



Oak Park Elementary School District 97

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**TO: Members, Board of Education
Dr. Albert Roberts, Superintendent**

FROM: Policy Committee – James Gates, Amy Felton and Chris Jasculca

RE: Review of new policy manual

DATE: January 22, 2013

Below is an update regarding the creation of the district's new policy manual, as well as information about the steps that must be completed leading up and including the submission of the document to the Board of Education for approval.

Background

On March 13, 2012, the policy committee made the following recommendations to the board:

- Conduct a comprehensive review of the district's policies and administrative guidelines to ensure they are legally compliant and in alignment with our role and responsibilities to deliver a high-quality education to the children of Oak Park.
- Switch from Neola, the district's current policy service provider, to the Illinois Association of School Board's Policy Reference Education Subscription Service (PRESS).

The report detailing the reasons for these recommendations can be accessed by visiting <https://v3.boardbook.org/Public/PublicItemDownload.aspx?ik=32223199>.

On April 10, 2012, the board approved the committee's recommendation to switch policy service providers from Neola to PRESS. The motion voted on by the board during its April 10 meeting can be accessed by visiting <https://v3.boardbook.org/Public/PublicItemDownload.aspx?ik=32314188>.

After receiving the board's approval to switch providers, the policy committee and members of the administration met with representatives from PRESS on May 1, 2012 to begin work on the district's new policy manual. During this meeting, PRESS collected information and background materials from us that it used to create the manual. The draft manual was delivered to us on July 9, 2012.

After receiving the manual, the committee members, Superintendent Roberts, and Joanne Schochat, the assistant superintendent of human resources and general counsel, reviewed it and then participated in four editing sessions with PRESS (August 7, 2012, September 6, 2012, October 18, 2012 and November 14, 2012). Therese O'Neill, the assistant superintendent for finance and operations, was asked by the committee and the superintendent to review the policies related to operational services and attend the editing session in November.

During the four editing sessions, the committee and administration provided PRESS with recommended revisions to the policies. Additional revisions were sent to PRESS via e-mail. These changes were aimed at bringing the policies/manual into alignment with the district's current practices.

PRESS incorporated the revisions we provided into a final draft of the manual, which was delivered to the district on January 15, 2013 and is being presented to the board this evening.

Issues of Note

The following are issues of note the committee wants to make the board and community aware of regarding the district's new policy manual.

- The manual is 277 pages long and is broken up into eight sections. These sections include:
 - Section 1 – School District Organization
 - Section 2 – School Board
 - Section 3 – General School Administration
 - Section 4 – Operational Services
 - Section 5 – Personnel
 - Section 6 – Instruction
 - Section 7 – Students
 - Section 8 – School and Community Relations

- Several policies from the district's current policy manual have been incorporated into the new one. These are policies that the district wrote from scratch. They include:
 - Policy 2531.01 – Instructional Digital and Analog Video
 - Policy 5517.01 – Aggressive Behavior, Bullying and Harassment
 - Policy 5600 – Student Discipline
 - Policy 6100 – Finance Goals and Objectives
 - Policy 6144 – Investments
 - Policy 6320 – Purchasing
 - Policy 7440.01 – Video Surveillance and Electronic Monitoring
 - Policy 8510 – Wellness
 - Policy 9510 – School/Classroom Visits

Since PRESS did not draft these policies or have them vetted by its attorneys, it has informed us that it cannot stand behind them from a legal standpoint. With that said, the company will incorporate any changes to these policies that are adopted by our board. It is also important to note that most of these policies were written, edited or reviewed by the Hodges Loizzi Eisenhammer Rodick & Kohn LLP (HLERK), which is the district's legal counsel.

- All of the policies in this manual have been vetted by the district's in-house general counsel, PRESS' legal counsel or HLERK to ensure they align with state and federal laws. We anticipate this will help expedite the process of reviewing and approving the manual.

- Based on the recommendation from PRESS, we refrained from changing superintendent to superintendent/designee in some of the policies in the new manual where it clearly makes more sense/is appropriate for the superintendent to maintain certain responsibilities from an authoritative standpoint.

Timeline for Board Review and Approval

Each member of the board has received a CD that contains an electronic draft of the new policy manual. A hard copy of the manual will be provided to any board member who requests it. In addition, the general public can access the manual on the district website by visiting http://www.op97.org/news/Policy-Manual.cfm?grp_id=6945.

Since the manual totals 277 pages, the committee is recommending that the board conduct its review of the document over the course of multiple meetings—more specifically, during the meetings on February 12 and 26, 2013. We believe doing so will provide the board with ample time to read all eight sections and compile its

comments, questions and revisions; will enable the committee to find answers to the board's questions and incorporate changes into the policies; and will give members of the general public an opportunity to peruse the manual and submit it own comments or questions via e-mail to d97feedback@op97.org.

The committee developed the following timeline for the board's review and approval of the manual based on the recommendation above.

- Board members receive a copy of the new draft manual during their meeting on January 22, 2013.
- Board members submit any initial questions about sections one through four of the manual to the policy committee by February 5, 2013.
- Board members review/discuss sections one through four of the manual during their meeting on February 12, 2013; discussion will include responses to the questions submitted to the policy committee by February 5, 2013.
- Board members submit any initial questions about sections five through eight of the manual to the policy committee by February 19, 2013.
- Board members review/discuss sections five through eight of the manual during their meeting on February 26, 2013; discussion will include responses to the questions submitted to the policy committee by February 19, 2013.
- *Board members approve the manual during their meeting on March 19, 2013.

*If the board determines it needs to conduct one final review of the manual prior to approving it, the committee recommends performing that review during the meeting on March 19, 2013. That would mean board approval of the manual would take place at its meeting on April 9, 2013.