

**EAST STROUDSBURG AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION
POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING
JULY 20, 2015
Carl T. Secor Administration Building
5:00 P.M.**

MINUTES

- I. Meeting was called to order at 5:01 p.m. and roll call made by Debra Wisotsky
- II. **Board Committee Members Present were:** Roy Horton, and William Searfoss. (Marjorie James was absent)

School Personnel Present were: Robert Dilliplane, Eric Forsyth, Sharon Laverdure, Thomas Lesniewski, Frederick Mill, Bill Vitulli, Debra Wisotsky, and Steve Zall

Member of the Public was: Andre Askins

III. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

ACTION BY THE COMMITTEE: Motion was made by Roy Horton to approve the minutes for June 15, 2015 (pages 1-3). Motion was seconded by William Searfoss and carried unanimously, 2-0.

IV. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

ACTION BY THE COMMITTEE: Motion was made by Roy Horton to approve this agenda for July 20, 2015 (page 1), with members of the Committee reserving the right to add to the agenda and take further action as the Committee deems appropriate. Motion was seconded by William Searfoss and carried unanimously, 2-0.

V. **POLICIES FOR DISCUSSION:**

- a. Membership #004 (Local Board Procedures)—Mr. Forsyth stated that Policy #004 has been updated to include mandatory statutes as well as add a section on Board trainings and conference attendance/reporting. Administration is requesting that this policy be moved ahead for first read in July and subsequent approval at the August Board meeting.
- b. Student Dress & Grooming #221—Policy #221 is being presented to the Board for further modifications. Mr. Forsyth stated that after a full year of implementation, we have learned what's working/enforceable as well as items that may not be achieving their original objective. Building principals were in attendance to discuss some of the major issues with students being disciplined for non-compliance. Concerns were expressed about changing the policy so late, considering parents may have already begun shopping for back-to-school clothes. The committee and administrators both agreed that any revisions would have an effective date for the second semester of the new school year, thereby giving ample time to get the message out to both students and parents.

Non-compliance continues to center around pants,denim vs. cotton, jean look-a-likes, jeggings, hoodies worn without approved shirts beneath, and sweatpants/sweatshirts worn without school, military and/or college logos.

Based on the discussion, the committee chose to clarify the following items in the policy:

- Standard Requirements-Pants—The policy currently states Non-demin. Changed to: Non-jean/non-denim.
- Full-length leggings/tights may be worn under skirts or dresses that meet
- the length requirement. Changed to: Full-length jeggings/leggings/tights may be worn under skirts or dresses that meet the length requirement.
- Official school district licensed, approved school activity/ organization, college/university, and/or United States military apparel. Changes to: Official school district licensed, approved school activity/ organization, college/university, and/or United States military apparel worn visibly to promote the organization/activity.

Administration is requesting that this policy be moved ahead for first read in July and subsequent approval at the August Board meeting.

- c. Use of Facilities #707—Mr. Forsyth stated that administration is continuing to review this policy as well as other districts’ use of facilities policies for future revision. The draft being presented this evening has been streamlined to remove repetitive language and simplify the document. Administration will collaborate with the Business Office next to establish a reasonable fee structure for building use and establish guidelines for assessing personnel fees. Further revisions to this policy will be presented at a future meeting.
- d. Suicide #819 newly entitled “Suicide Awareness, Prevention and Response”—Policy #819 is being updated based on the recently-released PSBA policy as mandated by PDE for the start of the new school year. Administration is requesting that this policy be moved ahead for first read in July and subsequent approval at the August Board meeting.
- e. Booster Clubs/Parent Organizations #915—Mr. Forsyth informed the committee that the Director of Athletics has completed his review/updates to the policy and has forwarded it on to the Business Office for their input. Further revisions to this policy will be presented at a future meeting.
- f. School Volunteers #916—Mr. Forsyth stated that we are awaiting further clarification with regard volunteers and the new Child Protective Services Law. This information should be arriving soon and will be presented at a future meeting.
- g. The latest PSBA Policy News Network Newsletter was shared with the committee. Policies listed for update are now being reviewed for compliance and be presented at a future meeting.

Public Participation:

Mr. Andre Askins inquired whether the committee would consider discussing Policy #201 Admission of Students. The committee agreed to open the floor to Mr. Askins to express his concerns.

Mr. Askins questioned the requirement that students must be at least five years old by September 9th for admission to kindergarten for the upcoming school year. Mr. Askins stated that his daughter would miss the cutoff by just a few days. He appealed to the Board to reconsider the cutoff date. Mr. Horton stated that he fully understood Mr. Askins concerns as his own daughter also missed the cutoff this year. Mr. Askins stated that his daughter has been attending the Children’s Education and Learning Center’s accredited Pre-K program for the past year and is already reading and writing. Having his daughter wait another year would hurt her developmentally and not allow her to perform to her true potential. It would also place an undue financial burden on his family as well as other families in the same predicament. Mr. Askins also inquired whether, in lieu of missing the cutoff date, would the Board consider providing a testing requirement for those that miss the cutoff.

Mr. Forsyth explained that the previous policy had September 1st as the cutoff and that the district revised it a couple of years ago to September 9th to coincide with the latest Labor Day start date. He also stated that the decision has to do with financial cons, the cohort rate and whether students are developmentally ready. Mrs. Laverdure added that, from experience, most children under five are just not ready to begin kindergarten. She did acknowledge that there are those exceptions where students are extremely advanced for their age.

Mr. Horton explained that, unfortunately, it takes time to revise policies as they require a 30-day review prior to obtaining Board approval at the following Board meeting, so this would not benefit Mr. Askin and his daughter for the current year. He agreed to look into the pros/cons of changing the policy for future years and wished Mr. Askins and his daughter well and looks forward to seeing her as a student of the district in years to come.

VI. ADVISORY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

ACTION BY THE COMMITTEE: Motion to authorize and direct the administration to post the following item(s) for PUBLIC REVIEW during the month of July and subsequent Board action in August: Policy #'s 004, 221 (with an effective date of 1/4/16), and 819.

VII. NEXT MEETING: August 17, 2015 at 5:00 p.m.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT: 5:56 p.m.

Respectively submitted,

Debra Wisotsky