

Policy Committee Report

October 2023

Chairperson: Carolina Roberts-Santana

Committee Members: Toni Atkin, Travis Escobar

PPSD Staff: Andrea Gustafson

Responsibilities of the Policy Committee

- The Policy Committee is responsible for formulating written policies for the administration of schools. These policies are to be reviewed regularly and revised as necessary.
- We operate under School Policy 205, which provides a clear framework for the School Board's policy development, adoption, and review processes. Additionally, we refer to School Policy 206, which delineates the School Board's role in the development, approval, and review of school department regulations.
- Over the past two months, we have set specific goals to review multiple existing policies and ensure that regulations are developed to support these policies.

Summary of the October 5 Policy Committee Meeting

Review of TAP Biannual Review Document

- During the last policy committee meeting, we provided the district with feedback on the Turn Around Plan (TAP) Biannual Review document that was presented to the Board in the previous month's meeting.
- Per established mandates, both RIDE and PPSD are required to submit a Biannual Report to the Board for review. The document was initially sent to the Policy Committee for review and was subsequently referred to the Board for final approval.

Areas of Focus During the Review

1. **Pillars and Core Values:** The review of the document showed that the three pillars and four core values are effectively integrated into the TAP. This alignment is in accordance with established best practices in policy evaluation (Smith, 2018).
2. **Scorecard Progress:** The review revealed limited information about the progress on the scorecard. We recommended that leadership provide detailed updates on each scorecard measure to the committee and the community at large. Transparency can only be achieved when the community is well-informed.
3. **New Initiatives:** The TAP document did an excellent job in detailing activities and events. However, it was not clear how these activities relate to specific benchmarks or the scorecard. We suggested that future biannual and annual reviews should focus more on scorecard metrics.

Ideal Structure for Annual Review Presentations

- **Pillar:** The focal area for the last 6 months.
- **Benchmark:** A table featuring benchmark goals.
- **Progress:** Information on how the goals is being met or limitations if they are not. This should include any changes to existing benchmarks.
- **Initiatives:** Details on ongoing or planned activities aimed at meeting goals.
- **Recommendations for Improvement:** Suggestions based on analysis and feedback.
- **Next Steps:** Future initiatives and goals.

Results of the Meeting

- Various department leaders presented their sections of the presentation and provided some updates on progress. However, for transparency and thorough examination, we recommend that these updates be documented in writing, broken down by each pillar.

Specific Questions Asked by Board Members

- **Engaged Communities:** Questions were raised about the metrics for families with a favorable perception of being involved with their child's school.
- **Excellence in Learning:** The biannual report only addressed one benchmark. Questions were raised about using current or new systems to monitor performance.
- **World-Class Talent:** Board members inquired about metrics related to teacher retention and engagement strategies.
- **Efficient District Systems:** Questions were posed regarding delays in contracts and other system-level challenges.

Agenda for the Full Board Meeting on October 18

- Second reading and potential adoption of the Grading Policy.
- Second reading and potential adoption of the 8.2 - Bullying and Harassment Policy.

To discuss at future policy committee meetings:

- **Policy Audit** – Andrea Gustafson – To review existing policies that need to be shifted or deleted from existing regulations.
- **Policy Meeting Participation and Structure**
 - Incorporation of parent voices
 - Reaching out to existing PPSD parent leaders
 - Connecting with external parent representatives
 - Incorporation of student voices
 - Reaching out to R.E.S.P.E.C.T
 - Connecting with external student representatives
 - Development of subcommittees (Proposal)
 - **Academic-focused Working Group** with a focus on instructional policies. May overlap with Specialized Oversight for Special Education Policies.
 - **Operational Governance Working Group** with a focus on operational policies like student conduct, attendance, school board policies.
 - **Specialized Oversight Working Group** with a focus on specialized policies like equity and special education. This working group may work with both group to ensure equitable practices are in place.
- **Policies needing regulation by January 2023.**
 - 106 Racial and Ethnic Equity Policy
 - 401 Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) Policy
 - 402 Grading Policy
 - 417 Homeschool Policy
 - 502 Attendance Policy
 - 508 Bullying Policy
 - 511 Physical Restraint Policy

- **Policies proposed for review and status update by January 2023 (in numerical order)**
 - **205 School Board Policy Process** – the review of the policy shall occur every three years. The last policy review was November 10, 2008.
 - **206 School Board Review of Regulations** – the review of the policy is once every five years. The last policy review was November 10, 2008.
 - **Special Education Policies**
 - **413 Special Education Staffing** – Amended 2021. Reviewed annually. Missing administrative regulations. Need to have these policies align with MTSS. What is the role of MTSS in special education?
 - **Suspension Concern**
 - **507 Student Discipline Policy.** Last amended December 8, 2014. Annually and prior to July 1 of each school year the Superintendent will report to the School Board the number of suspensions (both in and out of school), exclusions, arrests of active/enrolled students during the school day or during after school activities, and trends in the scope and frequency of student misconduct. No regulations.
 - **506 Student Code of Conduct.** “Suspension and Exclusion” page 19 – 24. 44 pages. Not a policy. A guideline. Appendix C. Last amended 2017.
 - **Media Concerns**
 - **Media Policy** – consider changing this into an opt-out and not an opt-in policy.
 - **604 Use of Students in District Media.** Associated with 503 Students Rights and Responsibilities. Last approved 01/19/2022. Are there any regulations associated with this policy? How many districts are opt in? How many states are opt in? [FAQs on Photo and Videos under FERPA.](#)
 - **Baltimore City Public Schools has an opt out policy:**
<https://www.baltimorecityschools.org/opt-out>
 - **703 Social Media Policy** – amended 10/20/2021. Has associated regulations. Need clarification on whether it’s a policy or a regulation.
 - **800 Health and Wellness Concerns**
 - **801 Wellness Policy** – Last amended February 12, 2020. This policy is too broad and may be better if it focuses only on the Wellness components and then generates new regulations from it. Missing social emotional component. Needs to align with MTSS. Address Recess. Cross reference with **504 School Meal policy.**
 - **802 Tobacco Free Policy** – Last amended November 29, 2017. No regulations. Needs more information on vaping in schools. Align with MTSS, align with Wellness Policy.
 - **NEW – Crisis Intervention and Prevention – Social Emotional Learning and Mental Health team** – to include suicide prevention. To enhance **511 – Physical Restraint & Crisis Prevention.**
 - **904 School Closure and Consolidation Policy** - Last edited March 11, 1991

Open Invitation: We invite parents and community members to join the policy committee meeting on November 1, 2023. One of the primary goals of the meeting is to establish sub-committees and to increase parent and youth participation in policy formulation and review.