

POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE

Hilliard City School District Operations Department

Mike McDonough, Deputy Superintendent Thursday, February 23, 2023, 4:00 PM Central Office

Committee Members

Nadia Long, Board of Education
Kara Crowley, Board of Education
Brian Wilson, Treasurer/CFO
Mike McDonough, Deputy Superintendent
Jill Abraham, Assistant Superintendent
Stacie Raterman, Communications Director
Herb Higginbotham, Director of Elementary Education
Jacob Grantier, Director of Secondary Education

Jamie Lennox, Special Education Director
Hilary Sloat, Director of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
Matt Middleton, Principal Hilliard Darby HS
Katherine Hueter, Principal Hilliard Weaver MS
Matt Trombitas, Principal Hilliard Station Sixth Grade
Kevin Landon, Principal Avery Elementary
Monica Campana, Principal Washington Elementary
Kathy Parker Jones, HEA Representative

SUMMARY

This committee meets quarterly each school year. One of the objectives of this committee is to study each issue thoroughly making sure we have appropriate policies that reflect the mission and vision of the Hilliard City School District.

The Policy Review Committee considers all proposed new policies, revisions of current policies and/or rescinding of a current policy before being presented to the Superintendent for submission to the Board of Education. Two readings at two separate meetings shall normally be required before a new or revised policy may be adopted. Action to adopt will take place at a subsequent third meeting. However, the Board does have the option of voting for adoption at the second meeting.

The following is a summary of the issues discussed at the meeting on February 23rd and the committee's recommendations.

Public Participation

None

Review of Policy Process for New Committee Members (no action required)

Mr. McDonough reviewed policy BF-Board Policy Development and Adoption as well as the Overview of Procedures document that was included with the agenda.

Review of Policies/Regulations Exhibits – as Requested by Board of Education and/or Community

- 1. IIAC Media/Resource Materials Selection and Adoption
- 2. KLB Public Complaints About the Curriculum or Instructional Materials

Mr. McDonough shared that the district has had some books challenged this year and we have some discrepancies in the policies that address the challenge process. We are reviewing these policies to outline a clear process for a book or resource to be challenged. He referred the committee to the Challenged Materials section of the yellow copy of policy IIAC. The original language in number three is

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in conflict with the language in policy KLB. He gave the committee a few minutes to read through the new proposed language. He explained that Mr. Stewart worked with legal counsel to strengthen this appeal process. Mr. McDonough asked if any of the committee members that were a part of the appeal process earlier this year had any thoughts or comments.

Mr. Grantier shared that it follows the process they utilized when we received the challenge earlier this year in terms of bringing the committee together, committee reads the text in full and considers supplemental materials, articles, texts that are either in support of retaining the book, removing the book or restricting it and the recommendations the committee would make to the Superintendent are in line with the process they utilized as well.

Mr. McDonough said the big issue is one policy stated that the Superintendent was going to make the decision and the other stated that the Board was going to make the decision. We have now cleaned that up and talk about what happens once the decision is made if somebody wants to appeal that. He wanted to point out that this process does take time. We tried to put some guardrails in so people understand the time it is going to take. We want to make sure we give it the time it deserves and we want to give the Board the time they need to evaluate whatever decision has been made from the committee if somebody were to appeal that decision. If somebody is trying to petition three or four books, they need to understand that we do it one at a time and it's going to take some time.

Mrs. Sloat said one thing up for consideration to think about is having an odd number of committee members that review the book because of how voting works. If we have an even number on the team, we could have a tie. She suggested we add language to number two indicating an odd number of members on the committee to ensure there is no tie with the ballots.

Mrs. Raterman asked if it already lists five people? Mrs. Sloat said it says it will consist of those positions.

Mr. Grantier said they did not stick to five, they had more, mainly based on where the challenged book was located to make sure they had a variety of perspectives. The wanted to make sure different levels and different buildings were represented. He didn't know if they would have been overly limited if they only had five.

Mr. McDonough said we can phrase something in number two indicating it must be an odd number of members.

Mrs. Long asked if they specifically identify in the complaint if they want it removed totally from the library or removed from different age levels because when she looks at the recommendations out of the committee, she would like the committee to be very clear from the beginning. Are they looking to remove this from all levels or are they looking at this just to be removed at certain levels?

