



POLICY/COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

November 24, 2025

Virtual Meeting - 3:30 p.m.

Committee Members: Ellen DePinto, Chair
Pamela Cassidy, Beth Fiore, Linda Rad

Administrative Staff: Dr. Jonathan Hart, Superintendent of Schools
Jason Bohm, SBA/Board Secretary

Agenda

1. Policy Updates: Dr. Hart provided the updates he made, based on the committee's previous recommendations, on the following policies:
 - a. Policy 2330 - Homework - policy was updated to include the independent reading practice log used in grades 3-8 to monitor student reading practices and create a reading connection between home and school.
 - b. Policy 2340 - Field Trips - policy was updated to further define that field trips shall be defined as any journey by a group of pupils away from the school premises, under the supervision of a teacher, which is an integral part of an approved course of study or part of a school celebration, milestone, or competition. It also included that parents will be notified when charter buses are being used. The committee also discussed if the number of field trips should be adjusted due to the increase in cost to the district. This will be re-visited by administration and discussed in committee.
 - c. Policy 2412 - Home Instruction Due to Health Condition (No Update. Policy 2481 covers other conditions)
 - d. Policy 2414 - Programs and Services for Students in High Poverty and in High Need School Districts: This is a Mandated policy from Strauss. Our policy is from 2006. Strauss has a more recent version but it is from 2011 which is still out dated but more updated than the one we have. We will place this on the agenda and keep an eye out for future updates.
 - e. Policy 2430 - Co-Curricular Activities - updated to include Kindergarten through eighth grade since the previous version only mentioned grades 6-8. Also included "situations where an outside vendor may provide the co-curricular opportunity" ie, YMCA programs. We also added that Co-curricular programs shall only be available to students enrolled in the district.
 - f. Policy 2440 - Summer School - added "This may include assignments for summer reading (grades 6-8) and students moving into an Advanced or Honors math class." to the policy and also changed the name to Summer School and Programs to capture the policy for ease of reference.

- g. Policy 2460.8 - Special Education (Still required.No update needed)
 - h. Policy 2551 - Musical Instruments - updated this policy to reflect our current practices by stating “The Board of Education shall not be obligated to purchase and maintain a supply of musical instruments for all pupils enrolled in the instrumental music program. The Board of Education will purchase and maintain a supply of instruments for students who meet a specific threshold on the Free/Reduced Lunch list. The Board also maintains a supply of larger instruments for student loans at no cost to the parent.”
 - i. Policy 2560 - Live Animals in School (No policy update needed. Just regulation)
2. Freedom to Read Act Related Policies (Strauss Esmay updates): Dr. Hart received Strauss Esmay’s policy 2535 -Library Material which was developed in time for the effective date of December 9th for the Freedom to Read Act. Dr. Hart attended a virtual seminar regarding these policies to gain as much information as possible in preparation for our meeting. The committee had a detailed discussion about the various points in the new policy and regulation. The regulation provides an outline for review committee selection which now includes the Superintendent and a representative selected by the board. It also states that the challenged books shall remain on the shelf until the final decision is made. The Board of Education shall review the review committee’s report and have a public vote on whether the library material is to be removed from the school library or limited in use. Some committee members feel the policy and or regulation needs to include a statement about considering community taste in regards to age-inappropriate sexually explicit content. It was mentioned that other districts have statements that reference not allowing obscene materials in accordance with NJ Revised Statute 2C:34-3. Some committee members feel the policy should remain exactly as is and do not wish to make any additions or subtractions to it to avoid any difficulties in regard to possible litigation. They feel that mentioning obscenity clauses or any deviation to the recommended model policy will place the district at risk for litigation. One committee member expressed concerns about some of our library books containing sexually explicit content and read a passage from one of those books. This committee member also recommended that due to item 2 under Library Material Curation (page 3 of 5) which states “The Board of Education, in consultation with school library staff members, shall have discretion in selecting, purchasing or acquiring library material for inclusion in the school library”, we can add guidelines for the librarian to aid her and her staff in the curation process to ensure student safety. Dr. Hart will consult with the librarian and gather her input and get back to us. Dr. Hart highlighted that the district has already taken steps, at the recommendation of the Ed/Tech committee, to ensure parents can see what books their children are reading. This year the district sent out a letter to parents listing books in our library that may be sensitive in nature designated for mature readers at the 9-12 grade level. The district also updated its library software which now has a parent login for parents to have easy access to the books their children are checking out. The district also implemented an independent reading practice log for grades 3-8 to monitor student reading practices and create a reading connection between home and school. This new policy and regulation may require a full board discussion.
- a. Policy and regulation 2530 - Resource Materials - updated to remove references to library and library materials since those now live in policy 2535.

- b. Policy and Regulation 2535 - Library Material - These are mandated as the Board is required by the Act to develop and adopt a written policy and procedure to address the requirements of the Freedom To Read Act and the Guidance. It is recommended we move forward with the first read of this policy and make changes as needed after board discussion.
 - c. Policy and regulation 9130 - Public Complaints - Updated to reflect policy 2535
- 3. Differences between Textbooks, Library Materials, and Resources - The committee reviewed the table provided by Dr. Hart to have a visual of the differences between resource, library, and textbooks and which ones require board approval.
- 4. NJDOE Broadcast Regarding Mahmoud - Tabled until next committee meeting
 - a. Requested review by BOE attorney
 - b. Strauss is working on Policy
- 5. Policy Tracking Document for Review. The committee continues to work through their assigned series prioritizing which policies require immediate attention. We are waiting for Strauss Esmay to complete their audit of our manual for us to reference during our process.

Agenda items: Policies 2330, 2340, 2414, 2430, 2440, 2551 and Freedom to Read Act revisions

Next Meeting: Monday, December 22, 2025 @ 3:30PM