

**EAST STROUDSBURG AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT  
BOARD OF EDUCATION  
POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING  
SEPTEMBER 21, 2020  
MEETING HELD VIA ZOOM DUE TO COVID-19 SCHOOL CLOSURE—4:30 P.M.  
MINUTES**

- I. Meeting was called to order at 4:30 p.m. by Sharone Glasco.
- II. **Policy Committee Members Present were:** George Andrews, Rebecca Bear, Sharone Glasco and Wayne Rohner (arrived at 5:09 p.m.)
- III. **Board Members Present were:** Dr. Damary Bonilla, Larry Dymond, Deborah Kulick, Richard Schlameuss
- IV. **School Personnel Present were:** Brian Baddick, Eric Forsyth, Ryan Moran, Dr. William Riker, William Vitulli, Debra Wisotsky and Stephen Zall
- V. **Members of the Public Present were:** Audry Garrett, Maria Hopkins, Darryl Sabino
- VI. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**ACTION BY THE COMMITTEE:** Motion was made by Rebecca Bear to approve this agenda for September 21, 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 George Andrews and carried unanimously, 3-0.

VII. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**ACTION BY THE COMMITTEE:** Motion was made by George Andrews to approve the minutes for for August 17, 2020 (pages 1-4). Motion was seconded by Rebecca Bear and carried unanimously, 3-0.

Included in the packet for your review is the PSBA Policy News Network Newsletter Volume V-2020. This issue of the Policy News Network addresses policies related to the health and safety of students, staff and the school community based on COVID-19, and the health and safety plans approved by boards for phased school reopening.

**POLICIES FOR DISCUSSION:**

**Policies presented by administration- (all Covid-related)**

- a. Policy 111 Lesson Plans—Ms. Glasco stated that there was some communication on whether teachers were able to add content and videos to supplement their lessons and from what I can see, the policy does not seem to restrict this. Ms. Bear quoted from the PNN Newsletter that minor revisions were made to Policy 111 based on the need for many school entities to shift lesson planning to a digital online platform as a result of Covid 19. Mr. Moran added that there are two other changes that he recommends for clarification. We are looking for preparation of lesson plans to go from three days in advance to five days. We currently have teachers that are planning on Wednesdays for the following week and we just want that to reflect our practice. The expectation is that by the end of the week, you are planned and prepared for the subsequent week. The other revision is that the format for lesson plans shall be decided at the district administrative level, so the format is set and all buildings follow that same format so that it is standardized across the entire district.
- b. Policy 203 Immunizations and Communicable Diseases—Dr. Riker shared that new language is based on guidance from PSBA due to Covid-19. You will see reference to the Health and Safety Plan which is obviously new. This year for immunizations, you will see in the PNN guidance that they actually prolonged the length of time by two months that families can get required immunizations in order for

their children to attend school. This supports us and guides us to continue to follow the Department of Health with respect to communicable diseases. One of the things we are doing this year, is on October 13<sup>th</sup> at Middle Smithfield Elementary we are bringing in the Wright Center for our district to provide those immunizations, for the first time, for our families as opposed to going to their family physician or driving to Scranton where the Wright Center is located to comply with state regulations. This service will be for all school-aged children and they do not have to be enrolled in the district. We are distributing information about this service, it will go out in communications from our school health departments, our social media, and we are working with local media outlets to gain further publicity. families. Although they do accept insurance, the Wright Center will not bill anything that insurance does not cover. Families will receive information if their child requires certain immunizations and is not in compliance. The school nurse tracks that and parents would receive the flyer along with the compliance letter.

Mr. Forsyth explained exemptions can be requested on the PA Certification Form that the physician signs when the family is not obtaining the immunizations that the law requires. The form has a statement that they can submit in lieu of. Our policy is that families comply and if they don't, there is a period of time in which they are excluded from school until they comply by either being exempted or getting the immunizations.

Ms. Glasco had a question on page three of four, the language states that the Board directs that students be excluded. Dr. Riker said yes, this is part of the Health and Safety Plan. So if a student is asymptomatic or a student is positive with Covid-19 or in close contact as part of the Health and Safety Plan, which is approved by the Board, you are actually saying that that student would be excluded from physically being present in school for a period of time based on the CDC guidelines of 10 days if they present symptoms or 14 days. This would be directed by the Department of Health through contact tracing if around someone tested positive or they too had tested positive. Ms. Glasco inquired whether outside of Covid, does the district have a Health and Safety Plan. Mr. Forsyth stated you would have this policy. Ms. Glasco suggested the wording be changed from the "Board directs" to the "Board-approved Health and Safety Plans directs students who...". Ms. Bear agreed. Mr. Forsyth reminded the committee this policy has always been here long before Covid and will be after, so it is not narrowly construed to the direction given in the Health and Safety Plan because this plan that we are operating under right now is in effect as authorized by the Board until this particular pandemic ends. It could be resurrected for another at some point in the future, but even without that plan, should we go back to a "new normal" there will still be the requirement for the administration and the school physician to act on the policy and exclude students time-to-time from school for other diseases that may present, whether it is TB or other long-standing communicable diseases that are listed in the Code. Mr. Forsyth suggested changing the language further to: "Board-approved and any Health and Safety Plans directs students who...", so that it stands the test of time.

