

BOARD OF EDUCATION OF ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY  
POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING  
ADMINISTRATIVE MINUTES APRIL 6, 2021

The Board of Education Policy Committee met at 3:30 p.m. on the above date via teleconference. Board members present were Joanna Tobin, Chair; Candace Antwine, Melissa Ellis and Drake Smith. Staff members present were Jeanette Ortiz, Legislative and Policy Counsel; Bob Mosier Chief Communications Officer; Maneka Monk, Senior Manager of Communications; Walter Federowicz, Internal Audit; Darren Burns, Board Counsel; and Diane Howell, Executive Assistant to the Board. Also present were staff members Ryan Voegtlin, Director of Student Services and Shirley Jackson-Avery, Coordinator of School Counseling Pre-K-8. The CAC representative was Martin Egna.

**Review and Approval of Minutes:** Dr. Tobin opened the meeting with approval of the minutes to the March 2, 2021, committee meeting. The minutes were approved.

*Policy Discussion*

**JQ – Safe and Inclusive Environments for LGBTQ+ Students:** Ms. Ortiz provided background information and reviewed the updates that were made to the policy including an update to section A. Purpose, section B. Issue, and section C. Position. Ms. Ortiz brought in language from the regulation to provide clearer alignment between the policy and regulation. The Board members asked questions. Ms. Ellis asked about section C.4. regarding school facilities and asked about athletics, and student attire. Ms. Ortiz will research possible additional language related to school facilities. Ms. Ortiz explained that MPSSAA regulates athletics for the state. Mr. Burns asked about the language regarding gender-neutral appearance in section D.7.a of the regulation. He also, suggested that “additional privacy” is used rather than “increased privacy” in section D.5.d. of the regulation. Ms. Ortiz provided background information on the language regarding gender-neutral appearance and explained that it is consistent with language used by the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN).

Mr. Smith asked to use the language “student identifies with” rather than “consistently demonstrates” in section C.4. of the Policy. He discussed other policies he found that did not include this language. Ms. Jackson-Avery, Mr. Burns, Ms. Ortiz, and Ms. Ellis responded and encouraged the use of the existing language. Ms. Jackson-Avery explained that the policies referenced are for adults whereas JQ is for students and, therefore, there is a different need to maintain the safety of all students. She explained that the language is consistent with our existing guidelines as well as guidance from GLSEN and other resources to help address the needs of and supports for students. Mr. Voegtlin explained that school counselors and administrators work with student to identify the most comfortable school facilities for them. Mr. Burns agreed that the language remain in the policy and provided additional information. Ms. Antwine asked about gender-neutral bathrooms and she requested that training/professional development remain up-to-date and consistent to ensure the ‘whole student’ is supported. Ms. Ortiz indicated that AACPS is always looking at opportunities to improve and supplement existing training/professional development.

Mr. Smith moved to amend the language in policy section C.8., that “The Board recognizes that this is a multifaceted and ever-evolving subject and supports the continued education, training, and professional development that will foster learning environments that honor, respect, and support the diversity of the AACPS student body.” Ms. Antwine seconded. The Board members voted 4-0 to amend the language.

*FYI Only - Regulation*

**JQ-RA – Students and Gender Identity:** Ms. Ortiz provided a detailed review of the regulation since it accompanies a new policy. She explained that the regulation was derived from language contained in the current AACPS Students and Gender Identity: Guidelines for Support which were most recently updated in July 2019.

Ms. Ellis moved that the current guidelines and regulation be made available as supporting documents upon presentation of the Board packet materials of the policy. Ms. Antwine seconded. There was discussion. The Board voted 4-0 to approve.

Ms. Ellis moved to introduce this policy before the Board of Education for first reading at their April 21, 2021 meeting. The Board voted 4-0 to approve.

*Good of the Order*

**Good of the Order:** The Policy Committee will review the Redistricting Policy at its next meeting.

Adjourn: 5:00 p.m.