Mr. Grantier shared that's what they did when they met as a committee. They could come to one of three determinations. They could remove it in its entirety, restrict it, or allow it to be retained in its current location. He thought the form they used had those three options. The complainant can elect which of those three. He said we could verify it by pulling up the form.

Mrs. Long said we might want to spell that out. She said "I guess you could ask for a book to be limited

at the elementary level then come back the next term and ask for it to be limited at all levels, right? In the current procedure or not? I'm just trying to think how this could play out."

Mr. Wilson asked if once a book has been reviewed isn't it over with?

Mrs. Raterman said she thought she read that you can't review the book for another five years or something like that.

Mrs. Crowley said even if we do have an odd number, it's possible that three people will want to leave it, three people will want to remove it and one person will just want it out of that grade level. Even if there are seven people you still could get in a tie situation since there are three choices not two. She said but I see what you are saying. How many people did you have at the last one?

Mr. Grantier said they had seven.

Mrs. Crowley asked if they had people at all three levels?

Mr. Grantier said the book that was challenged at the time was only at the secondary level so we had middle school and high school represented. We also had a variety of individuals from across the system.

Mrs. Crowley asked if they had those same three choices, take it out of the district, take it out of the grade level, or leave it as is?

Mr. Grantier answered yes.

Mrs. Crowley said so even in an odd number situation you could still...

Mrs. Long asked if the form is a district form that they fill out? She said it almost feels like the original complaint needs to say I want the committee to look at this option, then the committee follows that option. Because I think when you have three options in the end, they are going to challenge. They really wanted it from all libraries and we come back and say we are going to limit it.

Mrs. Crowley said she thinks that's the committee's right to do that. She said she doesn't have an issue with the choices.

Mrs. Sloat said on the form there are four things. It says do not assign it to my child, withdraw it from all students as well as my child, restrict it to more mature students or send it back for re-evaluation. That is policy KLB-E.

Mr. Grantier said I guess my wonder around that is does the form need to be re-done to be policy IIAC because the process lives here?

Mr. McDonough said KLB is our next policy and is complaints about curriculum or instructional materials so I think it could stay there and then within KLB the changes that we are making there are redirecting people to here and this is the process that will be followed. Are we good with the process that is outlined here?

Mrs. Long asked can you explain what 3d is? The "Evaluation of Materials" framework?

Mr. Grantier explained that it is on page two, it is the six criteria listed. He said that is what the rubric has been built around, those six pieces.

Mrs. Abraham added that we changed the language to framework because rubric is not really laid out ...inaudible.

Mr. Grantier said yes, that is correct. Thank you.

Mrs. Long said I just have a question on how did these three recommendations come about? Is this a guideline from OSBA of what the committee would provide or is that current?

Mr. McDonough answered that it was in consultation with our legal counsel. He said when the book got challenged originally, he knew Julie came in earlier this year to meet with our team.

Mrs. Sloat said that is what is on the form KLB-E. It asks basically those same three things. Remove the book from the selection, so basically withdraw it from all students as well as my child. Restrict the book to a specific age or grade level, so on here it says to restrict it to more mature students. Then it says to remove the book from the school/district collection or to leave it where it is, restrict it or remove it. This form is asking what the person would like to do.

Mrs. Long asked does that form also give the parent the choice to remove it from their child?

Mrs. Sloat answered yes it does.

Mrs. Long said she thinks there would be a lot of help if we could just narrate this up to this form so it is very clear to the committee that this is what has been asked because she is just thinking of the idea that someone says let's restrict it and that goes all the way through the committee and the decision is made. Well, they may not like that and they could come back and say they want it out of all libraries. She said she is just trying to make sure we manage the scenarios.

Mrs. Crowley asked Mrs. Long if she was talking about an appeal or is she talking about a challenge?

Mrs. Long answered that it would be a different challenge if they change what the challenge is.

Mr. McDonough said he thinks if we try to cover every scenario, we will never have a policy that we agree upon. He thinks if we get into that much of the weeds, he thinks we are getting too prescriptive. He said he thinks there is an option, there are actually two options for parents to opt their kids out of those things. He thinks if they want to opt them out of it there is a selection box on there for that.

