

POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

King's Fork High School
351 King's Fork Road, Suffolk, VA 23434
Media Room, 2nd floor
May 12th, 2025

Present:

Members

- ✓ Mrs. Kimberly Slingluff, **Committee Chair**
- ✓ Mr. Sean McGee, **Committee Member**
- ✓ Mrs. Karen Jenkins, **Committee Member**

Participants

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

Attendees

Avery Goodstine, *Suffolk News Herald*

➤ **Call to Order.**

- The meeting was called to order at 3:32 PM. Committee Chair Slingluff announced those in attendance at the meeting. The minutes are approved for the April 21st, 2025 meeting.

➤ **Unfinished Business**

• **POLICY SECTION 2-2.6:1 – SB norms; protocols**

- The committee discussed adding – “media contact” under subsection B2 regarding communication, and the language “must not interfere with school operations or disrupt standardized testing listed as a bullet. When a member of the School Board is alleged to have violated norms or protocols of the School Board, the Committee debated whether a discussion of the alleged violation should take place in an open or closed meeting of the School Board. The Committee decided that the discussion should take place in a closed meeting, unless at least three members of the School Board request that the matter be heard in a meeting open to the public. This proposed policy was sent to the full School Board for First Reading on May 22nd, 2025.

○ **POLICY SECTION 7-7.1 – Political Activity**

- The Committee discussed removing the Section (F) and not having to give a disclaimer. Committee Member McGee stated that he doesn't care what employees do on their own time, just when they are working.
- Dr. Gordon and Committee Member McGee discussed the role of the superintendent when communicating with the public. Committee Member McGee emphasized that communications should be non-political and referenced a letter sent by the school superintendent regarding Immigration Custom Enforcement (ICE). Committee Member McGee believed that the letter had political overtones,

which Dr. Gordon denied. Dr. Gordon stressed that the letter was about making sure that students felt safe at school. Attorney Waller clarified that the language in the heading of the draft policy stating “role of the superintendent” actually refers to section (E) of the policy, which requires enforcement of the policy by the school superintendent. Committee Chair Slingluff stated that section (I) should be deleted because members of the School Board should be non-partisan when performing duties as a member of the School Board. Committee agreed to have this policy presented as first reading with subsection (I) remaining as is.

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

- Committee Chair Slingluff asked Attorney Waller to give a historical perspective regarding personnel reports and closed meetings of the School Board. Attorney Waller informed the committee that the School Board used to hold a closed meeting during every public meeting of the School Board to consider personnel reports, and pupil personnel reports. This was done for a number of years, until the School Board was named in a lawsuit alleging that it violated the VFOIA when going into closed meetings. The allegation was that the motions were not specific enough to satisfy the statute. As a result, the board decided that they would no longer have a closed meeting at every school board meeting in order to review the personnel report and pupil personnel report. The Committee then engaged in discussions regarding whether there is a need (1) to have closed meetings to receive the personnel report; (2) for the board to be involved in hiring decisions; (3) for a process that will afford members of the School Board an opportunity to express any concerns they may have regarding hiring recommendations made by the school superintendent. Dr. Gordon expressed his concern that board members might be intruding in the day-to-day operations of the school division. Committee decided to get with other board members to discuss this policy, do more research on it, and move this policy to the June meeting of the PRC.

- **POLICY SECTION 2-2.7 – Special Committee**

- Committee Chair Slingluff asked should this special committee become a standing committee of the School Board? Committee member Jenkins stated that the “chair” of these committees is asking for this, so it is needed. Committee members confirmed that they would like to have this as a “standing” committee. Member Jenkins recommended that there should be a meeting with the “chairperson” of these committees to review committee bylaws, etc. The committee agreed to have this policy presented as first reading and adoption.

- **Section 2-1.4 Policy Effective Date, Suspension**

- This draft policy provides that a policy of the School Board can be suspended by vote of the School Board, but suspension will be for 30 days and the policy is then referred to the PRC to decide whether the policy needs to be repealed or revised. Attorney Waller also recommended that there be a 2/3 vote (need 5 members) in order to suspend any policy of the School Board. The committee agreed to have this policy presented as first reading.

- **Section 2-2.7:2 Appointment of Citizen Advisory Committee**

- This draft policy will allow citizen advisory committees to submit oral reports. Only standing committees of the School Board are required to submit written reports. The committee agreed to have this policy presented as first reading.
- **Section 3-1.13 Superintendent Interaction with Elected Officials**
 - PRC Member McGee expressed an interest in being notified when the school superintendent engages in conversations with members of City Council. This notification will enable members of the School Board to be on the same page so they too can advocate on behalf of SPS. Committee chair Slingluff stated that she would like to be notified when the school superintendent receives any directive from lawmakers or DOE that will impact SPS. Attorney Waller reminded members of the PRC that there are a number of memorandums and directives that Dr. Gordon receives from the State Superintendent and to require the school superintendent to notify the School Board whenever he receives a directive from the State Superintendent would be unduly burdensome. Committee Chair Slingluff withdrew her request so as not to be cumbersome. Board members agreed to table this policy until the June meeting when Dr. Gordon can speak to it.
- **Section 1-5.1:2 Education Equity Policy**
 - The PRC agreed to table this policy. Committee Chair Slingluff will send the superintendent emails with questions that she has regarding this policy. PRC Committee member McGee posed the following questions for future discussion: What motivated the Board to create this policy in 2021? Will the suspension of this policy impact SPED students? How has this policy benefited students in SPS? How does this policy directly affect program opportunities for students? Committee members will send their questions to Committee Chair Slingluff and she will send an email to Dr. Gordon.
- **New Business**
 - Attorney Waller mentioned to the committee that Chair Howell possibly had talked to some of the board members regarding grievance hearings. He presented three options that fall under the state code: Would they would like to continue to have a hearing officer, would they like to hear them as a board, or another option would be to have a committee of three to hear the appeals. The PRC asked Attorney Waller to send any policies that pertain to the grievance hearings.
- **Business by Committee Members**
 - Next meeting will be Monday, June 23rd, 2025 at 3:30 at King's Fork High School (Media Center).
- **Adjournment at 5:30 PM.**