

To: School Committee
From: Policy Subcommittee
Date: May 5, 2011
Re: Review of Policy Manual:
Initial Overview and Recommended Procedure

I. Overview

One of the primary responsibilities of any school committee in Massachusetts is to set the policies for the school district. These policies are an expression of the committee's educational vision and a codification of the rules and procedures that the committee wants the district to follow. "Boards must understand the power of the policy-making role – how it derives from the community and drives everything in the district."¹

The set of district policies is not the only determinant of those rules and procedures: the committee's scope is constrained by the relevant sections of the Massachusetts General Laws, by the regulations issued from the state Department on Elementary and Secondary Education (and perhaps also increasingly from the federal Department of Education), and by the collective bargaining agreements with district employees. In most cases, these other determinants will preempt the district's policies where there is a conflict.

Most school districts undertake periodic or ongoing reviews of their policy manuals. They do this both to ensure that the vision expressed in the policies still pertains, and to ensure that the rules and procedures remain practical, enforceable, comprehensive and current. Lincoln therefore has a policy that "a review of the Policy Book in its entirety will be conducted by the School Committee a [sic] least every six years." In principle, a complete review means that, over the next six years, each policy in the book will receive a reading at two open meetings by the full committee, which can then affirm, revise or remove the policy. Last autumn, Jennifer Glass asked the Policy Subcommittee to initiate this review process.

II. Current Status of LPS Policies

There are 128 policies in the LPS Policy Manual, starting with a non-discrimination policy and running through a policy on relations with educational research centers. 81 of the 128 policies in the manual have not been reviewed since the 1980s, and another 20 have not been reviewed since the 1990s. Only 27 of the policies have been written, revised or affirmed in this century. The obsolescence of the policy on policy review offers ample evidence of the need to adhere more closely to that specific, neglected policy.

¹ Davis W. Campbell and Diane Green, "Defining the Leadership Role of School Boards in the 21st Century," *Phi Delta Kappan* (January, 1994): 394.

The spreadsheet that follows this memo provides an overview of all the current LPS policies. For each policy, the date of its last review by the School Committee is indicated. For many of the policies, there is also a tentative and preliminary judgment both about whether any review is necessary and about what priority the School Committee should place on the review.

III. Policy review procedure

A comprehensive review of the policy manual is a long process. If we commit now to addressing one existing policy at each meeting, the full review will take more than 6 years.

An additional challenge that complicates the whole procedure, if we are aiming to have a complete and effective policy manual at the end of the process, is that of thinking about the policies that we don't have but might need.

There are, though, some reasons for optimism. One, some sets of policies, like those concerning the role of the superintendent, or those governing the fiscal management of the district, can be considered in bulk. In making the necessary changes, we may produce a more concise and streamlined set of policies. Two, some policies, even if they are old, are current and practical and require nothing more than a brief review and affirmation. One such example is the policy on SC quorum. Three, in many cases, the existing policies have been pre-empted by Massachusetts General Laws, and so no detailed discussion is required or relevant -- in these cases the question will be whether to keep the policy on our books, and if so, how to write language that conforms to the state dictates.

Over the short term, the recommendation is that the School Committee start to tackle four sets of policies that identified as high-priority: first, those that play a part in our anti-bullying initiative; second, the set of policies that address appropriate uses of interactive technologies; third, the obsolete set of policies that structure the role of the superintendent and the interaction of the superintendent and the School Committee; and fourth, the pair of policies concerning the length and beginning of the school day that have been rendered obsolete by a series of collective bargaining agreements with the LTA.

Once that process is complete, or at least well under way, then we can start to sprinkle other policies onto our agendas, starting with those with the most obvious shortcomings. Such shortcomings might include the most grievous cases of obsolescence, or a disjunction between the policy and our current practices (a disjunction that can be eliminated either by changing the policy or changing the practice). Over the longer term, the School Committee could undertake the sort of systematic review mandated by our predecessors, to affirm, update, or remove all the LPS policies.