Ms. Glasco questioned on page 4: "The district may disclose information from health records to appropriate parties...", and whether that meets HIPPA regulations? What do we mean by appropriate parties? Mr. Forsyth stated we are still subject to non-disclosure under HIPPA, this is authorizing the district to do so when it is required, for example, during the pandemic. It could be name, date of birth, and symptoms to the Department of Health for contact tracing. Ms. Bear requested adding something on why we are disclosing information. Mr. Forsyth shared that the sentence does indeed state, in accordance with applicable law. Dr. Riker added we would only do this when we have to do contact tracing. The Department of Health would require that information based on any student that came within close distance of a student with symptoms or who has tested positive for Covid. Ms. Glasco agreed that the language was sufficient as written. Mr. Forsyth shared that it is also important that the district share information to our school physician in consultation, which is all part of applicable law.

- c. Policy 209 Health Examinations/Screenings—Dr. Riker shared that this policy is under review by our solicitor particularly with regard to Health Monitoring. Mr. Andrews inquired what the difference is with medical examination as opposed to health examination. Ms. Bear suggested that health could involve both mental health, concussion monitoring as well as medical. Mr. Forsyth agreed that because

we could not find a valid reason for the recommendations that have come through the PSBA's PNN, we want to be sure that we are not doing anything that goes well beyond the scope of what we are required. Also, that the Board would be in essence directing staff who don't have the qualifications to monitor something that they shouldn't be. So we are having this read once by counsel prior to taking any action on it. We wanted you to see it as we are working on it, so that you know it is out there; because, we have the same questions that are being asked here. No further action will be taken at this time on Policy 209.

- d. Policy 705 Facilities and Workplace Safety—Mr. Forsyth stated you will see reference in 705, 904 and 907 to any Health and Safety Plan, giving clear authorization to the staff and administration to act upon the plan and not allow visitors to enter our facilities, workplace or public events if they are not in compliance with those plans. The committee had no concerns with the amended policy language.
- e. Policy 904 Public Attendance at School Events—Mr. Andrews inquired whether the policy had to do with how many spectators are in attendance. Ms. Bear shared it looks like this is more about behavior, nicotine, vaping and recording devices. Dr. Riker referenced page two of five under Authority which addresses the limiting of attendance; however, specifics are not addressed per policy as in Mr. Andrews question but through the district's Board-approved Health and Safety Plan. So the plan is where you would find attendance requirements or limitations, not in policy.

Ms. Glasco inquired why we were removing the School Resource Officer position (SRO) from the policy. Ms. Wisotsky explained that in the past, the district contracted with the PA State Police for SROs and that we no longer utilize them as the district now has its own School Police Department with both Police Officers and security personnel.

Both Ms. Bear and Mr. Andrews stated that since the policy addresses expected behaviors, it should also include consequences for not adhering to those expected behaviors. Mr. Andrews asked if an AR would be more flexible. Dr. Riker agreed an AR does not require going through the approval process, so we can make changes at any time. Mr. Forsyth added spectators at an event will continually invent new things to do in violation of the policy, the AR will allow us to keep track of what Administration did the first time that offense came up, so if it comes up again we can be consistent. We can update with new violations as we go and include a progressive list of consequences for each type of behavior moving forward. The committee agreed this will provide consistency across the district rather than there being arbitrary consequences dealt out on a case-by-case basis. Ms. Bear stated the same goes for an away team parent, where they know they are no longer welcome to come to our school when their child plays here if they don't follow the rules. Dr. Riker advised the committee that they would need to work on progressive steps the committee would want the district administration to take when a spectator at an event is not following policy. Ms. Glasco suggested starting with like-in-kind conduct found in the Code of Student Conduct to carry over into the AR when parents/visitors violate the policy. Dr. Riker asked that if anyone has any suggestions, to please send them to him and we can start to work that into a document that can be shared at a subsequent meeting.

- f. Policy 907 School Visitors—Mr. Andrews questioned the language, “The Superintendent or designee and building principal have the authority to prohibit the entry of any individual to a district school” and whether that meant School Board members too. Dr. Riker replied yes it does, citing interference with the day-to-day operations of the school system. Dr. Riker added no one has the right to be in a school, other than the teachers, students, and the people involved in the day-to-day operations of that school. Mr. Andrews said he agrees that the School Board member should contact the building principal and not just show up, that is just common courtesy, but there needs to be a reason. After much discussion, the committee members agreed that it is in the best interest of students and employees for them to feel safe and sometimes those interruptions are just that, interruptions to the day-to-day operation. Just like a parent can't come to the door and demand to enter the building, Board members are also expected to call ahead to schedule a visit. When denied by the building administrator, a Board member may request an appointment for a more convenient, mutually agreed upon time.

