

**EAST STROUDSBURG AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION
POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING
JANUARY 22, 2024
CARL T. SECOR ADMINISTRATION CENTER & VIA ZOOM—4:30 P.M.
MINUTES**

- I. Meeting was called to order at 4:30 p.m. by Keith Karkut.
- II. **Policy Committee Members Present were:** George Andrews, Keith Karkut, Debbie Kulick, and Jason Gullstrand.
- III. **School Personnel Present were:** Brian Borosh, David Cooper, Eric Forsyth, Amy Polmounter, and William Vitulli.
- IV. **Members of the Board Present were:** Ann Catrillo (by Zoom), and Wayne Rohner.

V. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

RECOMMENDATION OF THE COMMITTEE: Motion was made by Debbie Kulick to approve this agenda for January 22, 2024 (pages 1-2), 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.

VI. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

RECOMMENDATION OF THE COMMITTEE: Motion was made by Debbie Kulick to approve the minutes for November 20, 2023 (pages 1-3). There was no meeting in December. Motion was seconded by George Andrews and carried unanimously 4-0.

VII. **APPROVAL OF POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING CALENDAR FOR 2024**

RECOMMENDATION OF THE COMMITTEE: Motion was made by Jason Gullstrand to approve the Policy Review Committee Meeting Calendar for 2024. All meetings will take place in the Carl T. Secor Administration Center Board Room and virtually via Zoom and YouTube. Motion was seconded by George Andrews and carried unanimously 4-0.

February 26, 2024	July 15, 2024
March 18, 2024	August 19, 2024
April 15, 2024	September 16, 2024
May 20, 2024	October 21, 2024
June 17, 2024	November 18, 2024

VIII. **POLICIES FOR DISCUSSION:**

Policies presented by administration-

- a. Policy 200 Enrollment in District—Mr. Karkut shared; it looks like we are changing the layout with the legal references moved to the end of the policy rather than the left side? Mr. Forsyth replied, yes, for the sake of formatting purposes. On page 1 of 3, you will see a section stricken and moved to another section of the policy. We have a heading now for Students Experiencing Educational Instability because that is a newer term that the State has been using. A major addition is the inclusion of the section on Children of Active Duty Military Families and it is in several different policies that are going to be in front of you this evening. You will also see a new policy that backs all of this up, Policy 254, that lists the entire subject. Mr. Andrews stated the only question he has is why we cannot ask about the child’s or parent’s immigration status. Mr. Forsyth replied we cannot ask about the student’s status and that has been a long-standing practice in Pennsylvania. Whether the child is here legally or not, PDE has determined is irrelevant. We still require the residency requirement status for the parent. Mr. Andrews asked if the parent must be a legal immigrant. Mr. Forsyth stated the parent must be a legal resident or be in the process of obtaining naturalization. If you look at Policy 201, they must have documentation from the

federal government. If they cannot produce anything for us, such as a drivers' license, lease, pay stub, or automobile registration, they then must produce documentation from the federal government on why they cannot, or they can be in the process of filing. We also have those that come here as immigrants, they are homeless and are fleeing another country, and the federal law requires that we take them as well. Mr. Karkut asked Ms. Kulick, for referencing purposes, he noticed last year at the meeting she read everything. Ms. Kulick replied, I read the changes. Mr. Karkut asked other than the addition of the Children of Active Military Families, do you want me to read it word for word? Ms. Kulick suggested he read the revisions, so it is on the record. Mr. Karkut read the section and deletions. Mr. Andrews asked is Dr. Riker responsible for the AR and can we get a copy. Mr. Forsyth said there are Standard Operation Procedures (SOPs) available for review. Mr. Karkut asked if there were any other questions on this policy, if not, we can then move on to the next policy.