Mrs. Long said but they have that option now because we have the...inaudible...so that can probably go away because we don't really want them using this procedure to opt their kids out when we have the library situation.

Mr. McDonough said there is also the option that you referenced as well to opt my kid and every other kid out too.

Mrs. Long said right so if there are four options, we probably need to...do not assign to my child, is that different than if we were teaching?

Mr. McDonough asked Mrs. Long if her question was about the form or the policy?

Mrs. Long said she would like the form to match what the request out of the committee is.

Mr. McDonough said we can change the form to reflect these three options.

Mrs. Parker-Jones asked but is that form, for my clarification, isn't that also used for instructional materials?

Mrs. Long said that is what she is wondering.

Mrs. Abraham said that is the challenge. Policy IIAC is about media/library. KLB is complaints about curriculum or instructional materials which are different than what is in the library. That's where the conflict is coming up in the challenges. So, if someone doesn't want it in the library, here are the choices. If they don't want their child to access it as part of the curriculum that is KLB.

Mrs. Raterman asked should there be two forms? One for KLB, or for simplicity should we just have one form and parents can see all their options on one form and then they can make their decision?

Mr. Middleton said if they are just wanting their own child not to have it then that doesn't need to go through the process. That's why it's not on this one because you don't have to review that.

Mr. McDonough said he thinks we could denote that on the form. Say if you don't want your child to do this, it's not going to go through the review process but your child is going to have an alternative assignment.

Mrs. Crowley asked Mrs. Abraham if she gets the form...inaudible.

Mrs. Abraham said we had that form KLB that was used for the most recent challenge for the book from the library.

Mrs. Crowley asked do you get it for the other part of it, like the don't use this for my kid?

Mrs. Abraham said that goes through the teacher.

Mr. McDonough said ninety nine percent of the time they don't use a form for that. The parent sends an email and we give an alternative assignment.

Mrs. Raterman said there is no policy that requires us to use a form.

Mrs. Parker-Jones said we could just strike that one line from the form "do not assign to my child" completely then the form could go for both instances.

Mrs. Hueter said I do like Mike's point though just denoting that it's an option as a reminder to parents

if that is your choice for your child that it is there, maybe just not a checkbox.

Mrs. Long said she is just thinking how this could play out. If it's a book in the library I feel like that's a clear form that we need to identify this is library. If it's instruction, which is KLB so is there another form we need to create to make it very clear that this is a library challenge and this is an instruction challenge.

Mrs. Abraham said we need a form that is clearly a library challenge.

Mrs. Long said so I think that form matches, does it match KL...

Mrs. Abraham said that form more matches IIAC.

Mrs. Raterman said there doesn't need to be a form for KLB. They can just talk to their teacher. The parents can email the teacher or principal.

Mr. McDonough said that is in number one on KLB.

Mrs. Long said we had a challenge with that right? A student was asked not to have a certain book and then it did go through an appeal process, correct?

Mrs. Abraham said that was not on a form.

Mr. Grantier said that wasn't on a form. It was a direct communication with the family and teacher through the building.

Mrs. Long asked so that would have fallen under KLB?

Mr. Grantier answered yes and there was no form.

Mrs. Long asked do we think the process would be better if there was a form?

Mrs. Raterman said this cleans it up in the policy update.

Mrs. Sloat said here is what KLB says, "if a parent requests that his/her own child not read a given book, the teacher and/or school administrator should resolve the issue, perhaps by arranging for use of alternative material meeting essentially the same instructional purpose." It doesn't say how it is reported. It just says usually it's the parent, teacher, and principal working together.

Mr. Grantier said honestly if there is a form process for that it is going to slow it down. These kinds of things, you want the teacher to be as responsive as possible, especially if something has been assigned and a parent has a concern. We want to encourage the transparency in the communication with teachers directly. If parents have to go through a form in order to do that it is just going to become cumbersome and then parents won't feel connected to the teachers.

