

Board of Policy Committee  
October 11, 2007  
6:30 p.m.  
Conference Room 3A

## MINUTES

### **Attendance:**

Chairman Brennan, Commissioner Powell, Commissioner Elliott, Board Staff H. Washington, District Staff R.Vaid

Chairman Brennan convened the meeting at 6:35 p.m.

### **Agenda Items:**

**I. Motion** to approve August minutes by Commissioner Powell. Second by Commissioner Elliott. **Adopted 3-0**

### **II. Increasing Legal Dropout Age**

Commissioner Elliott would like to increase the legal dropout age from 16 to 17 years of age. Commissioner Powell provided data on other municipalities that are interested in increasing the legal dropout age. The committee reviewed data on dropout statistics for the City School District. Commissioner Powell would like to compare successful fourth grade ELA performance to that of high school graduates. Commissioner Brennan would like to examine why dropout rates increase at a certain age. Commissioner Elliott noted that there has been some discussion at the State level regarding increasing the legal dropout age to 18. R.Vaid recommended that the Board seek input from the Superintendent regarding changing the dropout age. R. Vaid noted that a change to the legal drop age could be incorporated into the Attendance Policy. R. Vaid noted that the committee has the authority to increase the dropout age by way of resolution. Commissioner Powell noted that the Board can change the legal dropout age by declaration in a resolution and that any such change should be included in the Attendance Policy.

### **Action Items**

R. Vaid will ask the Superintendent to provide feedback on the proposal on changes to the legal dropout.

H. Washington will distribute copies of the article "The Silent Epidemic" to the Board members in the Friday packet.

### **III. Review of Parent Involvement and School Based Planning Policies:**

The Policy committee would like both of these Policies reviewed and a report to be presented to the Board at the November Policy meeting. Commissioner Powell noted that the Polices should be reviewed and a presentation to the Board should be completed on an annual basis. Commissioner Brennan noted that there are too many policies not being reviewed on a regular basis.

**Motion** to seek clarification on whether the Policy committee has the authority to give directives or whether they need to come from the full Board by Commissioner Powell. Second by Commissioner Elliott. **Adopted 3-0**

**Action Items:**

R. Vaid will provide clarification on whether directives can come from the Committee level.

The committee would like the Parent Involvement and School Based Planning Policies to be reviewed A.S.A.P.

**IV. Attendance Policy:**

The Policy committee would like the Attendance Policy to be modified to include the following changes. The Attendance Policy should include language regarding the dropout age, two changes recommended by Lori Thomas, updated state requirements and that regulations and timelines when parents are engaged on attendance issues should be aligned with the District's goals. Commissioner Elliott recommended that the Policy notifies parents after 3 absences. Commissioner Powell stated that the District should be leery about punishing students, because of attendance. R. Vaid noted that there may other changes that need to be made to bring the Policy into compliance. R. Vaid noted that a public hearing is required to make changes to the attendance policy.

Lori Thomas stated that kids should not be penalized for medical absences and that make-up sessions should be provided at Saturday school, after school or at an off site school.

**Action Items**

R. Vaid will provide Commissioner Brennan with a copy of the Superintendent's regulations and the State's regulations.

R. Vaid will ask Administration to be prepared to present recommended changes to the Attendance Policy at the next meeting. Amend the current Attendance policy to reduce the number of absences before a parent is contacted, to include excessive tardiness, to apply to all students in Grades 1-12 and to provide a make-up opportunity for students.

Superintendent's regulations should be amended so that they are more compatible with a 93% attendance rate. The practice of denying students admittance to exams, because of attendance should also be addressed in the Superintendent's regulations.

**Miscellaneous:**

Valerie Johnson stated that there are number of Policies that are out of compliance and that Policies are being submitted to the State without parent review.

Commissioner Brennan noted that he asked L.Dunsmoor for list of the policies, deadlines for review and frequency of reviews. Commissioner Brennan would like a list of the policies and to discuss with the Administration a timeline for review. Commissioner

Powell would like a chart that identifies who is responsible for reviewing each policy and to arbitrarily assigns a month for each Policy to be reviewed on next year. Commissioner Powell suggested that a draft of policy amendments be presented in March/April, public hearings be held in May and that new policies be adopted before the school year ends. R.Vaid noted that public hearings do not have to be held unless you are amending policies.

A number of the parents present at the meeting felt that the Code of Conduct is too broad and needs to be revised.

Commissioner Elliott expressed an interest in being invited to the next parent meeting.

**Action Items**

H. Washington will follow-up with L. Dunsmoor on policy review deadlines and frequency.

H. Washington will work with the Administration to establish a timeline for policy review.

**Next meeting date:** TBA

**Motion** to adjourn at 8:11 p.m.by Commissioner Elliott. Seconded by Commissioner Powell. **Adopted 3-0**

Prepared by H. Washington