- b. Policy 202 Attendance Eligibility—Mr. Karkut stated this policy also looks like we are addressing the military families on page five. The rest is cleaning up of the legal references. Mr. Forsyth agreed, we are deleting the left margin and putting the references at the end. Mr. Karkut asked are we going to widen the margins eventually like most Boards do? Mr. Forsyth replied we are making these format changes because we also want to make these policies searchable in the future on the website. Mr. Karkut agreed that most school boards have the full documentation. Mr. Karkut asked if there were any other questions on this policy, if not, let us move on.
- c. Policy 214 Class Rank—Mr. Karkut shared; I see we are striking all the temporary revisions that we made due to Covid-19. Mr. Forsyth added they will forever appear for the record. Mr. Forsyth explained this policy was prompted by a review at a meeting held with Dr. Vitulli and Ms. Polmounter and had to do with making sure our policies supported the new direction the district is taking with its dual credit program for college courses. As they were reviewing the Program of Studies, it was noted that some of the language was not congruent with policy. This was an attempt to bring the policy up to date with the district's direction. We went through the wording in each of the paragraphs for each scenario to see what gets credits, what does not, and what's part of the GPA. We then collapsed it all into a table to make it easier to reference.

Mr. Karkut said I noticed we are changing he/she to other pronouns. Do we have a policy for that now or are we starting with just this policy. Mr. Forsyth replied, there is no policy for that, it just seemed like a safer route to go because we are not producing it in a binary sense. We see he/she in a variety of documents and where we have the ability in our student records system for example, when someone has selected the gender with which they identify, the system will automatically replace it in the instance it is relevant to them. Since we are addressing a large group here, we went with the pronoun, one, and if that is not a suitable selection, we have Mrs. Catrillo online to teach us all about pronouns. Mrs. Catrillo suggested when we get down to "his/her" senior year, if we are referencing it as a student and "one's", then the "their senior year" would be incorrect because it is a plural. My thought is, if we wanted to keep it more gender neutral, we can just say students, which is becoming common in writing now to pluralize everything as much as possible, and especially the fact that we are talking about both the valedictorian and salutatorian and/or students of North and South High School, I think pluralizing it might even be easier from a grammatical standpoint. Mr. Karkut stated his only concern is there are a lot of policies that reference he/she. We should have some type of procedure for doing that. If we are going to start, we should do them all. Ms. Kulick suggested that as a policy comes up, they should be changed. Mr. Karkut stated he likes Ann's recommendation that instead of one or they, we refer to them as students. We are treading water here and if we do one; we do them all. We have no procedure, so we are putting the cart ahead of the horse. Ms. Kulick suggested it is easier than having to go back and rewrite again. It is easier to change them as you go along. Mr. Forsyth suggested when we get to the point where we can search the whole policy manual or where we have less to do, we can go through and show you every occurrence of "he/she". They are editorial changes. We are not changing the actual function of the policy. Our counselor would advise us to just make the editorial change. You do not have to go through a policy revision and approval to change that. We can bring you all the "he/she's" in their context right through the policy manual and show you that they can be replaced with student or students at some point down the road, then you can give us that direction. That would be easier for us. Let us get there, we are still trying to get them all into a format where we can search them. Just for today, to clarify, do you want to use student or students in place of ones, their, or he/she. Mr. Karkut said I think it should be students.

Mr. Karkut asked Mrs. Catrillo if she wanted to bring it one other item to the committee's attention. Mrs. Catrillo questioned page four and the sentence; Level II elective courses offered at the high school will

receive a weighted course value of 1.25. When we look at Levels II, III, IV, V in foreign language, Level III and up are honors; but I just wanted to clarify that if we only have a course that has two levels, that the second level is earmarked as an honors course. For instance, Drama I and Drama II Honors, we usually write the word honors after the Level II course when that subject only has two levels. Do we need to add that to the policy to make sure that would definitely happen for those courses. Ms. Polmounter shared, we looked at what the procedures were for naming the honors courses. From that meeting it seems the highest levels of the course have the honors title; however, that is something that we need to be sure we have consistent throughout. We have been doing a comparison between the North/South Program of Studies to make sure courses are aligned. The way it is written, Drama I is not honors and Drama II is honors. Advanced Strength I is CP and Advanced Strength II is honors. Mr. Andrews inquired about what if we only have one? Ms. Polmounter replied that is where it gets iffy. I would love to tell you that they are all CP but based on certain classes when they were approved, they were approved as honors. For example, you can take SAT Prep or SAT Prep Honors. I would like to tell you it is consistent throughout, but it is not. There are certain classes that you have the choice of taking CP or honors. We talked about that at meetings, and I think the best thing that can help us is when we take a step back and look at each department as its own entity for example, Art Level I, II, and III and make that across the board. Mr. Andrews asked if you are preparing for the same SAT why would you have SAT prep and SAT honors? Mrs. Catrillo replied, having been Department Chair, one of the reasons that was done, if you notice where it states, Level I courses are given a value of 1.0, which is the applied level, and most students who are taking SAT Prep are going to be CP or above. If you notice at the Level I, which is a lot and depends on many of our electives, some electives are geared more toward upper academic strength. Mr. Andrews asked isn't that discriminating against kids? Mrs. Catrillo said no, because if they were to take that course, they would get higher credit. Studio Broadcasting is done on the honors level because of the responsibility, where we have applied special ed students in there and they get the extra credit, so it is not a distinction in terms of discrimination for the student. It is for the student and the parent to understand the difficulty assigned to that particular subject area. Ms. Kulick added, the EMT course would be an Honors course because it is not an easy course. Mrs. Catrillo added it is because of the difficulty level. Anyone can take, it just lets them know how difficult the subject matter is.

