



POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE

Mike McDonough, Deputy Superintendent
Thursday, September 21, 2023, 4:00 PM Central Office

Hilliard City School District
Operations Department

Committee Members

Nadia Long, Board of Education
Kara Crowley, Board of Education
Melissa Swearingen, 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
Angie Rader, 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 and policies discussed at the meeting on September 21, 2023.

Public Participation

None

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

1. EHA – Data and Records Retention
2. EHA-R – Data and Records Retention (Electronic Mail and Social Media Content)

Mr. McDonough explained that this is basically a total redo of the policy. Without going too much into the weeds on this one, essentially this is around records retention and those types of things. We obviously have a records retention schedule. There is a committee that meets on an annual basis that is comprised of our treasurer, the superintendent and the board president just to review these items.

There have been some changes in ORC here recently that really doesn't change anything for us in practice, but just updates the language within the policy to keep us in compliance with the changes.

Mr. McDonough said I deferred to Stacie on this one because she is kind of our public records guru. In that conversation, if you recall, those of you that have been on the committee for a while, in March we

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had some changes around meeting notifications. There is very much the same format in this policy around how we notify and keep minutes and that type of thing. There was one thing we did not include in meeting notifications that Stacie and I both agree we should not include in this. That is the notification, if you want to be notified via email or snail mail you can send a self-addressed, stamped envelope. We are not doing that. We put all of our meeting information online and we make sure that we disseminate that to the local media outlets as well. If you are looking at the white copy, that would be the sixth paragraph down. We are advocating that we do not include that portion that says any person may receive advance blah, blah, blah. Everything else in the policy, we don't see any issues with. Everything we do in terms of records retention has to comply with the Ohio Historical Center. We do submit your policies and your information to them to review.

Mr. McDonough said one thing that was interesting to me, but again, I am in agreement with it as long as everybody else is. It is asking us to rescind the associated regulation that we have with this. That is more around electronic mail and social media content. For those of you that don't know, our email is kept forever so this doesn't even apply to us that much.

Mrs. Raterman said it also talked a little bit about the reason for that, and we talk about this all the time in our meetings. It doesn't matter what the vehicle is, or the tool is. A public record is a public record. When electronic records became popular, email and stuff like that, they put this in to make sure people were including that but now it is every day. So, like, "Hey Nadia, do you want to go have lunch?" is not a public record email. A handwritten note could be a public record. It is just taking that distinguishing factor away.

Mr. McDonough said based on what I have read and the conversation that Stacie and I had; I don't see any issues with moving forward with OSBA's recommendations on this policy.

Mrs. Long asked about the third point from the last around social media, content must be related to the information they contain or purpose they serve. How does that fall into public record? How long do we retain the social media information?

Mrs. Raterman answered that at this point, most if not everything on our social media is transient information. It is celebrating something that is on our website. It is announcing a meeting. So, we don't currently have a separate retention policy other than we just don't delete things at this point. If it turned into a battleground or something, I screenshot it and I will save it if I think it warrants public record retention.

Mrs. Long said it doesn't seem like OSBA is giving us guidance on that. Mrs. Raterman said there are lots of companies we can hire that would like us to pay them lots of money to do it. She said it is pretty typical with her colleagues around Central Ohio. They do it the same way pretty much.

Mr. McDonough said it sounds like we will move forward with that.

3. BDDG – Minutes

Mr. McDonough said there again, updating the language associated with this policy. If you look at the white copy, there is a section that says permissive language next paragraph only. I would advocate, because this is the practice that we currently follow, that we insert that "Provided the Treasurer sends a

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copy of the minutes of the last Board meeting to Board members at least two days prior". Basically, that means we would waive the reading of the minutes. Otherwise, Kara is going to have to get her elementary teacher hat on and we will do a read aloud of the board meeting minutes at the board meetings. I don't think anybody wants that. So long as Karen Wright, if you don't know, Karen Wright compiles our board meeting minutes. She does a fabulous job, pretty much captures everything almost verbatim. The spirit of the minutes should be that you get the heart of the conversation. You don't have to have verbatim transcripts of the meetings but she does a very good job of capturing that information. Everything that is listed there as a proposed change is currently what we do in practice.

Mrs. Raterman said I apologize, I should have thought of this earlier when we were talking. We call Karen's meeting notes and then meeting minutes have always been what the Treasurer or Assistant Treasurer takes, which is not, it is just the votes. Do we need to merge those two together?

