



PENN RIDGE SCHOOL DISTRICT

BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS

Policy Committee Meeting Minutes

Pennridge District Administration Office – Board Room

October 5, 2026



A meeting of the Pennridge School District Policy Committee was held on October 5, 2026, at the Pennridge District Administration Office, Board Room. Present were Mrs. Carolyn Sciarrino, Mrs. Leah Foster-Rash, Mrs. Carly Taylor, Mr. Bradley Merkl-Gump, Mr. Brian McMullen, Mr. Tom Trauger, Dr. Bradley Palmer, Dr. Angelo Berrios, and Mr. Ernest Johnson.

Public Comment

Nate Smith-Grasse (Perkasie) provided public comment.

Lee Rush (Perkasie) provided public comment.

Lydia Ramer Hunter (Perkasie) provided public comment.

Policy Update Plan

Mr. Johnson reported that the Policy Update Plan had not changed since the previous committee meeting. The evening's agenda included a second reading of Policy 218, Student Discipline, and first readings of Policy 246, School Wellness and Policy 249, Bullying/Cyber Bullying.

Mr. Merkl-Gump requested renewed consideration of a responsible contractor policy. Discussion addressed concerns about the District's use of COSTARS, opportunities for open competitive bidding, contractor qualifications, apprenticeship programs, quality of work, and potential costs associated with change orders. These points were presented as considerations for further review, rather than established findings.

Several Board Members expressed support for further discussion. Dr. Berrios recommended gathering information from other districts and municipalities and developing language tailored to district needs, including possible project cost thresholds. Members emphasized the importance of an informational session before proceeding with a first reading.

November was identified as a tentative goal for further consideration, contingent on an information session and sufficient preparation.

Policy 218 — Student Discipline, Second Reading

Mr. Johnson described planned Bucks County IU training on restorative practices and restorative conferencing. Training will occur in December 2026 and February 2027, with participation by building administrators, counselors, MTSS specialists, and other district personnel.

Mr. Trauger discussed whether the policy should advance before training and the accompanying administrative regulation were completed. Concerns included the definition of restorative practices, consistent and fair implementation, staff readiness, decision-making authority, and the meaning of language such as “where applicable.” Mr. Trauger requested delaying the policy until additional implementation information was available. Mrs. Rash and Mrs. Sciarrino also shared their perspective while engaging in a discussion with Mr. Trauger. Mrs. Rash and Mrs. Sciarrino felt the policy could be moved forward while the administrative regulation could be written following policy approval.

Dr. Berrios, Dr. Palmer, and Mr. Johnson clarified that:

- Restorative practices would be an additional tool and would not replace existing disciplinary measures,
- Building administrators would determine appropriate use, with central office consultation as warranted,
- A limited group of staff could receive specialized training; individual classroom teachers would not independently determine disciplinary use,
- Participation and appropriateness would depend on the circumstances, including student and parent willingness, and
- Implementation would require training, administrative regulation revisions, legal consultation, and alignment of student handbooks, with handbook revisions anticipated as a part of the process.

Members (Mrs. Sciarrino, Mrs. Rash, and Mrs. Taylor) supporting advancement viewed the policy as a framework, with operational details addressed through administrative regulations. A sample or outline of the anticipated regulation was suggested to help address remaining concerns.

Mr. Johnson reviewed revised language addressing proximity and timing. Mr. Johnson reported that the solicitor had reviewed and supported the revised wording. Members expressed support for the clarification.

Mr. Johnson reviewed the definition of reasonable force. Mr. Johnson reported that the solicitor recommended combining existing and proposed language. Mr. McMullen raised concern about the reference to the language around “parent” within the definition. Mrs. Rash, Mrs. Taylor, Mr. Merkl-Gump and Mr. McMullen discussed what reasonable force may look like while recognizing and confirming that staff receive training in this area.

Policy 246 — School Wellness, First Reading

Mr. Johnson began with a focus on practical implementation and existing district practices for the policy. Mr. Johnson then shifted the focus to language in the policy regarding the Wellness Committee and nutrition. Mrs. Taylor suggested we scroll through the policy, and Members share their perspective and/or language concerns. Mr. Trauger and Mrs. Sciarrino asked clarifying questions about the brackets and choice within the policy. Mr. Johnson clarified what new language is versus old language. Mr. Johnson engaged in a discussion with Mrs. Rash, Mrs. Sciarrino, and Mr. Merkl-Gump around what is in the overall policy.

