

POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

King's Fork High School
351 King's Fork Road, Suffolk, VA 23434
Media Room, 2nd floor
June 23rd, 2025

Present:

Members

- ✓ Mrs. Kimberly Slingluff, **Committee Chair**
- ✓ Mrs. Heather Howell, **School Board Chair**
- ✓ Mrs. Karen Jenkins, **Committee Member**

Participants

- ✓ Dr. John B. Gordon III, **Superintendent**
- ✓ Wendell M. Waller, Esquire, **School Board Attorney**

Attendees

Member of the Public

➤ Call to Order.

- The meeting was called to order at 3:30 PM. The committee approved the minutes for the May 12th, 2025 meeting.

➤ Unfinished Business

• POLICY SECTION 7-16.1 – Hiring by School Board, etc.

- The committee discussed the following regarding this hiring policy: (1) if there are any FOIA concerns by having a closed session to review the Personnel report; (2) notifying the superintendent within 48 hours of school board meetings if there is a question regarding the recommendation for hire; and (3) board members responsibility to review board materials the week prior to the meeting. Attorney Waller pointed out that three (3) items must be satisfied when having a closed meeting under VFOIA: purpose, subject, and the code provision. It was further pointed out that this policy originated when a new hire was introduced to the Board before the Board voted to approve the personnel report. This has since been corrected and the need for a hiring policy is no longer required. Committee members discussed the need to review resumes of new hires. The importance of not interfering in day-to-day operations was also discussed, and the overall hiring process and the importance of confidentiality. The Committee agreed to accept the policy "as is" with the removal of section "B", to provide a separate confidential report of administrative resumes, and to introduce new administrative hires after they are approved at the school board meeting. The committee also discussed the importance of communicating with each other and the superintendent when school board members become aware of something that is a concern regarding a potential new hire. This proposed policy will be sent to the full School Board for

First Reading on July 10th, 2025.

- **POLICY SECTION 3-1.13 – Superintendent Interaction w/Elected Officials**
 - Committee Chair Slingluff asked that this policy be tabled until the next PRC meeting in that Mr. McGee's was absent from the meeting and he was the one who presented it to the Committee. Dr. Gordon asked Board Chair Howell about the context of the meeting that was held with the Education Committee when Mayor Duman requested that anything brought before City Council should be shared with the board first. Chair Howell stated that she had spoken Mr. McGee and she is not willing to support this policy. Dr. Gordon emphasized that there is no school division in Virginia that has a policy like this and it sends a very bad message that the school board wants to monitor the communication that the superintendent has with elected officials. Chair Howell again reiterated that she does not support this policy and it is not what the mayor asked for. The policy was tabled until Mr. McGee can speak on it.
- **POLICY SECTION 1-5.1:2 – Education Equity Policy**
 - The committee discussed changes to the Education Equity Policy. The discussion centered around how this will change the way in which Suffolk Public Schools operates. Dr. Gordon stated that the school division had not received any guidance from the VDOE but Dr. Gordon believes that we will have to hire more people next year. It is anticipated that increased documentation will have to include more data after guidance is received. This proposed policy will be sent to the full School Board for First Reading in July.
- **POLICY SECTION 2-1.4 – Suspension of Policies**
 - The committee discussed the voting requirement in order to suspend a policy of the Board. Attorney Waller stated that a majority vote will make it much easier for the Board to set aside a policy that the Committee and Board worked on, debated and approved. He further stated that he is of the opinion that it is bad practice to be able to set aside a policy so easily. This will allow the board to do so at a whim. A lot of work goes in to creating these policies and if a policy is suspended, it is no longer in effect for at least 30 days. The discussion continued regarding the 2/3 verses majority vote. The committee agreed to send it back to the Board as is with the language remaining the same as First Reading and Adoption.
- **POLICY SECTION 7-11.1 thru 7-12.4 – Appointment of Hearing Officer**
 - This policy was brought before the committee because there was a concern as to whether or not to have a hearing officer. Attorney Waller stated that appeals can be heard by the full school board, a panel of three, or by a hearing officer. There was some concern regarding if there is a potential conflict of interest, and should we have more than one participating school division. Attorney Waller stated other options used from the past were local attorneys who mostly worked pro bono. Dr. Avery can look into using other school divisions. Committee agreed to have Dr. Avery look into adding another school division and a resolution needs to be created adding an additional school division. The committee agreed that these policies do not need to be changed.

