

**EAST STROUDSBURG AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT  
BOARD OF EDUCATION  
POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING  
APRIL 25, 2022  
CARL T. SECOR ADMINISTRATION CENTER & VIA ZOOM—4:30 P.M.  
MINUTES**

- I. Meeting was called to order at 4:30 p.m. by Debbie Kulick.
- II. **Policy Committee Members Present were:** George Andrews, Debbie Kulick, Wayne Rohner and Lisa VanWhy
- III. **School Personnel Present were:** Brian Baddick, Brian Borosh, Eric Forsyth, Dr. William Riker, Dr. William Vitulli, Debra Wisotsky and Stephen Zall.
- IV. **Members of the Public Present were:** Shanice Person-Correa
- V. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**RECOMMENDATION OF THE COMMITTEE:** Motion was made by George Andrews to approve this agenda for April 25, 2022 (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.

VI. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**RECOMMENDATION OF THE COMMITTEE:** Motion was made by Wayne Rohner to approve the minutes for March 21, 2022 (pages 1-5). Motion was seconded by Lisa Van Why and carried unanimously 4-0.

VII. **POLICIES FOR DISCUSSION:**

**Policies presented by administration-**

- a. **Policy 218-Student Discipline**—Ms. Kulick read the revisions to the policy. Mr. Andrews inquired whether the Board Committee serving on an expulsion hearing can or shouldn't set the length of time for an expulsion. Dr. Riker replied no, to be consistent you shouldn't. Mr. Andrews noted, we did the last time. Ms. Kulick clarified that at the last expulsion hearing, the Board made a modification from what the normal routine is with regard to the length of time. Mr. Andrews said it is still a year but the start date was modified. Mr. Andrews stated that is why I am asking this now. Dr. Riker replied the reason why I say this is, in order to maintain consistency throughout the year in terms of how we apply the procedures for expulsion. I'm not saying that you can't. I'm just saying that it is not a good idea because you are starting to apply an inconsistent approach to one student vs. another. Mr. Andrews noted we were just trying to get the student back to school as soon as possible. Dr. Riker said that is our intent as well, but it creates an inconsistency. Mr. Andrews added our thinking was if she is going to be out a year, we might start the expulsion earlier, so that if she is out six months, she is back sooner. Dr. Riker said I understand you're thinking. Ms. Kulick shared we already have a procedure in place, so we want to be sure everyone gets the same. Dr. Riker noted the difference here, and why George is asking, is that this is a situation where the family elected to take a

hearing before the Board. What you do not want to do, at least my recommendation, is to suggest if and when you take a hearing before the Board, a different outcome would or could occur as a result that was different from the recommendation. If the Board committee were to decide not to follow the recommendation is one thing, but to start to get into the weeds of the length of time creates that inconsistency, which I would caution the Board not to do. Mr. Andrews repeated, that is why I was asking. Dr. Riker thanked Mr. Andrews, saying it was a good question. Ms. Kulick continued to read the revisions, asking if the committee had any other concerns. All revisions seem to be cleaning up language and updating where applicable.

- b. **Policy 903-Public Participation in Board Meetings**—Ms. Kulick noted we are adding just two sentences, “Any eligible public participant must register prior to the meeting using the form(s) provided by the school district”. Mr. Andrews stated, I am still against this. Mr. Rohner added, you are going to have to take this to the entire Board, as I am not in favor of this either. Ms. Kulick said we can move it on to have that discussion. Mr. Andrews replied, I’m not in favoring of moving it forward. Mr. Rohner said we can make a motion, you’ll say no, I’ll say no, and the motion dies. Dr. Riker stated I will put it on the agenda for approval or denial by the Board for next month’s meeting. Ms. Kulick continued with the other revision, “Citizens are required to state their name, township, organization, if any, and present their concerns or statements.” Mrs. VanWhy asked are the forms going to be here or do they have to register online. Dr. Riker stated, right now the public does pre-register if they are attending via Zoom and they wish to speak during public comment. If they come in person, they are to complete the form. Mr. Andrews asked are they signing up for only what’s on the agenda or for anything not on the agenda. Dr. Riker said your policy allows public comment on agenda items only. Ms. Kulick read from the policy, “In order to permit fair and orderly expression of public comment, the Board shall provide an opportunity at each public meeting of the Board for residents and taxpayers to comment on matters of concern, official action or deliberation which are or may be before the Board prior to official action by the Board.” Mr. Andrews stated, it does not say agenda items only. Dr. Riker stated every Board Meeting Agenda says, “public participation is limited to comment on this agenda by residents and taxpayers of the school district”. It has been like that for my six years here. Mr. Rohner replied, my interpretation of this in section two, is that taxpayers may comment on items of concern, official action or deliberation which are or may be before the Board prior to official action by the Board. Personally, I don’t have a problem with anyone having a comment whether it is on the agenda or not. Ms. Kulick suggested perhaps items on the agenda be at the beginning of the meeting and items that are not, at the end. Mr. Rohner said for example, the rifle team would never have had an opportunity to speak. They will tonight because it is an agenda item, but for the most part, they are never going to be an agenda item. Ms. Kulick asked can they request to be on the agenda? Mr. Rohner said I’m sure they can, but the intent of democracy is to allow free expression. So the idea of controlling public participation will always concern me.

