

BOARD OF EDUCATION OF THE CITY OF PLAINFIELD
IN UNION COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

MINUTES of a **POLICY COMMITTEE** Meeting of the Board of
Education Held on Tuesday, July 12, 2011

A **POLICY COMMITTEE** Meeting of the Board of Education of the City of Plainfield was held this day in the Plainfield High School, conference room. Notice had been provided to Board members and to the Courier-News, Star Ledger, Public Library, City Clerk, Plainfield Police Department, and posted in all Plainfield Public schools. Mr. Gary L. Ottmann, Board Secretary called the meeting to order at 6:45 p.m. and the following action took place:

I. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

II. WELCOME

WELCOME to a Policy Committee Meeting of the Board of Education of the City of Plainfield. Members hope you will find the meeting interesting and informative. We thank you for taking the time to attend. Please be advised that this and all meetings of the Board are open to the media and public, consistent with the OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT (Ch. 231 Laws of 1975), and that advance notice required therein has been provided to the Courier News and Star Ledger on Thursday, July 7, 2011 for advertisement on Saturday, July 9, 2011.

III. ROLL CALL

PRESENT

Mrs. Renata A. Hernandez, President
Mrs. Wilma G. Campbell, Vice President
Mr. Rasheed Abdul-Haqq
Mr. Alex O. Edache, arr. @ 6:50 p.m.
Mrs. Brenda Gilbert
Mr. Dorien Hurtt, arr. @ 6:50 p.m.
Ms. Jameelah Surgeon

ALSO PRESENT

Mrs. Anna Belin-Pyles, Interim Superintendent, left @ 8:00 p.m.
Gary L. Ottmann
Mr. Robert Pickett, Esq.
Ms. Lauren Craig, Esq.

Mrs. Lisa C. Logan-Leach, absent

Mrs. Hernandez would like to establish an attendance policy for the Board. If NJ School Boards does not have a policy on attendance, we will draft one and assign our own file number.

Mrs. Hernandez supports the six (6) absences per year April – March; Mr. Abdul-Haqq inquired if Board policy could be more strict than state requirement. Mr. Pickett indicated “no”.

Mrs. Gilbert has a problem with “pigeon holing” adults with regard to the attendance issue.

Mrs. Campbell believes that it is a board member’s responsibility to give notice if they cannot attend a meeting.

Mrs. Hernandez indicated that we will not go outside of the law in developing an attendance policy.

Mr. Edache thinks that the President is going above and beyond what is necessary.

The Board agreed that they will not bring back Policy 9114 for further discussion.

Mrs. Gilbert wants a policy that addresses disrespect of board members by board members.

The concern is whether "Robert Rules of Order" govern Plainfield board meetings.

Mr. Edache is concerned about making too many rules for governing the Board. He also wanted to know if we have a policy that requires parents to come to school a minimum number of times per year.

Mr. Edache inquired if the sample policies 9325 were from Abbot Districts. Mr. Ottmann indicated that only Hoboken was an Abbot district. The Board directed administration to obtain more 9325 policies from Abbot Districts.

Mrs. Hernandez reviewed the draft "Board Brief" that would be written by the Board President.

Ms. Surgeon thought it would touch more "hot button" items.

Mrs. Hernandez said the point is not to duplicate meeting minutes. She commented that it will be a two-sided page brief.

Mrs. Campbell asked how it will be given out. Mrs. Hernandez said the District website and board meetings.

Mrs. Campbell thought that the brief would have more "highlights" from board meetings. She thought we would be going in a different direction.

There will be a one week window for board members to review the brief before it is published.

There was board consensus to proceed with the Board Brief.

Board Vacancy

Mrs. Hernandez viewed Policy 9113 and the latitude that the Board has in filling the vacancy. She feels that we should appoint someone as soon as possible.

Mrs. Campbell believes by the opening of school we need to have nine (9) members in place.

Mr. Abdul-Haqq was in favor of accepting applications from interested candidates.

Mr. Pickett also reviewed the process for replacing a board member if one is removed as a result of the new legislation.

Mr. Hurtt inquired what the process would be for obtaining names of potential board candidates. He would like procedures defined.

Mrs. Gilbert is in favor of opening up the vacancy to community applicants. That would be a fair process.

Mr. Pickett emphasized that there is nothing illegal about appointing a new board member.

Mr. Hurtt indicated that he was not aware that the Board would be making a decision tonight on filling the board vacancy.

Mr. Hurtt moved, seconded by Mrs. Hernandez for each board member to bring a candidate to next week's meeting. The motion failed with one member in favor and Mr. Abdul-Haqq and Ms. Surgeon abstained. Mrs. Campbell, Mr. Edache, Mrs. Gilbert and Mrs. Hernandez were opposed.

Mrs. Campbell moved, seconded by Mrs. Hernandez to appoint a board member tonight. The motion carried with six members in favor and Mrs. Gilbert opposed.

Mrs. Campbell moved, and seconded by Mrs. Hernandez to appoint Keisha Edwards as board member. The motion carried on a roll-call vote with six members in favor and none opposed.

The Board appointed Keisha Edwards as a new board member and she took her seat at the board table.

Food Services

Mrs. Hernandez reviewed the results of the recent food sampling survey.

Mr. Pickett advised that the superintendent is not present and she has not made a recommendation for a food service provider. It was deferred to the Work & Study meeting.

Legal

Mrs. Hernandez reviewed status of legal appointments, which ended June 30, 2011.

Mrs. Hernandez moved, seconded by Mrs. Edwards to maintain status quo for legal. The motion failed on a roll-call vote with six (6) members opposed.

Mrs. Hernandez moved, seconded by Mrs. Campbell to consolidate legal of August 1, 2011 and appoint Pickett and Craig. The motion carried on a roll-call vote with seven members in favor and none opposed.

The Board appointed Pickett and Craig as the workers compensation counsel.

Shared Services

Mrs. Hernandez reviewed correspondence from City of Plainfield Corporation Counsel expressing interest in continuing the shared services agreement.

Race to Nowhere

Mrs. Campbell believes that the Board should start talking about the homework policy, perhaps in August.

Mrs. Campbell moved, seconded by Mrs. Hernandez and unanimously approved by the Board, to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 p.m.

Recorded by:

Gary L. Ottmann, Board Secretary
GLO/bsc