➤ **New Business**

- **POLICY SECTION 8-1.1:2 – Advance Mathematics**

- This policy is State mandated and was passed by the General Assembly in March. The discussion focused on section “C”. Committee Chair Slingluff asked how do you navigate teacher and parental recommendation when it comes to class enrollment. Dr. Gordon pointed out that Parents can request certain classes and then they will have a conference with the school counselor. Dr. Gordon went on to state that we are also waiting on the quartile scale scores that we haven’t received. (Scores that measure growth in student grade levels) The committee agreed to send it back to the board as is with the language remaining the same as First Reading and Adoption.

- **POLICY SECTION 9-11.6 – Cell Phone Statement of Policy**

- The policy was generated because cell phone free education was passed into law by the General Assembly. At the request of Chair Slingluff, the policy added language that headphones and earbuds are also prohibited from Bell to Bell. The superintendent explained the procedure for enforcing this policy and that it will be treated as any other discipline issue, not involving the SRO’s so it doesn’t become law enforcement issue. The discussion ensued regarding how teachers are notified of students who are granted permission to have cell phones. In-services are held with the schools as well as discussion of these types of situations so as to get off on the right foot from the beginning of the school year. This policy will be presented for First Reading and Adoption at the first meeting in July.

- **POLICY SECTION 1-8.3, 1-8.4, & 1-8.4:1 – Evaluation of School Superintendent**

- The committee discussed the process of turning in evaluations and having a third party to tally the evaluation results. A concern was raised regarding the board clerk doing the evaluations and if this presented a conflict of interest. There was also discussion by Committee members regarding evaluations being omitted if submitted late or retained for informational purposes. Committee Chair Slingluff commented that she disagrees with the practice of individual Board Member evaluations being seen by those being evaluated along with their comments ahead of the meeting. She expressed the opinion that it should be a compilation of the scores and comments. She further stated that she believes that it causes tension between the employee and the board member. It was pointed out that Employees need to see the comments in order to generate discussions on what needs to be improved and why they are receiving a particular score. This will also enable the employee to meet goals moving forward. Dr. Gordon used the example of when his chiefs are reviewing their evaluations. It is common courtesy for them to receive the comments early so employees can be prepared with solutions, rebuttals, notes, etc. and we can have productive discussions. It really is about the feedback to the individual and having the individual respond to the feedback. Committee Chair Slingluff disagreed and felt that board members can be targeted. Chair Howell discussed how evaluations were handled in the past. The evaluation tool speaks to when there needs to be a comment. Chair Howell stated that she would be following the process initiated by Dr. Brooks-Buck. She

will have Ms. Gardner send out an email that this is a confidential process. The committee agreed to send all three policies for First Reading at the first meeting in July.

- **POLICY SECTION 2-1.3 – Administration in absence of policy**

- The committee discussed bringing the language of Section A in line with our current practice. Language will be added to reflect that policies are developed and presented to the full school board by the Policy Review Committee. The committee agreed to send this policy to the full board for First Reading at the first meeting in July.

- **POLICY SECTION 4-13.2 – Disposal of surplus property**

- The committee had no problems with this policy and it will be presented to the full board for First Reading at the first meeting in July.

- **POLICY SECTION 5-4.4 – Student conduct on school buses**

- A discussion was held by the committee on how this policy is applied on the buses. Dr. Gordon made mention that a lot will depend on what the student does. Bus drivers write a report that is submitted and there are videos on all buses. The committee agreed to present to the full board for First Reading and Adoption at the first meeting in July.

- **POLICY SECTION 5-5.3 – Food Sanitation Program**

- The committee agreed that this policy is already in practice and will be presented for First Reading and Adoption at the first meeting in July.

- **Business by Committee Members**

- Next meeting will be Monday, July 28th, 2025 at 3:30 at King's Fork High School (Media Center).

- **Adjournment at 5:35 PM.**