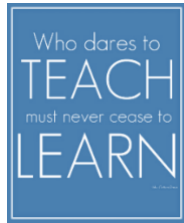




The Staff Development Center
 350 Main Street, White Plains, New York 10601
 Tel: 914-422-2438



SDC Policy Board Meeting
Thursday, January 15, 2026
8:00 am – 3:00 pm

“ I am **always**
 doing what I
cannot do yet,
 in order to **learn**
 how to do it. ”

- Vincent van Gogh
www.vincentvanGogh.com

Agenda Item	Planned Format/Outcome	Discussion Lead	Allotted Time
Opening/Welcome	Call to Open Meeting, Group Greeting	Rhoda	5 minutes
Goals for the Day/Check-In	Overview of Norms/ Activity: “Reconnect and Reimagine”	Annie	30 minutes
Approval of Meeting Minutes (3)	Motions/Seconds/Votes	All	15 minutes
Budget Update	Explanation/Overview	Monica	10 minutes
Course Proposals	Motions/Seconds/Votes	All	30 minutes
Course Updates & Evaluations	Summer and Fall in Review	Annie	20 minutes
10:00	Break		10 minutes
Needs Assessment: Data Analysis	Planning for 2026-2027	Lauren	30 minutes
Educator Resilience	RISE Activity	Armen Kassabian	20 minutes
Workplan Matrix	Group Activities to Plan Projected Courses	All	40 minutes
Feedback Checkpoint	Form	All	5 minutes
11:45	Lunch		30 minutes
Mentor Program Updates	Sharing Information	Chrissy Samagaio	20 minutes
Professional Learning	Professional Learning Activity	Kelly DeBellis	25 minutes

Technology Updates	Parent Square	Noah Miller	30 minutes
Technology Updates	Various Updates	Rocco Varuolo	30 minutes
Policy Discussion: Virtual Learning & Professionalism	Problem Solving Protocol	All	20 minutes
White Plains / Network AI Summit	Planning/Discussion	Lauren	40 minutes
Closing & Evaluation	Motion, Second, Vote to Adjourn	Rhoda	2 minutes

Thank you to all our Policy Board Members!

“Coming together is the beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success.” Edward Everett Hale



The Staff Development Center

500 North Street, White Plains, New York 10605 Tel: 914-422-2438 Fax: 914-422-2160

Staff Development Center

Policy Board Meeting Minutes: Thursday, October 23, 2025
8:00 am – 3:00 pm @ Room 123, Eastview Campus

Board Members:

Teachers Present: Rhoda Havis, Donna, Martuge, Joan Cruz, Toni Marie Amato, Grizel Marquez, Lauren Casalino, Brooke Kunze, Kelly Debellis, Lisa Vushaj, Amy Estersohn, Jorge Gonzalez-Guillot, Ray Drach

Others Present: Dr. Debbie Hand, Ann Hovis-Williams, Lauren Crowley, Monica Alvarez, Jerusha Beckerman, Joey Havis, Kathy Barpoulis

Absent: Jeannette Castilla, Michael Eaton, Dr. Kimberly Crawford, Paula Santa-Donato,

Others Present (non-voting): Lauren Crowley & Annie Hovis-Williams (Co-Directors)

Quorum present: Yes

Rhoda called the meeting to order at 8:14 am, when a quorum was reached. The Board reviewed our meeting norms and agreed to adopt them for the meeting.

Lauren gave an overview of the agenda and introduced a Padlet for members to use if they have thoughts to contribute during the meeting. A focus for the meeting is to be cognizant of Equity of Voice, as this emerged as an area of need in our previous meeting evaluations. This tool is intended to provide those who feel more comfortable sharing digitally, or quietly, an avenue for their active participation.

We also spent a few minutes brainstorming and sharing answers to these questions: What was my favorite Professional Development? What made it the best?

Some ideas that emerged from the members' sharing:

- Time to create
- Time to process
- Practical
- Hands-on
- Mindfulness
- Building relationships
- Clear focus, dynamic, applicable
- Brings joy
- Calming in nature
- Getting something out of it
- Feeds your soul

After this check-in activity, the Board began to move through the meeting's agenda.

Review of Policy Board Roles and Key Terms

Annie led the Board in an interactive game of "I Have, Who Has" in which members called out definitions and identified key terms and responsibilities of the Policy Board.

Budget Update

Monica shared the budget report. The Board discussed our current plans and determined that using the projected numbers, we are on track for spending so far this year. In Professional Salaries, we spent \$19,725, with several courses running or about to begin. The Board noted that projected Participant Stipends have already been spent as of this meeting. The Board plans to continue its significant support for the Mentor Program this year. At the time of this meeting, there was \$31, 770.51 remaining in the grant.

