

**EAST STROUDSBURG AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION
POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING
OCTOBER 19, 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
- III. **Board Members Present were:** Richard Schlameuss, Lisa VanWhy
- IV. **School Personnel Present were:** Brian Baddick, Brian Borosh, Eric Forsyth, Dr. William Riker, William Vitulli, Debra Wisotsky and Stephen Zall
- V. **Members of the Public Present were:** Nina Dick, Jennifer Floyd, Toni-Ann Gilmore, Maria Hopkins
- VI. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

ACTION BY THE COMMITTEE: Motion was made by Rebecca Bear to approve this agenda for October 19, 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, 4-0.

VII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

ACTION BY THE COMMITTEE: Motion was made by Rebecca Bear to approve the minutes for for September 21, 2020 (pages 1-6). Motion was seconded by George Andrews and carried unanimously, 4-0.

Included in the packet for your review is the PSBA Policy News Network Newsletter Volume VI-2020. This issue of the Policy News Network addresses policies related to special education updates based on cyclical compliance monitoring, sudden cardiac arrest and electrocardiogram testing, the list of federally-required annual notices and policy-related notifications, and information related to Suicide Prevention Month and the Statewide Suicide Prevention Plan.

Mr. Andrews inquired about the PNN with regard to policies requiring annual notice and how the district disseminates this information to families. Dr. Riker stated information on annual notices is included in the Code of Student Conduct, paperwork that goes home to parents at beginning of the school year for sign-off and is located on the Student Portal in Sapphire. Ms. Wisotsky also shared that the website has a section entitled “Annual Notices” as well.

POLICIES FOR DISCUSSION:

Policies presented by administration-

- a. Policy 113.1 Discipline of Students with Disabilities -- Mrs. Bear asked how do we determine if a disciplinary infraction is related to a child’s disability. Dr. Riker shared that a Manifestation Determination is held with administration, the student and parents to review the incident. They go through a series of questions to see if the infraction is linked to the individual student’s disability or not. See page two of five. Mrs. Bear inquired, do we look at behaviors that led up to the expulsion as well and what we did to stop the behavior before it got to this point, so we know we did what we needed to do as a district in order to prevent expulsion. We all know a child with disabilities has to be coached differently. So did we complete the corrective action plan prior to us getting to this point. Dr.

Riker stated we track discipline and look for patterns of behavior that would require an intervention or a change to a student's program; however, I would just emphasize that if a student with a disability were to commit an expellable type of infraction, the first priority is where do we place the student to get the proper resources needed to assist them and still provide the best education. Expulsion does not stop education. It simply states that it takes place in a different setting. So that student would be placed accordingly by the IEP team so they can still be successful and address any disability that may have been involved or led to a student making that poor decision. Again, if an infraction turns out to be determined that it was a manifestation of their disability, there is no discipline. Discipline ends and can't occur. Then it goes to programs, resources, and support of the student. Even if a child is not identified previously and the manifestation meeting determines there is a disability, then the child is thought to be exceptional. The student would then go through the evaluation process to determine if there is a disability that may have been a cause or manifestation of that student's decision making. Any type of discipline would be on hold until resolved. Parents must agree to the evaluation in order for it to happen. Mrs. Bear asked what if parent does not agree? The proceedings would occur under circumstances with the student not having been identified with a disability. Ms. Glasco inquired whether the process is the same for students with just behavioral issues. Dr. Riker stated we always look at the student's disability and they may still receive consequences for behaviors displayed. Typically, by law, there is a limit to the number of suspensions, whether that is ISS or OSS that an identified student would receive before the IEP team would reconvene and look at the supports and programs in place to help that student. The decision would be that those supports may not be helpful in that student making better choices. It may be that a different placement needs to occur because the student needs additional supports. The answer is yes and no. Can a student with a disability still receive consequences, yes; however, the answer is no because there a mechanism that if they have received a certain number of consequences, the district is obligated to go back and look at that student and see what we can do to further support them. We start with the behavior first, a student commits an infraction, then you look to see if they have a disability, and then you determine if the disability may have been a cause for the behavior. It doesn't eliminate the ability to provide consequences as per the Code of Student Conduct to student with disabilities. The number of behavioral issues or disciplinary infractions does cause the district to look at what supports and programs that student is currently receiving and whether or not that needs to be changed, which would then be reflected in the IEP. A non-identified student has a pattern of behavior, that a student has displayed over time, the district would look at it as part of the Child Find to offer an evaluation, where a parent has to agree to the evaluation for the district to move forward.

