



POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE

Mike McDonough, Deputy Superintendent
Friday, October 3, 2025, 9:00 AM Central Office

Hilliard City School District
Operations Department

Committee Members

Brian Perry, Board of Education
Kelley Arnold, Board of Education
Melissa Swearingen, Treasurer/CFO
Mike McDonough, Deputy Superintendent
William Warfield, Assistant Superintendent
Stacie Raterman, Communications Director
Jacob Grantier, Director of Measurement, Intervention
& Enrichment

Herb Higginbotham, Director of Elementary Education
Jamie Lennox, Special Education Director
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 Woodson, 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 October 3, 2025.

Review of Policies/Regulations/Exhibits – As Requested by District Administration

GCBC-R – Professional and Certificated Staff Fringe Benefits

Mike McDonough explained we are just doing a little cleanup language here to mirror the recent negotiations that we had with both of our associations. There were some changes made in those contracts that also impact administrative contracts.

Effective January 1, 2026, the Board portion would be 84%. That is the same for all of our associations, as well as our administrators. Then, effective January 1, 2027, that would go to 83% so we need to add an additional sentence in that second paragraph, “Effective January 1, 2027, the Board shall pay 83% of the premium”.

The PRC recommends language revisions in accordance with the above.

Review of Policies/Regulations/Exhibits – OSBA SEPTEMBER 2025 PDQ

UPDATED POLICY ADOPTION PROCESS RECOMMENDATIONS

BF – Policy Development and Adoption

Most of the changes in the September PDQ take effect September 30, 2025. The recommended revisions

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provide more flexibility and clarification for boards regarding when the board may need to adopt policies at the first meeting they are presented. The revisions also include language authorizing the superintendent to make certain editorial changes that do not impact the meaning of the policy.

Policy BF has been updated to provide flexibility for policy review process.

Mike McDonough said he thinks our policy already captures us to be able to emergency approve a policy, so he didn't think we needed to add that revision. He said he did think the editorial revisions are a good addition to the policy and said if we were to exercise that option, we would certainly be transparent and give that to the Board and make sure they understand and they can certainly stop us from making those editorial changes if they feel like it needs to go to this committee.

The PRC recommends language revisions in accordance with the above.

ATTENDANCE OVERHAUL

IKE – Promotion and Retention of Students

JED – Student Absences and Excuses

JEDA – Truancy

JEDC – Religious Expression Days

Mike McDonough said we have four policies that we are going to look at, all relating to changes that were made in some of the attendance which is why Molly Walker is joining us today. The good news is, because of Molly's work, we have already done most of these things and we are ahead of all of this.

House Bill (HB) 96 includes several changes to attendance, including new allowances for absences relating to driver's education and an overhaul of existing absence intervention and truancy provisions.

District obligations for absence interventions and truancy are significantly modified by HB 96. The bill also makes changes to Ohio's attendance and truancy provisions, effective September 30, 2025.

Policy IKE has been updated to remove the requirement in RC 3313.609 that a district prohibit promotion of a student that is truant for more than 10% of required attendance days in a school year.

Policy JED has been updated to reflect attendance changes removing the distinction between medical and nonmedical absences and new allowance for students to be excused to attend a private driver training course.

Policies JEDA and JEDC have been updated to reflect changes to law.

The PRC recommends language revisions in accordance with the above.

RELEASED TIME FOR RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

JEFB – Released Time for Religious Instruction

House Bill 96 modifies existing released time for religious instruction requirements of Ohio Revised Code (RC) 3313.6022.

Students must be excused from school to attend a released time course for at least one period per week. Under

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new RC 3313.6022(E), such excusal cannot exceed two periods total in a week for elementary or middle school, and the amount of time equivalent to attending two units of high school credit per week for high school students.

JEFB has been updated to reflect the changes for how often a student must be excused. A statement was also added stating the District, Board members and employees are not liable for damages in a civil action for injury arising during a student's transportation when private transportation is used.

The PRC agreed with one period per week. Mike McDonough explained that we would also split the second paragraph in our policy just to make it look more like the OSBA version.

AI AND CYBERSECURITY UPDATE

EDEC – Artificial Intelligence

EHC – Cybersecurity

House Bill (HB) 96 requires changes to school district operations regarding artificial intelligence (AI) and cybersecurity.