Ms. Polmounter shared when doing her internship under Eric and Dr. Riker while going through Sapphire, one of the things we found was we were looking to go to one common course code. We realized there is a long history tied to Sapphire that stretches across four grade levels that are currently taking classes. In our conversations with Sapphire Learning Management System (LMS), we need to create a brand new course ID that is not used at North or South. As we go through each department, realigning based on the curriculum rewrites, we can then establish one set system that would be controlled by Administrative Services in the Sapphire LMS. This way individuals cannot make changes to courses, creating consistency across the district. A substantial change that we made when we brought in ESACA they had CP courses so if they took Intro to Business here at the building and ESACA students were getting applied weight in the building and CP weighting in ESACA and we brought all the courses up to CP for electives. We are working towards that as part of the big picture. When we get that accomplished, we will be able to resolve a lot of the issues we have with technology and Sapphire. Mr. Forsyth suggested while everyone here understands this now, please look at page 4/paragraph 3, which is the Level III paragraph. You have indicated you need to go back and make sure that everything that needs to be labeled honors is accurately labeled. Once that happens, would it be accurate to state in paragraph 3 that Level III and above elective courses and those designated as honors offered at the high school will receive a weighted course value of 1.375, unless otherwise designated. Would that solve today's policy problem. Ms. Kulick asked can you say the same thing for Level II? Mr. Forsyth replied it says if it is a Level II course, it goes to 1.25. If it is Level II Honors, that is where the language in paragraph three for Level III where we now state and those designated as honors will get the 1.375, takes care of that. Mr. Andrews asked what an AP course is worth. Mrs. Catrillo replied 1.5. Mr. Gullstrand asked in the Program of Studies do we have them listed by level? If that is the case, if it says Level II Honors and Level III Honors, I just do not want it to be confusing in the terminology. Mr. Forsyth said I am not suggesting Level III and honors, I am saying Level III or honors. Mr. Gullstrand said if Program of Studies says Level II Honors are you saying it is Level II or it is Level III. Ms. Kulick said the honors will automatically go to the highest level. Mr. Gullstrand said correct, but we cannot label it as Level II, we must label it as Honors. In our Program of Studies, we must see how we describe each class as a Level I, Level II, or Level III. So, if we are saying Drama II is considered honors, we cannot label it as Level II. Mrs. Catrillo added I have seen a Program of Studies in a while. In the past, if we only had a course that is a Level I or a Level II, they never were labeled as Level II, they were just labeled as the title of that particular course. The only time I remember seeing leveling was Accounting I, II, III, or foreign language

I, II, III, IV, V, that sort of thing. Dr. Vitulli is going to bring a Program of Studies for discussion at the next EPR meeting. Mr. Gullstrand reiterated that he just wants to be sure there is no confusion. Mr. Forsyth shared he was trying to change it with the least language to be accurate because it is telling us in that paragraph, if it is Level III, it is 1.375 or if designated as honors, it is also 1.375.

