



POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE

Mike McDonough, Deputy Superintendent
Thursday, May 18, 2023, 4:00 PM Central Office

Hilliard City School District
Operations Department

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 May 18th and the committee’s recommendations.

Public Participation

1. Kelley Arnold – Policies IIAC and KLB

Some of you may recall my recent comments at the April Board meeting regarding book ban challenges. Just to update, I have now read 28 of the initial 35 books challenged, representing over 53 hours of reading time. As discussions evolve around our challenge policies IIAC and KLB, it is vital that the impacts on the time, resources, and energy of our staff are sincerely considered while developing policy. Board members are elected in service to our diverse community and must formulate policy that allows our education professionals to do the job they are hired to do.

And key to that effort is ensuring as policy development is occurring is it mindful of existing policies. Policy AC enshrines our nondiscrimination statement adhering to the protection of students’ rights with respect to race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation and gender identity, among other human rights afforded to them. In order to preserve those rights, and reduce the extraordinary burden these challenges represent, it is essential the process must be protected from abuse. The first tier in the process should include evaluation of the submitted form to ascertain if the challenge is valid within the context of our nondiscrimination policy. Let’s look at the form submitted for *The Flower Girl Wore Celery*, a charming story of a little girl’s confusion over her literal interpretation of events leading up to her cousin’s wedding. The objection registered is “this book follows the happenings of a wedding with 2

POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE - SUMMARY

Thursday, May 18, 2023

brides.” Our policies protect against this very type of sexual orientation discrimination and thus the challenge has no basis for consideration.

Within this same context, it is important to note a lawsuit filed just yesterday by PEN America and others against Escambia County in Florida regarding book bans and book restrictions. I recommend a careful reading of the filing in its entirety. The suit notes the violation of the First Amendment rights of the students, authors, and publishers by removing books “based on ideological objections to their contents or disagreement with their messages or themes.” The suit also challenges the book bans within the context of the Fourteenth Amendment “because the books being singled out for possible removal are disproportionately by non-white and/or LGBTQ authors.” These same books are being targeted here in Hilliard for those very same reasons. I dare say we do not need to risk wasting more time, money, and resources over yet another lawsuit as a result of these extremists.

It is critical we do not allow our educators to be overwhelmed by those wishing to bully and abuse the system with discriminatory rhetoric. This one group has already submitted 35 books and have now added 14 more to the pile. Where does it end? And most importantly, how does this serve the education of all students?

Complaint filed by PEN America: <https://pen.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/1-Complaint.pdf>

Review of Policies/Regulations/Exhibits – OSBA May 2023 PDQ

1. JED – Student Absences and Excuses

Mr. McDonough explained that our policy is very different from OSBA’s policy. We have a section on ours that OSBA does not speak to a whole lot and that is around family trips. That is where you will see the first of the proposed changes. The bulk of the changes you see within the yellow copy are just removing and cleaning up all the references to COVID-19 and everything that goes along with that. Remote learning and those types of things have been stricken and I don’t see any issue with those. For our administrators in the room, the big question centers around that section on family trips and changing that from 10 days to 5 days. That will be a big change in practice for us as a district. Certainly, the administrators in the room deal with it much more than we here at central office do. I just want to open up for conversation that piece changing it from 10 school days to 5 school days.

Mr. Wilson said so OSBA doesn’t talk about family trips at all? Mr. McDonough replied that is something that has been ours for as long as I have been in the district, longer than I have been in the district.

Mrs. Campana said I am so ecstatic! From the building perspective, every single one of my absence intervention plans revolved around exceeding just the 10 days alone. It is the number one issue I deal with from my building around attendance, that and medical, but this is a big one. I did the math; 6.42 hours is our school day. The state says 65 hours, so 10 school days is excessive and we are basically saying, here’s a gift, take 10 days. So, for me, it is really hard to say school is important when we say you can miss 10 days for a vacation. This makes me happy!

Mr. McDonough said there is a form that is associated with this policy that, should we move forward with changing this from 10 to 5, we would also update that form. Then we would go back, once the policies have been approved, and update the handbooks that were just recently approved.