Mr. McDonough said let me try to summarize this. To Jake's point earlier, I think we can make KLB-E IIAC-E. We can remove do not assign to my child because we put a system in place with the Google form that allows parents to already do that. Then, per number one in KLB, the parent just needs to reach out to the teacher or principal if they want their child to be given an alternative assignment.

Mrs. Long said so the current form will be updated to reflect what is on IIAC.

Mr. McDonough said we will change it to IIAC-E and we will remove do not assign to my child.

Mrs. Long said so then the committee will clearly know what they are asking to do.

Mrs. Abraham said she wants to point out just because we are going through a curriculum review cycle this will be maybe a question that comes up again. If you look on KLB under 2Bi, that specifically talks about the purchased curriculum. She feels like in IIAC we have covered the library, we have covered with that form, the purchased curriculum for classrooms. If somebody challenges a book, let's just say in ELA curriculum resources, that is covered under that form. Then KLB covers either one — I don't want my child to read it. It's all covered.

Mr. McDonough said if you go to KLB, under B, we are adding two statements. We are adding letter i. If you have a question about something that the district has purchased, whether it's in the media center or in the curriculum course of study, we are going to follow policy IIAC. If it's in relation to something the teacher has created or presented to the students, then that family should work with the teacher and the administrator in that building.

Mrs. Long asked so is this like a book that would be read in class?

Mr. McDonough said it could be a self-selected book, it could be something they created as part of a lesson plan. We don't need every question going through this formal process. It could just be a simple meeting with the teacher. We always want to follow our normal complaint procedure. We want to start with the closest point to the issue.

Mrs. Long said I am afraid i is telling us to go straight to...

Mr. McDonough said that is if it is district purchased.

Mrs. Sloat said she would suggest adding a statement in there that says following policy KL, parents are encouraged to contact their student's teacher first to share their concern. Because she knows what Mrs. Long is saying, it looks like you are supposed to go straight to the Superintendent to complain. We already have a policy in place for that with parent complaints. It says to go to the teacher first, then the principal, then the Superintendent/designee and then the Board of Education. If we just put a sentence in there that would tell parents to go to the teacher first.

Mrs. Long said like if the class is reading a book and they don't want their student to read that book we want them to go to the teacher. She said how she reads this is they would be going through to the committee and she doesn't think we want that so we probably do need to add.

Mrs. Raterman said they do have to come to the committee if its district purchased, right?

Mrs. Long said not if it is for the classroom.

Mr. McDonough said look at ii. Look at the next statement.

Mrs. Raterman said if it is district curriculum they have to go through the process, right – or is she wrong on that?

Mr. McDonough said correct, you are right.

Mrs. Abraham said what she is thinking about here when she looks at B is when it is about the evaluation of material in question versus they just don't want their child to read it. There is a process for they want you to re-think this particular book. Does this fit in our curriculum? Then there are those who just don't want their child to read it. They don't need a whole process and have everyone weigh in. They just don't want their kid to read it.

Mrs. Long asked if that is when we want the parent to go to the teacher?

Mrs. Abraham said right. If they question it being a curriculum resource, then it goes to IIAC.

Mrs. Raterman said which is...inaudible... of what number one says, if a parent requests...

Mrs. Long said for district purchased, the other one is teacher recommended right?

Mrs. Raterman asked if she meant number one up above it?

Mrs. Long said the i.

The group said no – number one.

Mrs. Parker-Jones said number one says "if a parent requests that his/her own child not read a given book, the teacher and/or school administrator should resolve the issue, perhaps by arranging for use of alternative material meeting essentially the same instructional purpose."

Mrs. Sloat said yes, that is policy KL.

Mrs. Long asked so that is what you are adding?

Mrs. Sloat said even if we just add...inaudible...it is already on the cross-references.

Mr. Grantier said the way he reads number two below is less about texts and more so about an activity. Something the teacher has planned for the class that maybe a parent doesn't want their child to participate in for one reason or another. He thinks about some of the topics in our curricula right now. We receive requests from parents that in sixth grade social studies their child not participate in the world religions unit. That is not a purchased thing. It's not a purchased resource. It wouldn't go through number one because it is state standards. We would encourage them to reach out to the teacher and say under that number two...inaudible.

