

**Policy Committee Meeting  
January 17 , 2019  
Central Services Board Room**

The Policy Committee met on Thursday, January 17, 2019, in the Central Services Principal’s Meeting Room where Mr. Josh Stone called the meeting to order at the approximate hour of 4:30 p.m. He welcomed everyone to the meeting and appreciated everyone for attending.

**PRESENT:**

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| Mr. Tom Netherton, District 6          | Mr. Josh Stone, District 4      |
| Mr. Tony Brock, District 5             | Mr. Robert Safdie, District 2   |
| Mrs. Janet Graham, Director of Schools | Mrs. Kim Bray, H.R. Supervisor  |
| Mrs. Kacee Harris, CFO                 | Mr. Earl Patton, Attorney       |
| Mr. Jim Inman, District 1              | Mrs. Shirley Parris, District 3 |
| Mrs. Rebecca Hamby, District 7         |                                 |

- 1. Call to Order – Mr. Josh Stone**
- 2. Moment of Silence/Pledge of Allegiance – Mr. Josh Stone**
- 3. Approval of the December 13, 2018 Minutes – Brock made a motion to approve**

**VOICE VOTE:** Brock (mover- yes)  
Netherton (seconder –yes)  
All Ayes

**MOTION:** Carried unanimously

**4. Policy 3.5.303 Personal and Professional Leave**

Stone stated, “The only policy on the agenda tonight is policy 5.303 which is from our work-session on Saturday. The thought was if we are going to do something, lets do it. That way we can get this in place for our professional staff.” Stone inquired if Graham had any thoughts or comments to make before the discussion. Graham responded, “This is a perk for our people. It is a cost neutral for us. It would allow some of our professional staff to have additional personal leave. She went on to describe the situations that this leave could be used. Stone asked for any additional comments. Safdie mentioned, he didn’t have any objections to this policy change. Brock expressed, “I would like to look into the possibility of changing, on the last page and last line, “when appointed by the mayor, city council, executive or county commission” I would like to consider to add “when elected to public office” before when appointed by.” Stone remarked, “I would say this, and I understand that we would have the ability to make that change, you can do more but you can’t do less. What is stated here is from Tennessee Code Annotated. I would not be in favor of making that suggested change. You could get into something like that and it would really bring about a lot of questions.” Stone presented the circumstances where this could cause problems like if a teacher was a city council member and they meet in the middle of the day frequently. He also reasoned it opens up questions regarding trainings and if they are offered online at their convenience. Is it mandatory attendance? He stated, “ I think that opens up a whole different can of worms. I understand the sentiment behind it but I am not in favor of it.” Brock emphasized, “It doesn’t say it will be done. It says it could be done. You could even change the wording if that would make you more accepting of it.” Brock continued with the fact we do have to follow state law, but that does not mean we are limited to that so we could expand beyond the state law. Stone acknowledged the truth of his statement. Safdie stated, “I initially thought along the same lines but given the circumstances that have occurred over the last four or five months, I am not ready to make that change in this policy. However, that does not preclude that I would be unwilling to do so in the future. I am just not ready now, I’m not ready emotionally and I’m not ready logically to make that decision.” Graham stated that

