

**Salem Public Schools
Salem School Committee
POLICY SUBCOMMITTEE
Meeting Minutes
November 9, 2021**

On November 9, 2021 the Policy Subcommittee held its regular meeting using the Zoom on-line meeting platform.

In Attendance: Ms. Ana Nuncio, Ms. Mary Manning, and Mr. Manny Cruz

Members Absent: Mr. James Fleming

Others in Attendance: Dr. Stephen Zrike

Call of Meeting to Order

Ms. Nuncio called the meeting to order at 4:37pm.

Approval of Minutes

Ms. Nuncio made a motion to approve the minutes of October 14, 2021. Mr. Cruz seconded. A roll call vote was made.

Mr. Cruz Yes

Ms. Nuncio Yes

Motion carries 2-0

Ms. Nuncio notes she is nearly complete with the August 18, 2021 Policy Subcommittee Meeting minutes and will complete those minutes with refined detail for review at the next Policy Subcommittee Meeting.

Ms. Nuncio suggests a recap of items that were pending from previous conversations to ensure everyone understands and agrees with next steps. Ms. Nuncio recalls the discussion surrounding the standardized language used in Policy 1101.01 - Nondiscrimination and asks if the policy had been reviewed by the legal team and if the review could be discussed. Dr. Zrike notes Justin reviewed and made minor changes. The school committee secretary shares the policy with the legal edits.

The members read aloud some of the changes noting the protected classes and gender neutral language updated within the policy. Mr. Cruz notes the answer about non-religion isn't documented in the policy changes and mentions legal advice isn't required for the policy to read "religion or non-religion." Discussion surrounding non-religion occurs. Ms. Nuncio suggests changing the policies that note the protected classes and having those policies updated for consistency to mirror the changes made in this policy. Ms. Manning suggests the school committee secretary work their way through the policy manual and update the changes wherever this paragraph is mentioned.

Mr. Cruz wonders if a recommendation could be made for the full committee to vote on updating the policies that include protected classes, allowing the school committee secretary to go forward in making the changes needed to reflect the update in language. Ms. Manning agrees with that recommendation noting that it wouldn't be a change to the policies that include protected classes, but rather would be an update to the language changed as noted.

Mr. Cruz discusses the next steps of going through the next process of updating the gender specific pronouns in all policies to reflect gender neutral pronouns. Ms. Manning echoes the changes for pronouns being another task to be handled clerically. Mr. Cruz suggests bringing this task to the attention of the full school committee. He suggests making a recommendation to the full committee to update the language regarding protected classes throughout the policy manual and provide a separate recommendation at a later date regarding the vote to change pronouns.

Recommendation for first reading of Policy 1100.01 to the full committee.

Mr. Cruz makes a motion to move Policy 1100.01 to first reading. Ms. Nuncio seconds the motion. A roll call vote was made.

Mr. Cruz Yes

Ms. Nuncio Yes

Motion carries 2-0

Recommendation to update all policies that mention the list of protective classes with the request that the school committee secretary make the changes for all policies that are on the books requiring this update.

Ms. Nuncio makes the recommendation. Mr. Cruz seconded with the suggestion to mention the equity statement in making sure that the vision for this change aligns with the commitment to the equity statement agreed upon by the committee. A roll call vote is made.

Mr. Cruz Yes

Ms. Nuncio Yes

Motion carries 2-0

Ms. Nuncio raises the matter regarding the resolution for policies requiring three readings that do not need changes and if they need to undergo multiple readings. Mr. Cruz notes receiving legal advice that stated that as long as the policy is reviewed and noted and dated to have had no changes, the subcommittee can proceed as they wish and suspend their own rules regarding the multiple readings or just pass the policy that doesn't require changes. The subcommittee members agreed to have the date of review with no change noted on the policy for future reference. Informing the full committee that policies with no changes would no longer be presented for three readings but rather listed with policy number, title, and the overview of no changes be mentioned once was suggested for the next regular school committee meeting.

Recommendation to propose the updated procedure for policies reviewed by the subcommittee that undergo no changes be explicitly stated with number and title of policy and openly stated with no changes will no longer go through three readings.

