

**Policy Committee Meeting**  
**April 20, 2010**  
**5:30 p.m.**

**MINUTES**

**Attendance:** Commissioner Cruz (Chair); Commissioners Campos and Powell

District Staff: Chuck Johnson, Gladys Pedraza Burgos, Jeanette Silvers

Board Staff: Debra Flanagan

Commissioner Cruz convened the meeting at 5:50 p.m.

**I. Review and Approval of Minutes from March 16, 2010 Policy Committee Meeting**

**Motion** by Commissioner Campos to approve the minutes of the March 16, 2010 Policy Committee meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Powell. **Adopted 3-0.**

**II. Status of Policy Review**

Chuck Johnson presented a status report regarding review and development of mandated policies. He reported that four policies and two regulations have been completed; another fifteen are in process; and the remaining six mandated policies pertain to Special Education and are to be addressed in the fourth quarter of 2010.

In terms of the regulation regarding Education of Homeless Students, Commissioner Powell inquired whether consideration can be given to keeping siblings together in the same school to minimize further disruption to these families. Mr. Johnson stated that nothing in the law would prohibit this practice and that he would recommend this to the Superintendent.

Commissioner Cruz expressed concern regarding establishing a precedent, given the unique nature of these cases. He suggested allowing decisions to be made at the discretion of the Liaison for Homeless Students to accommodate family needs through a range of options. Gladys Pedraza Burgos explained that the situation becomes more complex when the family has children in Special Education or ELL programs.

**III. Prioritizing Review of Non-Mandated Policies**

Debra Flanagan proposed prioritizing review of non-mandated policies in the following order: 1) All policies contained in the Board Goals for 2010-11 (uniform evaluation standards for all staff, incentives for highly effective teachers, and evaluation metrics; all finance policies); 2) All

policies with an established date for review; 3) All policies with a schedule of deliverables to be provided to the Board; and 4) All remaining policies.

Commissioner Powell cautioned against using policy to accomplish all Board goals because of the need for flexibility and use of a proactive approach in addressing issues within the District. She asked about the extent to which the Policy Committee should focus on these goals, particularly in light of the extensive work already underway in updating the Policy Manual. Commissioner Campos encouraged Commissioner Powell to raise these questions at the next Board retreat on June 12<sup>th</sup>.

Commissioner Cruz observed that quite a few steps may be involved in obtaining Affirmative Action – EEO employer designation. Mr. Johnson replied that he would investigate this process.

**Action Item:** Mr. Johnson will examine the process for obtaining Affirmative Action – EEO designation and provide this information to the Policy Committee.

#### **IV. Report on Proposed Amendment to Student Attendance Policy**

Ms. Pedraza Burgos reported that an amendment to Attendance Policy had been presented to the Policy Committee last year, and Committee members directed her to check New York State regulations to ensure that the amended policy would be in compliance. Ms. Pedraza Burgos stated that additional modifications were made to incorporate all of the regulatory requirements.

Jeanette Silvers explained that the requirements include establishing a process for withdrawing students, and procedure codes are being added to the data system to monitor all students absent for 20 or more days. She stated that additional efforts are planned for outreach, notification of parents, and offering a range of services to these students to maximize their retention in school. Ms. Pedraza Burgos noted that substantial documentation is required regarding phone calls, correspondence, and referrals regarding these students to ensure that every effort is made to keep them in school.

Ms. Silvers also noted that the internal Data Warehouse will enhance efficacy in terms of monitoring these students and intervening earlier during their absence from school. In addition, data will be readily available regarding schools having difficulty in implementing this approach. Ms. Pedraza Burgos stated that the Division of Youth & Family Services is currently working with schools to improve their efforts in outreach with absent students.

Commissioner Campos expressed concern regarding principals not following Attendance Policy or practices uniformly, leading to arbitrary treatment of students absent for a period of time. Ms. Pedraza Burgos replied that there has to be some discretion at the building level to avoid penalizing students who are making an effort to improve their attendance.

Commissioner Cruz inquired as to the next step involved in amending the Attendance Policy. Ms. Pedraza Burgos stated that she is currently working with Ms. Silvers and Mr. Johnson to develop a regulation aligned with the amended policy. She reported that the policy proposal and regulation should be ready to present in the May 18<sup>th</sup> Policy Committee meeting.

Commissioner Powell described situations in which parents disagree with the principal and decide to keep their child home from school as a result. She asked about systems that could be established to identify these types of situations. Ms. Silvers assured that the amended Attendance Policy contains provisions regarding staff planning to address concerns with parents in these situations.

## **V. Code of Ethics Regulation**

Mr. Johnson provided background information regarding the development of the Code of Ethics regulation, noting that the extensive Board policy was amended a few years ago to its' current condensed version. He explained that the regulation defines prohibited conflicts of interest according to the individual's ability to influence decision-making. In addition to this standard, prohibited conflicts of interest include: intimate relationships between students and staff, or a supervisor and their direct report staff; employment of family members; performing work other than assigned as an RCSD employee on the District's time; any gift valued more than \$75.00; or any other interest which impedes an employee's ability to perform their job.

Mr. Johnson clarified that this Superintendent regulation would not apply to Board members or Board staff, but could be used as a basis for modifying the existing Code of Ethics policy. He offered to modify the Code of Ethics regulation to provide the basis for a new Board policy.

**Action Item:** The Code of Ethics regulation will be used as the basis for a new Board Code of Ethics policy. Mr. Johnson will also examine legal requirements regarding use of the New York State Disclosure Form.

## **VI. Selection of Parent Representatives to Serve on Policy Committee**

Ms. Flanagan reported that parent representatives are to be selected for each Board committee by April 30<sup>th</sup> to enable their term to begin on May 1<sup>st</sup>, as approved in Board resolution in the March Business meeting. She requested that the members of the Policy Committee consider the method by which the parent representative will be selected for 2010-11.

Commissioner Powell suggested that each Policy Committee member choose their top three candidates and assign the greatest weight to their top choice. The total score for each candidate will be tallied and the selection will be based on the candidate with the highest total score.

Commissioner Cruz requested that Policy Committee members follow this suggested process and submit their choices to Ms. Flanagan by Friday, April 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**Motion** to adjourn by Commissioner Powell. Seconded by Commissioner Campos.  
**Adopted 3-0.**

Meeting adjourned at 6:52PM.

**Next Meeting: May 18<sup>th</sup> at 5:30PM**