

Policy Committee Minutes
Tuesday, December 10, 2013
3:00PM

Present: Jonathan Blumberg, Jim Martin, Tom Benton, Christine Kushner, Bill Fletcher, Kevin Hill, Susan Evans, Zora Felton, Monika Johnson-Hostler, Marvin Connelly, James Merrill.
Staff Members: Todd Wirt, John Williams, Brian Pittman, James Overman, Clinton Robinson.

Welcome and Introductions

- Jim Martin called the meeting to order at: 3:04:03
- Jim Martin open by saying committees have not yet been reconstituted. We have a quorum of the committee, no need to deputize anyone.
- Welcomed guests.
- Shuffle of order for today's meeting
 - First, Policy 3610-Professional Learning Teams
 - Second, Policy 6410-Code of Student Conduct
 - Third, Policy 5532-Acceleration and Grading Systems
 - We may not have a policy that comes out of this meeting that will go to the Board. The work does not mean the action has been decided.
 - Goal is to be in place for the next school year.
- A motion was made to approve the minutes for June 25, 2013, September 24, 2013, and October 29, 2013.
- All in Favor.
- Minutes are approved.

NOTE: Change of Order

Policy 3610-Professional Learning Teams and R&P

#1 Agenda Item

- Cathy Moore presented the policy and commented that a good portion of the policy that read more like an R&P. Suggested to move that language to R&P and maintain a broad statement at the front around the support of the Board and the implementation of PLTs at our schools.
- Changes in yellow in the first (2) paragraphs would be the totality of the policy.
- Move Roles and Responsibilities to R&P.
- Jim Martin suggested looking at the policy components.
- Question was asked how PLTs interact with response to instruction (RtI) and how they support initiatives.
- Cathy Moore responded-RtI as a framework that guides how decisions are made. The framework will guide how they make decisions and talk about core instruction and move students into different tiers. Work of the PLT is related to RtI where student are on their Formative assessments and Benchmark assessments, to identify the needs of different groups of students.
- Clarification was made that PLT's will meet one hour per week for every school-based certified staff. Referenced R&P 3610, A-PLT.
- PLT schedules are submitted to the Area Superintendent's in the beginning of the school year. PLT's can also meet centrally as a district, or as a virtual meeting.
- Zora Felton used an example of PLT at her school every Wednesday for one hour. PLT's are very valuable. Talked about collaboration being very important.
- The Committee agrees:
 - All certified staff should participate in a PLT.
 - All PLTs should meet on a regular basis.
- Suggestions:
 - Should be a part of your educational school day.

- Suggestion to scratch the first opening sentence and change it to: **Team-based collaboration is an important means to continuous improvement and the achievement of schools and school system goals.**
- Jim Martin referenced R&P-B. Early Release Days and asked if this is a PLT or Professional Development? What are we trying to do in the policy and the associated R&P?
- Jim Martin summarized that Policy should define: the What, That it Be Done, and Why? R&P should define the How.
- Cathy Moore responded that we will pare it down then bring back to committee the Policy and R&P. Added the Definition of Early Release Day-tend to support PLT activities.
- Kevin Hill asked if PLT's will meet whenever there is an early release day?
- Jim Martin recommended reading through the R&P and sending your revisions to Cathy Moore & Todd Wirt. Keep this question in mind: If I were a principal what would be useful to have in this R&P?
- The Committee agrees that:
 - Take introduction out of the R&P.
 - First paragraph the way we currently have it.
 - That it be expected.
- Susan Evans commented to take out in the R&P *what the board shall do and what the superintendent shall do.*
- 32:16