Dr. Riker offered his opinion, stating, the purpose of public participation at a Board meeting is to influence the Board prior to taking official action on a motion. It is not to discuss any other items related to the operations of the school district, as there are other policies that address how and when a member of the community should and would address that. It speaks to that through what I would call a chain of command, that unless they have had that conversation with the Superintendent as per your policy, and unless they are

unsatisfied with the outcome of that conversation, then it doesn't go before the Board. I keep reminding the Board that the purpose of a Board meeting is to conduct business in a public forum and the idea of public comment is specifically so that the public has an opportunity to voice their thoughts on a motion prior to the Board taking action. The intent of a Board Meeting is not for the community to come to the Board and air their grievances or dissatisfactions with everything and anything that occurs as part of the daily operations of the district. Mr. Andrews said I look at it as the only place where people in the community get the whole community, at the same time at a Board Meeting. So I see what you are saying but it is a forum for a person who wants to talk to the whole community rather than one individual. I think we should allow them the opportunity to speak to the community and the Board meeting is the place where we can do it. That is my opinion and where I am coming from on that. Dr. Riker said I am simply saying it is a philosophy that the Board has to determine. I am not saying one is right or one is wrong. You have to look at what the intent behind a public meeting of the Board is to be for the purpose of the Board members. Mr. Andrews agreed we both have a different interpretation of what that is. Ms. Kulick shared that if someone wants to speak, they just put their name on a piece of paper and hand it in at any time prior to public comment. It just makes it more orderly. Mr. Rohner shared that sometimes an individual speaks and I am in the audience and don't have intentions of speaking, but that person may make a comment that will inspire me to stand up and make a comment.

Ms. Kulick stated it looks like we are okay moving student discipline to be advertised but can't seem to come to a consensus on Policy 903. Dr. Riker informed the committee that 903 will be on the agenda regardless of the committee, or at least half the committee, not approving to move this forward. He added, since the Superintendent gets to create the agenda along with the Board President, it will be moved forward and that discussion will occur with the full Board next month. At that time, the Board would vote on whether they are going to accept it as written or make any modifications. Wayne or George are going to make a motion on whether to vote on the policies separately and then you can have discussion. The Board will take a vote on it as presented. If any substantial modifications, it will go back for public review for 30 days and come up at the subsequent Board meeting. If the majority of the Board approves it as presented, then it is done.

**Public Participation:** Ms. Person-Correa inquired about the discipline policy. She asked when a student violates policy, perhaps in addition to or instead of ISS or OSS, can the student also be considered for a Student Assistance Program, especially when they have multiple incidents. Instead of arbitrarily disciplining, take into consideration that if this student is exhibiting behaviors and acting out, regardless of whether they have a disability, that we put them in a SAP program or a guidance program to see exactly why they are behaving that way. Ms. Person-Correa also shared her experience with public participation in Board meetings. Whenever she preregisters to be able to speak and clicks the Zoom link within the calendar, it sometimes tells her the link is invalid. She has to go back to the Board website, register again before getting put into the actual meeting. She wanted to make the school district aware that there are sometimes technical issues with the link and she thanked the committee for allowing her to speak.

In answer to Ms. Person-Correa, Mr. Andrews explained that prior to expulsion, we have a whole series of steps before it gets to the Board to look at. Ms. Kulick added there are a number of programs available to help support students. Dr. Riker responded, for the expulsions specifically, the district has created the Alternatives to Expulsion (A2E) Program which allows a student to participate in a nine-week program to help them make better decisions. If they choose to participate and successfully complete that program,

their expulsion period is cut in half. For the committees benefit too, we have selected a number of disciplinary infractions that are not expellable offenses but are typically in-school or out-of-school suspensions. We are proposing an action research project next year to provide more types of interventions with those students to reduce the length of the punishment. Recognizing that schools need to do more of the things we used to rely on parents to do to help students make better decisions. Long-term goal is to eliminate OSS as a disciplinary consequence. It is a multi-year procedure because it is something that has been entrenched in education for forever. We recognize that we need to really work with students and try to get them to think about decisions they are making. When we were in school and we got in trouble, we went home and got in more trouble. I don't know if that happens as much as it used to as when I was in school. So how are we helping students to make better choices to avoid situations where they are receiving disciplinary consequences. We have manifestation determinations for students who may have a disability. We are doing more than we have ever done to try and recognize that simply giving an ISS or OSS doesn't necessarily cause students to make a better decision. The challenge is that maybe there is a benefit from the lens of an educator when the student is removed from the room for some period of time. If a student commits an infraction and is right back in the classroom the next day, that is the mindset we have to change in how educators perceive that as well. Many will see that as the student getting away with doing whatever they did and the district losing sight of disciplinary procedures. Our direction is to look at how we can intervene and provide more of that support for students in making better decisions without losing sight of the need for consequences when necessary, along with doing that deliberately and consistently. That is the challenge. In a school you can't respond to the same infraction differently. Mr. Andrews added not only do we have to educate our teachers, but our substitutes as well and that will be a challenge. Dr. Riker added that is why we do our trauma-informed training and we do have SAP programs in all of our schools. There is a litany of things we are doing as a district to really address those items as best we can. We are going to be creative and innovative in how we do that and do our own action research to prove that what we are doing is working better than just doling out consequences.

#### **VIII. ADVISORY RECOMMENDATIONS**

**RECOMMENDATION OF THE COMMITTEE:** Motion was made by Lisa VanWhy to authorize and direct the administration to post the following item(s) with noted revisions for PUBLIC REVIEW during the month of April and subsequent Board action in May: Policy 218. Motion was seconded by George Andrews and carried unanimously 4-0.

#### **IX. ADJOURNMENT: 5:06 p.m.**

**RECOMMENDATION OF THE COMMITTEE:** Motion to adjourn was made by George Andrews. Motion was seconded by Lisa VanWhy and carried unanimously, 4-0.

Next meeting: May 16, 2022 at 4:30 p.m. in the Carl T. Secor Administration Board Room & via Zoom.

Respectively submitted by,  
Debra Wisotsky