Mrs. Sloat asked Mrs. Long if she was afraid that they were going to go straight to the Superintendent? Is that what she is thinking?

Mrs. Long said she just wants to make a clear roadmap for our committee and this is our chance to do it.

Mrs. Crowley asked Mrs. Long what she felt was unclear. Is it the top part of KLB? Is it with the second sentence that she feels is unclear?

Mrs. Long said she feels like we are kind of saying, it is all kind of washing together. If it is a library thing or if it is a...inaudible...thing for my child to read. She just wants to make sure it's very clear if it is something their child is being asked to read in class go to the teacher. She thinks that is what the policy is getting us to. She said she can see quickly how you could jump into writing this how it is written right now. She said she is trying to understand the difference between one and two. Because one is they don't want them to read something that has been recommended in the classroom through the curriculum. Two is more of a withdraw of all books.

Mr. McDonough said one is a personal preference and two is more global.

Mrs. Long asked if A is actually referring to IIAC and that form that Hilary brought up, correct?

Mr. McDonough said a written statement could simply be an email.

Mr. Grantier said the point of this part back here is to lineate that the formal receipt process does not apply. This formal process does not apply to things that should go to the teacher first. Almost like directing them back to number one at the top.

Mrs. Long asked then do we need that statement because it's truly number one, right?

Mrs. Abraham asked Mrs. Long if she was thinking under number one there needs to be an a? Like under number one, a parent doesn't want a child to read a book, the teacher and school administrator should resolve it. That's like sending an email that's reaching out to the teacher. That's the answer to number one.

Mrs. Long said and she thinks if it doesn't work then it goes to the principal and if it follows the escalation it could go to the Superintendent.

Mrs. Sloat said for their child.

Mr. Middleton said there's not many times that's going to go through that. He said he means if they don't want their child to do it...

Mrs. Long said then she doesn't think she wants them coming to the Board saying they don't want their kid in the classroom reading this...she wants it to be clear.

Mrs. Crowley said if it comes to the Board then the Board should say they should have this conversation with their child's teacher. Because the teacher is always the place to start. She one hundred percent agrees with that. The teacher wants to be a part of that conversation and wants to resolve that issue. They will work to resolve that.

Mrs. Long said yes, so ii fits under number one is what she is gathering. If they are not happy with what happened with the teacher then they keep it at the Superintendent or the principal.

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Mr. Grantier asked Mr. McDonough if the two pieces under letter B for KLB were based on recommendations from legal counsel?

Mr. McDonough said Mr. Stewart submitted this to Julie and she blessed it.

Mrs. Raterman said she thinks it is all here. We just need to count on people to read it and if they have questions or if they do submit the wrong paperwork, it's up to us or whoever they submit it to say "hey, we think it should fall under here. Why don't you read this policy or let us help you walk through it because policy is foreign to a lot of people or people don't even know where to look. We get those questions all the time, like how do they do what. That's where we can guide them as a staff or you guys as Board members can point them to here is the policy you should be...

Mr. Grantier said so perhaps this is in case we receive that form in error. Like what they are requesting is not covered under that part of the policy. We would just redirect them back to the teacher.

Mrs. Crowley said it says the teacher and principal but then later it says a formal complaint so if they are formally complaining on the form then it's going to go to the i and ii and the district is either going to funnel it through IIAC or they are going to funnel it back to the teacher. She said it's not us as a Board that would do that. It would be the Superintendent that would say, no this goes back here or this goes here. She asked Mrs. Long if she was just worried that a bunch of people are going to come to the Board meetings and have us review stuff?

Mrs. Long said so number one is about the student and the instructional material for the classroom. Number two is about a group ask to have a book or material withdrawn from school period. Right? We want that to go to IIAC.

Mr. McDonough said potentially but not necessarily. Not everything a teacher teaches in their class is district provided.

Mrs. Crowley said so if it is district provided it goes through IIAC. If it is not district provided then it is going to go back to the teacher and principal.

