

## UPPER PERKIOMEN SCHOOL DISTRICT

Education Center  
2229 E. Buck Road  
Pennsburg, PA 18073

### Policy Committee Meeting

September 21, 2020 (via Zoom)

#### In attendance :

Raeann Hofkin  
Stephen Cunningham  
Peg Pennepacker  
Assistant Superintendent – Dr. Andrea Farina  
Business Manager – Sandra Kassel  
Human Resources Director – Georgiann Fisher  
Director of Curriculum- Kimberly Bast  
High School Principal- Dr. Robert Carpenter

The minutes from the August 17, 2020 Policy Committee Meeting were approved at the start of the meeting.

We will move policies 203, 204, 205 and 206 will move to school board meeting in November. Andrea will send to the entire board and put on the agenda and submit to the full board for the first read.

**Policy 207-Confidential Communication of Students-** There were minor language revisions made to this policy. Specifically, language was added to include “parent/guardian”. This policy does address that there is some communication between the student and school personnel that is deemed confidential, however, it does require that the school personnel report to the parent/guardian share or the proper authority if there is a health/safety issued that affects the student, so that goes unchanged. Student’s communication with school personnel in legal proceedings is governed by those “laws”, previously proceedings. This will be sent to the board for review.

**Policy 211-Student Accident Insurance-** It was previous agreed upon to repeal this policy but it was not sent to the board for full review. This policy addresses student accident insurance but does NOT need to be in a policy. This information is provided to families/students at the beginning of each year and/or beginning of activity. PSBA wanted to make sure information is updated/ revised annually and disseminated to families. This will be sent to the full board for a vote to remove policy 123.

**Policy 212- Reporting Student Progress-** The initial policy was very limited in scope. Revisions were recommended to clarify language and better define how progress will be measured. The recommended revisions includes both data and growth measures and spell out what the recommendation for what student progress should be. We want to develop the importance of two-way communication regarding the student’s progress, acknowledging that the student’s parent/guardian needs to hear if the student is struggling in a particular content area before the report card is issued. This policy is about the individual growth of each student. The language under “authority” was clarified to include that the board is directing the districts instructional program include a means to measure all student’s academic progress, in a variety of

mechanisms. We need to develop an AR to determine how each student's progress will be communicated and in what intervals the information is being provided. AR should also include how the student's scores will be recorded in the student portal. It was recommended by the committee that we take the time to develop the AR and then submit both the revised policy and AR to the full board in October for first read.

**Policy 213- Assessment-** We added language in 127 that addressed the information contained in 213. It is recommended that we repeal this policy as language was added to Policy 127. It was recommended that this be moved to the board to as an intent to repeal in October.

**Policy 214- Class Rank-** It is recommended that we repeal this policy. The college process and expectations of students has changed considerably. Class rank can be damaging to students, particularly when applying to colleges and universities. The Administration does not believe that this is a necessary process practice for the District at the high school. For one reason, when we have a large number of high achieving students, they can be penalized, because they may end up ranking 12<sup>th</sup> or 13<sup>th</sup>, where in another high school they may have been ranked 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup>. Colleges and universities created profiles for each high school and they more and more they want to look at the "whole student". For instance, if you don't rank in the top 10 at your high school, a college may not look at you. However, if the high school does not identify class rank, then the college/university is forced to look at the whole student and take a more holistic approach. More and more high schools are doing away with class rank for this reason. Additionally, it can impact awards and scholarships. When we look at the archaic means of ranking students, it can be damaging to students hoping to go to colleges/universities and apply for scholarships. Locally, many school districts have done away with class rank all together: Wissahickon, Hershey, Central Bucks, Council Rock, Downingtown, Lower Merion, Plymouth Whitemarsh, Radnor, Souderton, Upper Dublin, Upper Moreland, West Chester, Spring-Ford, Methacton and North Penn do NOT report class rank. Hatboro Horsham and Upper Moreland still report. We are hoping that removing class rank will help improve overall wellness and mental well-being. Studies and research have shown that students stress about their class rank and enroll in classes based solely on how each will affect their class rank. In place of the valedictorian giving the graduation speech, an alternative method could be developed, such as allowing the top 10% of the students to apply to be considered and interview for the opportunity. If this policy is repealed then the selection process for graduation speaker, would replace class rank, in the student handbook. Another option for determining the speaker is by using the laude system. This has no impact on merit scholars. If agreed to, this would not go into effect until next year or phase-in for students just entering the high school. A presentation was recommended for this policy with the repeal at the same meeting. This would allow a larger conversation with the board.

**Policy 216- Promotion and Retention-** There are recommended revisions, specifically, we need to develop an AR for this policy. The District gets a lot of questions regarding promotion and retention each year. We need to be able to apply an AR for how we are using student data to determine if a student needs to be retained in a grade. The research is mixed on excessive retention. It is not something that the district takes lightly and in some cases, we have parents who are requesting retention, but the student data and scores do not indicate the need. Some things we would like to start considering multiple measures such as: student behavior, attitude, attendance among other factors. A question was raised regarding whether we should consider adding language around Covid-19, since that may impact retention. Mr. Summers suggested that we address that outside policy, as it is limited to a one/two year period of time. Covid-19 related issues will likely be a procedural issue. Is it necessary to include in the policy that the parents

cannot request a student be retained for the purposes of athletic eligibility. It was suggested that language surrounding that be included in the AR. Once the accompanying AR has been developed and the measures are clearly defined, the District will need to provide training to teachers and Administrators. It is recommended that both the AR and revised policy be sent to the board for review in November.

**Policy 216 Student Records-** This policy addresses how student records are collected, protected, disclosed and maintained. It also identifies who can review the student records. The revised AR was also enclosed for review. PSBA suggested that we update the language and definitions. The AR will also provide guidance for administrators as to what can be disclosed and to whom. It was recommended that the committee review the policy and AR in October and then send to the full board for review in November.

**Policy 217-Graduation-** This policy needed a minor revision. Specifically, the policy was revised to include veterans of the Vietnam War. It was recommended that we eliminate 217.1 and 217.2 as they have been combined in this newly revised policy 217. It was recommended that we move to the full board for review and then repeal 217.1 and 217.2 after 217 is approved.