IV. Anti-bullying review

In her report to the School Committee dated March 23, 2011, Stephanie Powers wrote:

The Lincoln Public Schools has policies and procedures that prohibit forms of bullying, cyberbullying and student harassment. These include the:

- Code of Conduct (Student and Parent Handbook)

- Computer Acceptable Use Policy (Student and Parent Handbook)
- Discipline Code (JK)
- Student Computer and Internet Use (IJNDCA)
- Non-Discrimination and Discrimination Grievance Procedures (AC)
- Harassment and Harassment Reporting and Investigation (ACA)
- Student Conduct on School Buses (EEAEC)

Next steps will be to review and update these policies, as appropriate, to comply with the district's "Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan."

Four regularly scheduled meetings remain on the School Committee calendar for 2010-2011: May 12, May 26, June 16, and June 23. In order to complete the review of these policies in this calendar year, so that the relevant information can be included in the Student Handbook for 2011-2012, the proposed schedule is:

1. Code of Conduct and Discipline Code: First reading on May 12, second reading on May 26.
2. Acceptable Use Policy: Mark McDonough and other members of the Instructional Technology Team will draft an updated AUP for a first reading on June 16 and a second reading on June 23.
3. AC, CA and EEAEC: First reading on May 26, second reading on June 16.
4. IJNDCA: Aspects of this policy will fall under the AUP review, and it would otherwise be part of the general review of technology policies in the next school year, as below.

V. Web 2.0

There has been frequent discussion of the need for the School Committee to undertake a comprehensive review of its policies governing student and staff use of computers, the internet and other interactive technologies. In our discussions, we have tended to place this review in the context of an understanding of the growing importance of 'Web 2.0,' which refers to the interactive use of the technologies, when students and teachers are both creators and consumers of content. This policy review is particularly challenging because the technologies and their use change so rapidly.

We do have policies of relatively recent vintage that govern student and staff use of school-owned computers, including internet use on those computers. As far as they go, those policies are still practical and effective. The new challenges that those policies do not address, and that the SC should address both as part of its anti-bullying review and as part of a broader Web 2.0 review, are the challenges that arise first from student and staff use of interactive technologies not owned or directly controlled by the school and, second, from the on-line interactions that occur outside of school hours or outside of the school grounds.

In the fall of 2011, then, the School Committee should discuss how to proceed with a comprehensive review of the relevant technology policies, those we have and those we don't have but need. This review could be led by members of the School Committee and could also, at the Committee's discretion, include members of the community.

VI. Role of Superintendent

The set of LPS policies that govern the role of the superintendent and the relations of the superintendent and the SC predate the Education Reform Act of 1993, which made major changes to the laws governing that role and those relations. It doesn't then make any sense to keep the obsolete policies on our books.

To the extent that the language of the state laws is clear and comprehensive, we may not need district policies. Certainly, the obsolescence of those policies has not discernibly hampered the day-to-day administration of the district for the last 18 years, as far as I know. Nevertheless, there are some areas in which the legal language is not comprehensive, and so a review of the policies may provide clarity and improve our procedures. For instance, the 1993 act did not remove from school committees the authority for the hiring of district business managers. The DESE recommends, though, that school committees delegate this responsibility to the superintendent. The question certainly merits discussion by the School Committee over the next year.

VII. The School Day

Two policies have been rendered obsolete by the collective bargaining agreements over the last nine years with the Lincoln Teachers' Association. One specifies the length of the school day (ID), and the other specifies "Student Time of Arrival and Supervision Before School" (IDB). The School Committee would have a first reading of the revised versions of these policies on May 26 and a second reading on June 16. The superintendent will prepare the draft policies for the Committee's consideration.

VIII. Conclusion

In the face of considerable evidence of the neglect of the commitment to policy review by several generations of predecessors on the LPS School Committee, we can only conclude that the policy review process is a kind of unpleasant medicine. If some set of stern doctors can induce this committee to take that medicine, it is with the assurance that the medicine will be good for us and with the hope that the process will entail a series of productive and engaging conversations about how we run our schools and serve our students and the community.