Mr. McDonough said we could just add notes, maybe we just say minutes/notes wherever we see that in the body of the policy we will add notes.

Mrs. Long said the last part of that says copies of the meeting minutes are also made available to the public and news media. Isn't that on the website? You are not going to hand them a separate copy are you, a printed copy?

Mrs. Raterman said we don't hand any, we do print out the agenda but we don't print out the minutes. Mrs. Long asked if we needed to take that part off? Mr. McDonough said we would just say made available online to public. Mrs. Raterman said or just made available.

4. JED – Student Absences and Excuses

Mr. McDonough said in May we had a meeting that only had two policies on it. One of them was the one that you see before you here in #4. JED Student Absences and Excuses. We brought that in May for two reasons. One, to clean up some of the language around COVID. We actually missed one of those lines which we will catch in today's agenda. The other piece was we changed our vacation policy.

OSBA, ironically, over the summer had this policy come to them to clean up COVID so we were a little bit ahead of them in that regard. Also, they made some clarifications which we have done in our policy but I think some of the call outs that OSBA has are good to add.

We added some information around mental health illnesses. One of the things that they added, if you look, our policy does not look similar to theirs just because of the first part around family trips, but on page two of our policy, number four, there I would advocate that we too add there at the end where it says documented medical, I would add ", behavioral or dental appointments" as well just so we capture everything. We follow that currently as is.

In that next section below nonmedically excused absences, they have two additions that I think are good to add. Especially if we continue to prepare every student for their tomorrow. If the military is a part of that I think we need to honor that. So, adding six and seven to our list I think is a good thing to do.

I think you will find that the other changes there don't change the spirit of what we have in place. It just

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helps clarify. The changes that you see in that list there beginning with number one, having students needed to do things at home, that needs to be approved in advance. I don't think anybody would disagree to that. Number three there, the information around religious holidays, just cleaning up how that reads. I don't think anybody would disagree to that. We changed the numbering of ours a little bit by adding six and seven but all in all, I think the spirit of the policy stays the same.

The other piece, if you look on our blue copy, the sentence immediately before non-medically excused there on page two, that was the one piece of COVID that we didn't catch the last time so we will eliminate that this go-around as well.

Mr. Trombitas said just going back to the military family, what we see probably more often is kids going to visit and watch their siblings versus the legal guardian or custodian. That is not specifically accounted for in this. Is this something we want to do? It is like my brother is graduating or my sister is graduating versus I am going to watch my dad's graduation kind of thing.

Mrs. Crowley said can we change it to immediate family? Mr. McDonough said yes, that works for me.

Review of Policies/Regulations/Exhibits – as Requested by Board of Education/Administration

5. IKF – Graduation Requirements

Mr. McDonough said that as much as I have tried over the years to keep this as general as possible, we always seem to miss something and thank you Jake for catching those things. I think this might be a policy that we just need to add to every Spring agenda because the graduation requirements seem to change three times a year. But these ones are self-inflicted I believe. In the packet, you will see a white copy which is OSBA's. I don't think you need to worry about that. What we are mainly concerned on or looking at is the blue copy and comparing it to the yellow copy. Jake, I don't mean to put you on the spot, but if you want to just highlight what you caught. Again, I don't think it changes anything of substance.

Mr. Grantier said the first thing that sticks out, if you look at our, the beginning of that policy are the statutory requirements for the state. This is the bare minimum that students have to achieve in order to receive an Ohio diploma. We go above and beyond that. If you look at page two of the yellow copy, you will see our graduation requirements listed.

We just kind of clarified a few things. The first thing is we don't offer Digital Connections anymore so that graduation requirement has shifted to Future Ready. We do have students who have fulfilled that requirement by taking Digital Connections. They are current juniors and seniors. That phase out has already happened. We just want to make sure that is in there. We had some misspellings which is fine.

Under Science and Math, we have more than just Algebra II and Honors Algebra II currently that count for Algebra II, that Algebra II requirement, so we just changed that to be what is equivalent rather than listing out the additional courses that would count for that.

Under Science, this, the way it was originally worded, Physical Science is itself a class, but students can achieve that physical science requirement by taking any physical science course. We just wanted to

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make that more clear in the policy.

On the front page under those statutory requirements, we just tried to clean it up a little bit just to make it a little bit more clear. The last time those requirements changed was 2017. We do not have anybody that falls under those requirements so we just want to consolidate a little bit and clean up that language.

