

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

April 27, 2015 - APPROVED

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**Members Present:**

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| Board:                           | Mr. Jonathan Sessions (Chair)<br>Ms. Jan Mees<br>Mr. James Whitt           |
| CPS:                             | Dr. Peter Stiepleman<br>Ms. Melinda Adams (arrived late)                   |
| Community Member:<br>Ex-Officio: | Mr. Ben Trachtenberg<br>Ms. Susan McClintic/CMNEA<br>Ms. Susie Adams/CMSTA |
| Guests:                          | Mr. Kyle Picolla/PROMO<br>Ms. Kerri Schaefer/University of Missouri        |

***Opening***

The meeting was called to order 4:35 pm by Mr. Sessions.

**Old Business**

***Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes***

Ms. McClintic requested that page three of the previous meeting minutes from April 27, 2015 be revised to indicate policy was to go before the Board, rather than continue in review by Policy Committee.

***Policy GBCA – Staff Conflict of Interest***

The committee recapped discussion of Item #9 on page four. Since the Board had not reached a consensus on a defined dollar amount, Ms. Quinley approved going back to the previous language which stated “employees will not accept gifts of substantial value”. Dr. Stiepleman mentioned another reason this comes back to the committee was due to the language on page three under “Independent Contractor Services” as it posed some concerns for the cabinet pertaining to employees as contractors. Ms. Mees inquired about spouses of employees who may be vendors.

Mr. Trachtenberg asked if referenced Senate Bill 719 was a law. It is. He also asked if there was any guidance for employees regarding teacher’s acceptance of gifts. At this time, the district has not been in a position where a gift has been an issue and responds to each incidence as presented. The group discussed various gift and grant amounts and decided to reinsert the wording of “substantial value” keeping the amount undefined.

Ms. Susie Adams pointed out the process on gifts stops with approval of the Board and employees are not asked to obtain approval from their immediate supervisor. Ms. Mees was in favor of adding “or the employee’s immediate supervisor” to the language as it is the supervisor’s responsibility to understand policy and afford an expedient response to an employee. Mr. Sessions added Ms. Quinley was amenable to aligning this with the Board’s policy. Some federal policies have gift limitations of \$20 - \$50.00 within a year’s time and as long as it doesn’t exceed that amount the employee can accept. Mr. Sessions pointed out the issue with CPS policy is whether someone could use a gift to sway a vote or grade, etc.

Ms. Mees suggested adding the employee's immediate supervisor. Mr. Trachtenberg acknowledged this won't define whether a gift is substantial but it will provide discussion. Mr. Whitt requested that this policy be reviewed again in April 2016 and Mr. Sessions agreed.

- **Action:** Mr. Sessions motioned that we modify language on page 4, Item #9 so it reads as follows: "Employees will not accept gifts of substantial value from vendors, students or parents unless authorized by the Board of Education or the employee's immediate supervisor", and asked for a motion to take this to the Board for Tier 2 – First Read. Ms. Mees motioned and Mr. Trachtenberg seconded. All were in favor.

#### ***Policy GBCBC - Staff Absences and Tardiness***

Mr. Sessions brought forward discussion on this policy though it was not on the agenda. He stated that he'd received comments from the Board and would bring them before the committee at next meeting before going to the board.

#### ***Policy GBCC – Staff Use of Communication Devices Update***

(This cabinet reviewed the policy and would like for the principals to discuss)

#### ***Policy GCBA/GCBA-R – Professional Staff Salary Schedules Update***

Dr. Stiepleman said this policy needed further review by the Finance Committee, and they are scheduled to review it during the May meeting.

### **New Business**

#### ***Gender Identity/Gender Expression Discussion***

Mr. Sessions welcomed guests Kyle and Kerri. He relayed Dr. Tager, Ph.D., a licensed psychologist in Columbia, had approached him about presenting the topic of transgender identity to the district, and Kyle and Kerri were here today to represent Dr. Tager.

Kyle works with Promoting Equality for All Missourians (PROMO) and explained their goal of bringing understanding and non-discrimination to communities. He wanted to discuss transgender expression for CPS policy as they realize not everyone has met someone who has gone through this process. He shared that in general terms, transgender expression sums up how a person desires to live out a more authentic self rather than their gender assigned at birth. The goal is to educate people so they're more comfortable with transgender persons and including this in district policy would provide protection and understanding for students and employees. Ms. Melinda Adams asked about the numbers of transgender individuals today to help understand trends. Kyle responded there had not been much record keeping. Dr. Stiepleman added just as we would not discriminate against race or religion, he felt strongly we should also not discriminate against transgender persons.

