Committee review the remaining policy suggestions and assist in policy development in collaboration with the Chief Financial Officer and Deputy Superintendent for Administration.

**Action Item:** Ms. Flanagan will obtain information from NYSSBA regarding generic language for a general fiscal accountability policy. She will refer the policy suggestions regarding internal controls/audit to the Board Audit Committee for consideration, and the remaining policy suggestions to the Finance Committee.

#### **IV. Organizations Providing Policy Update Services**

Ms. Flanagan reported that four organizations had been identified as providing policy update services: New York State School Boards Association (NYSSBA); Erie 1 BOCES; the law firm of Ferrara, Fiorenza, Larrison, Barrett, & Reitz, PC; the law firm of Hodgson Russ, LLP. Due to the specific focus of the services being sought, the law firm of Ferrara, Fiorenza, Larrison, Barrett, & Reitz, PC did not provide a cost quote. Ms. Flanagan noted that she had not yet received a response from Hodgson Russ, LLP.

Commissioner Powell expressed concern regarding the quality of services received to date from Erie 1 BOCES in updating the entire Policy Manual. She reported having a much more positive and productive working relationship with NYSSBA, who assisted in the initial development of the Policy Manual. For this reason, Commissioner Powell stated that she was favorably inclined to select NYSSBA for this service.

Commissioner Cruz pointed out that the cost for the policy update service through NYSSBA is half that for Erie 1 BOCES. He suggested making a selection based on cost effectiveness and assessing experience over the course of the next year.

**Action Item:** Ms. Flanagan will request a proposal from NYSSBA for providing policy update services and a cost estimate from Ferrara, Fiorenza, Larrison, Barrett & Reitz, PC specifically for their email alert of changes in legislative and case law and their monthly bulletin of information regarding education policy.

**Motion** by Commissioner Powell to adjourn. **Adopted 2-0.**

Meeting adjourned at 6:11PM.

**Next Meeting:** July 15<sup>th</sup>, immediately following the Finance Committee meeting