Policy code	Policy title	Last review	Action	Priority	Comments	Staff support
AC	Non-discrimination and Discrimination Grievance Procedures	26-Feb-09	Discuss	High	Anti-bullying review	S. Powers
ACA	Harassment and Harassment Reporting and Investigation Procedures	26-Feb-09	Discuss	High	Anti-bullying review	S. Powers
ACH	<i>Non-Discrimination on the Basis of Veteran Status</i>	3-May-07	None			
AD	Educational Philosophy	21-Mar-94				
ADA	Vision and Mission	26-Mar-01				
ADC	<i>Smoking</i>	3-May-07	None			
ADDA	<i>CORI Requirements</i>	3-May-07	None			
ADF	<i>Wellness</i>	3-May-07	None			
BA	Annual School Committee Goals	7-Jan-04	Discuss		We do not follow -- change or comply	
BB	School Committee Legal Status	30-Oct-89				
BBA	School Committee Powers and Duties	13-Nov-89				
BBA-R	School Committee as Employer	16-Oct-89	Technical Fix	High	Obsolete -- SC role changed by ed reform	
BBAA	School Committee Authority	13-Nov-89				
BBB	School Board Election	29-Oct-90				
<i>BBBE</i>	<i>Procedures for Filling School Committee Vacancy</i>	4-Dec-89	None			
BCB/GBEA	Conflict of Interest	27-Nov-89				
<i>BDA</i>	<i>Board Organizational Meeting</i>	22-Jan-90	None			
BDB-R	Role of the Chairman of the School Committee	22-Jan-90	Discuss			
BDC-R	Role of the Hanscom Representatives	4-Dec-89	Discuss	Medium	No explicit policy for role of METCO rep	
BDD	School Committee-Superintendent Relationship	5-Feb-90				
BDD-R	School Committee-Superintendent Relations	5-Feb-90				
BDE	Board Subcommittees	4-Mar-85				
BDE-R	Subcommittees and Liaisons of the School Committee	4-Mar-85				

Policy code	Policy title	Last review	Action	Priority	Comments	Staff support
BDE-R2	Guidelines for School Committee Liaisons	17-Dec-84				
BDF	Citizens' Committees Appointed by the School Committee	21-Jan-85				
BDF-R	Procedures for Establishing Citizens' Committees	21-Jan-85				
BDFA	School Councils	27-Sep-93				
BE	School Committee Meetings	21-Nov-02	Technical Fix			S. Brooks
BEDA	Notification of School Committee Meetings	17-Dec-84	Technical Fix			S. Brooks
BEDB	Agenda Preparation	17-Dec-84	Discuss			
<i>BEDBA</i>	<i>Consent Agenda</i>	<i>13-Jan-05</i>	<i>None</i>			
<i>BEDC</i>	<i>Quorum</i>	<i>17-Dec-84</i>	<i>None</i>			
BGC	Policy Review and Maintenance	26-Oct-87	Discuss			
BIA-R	Procedures for New Committee Member Orientation	17-Dec-84	Discuss			
CA	Administrative Goals	21-Jan-85	Discuss	Medium		
CB	School Superintendent	17-Dec-84	Discuss	High	All policies concerning role of superintendent have been rendered obsolete by changes in ed law	
CBA	Position Description - School Superintendent	7-Jan-85	Discuss	High		
CBCA	District Administration Priority Objectives	17-Dec-84	Discuss	High		
CBI	Evaluation of the Superintendent	17-Dec-84	Discuss	High		
CBI-R	Procedures for Superintendent's Evaluation	21-Jan-85	Discuss	High		
CCA	Organizational Chart -- LPS		Discuss	High		
CD	Management Team	17-Dec-84	Discuss	High		
CF	School Building Administration	17-Dec-84	Discuss	Medium		
CHD	Administration in Policy Absence	17-Dec-84	Discuss	Medium		
DBC-R	Budget Deadlines and Schedules	21-Jan-85	Discuss	Medium	No review of budget procedures in 26 years	B. Creel
DBF	Budget Hearings	21-Jan-85	Discuss	Medium		B. Creel

