



Oak Park Elementary School District 97

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

FROM: Chris Jasculca

RE: Review and Discussion of Various Policy-Related Plans and Documents

DATE: February 10, 2015

The district's policy review team (Amy Felton, Denise Sacks and Chris Jasculca) is presenting the following information to the Board of Education tonight for review/discussion:

- An exhibit created by Policy Reference Education Subscription Service (PRESS) that corresponds with policy 2:140 (Communications To and From the Board)
- An updated version of the document titled "District 97 Board of Education Responsibilities, Procedures and Protocols"
- The outline of a proposed plan for monitoring policies in the future in accordance with the "next steps" from the board's self-evaluation in December 2014.

Exhibit for Policy 2:140 (Communications To and From the Board)

There are several administrative exhibits dealing with school board procedures that PRESS recommends be included in the Board of Education section of the district's policy manual. One of these is the exhibit for policy 2:140, which addresses three issues:

- Communications between or among board members and/or the superintendent outside of a properly noticed board meeting.
- Disclosure of electronic communications sent or received by individual board members in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).
- Retention of electronic communications.

The exhibit has been revised in response to an appellate court decision that "addresses the circumstances when emails sent or received by individual members of a public body will be a public record and subject to disclosure under FOIA."

The policy review team recommends that the board adopt the exhibit as written.

District 97 Board of Education Responsibilities, Procedures and Protocols

During its meeting on January 14, 2014, the board approved a document titled "District 97 Board of Education Responsibilities, Procedures and Protocols." This document, which guides the work of the board and supports its commitment to transparency, features detailed information about the following aspects of board service:

- Board responsibilities.
- Communication expectations.
- Board meeting protocols.

- Board and community requests of the administration.
- Committee and liaison roles.

In December 2014, the board charged the policy review team with revising the document to reflect changes in the law and updates to its practices and protocols. The team has made several recommended revisions in response to the board's request. These revisions include:

- Adding a graphic titled "Trust and Communication" to the Communication Expectations section of the document. This graphic delineates the roles and responsibilities of the board and superintendent.
- Providing greater specificity regarding the process by which the administration will respond to public comment on behalf of the board.
- Updating the list of items that appear on the agenda for regularly scheduled board meetings to include administrative items (policy review, presentation of financial information, discussion of administrative proposals or reports).
- Modifying the Board and Community Requests of the Administration section to align it with the law, board policy and the Oath of Office taken by board members. More specifically, the team added language regarding how the board will respond to emails and the process by which it will share its questions or communications with staff members.

A draft of the updated version of the document is attached to this memo.

Plan for Policy Monitoring

The board conducted a self-evaluation in December 2014. One of the "next steps" following this evaluation was to develop a plan for monitoring policies in the future. The board assigned the completion of this task to the policy review team.

Based on the size of the manual, as well as the other policy-related work that must be done on an annual basis, the policy review team believes the most efficient and effective way to monitor the district's policies moving forward is to perform a staggered check in on a quarterly basis. The first step in this process is to determine how much time it will take to review each section of the manual (eight sections total) and develop a calendar based on those estimations. For example, the check in on sections one (School District Organization) and three (General School Administration), which contain a small number of policies (nine total), will likely take one session to complete. Whereas, it will likely require multiple sessions to complete the check in on section seven (Students), which contains more than 30 policies. This calendar will be presented to the board as an information only report during one of its regularly scheduled meetings at the beginning of the school year. It will also be shared with the public via the district's various communications resources (websites, community listserv, Facebook, Twitter, etc.).

Once the calendar has been established, the policy review team will go through each section of the manual during its allotted time period and place every policy into one of three categories:

- **Review only** – The review only category includes policies that rarely need to be updated and/or require a spot check. Policy 1:10 (School District Legal Status), which defines what a school district is from a legal standpoint, is an example of a policy that falls under this category. This category may also include policies that were recently revised and/or spot checked in conjunction with an update issued by PRESS.
- **Review and possibly revise** – The policies in the review and possibly revise category are ones the policy review team believes may need to be updated based on changes in the law, district operations or standard best practices. These policies include the district-specific ones that are not maintained or updated by PRESS (e.g., policy 4:172 – Video Surveillance and Electronic Monitoring). They also include ones that may need to be revised based on modifications to the district's procedures or protocols

(e.g., updating the gift policy to include a minimum dollar amount at which items must be presented to the board for approval).

- **Review and spot check for enforcement** – The policy review team will work with administrators and staff members to identify and perform spot checks on a handful of policies in each section of the manual to ensure that they are being enforced with equity and fidelity district wide. For example, making sure that all 10 schools are performing the mandatory drills listed in policy 4:170 (Safety). The team will select the policies that are to be spot checked with assistance from the superintendent or his/her designee.

At the conclusion of each quarterly review session, the policy review team will provide the board with a written report summarizing its activities. If the activities involved policies in the review only or review and spot check for enforcement categories, this report will likely be information only. If the activities led to policy revisions, those revisions will be presented to the board for a first reading during one of its meetings, and a second reading and approval at a subsequent meeting. All reports will be shared with the public.

All three of the items referenced above (exhibit for policy 2:140, updated version of the “District 97 Board of Education Responsibilities, Procedures and Protocols” document and the proposed plan for policy monitoring) are being presented to the board tonight for review. A follow-up discussion and approval of each item are scheduled for the board meeting on February 24, 2015.

Attachments:

- Exhibit for policy 2:140 (Communications To and From the Board)
- Updated version of the “District 97 Board of Education Responsibilities, Procedures and Protocols” document