

**EAST STROUDSBURG AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION
POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING
JUNE 22, 2020
MEETING HELD VIA ZOOM DUE TO COVID-19 SCHOOL CLOSURE—4:30 P.M.
MINUTES**

- I. Meeting was called to order at 4:35 p.m. by Sharone Glasco.
- II. **Policy Committee Members Present were:** George Andrews, Rebecca Bear, Sharone Glasco, and Wayne Rohner.
- III. **Board Members Present were:** Larry Dymond, Richard Schlameuss, Lisa VanWhy
- IV. **Solicitor Present:** Chris Brown (called in late to the meeting)
- V. **School Personnel Present were:** Brian Baddick, Eric Forsyth, Thomas McIntyre, Ryan Moran, Dr. William Riker, Debra Wisotsky, Stephen Zall
- VI. **Members of the Public Present were:** Audrey Garrett, Maria Hopkins, Darryl Sabino
- VII. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

ACTION BY THE COMMITTEE: Motion was made by Rebecca Bear to approve this agenda for June 22, 2020 (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 Wayne Rohner and carried unanimously, 4-0.

VIII. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

ACTION BY THE COMMITTEE: Motion was made by Rebecca Bear to approve the minutes for for May 18, 2020 (pages 1-3). Motion was seconded by Sharone Glasco. The motion failed 2-2 Rebecca Bear and Sharone Glasco voted yes; Wayne Rohner and George Andrews voted no.

Mr. Rohner requested that the record show that he refused to approve the May 18th minutes as written and that he is not in agreement with the revisions to Policy 000 that are on the Regular Board agenda for final approval later this evening. He stated that Administrative Regulations are part of Board policy and that they should not be altered by administration without Board action. Mr. Rohner believed that the statement made by Chris Brown in the minutes on Page 2, Item a. under Policy 000 was in the wrong place and that Mr. Brown was actually referring to Item c. under Policy 003.

Ms. Wisotsky stated that Chris Brown was indeed referring to Policy 000 and that Mr. Brown advised the committee that you don't want administration to lose the flexibility to revise Administrative Regulations or procedures as needed, especially as witnessed recently with the Covid-19 pandemic. If administration has to wait two-three months to go through the normal Board approval process, this will limit administration's ability to conduct district operations. Mr. Brown offered the following language, "Administrative regulations are not part of Board policy and may be altered by the Superintendent without Board action. Administrative regulations may not conflict with Board policy or with applicable law. The Superintendent shall be responsible to submit administrative regulations to the Board for review. The Board reserves the right to alter or rescind any such regulation."

Mr. Rohner stated the policy as written does not solve the problem. The district has a history of being inconsistent in following policy. He stated if this is what Chris' legal advice is, then I want him to put it in writing, citing the specific sections of law, otherwise it is here say. Policy is binding on all employees and when there is a complete disregard, the district is in need of reform; hopefully, this will be a positive step in transparency and disclosure,

which is what you learn every year at national and state conferences. Mr. Andrews agreed with Mr. Rohner. Ms. Bear and Ms. Glasco did recall Mr. Brown's advice to allow ARs to be revised by the Superintendent. Mr. Rohner asked that they vote to pull the policy off the Regular Board meeting agenda for another rewrite. Mr. Schlameuss advised the committee to wait until the Regular Board Meeting to vote, being that the policy was on that agenda and not the Policy Committee agenda. The committee agreed they would discuss the policy during executive session and wait for a majority vote of the Board on whether to pull it from the agenda to send back to the committee for further discussion.

POLICIES FOR DISCUSSION:

