

Policy Committee Meeting
May 18, 2010
5:30 p.m.

MINUTES

Attendance: Commissioner Cruz (Chair); Commissioner Powell (joined at 5:54PM).
Commissioner Campos absent.

District Staff: Chuck Johnson, Gladys Pedraza Burgos, Jeanette Silvers, Christine Richards, and Michael Allen.

Board Staff: Debra Flanagan

Commissioner Cruz informally opened the meeting at 5:39 p.m., which was officially convened at 5:54 p.m. with the arrival of Commissioner Powell.

I. Review and Approval of Minutes from April 20, 2010 Policy Committee Meeting

Motion by Commissioner Powell to approve the minutes of the April 20, 2010 Policy Committee meeting. **Adopted 2-0.**

II. Proposed Amendment to Student Attendance Policy

Jeanette Silvers provided an overview of revisions to Student Attendance policy, noting that current policy allows a student to withdraw from school upon their 17th birthday. Ms. Silvers stated that the proposed amendment would require these students to complete the school year before withdrawing. She also explained that the proposed amendment would only allow students to initiate the withdrawal process at the end of the school year of their 16th birthday. The proposed policy amendment would also require students to document employment to indicate that they are able to sustain a living on their own.

Commissioner Cruz inquired whether employment documentation is part of the emancipation process, and suggested that this be stated in the policy. Christine Richards confirmed that this is part of the emancipation process.

Chuck Johnson pointed out that the law allows students to be employed full- or part-time to become an emancipated minor, and the District cannot require demonstration that they are able to be fully self-supporting.

Ms. Silvers explained that the proposed policy would require schools to document efforts to retain students (outcomes of conferences, interventions and referrals), and provide this documentation to the Attendance Coordinator. The Attendance Coordinator would investigate the situation and determine the appropriate withdrawal code to use. The Placement Office would manage the student's withdrawal from school. She stated that a minimum of three meetings

would be required with the student, parent/guardian, teachers, and appropriate administrators to address attendance issues.

Ms. Pedraza Burgos emphasized that the intent in developing the policy proposal, regulation and procedures was to ensure that all available measures have been taken to retain students in school before considering withdrawal. She also noted that the proposed policy clearly delineates responsibilities between the school, Central Office, and Office of Accountability in this process.

Commissioner Cruz expressed concern about reaching parents as early as possible when attendance issues arise. He underscored the importance of maintaining an accurate database with current telephone numbers and addresses to notify parents, and encouraged District staff to consider alternate methods for reaching parents and collaborating with community organizations (e.g. Hillside, Center for Youth, etc.). Christine Richards replied that the administrative procedures incorporate contact and collaboration with community agencies, and the FACT team meets regularly with the family on an ongoing basis.

Commissioner Cruz inquired as to assessments conducted at the outset of the school year to identify students at high risk for truancy. Ms. Richards explained that these assessments are conducted during the summer, through examination of student attendance and discussion with parents. She stated that the assessments enable the District to provide appropriate supports and services before the start of the school year to prevent attendance issues from arising.

Motion by Commissioner Powell to advance proposed Student Attendance policy to the full Board. **Adopted 2-0.**

III. Naming Facilities Policy

Chuck Johnson briefed the Committee on the rationale for amending the existing policy, explaining that it does not allow the Board to have much involvement in the name selection process. He stated that the policy amendment would require at least one public forum in which the community can suggest names, three of which would be selected by the Administration and presented to the Board for final decision.

Motion by Commissioner Powell to advance proposed Naming Facilities Policy to the full Board. **Adopted 2-0.**

III. Code of Ethics Policy

As directed in the April 20, 2010 Policy Committee meeting, Chuck Johnson used the Code of Ethics regulation as the basis for developing a revised Board policy. Mr. Johnson noted the brevity of the existing Code of Ethics policy due to the expectation that further detail would be provided in regulation. However, the Superintendent was not comfortable with promulgating a regulation that would not apply to Board members or Board staff.

Mr. Johnson reviewed the definitions of conflict of interest contained in the proposed policy. For any issues that merit review, a Conflict of Interest Committee would evaluate the issue and provide recommendations. The Conflict of Interest Committee would be composed of Mr. Johnson (or his designee), representative from HCI, and Deputy Superintendent for Administration (or his designee). Mr. Johnson suggested that the policy simply reference the Financial Disclosure form so that modifications could be made to the form without having to amend the entire policy.

Commissioner Powell requested that the Financial Disclosure form be posted along with the Code of Ethics policy to ensure that all concerned are notified of the content. She emphasized the importance of establishing standards of conduct and delineating consequences for violations, even for Board members. Mr. Johnson responded that the form could be posted with the policy on the District website and included in public bulletins and the District's Orientation packet for employees.

Motion by Commissioner Powell to advance proposed Code of Ethics policy to the full Board. **Adopted 2-0.**

IV. Board Goals for 2010-11 Assigned to the Policy Committee

To carry out the Board Goals for 2010-11 assigned to the Policy Committee, Debra Flanagan reported that she had developed major milestones and timelines for their completion. She explained that this information is due to the full Board in their retreat on June 12th.

Ms. Flanagan noted that while a policy can be developed to establish performance evaluations based on specific, measurable and attainable goals, the bargaining units would have to be involved to implement this policy.

Motion by Commissioner Powell to approve the milestones and timelines specified for Board 2010-11 Goals for the Policy Committee. **Adopted 2-0.**

V. Prioritizing Review of Non-Mandated Policies

In accordance with the priorities assigned for policy review in the April 20, 2010 Policy Committee meeting, Ms. Flanagan presented suggestions for new policies to enhance Board fiscal oversight and questions regarding existing Finance policies.

Commissioner Cruz directed Ms. Flanagan to present this information to the members of the Finance Committee to obtain their input. This input could then be considered in the following Policy Committee meeting.

Action Item: Ms. Flanagan will present suggestions for new Finance policies and questions regarding existing policies to the members of the Finance Committee to obtain their input. She will present their input to the members of the Policy Committee in a subsequent meeting.

VI. Service to Obtain Policy Updates

Ms. Flanagan noted that Erie 1 BOCES offers a service to provide quarterly policy updates, which would be more efficient and effective than a review of the entire Policy Manual every three years. She reported that the service through Erie 1 BOCES would indicate policies that are legally mandated, as well as those that may be advisable for school districts. The cost of this service from Erie 1 BOCES is \$1500 per year.

Commissioner Powell agreed that such a service would be beneficial, but requested that other potential vendors be located because of the inadequate performance by Erie 1 BOCES on the current Policy Manual.

Action Item: Ms. Flanagan will research potential vendors to provide a regular policy update service to keep the Policy Manual current, and report this information to the members of the Policy Committee in the next meeting.

VII. Rescheduling June Policy Committee Meeting

Ms. Flanagan reported that the regular standing date for the June Policy Committee meeting (June 15th) is already scheduled for Orientation of Parent Representatives to Board Committees. She suggested alternate dates of June 8th or June 22nd.

Policy Committee members decided to convene on June 22nd.

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

Meeting adjourned at 6:34PM.

Next Meeting: June 22nd at 5:30PM