Policy 6410-Code of Student Conduct

#2 Agenda Item 32:37

- Marvin Connelly presented Level I Violations
 - Feedback was received from council
 - 1st paragraph page 2, Add: parent/guardian.
 - Instead of saying on 4th violation, say on the 3rd Violation-offer option to parent to come in. See the last sentence.
 - Level I violations are less serious.
 - Result in-school consequences. Intent of school is to implement in-school interventions on the first 3 violations in a semester.
 - Level I shall not result in a long-term suspension.
 - *Changes: On the ~~4th~~ 3rd violation prior to suspending a student out of school the principal shall offer a final option of the parent/guardian attending a conference for the school to explain behavioral and academic expectations for the student.*
- Kevin Hill expressed a gray area in the first 3 levels. Asked if all schools have the capacity to offer Alternative Learning Center or in-school? Do we have staff, funding. I cannot support this the way it is written.
- Marvin Connelly responded saying there are ALC Coordinator's for every HS and ALC Coordinator's for secondary schools.
- Marvin Connelly stated all students may not go to ALC who receives a L1 suspension. If the behavior is significant enough principal may look at level II.
- Tom Benton would like to see data on the number of students suspended for first Level I offense.
- Marvin Connelly responded for Level I suspensions-schools are documented. In-school suspensions (interventions). See Handout. Numbers are going down. Schools are using more in-school suspensions.
- Jim Martin added overuse of level I. Reports would provide consistency. Commented on Financial Aid Applications and that they do show a student's suspension.
- Cathy Moore responded on Financial Aid applications-never found a child where this became an issue. Wrote many letter to college admissions. The college would be able to tell you this, not us, if this is why a child was denied entry.
- Christine Kushner asked about Level II class and activity disturbance and how serious is this disturbance. School transportation violations will all be a level II.
- Susan Evans added to bring policy to a higher level. It already says to meet. Being so specific in policy will accomplish the goal we are trying to accomplish.

- Marvin Connelly added on a Level II to Level III-Principals may put in description *aggravating factors*. Warrant Short-term up to a Long-term suspension. Result in in-school consequences. If a principal needs to for a first time to suspend a student out-of-school, then in the description the principal would add aggravating circumstances that warranted it to an out-of-school suspension.
- Kevin Hill added that this makes sense. Needs to be better training across the district.
- Jim Merrill added if the intent worked, you would not need the detailed policy. A principal may elect to suspend on a first offence in consultation with the Area Superintendent for a check and balance. We try to keep them in school. Still gives the principal the ultimate option. Assuring a minimum level offer before you go to suspension.
- Tom Benton asked for data on out of school suspensions for class attendance.
- Marvin Connelly added that we continue to look at data and continue to have conversations with principals and work with Area Superintendent's so they can have a conversation with principals on why rubric on tardiness is high at some schools. What is happening at some schools driving this?
- Jonathan Blumberg gave clarification on the yellow language. Revised to say: *from the 4th to the 3rd parent/guardian. Principals may suspend with fewer than 3 violations after consultation with the Area Superintendent.*
- Jim Martin made a recommendation to strike: *for the same offense.*
- Marvin Connelly added there are different cultures in schools. Efforts to get some consistency across the district.
- Bill Fletcher added that some schools are over suspending on mild level I violations.
- Marvin Connelly responded saying they continue to train principals on what should be an Level II or a Level I, profanity, not doing what teachers asked them to do would be a Level II.
- Bill Fletcher asked how the new policy improves effective administration of the school.
- Jim Merrill responded in addition to consistency seeking to assure enough interventions before pulling the plug with the suspension lever.
- Christine Kushner expressed there is inconsistency. Repeat language and trying to get more precision at the school. Adding the Area Superintendent, to crises situations that might come up. Generally, Level I should result in-school intervention in lieu of out-of-school suspension. Level of tolerance that teachers have.
- Zora Felton added what some students consider to be disrespectful, others do not. Different cultural backgrounds, don't see that they did anything wrong. What is the level of tolerance for teachers?
- Marvin Connelly brought up the Effective Teacher Framework and it has a module on cultural competence.
- Monika Johnson–Hostler talked about consequences, behavior, redirects and interventions. We can redirect with consistent consequences.
- Jonathan Blumberg summarized by saying all agrees that Level I should not be out of school suspensions. Principal needs to retain discretion in extreme cases. Take existing policy before suspending out of school would consult with the Area Superintendent or we need more specific direction.
- Jim Martin responded there needs to be a board decision rather than a policy committee decision. A general agreement defines the circumstance and consults with the Area Superintendent, if you are going to elevate it. Do we add that to existing language or modified version? Thumbs up for a recommendation to take it to full board.
- Committee Agreed on:
 - To add description of aggravating circumstance
 - Consult with the Area Superintendent
- Susan Evans added maintaining (3) violations and giving the staff at the school an alternative. If this is a repeat offender elevate the consequences for repeat offenders.
- Jim Martin summarized agreements. Strike: *of the same rule, 4th becomes 3rd. Add Parent/Guardian*
- Jim Martin asked if we should bring to the Board or should we bring to the Work Session?
- Kevin Hill recommended taking to the Board.
- Jim Martin asked for a thumbs-up on working from New Draft –Voted 6 to 1. The Chair voted in favor of the New Draft which makes it a vote of 7 to 1. **NOTE: Only Committee Members can vote**
- Decision to come as a first reading to the Full Board.