Mr. McDonough said if it is any district provided resource, but if you walk into a anybody's classroom, they are going to be doing things that they created themselves in preparation for whatever unit they are teaching. That's where the ii at the very bottom is addressing. In either scenario, regardless of whether it is district provided or not, ninety nine percent of the time the parent is going to call and complain and then it is our job to say "I appreciate your complaint." You need to, if it is district provided, say "here is a form I need you to fill out". If not, "let me invite you in to have a meeting with myself and the teacher so we can understand what you are complaining about and get a better understanding of what we need to do to adapt for your child."

Mr. Trombitas said we do that. We have all made those phone calls. We need you to call this parent. They reached out to Central Office about XYZ. We follow up and get them in touch with the teacher and have the teacher take over the communication unless we need to get involved.

Mrs. Crowley said so it only comes to the Board if it is vetted through IIAC already through the form.

Mrs. Long said how she reads number two is it's saying we are withdrawing it from all school stuff so she thinks it is just kind of gray how it goes to the classroom specific.

Mr. McDonough said he agree with Mrs. Long. A parent has a complaint that they just don't want their student to do it. That's part of number one. But a parent can have a complaint about whether it's a district resource or a teacher resource that they still don't feel any student should participate in. That's all under number two. However, part of number two would address what the teacher has created and that's the ii or what the district has provided and that's the i. So, if a teacher has created something they better have that conversation with that teacher.

Mrs. Long said that would be something like a quiz. It wouldn't have to necessarily be a book.

Mr. McDonough said it could be any activity they are doing. It can be a lesson they have done; it can be any activity they have had kids complete.

Mrs. Long asked so they go straight to Dave, the Superintendent?

Mr. McDonough said no.

Mr. Grantier said in some cases.

Mrs. Sloat said that's KL. It lists out that you go to the employee, you go to the principal, then Superintendent.

Mrs. Long said alright Mike, so can you summarize what the recommendation from the committee is going to be?

Mr. McDonough answered sure.

Mrs. Parker-Jones said she has a question on under C it says we are taking out the language "the Board assumes final responsibility for all books and instructional materials that it makes available to students and it holds its certificated staff accountable for their proper selection." It looks like that language is still in the recommended language form OSBA so she is kind of curious why we are removing it.

Mr. McDonough said the is under the direction of Julie Martin, our district legal counsel, and he thinks that is so it marrys better with IIAC at the end. And IIAC, technically, the Superintendent makes that decision and then the people would appeal that decision to the Board of Education. We are trying to make it so if it is an appeal process, ultimately the Superintendent is going to make the decision to begin with and then the appeal of the appeal would go to the Board.

Mrs. Crowley said the issue all along was that one said the Board and one said the Superintendent. So, it's just removing that language saying the Board would get the final say because it will go to the Superintendent first, then they appeal it to the Board.

Mrs. Abraham asked if the exhibit from KLB is moving over to IIAC?

Mr. McDonough said he wants to confirm with OSBA just to get their take on it as well because there is a

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note at the bottom of OSBA's version that specifically references the form. He just wants to make sure we are in alignment and if we have to have two forms then we will have two forms. He just wants to make sure we are in alignment legally with what we have to do.

Mrs. Long asked Mr. McDonough if he wanted to summarize the next steps for the committee. She said it sounds like it's coming back next time with the ideas of making sure the form is aligned.

Mr. McDonough asked Mrs. Long what she meant coming back next time?

Mrs. Long said to the policy committee so then we can take it to the Board.

Mr. McDonough said he thought we were going to take it to the Board. He said this would go on the March 13th Board meeting. We will get the forms cleaned up and we will make sure all of that information goes to the Board on the March 13th meeting.

Mrs. Long asked if the committee was okay with that or did they want to see it again?

The committee members said they were fine with it.

Mrs. Long said it could end up that there will be two forms or the one form will be cleaned up so it is just for media center materials while KLB will stay with instructional materials.

Summary of Policies Reviewed and Status

POLICY	STATUS
IIAC – Media/Resource Materials Selection and Adoption	Revisions for first reading March 13, 2023
KLB – Public Complaints About the Curriculum or Instructional Materials	Revisions for first reading March 13, 2023
KLB-E – Citizen's Request for Reconsideration of Library/Curriculum Materials	Rescind/Replace with IIAC-E
IIAC-E - Citizen's Request for Reconsideration of	New/Replaces KLB-E
Media/Curriculum Materials	