6. IIAC – Media/Resource Materials Selection and Adoption

Mr. McDonough explained that there is a copy of the summary of a conversation that occurred at one of our Board meetings when this policy and its status of revisions at the time went to the Board then got kicked back to the committee. You will see OSBA's sample policy which really is not helpful at all in terms of what we are trying to accomplish with the section that we are addressing. You will see our blue copy, which is the current policy, and then you will see the proposed changes.

Really, we are primarily focused around what to do when there is a challenge of a resource or materials, either within our Media Center or the curriculum itself. After many, many different iterations, I believe this is the fifth different version that our attorneys have drafted up for us. If you look in the Challenged Materials, I am just going to give you guys a few moments to read through what Julie Martin has put together for us on your yellow copy under Challenged Materials, specifically where it says "In cases where material in the school media center is challenged, the following course of action will be followed". Then it is all brand new. I will give you a moment to review that then we can discuss the changes. Everything else that is in your packet are the related policies just for reference. We are not proposing any changes to those at this time.

Mr. McDonough gave the committee some time to read through the information then asked if anyone would like to start us off.

Mrs. Abraham said one of the things I do like about it is that it requires the person that is making the complaint to be detailed so it is not just a general pulling the title off of a list. It is asking for the specifics which I think is going to be very helpful.

Mr. McDonough said along those lines, obviously, we know we have some, a few challenges that we have been posed with already. If those challenges do not list those things, if this policy were to go through, we would give the complainant an opportunity to correct, they would have some time to correct their challenge because any current challenge would fall under this policy, as you probably saw in that first paragraph.

Mrs. Raterman said that is what I think is good. You are not just throwing it out and just saying it is wrong. We will give them the specific opportunity and help them if they need help figuring out how to take care of it.

Mrs. Crowley said I think it is good that all of them are not going to a committee. I think it saves precious time and resources within the district.

Mrs. Long said a couple things I want to bring up. Around the district maintaining the website for one year, I really think it should be longer than that because I don't want every fall this to be a list of books

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submitted to the Superintendent's office. I feel like if it gets submitted once, it should live there for, at work I would call if shelf life of the product, but I would say in terms, I was trying to figure out what that would mean. I was like ok, four years. Just because I don't want it to be busy work for the district. I am afraid that just the one year, by the time the list is up we will be circling back around to the next year and it is going to be the same books. I wanted to get the opinion of the committee around how long should it have a life on the website. I didn't know if anyone would have any other suggestion or is there is any other kind of timing in education that tells you. I was thinking four years because it would be a new freshman class to go through high school.

Mrs. Raterman said it makes sense to me.

Mrs. Crowley asked to get on the website, they just have to submit a valid form?

Mrs. Long said, a complaint, but it doesn't go to the committee. If it doesn't move to the committee, it would be on this, and I guess I question if it needs to be a complete copy of the complaint or if it can just be a list of book and author?

Mrs. Raterman said either way is easy.

Mrs. Long said I am a little concerned of a copy of the complaint, if it creates a platform for people to provide whatever they want on our website. If it is a simple author and title.

Mrs. Raterman said and then the person's name, if they give consent, the person's name.

Mrs. Long said that's the other thing I was wondering, do we need the person's name? Because is that again another platform?

Mrs. Raterman said I do think it is a platform, but I think it is also an indicator for parents. If one or two people are submitting every single one, that just says something. I am not trying to judge one way or another, but I think if parents go to the website and are looking at this, I think, now those people could say no, we don't want our name associated with it too, so it doesn't look like it is from the same person. If they want that platform, that's okay. It doesn't mean anything, I don't mean to say it doesn't mean anything, it...

Mrs. Abraham said I am also thinking because, unless I missed it, it doesn't say anything about you have to be a parent, correct?

Mrs. Raterman said it can be a community member.

Mrs. Abraham said and knowing who is making the complaint, it may be somebody that doesn't have kids in school, or a grandparent, or something and I think in fairness to parents who have kids in school, they should, if they know this person, that information should be known to them that this is somebody that doesn't have a kid in here.

Mrs. Raterman said we give them the option if they don't want their name out there to take their name off of it too, but...

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Mrs. Abraham said I think their name should be on it.

Mrs. Raterman said I agree but I see both sides.

Mr. McDonough said the way this currently reads, they have to consent for their name to be on it.

Mrs. Raterman said I do agree with that but I also see where Julie is coming from.

Mr. McDonough said stand up and own it!

Mrs. Raterman said stand up and own it, I know and I am not going to fight it either way. Whatever the committee wants to go with is fine. There are well meaning people that will get through the, people have very personal, very deeply held reasons for doing this. Some do, some do not...

