

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, June 7, 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 6:40 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, May 26, 2011 for advertisement on Saturday, June 4, 2011.

III. ROLL CALL

PRESENT

Mrs. Renata A. Hernandez, President
Mrs. Wilma G. Campbell, Vice President, arr. @ 6:45 p.m.
Mr. Rasheed Abdul-Haqq
Ms. Patricia I. Barksdale, left @ 8:15 p.m.
Mr. Alex O. Edache, arr. @ 6:45 p.m.
Mrs. Brenda Gilbert
Mr. Dorien Hurtt, arr. @ 7:10 p.m.
Mrs. Lisa C. Logan-Leach
Ms. Jameelah Surgeon, arr. @ 7:00 p.m.

ALSO PRESENT

Mrs. Anna Belin-Pyles, Interim Superintendent
Gary L. Ottmann
Mr. Robert Pickett, Esq.

Mrs. Logan-Leach indicated that both Ms. Barksdale and Mrs. Gilbert have policies that they would like to be reviewed by the Board.

She also indicated that at the time she did not have policies for the agenda; however, Mrs. Hernandez did have items that she wanted to be reviewed.

Mrs. Logan-Leach also pointed out that in the future any existing policy on the agenda should be labeled "potential amendment".

Mrs. Gilbert was concerned what "good cause" means. Mr. Pickett indicated that it's up to the Board to determine what good cause is.

Mrs. Hernandez clarified that she only asked for two (2) policies to be on tonight's agenda. Other policies were added by administration and she suggested that in the future, the policy chair and president be aware of changes to the addition.

She wants the Board attendance policy standardized and followed.

Mrs. Campbell feels notification is more important than “good cause”. The Board members are volunteers and she feels some language appears petty.

Mr. Edache expressed that what is important to some board members might not be important to other members.

Board members discussed the Green Brook attendance policy; which has a six (6) meeting absence parameter.

Mrs. Gilbert feels we’re trying to “pigeon-hole” adults.

Policy 9114 will be on the next policy agenda for additional discussion.

Mr. Abdul-Haqq feels that board members should be paid for their services.

The Board next discussed Policy 9322 – Public & Executive Sessions.

Mr. Abdul-Haqq doesn’t feel that the Board should have to vote on granting an additional two minutes to speakers.

Mr. Hurtt, Mrs. Campbell and Mrs. Hernandez felt that at business meetings five minutes should be granted up front, as opposed to three.

Mr. Abdul-Haqq thought a one minute warning should be given if we modify it to five minutes.

Ethel Coleman agreed with the five minute rule.

The Board supported changes to a five minute privilege of the floor with a one minute warning.

The Board next discussed Policy 1200 – Participation by the Public.

Mr. Abdul-Haqq was troubled by the term “regular contact” in the proposed policy.

Mrs. Campbell too, asked for clarification on “regular contact”.

Mr. Edache believes safety is a big issue in Plainfield and supports the language change.

Ms. Surgeon was concerned that chaperones on overnight trips be fingerprinted.

Mrs. Hernandez inquired if the policy would apply to parents in PTO’s.

Mr. Hurtt wondered what types of offenses would disqualify someone who might volunteer in the District. He asked if disqualifying offenses be listed.

Lindsay Council echoed Mrs. Hernandez’s concern about PTO members being fingerprinted and the cost.

Policy 1200 will be brought back at a later date with revisions by administration.

The Board next discussed a proposed new policy 4217 which addresses benefits available to District employees.

Mrs. Belin-Pyles emphasized that the District does not have a “bridge in service” policy; perhaps we should if that is the will of the Board.

Mrs. Campbell thought the issue was more procedural, than policy.

Mr. Abdul-Haqq would like the CSA to have discretion in this matter.

Mrs. Hernandez feels that as a district we should stand “silent” on this matter but could be addressed in procedures.

Lindsay Council inquired if we had surveyed other districts to see how they handle rehires.

Mrs. Belin-Pyles indicated that Human Resources has reached out to other districts.

This policy was held for additional review.

The Board reviewed Policy 4112.4/4212.4 which had changes so that we are in compliance with state and federal laws.

This will be moved to work & study agenda.

The Board reviewed various sample parent involvement policies. Mrs. Hernandez feels the Board needs to articulate what the Board wants in the policy. Could there be language requiring parents to participate for example?

Mr. Abdul-Haqq wondered when teachers are going to become active in PTO's.

Mrs. Belin-Pyles feels that we have to define what we mean by “parental involvement”.

Ethel Coleman offered that it is very difficult to get parents out to school events at Cedarbrook School.

Mrs. Gilbert moved, seconded by Mr. Hurtt and unanimously approved by the Board, to adjourn the meeting at 8:50 p.m.

Recorded by:

Gary L. Ottmann, Board Secretary
GLO/bsc