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DBI	Budget Implementation	21-Jan-85	Discuss	Medium		B. Creel
DBJA	Line Item Transfer Authority	21-Jan-85	Discuss	Medium		B. Creel
DD	Funding Proposals and Applications	21-Jan-85	Discuss	Medium		B. Creel
DJB	Purchasing Policy	15-May-95	Discuss	Medium		B. Creel
DJB-R	Purchasing Procedures	15-May-95	Discuss	Medium		B. Creel
DJC	Petty Cash Accounts	8-Sep-97	Discuss	Medium		B. Creel
DJE	Bidding Requirements	21-Jan-85	Technical fix	High	Obsolete	B. Creel
DJG	Relations with Vendor	21-Jan-85	Discuss	Medium		B. Creel
EBA	Safety Inspection Policy	21-Jan-85	Discuss	Medium	Not followed -- change or comply	B. Creel, M. Haines
EBAD	Pest management	4-Feb-02				A. Cotoni, K. Mooney
EBCA-R	Emergency Plans	21-Jan-85	Discuss	Medium	Review with public safety officials	A. Cotoni, K. Mooney
EBCB	Fire Drills	21-Jan-85	Discuss	Medium	Review with public safety officials	A. Cotoni, K. Mooney
EDB	Book/Material Discard	24-Sep-84	Discuss	Low		
EDC	Use of School Equipment	4-Nov-85	Discuss	Low		
EDCA-R	Use of Steinway Piano at Brooks School	6-May-96				
EDCB	Library Loan Policy	8-Apr-85				A. Sajdera
EEAEC	Student Conduct on School Buses	21-Jan-85	Discuss	High	Anti-bullying review	S. Powers
EEAEC-R	Bus Safety Rules	10-Jun-91	Discuss	High	Anti-bullying review	S. Powers
<i>EEAEF</i>	<i>Bus Rules for Kindergarten Drop-off</i>	<i>5-Jun-00</i>	<i>None</i>			
EEBA-R	Administrative Procedures for Special use of School Buses (System-Owned Buses)	21-Jan-85	Technical fix	Low	Obsolete	B. Creel
EEBC	Business and Personnel Transportation Insurance	21-Jan-85				B. Creel
<i>EEC</i>	<i>Transportation Fees</i>	<i>12-Feb-04</i>	<i>None</i>			
EFC	Policy on Free/Reduced Price Lunch Program	21-Jan-85	Discuss	Low		
<i>FCD</i>	<i>Retirement of Facilities</i>	<i>21-Jan-85</i>	<i>None</i>			
GBEA/BCB	Conflict of Interest	29-Feb-88	Discuss	Medium		
GBEBC	Presents to School Personnel	18-Mar-85	Discuss	Medium	Comply or change	
<i>GBEC</i>	<i>Drug-Free Workplace</i>	<i>9-Mar-92</i>	<i>None</i>			