Mrs. Abraham said I would suggest maybe not, based on the limited number of people who submitted the "I don't want my kids to have this book". I am just one voice, but I am thinking so many times, things are on social media about the books we are providing and we don't have a space or place to have any response. To me, this is somewhat of a response. This is saying...

Mrs. Sloat said this is very different than a parent saying I don't want my child to read this. That is a very different, that is just handled between the principal, the teacher, that is something very different than this. This is saying that no student in Hilliard City Schools should read this book.

Mrs. Crowley asked what is the headline of this web page?

Mrs. Raterman said I have not even thought about that.

Mrs. Crowley said is it Challenged Books?

Mrs. Abraham said Challenged Books.

Mrs. Long said I was calling it Watch List.

Mrs. Raterman said I would rather call it Challenged but we can work that out much later when it gets passed but I think Watch List might indicate we are putting it on a watch list. If it is a challenge, that means somebody else is challenging it. We can work, that is not a policy. We can call it...

Mr. McDonough said Community Challenges.

Mrs. Long said the other thing I wanted, so it sounds like, have we made a decision as a committee if we are going to give them the option to put their name on it or not? Are there any strong feelings either way? I feel like I heard both.

Mrs. Raterman said I have been the only one that said not, but I am fine with it.

Mr. Middleton said I think their name should be on it. That is my opinion.

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Mrs. Long said I feel like they shouldn't because of the platform. Really, this is about books and not about people and that is where we should stay is with books.

Mr. McDonough said the Hollywood acts we have seen so far have been about people and not books though.

Mrs. Long said right, so I think we need to stay about books because that is what the policy is about.

Mrs. Crowley said I think I lean more towards Jill's side. If you are going to submit it, put your name on it.

Mr. Middleton said I don't think we are saying we should see the whole of why they feel it, but here is who submitted it.

Mrs. Crowley said the book, the title, the author, submitted by and the date.

Mrs. Long asked are you guys good with the one year or do you want to look at an extended...

Mrs. Raterman said I think four years is fine.

Mrs. Long said once it's on there...

Mrs. Raterman said we don't have to do anything with it. It will just stay there for four years, then we will have to remember in four years to take it off.

Mr. Trombitas asked have we seen multiple people submit the same book?

Mrs. Raterman said I think we have only had three people submit lots of reports.

Mr. Trombitas said for example, say it is Fahrenheit 451 and fifteen people challenge it, does Fahrenheit 451 get listed fifteen times with fifteen different names?

Mrs. Abraham said what we have had come in is multiple people may be listed on the same challenge...

Mrs. Raterman said we could just put Fahrenheit 451 and then put Nadia Long, September 1st, Matt Trombitas, December 31st, if multiple people do the same book. If they are putting ten names, I think we still put the ten names. If we are going to put names, we put the names. If we are not, we are not. That's okay.

Mrs. Long said so the last submission, the latest date, so then that would be four years from that. Does that make sense? I think we take out the words "copy of complaint" and there will be some kind of list created. Right? Because we are not going to put the actual complaint up on the website. We are going to create a list.

Mr. McDonough asked if there are any other comments?

Mrs. Long said the other thing around when we looked at what the Board gave back to us, there was a lot of talk about timeframe on how things should happen. I don't see, like when you think about, it is

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submitted to the Superintendent and then it will be decided if it goes to the list or if it goes to committee. Is there a timeframe that we could put on that process, specifically on how long the decision from the Superintendent on which path it goes on?

Mrs. Crowley said I think right now it is difficult to pin a timepoint because he has forty-three books to review. I would imagine in the future they would come in at a different pace than what he would have to deal with right now.

Mrs. Abraham said I think we got thirty-five or something in one...

Mrs. Crowley said in one fell swoop.

Mrs. Abraham said we have forty-nine waiting.

Mrs. Crowley said I worry about at least an upfront timeframe.

Mrs. Long said it is more of, I wouldn't say the book would be reviewed. That is not against the committee. The committee would decide...

Mrs. Raterman said how long does Dave have to work? How long does Dave have to decide?

Mrs. Long said it's almost like an acknowledge of it that it's going to go one way or the other.

Mr. Middleton said I think, to the point, if you have thirty-five come in at one time, and you put a timeframe on that, let's say thirty days. That means he has to go through more than one book a day.

Mrs. Long said this isn't saying he is reading the book. He is just making the decision...