HB 96 enacts Revised Code (RC) 3301.24, requiring the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce (ODEW) to develop a model policy on the use of AI in schools that addresses appropriate educational uses of AI for both staff and students by December 31, 2025. The new provision also requires school districts to adopt a policy on AI use by July 1, 2026.

HB 96 enacts RC 9.64, requiring boards of education to adopt a cybersecurity program by September 30, 2025 "that safeguards (the district's) data, information technology, and information technology resources to ensure availability, confidentiality and integrity."

Mike McDonough explained that Rich Boettner is convening a group of administrators and stakeholders throughout the district to develop an AI policy, so he asked that the PRC table this policy for now.

Policy EHC has been updated to reflect new RC 9.64 requiring districts to establish a cybersecurity program that meets State law requirements. Mike McDonough shared with the PRC that Rich Boettner is in full agreement with the changes and believes that we are already compliant with all of those changes.

The PRC recommends language revisions in accordance with the above.

CELLPHONE USE UPDATE

EBC – Emergency Management and Safety Plans

JFCK – Use of Cellphones and Electronic Communications Devices by Students

House Bill (HB) 96 modifies Ohio Revised Code (RC) 3313.753 regarding student cellular telephone use. The amended law requires boards to adopt a policy by January 1, 2026, that prohibits all cellphone use by students during the instructional day. ODEW defines "instructional day" as "any period of time in which a student is expected to be in attendance and includes not only formal instruction time but also supervised activities, such as transitioning between classes, recess, meal periods and field trips."

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RC 3313.753 now also requires the board to permit a student to use a cellphone or other electronic communications device to monitor or address a health concern if the board receives a written statement from the student's physician requiring such use.

Cellphones also may be used by students if permitted under the building's comprehensive emergency management plan.

Policy EBC has been updated to reflect changes to RC 3313.753 addressing the use of student cellular devices during an active threat or emergency.

JFCK has been updated to reflect changes in RC 3313.753 prohibiting student cell phone use during the "instructional" day unless otherwise specified by the law.

The PRC agrees with the suggested revision provided by Jamie Lennox and Jake Grantier during the discussion.

CHANGES TO BUDGET, FORECAST AND LEVY PROCESS

DBD – Long-Term Financial Planning (Five-Year Forecast)

DE – Revenues from Tax Sources

FD (also KBE) Tax Issues

House Bill (HB) 96 makes various revisions to the district budgeting and forecasting process.

The "five-year" forecast process districts are accustomed to is replaced with the required submission of current budget information and three-year projects.

RC 5705.314 currently requires boards of education to hold a public hearing solely on a proposal to change its levy within the ten-mill limitation if it will result in an increase in the amount of real property taxes levied by the board in the tax year that the change takes effect. The provision has been amended to also require the board to obtain approval from the county budget commission of each county in which the district has territory before adopting a resolution to implement the proposal.

Policy DBD had been updated to reflect HB 96 changes to required budgeting and forecasting process.

Policies DE and FD (also KBE) have been updated to reflect HB 96 levy changes.

Melissa Swearingen provided revision suggestions for policy DBD that aligns with our policy, avoids dates that frequently change and accomplishes what is needed.

The PRC recommends language revisions in accordance with the above.

CONSTITUTION DAY

IND/INDA – School Ceremonies and Observances/Patriotic Exercises

All districts receiving Federal funds must hold an educational program on the United States Constitution on September 17 annually for the students served by the district.

Policy IND/INDA has been updated to place the language around Constitution Day in a place more closely tied to

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other mandatory recognitions (Veterans Day) and provide flexibility for what process the district may use for the educational program.

The PRC recommends language revisions in accordance with the above.

PUBLIC RECORDS DEFINITION UPDATE

EHA – District Records Commission, Records Retention and Disposal

KBA – Public’s Right to Know

House Bill (HB) 96 modifies the Ohio Revised Code (RC) 149.011 definition of “records.” The revisions create a new exception to items meeting the definition of a “record,” meaning that such items must not be retained in accordance with a district’s records retention schedule.

Policy EHA has been updated to reflect the amended definition of “record.”

Policy KBA has been updated to clearly indicate public record where applicable.

The PRC recommends language revisions in accordance with the above.

TEACHER ASSIGNMENTS

GCI – Professional and Certificated Staff Assignments and Transfers

House Bill 96 enacts Ohio Revised Code (RC) 3319.173, effective September 30, 2025, requiring superintendents to assign teachers to positions based on the best interests of the students enrolled in the district.