Mr. Rohner asked, so if I am taking photographs of the condition of our ball fields, are you telling me that's a violation. Ms. Glasco stated no, but I would call if you're coming up to take photographs because that is not a normal reaction or behavior of anyone that would come to a school district. If that is your intent, I would definitely pick up the phone and make some arrangements. Mr. Rohner stated I was at the North HS last week and once again I have a varsity baseball field that has an infield littered with weeds and potholes, I am going to continue to photograph those issues so that I can promote routine maintenance. I do intend to continue to do that to improve the quality of the school district. Ms. Bear said I understand what you are saying, but most baseball and softball fields go by the wayside in the fall. Mr. Rohner said not really, I go to most away games and I know the condition of most school district properties. Ms. Glasco stated we are in Covid and we need to prioritize what's important now. Dr. Riker added district baseball is not playing right now. Mr. Rohner stated we still want our potholes to be filled in. We want to maintain what we have. The point Mr. Andrews and I are trying to make here is we just don't want the policies to be abused because we most certainly pick and choose how we enforce and administer policies moving forward and I am completely aware of that. Dr. Riker stated, I believe that is a false statement but we also want to protect our schools. Mr. Rohner added it is not a false statement and we most certainly want to protect our schools.

- g. Policy 803 School Calendar—Reflects new pandemic protocols. Mr. Andrews stated it looks like we can be flexible if we need to make changes. Dr. Riker stated, yes, and I would just add to that this is somewhat a moot point because the Board has always had flexibility in approving a calendar. Tonight is no exception as you have on the Board agenda perhaps the fourth calendar revision. This doesn't change that. Mr. Andrews inquired about the five flex days and stated we may be using them again this year.

#### **Policies requested by the committee-**

- a. Policy 317 Conduct/Disciplinary Procedures (Administrative Employees chg. to "Employees")—Mr. Andrews stated this policy has to do with our questions involving grievances and the arbitrary dealing out of punishment. The committee discussed creating an AR for staff conduct just like they spoke about creating an AR for the conduct of adults at school events. Mr. Andrews stated yes, one person might get three days unpaid. and another something else. Ms. Bear added we need consistency. We lack that when it comes to consequences for actions. Mr. Andrews added we can't have a bus driver get an unpaid suspension and a teacher a paid suspension for the same offense. Combining the three policies into all one is good but we need a set of consequences that are progressive which will be a big project. Mr. Zall added we had that special executive session where it was fortunate for all of us to have that dialogue and I have already initiated and started working on a template to reflect and capture the expected behaviors of our employees, looking at potential consequences for such. In speaking to our grievances, specifically to what we have been involved with, in the past, there was absolutely inconsistencies. In my tenure in working with our current administrative team we have put in place bringing that continuity and consistency to it, albeit meeting some resistance with the association. That is exactly what we have been working towards. We will continue to have that dialogue and I have already prepared a chart to get some of this together for some talking points moving forward. Mr. Andrews stated it was said that we did not need to work with the unions on this; however, we do have to work with the unions on these grievances and how we issue disciplinary actions. Why would we arbitrarily on our part make decisions all in the dark without talking to the unions. Mr. Zall stated, as far as consequences that are issued, that is not something that we collaborate with the association on. Do we go through the grievance process and work on resolutions? Mr. Andrews asked why go through the grievance at all, why not work with the union and set up some plans that everyone agrees to. Mr. Zall said if we try to hold employees to a standard, if I don't have everyone on Board as to what those standards should look like by their association membership, they may very well not be in alignment with what our approach is. Mr. Andrews again stated that is why we talk to the union to all get on the same page. Mr. Rohner asked don't we have policy and administrative regulations right now on standards. Ms. Bear said there is a policy but no AR that stipulates that if you do A than B happens. Unfortunately, you may get a different punishment than me because six months from now. We need to work on collaborating with the union on what is a reasonable punishment for each offense. The Board

should design it first that based on past experiences, this is the three things that we have done. Yes we haven't been consistent and apologize, it's in the past. How do we move forward. Mr. Zall said those things haven't been done previously because prior to even my tenure it was haphazard. The past three years Administration has been consistent based on what violations we have identified. The part that a grievance evolves out of is the association or membership not being in agreement with the consequence. Mr. Moran added what we lack is the agreement of holding people to high expectations and holding them accountable for when certain things occur. There needs to be more communication on what is acceptable behavior from our employees when serving our students. The association also has to be open to that communication. Mr. Rohner found it hard to believe we don't have an AR in place for employees like we do for students. Mr. Zall also added that when cases go to arbitrators, they too can sometimes be inconsistent on how they delve out determinations for things. What we need to do is get some framework and work collaboratively on what this will look like representative of ESASD. Ms. Glasco stated that the Conduct/Disciplinary Procedures 317, 417, and 517 will be brought back for further discussion.