Mr. Gullstrand asked for an explanation of the dual credit program vs. dual enrollment program. Ms. Polmounter explained, the wording is a little confusing. Students receive both high school and college credit for courses whether it is dual credit or dual enrollment. For instance, Intro to Communications at Northampton, a student would get a credit at both Northampton and the high school. The difference is dual credit also means the course carries an AP weight, counts toward a student's high school GPA and class rank. Dual enrollment does not impact class rank, GPA or carry any weight. We do not want to exclude students because there are certain students who want the AP rank that goes with a college-weighted class, but we also have a wide array of students that just want to take college classes for the experience and credit. This year, we have had presentations explaining dual credit vs. dual enrollment. Students met with their guidance counselor and with the Northampton or ESU representative, they talk about the course, choose which program, and sign a contract that best fits their circumstances. It is really important for our seniors because they need certain credits to stay eligible as an athlete and for certain awards as outlined in the Program of Studies. Mr. Forsyth stated the dual enrollment addendum is in the Program of Studies not the policy. It is a separate document to be clear. If we look at the table again, we tried to take all the language that is confusing and move it up to this table to accurately say if you want to get GPA, class rank and credit your courses need to be here in our dual credit program. One piece I did not hear mentioned is the dual credit program is a menu of courses that students must choose from. Ms. Polmounter added we are moving into that for the new school year. Mr. Forsyth said we looked that courses were not duplicates of what the teachers here are teaching, and students would not be able to take for AP Credit. With no other concerns, Mr. Karkut stated administration will edit the third paragraph on page four prior to publishing for public review.

- d. Policy 217 Graduation Requirements—Mr. Karkut noted the shift in legal references to the end of the policy and the addition of the section on Children of Active Duty Military Families in accordance with the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children. Mr. Forsyth shared that his department has also been developing, in conjunction with all these other folks here, a process for ensuring there is communication in place from the time of enrollment with all key players in the buildings to create those graduation plans for the children, including those that may be experiencing educational instability.
- e. Policy 254 Educational Opportunity For Military Children—Mr. Karkut stated this is a new policy suggested by PSBA. Mr. Forsyth added, we needed to put a policy in place because of the law changes and PSBA already had a model ready. Mr. Karkut asked on page two, it says choose one? Mr. Forsyth stated before I do, starting at the bottom of page three into four. That is a highlighted note that will disappear from the policy, but it is guidance from the PSBA legal team. They are recommending that districts select the second choice, which is the Uniformed services meaning defined as the U.S. armed forces, Commissioned Corps of NOAA as well as the Public Health Service. After analyzing the groups and subgroups, here is the difference, option one does not include the Space Force while option two does and they are based on two different definitions. If you see the small three at the end of the first definition it is based on Pennsylvania's definition. If you look in the back, the reference for #3 is 24 P.S. which is the Purdon statutes and if you look at the other two definitions, there is a #4 referencing the US Code, which is what this bill came out of. PSBA is recommending that we choose the second option. It includes all the same groups; it just adds the Space Force, by definition of the Armed Forces and U.S. Code. We just need to confirm from you which one you want us to go with. Ms. Kulick stated option two is all inclusive and that is your future right there. All agreed to go with the federal definition and to post it with option two chosen and strike the highlighted section.
- f. Policy 810 Transportation—Mr. Karkut shared revisions looks to be nothing but legalize, code updates and we took the opportunity to move the legal references to the end. Nothing seems to have changed in the language of the policy.

Mr. Andrews asked in which policy do we state that the military kids can wear uniforms at graduation? Mr. Karkut said we currently allow it. Mr. Forsyth said there is no prohibition on wearing a military uniform at graduation ceremonies.

Mr. Forsyth shared that the PSBA PNN newsletter is for the committee's reference and reading pleasure.

Public Participation: None

IX. ADVISORY RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION OF THE COMMITTEE: Motion was made by Debbie Kulick to authorize and direct the administration to post the following item(s) with noted revisions for PUBLIC REVIEW during the month of January and subsequent Board action in February: **Policies 200, 202, 214, 217, 254, and 810.** Motion was seconded by George Andrews and carried unanimously 4-0.

X. ADJOURNMENT: 5:10p.m.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE COMMITTEE: Motion to adjourn was made by Debbie Kulick. Motion was seconded by Jason Gullstrand and carried unanimously, 4-0.

Next meeting: February 26, 2024, at 4:30p.m. in the Carl T. Secor Administration Center Board Room

Respectively submitted by,
Debra Wisotsky