Course Updates and Evaluations

Annie shared a presentation to share evaluation data from the Summer and Fall course offerings so far. The following courses were reviewed:

- Visible Thinking Routines
- Gratitude Journaling
- The Reading Comprehension Blueprint: Book Study
- Uncovering the Logic of English: Book Study
- Supporting ENL Students in Content Areas
- Reimagining Educational Practices with AI
- Designing AI-Durable Learning Experiences
- Building Classroom Community Using Drama
- Writing Revolution in the Content Areas
- Choosing Our Words

The Board discussed each offering and shared feedback. There were many positive comments from participants. Many expressed their appreciation for the flexibility of access to virtual coursework during the summer. All evaluations are shared with the instructors; during our Instructor Orientation we encourage facilitators to use course and workshop feedback to adjust and revise as needed.

Course and Workshop Proposals

Repeated Sections

The Policy Board decided to offer the following courses as repeated sections.

Motion: (G. Marquez) moved to approve funding for Espanol for Educators 1 - K-12 15-hour course (in person)

2nd Motion: B. Kunze

Opposed: none

Abstained: none

All Approved – Motion carried

Motion: (J. Beckerman) moved to approve funding for Espanol for Educators 2 - K-12 15-hour course (in person)

2nd Motion: T. Amato

Opposed: none

Abstained: none

All Approved – Motion carried

Motion: (K. Debellis) moved to approve funding for Build, Sculpt, Create: Unlocking Creativity Through Clay, K-12 15-hour course (in person)

2nd Motion: L. Vushaj

Opposed: none

Abstained: none

All Approved – Motion carried

New Course Proposal

Motion: (L. Casalino) moved to approve funding for Leverage IXL to Drive Differentiated Classroom Instruction K-12 15-hour course (in person)

2nd motion – A. Estersohn

Opposed: None

Abstained: K. Barpoulis

All Approved – Motion carried

Alignment with the Workplan Matrix

The Board studied the Workplan Matrix as it was submitted to the state and compared the proposed course offerings to our current course catalog. Most courses have run, are running, or are projected to run. A few were cancelled due to low enrollment, and plans changed regarding a few consultants. The Board made plans to reach out to district teachers through Requests for Proposals in an effort to create opportunities within the specific Matrix areas to meet these needs.

Name Change and Rebranding

Lauren and Annie opened a discussion with the Board about a new name for the Staff Development Center. Several ideas were discussed, and the Board was in support of marketing the Center as one of continuous and reciprocal learning. We agreed to keep discussing this in future meetings.

The Art of Teaching: 40 Years of Impact

Policy Board member Jerusha Beckerman, Director of the Art of Teaching Program at Sarah Lawrence College, shared highlights from The Art of Teaching's 40th Anniversary Celebration. The event, held on October 11th, included remarks from Art of Teaching co-founder and former Director Mary Hebron and current Director Jerusha Beckerman, along with several notable alumni. Rue's talk championed the program's role in the history, present, and future state of teacher education—and of teaching and education in general. The Board was inspired and thankful to have her share her perspectives about the importance of building

relationships, honoring the child's spirit and interests, and empowering educators during an unstable time.

Professional Learning: Anxious Generation

Annie led the Board in a discussion of Jonathan Haidt's book. She is working with the Lower Hudson Teacher Center Network to develop a Book Study that can be shared among the Network's Teacher Centers. She shared several key points from the text, such as the impact of a play-based childhood shifting to a phone-based childhood. The author provides a wealth of data and research to support the idea that this shift is responsible for increased anxiety and disconnection among our students.

State Leadership Team Updates

Lauren shared updates from her State Leadership Team meeting. The state is rolling out the new "Portrait of a Graduate" information, so we will be looking for ways the Center can support this shift. She also reminded the Board that as always, it is important to share the good news about the positive impact our Professional Learning experiences are making on our colleagues, students, and community. Policy Board members are encouraged to share about our courses and the successes we are having giving teachers opportunities to learn with and from one another!

The "Unconference Day"

One idea we are exploring is a day of professional learning in which participants could choose sessions that align with their needs and interests. This day would provide workshops, introductions to available courses, opportunities to try out facilitation, and CTLE hours. We could also include a NYSUT ELT booth. Lauren agreed to do some research to learn more about other "unconference" models and bring these ideas to our next meeting.

Motion: (J. Havis) moved to adjourn the SDC Policy Board meeting at 1:59 pm.

2nd motion: D. Martuge

Opposed: None

Abstained: None

All Approved: Motion carried

Minutes submitted by Annie Hovis-Williams, Co-Director