



GLENBARD TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT #87

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POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES DISTRICT OFFICE Monday, July 15, 2019

The Policy Committee held its monthly meeting at the District Office on Monday, July 15, 2019. The meeting was called to order at 6:03 p.m.

In attendance:

Cindy Christensen, Committee Member
Jennifer Jendras, Board Member
John Kenwood, Board Member (PT)
Rich Mazzolini, Committee Member
Martha Mueller, Board Member

Josh Chambers, Asst. Superintendent HR
Janet Cook, Ex. Director Student Services
Brady Hanson, GEA liaison
Diana Flint, Recording Secretary

Quorum requirements were met and the meeting was able to proceed.

Assistant Superintendent Chambers welcomed the large number of attendees to the meeting. He then noted the purpose of this committee is to review policy and make recommendations to the School Board for potential change. The Policy Committee does not make policy. Only the School Board has the authority to determine policy. Tonight, the committee will approve the meeting minutes and discuss Administrative Procedure 7:10-AP1 as noted on the agenda. Cook will provide a brief synopsis on the procedure and recent developments. After that time, anyone who wishes to address the committee will need to submit a public participation form and will be given three minutes to speak. Comments should be directed to the Policy Committee and not to audience members. This is meant to be an avenue for everyone's opinions to be heard in a respectful manner and a positive decorum is to be upheld. Speakers have the option to submit any prepared statements read. Should there be insufficient time to complete the meeting agenda, the item will be continued to the next Policy Committee meeting on August 12, 2019.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the Policy Committee meeting for June 10, 2019 were reviewed.

Action: Motion made to accept, seconded, and carried.

Items for Discussion

1. Administrative Procedure 7:10-AP1 *Accommodating Transgender Students or Gender Non-Conforming Students* – Executive Director Cook stated this is a continuation of the same procedure brought forth at the last meeting. The red-lined document has not changed. What has been added is a copy of the State of Illinois’ Executive Order issued by Governor Pritzker on June 30, 2019 which went into effect immediately upon its filing with the Secretary of State. The document states that 80% of transgender students feel unsafe at schools and 70% feel discriminated against in established school policy or practices. Therefore, an Inclusive Schools Task Force is to be established that will deliver a report by January 1, 2020. The report shall entail:
 - a) An overview of the legal rights of transgender, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming students to be free of discrimination and harassment in schools;
 - b) A description of best practices for ensuring welcoming, safe, supportive, and inclusive school environments for transgender, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming students; and,
 - c) Its findings and recommendations for ensuring transgender, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming students are fully supported in Illinois schools.

Within this same Executive Order is a secondary request to the Illinois State Board of Education noting the similar stipulations. This will entail the State Board’s review of school policies.

At this point the meeting was opened to public participation. The audience was reminded that individuals wishing to speak needed to sign in and complete the public participation form prior to addressing the committee.

Glenbard parent, Linda Samuta, thanked the Policy Committee for extending public input. Samuta expressed how extremely troubling it was on how Policy 7:10 was changed in February. In addition, Governor Pritzker’s order is only to establish a task force and should not be used to actively format policy. Samuta spoke on the list of suggestions that she advised had been emailed to the School Board:

- a) Of great importance for review was the suggested “overnight accommodations student/parental consent and field release form,” which provides parents the right to note their preference for accommodations with a person of the same biological sex.
- b) In addition, District 87 is referencing an old version of the Dear Colleague Letter instead of the current 2017 Department of Education guidelines.
- c) Samuta also referenced terminology changes that related to addressing potential mental health needs in another policy - not 7:10.

- d) Concern was raised on the balance of human rights, privacy rights, and freedom of religious expression.
- e) PE exemptions due to the uncomfortable and unsafe situation in locker rooms should be allowed.

Community member, Julie Breen, expressed her concern for training. She believes that the administrative procedure adopted should state that all school staff be trained within 90 days of hire, as well as having a requirement that substitute teachers and contracted services such as lunchroom workers also have mandated training. Breen questioned why District 87 has not offered a GPS night on gender non-conforming/transgender similar to two other local school districts? She advised that she sent an email to the School Board with her concerns.