- a. Policy 828 Fraud -- Mr. Rohner asked for clarification on who would be responsible for the investigation of complaints. Mr. McIntyre stated Lighthouse would receive the anonymous complaint and forward to the District Compliance Officer. If the complaint was filed against the Compliance Officer, it would then go to the Director of Human Resources. Ms. Bear shared that based on the advice of the district auditors, there should always be a backup for all complaints. Mr. Rohner was in agreement but wanted it noted in the minutes that the amended version the committee was given was not the same as the 2007 language from Policy 828. The committee had no concerns with the policy moving forward on the Regular School Board agenda.
- b. Policy 829 Whistleblowers – Includes Lighthouse Contact Information – Appears on the Regular Board Meeting agenda for final Board approval this evening. The committee had no concerns with the policy moving forward on the Regular School Board agenda.
- c. Policy 201 Admission of Students -- Updates include PSBA sample language of revised compulsory school age requirements starting in the 2020-2021 school year. Students must be age five by September 9th to enter kindergarten and age six by September 9th to enter 1st grade. Kindergarten is not a requirement; however, once attended, it starts the student compulsory attendance. If a student is not age six by the September 9 but has completed the required hours at an approved kindergarten program, they can be considered for possible entry into 1st grade, but not guaranteed. The curriculum department will assess the student to see if they are ready for first grade, if not, the student will be required to enter the district's kindergarten program. The committee agreed the policy would be moved forward for public review during the month of June and subsequent Board action in July.
- d. Policy 233 Suspension and Expulsion -- Updates include PSBA sample language of revised compulsory school age requirements starting in the 2020-2021 school year. The committee decided that the expulsion hearings will continue to be before a duly authorized committee of the Board, as they are a diverse board with diverse opinions, they chose option 1 over 2. Ms. Bear asked since compulsory school age has now been changed from seventeen to eighteen years old, then what happens when a student is age nineteen and is expelled from school. Do they no longer receive an education? Dr. Riker explained that compulsory attendance will continue at the district's expense during the expulsion until the student reaches age 18, the family will then have the option to continue the child's education at their personal expense during the scheduled expulsion period. After the expulsion term is completed, the student may return to the district if they have not aged out at age twenty-one and have not met the requirements for their diploma. The district is continuing the same practice it has always done; however, the compulsory age has now changed from seventeen to eighteen as far as the district's expense for providing an education during the expulsion. The committee agreed the policy would be moved forward for public review during the month of June and subsequent Board action in July.

- e. Policy 221 Dress and Grooming – Administration presented a draft dress code based on the committee’s previous discussions for revision. Mr. Andrews asked then, even if we change the dress code the question still becomes who is responsible to enforce the dress code? It has to be one person that is in charge so that the students don’t get missed signals. Ms. Bear suggested that it be the homeroom teacher or Dean of Students during first block only and that would be the cut off where a student can’t be written up later in the day. Ms. Glasco added that it is important that we recognize the change in the culture as far as what is important and this is a bigger opportunity to see what parents and student want. Students know what is appropriate dress and will step up. We create policies that sometimes stagnates children from thinking clearly and performing at a higher level. I ask the committee to really look at this new language closely, so that we can adopt and create a process the entire district can live with, rather than all the time that is spent sending students to ISS and OSS. There are much larger opportunities here to assist students with their mental and emotional health by not having a policy that works against them. Mr. Rohner requested one change with regard to hoodies so there are no interpretation issues. He suggested, “Hoodies shall not be worn indoors on school district property or while riding on school buses.” The committee will review the updates to this policy more closely and bring back any other concerns for discussion on the July agenda.

- f. Policy 815 Acceptable Use of Communications and Information (CIS) Systems & AUP Student/Parent Sign Off Form – Ms. Glasco expressed concerns from parents and students about consistency in enforcement and how much time is being spent disciplining students for violation of this policy. Mr. Andrews commented that it is one of our longest policies, totaling twenty-four pages. Ms. Bear asked about HS North and the VPN. Why was it shut down to students? As a result, some students were selling their hot spots to other students who did not have cell service. Verizon is the only carrier that seems to work at North. How do students get in touch with their parents especially in the case of students with a medical condition? Ms. Glasco stated there is a lot to be considered here and how do we coexist in this space, knowing that everyone is so connected to their devices. Mr. Borosh stated he has been working on this policy and revisions to it over the last twelve years. The reason it is so long is the amount of items it covers and vastness of technology today. The policy is continually reviewed by our attorney who specializes in technology and each of the items listed refer to specific case law. He shared that the VPN was indeed shut off to students because some were using it to share porno at school, which is in violation of policy. The district is bound by federal law to content filter under CIPA, the Child Internet Protection Act and federal eRate that subsidizes our internet and wide-area internet connection. The VPN was used as a way around the content filter, so once it was identified, it was blocked. Mr. Borosh shared that there is a provision in the policy for students with medical conditions, such as diabetes which allows the district to hook up the student’s phone and for the nurse and parents to receive real time monitoring alerts. All other students are blocked. The committee requested more time to review the policy. This policy will be included on the July agenda for further discussion.

Public Participation: Maria Hopkins thanked the committee for the updated dress code, stating everything looks like its headed in the right direction including the small changes on hoodies. Please know that the effort is greatly appreciated.

IX. ADVISORY RECOMMENDATIONS

ACTION BY THE COMMITTEE: Motion was made by Rebecca Bear to authorize and direct the administration to post the following item(s) with noted revisions for PUBLIC REVIEW during the month of June and subsequent Board action in July: Policies 201 and 233. Motion was seconded by George Andrews and carried unanimously 4-0.

X. **ADJOURNMENT:** 5:30 p.m.

ACTION BY THE COMMITTEE: Motion to adjourn was made by Rebecca Bear. Motion was seconded by Wayne Rohner and carried unanimously, 4-0.

Next meeting: July 20, 2020 at 4:30pm via Zoom

Respectively submitted by,
Debra Wisotsky