Mrs. Long asked if we have data on how many families are taking the 10 days a year. Mr. McDonough

POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE - SUMMARY

Thursday, May 18, 2023

said he did not have that on hand but was sure he could get if for her. Mrs. Long then said I would like to see it broken down by elementary, middle and high school so we can understand a little bit of the impact on the families. I totally understand the need to have them in school, but then is there any kind of exemption? It looks like there is a medical excuse.

Mrs. Campana said one of the issues you run into is they take the 10 days, but then they might be sick 10 more days. I have 463 students and as of May 1st, I had 197 miss 10 or more days of school. They may have taken a vacation that was 5, but then, it is a compounding issue. Especially with elementary level, young ones get exposed to germs so they are off. So, they have taken their 10 days, but lo and behold, they also had household illness twice. It is impacting big time when they are missing 20 days of school in a year.

Mrs. Long asked Mrs. Campana for those numbers again. Mrs. Campana said 197 as of May 1st have missed 10 or more days of school for either valid excuses or not. When I look at them, there is a combination of they took 4 days for a vacation, then they were sick and so it is giving students an opportunity to (inaudible). When I look at K-2 in our foundational parts of reading and writing and just doing school, K, 1, 2 is where I have a lot of students that miss for illness. It just compounds it. We really want to promote them to be at school as much as possible.

Mrs. Long then said to Mrs. Campana, you have how many students? Mrs. Campana answered at one point it was 463 kids, so that is just under half of my building. That is just for my building. I don't know what other buildings look like.

Mr. McDonough said this is coming from one of the things, as we looked at district data throughout the school year, one of the biggest challenges since we have returned from COVID has been the amount of student absences that we have had. We have had a team of folks, Jake being a part of that, Molly Walker, Herb, and many of our principals, looking at ways in which we could positively impact attendance. We felt like this is one step. It is certainly not going to solve things, but it would certainly help us in having some of those conversations with families.

Mr. Grantier said he just pulled up Performance Matters to look at early warning indicators. We currently have 16,326 students enrolled in the district. If we look at only those students who have 10 or more absences, that could be a combination of excused and unexcused, that is 8,948 students. We have kids who have missed the 10. Beyond that, we also track kids who have missed 12 or more unexcused days. That is when we start to think about truancy. Truancy and excessive absences are two different things. We want to be as proactive as possible as a district when we think about our approaches to attendance, to try to get to the root cause and help prevent kids from missing days rather than catching them once they have already missed 10 or more and are triggering a truancy threshold as determined by the state. To Monica's point, this is an effort for us to say we are prioritizing you to be in school because we recognize the importance of that and we are not going to talk out of both sides of our mouth and provide you the opportunity to be excessively absent when we say it is important that you are sitting with us in person receiving instruction intervention.

Mrs. Crowley said I agree with Monica. Five days for a family trip sounds like plenty. I think 10 days is a lot. I can't imagine, especially right now with all the assessments I know teachers are trying to get done. Having students gone for 10 full days is a lot. I think the 5 is great. I like the cleanup of the COVID-19 language and the addition of the mental health part at the bottom. The only part I am questioning is the

POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE - SUMMARY

Thursday, May 18, 2023

part about as determined by the building principal now as the superintendent. Were you guys having a hard time approving all of those?

Mrs. Campana said I am approving as superintendent designee.

Mr. Landon said when I get one my attendance secretary usually comes with an attendance sheet so we know when we are making that decision.

Mrs. Crowley said I think it looks good.

Mrs. Parker-Jones said in the case of, let's say a family is traveling overseas, because that will happen, we have families who go to India for a wedding and things like that. They are still within this policy to say that they can be granted more than the five days, if need be, correct?

Mrs. Raterman said the last one says as determined by the superintendent.

Mrs. Campana said they are still going to be excused for five days but the 6th day and over is automatically unexcused. That is where our attendance plans have come up because they will be gone for 20 school days. It kicks in as truant, so they are unexcused hours. That is in here. I put that out to families who put in for 15 days. I tell them to just realize I can approve the first 10 but after that these additional 5, or additional 7 or 10 are going to be unexcused.

