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**TO: Members, Board of Education
Dr. Constance Collins, Superintendent**

FROM: Chris Jasculca

RE: First Reading of Security Camera Policy

DATE: May 25, 2010

The District 97 Policy Committee (Rance Clouser, Jim Gates and Chris Jasculca) is presenting the Video Security Camera and Electronic Monitoring policy to the Board of Education for a first reading this evening.

During the meeting on January 26, 2010, the District 97 Board of Education reviewed a preliminary draft of this policy, which is related to the proposed installation of video security cameras in Gwendolyn Brooks Middle School and Percy Julian Middle School.

In response to the questions and comments raised by the Board members at the meeting on January 26, the following revisions were made to the draft policy:

- The name of the policy was changed to Video Security Camera and Electronic Monitoring.
- The word surveillance was removed from the document; all references to video surveillance were changed to video security camera.
- Two new sections were created—Expectations Related to the Use of Video Security Camera and Electronic Monitoring Equipment and Limitations on the Use of Video Security Camera and Electronic Monitoring Equipment—that feature new content or information that was moved from the section titled Use of Video Monitoring.
- The second paragraph on the first page of the policy defines the primary purpose of the video security camera/electronic monitoring system, which is to complement other means being employed in the District to promote and foster a safe and secure teaching and learning environment for students and staff.
- The second paragraph on the first page of the policy states that the video security camera/electronic monitoring system serves as an appropriate and useful tool with which to augment and support policy 5601 (Serious Misconduct).
- In the first sentence on the second page, person was changed to student or staff member to clearly define who the district and Board have the ability/authority to discipline if this policy is violated.
- A cross reference with policy 5601 (Serious Misconduct) was added to the end of the policy.

After these changes were made, the revised draft policy and a letter from Superintendent Collins regarding the security cameras were made available to the community for review and feedback in a variety of ways, including:

- Both documents were posted in the digital backpack for each school, as well as on the home page and policy review page (<http://www.op97.org/boe/policies.html>) of the district Web site, from April 15 to May 12.
- A hard copy version of the letter from Superintendent Collins, which included a link to the page where the draft policy was posted online, was sent home on April 16 to parents/guardians at each school who requested to receive information in a paper format.



- A request for feedback regarding the District's recommendation to install the security cameras in both of the middle schools, as well as on its draft policy regarding the use of these cameras, was sent to community members and staff via e-mail on April 16, April 26, May 3 and May 10. These e-mails included hyperlinks to both the letter and the draft policy.
- The Wednesday Journal (April 20) and Oak Leaves (April 29) published articles about the District seeking feedback from the community regarding the security cameras. Both articles included links to the information posted on the District's Web site.

The request for feedback generated responses from 40 members of the community. Of these 40 people, 65 percent (26) expressed support for the initiative while 35 percent (14) opposed it or had additional questions/wanted more information about the purpose of the security cameras. Among the reasons people cited for supporting the proposed plan to install cameras included:

- Extra sense of protection for children
- Provide administrators with more time to focus on education
- Improve student behavior
- Excellent way to monitor areas where staff cannot be present at all times
- Help prevent vandalism on the outside of the school building
- Positive impact seen in other districts
- Enhanced safety for students and staff
- Useful resource in dealing with issues such as theft and vandalism

Among the reasons people cited for opposing the proposed plan to install cameras included:

- Concerns about racial profiling
- Violation of privacy
- Poor use of district money
- Staff is more effective means for dealing with issues such as bullying, drug use, etc.
- Belief that security is not a significant enough of a problem to warrant the installation of cameras
- Viewpoint that cameras represent Big Brother – send a message of distrust
- Offer false sense of security and have little impact
- Negatively impact the climate in the building

Other than a suggestion to change the name from security camera to safety camera, there was no feedback offered on the draft policy. The policy is being presented to the Board tonight for a first reading, with a second reading and approval scheduled for the meeting on June 14, 2010.

Attachments:

- Video Security Camera and Electronic Monitoring policy