

**Policy Committee Meeting
November 17, 2009
6:30 p.m.**

MINUTES

Attendance: Commissioner Elliott (Chair); Commissioner White. Commissioner Brennan absent.

District Staff: Gladys Pedraza Burgos, Christine Richards, Tom Keysa, Chuck Johnson, Pamela Rutland

Board Staff: Debra Flanagan, Shanai Lee

Commissioner Elliott convened the meeting at 7:19 p.m., immediately following adjournment of the Finance Committee meeting.

I. Review and Approval of Agenda

Commissioner Powell expressed concern about the length of the agenda, particularly given the late starting time for the meeting. She asked if the agenda items could be prioritized so that Attendance policy and Parent Involvement policy be considered first.

Gladys Pedraza Burgos stated that there is nothing of substance to report at this time regarding the Parent Involvement policy, but this will be addressed in the near future.

Motion by Commissioner Powell to revise agenda to remove Parent Involvement policy and to make Attendance policy the first item on the agenda. **Adopted 2-0.**

II. Review and Approval of Minutes from Policy Committee meetings on October 20, November 5, and November 10, 2009

Motion by Commissioner Powell to approve the minutes of all above Policy Committee meetings. **Adopted 2-0.**

III. Attendance Policy

Gladys Pedraza Burgos provided an overview of proposed revisions to the Attendance policy, noting that the intent was to update and streamline the process. She stated that new Superintendent regulations, attendance protocol, and procedure manuals have been developed; the procedure manuals have been distributed to schools. Ms. Pedraza Burgos explained that putting these provisions in place has been a priority because attendance was cited in a State audit last year.

Commissioner Powell noted that the target levels of attendance in the current policy were based on requirements specified in State regulations. She inquired whether the State has changed the target level to 90% as indicated in the proposed policy revision.

Action Item: Ms. Pedraza Burgos and Ms. Richards will check current New York State regulations to ensure that the proposed policy revision is in compliance with the attendance levels specified in regulation. This information will be presented to the members of the Policy Committee at the next meeting in December.

IV. Student Arrests

Pamela Rutland, Principal of Wilson Commencement Academy, described initiatives taken at the school to reduce student arrests. She explained that the primary focus was on school climate and culture, as well as the way in which staff interact with students. Ms. Rutland stated that a team of staff was organized at the school to examine also student rights and responsibilities and to develop a positive role model for students to emulate (i.e. the “Wilson scholar”). She also described her involvement in interviewing School Resource Officers to ensure that their attitude would be supportive of the measures taken to improve school climate and culture, and to have the capacity to interact with students positively.

Ms. Rutland also pointed out that student arrest data can be misleading, in that any offense committed near school grounds may be considered as occurring at the school by students because the law enforcement system simply uses the address of the nearest large building. She cautioned school and District administrators to interpret this data cautiously and to question the way in which information is reported by the Rochester Police Department.

Action Item: Ms. Rutland will send an email to Commissioner Elliott with this information for reference.

V. Update of Status of Draft Policy regarding Education of Homeless Students

Chuck Johnson, General Counsel, stated that a draft policy has been prepared and recently reviewed by staff in the Law Department. He stated that he plans to convene a meeting with key District staff who would be involved in implementation, so that the operational implications can be assessed. Mr. Johnson estimated that this policy proposal would be ready to present to the Policy Committee in January.

VI. Proposed Revisions to the Code of Conduct

Mr. Johnson provided an overview of the revisions proposed to the Code of Conduct: removing the date reference to indicate that the policy is in effect until revised by the Board; eliminating reference to the weapons diversion program, which is no longer in existence; and omitting reference to an obsolete court decree. In terms of the weapons diversion program, Mr. Johnson provided information as to specific programs and alternatives currently used to address these issues with students (counseling services, programs through the Center for Youth, UR, the Children’s Institute, PATHS, and the Olweus Anti-Bullying program)

Action Item: Mr. Johnson will provide to the Policy Committee the specific language in the State requirement that school boards conduct an annual review and public hearing regarding the Code of Conduct.

Commissioner Powell requested that all legal references (laws, statutes, and regulations) be cited at the end of the Code of Conduct to be consistent in formatting with other Board policies. She also asked that the Superintendent regulations be included with the Code of Conduct in the information provided to Board members for the next meeting.

Action Item: Mr. Johnson will include the Superintendent regulations regarding Intervention and Discipline with the Code of Conduct in the materials given to Board members in preparation for the next monthly business meeting on November 19, 2009.

Motion by Commissioner Powell to approve proposed revisions to the Code of Conduct, with the changes suggested by members of the Policy Committee. **Adopted 2-0.**

VII. Proposed Amendment to Responsible Bidders' Policy

Ms. Shanai Lee, M/WBE Coordinator, gave a presentation of the major aspects of the amendment proposed to the Responsible Bidders' policy. She explained that the purpose of the policy amendment is to enable RCSD to establish its own qualified bidders' list based on criteria established by the Board and District. The proposed policy provides a definition of the most qualified bidder, the way in which the qualified bidders' list would be used, and pre-qualification criteria to determine which firms should be on the list. Ms. Lee emphasized that this proposal would enable the District to have more rigorous control over selection of contractors for public works projects and consider only those firms that are aligned with District goals, such as contracting with M/WBE companies. She also outlined criteria that would be used to either suspend or remove a firm from the qualified bidders list, as well as a draft prequalification application form. She explained that the form was developed from examples provided by the City of New York and state agencies in Pennsylvania and North Carolina. If pre-qualified, a firm could remain on the qualified bidders list for two years before having to reapply and continue to demonstrate their ability to meet the specified criteria.

Ms. Lee reported that this policy proposal has not yet been vetted by the Law Department or District staff because she wanted to ensure full Board support before advancing the proposal. She noted the complexity of monitoring and updating the proposed RCSD qualified bidders list and tracking contractor performance, stating that this would not be fully implemented until the bidding cycle for work to be performed in summer 2011.

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

Meeting adjourned at 8:26PM.

Next Policy Committee Meeting: December 15, 2009