



PUBLIC- POLICY/COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

January 24, 2023

Virtual Meeting - 4:30 p.m.

Committee Members: Jennifer Wolf, Chair
Jodi Bettermann, Michele Mencer, Randall Peach

Administrative Staff: Dr. Jonathan Hart, Superintendent of Schools
Jason Bohm, SBA/Board Secretary

Agenda

1. Follow-Up Policies

- a. Policy 5511 - Student Dress and Grooming follow-up
 - i. The policy was reviewed again by the middle school administration.
 - ii. The board discussed the concerns with straps versus no straps. Some committee members advised that all shirts should require a sleeve or strap per the current proposed policy and a committee member voiced the concern of difficulties finding dresses for the 8th grade dance and the communities' prior public request for strapless dresses to be allowed at the school dances. The policy will require straps or sleeves for school, but will allow for minor exceptions for events outside the academic school day such as school dances.
- b. Policy 2560.01 - Therapy Dog
 - i. This policy needs to be in place prior to beginning the therapy dog program at RMS this spring. The therapy dog will be phased in slowly to allow the dog to acclimate to the school, and meetings with students will be individual at the beginning of the program
 - ii. Dr. Hart referenced an APA research paper that was attached to an article from the Garden State Coalition of Schools that cites the "School Counselor Model" as the comprehensive model for therapy dogs.
 - iii. The committee discussed liability insurance and coverage and discussed that the Bright & Beautiful Therapy Dog's Inc insurance would only provide coverage when a therapy dog is handled by a registered volunteer. The dog would be covered under the school district's property insurance if owned and handled by a school employee.

2. Revised Bylaws, Policies, and Regulations (alert 229)

- a. Bylaw 0152 - Board Officers
 - i. The updated policy provided to the committee provides the Board two options for electing Board officers – one with a majority vote of the members of the Board present and the other with a majority vote of all members of the Board.
 - ii. The committee discussed that current practice for the Readington board is to elect the President and Vice President by majority of board members present at the reorganization meeting in January and the policy update formalizes this practice. Committee members agreed that it is important for board members to be present at the January reorganization meeting and the date is provided well in advance.
- b. Bylaw 0161 - Call, Adjournment, and Cancellation
 - i. The Bylaw Guide 0161 presented to the committee had been revised to better align with

- the current governing statute, N.J.S.A. 18A:10-6, and administrative code, N.J.A.C. 6A:32-3.1. The changes were not substantive.
- ii. Board discussed that in practice a decision to call a meeting would need to be made at least 5-6 days in advance of the meeting to provide adequate notice in posting to two newspapers.
 - c. Bylaw 0162 - Notice of Board Meetings
 - i. Bylaw Guide 0162 has been revised to better align with the current governing statute. Changes not substantive.
 - d. Policy and Regulation 2423 - Bilingual and ESL Education
 - i. The district has been expending its' ESL program and will continue to look toward expansion in conformity with the policy.
3. Revised Regulations Concerning Safety and Security (alert 229)
- a. Regulation 8420.2 - Bomb Threats
 - b. Regulation 8420.7 - Lockdown Procedures
 - c. Regulation 8420.10 - Active Shooter
 - i. The information in the three regulations will formally move to the district's Safety Plan which already exists. Safety plan is reviewed annually. The committee members requested an annual notification to the board when the safety plan is updated and the SOA is completed.
4. School Calendar 2023-2024 Draft
- a. Committee discussed the calendar and Dr. Hart will discuss the calendar with Hunterdon Central and regional school districts to align as closely as possible.
5. Advocacy
- a. Teacher Retention
 - b. S3440 - Revision of the definition of Sick Leave under 18A
 - i. The committee expressed appreciation for the addition of advocacy to the agenda.
6. Relevant Board Goals for follow-up:
- a. *Goal 2. Engage in activities that advocate for our community's needs.*
 - b. *Goal 4. To continue to improve communications and expand community engagement with all stakeholders. Our efforts will continue our focus on transparency, broadening our efforts beyond our locality, highlighting and celebrating district accomplishments with an emphasis on our sustainability/greening initiatives and developing collaborations with our local governmental entities.*
7. Press Releases Tentative Topics (Based on Communications Plan):
- a. February (due January 16) Budget: Budget Time of Year (Ms. Cerciello) and Kindergarten Registration Reminder (Ms. Harris)
 - b. March (due February 15): New Board Member Bios (Ms. Wolf) and Summer Enrichment (Mrs. Krial, Mrs. Ogden)
 - c. April (due March 15): Pupil Services (Mrs. Beegle) and Advertise Bioswale celebration (TBD)
8. Agenda items: Policy 5511, Policy 2560.01, Bylaw 0152, Bylaw 0161, Bylaw 0162, Policy 2423
9. Next Meeting: February 27, 2023 at 4pm