Mrs. Long asked how many is it for truancy? Mr. McDonough answered that there is a whole host, 38 or more hours in a month is considered excessive absences. Mr. McDonough told Mrs. Long it would probably be easier for her to look at policy JEDA than for him to go through it.

Mrs. Raterman said to Kathy's point, it does say in number 11 for nonmedically excused absences as determined by the superintendent so if there is a circumstance, the superintendent could theoretically, in policy extend it, or am I misreading that? Mr. McDonough answered I think the superintendent could make an exception for any of these in 1 through, it would be 7 now.

Mrs. Long said if a family was going on a trip that was very long and it was educational, they could probably submit that to the superintendent and have that considered, correct? Mr. McDonough said I would advocate that they go through credit flexibility in that situation.

Mrs. Sloat asked what if they are in kindergarten? Mrs. Campana said you can't replace the instruction that is happening in the classroom.

Mr. McDonough said you pick the number, 1 or 25 and it is never going to be right. You get two weeks in December, a week in March. Mrs. Campana added that you actually get an extra day now.

Mrs. Sloat asked about our policy, I thought at some point students become unenrolled. Mr. McDonough answered that was years ago. It used to be after 10 days, if you were going to be gone for more than 10 days, we withdrew you. House Bill 410 tightened all that up.

Mrs. Long asked if we know what neighboring districts are doing? Mrs. Campana answered that I have done a bunch of research on that as well. By far 10 is, most districts are 3 to 5 days and I did the whole

POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE - SUMMARY

Thursday, May 18, 2023

outer belt, including Jonathan Alder, 10 was a lot. Mrs. Crowley agreed, 10 is a lot. Mrs. Campana said I am vested in this because I was getting frustrated with the amount of days kids were missing.

Mrs. Long asked if there was any other discussion? She asked if the committee was okay with this one moving forward to the board? I would ask that when we bring it to the board, probably at reading two, that someone from administration could support us with some of the data because others that aren't sitting with Kara and I right now will have questions.

Mr. McDonough said he wanted to make two clarifications. One, I agree with Kara that we could probably keep building principal and not superintendent because Dave is not going to know the individual circumstances. Certainly, if the building principal needs some consultation, they can work with Jake, Herb, Jill, him or whoever.

Mrs. Parker-Jones said I am going to disagree with that because it says that if they are going to take more than 5 days for extraordinary circumstances as determined by the superintendent. Is that something above and beyond the 5 days?

Mr. McDonough said I think we cover that with number 11 which would become number 8. Mrs. Parker-Jones then said so you are putting it back on the building principals to determine if it's an extraordinary circumstance?

Mr. McDonough said I think they are the ones that deal with it on a day-to-day basis. That is my personal opinion. The other piece I wanted to clarify was we specifically wanted to put in there on number 1 under medically excused, mental health. I think there is a misconception out there that mental health absences are automatically official medically excused absences and people have been pushing back on us when we have asked for documentation. That is why we put that in there and we would update the handbooks with that as well.

Mrs. Sloat asked if the superintendent was in there because there might be a student in Washington, there might be a student at Weaver and there might be a student at Davidson. Monica may not approve; the middle school may approve and the high school may not. So, then one family has three different determinations. I don't know if that is why that was on there.

Mr. McDonough said personally, I think it should be the building principal.

Mrs. Raterman said there is a reason they are saying no to one of the three kids in the family and the superintendent hopefully would stick with it and the principal's reasoning. The principal would deny it only if there are truancy issues, sickness or whatever.

Mrs. Long asked if as a committee, do we want to move it forward with building principal or superintendent? Do we want to ask the superintendent his thoughts and then move it forward from there? How do you guys want to do it?

Mrs. Abraham asked if the form has them list all siblings? Mrs. Sloat answered only if they are in the building. Mr. Landon said they have the ability to look up if there are siblings and where they are at. Mrs. Sloat said it might be nice to have the parent put it right there on the form for you.

Mrs. Abraham said we know sometimes we have inconsistencies on how different buildings, whether it's

POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE - SUMMARY

Thursday, May 18, 2023

coding an absence or, then it becomes problematic, especially when it is siblings in the same family. I think we need to have a system of making sure we are checking and we know that there are siblings.