Community member, Rene Jurkowski, stated that biological sex is determined at birth by physical characteristics, including chromosomes, reproductive anatomy, and sex hormones. Subjective feelings of identity cannot override the facts of biology. As such, biological boys should not be allowed in girls' locker rooms. In addition, a boy's brain is not fully formed until age 25 and those under the age of 18 lack the ability to make life changing decisions. Unfortunately, biological girls are not having their feelings considered with the changes made. Jurkowski respectfully asked that a clear line be drawn when it comes to locker rooms.

Class of 2018 alumnus, Quinn Whitlaw, talked about respecting transgender individuals and the differences between assigned gender and gender identity. One is assigned at birth while the other is personally perceived. The distinction is important. Whitlaw noted that GLSEN states 75% of transgender students feel unsafe in schools and 50% have been denied access to restrooms or locker rooms that fit their assigned gender. If you take these statistics and apply them to Glenbard, the majority of transgender students at his former school feel unsafe every day. Whitlaw stated transgender students are not confused on their identity, nor are they faking it, and they are also not predators. They simply want a safe haven where they can be the gender they identify with and a school that aligns with that.

Wheaton resident, Erika Newman, spoke on evolution as a reflection of nature and for something to evolve, change is required. The contention with the acceptance of transgender, non-binary, gender non-conforming is similar to the historical acceptance for people of color. It is not logical, but based on one's own fear. She also stated that it was, in fact, the transgender student who is forced to attend an unsafe school environment. She then quoted newspaper article headlines from 2014 to the present on transgender students being attacked or harmed at school -- the last one dated April 4, 2019 about a transgender teen being left with a head injury after being brutally assaulted in a girls' changing room. She asked the committee to embrace diversity rather than to reject it -- raise the voice of the transgender individual versus silencing it.

Glenbard parent, Kristen Seaman stated there was a large group with much diversity present in the room and everyone is charged up. She noted that she was not here to judge nor to say someone was right or wrong. Rather, she was acting as a concerned parent. The decision to revise Policy 7:10 was not mandated by Federal or State governments. Seaman stated she has spent several hours reviewing what neighboring schools have in place and found only one or two had similarly changed policies. She cautioned the district as it was moving forward into uncharted territories. Perhaps, the state of undress and bodily exposure should be clearly defined, as well as the liability. Seaman noted she sent documents to the School Board.

Pastor Daniel Wegrzyn addressed the committee as a Glenbard parent, noting he did not have a lot to add. However, he concurred with Seaman and others regarding the issues on safety, as well as privacy. He feels there are better ways to handle things.

Current student, Christopher Jeschke, stated he was not a fan of public speaking. However, he felt it prudent that people should be allowed to utilize locker rooms or restrooms of their choice.

Glenbard parent, Mark Miselnicky, stated he had come across several articles and statistics recently. Of particular interest were the ones on Target Stores changing their transgender access policy for bathroom and changing areas -- Based on a study from 2003-2017 personal attacks have increased in their stores since instituting the change two years ago and 99% of the violations were against women and children. Recently in Chicago, a man forced himself into a Target Store bathroom and exposed himself to a young girl. Another article of interest was from the UK on Shy Bladder -- how certain things affect individuals from being able to use the bathroom. Instead they wait till they get home, which is not healthy. Still more articles talked about anxiety and depression being a major problem for students. All this raises great concern when you talk about the changes made to Policy 7:10.

Glenbard student, Catherine Andres, noted that the parents here say they are concerned about their children's safety. However, sexual assault has no gender. It is about power and does not equate to transgender. In fact, transgender individuals have a greater rate of being victims -- black transgender women being the highest. "Personally, the only thing on my mind in the locker room is changing so the PE teacher will not penalize me for being late rather than being concerned with someone else's body parts." Transgender individuals are people who have wants, needs, and desires just like anybody else -- they are subjected to bigotry and fear.

Community member, Ron Whitfield, stated he had been a Glenbard resident for 40 years and only recently one of his children felt comfortable enough to tell people that he was gay. He commended the School Board for getting where they are -- on the threshold of progress.

Whitfield noted his son felt at risk for 25 years and struggled in school. This would have offered him support.

