

Big Spring School District

Newville, Pennsylvania

Policy Committee Meeting Minutes

July 15, 2024



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Call to Order – Chairman Seth Cornman

The Policy Committee of the Board of School Directors for the Big Spring School District met in the Big Spring Middle School Auditorium at 6:00 pm with four (4) Committee Members present: Chairman Seth Cornman, Secretary Julie Boothe, David Fisher, and President John Wardle and Board of School Directors present: Lisa Shade, Treasurer and Frank Myers.

Others in attendance: Nicholas Guarente, Superintendent; Nadine Sanders, Assistant Superintendent; and Donna Minnich, Board Minutes

1. Meeting Agenda

Public Comment

Charlotte McDonald wanted to make the Committee aware of the court ruling injunction involving Title IX.

Motion by Mrs. Boothe to approve the agenda and rules was seconded by Mr. Fisher.

Motion carried 3-0

Policy 903 Public Participation in Board Meetings

Mr. Cornman stated his concerns with the current 903 policy and shared the Solicitors' recommendations.

Mrs. Boothe made a motion to strike the bullet about exceeding the time limit which was seconded by Mr. Fisher.

Motion carried 3-0

Mr. Fisher made a motion to strikeout Board reserves the right to extend the time limit which was seconded by Mrs. Boothe.

Mr. Fisher rescinded his previous motion and made a motion to re-write in order to clarify the time limit and time sharing which was seconded by Mrs. Boothe.

Motion Carried 3-0.

Mrs. Boothe made a motion to amend the wording of #3 Public Comment Period for clarity and to change the minutes which was seconded by Mr. Fisher.

Motion Carried 3-0

Mrs. Boothe made a motion to add students to the Eligibility for Public Comment which was seconded by Mr. Fisher.

Motion Carried 3-0

Policy 903 Public Participation in Board Meetings (continued)

Mr. Fisher made a motion to replace invited guests with vendor and subject matter experts invited to speak pertaining to relevant agenda items, which was seconded by Mrs. Boothe.

Motion Carried 3-0

Mrs. Boothe made a motion to strike #3 Guidelines for Public Comment pertaining to group presentations which was seconded by Mr. Fisher.

Motion Carried 3-0

Mrs. Boothe made a motion under Board Response to add objectors must meet eligibility requirements and state their name for the record which was seconded by Mr. Fisher.

Motion Carried 3-0

Mrs. Boothe made a motion to add people not recognized to speak are out of order and considered a disruption, which was seconded by Mr. Fisher.

Motion Carried 3-0

Motion by Mr. Fisher to add adjournment to the sentence under Disruption which was seconded by Mrs. Boothe.

Motion Carried 3-0

Motion by Mrs. Boothe to rewrite the wording of the section pertaining to signs was seconded by Mr. Fisher.

Motion Carried 3-0

Motion by Mrs. Boothe to present all new wording at the next meeting was seconded by Mr. Fisher.

Motion Carried 3-0

Motion by Mrs. Boothe to rewrite the policy to provide clarity was seconded by Mr. Fisher.

Motion Carried 3-0

Chairman Cornman stated the policy corrections and rewrites would be completed by August 1 for review.

Policy 235 Students Rights/Surveys

Motion by Mrs. Boothe to work on definitions and clarify wording of instructional materials and survey definition was seconded by Mr. Fisher.

Motion Carried 3-0

Policy 009 School Board Policies

Chairman Cornman stated the updated policy includes the involvement of the Policy Committee as the only change.

Motion to move Policy 009 to the Board by Mrs. Boothe was seconded by Mr. Fisher.

Motion Carried 3-0.

Policy 004.1 Student Representative to the Board

Motion by Mrs. Boothe to insert or junior after the word sophomore and clarify the process was seconded by Mr. Fisher.

Motion Carried 3-0

Motion by Mrs. Boothe to add and revise the policy wording to present to the public for review was seconded by Mr. Fisher.

Motion Carried 3-0

New Cellphone Policy

Motion by Mrs. Boothe to table this policy for further research of existing policy spelled out in student handbooks was seconded by Mr. Fisher.

Motion Carried 3-0

Review Title IX Changes

Chairman Cornman stated he is familiar with the previously mentioned court ruling on Title IX.

Motion by Mrs. Boothe to table this policy pending further research and court outcomes was seconded by Mr. Fisher.

Motion Carried 3-0

2. Informational Items

Annual review of Policy 918 Parent and Family Engagement

Review results of policy research.

Missing Policy 830.1 request copy from PSBA

Review 706.0 Property Records

Review 818.0 Contracted Services Personnel

Review 806 Child Abuse

Public Comment

Alison Mellott questioned how speakers would be selected if they exceed the 60 minute cap during public comment. She expressed concern for signs outside the meeting entrance overwhelming students who may be participating in meetings. She expressed concern for students experiencing mental health situations who may not be supported by parent permission to participate in school survey's and expressed support for a cell phone policy that would engage student conversation and academic focus.

Cindy Sutton offered comments of concern for changing public comment from 3 to 5 minutes and said less people will be able to speak. She offered comments of concern for inviting experts to speak and asked who determines who is an expert. She stated she was taken aback by the wording under civility and said it is a low bar and she is offended that personal attacks are acceptable. She said she is not sure it should be stated in such a manner and encouraged the Board to stick with just the statement that speakers are encouraged to address the Board with respect and courtesy. Chairman Cornman said he will offer 2 different versions of wording in that area of the policy.

Public Comment (continued)

Riley Brown asked questions about student created surveys for his business marketing class in regard to the survey policy and Mr. Cornman said inhouse voluntary student surveys that don't ask questions on protected topics are permitted. Mrs. Boothe pointed out the sentence stating the provision does not extend to inhouse educational surveys.

Charlotte McDonald offered comments on point of view speech protected by the first amendment and said if you define disruptive, everything has to be specifically defined to meet the legal requirements. She said people have a right to attend meetings and you may not remove them unless they're violent and also stated people have a right to peacefully hold signs.

Lawrence Flynn offered comments on student representatives and said life is about choices so athletes wishing to serve as a student representative might have to make a sacrifice to participate. He said he doesn't believe there could be an eligibility requirement to offer an objection at public meetings and encouraged the Committee to review objections. He said if the Board votes on changes involving signs, they would be in violation of an August 2022 ruling until the pending lawsuit is settled. He said he disagrees with putting signs in the commons and expressed concern that would be a violation of the first amendment. Mr. Cornman said he mentioned this policy would be reviewed by the solicitor for legal opinion.

3. Closing

Mr. Wardle said he appreciates the process, input and ideas shared and said policies are important but favors a common sense collaborative approach with administration and staff.

Mrs. Boothe said she went through the policies and PSBA suggests reviewing most policies every 3 years. She said there are 249 policies and only 7 are currently updated, which confirms the need for a policy committee.

Mr. Cornman thanked everyone for their attendance and expressed appreciation for the willingness to share ideas to form and update policies.

4. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the meeting by Mr. Fisher was seconded by Mrs. Boothe.

Voting Yes: Boothe, Cornman, D. Fisher
Motion Carried unanimously. 3-0

Meeting adjourned at **8:30 pm**