Mr. McDonough asked if there were any other comments on JED? Mrs. Long asked if JEDA should be added as a supporting one while we are modifying or how do we decide what is supporting? Mr. McDonough said that comes from OSBA but I am fine with adding it.

2. JHCCB – Tuberculosis Control Policy

Mr. McDonough explained that OSBA does not have a sample for this policy. Currently, our tuberculosis control policy requires a test of students if they are out of the country for more than 90 days. Even our trip form has a lower number than that and all recommendations from the local health organizations have been outside of the country for more than a month, so 30 days. We are just wanting to update that. Mike Abraham has just formed a partnership to make that testing free for families and has a location for them to do that. I think it just protects us and keeps us in line with local health recommendations. If there is no objection, we would change that 90 to 30. We will work with our Welcome Center and make sure they have the resources in place to direct families on where to get tested.

Mrs. Long asked if there are multiple tests that you can get done? Mr. McDonough answered that the partnership Mike Abraham has secured is actually a blood test. It is a one and done. The other challenge we have seen is the skin tests have produced a number of false positives so we have been keeping kids out of school when technically they don't necessarily have TB. Not only is the testing going to be free for families, but it is going to be more accurate as well.

Mrs. Long asked if the family could still pick their test the way it is written? Mrs. Sloat answered yes, they could but I think that because whoever gets the tuberculosis vaccine are sometimes creating a false positive so that is why the blood test is much better but there was a cost associated with it. Fortunately, Mike Abraham really worked on that because that was another thing that was keeping kids out. They couldn't afford tests.

Mrs. Long said this doesn't say that we are going to require the blood test, right? Mr. Grantier answered no, it doesn't mandate the type of test.

Review Board of Education Discussion at March 27, 2023 BOE Meeting on the Following Policies:

1. IIAC – Media/Resource Materials Selection and Adoption
2. IIAC-E – Citizen's Request for Reconsideration of Media/Curriculum Materials (New)
3. KLB – Public Complaints About the Curriculum or Instructional Materials
4. KLB-E – Citizen's Request for Reconsideration of Library/Curriculum Materials (Rescind)

Mrs. Long explained that on March 27th, all of our work on IIAC, IIAC-E, KLB and KLB-E got a lot of feedback from the board. I want to, as a committee, look at the feedback, make sure we get any more feedback before we move any further looking at these items. The meeting notes have been included. When we presented these policies, there was a concern around the time with the number of books that have been brought. I think the one theme I heard back from the board was time. The other was about who, how many should be on the committee. We discussed a little bit in committee about how you do

POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE - SUMMARY

Thursday, May 18, 2023

the voting kind of situation. I want to see if there was any additional feedback that should be taken prior to working on the policies any further.

Mrs. Crowley said there was also the third theme of it which is more towards the bottom, about community members. Mrs. Long said, oh yes, that was the other one. That's right. So, it is community members, voting and the time of the process.

Mrs. Abraham said the other thing I would throw out just as we are talking about how much time. First of all, you can take the number of books we have sitting out there right now that have been challenged. For a committee to review them, means they will have to have a copy of the book. We don't have that many copies in all of our libraries, so I don't know where that investment comes to pay for the books that are challenged. If you have community members on, they may be paying for books that they say take off the shelf. I don't know where that fits in the review process. The other thing I think about, I know there was conversation about running multiple committees, and if we think about the different people we are pulling, obviously we can take the academic team and have them leading different, but when we are pulling on teachers to do that, what is the compensation for their time? This is something that comes outside of their school day and how do they manage that? And again, with the number of books that are in front of us...

Mr. Grantier said and with that time piece as well, our previous process that we went through in the fall, we had 5 teachers, myself and a member of the Board of Education. As we think ahead, is this a standing committee? Is it the same people every single time? Based on the challenges that come forth, does the committee need to have some flexibility to ensure that the right representation is on there and aside from, how do we compensate teachers or other participants for the reading of the book and the coming together as a committee to make that determination? If this is during the contractual day, we know that there is a negative impact on the student experience when the teacher is absent for one reason or another. If we are pulling teachers multiple times, whether they are on a standing committee or just a selected representative to participate in the process, there could be unintended consequences on the students that they leave behind in the classroom to participate in this district level work. Just something we might want to consider.

