



Board of Education COMMITTEE REPORTS

FEBRUARY 11, 2021

Culture, Climate & Community Relations

The Culture, Climate & Community Relations Committee met on Tuesday, January 19, 2021, to review and strengthen Committee goals, and steps taken toward goal completion.

- 1. Positive Messaging:** Positive messaging continues at all three middle schools, preparing additional signage for the return to school, and offering virtual messaging during remote learning. The social media poster template contest was completed with entries to be judged and publicized in the ensuing weeks. All K-12 schools will include quotes on marquee from famous African Americans in celebration of Black History Month; Women's History Month will be the next focus, in March.
- 2. Community Partnerships:** Working with the Office of Community Education, a Winter Door Decorating contest took place throughout the District. The Committee discussed the efforts of the new PHS principal in creating a student committee to discuss PHS culture, including establishing a student created activity to promote engagement in a virtual climate. Working with Rutgers DICE, PHS students were able to attend a Rutgers Virtual College Fair, and can take part in a second virtual event that will be announced in February.
- 3. Wellness and Physical Health:** The committee reviewed the design template for a new brochure focusing on mental health and wellness programs offered through the District. The Administration shared a list of mental health and wellness books that will be posted on the District website as suggestions for parents.
- 4. New Business:** Kimberly Lane announced the Board's approval for a position of Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. The Committee discussed ensuring increasing teacher/student communication for health and wellness programs.

Fiscal Planning & Operations Committee

The Fiscal Planning & Operations Committee met on Wednesday, February 3, 2021, to review the 2021-2022 budget, capital projects, preschool building renovations, and other ongoing projects.

- 1. 2021-2022 Budget:** The Committee reviewed the 2021-2022 Preliminary Budget and discussed state aid, the projected tax levy, major expense categories, and capital projects.
- 2. Facility Capital Projects: PHS/MS Auditoriums and PHS Family/Consumer Science Room-** Auditorium training was postponed due to snow. Architect review of completed punch list items is scheduled for Feb. 5. **PHS Vocal Music Room**—Supplier/contractor will rectify a problem in the lighting motion-sensor control system at no cost to the District. **Generators**— DOE approved project plans. We await Legislature approved funds from the Securing Our Children's Bond Act funds to proceed.
- 3. Long-Term Capital Project Plan:** The Committee discussed debt expiring in 2022-2023 and possible impact for the District's Long-Term Capital Project Plan.
- 4. Energy Savings Improvement Update:** Mr. Oliveira and the Facilities team reviewed initial energy conservation measures (ECM) identified by Honeywell and provided feedback on focus areas. After assessing the financial impact of proposed ECMs, a final presentation to the full Board is anticipated for the first April Board meeting. The District awaits final copies of the Solar PPA contracts from Eznergy.
- 5. Transportation:** Layla Transportation agreed to amend transportation contract payments as required by Executive order. Mr. Oliveira discussed the purchase of new buses to replace our aging fleet.
- 6. Food Service:** Meal participation has increased with meal counts regularly in the high 500s per day. District profitability is ahead of prior year due to breakfast reimbursements and supplemental contracts.
- 7. Business Office Update:** Preschool Building – The Township Planning Board approved the project plans. Architectural drawings were submitted to the NJDOE and the District awaits approval. The Landlord continues to negotiate specific design needs with the District.

Policy/Legislative Committee

The Policy/Legislative Committee met on Thursday, February 4, 2021, to review Bylaws and pending legislation.

1. **Bylaw 0155.1, Electronic Meeting Participation at In-Person Meetings:** The Committee reviewed a final draft containing a clause requiring that a Board member participating remotely observe all privacy and security protocols in effect as if the Board itself were meeting remotely. The Committee discussed what form of "electronic equipment" they preferred for remote participation and were comfortable leaving that to the Administration's discretion.
2. **Bylaw 0145, Board Member Resignation and Removal:** The Committee further discussed what constitutes "attendance" at Board meetings and "good cause" for missing them. These two Bylaws, taken together, reflect the Committee's view on a fair balance between Board members' need to miss meetings occasionally for legitimate reasons beyond their control, and the Board's need to function with a full roster of members. Board members who are eligible to participate remotely under the conditions of 0155.1 would be considered present for that meeting. This Bylaw was also approved for forwarding to the full Board for First Reading.
3. **Bylaw 0164.2,** focuses on implementing the recent State emergency regulation for the conduct of remote meetings generally. The Committee preapproved submission of this Bylaw to the full Board for First Reading with Administration modifications.
4. **Legislation:** Mr. Rubin briefed the Committee on several legislative developments, including S854, "Laura Wooten's Law," which would require civics education courses for middle school students; S1018 and S1021, which would create a School Discipline Task Force to review discipline policies and practices for racial disparities and other inequitable treatment, and require tracking of related data; and S550, which would require student ID cards for grades 7-12 to have a telephone number for a suicide prevention hotline on the back.

Curriculum Committee

The Curriculum Committee met on Monday, February 8, 2021 to discuss Black History Month, diversity needs at PHS, Student Screeners and Assessments, and other topics.

1. **Diversify Our Narrative:** Led by a group of PHS seniors, discussion focused on inclusive curriculum and the strides that the district curriculum should take to meet the diverse backgrounds of Piscataway students. Dr. Baskerville emphasized that students should have a voice in their curriculum.
2. **The Diversity Org:** PHS Rising invited this organization to hold a February 19 assembly for students focused on fostering tolerance and unity, embracing diversity, and having difficult conversations. The organization, Vocal Justice, will meet with a group of students to foster student voice by using the art of public speaking to build confidence, communication skills, and critical consciousness.
3. **Black History Month PBL (Project-Based Learning) Update:** The PBL is in Google Drive and third grade teachers are invited to use the activity. Data on its use will be shared in the future. Some schools are choosing to implement an exhibition to present student work with this PBL.
4. **QSAC Update:** Due to our status as a high achieving district, we are exempt at this time.
5. **Student Screeners and Assessments:** All K-8 students are currently being screened and the data will be used along with information collected from teachers (anecdotal notes, report cards). NJSLA testing window is March 15 - June 11; the state will allow a remote component of the NJSLA.
6. **Remediation and Enrichment:** A K-12 Remediation and Enrichment program will be announced in March and implemented this school year/summer. A counselor will also be available to address social and emotional learning.