makes her judge and jury to make the decision of granting permission for such leave. It should be either you allow it or you don't. It should be in black and white. Whatever we do has to be done with discipline and has to be done fair. Brock asked if all requests are not requests but notifications? People who have abused professional leave in the past did they not request it? Graham acknowledged they did. Brock said, "So it still has to be approved?" Graham agreed it does. She stated, "If it is professional leave for school business it is granted. I have denied professional requests, because it did not fit into professional leave. It is really a choice if someone wants to go do something for pleasure and I have had to make some of those decisions." Stone maintained, "I would like to make a couple of points, Tennessee Code Annotated as the lawmakers have described here for us short and temporary. It describes appointed by these folks. I don't think for a second that those elected officials didn't think to themselves that someone in the school system is an elected official, maybe we should... I think they have written the law the way they want it and I understand we can go above the law and we could allow this. But when I think about short and temporary, we have had folks who have served on our county commission or other local seat for four or five terms. When they start scheduling meetings, and you would hope that they wouldn't, for the middle of the day frequently, that would not be short or temporary." Brock questioned, "So, it wouldn't be granted, because that is spelled out. You would not leave your classroom every other Wednesday for a committee meeting as a county commissioner. What if we had a teacher who was a state legislator? Would we not release him? Graham replied, "We have people in other school systems who are and they have to take leave. Some of the elected officials are in a position where they can do their work at night. Inman requested to make a suggestion, "Limit it to two days and limit it to training only. Not for meetings but for training." Safdie responded, "That interests me if it is specified like training for the Tennessee School Board Association or the Tennessee County Commission Association. I am not saying that I am ready to vote on it, but that is more appealing to me." Stone asserted, "I think the changes in this policy that are already presented lends itself to allow a little more flexibility in those days. I know we are very small number of folks but we are making some changes that would allow them flexibility. They were getting two days before, now they can get up to five. That takes care of that in some ways, also. Netherton remarked, "I would like to think a mayor, city council or executive of county commission where they make those recommendations of who they want to appoint to do certain things, would use a little discretion of who they picked and leave it up to the school director. I think that is something they can work out between them." Graham remarked, "If the mayor notifies me that any person is needed to do this task, then it is in our realm to grant that professional leave. That is an appointment by the mayor to do something." Safdie agreed that is true, and stated he would like to bring this up again next year as opposed to vote on it this year. He also stated he had no problems with looking into Mr. Inman's proposal. Stone suggested we look at other policies in the state to see if there were other carve outs for employees who work in the school systems. Safdie remarked, "City Council is a good example. They have their meetings in the middle of the day, many times. Just a generic, I could not see a faculty member or a teacher elected to the city council say "I'm going to take off once or twice a week". It is impossible for me to imagine; one the school to permit that; and two the teacher would even have audacity to request that." Stone agreed and stated, "That is why you have to be careful of what you put into policy because it doesn't take a lot of audacity if the policy says you can ask and it can be granted." Brock mentioned the policy does say short and temporary and a city council meeting would be more that this policy would allow. The committee discussed the meaning of short and temporary and how it could be misinterpreted. Patton explained he has researched several surrounding counties and their policy on this subject. He did not have them with him but could bring them to the next policy committee meeting. Stone summarized, "As far as the changes that are presented here, are there any other comments or questions on those changes specifically outside of the description of professional leave?" Netherton mentioned maybe we should bring this policy back in six months and review. See if we want to address it then. Brock stressed, "One reason I agree with what you are saying is to make sure that all the people who can benefit from the change in policy with granting the opportunity to convert sick days to personal days. That is the reason I am willing to let that go. Otherwise I would put up more of an argument. But I do not want to keep any teacher from enjoying this benefit as soon as possible." Brock also agreed to the first and second reading

to make it effective sooner. Netherton mentioned he also wanted to think on this for a longer period before it comes up again. Safdie asked Inman to make a presentation of his prior offer of giving two days for training. Stone proposed, "I would like to move to approve this policy as presented, with the exception of moving the last sentence on page 1 to page 2. My motion is to recommend it for approval on first and second reading"

**VOICE VOTE:** Stone (mover-yes)  
Netherton (seconder-yes)  
All Ayes

**MOTION:** Carried Unanimously

### **8. Other Discussion**

Stone asked if anyone had any other discussion. None was mentioned.

### **9. Adjournment**

**VOICE VOTE:** Brock (mover- yes)  
Netherton (seconder –yes)  
All Ayes

**MOTION:** Carried unanimously

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**Mrs. Janet Graham**  
**Director of Schools**

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**Mr. Josh Stone**  
**Chairman of the Policy Committee**

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**Jane Franklin**  
**Executive Assistant for the Director of Schools and BOE**