Mrs. Campana said I am curious, the books that have come forward, are they secondary in nature, elementary or a combination? Mrs. Crowley said they were a combination. The one Kelley presented was elementary but there are ones at all levels. And how many do we have? 49?

Mrs. Long asked if there was anything else around the time process?

Mrs. Raterman said if we want to have a board member on, you guys have other jobs and kids and families and stuff. Can you guys commit to that kind of extra time as well? Just a thought. Mrs. Long said I see the board members as representing the community so I think we might be able to cover that. Mrs. Raterman said I would challenge you on that. I think that is hard. I think people look to you as a board, a board member, not a mom or a community member. That might just be my perception. That is why it is always so hard, even when you guys attend your child's holiday play or whatever, when you walk in, to staff and to the community members, you are a board member first. Fortunately, or unfortunately, I think that is the way people perceive you. Mrs. Crowley said I see your point.

Mr. McDonough said the other thing around time that hasn't been mentioned is I think there needs to be timelines as well. We need to be realistic with folks that challenge a book. We can't have a book

POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE - SUMMARY

Thursday, May 18, 2023

challenged in September and have an answer by October. Whatever we decide within the policy or the review process, we need to probably put some kind of, like when we had it in here at one point, I think it was 90 days after and maybe that is too long. I don't know what the appropriate number is but I certainly think you need to give it the due diligence and that is more than one meeting to the next.

Mr. Grantier said that might be challenging because if you are talking about a picture book as opposed to a novel and guidelines from the American Library Association. Mrs. Sloat added and any sort of literature around the book. Mr. Grantier said you are meant to read the entire text. You don't take sections of it out because you can't evaluate the merits of the text without reading it in its entirety. The book that we have gone through to this point wasn't a taxing read but it took a couple hours to sit down and be able to read that text. A picture book is going to take significantly less but you also have the additional time, like Mike and Hilary mentioned, of doing the additional research around that text that really is meant to inform you so you can come to that judgment with as much information as possible to make a determination.

Mrs. Raterman asked if we needed an element of how often a book can be challenged? Let's say Mike challenges a book, it's found to be fine to be in the classroom. I disagree with that so I am going to challenge it next week. Mr. McDonough said my personal opinion is that once it is challenged and the decision has been made and it has been appealed one way or the other and it has been upheld or overturned by the board then I think that is final. We wouldn't take back a vote on, unless we made a new change to what we are voting on. Mrs. Crowley asked if that is written anywhere and agreed with that. Mr. McDonough said I think that is something we should put in, once the decision has been made, appealed and decided on by the board, or however that process is going to work, the decision is final.

Mrs. Crowley said I think Kelley brings up an interesting fact about the validity of forms as well. It is difficult, because I understand somebody submits a form, then it takes consideration but a lot of the forms that have been submitted have been filled out incorrectly. They do violate some of our other board policies. A significant amount of them are just copied and pasted. It is pretty clear that the people submitting them haven't read those texts, so I understand how we need to have a conversation about the time and the work and the people and the resources but if there is a way to figure out how to move through that process. The one that we did, that person had read the book. It was very clear that they had put the time and effort in, filled out the form correctly, did all the things right and it should have gone through the process. It is difficult when you feel like maybe the forms violate some of our other policies and things like that.

Mrs. Sloat said one of the other things, talking about committee members, in our policy it says it has to consist of a media specialist who is somebody that is trained in media, like literacy. We have very few licensed media specialists. We would be pulling on the same one of two people. We only have two in the district that meet that licensure. We are pulling on those two people for every book that is written because she believes that still remains in this policy that was pulled. There's 49 right now? That is 25 books per person. If we were to run multiple committees, we are only able to run two committees because of how the policy is written, with a media specialist on there. That is all we could do and now we are asking two people to read 25 books.

Mr. Grantier said and to that point as well, yes, we are talking about books, texts, novels, and that is the world of English Language Arts teachers, but it does disproportionately impact that department over other departments because if I teach science, I am less likely to get pulled to be a part of this process

POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE - SUMMARY

Thursday, May 18, 2023

because that's not my world. I don't teach novels. So again, I don't know if there is a measure of inequity that negatively impacts one group of staff members over others.