- Agreement to Strike I-10-in Level I because this is written in Level II.

4:31PM

Policy 5532-Acceleration and Academic Advancement

#3 Agenda Item 1:27:51

- Todd Wirt made a recommendation to discuss this policy at the next Work Session with the Full Board. **Credit by Demonstrated Mastery** policy, which is now an LEA option to implement for the 2014-15 school year. Share full details and what it would take to implement this policy. Ask Board to make recommendations and get feedback and will revisit this policy.
- Christine Kushner presented feedback from discussion of the Knightdale Work Group.
 - AIG coordinators are driven by how many AIG students you have.
 - Schools with critical mass of students have more identified.
 - Low numbers, less employment for AIG coordinators.
 - There is an imbalance with resources and what the results are. Concern that had been raised.
 - Balance, identifying students, getting opportunities to students, and having equity across the county.
- Jim Martin asked at what level should identifications be the purview of the school or the purview a broader group or Area Superintendent's.
- Kevin Hill asked on B1A-Curriculum Compacting- teachers are to give a pretest before every unit of study.
- Todd Wirt expressed that is an option for acceleration.
- Jim Martin asked if any other issues on this policy. Discussion will continue on the following:
 - School based vs. System based perspective
 - Credit by Demonstrated Mastery
 - Curriculum Compacting
 - Note- careful on what definition means for early graduation in Early college High Schools

Policy 5520-Grading Systems

#4 Agenda Item 1:36:00

- Todd Wirt shared updates from the last committee meeting. We have collected feedback from principals.
- Brian Pittman- Presented Middle School feedback from principals;
 - Principals are supportive of policy and the revised R&P.
 - Had ability to differentiate based on building and culture within that building.
 - R&P was already put in place and was already working.
 - Specific feedback- putting some definitions on academic behaviors and what does the rubric look like.
 - A 1- General Guidelines /Homework - suggested add clarity to definition and expectations.
 - How to give really effective feedback on homework.
 - 4. Reteaching/Reassessment-What are the different forms of reassessment. Only tests are the only form of reassessments. See a variety of avenues.
 - Options to explore on: *Once the reassessment is completed the higher of the two grades will be recorded*
 - Teacher work load
- Christine Kushner asked if they were comfortable with classroom behaviors being reported separately.
- Brian Pittman- Principals are comfortable with the idea. This has been a conversation for many years. There is a need to be looking at achievement and academic behaviors. How we define academic behavior?
- John Williams presented feedback from High Schools;
 - Agreed on feedback Middle School collected.
 - Go back to HS group and ask this Question. If the BOE is not going to support a unilateral statement what is appropriate or inappropriate in grading policy then are we okay to develop a school wide policy?
 - Zero recovery plan
 - Shrink the up range
 - Retesting

- Make up work
 - Consistency within course content or PLT
 - Focus on learning objectives and grades.
 - Put in parameters for retesting
 - Specific language about homework
 - Timeliness for grade reporting
 - Academic behavior should not be included in a grade for content or subject. Referenced A 2. Policy 5520- *While academic behaviors influence student learning, they are reported separately and will not be included in a student's academic grade.*
 - Focus on learning objectives and grades recording as part of the grade. i.e., turning in work late.
- Susan Evans asked about consistencies in a subject course. Desire at system wide to have some level of consistency.
 - Todd Wirt responded saying these would be general guidelines. If a student within a department follow these guidelines using a point system.
 - John Williams asked should one HS have the same consistence practice as another HS? We are beyond that point.
 - Todd Wirt expressed that we have an opportunity to create something meaningful.
 - Susan Evans expressed that she appreciates the work from the principals and very valuable feedback and the solicited input from the teachers as well. Also, the Teacher advisory council that Dr. Merrill is setting up.
 - Jim Martin added this is a continuing effort to make sure we're listening and getting the right input.
 - Bill Fletcher commented on Level I violations and academic behavior and what do we expect our students to do.
 - Susan Evans stated that she has not given thumbs up for A2 in this policy.
 - Jim Martin made a motion to adjourn 5:05PM
 - All in Favor.

5:05PM Adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by:

Dr. Jim Martin, Policy Committee Chair Date

Dr. James G. Merrill, Superintendent Date

Jan Macpherson, Recording Secretary Date

Christine Kushner, Board Chair Date