



POLICY/COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

October 5, 2026

Virtual Meeting - 8:30 a.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 and Regulation 2535 Discussion and Feedback: Dr. Hart met with the librarians to get feedback on the suggested revisions for the policy and regulation. The librarians said that the removal of the term “sensitive content” and that there is no specific mention of sexual content was a step in the right direction because they found it difficult to define. There was recognition that this was an improvement overall and appreciated. The librarians felt the rubric should be collaborated on with the Superintendent and not provided by the Superintendent to them. They also would like the rubric to be suggested and not required. Some librarians asked if the rubric can be available to all librarians and not just at the middle school as a way for them to handle books at the lower grades that may be questioned by parents or administrators. The K-5 librarians asked if it should include all materials rated for grades above the grade levels of the school served and not just for materials rated for 9-12. Overall the librarians expressed to Dr. Hart that they can live with this change, but they do not like it, nor do they hate it. They recognize that this may be a compromise however, they still have some concerns.
One committee member questioned how the conversation with the librarians moved away from the issue being with mature content and into for all grade levels of the school served because the original intent of these additions was to deal with young adult novels for grades 9-12 having more sexualized content and more graphic depictions of suicide etc. She also suggested the words “adverse content” should be removed to avoid any suggestion of censorship. The original wording there was sexually explicit and then was changed to adverse content and it may be questioned by the same groups. Dr. Hart explained that the suggestion for the lower grades to also have the rubric was because there have been instances where books in the lower grades have been questioned. An example could be texts by Judy Blume that may be in the lower grade libraries, as they have also been challenged in other districts. One committee member agreed that the policy should incorporate all grade levels and is concerned that the rubric could create a burden if it is used for all levels instead of just for those books rated for grades 9-12. She suggested removing the rubric. Dr. Hart shared the rubric he created for the book challenge that followed the statute standards for curation and suggested this could be used. One committee member referenced the Freedom to Read Act where it mentions things like the condition of the book rather than the content of the book and she feels adding the rubric is encouraging censorship and may deter librarians from purchasing books and isn’t comfortable with the rubric. Two committee

members' preference is to revert to the suggested Strauss Esmay policy language that was adopted by other districts. Another committee member would like to keep the revision as is and since the librarians stated they were ok with it, that we don't need to make additional changes. Overall when it comes to curation decisions, Dr. Hart asked the committee to consider the Board's governance role in being the policy-making body and the librarian's role as the certificate-holder. The committee then worked on incorporating some of the feedback from the librarians into the revisions and prepared it for first read.

2. Policy 0167 - Public Participation in Board Meetings (HC&B): This is on the agenda because bylaw 0164.6 was abolished in 2024 however the language remained on the agenda and website because it was an active protocol. It was recommended to remove it from the agenda and website however the committee agreed last meeting that it isn't the right time because residents use it during our meetings and we don't want to restrict public participation at this time. The committee worked on wording for it to be added to policy 0167. It was suggested to add the following to item 2. "For the first public comment section, related to action items only, the Board President may impose a time limit of 60 minutes. This may be adjusted as the Board President sees fit." It was also recommended to increase the 250 word count mentioned for the web participants to reflect the 3 minute time allotted for in person comments. It was also suggested to add that participants must state their name and the town they are from to avoid anonymous comments. The committee proposes the following language be added at the end of the bylaw: Public Participation in Board of Education meetings may also occur prior to the meeting. A member of the public may submit public comments, limited to 750 words or three minutes, to the Board through electronic mail or by written letter to the Board Secretary via Boardmembers@readington.k12.nj.us or P.O. Box 807, 52 Readington Road, Whitehouse Station, NJ 08889. All comments must be received by 12:00 P.M. on the day of the Board meeting. The individual must indicate that the comments are to be read aloud during the public comment section of the agenda.
3. Requested Update to Policy 2431 (HC&B) - Tabled due to time constraints
4. Policy 7650 - School Vehicle Assignment, Use, Tracking, Maintenance, and Accounting - Tabled due to time constraints
5. Bylaw 0174 - Legal Fees (FS) - Tabled due to time constraints

Agenda items: Policy and Regulation 2535 revised., Policy 0167

Next Meeting: November 19, 2026 @ 8:30am