Mrs. Long asked if there is anything else around time process? That is a lot of stuff. I am glad I am getting your opinion. What about voting? Did you guys see how it was presented? Mr. Perry recommended two different votes, one would be to change the status from where it is to yes or no and then, if you answer yes, I don't know if I understand...

Mrs. Crowley said I think he was worried because there are five people in it and there are three choices. Keep it where it is, remove it completely, or just remove it from a certain area. The three types of votes make it so it could still be a split vote, like a 2, 2, and 1. I think what he was saying was on the form, you check what you want. Removed completely, that's what you checked, then they just vote yes and no kind of situation. Instead of the committee having all three choices, you say this is the book, this is what you want to happen to it and the committee just votes yes or no. I do not want to put words in his mouth but I believe that is what he was saying.

Mrs. Abraham said keep the book or remove the book. If the vote leans toward keep the book, then the question is, keep it at the level that it is or keep it in the district but move it.

Mrs. Raterman said it can only be two votes. The first vote is do we keep the book where it is? If it is all no votes, then you move on to do we remove it completely or do we move it to a different grade level? Like a two-tiered voting. If everybody says keep it where it is, there is no need to worry about those second two options.

Mrs. Long said I think it would be if you remove it completely then it doesn't go to the next level. If you keep it, then you decide is it keep it at the level or...I think that is how he described it.

Mrs. Sloat said because Jake has lived through this process, I am just asking him how does that work in practicality because nobody was check marking anything. I think it was people putting slips of paper in an envelope then you would count it. If there was that (inaudible) then you would do it again but would restrict it.

Mr. Grantier said however it shakes out, we will make it work, in practice, either of those scenarios.

Mrs. Long asked if we are leaving it at five people? Mr. Grantier said I think as long as we have representation of people who can speak intelligently about whether or not a book fits our district's mission, that is the most important part. The minutia around voting...Mrs. Long said but it needs to be an odd number so if we were to add community, we would probably be adding two to keep it odd.

Mrs. Parker-Jones asked isn't the community involvement happening through the form? When they submit the form, that is their community involvement. They have already voiced a concern against it.

Mrs. Long said part of the discussion was that they got to talk to the committee.

Mrs. Crowley said the discussion was whether we had them as voting members of the committee. I don't have an issue with them coming to present and actually I think that might be a great idea that they come and present, because then they will have to have read the text and be able to answer questions and discuss it. I don't necessarily think they should be a voting member. In the discussion at the board

POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE - SUMMARY

Thursday, May 18, 2023

meeting, they wanted them, community members chosen at random, to be voting members. Mrs. Long said I think if you read that last paragraph, Mr. Vorst thinks the community involvement, particularly the complainant, is important so they can share the concern. I think it is kind of like they can come talk to the committee, but maybe not be a vote. I think the other part was do we bring more people in from the community to sit in on the voting part of the committee?

Mrs. Crowley said the discussion we had about that at the board meeting was about how those people would be chosen. I think having more voices at that table is just going to get tricky.

Mrs. Raterman said I think when you look at businesses, they will bring in focus groups and listen to people. They listen to the complaint or the person writing it and hear what they have to say but they are not sitting at the table deciding. They are a different way with their dollars but so is the community with their tax dollars and who they vote for and stuff. I don't know many organizations, public or private, that allow non-professional experts to vote and make the decisions for them. If anything, that would be you guys as board members that aren't necessarily educators but you have been voted on to be the voice.

Mrs. Abraham said I am curious what somebody would add to the discussion that they haven't put on the form. To come in and read again out of context. I think there would have to be really tight parameters on how much time they have and how they present or don't present.

Mr. McDonough said perhaps there is language that says the committee may invite the complainant in because they need a clarification on something. It's not an automatic but perhaps, and I don't want to set us up for something we can't sustain, but there may be a time where the committee needs...Mrs. Raterman said yes, if the committee has questions, they may like that.

