



Meeting Minutes Duval County Public Schools

February 25, 2025, Policy Handbook Review Committee Meeting

Ms. Charlotte D. Joyce, Chairman
Ms. April A. Carney, Vice-Chairman
Mr. Reginald Blount
Ms. Melody A. Bolduc
Ms. Cindy Pearson
Mr. Anthony Ricardo
Mr. Darryl D. Willie
Dr. Christopher Bernier, Superintendent

ATTENDANCE AT THIS MEETING OF THE DUVAL COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD: All Board Members were present. Dr. Christopher Bernier, Superintendent, and Mr. Ray Poole, Office of General Counsel, were also present. Board Member Reginald Blount arrived at 9:16 a.m. Board Member Melody A. Bolduc departed at 12:09 p.m.

Call Meeting to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:03 a.m.

Items to be Discussed

1. BOARD POLICY 9.63 - SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS/SCREENING PROCESS

Cami Sams, Executive Director of Policy and Compliance and Jacqueline Watkins, Interim Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, reviewed and explained the changes to Board Policies 9.63 Visitor Identification Measures and Policy 4.45 Chaperons for School Functions together.

Discussion involved:

- Level 2 screenings are for those serving as chaperons. What chaperons are permitted and not permitted to do.
- Level 1 screenings are for those serving as volunteers. What volunteers are permitted and not permitted to do.
- The policy was changed from saying that all volunteers would be required to have a Level 2 fingerprint.
- On Board Policy 9.63 B, add the word (Chaperon).
- Guess speakers are considered visitors, so they are not screened. They should never be alone with the children.
- Defining a visitor versus a chaperon.
- Use a visible identifier that distinguishes the different levels of screenings.

- Language about a volunteer being removed for inappropriate conduct towards students.
- A parent who has not had a Level 2 fingerprint cannot be left alone with students.
- This policy will cause some limitations for some people. Further conversation is needed.
- The effect this will have on parents who have already started paying or have paid for trips.
- The law does not go into effect until July 1, 2025.
- Compare the number of parents who have gone on field trips this year with the number of parents who will be going on field trips next year once the policy is enforced.
- There is no way to determine how many parents would have passed a Level 2 background check.
- A third-party may pay for the Level 2 screening.
- Dr. Bernier shared that there was no information regarding any other funding source other than the parents, the district, or a third-party volunteer. The representatives will defer to what the law says.
- Ray Poole, Office of General Counsel Attorney, shared information about there being people who harm children, and that the district needs to do Level 2 screenings.
- HB 301 - School Mapping Data Program.
- Finding funding for screenings is another conversation.
- Volunteer students under the age of 18 cannot serve as chaperons on a field trip.
- Students who are tutoring are never outside the sight of a licensed adult.
- Ms. Sams did a recap of the conversation.
- There will be a system-wide approach when distinguishing the identification of the screening types.
- Chaperons are encouraged not to be left alone with students, but there will be times on a field trip when the chaperon will have to be left alone with the students.
- Thoughts and conversation about the possibility of having two adults to be with the students.
- Determine if the word 'never' should be removed or not.

2. BOARD POLICY 4.45 - CHAPERONS AT SCHOOL FUNCTIONS

Discussed along with Board Policy 9.63.

3. BOARD POLICY 6.83 EMPLOYEE CONDUCT

Ms. Sams explained the changes to the policy.

Discussion involved:

- Personal or professional.
- Some off-duty comments are suitable for discipline if it impairs a person's effectiveness in the school district.
- This would have to be done in a case-by-case situation.
- Concern was expressed about 'personal use' based on the new law that came out.
- A person should not have to put in a disclaimer for their personal social media just because they work for the district.
- Need to focus on what employees are doing with students on their personal page.
- Briefly shared information about a case in Duval. Currently in litigation.
- Should not put something in policy that can't be policed.
- The important term is 'harm'. Threat to employee or student, the intent to do harm.
- Think about the value of the district and how the community views us.
- Add language, and let employees know they can post, but not if it is detrimental to the job they do with students.

- Offensive is subjective.
- The Board needs a history lesson regarding previous cases, discipline, and lawsuits involving free speech.
- Consider providing language to hold up the district's values - code of ethics.
- Consider adding the language about violation of the policy being case by case.
- Teachers are concerned about being penalized for events they may take part in, and their picture is taken and posted.
- Side employment, e-commerce opportunities.
- Bring policy back after the Board has had a history lesson.
- Conversation about personal view versus not representing the district.

4. BOARD POLICY 4.10 - THE CURRICULUM

Ms. Sams, Paula Renfro, Assistant Superintendent of Academics, and Heather Albritton, Director of Health and Physical Education, explained the changes to the policy.

Discussion involved:

- The current and future ways that parents are notified regarding the health curriculum that is being taught.
- Conversation about the co-ed lessons in grades 5th - 8th. Some parents are not aware of the lessons and how they are being taught.
- Since there is no opt-in, separate the students: boys and girls, instead of group.
- Various reasons why parents don't see the information.
- Don't want students to be uncomfortable.
- How the professionals are teaching the class. Annual training is provided.
- Feasibility.
- 7th grade reproduction lesson.
- The lessons are required, and parents may opt-out.
- State statute requires certain language in the lesson.
- Not every school district has 6th - 8th grade health. Standards can be taught in different settings and environments.
- Co-ed environment is not good for victims of abuse.
- Know the Line.
- Being more transparent, more accessible.
- Lesson on consent. Grades 7-12 - Teen dating violence addresses consent (healthy and unhealthy relationships).
- The number of middle schools versus the number of health teachers. This is a bring back.
- Students that do not identify with their birth gender or any gender at all.
- The federal executive order states that gender is defined as gender at birth.
- The districts that do not have health teachers ensure that others are trained so that the lessons are taught.
- Students that don't identify with a specific gender, their parents will submit a document for their student to be excluded from the lesson.
- Unwritten best practice.
- Policy will be brought back.

