

**Columbia Board of Education Policy Committee
Meeting Minutes**

December 11, 2014

Members Present:

Board:	Mr. Jonathan Sessions (Chair) Ms. Jan Mees Mr. James Whitt
CPS:	Dr. Peter Stiepleman Ms. Melinda Adams
Community Member:	Mr. Ben Trachtenberg
Ex-Officio:	Ms. Susan McClintic/CMNEA Ms Susie Adams/CMSTA
Guests:	Ms. Carla London, Supervisor Student & Family Advocacy Mr. Jim Cherrington, Director Business Services

Opening

The meeting was called to order by Mr. James Whitt at 4:32 p.m.

Mr. Trachtenberg motioned meeting minutes from November 17, 2014 be approved. Ms. Mees seconded and all voted in favor to approve.

Mr. Sessions introduced and welcomed guests.

Board Updates

Ms. Adams mentioned policies presented to the Board December 8th for Consent Agenda were approved.

Policy JG-R Student Discipline

Ms. London reviewed and provided brief explanation of Policy JG-R and some of the additions and clarifications included in the revised language such as adding “cyberbullying”, broadening of the section for “Sexual Explicit, Vulgar or Violent Material” to include explicit use of the term “sexting”, as well as out of school suspension being removed as a first consequence option for many offenses and suggestion of limiting it to situations where the student’s presence at school represents danger to others.

She noted the section for “Nuisance Items” relating to items such as MP3 players and games and shared that language was revised to have personal electronic devices removed. Dr. Stiepleman noted the district has some “bring your own device” language in a separate policy for devices acceptable for educational use.

The group discussed truancy, out of school suspension as a form of discipline, and the impact of suspensions on student grades. Ms. London noted page nine states “As with any absences, those due to out of school suspension may result in the student earning a lower grade”, and mentioned the district allows makeup work for other absences.

Dr. Stiepleman feels out of school suspension is ineffective as a discipline for truancy. Ms. London said some situations substantiate out of school suspension, but also noted that the ACE program helps prevent students from missing instruction.

Discussion continued regarding the necessity or lack of value regarding suspending students for truancy.

A lengthy discussion continued regarding whether or not this policy allows for lowering a student's grade solely because of the suspension, or if there are other reasons for the impact on grades (i.e., missed assignments, missed instruction).

The group decided that clarification was needed in the policy.

Mr. Sessions asked if we should strike some of the language from the policy and Ms. Adams asked if anyone had issues with language being removed. There were none.

- **Action:** Dr. Stiepleman motioned revision to change language of Policy JG-R as follows: 1) Under Consequences for Truancy or Tardiness on page nine, to insert the word "or" after detention, and to strike the words "or out of school suspension", and 2) Under Impact on Grades, page nine, eliminate the entire paragraph that beginning with "As with any absence...." before presenting to the Board as Tier 2 - First Read. Mr. Whitt and Ms. Mees seconded. Dr. Stiepleman also commented he would include the policy specifically addressing absences in his Friday update to the Board so they have opportunity review before seeing the suggested changes for JG-R in the January board meeting.

Policy GBCA – Staff Conflict of Interest

Mr. Sessions introduced Jim Cherrington and asked him to open discussion on Policy GBCA – Staff Conflict of Interest. Mr. Cherrington said the policy is self-explanatory and noted recommended revisions on page 2, item 6. It is similar to policy BDFA, which was approved in September.

Various types of gifts and their value were discussed, including combined gift from several sets of parents.

Discussion continued regarding what constituted a gift, and how a \$50.00 value did not seem reasonable.

- **Action:** Mr. Session motioned policy GBCA Staff Conflict of Interest be revised to remove comma and text of "students or parents" on page 2, item 6, and the value changed to \$100, and policy put on Tier 2 – First Read for Board January 12th. Mr. Whitt seconded, and decision was approved.

Mr. Sessions added he did not have issue with gifts from vendors including social events and meals

Policies GCBA and GCBA-R – Professional Staff Salary Schedules

Mr. Sessions opened discussion stating that GCBA-R, item 5, addresses how experienced teachers new to the district can receive credit for prior experience. This process has created inequity now because teachers who have been with us for 11 years and have experienced their salary being frozen, are at a lower salary level compared to a newly hired teacher coming into the district with 11 years of experience who is granted full salary for that experience.

Ben Trachtenberg requested clarification that the policy we are reviewing is current policy not a proposed revision. Mr. Sessions and Ms. Adams concurred that this was existing policy.

The group discussed the challenges of recruitment vs. retention and the impact on morale.

Dr. Stiepleman asked if language should be inserted to make provision for when the district is able to restore the frozen year's salary, then all teachers would be able to move to the step on the schedule where they should be.

Explanation/clarification was presented regarding how the current hiring scales are applied and how “frozen years” impact teachers.

Mr. Trachtenber asked how a new employee to CPS was handled when they had eight years’ of experience in another district, but two of those were frozen. The group responded they would be hired in at eight years’ experience at CPS. Ms. McClintic added there had been employees who resigned at a frozen level, who were able to return to CPS later at a higher level.

Ms. McClintic commented our current process negatively impacts the district due to costs of training new employees and felt funds would be better spent honoring the employees with longevity. She added she would like the policy to reflect language stating if there is a freeze again, it doesn’t change, and when funds are released we disperse them to the frozen employees as soon as possible. She added while new, highly experienced teachers are a great asset, they should not be paid more than those currently employed with the district, and making the suggested revisions would take some responsibility off of the board of deciding where they will make cutbacks.

Mr. Trachtenberg asked if changes would reduce our ability to recruit new teachers. Dr. Stiepleman responded it may if we were a St. Louis or Kansas City, but didn’t feel it would for our area.

Ms. Adams explained how many employees were hired at each step in 2014-15.

Clarification was made that less than one year experience is Step 1 and this is where most employees come in. Mr. Sessions clarified there is nothing below Step 1. Ms. Mees stated this is an important situation and offered support for equity and improving the morale of our teachers. She added teachers remain in Step 1 for four years before being allowed to move up, unless they have a master’s degree, when they are allowed to move up after three years. Ms. Adams shared we have similar steps with all of our non-teacher jobs and that we should address all positions the same.

Ms. Adams commented job hires are completed in January and perhaps we could relay to new hires that their entry step would be one year less than their experience, but we shouldn’t promise anything yet.

- **Action:** Mr. Sessions proposed the committee review policy GCBA-R again to consider the financial end of this in January, and to develop revision language that can be presented to the board. Mr. Cherrington or Ms. Quinley may be asked to attend.

January – June 2015 Policy Committee meeting schedule

- **Action:** Decision was made to set schedule for January and February meetings on Monday, January 26, 2015 and Monday, February 23, 2015, from 4:30-5:30 p.m were approved.

Mr. Sessions motioned that the meeting be adjourned. Mr. Whitt seconded and meeting was adjourned at 5:22 p.m.