Mrs. Parker-Jones said on to that point, if the form doesn't even seem to be filled out in a way that you looking at it, you feel like you understand what their complaint is or their justification for why we should even be considering it. Do we even stop at that point and say we need to return this to a community member because this has not met our criteria?

Mrs. Sloat said the form asks to what do you object? Are you aware of the judgement of this material by professional critics? What do you believe is the theme of this material? That is on the form right now. In my opinion, that is giving them their voice. Just as I would in an email if I were to call Mars Company. I would just say these are the things I am concerned about, but never would I be a voting member on that. I shouldn't be because that is not my job. We have trained professionals that are educators that have licensure in children's literature. We all have to take a class in children's literature to get a teaching license. Many people have reading endorsements and they have gotten coaching. This is what they do so that would hold weight as opposed to if I went into Mars with my reading license and said here is great dog food.

Mrs. Parker-Jones said I think it would be helpful if we could vet the complaint before it goes into a full committee investigation. If we have 49 books sitting out there and thinking about the time commitment, would there be a pre-screening? Maybe that could be step one? There is a pre-screening of the complaint or concern to see that it is complete enough that the committee will understand the concerns and therefore move it forward. If they are copying and pasting, that might not be enough.

Mrs. Sloat said you could ask that question on the form too. Did you read the book?

POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE - SUMMARY

Thursday, May 18, 2023

Mrs. Parker-Jones said I think that would be a great time to get that community member's input.

Mrs. Long said if you could put that extra tier of evaluation.

Mrs. Crowley said it would be nice if you could call whoever submitted the form and say "We are thinking about moving forward with this form. If we need you, would you be willing to come in and answer questions and have a discussion?" right out of the gate so they are prepared that that could happen and maybe they don't want to submit the form as much.

Mrs. Raterman asked if there are legal laws around this? Could they write this policy for us? Mr. McDonough answered that Julie provided some input for us before and I know Julie walked the team through the whole challenge process before we did the first book. Where we need to be really careful is what we do while we are reviewing that book because the book kind of gets its own First Amendment rights once we put it in our library.

Mrs. Long said she thinks Jill brought up some of that. Where do these books come from when...do we take them off the shelves?

Mrs. Raterman said to Mrs. Long, I know all of that but when you asked about the form, we can design the form however we want.

Mr. McDonough said before we bring everything to a first reading, we would have our legal counsel review everything.

Mrs. Long said I am really thankful that you guys were open to share this information because the board got to provide the information that we spent a whole hour on the last one and then hopefully with taking all of this together when we come back in the fall, we can have a better idea of where we might be moving with this.

Mrs. Abraham asked if it is relevant if the person making the complaint is a parent or guardian of a student in the district? A lot of the feedback we are getting at board meetings is around parents having input but if it is not a parent or guardian who is asking us to do this book review, it seems to go against parents having a choice and it is somebody else making that decision or asking to have it not accessible to kids.

Mrs. Crowley said some of the forms that have been submitted have kids in kindergarten per se and the books they are challenging are high school books so they don't technically have a child in that school with access to that book, so it does get complicated.

Mrs. Raterman said the result of that would be if you are a taxpayer in the district, you should have a say in how your district is run. I think that would be a legal question.

Mrs. Crowley said Nadia, when Zach was talking about the community member involvement, do you remember specifically if he was only wanting the person who filed the complaint to be involved or I had the sense for some reason that he also wanted community members just on the committee, chosen at random.

Mrs. Long answered that's why I think we had two things. One was the complainant comes to the

POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE - SUMMARY

Thursday, May 18, 2023

committee and discusses and then the other piece was we had voting members added to the process. Mrs. Crowley said I remember them talking about just choosing community members at random.

Mrs. Sloat said I don't know if we are on the vetting the complaint, if that is something that we are looking into, but I don't know who would be the person that would vet that complaint. Nobody is going to want to say...Mrs. Long said I don't know. That is my legal question.

Mrs. Long asked if there was any other feedback?

Summary of Policies Reviewed and Status

POLICY	STATUS
JED – Student Absences and Excuses	Revisions for first reading on June 12, 2023
JHCCB – Tuberculosis Control Policy	Revisions for first reading on June 12, 2023