

Dr. Rasmus called the Millville Area School District Policy Committee Meeting to order at 5:18 pm.

Those present in the High School Library were Joseph Rasmus, Superintendent; Whitney Holloway, Business Manager; Greg Hemsarth, Board Member/Policy Committee Member; Jessica Whitmoyer; Board President/Policy Committee Member; Corey Whitmoyer, Board Member/Policy Committee Member; Alex Cavallini, Board Member/Policy Committee Member; Gena Maize (via ZOOM), Board Member; and Chelsea Rosenberger, Board Recording Secretary.

Policy 216.2 – Student Records: Name, Sex, and Gender Identity

- ❖ Dr. Rasmus began by reviewing the need for this new local policy due to growing issues around student gender identity requests, staff concerns, and inconsistent practices in student records and daily operations. He explained that a district parent raised concerns earlier in the year about how the school honored preferred names/pronouns. Staff have also expressed discomfort or conflict between such requests and their religious/personal beliefs.
- ❖ Dr. Rasmus shared that a similar policy was recently adopted in the Berwick Area School District, serving as a reference, shaped by recent case law and solicitor guidance.
- ❖ Dr. Rasmus reviewed the key elements in the proposed draft policy.
 - Parent/Guardian Required for Records Changes:
 - i. A student's preferred name, pronouns, or gender identity would only be formally changed in student records when requested by a parent/guardian (or by the student at age 18+).
 - Staff Protections:
 - i. Staff who, for religious or personal reasons, do not feel they can use a requested name/pronoun would not face disciplinary consequences as long as their behavior is not antagonistic or harmful toward the student.
 - Staff may use the student's legal name; a neutral alternative such as a last name; and should avoid actions that are intentionally disrespectful or retaliatory in nature.
- ❖ Dr. Rasmus explained that the district would need to create forms and procedures for families to request changes and clarify operational steps for staff.
- ❖ The Committee held some discussion on concerns with the policy as written.
 - Members discussed scenarios in which students request to shift their identity from day-to-day, which would create inconsistency and staff uncertainty.
 - Although there was no language included in this policy, committee members acknowledged that the district would need to consider implications for the bathrooms and locker rooms soon.
 - i. Mr. Hemsarth gave the suggestion to install floor-to-ceiling stall dividers.
 - ii. The Committee liked this idea and discussed plans to prepare facilities proactively.
 - Mr. Cavallini noted the need for language that ensures the requested names from students are school-appropriate so that this policy language is not misused.
 - i. The Committee agreed with the suggestion and asked that this language be added.
- ❖ In conclusion, the Committee agreed to move the policy forward to a first reading with the full board, adding clarifying language on appropriate names, and continue working on administrative regulation documents. Finally, the Committee wanted to continue the discussion on the facilities implications at later meetings.

Policy 105 – Curriculum

- ❖ Dr. Rasmus shared with the Committee that there are some required updates to this policy based on federal requirements related to Constitution Day/Citizenship Day, Arbor Day, Bill of Rights Week, and other federally recognized observances. He shared that teachers must include appropriate instruction on these observances if the district receives federal funds and that appropriate curriculum updates and communications would follow.

- ❖ The Committee reviewed PSBA's template options and selected those that reflect district practice. Some of the discussed items included: collaboration among schools; guidance and counseling services; special education; English language learner education; compensatory education; equal educational opportunity; career awareness and vocational education; gifted education; and safety instruction.
 - The Committee recommended excluding the option relating to continuous open access to library media collections, as this does not align with current district practice.
 - The Committee also selected the option requiring prior board approval for curriculum pilot programs.
- ❖ In conclusion, the Committee recommended that the administration move forward with the selected options and minor administrative adjustments.

Policy 105.2 – Exemption from Instruction

- ❖ Dr. Rasmus explained that this policy covers parent/guardian rights to exempt students from instruction conflicting with sincerely held religious or moral beliefs.
 - The Committee reviewed the PSBA template options and decided to make the following selections:
 - i. Parents/guardians may request exemption;
 - ii. Students age 18+ may request their own exemption;
 - iii. Teachers must provide reasonable advance notice when upcoming content may raise conflicts.
- ❖ Dr. Rasmus added that an administrative procedure would need to be created to guide notification methods and maintain documentation (e.g., SchoolInfoApp, syllabi, letters home).
- ❖ The Committee discussed dissection clauses in the policy template and selected that parents may opt their students out of animal dissection, vivisection, and any activity involving harm to animals.
 - There was discussion that the district needed guidance from the solicitor on whether virtual dissections must also be exemptible.
- ❖ In conclusion, the Committee decided to move forward with the selected options and the development of administrative regulations.

Policy 816 – District Social Media

- ❖ Dr. Rasmus and the Committee reviewed the updates to this policy, focusing on how district-operated social media accounts function, the requirements of archiving information on social media, staff communication responsibilities, right-to-know implications, and public commenting on official pages.
 - Some key concerns of the this updated policy include:
 - i. Right-to-Know Exposure
 - Text messages between board members and administration on district matters may become subject to RTK requests.
 - The Board may need to rely more heavily on email for substantive discussion.
 - ii. District Social Media Structure
 - After discussion on the advantages and disadvantages, the Committee reaffirmed that district accounts (Facebook, website) should remain non-public forums (i.e., information-only, comments disabled or restricted).
 - iii. Comment Moderation Risks
 - The Committee discussed recent legal cases that have ruled against districts for hiding or deleting public comments. The consensus was that the district must tighten our social media settings to avoid legal exposure.
 - iv. Tagging / Linking External Entities
 - The Committee discussed the issue of the option to directly tag or link outside vendors to district social media pages or rather simply list vendors to recognize their donations/commitments.

- Concerns were cited about the district appearing to endorse certain vendors over others.
 - Additionally, the Committee discussed accessibility requirements and the fact that any linked site must meet ADA accessibility standards by 2027.
 - Finally, there were concerns about unintended or inappropriate association with vendors that could hold the district liable.
- ❖ After the discussion, the Committee was amenable to listing names of vendors on the district's social media while tagging and linking directly to vendors required a much deeper review, again citing accessibility and liability concerns.
- The Committee also discussed the district's current practice of sharing posts from our associated booster clubs and vendor groups.
 - i. There were concerns raised again about accessibility.
 - ii. The Committee agreed to discuss this further with the solicitor prior to finalizing a position.
- ❖ In conclusion, the Committee agreed that the policy required significant further discussion and that it would need to be reviewed further at the next Policy Committee meeting. The Committee asked the administration to work with the solicitor on the accessibility obligations, tagging/linking guidance, and right-to-know law implications for personal devices.

ADJOURNMENT

The Committee adjourned the meeting at 6:36 pm.

Chelsea Rosenberger
Board Recording Secretary