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GBEC-R	Implementation Plan of Drug-free Awareness Program	9-Mar-92	None			
GBM	Salary Payment for Snow Days	22-Apr-85	Discuss	Medium		
GCAB-R	Administrative Positions	22-Apr-85	Discuss	Medium		
GCB	Professional Staff Contracts and Compensation Plans	18-Mar-85	None			
GCT	Policies Relating to Employment of Substitute Teachers	23-Apr-84	Discuss	Medium		
GDB	Employment of Regular Classroom and Special Needs Aides and Tutors	29-Oct-01				
GDB-1	Support Staff Contracts and Compensation Plans (Secretarial Staff)	Jun-89				
GDB-2	Support Staff Contracts and Compensation Plans (Custodians)	18-Mar-85				
IA	Instructional Goals	4-Mar-85	Discuss	Medium	Review in conjunction with SC and district goals	
IC	School Year/School Calendar	11-Feb-85	None			
ICAA	School Year Hours	19-Jun-95	None			
ID	School Day	11-Feb-85				
IDB	Student Time of Arrival and Supervision Before School	27-Jan-86	Discuss	High	Review for compliance with new LTA contract	
IEA	Subject Time Guidelines	18-Mar-85	Discuss	Medium		M. Sterling
IHAMB	Parental Notification Relative to Sex Education	1-Dec-97				M. Richichi
IHAMBA	Sex Education Films	11-Feb-85				M. Richichi
IHBA	Program and Services for Children with Special Needs	18-Mar-85				S. Powers
IHBA-R	Testing and Evaluation procedures	18-Mar-85	Discuss	Medium	Obsolete	M. Sterling
IHCG	After-School Programs	6-May-96	Discuss	Medium	Comply or change	
IIB	Class Size	6-Dec-07	None			
IJ	Instructional Material Selection, Public Complaints about Curriculum or Instructional Material	11-Feb-85				M. Sterling
IJNDCA	Student Computer and Internet Use	Jun-05	Discuss	High	Web 2.0 review, anti-bullying review	S. Powers
IJNDCB	Employee Computer and Internet Use	30-Oct-00	Discuss	High	Web 2.0 review	S. Powers

Policy code	Policy title	Last review	Action	Priority	Comments	Staff support
IJOA	Field Trips	3-Jun-04	None			
IJOB	Communtty Resource Persons and Volunteers	11-Feb-85	Discuss	Low		
IKB	Homework	11-Feb-85	Discuss	Low		
IKF	Graduation Requirements	11-Feb-85	Discuss	Low		
IL	Testing Programs	18-Mar-85	Discuss	Medium	Review in conjunction with IHBA R	M. Sterling
ILE	Testing on Religious Holiday	4-Mar-85	None			
IMDA	Clarification on Dissection in the Lincoln Public Schools	Jul-93	None			
IMDC	Religious Music	8-Apr-85	Discuss	Low		
JBAA	Nondiscrimination: Extracurricular Activites	26-Feb-09	None			
JEB	Entrance Age	20-Mar-03				
JFA	School Admissions	6-May-85				
JFAA	Admission of Resident Students	20-Mar-03				
JFAA-R	Admission of Resident Students - Administrative Procedures	6-May-85				
JFAB	Admission of Non-Resident Students	30-Mar-03	None			
JFABC	Admision of Inter-District Transfer Students (Enrollment of METCO Students)	6-May-04	None			
JG	Classroom Placement	6-May-85				
JG-R	Placement Procedures for Individual Schools	16-Dec-85				
JH	Policy on Student Absences	23-Sep-85				
JH-R	Administrative Guidelines for Student Make-up Work Procedures	6-May-85				
JJB	Students Social Events	11-Feb-85				
JJC	Public Performances by Students	11-Feb-85				
JJIF	Athletic User Fees for Hanscom Campus	27-Sep-99				
JK	Discipline Code	26-Feb-09	Discuss	Hign	Anti-Bullying review	S. Powers
JKF	Physical Restraint	26-Feb-09	None			
JP	Soliciting Funds from Students	1-Jul-85				
JRE-R	Procedure on Broadcasting and Taping of Students and Classrooms	6-May-85	Discuss	High	Web 2.0 review	

Policy code	Policy title	Last review	Action	Priority	Comments	Staff support
KBF	Policy of Parents Visits to Classrooms	6-May-85	Discuss	Low	Comply or change	S. McKenna, S. Hobbs
KBFA	Policy on Children's Visits to Schools	6-May-85	Discuss	Low		S. McKenna, S. Hobbs
<i>KCD</i>	<i>Gifts/Donations/Grants to Schools</i>	<i>18-Dec-08</i>	<i>None</i>			
KED	Public Complaints about School Personnel	6-May-85				
<i>KFB</i>	<i>Use of School Buildings</i>	<i>27-Mar-08</i>	<i>None</i>			
<i>KHB</i>	<i>Advertising and Commercialism</i>	<i>14-Feb-08</i>	<i>None</i>			
LC	Relations with Education Research and Service Centers	6-May-85				M. Sterling