

**EAST STROUDSBURG AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION
POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING
JUNE 20, 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 Borosh, 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 June 20, 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 Lisa VanWhy and carried unanimously, 4-0.

VI. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

RECOMMENDATION OF THE COMMITTEE: Motion was made by Lisa Van Why to approve the minutes for May 16, 2022 (pages 1-2). Motion was seconded by George Andrews and carried unanimously 4-0.

VII. **POLICIES FOR DISCUSSION:**

Policies presented by administration-

- a. Policy 206 Assignment within District – Ms. Kulick read the revisions on page two with regard to change of school assignment for childcare and on page four on the ESASD school personnel exception and PIAA transfer rules. Mr. Andrews asked where are the PIAA rules or is that in a separate policy. Should we not include the rules in here? Dr. Riker replied no, that it is the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association’s rules that are referenced here. Mr. Andrews inquired about the language should an employee leave the district mid-year, that their child would automatically be returned to their zoned school district of residence. He asked, doesn’t that hurt the child and wouldn’t it be better if they leave at the end of the year? Ms. Kulick replied that this is a benefit of being an employee, so if they are no longer an employee, then no. Mr. Andrews said I understand that, but if they want to leave the child here, shouldn’t they be permitted to finish the year. Dr. Riker replied, no, we prefer to deter employees from leaving in the middle of the year. The parent knows this when they are making that decision. I follow your thinking and can appreciate that; however, the parent makes that decision and they understand the ramifications. Mr. Rohner inquired whether we have any employees taking advantage of this exception. Dr. Riker said, yes, we do have a small number. Ms. Kulick asked if it was their recommendation to move this policy on. The committee were in agreement.

Policies requested by the committee for discussion-

- a. Policy 217 Graduation Requirements – Mr. Andrews asked about home education students walking in graduation ceremonies. Mr. Forsyth explained that home education students by school code, are non-public students. Mr. Andrews said that an assistant principal he spoke to said they could so why not, if they are members of our community? Mr. Forsyth said home education is the same category as a parochial or private school. The main difference is the only person authorized to educate one's child without a certification is the parent. They have the same access to privileges here such as extracurricular activities, but that is where it ends. They are not part of the academic program nor can they be, unless they choose to enroll. Mr. Andrews asked doesn't the evaluator have to be approved by the school district. Mr. Forsyth said we are merely required to maintain the census of who they are and we are required to record that the student had an evaluator evaluate them. There was a point in time where school districts did the evaluations, but that law changed. We make sure the evaluator meets the law requirements by looking them up in the Pennsylvania Information System for teachers and we simply take their recommendation. That is just a requirement laid upon school district's so we can ensure every student of compulsory school age is receiving an education whether here, or with their parent or an approved private or parochial school. The student cannot walk or graduate with the class because they are not an enrolled member in the school district. They can receive a diploma through the Department of Education that is considered a Commonwealth Diploma. Mr. Andrews said then you need to tell your principals this to clarify, so they don't pass incorrect information to the community.

The other item Mr. Andrews wanted to discuss with regard to graduation was Delegation of Responsibility, saying he felt the Board should be responsible for determining the primary and alternate location for graduation. He said, I am trying to take some of the pressure off the Superintendent. Dr. Riker stated, "I feel no pressure. Leadership requires you to make decisions that not everyone is going to like and I am okay with doing that". Ms. Kulick added, I would think that if a decision is made that something would be outside that it would have to be weighed against the weather and you can't guess the weather. It has to be days in advance. Mr. Rohner stated, "Just for the record, that's a week argument". Ms. Kulick said, by days in advance, she meant in order to make a change. Mr. Rohner said, "The bottom line is all about effort. I know what we have done and I know what other communities are doing". Ms. Kulick said she personally prefers graduation inside. So we are at a draw here, so that leaves us where we are and it just keeps going the way it is with no change to the policy.

- b. Policy 903 Public Participation in Board Meetings – Ms. Kulick shared that at the last meeting, we stated that we would put 903 back on the agenda for discussion. Mr. Andrews agreed that the public should have to give their name and address so that we know they are residents of the district; however, didn't think the public should have to state the reason on the form as long as it was a topic on the agenda. This could hinder free speech. Mrs. VanWhy added that this was a requirement of the Board President when the pandemic started and we conducted meetings by Zoom. Mr. Andrews said we've been back for almost a year now. Mrs. VanWhy said perhaps we don't need language in policy but could have a conversation with the Board President because he runs the meeting and this is what he prefers. Ms. Kulick added it makes it easier when Rich goes through the agenda. Mr. Andrews asked how does someone sign up and log into the meeting online if they don't do it prior to the meeting. I think the public should be able to speak online even after the meeting has started. Mr. Rohner asked, are you questioning the flexibility of the form itself? Dr. Riker said the online requests are reviewed at 7pm to see if anyone has pre-registered to speak. Mr. Rohner asked is there flexibility and latitude if we add to the agenda at the start of the meeting. Obviously no one is going to fill out a card for that new agenda item, I can't imagine we would say sorry, we are not interested in your three minutes. Is that the plan? Mr. Forsyth noted to Wayne's point, it brings up a valid point, and the law and the policy exists

that if an item wasn't on the agenda and is added when the Board opens the meeting, that the Chair of the meeting must provide an ample opportunity for public comment on that specific item. Mr. Andrews asked again, if they are on Zoom and they haven't pre-registered, how can they speak. Mr. Forsyth said, they can still indicate that they want to make a comment on that specific item. Mr. Rohner asked is there latitude and flexibility if I come to a meeting and sit in the audience and someone makes a statement, I had no intent to provide public participation, but if something was said that inspired me to say, hey I want my three minutes, can I? Mr. Andrews said the way this is written, no. Mr. Rohner said so you are denying me an opportunity at a public meeting to express myself. Ms. Kulick said it does not actually say that and Rich has always asked, did I get everyone, so that does leave the door open. Mr. Rohner said so with that scenario, I would like to think that we are going to allow people the opportunity to comment because people will make statements that might provoke thoughts and I don't think it is right to deny them the right as a taxpayer, to speak up at a public meeting. That is the intent of democracy. Ms. Kulick agreed saying, I believe we allow for that but the people who signed up first get to go first, so that kind of solves this whole dilemma. Mr. Rohner agreed, it sure does. Ms. Kulick announced we don't have to change a thing in policy but have just had a better discussion and understanding.

Public Participation: None

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 June and subsequent Board action in July: Policy 206. Motion was seconded by George Andrews and carried unanimously 4-0.

IX. **ADJOURNMENT:** 4:52 p.m.

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

Next meeting: July 18, 2022 at 4:30 p.m. in the Carl T. Secor Administration Board Room & via Zoom.

Respectively submitted by,
Debra Wisotsky