Policy GCI has been updated to reflect RC 3319.173 requiring superintendents to assign teachers to positions based on the best interests of the students.

The PRC recommends language revisions in accordance with the above.

UPDATE TO MILITARY INTERDISTRICT OPEN ENROLLMENT

JECBB – Interdistrict Open Enrollment (Do Not Participate)

Senate Bill 208, effective April 9, 2025, modified Ohio Revised Code (RC) 3313.98 to allow a student with a parent who is an active-duty member of the armed forces stationed in Ohio to apply for open enrollment in a district that would not otherwise accept open enrollment students. House Bill 96, effective September 30, 2025, further modifies these provisions.

Districts are prohibited from requiring a student to comply with any open enrollment application deadlines if the student’s parent is an active-duty member of the armed forces stationed in Ohio.

Policy JECBB has been updated to remove the application deadline requirement for these students.

The PRC recommends language revisions in accordance with the above.

HB 96 AMENDS SEVERAL LAWS RELATED TO READING ASSESSMENT AND INSTRUCTION

IGBEA – Reading Skills Assessment and Intervention (Third Grade Reading Guarantee)

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IGBEA-R – Reading Skills Assessment and Intervention (Third Grade Reading Guarantee)

House Bill (HB) 96 revised several laws related to reading requirements. HB 96 amends the high dosage tutoring requirements of Ohio Revised Code (RC) 3313.608 and eliminates language in RC 3313.608 that exempted students with significant cognitive disabilities or other disabilities authorized by ODEW on a case-by-case basis from the annual reading assessment requirements in K-3.

IGBEA and IGBEA-R have been updated to reflect changes HB 96 made to reading requirements.

The PRC recommends language revisions in accordance with the above.

HB 96 ADVANCED STANDING, GRADING AND CLASS RANKING CONSIDERATIONS

IKA - Grading Systems

Ohio Revised Code (RC) 3313.6013 requires districts to provide at least one advanced standing program for students in grades 9-12.

Newly enacted RC 3313.6031 requires districts to adopt and implement a policy for awarding grades and calculating class standing for courses that comply with career-technical education credit transfer criteria, policies and procedures established under RC 3333.162.

Policy IKA has been updated to include a general statement on compliance with law for development of grading scales.

The PRC recommends language revisions in accordance with the above.

FINANCIAL LITERACY INSTRUCTION EXEMPTION

IKF – Graduation Requirements

House Bill (HB) 96 has added a provision that permits boards to adopt a policy to excuse a student from the financial literacy instruction graduation requirement if the student, while in high school, participates in a financial literacy program offered through a student branch of a credit union or by a bank.

Policy IKF has been updated to add permissive language to allow boards to excuse students from the financial literacy instruction graduation requirement pursuant to these new changes.

The PRC recommends language revisions in accordance with the above.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITY PARTICIPATION CHANGES

IGD – Cocurricular and Extracurricular Activities

IGDJ – Interscholastic Athletics

House Bill (HB) 96 enacts Ohio Revised Code (RC) 3313.536, effective September 30, 2025, allowing a district superintendent to permit a student enrolled in another district the opportunity to participate in ice hockey as an interscholastic athletic activity at a school of the superintendent's district if the district in which the student is enrolled does not offer ice hockey as an interscholastic athletic activity.

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HB 96 also amends RC 3313.5313, enacted last year, which permits superintendents to allow certain students to participate in interscholastic activities. HB 96 now limits participation in this program to home-educated students meeting certain criteria.

Policies IGD and IGDJ have been updated to reflect permitting students in another district the opportunity to participate in ice hockey and amendments to RC 3313.5313 relating to home-educated students.

The PRC recommends language revisions in accordance with the above relating to home-educated students and agrees it is not necessary to add the revision around ice hockey as the district does not offer ice hockey.

ADVANCED MATHEMATICS PLACEMENT

IKEB – Acceleration

House Bill 96 enacts Ohio Revised Code (RC) 3313.6032, effective September 30, 2025. This law requires districts to provide each student achieving an advanced level of skill on a mathematics achievement assessment as prescribed in RC 3301.0710, or an end-of-course examination under RC 3301.0712, with advanced learning opportunities in mathematics, including advanced mathematics courses in the following school year.

Policy IKEB has been updated to address this new requirement.

