

Rochester Board of Education
Policy Committee

Minutes
Tuesday, July 17, 2007
6 p.m.

Attendance: Chairman Brennan, Commissioners Powell and White; Board staff L. Dunsmoor; District staff D. Cottrell, R. Vaid, S. Wheatcraft; also L. Thomas and V. Johnson, community members.

Chairman Brennan convened the meeting at 6:03 p.m.

Agenda items:

1. Motion to approve minutes of May 1, 2007 by Commissioner Powell. Second by Commissioner Brennan, adopted 2-0.

2. Guest speaker and staff member Lori Thomas addressed three topics. Attendance -- Ms. Thomas said there are elementary students with 30-40 absences per year. She asked the Policy Committee to extend the attendance policy to include grade 1. Dress Code -- She said there should be a dress code for teachers, who should dress professionally. Low-cut jeans and see-through tops send students the wrong message about the importance of education. Homework -- Ms. Thomas said the regulations are not being followed and the language needs to be stronger.

7. Commissioner Powell suggested that item 7 be moved up on the agenda because of district staff and community members in attendance to discuss the proposed Lead Safe Schools Policy. Chairman Brennan concurred and invited Lead Coalition representative Derrick Hazle to the table. Following discussion on several points, the committee directed board staff to work with Mr. Hazle and district staff to finalize a document for the next Policy Committee meeting. Commissioner Powell also made a motion to move the policy to the Audit Committee for risk assessment. Adopted 2-0.

Action items:

Have Lead Safe Schools Policy ready for next meeting.

Forward policy to Audit.

3. Commissioners again reviewed the proposed Cell Phone Policy. Counsel D. Cottrell said all details will be finalized before a vote by the full Board. Motion to forward proposed policy to full Board as an information/discussion item for July 19 by Commissioner Powell. Second by Chairman Brennan, adopted 2-0.

Action item:

L. Dunsmoor to forward Cell Phone Policy to all Board members immediately following committee meeting.

4. Code of Ethics review. Commissioner Powell said she would like to see language in the regulations stipulating that the Board must be notified when regulations change. Commissioner White said he does not believe the superintendent can write regulations for the Board and that the Board needs to develop its own review process, either through Board Governance or Policy. Motion by Commissioner Powell to forward

DRAFT; Not Approved by Committee

proposed policy to full Board as an information/discussion item for July 19 and vote in August. Second by Chairman Brennan; adopted 2-0.

Action item:

L. Dunsmoor to forward Code of Ethics policy to all Board members immediately following committee meeting.

5. African and African American Studies Department. Commissioner Powell moved that the amendment to Policy 4350, Multicultural Education, be forwarded to the full Board as an information/discussion item. Commissioners agreed that the Board needs a policy to back up administration's efforts to establish the department and ensure that it stays on track. Adopted 2-0.

6. Code of Conduct. The Code is annually reviewed by the Board and traditionally has been adopted in August following a public hearing. Discussion centered around when the Code must be adopted and when the public hearing should be held; it may be better to do this in the spring when parents are more engaged in school activities. Commissioners understand from Dr. Cala that there are parents who want to provide input. Motion to forward to full Board for consideration July 19 as discussion/information item by Commissioner Powell. Second by Chairman Brennan, adopted 2-0.

Action items:

L. Dunsmoor to determine if full Board needs to conduct public hearing, whether the Code can be amended at a later date, and if there are legal stipulations regarding when the Code must be adopted.

Other:

Community member and parent Valarie Johnson asked the committee to revisit policies governing school-based planning and parent involvement.

Policy will meet Wednesday, August 8 at 6 p.m. (Revision: Meeting later moved to August 14 to accommodate public hearing on Code of Conduct.)

Adjourn:

Motion to adjourn by Commissioner Powell. Second by Chairman Brennan. Adopted 2-0 at 7:50 p.m.