Ms. Nuncio makes a motion to bring the recommendation to the full committee. Mr. Cruz seconded. A roll call vote is made.

Mr. Cruz Yes

Ms. Nuncio Yes

Motion carries 2-0

Discussion surrounding the change of the gender pronouns and language is had and Mr. Cruz identifies there is no legal requirement to update gender pronouns at this time but notes many are taking a proactive role to make the changes. Mr. Cruz suggests the topic appear on the regular school committee agenda as an action item for consideration but take a few meetings to discuss and present why it's the right thing to do ahead of pushing the topic to a vote. He mentions providing time for folks to digest the

changes and recognize the operational task of policy edits, school handbook changes, and other documents requiring gender pronoun changes.

Review of Policies in the 1000s Category - Community Relations

1103 - Distribution of Notices

Ms. Nuncio notes changing “school children” to students to include the broader age range throughout the grade level. Mr. Cruz agrees with that change and suggests expanding that change to note “students and families.” Mr. Cruz also notes the change from “Salem students” to “Salem Public Schools students and families” to recognize that some students and families do not reside in Salem due to school choice.

Dr. Zrike proposes the next step regarding the translation of documents to include English, Spanish, and Portuguese. He mentions the district does not have the full capacity for this accommodation just yet but recognizes the growth of the Brazilian and Portuguese-speaking population rising and to consider this in the future. Dr. Zrike notes wanting to do more research regarding the percentages of the student population that would result in the need to provide additional translated documentation. He also notes Andre Fonseca (Director of Multilingual Learner Education) is presenting at the next school committee meeting and could provide insight on next steps. Before asking other organizations to provide the translation of Portuguese, we want the district to get to that level first.

Ms. Nuncio made a motion to refer to Policy 1103 Distribution of Notices for first reading. Mr. Cruz seconded. A roll call vote was made.

Mr. Cruz Yes

Ms. Nuncio Yes

Motion carries 2-0

1104 Emergency Closing/Delayed Openings/Early Dismissals

The policy is noted as last reviewed in December 2016. No changes were made to the existing policy. The policy number and title will be noted in the next regular school committee as having no changes and reviewed on November 9, 2021.

1105 Media Relations/News Releases

Ms. Nuncio suggests that Liz Polay-Wettengel join the conversation surrounding this policy. Mr. Cruz reads through the policy and notes equal access laws for the press and doubts the practice remains. He suggests being cognizant and not running into issues with the press surrounding releases. Dr. Zrike shares that when press is released, it’s on the full distribution list of all platforms of local media outlets. Mr. Cruz asks if press is released to ethnic media outlets and Dr. Zrike shares he doesn’t believe it is, and it should be. He notes it is something to discuss with Liz.

Conversation continues surrounding the role of school committee members talking with the media. The policy states there is one voice [school committee chair] to speak on behalf of the committee. Ms. Manning raises the concern for one voice and that all committee members should be able to speak on their opinions. Mr. Cruz provides the example of the chair speaking for the committee regarding a unanimous vote of a particular policy or situation versus a committee member being able to share their opinion and thoughts.

The committee notes this policy to be reviewed by the Chief of Public Relations and it’s noted for record.

Mr. Cruz suggests making the policy a bit less wordy. Ms. Manning asks if a reference to the Open Meeting Law should be noted. Mr. Cruz says it should be referenced along with the Public Record Law. Ms. Manning asks if this policy should be provided to Colby Brunt for review. Mr. Cruz suggests sending it off to the city legal department for review based on the context and for consistency between the city and the schools. A suggested note is added to send the policy for legal review and to be sure to add and update legal references.

Newer technology is discussed that is not mentioned in this policy including the use of Zoom and recording on cell phones or the use of Facebook Live. Mr. Cruz doesn't believe any changes need to be made for this policy. Ms. Manning asks if we [the district] need the policy? Mr. Cruz suggests that there is a need specifically if someone showed up to a meeting with a camera for recording. He notes the committee has never denied someone recording. Mr. Cruz suggests sending this policy to the city legal department where it falls under public recording. A suggested note is added with this note.

Mr. Cruz	Yes
Ms. Nuncio	Yes
Motion carries 2-0	

Jensen Frost

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