- b. Policy 417 Conduct/Disciplinary Procedures (Professional Employees) – **REPEAL—Combine with Policy 317**
- c. Policy 517 Conduct/Disciplinary Procedures (Support Employees) – **REPEAL—Combine with Policy 317**

#### **Public Participation:**

Debbie Kulick apologized that she came in late to the meeting, she was wondering if they were going to further discuss Policy 111 Lesson Planning. Ms. Glasco explained the two notable changes from three to five days on lesson plans and that the format will be determined by the district administration. Mr. Andrews asked why five days. Ms. Kulick stated it seems to be too much of big brother micro-managing. If this is just the baseline and principals still have the opportunity to say we can do this at a higher level, then I would agree. Mr. Andrews asked what happens if the teachers get bogged down with something else, and they can't get it done. It's bad enough trying to get teacher to prepare 3 days of lesson plans let alone 5 days. Ms. Kulick said it has nothing to do with the timing, I have a problem with the principal not being the person who ensures the lesson plan is right and that whether there is a higher standard to be met. Administration is only producing a minimum requirement to prepare a lesson plan. With a minimum standard, if you're just a Level C teacher and you just want to do the minimum, you do what administration put out but if there is an opportunity to go beyond that and become a superior teacher, that's the part I am talking about. Ms. Glasco said I didn't see that it delineates don't go above and beyond. Mr. Moran added that teachers have the flexibility to obviously go above and beyond whatever the requirements are that are set by the district. What we don't want to happen is what is occurring right now, that ten buildings having ten different sets of expectations for what needs to be included in a lesson plan. We have staff at one building expected to do X and staff at another building expected to do XYZ. To bring equity across the district, at a minimum, this is what we expect all of our teachers' lesson plan format to include. Teachers by all means can go above and beyond and supplement where necessary, but we need to have a consistent message across the district. Ms. Kulick stated she also believes the principals should be held responsible for what their teachers are doing. Principals should be able to say this is the minimum; however, I expect more. Mr. Moran said the issue with that is we will have 10 different sets of expectations again. Ms. Kulick stated I think you need to sit with all principals, say what the minimum standard is, if you do something above that or the principal wants their team to do something more, it doesn't hurt the teacher if they do and doesn't hurt them if they don't. Perhaps it's an extra couple of points on their evaluation. That is how you get better teachers. Mr. Moran stated we will absolutely get input from the teachers on setting expectations for lesson planning. Teachers can go above and beyond to be more distinguished in their ratings. Ms. Kulick added there needs to be some onus on principals because if you get ten different levels where some are great and others mediocre, then you need to address those principals. The principals that go above and beyond should be the ones helping with the template. I know we have new principals who don't get it yet but that could be the key. Ms. Glasco asked isn't there a rating and evaluation system for each teacher and their performance. I think it is good for a standardized administrative process that they all know but there is still room for individuality, creativity, innovation and methods you need to

get the lesson across and stay current. I think this policy is for lesson prep universally across the district, it's pretty generic, the only change is the Administrative level coming up with one expectation across the district.

George asked about Policy105. Ms. Glasco said she only received his request three days ago and didn't get it to the Board secretary for the agenda in time. It is now 5:45 so we need to wrap up and discuss this policy next month as we all have another meeting to get to.

Mr. Rohner asked are these policies consistent for North and South schools and will they be enforced consistently. Dr. Riker stated yes, that is the expectation. Mr. Rohner said since there has been a lifetime of our fans being able to stand at the purple pit fence, I expect the fans at North to be able to stand at the fence without being harassed. Dr. Riker stated that is not policy, that is procedure and it will be enforced consistently. Mr. Rohner asked what will be enforced? Ms. Bear stated whatever the AR states it should be. Dr. Riker, stated no, whatever the procedure is for spectators at our games. Mr. Rohner said since we have every year stood at the fence, is that permissible this year. Ms. Glasco stated Dr. Riker has already stated the procedures will be consistent. We need to move on as I am receiving a text message right now from the Board President that they are waiting for us.

### VIII. 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 September and subsequent Board action in October: Policies 203, 705, 803, 904, 907. Motion was seconded by George Andrews and carried unanimously, 4-0.

### IX. ADJOURNMENT: 5:49 p.m.

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

Next meeting: October 19, 2020 at 4:30 pm, TBD.

Respectively submitted by,  
Debra Wisotsky