- b. Policy 113.2 Behavior Support -- Mrs. Bear asked what a Positive Behavior Support Plan is and how does that work. Dr. Riker shared that it looks for ways for students to be rewarded for positive behaviors in order to try and mitigate any negative behaviors, recognizing when students are doing good things and give students opportunities to not only make good choices but to be recognized for the good choices that they are making in school. Mr. Baddick stated we are trying to reward student time on task, more completion, social interactions with peers and staff, so SWPB is something we use in all of our schools but Behavioral Support Plans are more individualized. It kind of coincides with the student's IEP. Students who are in autistic support or a life skills class especially those identified as emotional support, they are required to have a Behavioral Support Plan in place for them. It has goals and objectives, just like an IEP does. It is therapeutic in mind and it has a tracking system that it involves the student, family and staff, anyone who has interaction with the student to get the student to work independently and to monitor their own behavior. That is the ultimate goal of a Behavior Support Plan. ESACA students have Behavioral Support Plans as well. We have students in the virtual world or hybrid that have a Behavioral Support Plan and some are doing very well with that. Mrs. Bear asked what de-escalation techniques we use. Mr. Baddick replied, there are a lot of de-escalation programs that go from very mild from initiating a talk-down to as a last resort, Tact II, which is a physical de-escalation where we certify and train our staff. In fact, Mr. Zall and Dr. Vitulli are certified trainers in Tact II, which also now includes in that program Trauma-Informed. It is a physical program where we may have to physically support a student from injuring himself/herself and possibly others. Mrs. Bear inquired whether de-escalation takes place when a student is alone with the staff member. Mr. Baddick replied no, the philosophy over the course of the last three years has changed. We are now

implementing calm down rooms. We are getting away from using the timeout room. The calm down room is therapeutic and similar to where we instituted about two years ago, the sensory room. It has bean bag chairs, it may have a couch and some other items where a student can go and kind of talk down. We are getting away from physical restraints and doing more of the therapeutic. We now employ three mental health workers that work at the elementary level (Mr. Baddick's zoom feed cut off and he was unable to complete his thought.)

- c. Policy 122 Extracurricular Activities -- The committee discussed PSBA revisions to concussion management and cardiac arrest. No concerns were noted in the new language
- d. Policy 123 Interscholastic Athletics -- The committee discussed PSBA revisions for concussion management and cardiac arrest. Mrs. Bear asked why the language on charter school and home education student participation in interscholastic activities was removed from the policy. Can those students still participate? Mr. Forsyth stated yes, they can still participate; however, we cleaned up the location on where that is addressed. Those particular nuances are addressed in their specific policies on Cyber Education and Home Education. As this policy speaks to our overall program on interscholastic athletics, the permissions to participate are intact, assured by law and are reflected in their respective policies.
- e. Policy 123.2 Sudden Cardiac Arrest -- Mrs. Bear inquired whether we had AED machines in our schools. Ms. Wisotsky shared that the district has a total of 33 AEDS, which includes all school buildings, school vehicles and each of our athletic trainers have them on the field during sporting events. Batteries and pads are checked throughout the year. We keep a current list of upcoming expirations dates and replace these items prior to expiration. No other concerns were noted in the updated language.

Policies requested by the committee-

- a. Policy 105 Curriculum – The policy was included for discussion as per the direction from the last meeting. Mr. Andrews stated that the policy was actually discussed during the Education Programs and Resources meeting. They spoke about the different technologies and resources that teachers want to infuse in their curriculum. Language in the policy has not changed; however, Mr. Andrews wanted to be sure that the Board is involved in the final approval of curriculum and textbooks. Administration will review options and present to the Board for approval. The curriculum audit timeline will be adhered to more closely moving forward and the Education Program and Resources Committee consists of four Board members who will be involved throughout the process and have knowledge on the subject prior to final approval.

Public Participation:

Mrs. Nina Dick asked if there was any talk about a reopening plan, making a five-day week available to students rather than just a two-day/hybrid model. She expressed concern with the Monday/Tuesday, which are the days that include most of our holidays, totaling 14 throughout the year. She is worried about her daughter's education hanging in the balance compared to other school districts who go five-days per week. Dr. Riker explained that the Board will approve later tonight an amendment to move one of those days off to a Thursday/Friday. While that is not significant, it is the direction that the Board provided. There has been no further discussion under our current conditions with respect to a full return to school. Mrs. Dick also expressed concern with the cost of unlimited Wi-Fi at home in order to support the at-home learning days. Mrs. Bear and Dr. Riker spoke about a four-day a week option that is available for families that need additional assistance. Mrs. Dick was concerned and advised that this option was not appropriate for first-grade level as her daughter would be working independently. Yes, under adult supervision; however, there would be no one to keep her on task or resources to assist her in the learning process. Dr. Vitulli encouraged her to reach out to the building principal again and to give the four-day option a try. Dr. Vitulli will also reach out to the building principal as a liaison to discuss her individual concerns.

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 October and subsequent Board action in November: Policies 113.1, 113.2, 122, 123, 123.2. Motion was seconded by George Andrews and carried unanimously, 4-0.

IX. ADJOURNMENT: 5:08 p.m.

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

Next meeting: November 16, 2020 at 4:30 pm, TBD.

Respectively submitted by,
Debra Wisotsky