Kerri, Psychological Resident with University of Missouri, shared the University of Missouri has developed policy language to address transgender identity and how doing so provided allowance for name transition, and helps people navigate more easily within the educational system. Kyle suggested that PROMO recommends CPS add language to educate staff, and Kerri added it is beneficial as EEO is difficult to follow through due to existing disparity.

Discussion followed regarding how to handle athletic teams and facility issues. Kerri also represents the Transgender Health Network which was opened by three professional healthcare providers committed to increasing individual's access to quality and sensitive appropriate healthcare. One issue at MU relates to residence halls and campus restroom facilities. In the past, many students that identified with transgender didn't have a way to network with other students in similar situations or have communities available that

were aware of what transgender was. They're now seeing students recognizing the identification and learning how to live with it earlier than before. MU residence halls are based on sex defined at birth, however, MU has drafted revision for how to address this in the fall of 2015.

Mr. Trachtenberg asked if there are other districts (universities) that have drafted policy and pointed out they may have education they could provide and we could compare what other districts are doing in regard to athletic associations, restroom facilities, and locker rooms. Kyle said he would get information to us. Similar to how organizations would not fire someone for being gay or lesbian, they should neither fire someone for transgender identity. He added that there is reverse fear that transgender persons will be aggressive and it is normally the other way around. In instances where provisions are in place, violent acts decrease.

Dr. Stiepleman asked if Title 7 already protects a transgender in a situation and asked what we can adopt in our policies to educate staff for what to do when someone comes to ask what the district will do for their child when their child's identity has changed (we're already hearing about this).

Mr. Sessions said policy-wise it is an easy direction. Policy AC, and JG-R which is our bullying policy, references punishments and enumerates items in the policy. Our policy AC includes sexual orientation and some areas in JG-R do not align with AC. He asked if they need to be amended, whether we enumerate gender identity and gender expression or not, and believes it may be a procedural issue. Mr. Trachtenberg felt we should do more than what is required, and added the Supreme Court has not yet advised on this to the letter.

Ms. Mees asked if we had spoken to MSBA. Ms. Melinda Adams confirmed we had and shared MSBA does not have specific policy right now, but provided us with procedures from Kansas City. They said Title 7 covers transgender through existing language, but MSBA did not have a lot of input for how to handle locker rooms, etc. Kyle said if we decide to import policy, he can provide information and added it is better to be prepared before any situations occur. Mr. Sessions added City of Columbia has language in their policy.

Kerri provided information from the 2011 Survey of the National Transgender Discrimination to help explain what some of these kids are facing. She directed the committee to the Missouri percentages regarding how many students had experienced harassment and assault and how many left their districts because of it. She said transgender students experience mental health issues from negative experiences. When policies are implemented and a student can begin to live as they see themselves, mental health issues are reduced.

Ms. Susie Adams asked what help we could offer those students who have parents in conflict with their student's identities. Ms. McClintic will request best practice information from MNEA and should have this information within a couple of weeks. Kyle pointed out it is best for transgender individuals to feel protected so they can attend school and focus on learning, adding that success of a student who is protected is comparably different than a transgender student in a district without a policy.

Dr. Stiepleman asked if we should bring this before the Board as 1<sup>st</sup> read. Ms. McClintic felt it best to gather additional information and background from districts outside CPS. Mr. Session stated we may also want to update JG-R to include transgender identity and expression as well.

Mr. Whitt pointed out there is an educational portion as well as policy portion and encouraged the group that the district needed to be very clear on where we stand and our approach forward. The group discussed adjusting policy, looking into supporting statutes, and gathering information on procedures over the

summer, with the goal of placing this on the committee agenda and possible Board review in the fall to be best prepared on how we would answer questions and handle situations before implementing policy.

Kyle stated 16 other cities had passed ordinances, but said the State has a non-discrimination law that does not include sexual orientation and gender identity, and there is not a bill proposed for this year's session.

- **Action:** Mr. Sessions recommended presenting revised language for two CPS policies including gender identity and gender expression as well as addressing our bullying policy.

#### ***Upcoming Policy Committee Meeting Schedule***

Group discussed alternate dates for May committee meeting and agreed on May 26<sup>th</sup>, 2015.

Ms. Mees asked when new committee appointments are made. Mr Whitt said it will be approved in May. Committee chairs will be expected to meet in June to layout mini-dates for upcoming year and will encourage all new committee members to attend.

Mr. Trachtenberg moved we adjourn. Ms. Mees seconded. All approved. Meeting adjourned at 5:39 p.m.