Glenbard parent, Matthew Ferris, agreed that transgender individuals should be treated with respect and support. However, the NCAA does not require the use of the same facilities -- only the same type of facilities. Civil Rights are being affected. High school students are minors, not adults, and the School Board is assuming they can process all this. The Governor's Executive Order deals with transgender. However, gender conforming students are now being forced to deal with uncomfortable experiences. What about the rights of all? Ferris believes that gender conforming students should have the ability to opt out of PE; have equal confidentiality if they express their discomfort; and should have separate travel accommodations. He advised he emailed the School Board.

Glenbard student, Elizabeth LeBeau, addressed the Policy Committee noting that she was age 17 and considered a minor. However, she disagreed with the previous remarks that she did not have the mental capacity to process someone as trans/non-binary. It was not for her to judge. Today's students are more accepting and really do not care. Personally, she just wants to get dressed in the locker room as quickly as she can for PE.

Glenbard student, Elsa Ford-Taggart, noted she was in support of the policy changes and was glad the School Board was forward thinking.

Glenbard student, Robbie Matthew, stated that everyone had certain animalistic rights -- the right to eat, sleep, drink and so on. However, LGBTQ individuals live in fear and have their rights denied. My friends who identify themselves within this group feel singled out. I also had to do research for a paper at school on the subject and discovered LGBTQ individuals have a higher depression rate. This is a public-school district and we need to divide the Church and State. "Honestly, if I were in the washroom and someone trans walked in, I might say wholly crap to myself -- I certainly would not say you do not belong here. It is about respect -- teaching respect."

Glenbard parent, Noel Samuta, stated she was a 16-year resident of Glen Ellyn. Her opposition to Policy 7:10 has nothing to do with the choices made by individuals, but more on fairness for all -- alternate accommodations should be offered. She is distressed that the wants of a few individuals were considered more important than the needs of the majority. Samuta clarified that she is not identifying transgenders as predators, but felt it inappropriate to have the same locker room and bathroom access. Further, a member of the Illinois School Alliance was allowed to speak at a Policy Committee meeting in January and they are not even part of District 87.

Community member, Anne Bouchard, noted that any Civil Rights progress is not started by the majority, but the minority. She is proud of the Policy Committee and the School Board who want to serve as leaders. Bouchard acknowledged that several years of effort had been put into reviewing this and she wanted to thank everyone for the progress that has been made.

Community member, Hal Temple, stated that everyone has heard that non-transgender students who share bathrooms and locker rooms with transgender students will experience: embarrassment, humiliation, anxiety, fear, and loss of dignity. He referenced a U.S. News & World article on a lawsuit against a local school district that was just dismissed in April of 2019. The petitioners utilized these same arguments and lost. However, the article stated that one thing remained clear over the course of three years of litigation -- no harm had come to any non-transgender students from sharing restrooms or locker rooms. Instead, transgender students have been the target of harm due to fear brought on by misinformation.

Recent Glenbard graduate, Molly Friedman, applauded the district for being a trailblazer in this area and commended the School Board for not letting anything scare them. The revisions to Policy 7:10 are just another way the district demonstrates they are an educational leader.

Glenbard parent, Cedra Crenshaw, noted she is concerned about the truth and facts that have been provided. Revisions to Policy 7:10 took place without proper input from all stakeholders. She is also concerned with school safety. School safety and privacy policies should respect the needs of all students. No child should be forced into an intimate setting with a member of the opposite sex. Every student should be allowed the use of private spaces to relieve themselves, dress/undress or shower without penalty. Students and parents should have the right to sign off on a new, overnight accommodations form to state their preferences at least 2-weeks in advance. A PE waiver should be established, as well as a disclaimer that no student, teacher, or administrator shall be bullied, harassed, or held liable if they have a difference of opinion on this matter. Schools need to be safe learning environments. Crenshaw stated she emailed her concerns to the School Board.

At this point the audience was advised that the meeting needed to conclude and the item would be continued at the next Policy Committee meeting scheduled for August 12th.

The meeting adjourned at 6:56 p.m.

Signed:



Jennifer Jendras
Policy Committee Chairman

8/12/2019
Date