5. BOARD POLICY 2.14 - SUPERINTENDENT EVALUATION

Ms. Sams explained the changes to the policy.

Corey Wright, Assistant Superintendent of Accountability and Assessment, mentioned making some progress in the Evaluation Subcommittee regarding the evaluation instrument. When it came to the policy, OGC advised the Board to work with him as it relates to the policy. Therefore, Mr. Wright did not make any adjustments to the policy.

Chairman Joyce briefly mentioned about the discussion of the policy around the evaluation, and that each Board Member can have a discussion with Mr. Poole.

Mr. Poole stated he did not have a discussion with any of the Board Members, and that he was under the impression that the policy would still be worked on. Mr. Poole stated that he was not in town to meet with Board Members prior to the policy meeting. He offered to meet with members individually who had questions after the meeting.

Chairman Joyce mentioned about Mr. Wright and Mr. Poole working together, and that Mr. Poole would bring back a recommendation for the contract, the policy, and how it needs to work together.

6. BOARD POLICY 2.26 - BOARD MEETING & PROTOCOL

Ms. Sams explained the changes made to the policy.

Discussion involved:

- Board Policy 2.30 - Participation in Organizational Activities mentions about Board Members sharing information they have gained from the activities and programs they have participated in.
- Having the board travel on discussion provides a landing place for what is expected of the Board Members.
- Board Members could share information about their travel during For the Record.
- Under the Chair's Report, or Superintendent's Report, or somewhere near the top of the agenda was the suggestion for when Board Members could share information regarding their travel.
- It should be up to the Board Members to determine when they want to share information. There is an expectation for the Board Members to share based on Board Policy 2.30.
- Various times in which the Board Members have shared information about their travel.
- There does not need to be any redundancy in the policy.
- All Board Members have the opportunity and the right to attend a conference.
- New Board Members need the professional development that is offered at the conferences.
- Board Members can share their experiences during For the Record.
- Allocate time for an organization to speak at the meeting.
- The length of time representatives from employee groups speak during the meeting.
- Groups can speak with each Board Member at separate times outside of the meeting.
- Reports from designated committees. Change the word 'comments' to 'reports' on lines 14 and 15.
- Ms. Sams provided a recap of the conversation.

Recessed at 11:23 a.m.

7. BOARD POLICY 4.30 - CHALLENGED MATERIALS

Reconvened at 11:36 a.m.

Ms. Sams shared that Board Member Ricardo had some questions regarding Board Policy 4.30 Challenged Materials.

Board Member Ricardo shared the following:

- He had a conversation with Ms. Renfro.
- Concerned about how long it takes to pick a committee, the time it takes for the committee to read the material, make a decision, and present the recommendation.
- There is a need to consider the amount of material the committee must review and limit the number of titles.
- A suggestion was made for sixty days to get a committee, 30 days for a decision, and a limitation of eight titles.
- When a book is challenged, there needs to be time parameters around when the work is done.
- A discussion about what causes a delay was had.
- The number of books and the timeframe for the committee to be together.
- The committee.
- Challenged materials are removed from circulation.
- Consider allowing Board Members to appoint a member of their community to the committee.
- There is no list of approved books.
- Verify if by statute there is a requirement as to who should be on the committee.
- Florida statute requires an approved online classroom library list for elementary schools. This is still an ongoing process for Duval.
- Bringbacks to be prepared by the staff are as follows: statutory requirements, best practice, what the selection process is to be, and the recommendations.
- Meetings must be publicly noticed and open to the public in accordance with Florida statute.
- Confirmation will be provided about the committee voting when making a decision.
- Consider adding language to make sure there is an odd number of committee members to prevent a deadlock.
- Allow the Superintendent to complete the work around the request that has been made.
- The current committee makes a recommendation to the Board, and the Board makes the final decision.

~~8. BOARD POLICY 6.08 – APPOINTMENT OR EMPLOYMENT REQUIREMENTS~~

9. BOARD POLICY 6.12 - EMPLOYMENT OF ATHLETIC COACHES

Ms. Sams reviewed the changes to the policy. There was no discussion.

10. BOARD POLICY 6.45 - PERSONNEL FILES

Ms. Sams reviewed the changes to the policy. There was no discussion.

11. BOARD POLICY 6.57 - ANNUAL LEAVE

Ms. Sams reviewed the changes to the policy. There was no discussion.

12. BOARD POLICY 6.61 - BEREAVEMENT LEAVE

Ms. Sams reviewed the changes to the policy. There was no discussion.

13. BOARD POLICY 6.67 - TEMPORARY DUTY ELSEWHERE

Ms. Sams reviewed the changes to the policy. Anita Smith, Executive Director of Employee Support, confirmed what Ms. Sams had stated. There was no discussion.

14. BOARD POLICY 6.73 - SUSPENSION AND DISMISSAL

Ms. Sams reviewed the changes to the policy. There was no discussion.

15. BOARD POLICY 6.78 - DEFERRED RETIREMENT OPTION PROGRAM (DROP)

Ms. Sams deferred the explanation of the changes to this policy to Ms. Smith and Ms. Watkins.

Discussion involved:

- The change is a good benefit.
- Instructional staff were the only ones previously allowed to extend DROP. Individuals in DROP for five years can now go to eight years. Those in the classroom can extend to ten years. Helpful for retention.
- When an employee may enter DROP was explained.
- Workshops are conducted to educate members.
- These are legislative changes that have occurred.
- Administrative extension.

Adjournment

1. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 12:18 p.m.

GC

Superintendent

Chairman