The PRC recommends language revisions in accordance with the above.

COMPETITIVE BIDDING CHANGES

DJC – Bidding Requirements

FEF – Construction Contracts Bidding and Awards

House Bill 96 makes changes to school district competitive bidding.

Policy DJC has been updated to reflect which contracts now require competitive bidding under RC 3313.46. Additional edits have been made to clarify the individual involved in the bidding process if the district does not have a business manager.

Policy FEF has been updated to reflect the revised bid guaranty options.

The PRC recommends language revisions in accordance with the above.

IN-SERVICE TRAINING UPDATES

JHG – Reporting Child Abuse and Mandatory Training

Ohio Revised Code (RC) 3319.073 establishes in-service training requirements for school employees. House Bill 96 makes the following changes:

Eliminates the option for the board to adopt or adapt curriculum developed by the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce under RC 3301.221 for youth suicide awareness and prevention training. Instead, boards must develop their own curriculum for this purpose, and such training can no longer be accomplished through self-review of suitable suicide prevention materials approved by a board.

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Eliminates language authorizing child sexual abuse education training to be presented by law enforcement officers or prosecutors at their discretion. Instead, it requires the board to develop its own curriculum in consultation with public or private agencies or persons involved in child sexual abuse prevention or child sexual violence prevention.

Policy JHG has been updated to reflect changes to in-service training provisions.

The PRC recommends language revisions in accordance with the above.

OEC FREQUENT FLYER OPINION

DLC – Expense Reimbursements

The Ohio Ethics Commission (OEC) recently issued Advisory Opinion 2025-02, in which it concluded that Ohio public officials are permitted to benefit, for their personal use, from frequent flyer miles, credit card rewards, hotel points or other rewards earned during official business.

Policy DLC has been updated to remove prohibition of employees earning frequent flyer miles and other rewards due to OEC opinion.

The PRC recommends language revisions in accordance with the above.

OHIO ADMINISTRATIVE CODE CHANGES REQUIRE POLICY UPDATES: GIFTED STUDENTS AND TRANSPORTATION

EEA – Student Transportation Services

EEAC – School Bus Safety Program

EEACC-R (Also JFCC-R) – Student Conduct on District Managed Transportation

EEACD – Drug Testing for Motor Can Drivers and District Personnel Required to Hold a Commercial Driver’s License

*EEACD-R-2 – Drug Testing for Motor Van Drivers (**New Regulation**)*

EEAD – Non-Routine Use of School Buses and Motor Vans

GBQ – Criminal Records Check

IGBB – Programs for Students Who Are Gifted

Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) provisions for gifted students and student transportation were updated with an effective date of July 1, 2025.

Policies EEA, EEAC, EEACC-R (also JFCC-R), EEACD, EEAD and GBQ have been updated to reflect the OAC transportation changes.

Mike McDonough shared that he consulted with Angelo Caputo on the transportation policies. Angelo agrees with all the updates and would like to add EEACC-R and the new regulation EEACD-R-2. We do not currently have vans, but Angelo would like to add the information that relates to van drivers so we are ahead of any requirements should we purchase them.

Policy IGBB has been updated to align with OAC gifted changes. Jake Grantier said this is all in line with what we are doing, and we have made the necessary changes.

The PRC recommends language revisions in accordance with the above.

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MAHMOUD V. TAYLOR AND DISTRICT OPT-OUT POLICIES

IGAE – Health Education

The U.S. Supreme Court issued a decision in *Mahmoud v. Taylor* in June. The case involved a challenge to a Maryland school district's curriculum, which featured "LGBTQ+-inclusive" content and storybooks aimed at students in kindergarten through fifth grade. Initially, the Montgomery County Public Schools' board policy required parental notice before using the storybooks and allowed parents to opt their children out of this instruction. However, the district later revised its notice and opt-out policy, stating that it was "difficult to accommodate the growing number of opt-out requests without causing significant disruptions to the classroom environment."

In a 6-3 decision, the court agreed and held that the Maryland school board's introduction of the LGBTQ+-inclusive storybooks, combined with its no-opt out policy, burdened the parents' rights to the free exercise of their religion.

In Ohio, parents are provided certain statutory opt-out rights.

Policy IGAE has been updated to clarify that districts will comply with any parental opt-out or opt-in provisions required not only by state law but also by federal law.

The PRC recommends language revisions in accordance with the above.