Mr. Middleton said or even reviewing the book. I am just saying, thirty-five books, I don't know what time, that's just my opinion.

Mrs. Crowley said it is different if he is looking at one book or he is looking at forty-nine books.

Mrs. Long said we could say sixty days unless extreme circumstances or something like that. At least to give them, I feel like for it to move out to the Board, they are going to need a timeframe.

Mrs. Crowley said why don't we just write in a timely manner? Books will be reviewed in a timely manner.

Mrs. Raterman said the is what the law says about public records response, within a reasonable amount of time.

Mrs. Long said okay.

Mr. McDonough said there we go; we will insert reasonable amount of time.

Mrs. Crowley said perfect!

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Mr. McDonough said just to clarify, there are forms associated with this policy. A form does not need to go through the policy committee so my intent would be, assuming that this works through the policy review process, which for those of you who don't know, all of these policies would show up on our October business meeting on the 9th for a first reading, a second reading at the work session on the 23rd, which would give the Board the opportunity to discuss any proposed changes within this packet, and then a third and hopeful approval at the first meeting in November. Assuming that it gets through that process, I think at that time we would update the form to match what the policy shares. We can certainly work with Julie to make sure we have the form that captures all this and then we can also work on what the website is going to look like and all of that stuff. We can have all of that ready to go assuming that everything went through that process.

Mrs. Abraham said one question, Mike, and I know we are going to do this policy next, but I know we had at least one instance this year where the wrong form was filled out for a challenge of the library materials. I think it came in on KLB if I remember right. That is when we got stuck in this moment of, they are applying a different form to this policy so we just...

Mr. McDonough said we will clean up all forms. If this goes through, we will make sure that the forms very clearly...

Mrs. Abraham said and if it is not on the right form, we send it back.

Mrs. Long said in all of these meetings when we got feedback; we talked a lot about who is on the committee. I think that was a huge struggle of this whole policy because it was so limiting on people that could possibly be picked. I think one role was down to two people within our district which that didn't seem right to me. This has opened it up pretty big and giving Superintendent a lot of responsibility of creating that. Are we ok from a policy committee? Do we want to put any guiderails? I know that Mr. Perry was very concerned about splitting votes so the number of people on the committee, do we need to provide any more guidance through policy or do we trust that our Superintendent would create a committee that represents the right people?

Mrs. Abraham and Mr. Middleton answered yes.

Mrs. Long asked does it need to be an odd number? I am just trying to think of what feedback I am going to get when we move, because I am hoping we can move forward and that is the hope around this is that we can progress this whole policy and not keep sending it back to committee. If we put an odd number, that shouldn't split but then you still have, as Mr. Perry described, you can, because there are three options, you can still split the vote.

Mr. McDonough said I really think it is two options. One and three are kind of the opposite of one another. I think the first decision that needs to be made is, is this material going to get removed from the district collection, yes, or no? Then at that point, if it is yes, the only you are left to answer is at what level is it going to? Is it going to remain at all levels? I think it is really only a two, I get where if there was, if it was three different options you could potentially have some tie, but I think given this, we would be okay.

Mrs. Long asked do we take option two out and then you only have the two options and make it an odd

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number on the committee?

Mr. McDonough said I would leave option two and maybe reword options one and three unless I am not reading this correctly. To leave the material in the school/district collection as it is and number three says to remove the material from the school district collection. To me, those are the same decision. They are just the opposite. I think it could just be two choices. It could be to remove or remain and then the second option would be to restrict.

Mrs. Raterman said I see what you are saying.

Mrs. Long said I am not following, I am sorry.

Mrs. Raterman said that it was confusing to me at first too.

Mr. McDonough explained that the first decision the committee is going to make is do we think this book should not be in Hilliard City Schools. If the answer is yes, it should be gone then it is gone. If the answer is no, it should remain, then we need to decide, okay, it is going to stay in the Hilliard City Schools, then the committee's decision is where does it stay?

Mrs. Abraham said in its current location or restricted.

Mrs. Long said so we need two votes out of the committee.

Mr. McDonough answered correct.

Mrs. Long said so, we need to somehow word that. It is either remove or remain and then if it is to remain, the next vote will be in current location or restricted. Is that right?

Mr. McDonough said that would be my suggestion.

Mrs. Long said then you can't split votes at that point. I think we need to add the odd number and then the two votes. Does that make sense guys? I am just trying to make sure our time is not continuously on this policy.

Mr. McDonough said we will take a stab at that and we will get it to Nadia and Kara in advance before we put it on the agenda.