



POLICY/COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

December 22, 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

Minutes

1. Policy Updates: 2000 Series: Dr. Hart brought the following policies to the committee to review any changes that were made based on the committee's previous recommendations and after consultation with staff and Strauss Esmay. The committee also discussed the best way to indicate on the policy in the manual when a policy has not been fully revised but has had minor edits without changing any substantive parts of the policy. The Edited Date listed at the top of the policy will reflect minor edits for example, updating the name of testing mentioned in the policy. The Revised Date at the bottom of the policy will change when substantive changes are warranted. This will be included in the tracking document for future boards and may be added to bylaw 0131.
 - a. 2412 - Home Instruction Due to Health Condition: As per Strauss Esmay, this policy is the most updated version. A minor correction to update Core Curriculum Standards reference to NJSLs will be made and then this policy will be marked as reviewed.
 - b. 2415.06 - Unsafe School Choice Option: This is the most updated policy according to Strauss. It includes federal requirements of Title VIII of ESSA - no changes recommended. This policy will be marked as reviewed.
 - c. 2415.2 - No Child Left Behind: This is the most updated version of this policy. However, the title must be updated from No Child Left Behind to Every Student Succeeds Act. This policy will be marked as reviewed.
 - d. 2415.3 - Educational Stability for Children in Foster Care: (This is the most updated policy. The committee discussed current language in the policy regarding children remaining in the district once they exit foster care. The current language states "A foster care child who has been placed in this district and exits foster care during the school year will not be permitted to continue in this school district for the remainder of the school year. The parent(s)/legal guardian(s) of the child may petition the Board to allow the child to complete the school year in accordance with terms and conditions outlined in Policies 5118 and 5111." Reference to policy 5118 should be replaced with 5116 since policy 5118 no longer exists.

- e. 2461 - Special Education/Receiving Schools: (This policy is only mandated for approved private schools for students with disabilities, ESCs, and jointures. Since we are not a send/receive district and do not need this policy, we will abolish it.
 - f. 2460.8 - Free and Appropriate Public Education: This is a regulation Only and was in the policy section in error. It has been reindexed appropriately as a regulation.
 - g. 2468 - Independent Educational Evaluations: This policy has been reviewed by administration who recommends no changes be made to it as it is a solid policy.
 - h. 2481 - Home Instruction for a General Education Student For Reasons other than a Health Condition: This is also the most updated policy from Strauss Esmay and does not require any revisions. However, minor corrections to update Core Curriculum Standards to NJSLS in the policy and then it will be marked as reviewed.
2. Bylaw 0143 - Board Member Election and Appointment
- a. Legal Update: Dr. Hart provided the board with a recommendation from legal counsel regarding this bylaw. We updated our bylaw to include language that indicates that the board will not nominate or vote on candidates until the public has been given a full and fair opportunity to speak after returning from executive session. Dr. Hart will review with the attorney and if they approve it will move forward and if it isn't approved it will return to the committee.
3. Board Meeting Follow-Up
- a. Policy 2330 - Homework: This policy did not pass at our last board meeting. The committee considered the full board's positions on whether or not the reading log should be a part of the policy or included in the regulation instead. The committee decided to leave the policy as is and mention the reading log in regulation.
 - b. Freedom to Read Options
 - i. Freedom to Read Considerations: Dr. Hart met with our librarians to get their input regarding adding a statement to the Freedom To Read policy that would guide the librarians regarding sexually explicit content at the curation point. The librarians expressed concerns about whether having language preventing obscene material will contradict the very intent of the Freedom to Read Act and could also cause confusion when selecting material without having terms such as sexually explicit defined in a clear way. They expressed concerns that this language could create an issue for current books in the library and may cause a need for many books to go through the challenge process. The librarians shared that their current curation process includes referring to the School Library Journal, webinars, professional development and conferences, Good Reads, Doing their own preview and Student input/recommendations. The committee discussed the following options for the policy:
 - Option 1:** Leave the Policy "as is" and Adopt it
Implications: No changes to the policy
 - Option 2:** Add the language from criminal law NJ Revised Statute 2C:34-3 preventing library material that meets this definition
Implications:

Will require the policy/regulation be changed to have this statute and expectations clear to staff

Option 3: Add language that prevents “sexually explicit” “obscene” material to be placed in the library

Implications: Will require the policy/regulation be changed to have this language and expectations clear to staff

Option 4: Create a flowchart of expectations (or a decision tree) of how books are selected for the library.

Implications: May require the policy/regulation be changed to reflect this flowchart but does not require a change.

Option 5: Create, in policy, that the Board of Education approves all books in the library.

Implications: May require the policy/regulation be changed to reflect this approval; Could slow the process of ordering

Other Options to be discussed - there can be gradations of any of the options above.

A board member shared a quote from Governor Murphy where he explains that boards can restrict access to developmentally inappropriate material for certain age groups. She also shared that the bill clearly defines censorship and that restricting access to books that are developmentally inappropriate for certain students is not censorship. A suggestion for possible language to include in the policy was made. “The Readington Board of Education will provide proper library review tools to ensure books are developmentally appropriate for our K-8 students. Materials with significant educational value that might also touch upon sensitive topics must prioritize the educational, artistic or scientific merit over any sexual content. All materials selected must be consistent with the curriculum and be developmentally appropriate for the specific grade levels they are intended to serve.” Other board members shared that they have concerns with adding language to the policy because different parents have different views on what is appropriate or what they might prioritize for their child. A board member inquired as to what other surrounding districts have done with this policy and it was mentioned that one has passed the policy on first read after making minor changes to the section about “individuals with a vested interest”. The committee decided to craft language and have it reviewed by the attorney and library staff and then we will decide if it should be placed in policy or in the regulation. Dr. Hart took the suggestion for language and will use that as a starting point. The library software MackinVia has an integration with Common Sense Media to provide age- based rating and content details such as violence and language. This could also be included in the proposed policy language. The committee will meet again to further discuss this policy and intends to move forward at that time.

4. NJDOE Broadcast Regarding Mahmoud: no real updates yet and is tabled due to time constraints.

- a. Requested review by BOE attorney
 - b. Strauss is working on Policy
5. Policy Tracking Document for Review: The committee continues with its independent review of assigned manual sections. This will be revisited at our next meeting.

Agenda items: Revise 0143, 2415.3, abolish 2452 and 2461

Next Meeting:

Summaries of Policy and Regulation Revisions