Members analyzed pages 2, 3, and 4. On page 4, Mrs. Taylor asked about the Advisory Health Council and inquired about who should be on it. Mr. Johnson suggested we maintain a School Wellness Committee while not creating an Advisory Health Council. Members agreed with the recommendation. Mrs. Taylor recognized the inclusiveness of the School Wellness Committee. Mr. Johnson suggested that the Director of Nutritional Services could lead or co-lead the committee and that useful advisory functions could be incorporated through the School Wellness Committee. Mrs. Sciarrino asked about the role of the Wellness Committee in surveying parents/guardians. Mrs. Taylor and Mr. McMullen shared their perspective focused on parent surveys and gathering information from our parents.

Mrs. Taylor asked about the “learning laboratory.” Several Members inquired about the learning laboratory. Mr. Johnson stated that he has not had experience with a learning laboratory. Members shared their desire to leave the learning laboratory out of the policy. The concept could be reconsidered if further information demonstrated its value and feasibility.

Members (Mrs. Taylor, Mrs. Sciarrino, Mr. Trauger, and Mr. Merkl-Gump) discussed farm-to-school activities, food waste, share tables, meal requirements, and the use of student or parent surveys to inform food service practices. Mrs. Taylor requested additional information about existing surveys and supported review of the nutrition provisions by the Director of Nutritional Services.

Mr. Trauger suggested the policy be reviewed by the Nutritional Services Department. Mr. Trauger’s recommendation received support from fellow Members.

The next section reviewed related to “Physical Activity.” Mrs. Sciarrino questioned whether all schools still complete the physical fitness test at the elementary level. Members also questioned the feasibility of the proposed daily physical activity expectations. Mr. Johnson returned to the idea shared by Mr. Trauger in terms of Nutritional Services engagement in a review of the policy. Mr. Trauger asked about the review of curriculum for physical education, wellness education, art, and other areas within the schools. Dr. Palmer explained that Health and Physical Education and other special-area subjects fall within the curriculum department and have designated coordinators and supervisors. Members recommended review of the relevant policy sections by Health and Physical Education personnel as well as the implications for schedules, resources, and consistency across schools. Mrs. Rash recognized our county as behind in multiple areas, including nutrition and wellness.

Mrs. Taylor asked us to provide clarity on the use of facilities outside of school hours. Dr. Berrios responded and described school and athletic use, summer access, and staffing and security considerations associated with early morning access. Dr. Berrios stated if it is the Board’s will to re-examine facilities use and the time for public use we could do so in the future.

Mr. Johnson drew the Members’ attention to proposed language concerning confidential BMI screening, social media, and safe drinking water, including changes presented as responses to legal requirements. Members supported further review by the appropriate district personnel, as recommended by Mr. Johnson.

The next area of focus related to safe routes to school. Mrs. Sciarrino asked if we already follow the language in the policy related to safe routes to school. Mrs. Taylor suggested the practices outlined in this part of the policy should allow us to engage our local representatives in discussion about safe routes to school. Mr. Trauger shared concern about the District's liability based on the language in the policy. Mr. Trauger shared specific concerns about the extent of the District's responsibility and whether the wording in this area created additional assessment obligations. Mrs. Taylor, Mrs. Sciarrino, and Mrs. Rash verbalized their perspectives about implementing improvements as well as the commitment the proposed language may have for the District. Dr. Palmer provided a specific example with respect to our work with the Mayor of Silverdale for crosscuts. Significant discussion continued among the Members about the proposed language under the category of safe routes to school. Dr. Palmer suggested we seek the advice of our solicitor, Mr. Miller.

Ms. Sciarrino asked that we examine the section about classroom parties and celebrations. Members (Ms. Sciarrino, Mr. Trauger, Mr. Merkl-Gump, and Mr. McMullen) discussed optional limitations on food-based classroom celebrations, allergy precautions, food sharing, and the interaction of celebration rules with student rewards and existing practices. Mrs. Sciarrino raised questions about a possible once-per-month limitation. Dr. Palmer recommended that we review this section with the Director of Nutritional Services. Mr. McMullen shared a concern about the operational details in the policy.

Bullying/Cyberbullying Policy — First Reading

Mr. Johnson explained that the policy had been revised and approved previously and was returning for review because of additional legal changes. Proposed revisions addressed cyberbullying and AI-generated or modified media.

Mrs. Taylor raised a question about the proposed language within the section under definitions. Mr. Johnson explained that the proposed wording would permit a response when conduct met any one of three criteria: substantial interference with a student's education, creation of a threatening environment, or substantial disruption of school operations. Mr. Trauger initiated discussion about the school's ability to address incidents in the school and/or outside a school setting. Members (Mrs. Rash, Mrs. Sciarrino, and Mrs. Taylor) discussed the importance of establishing a connection to school, the challenges of investigating off-campus and online conduct, and the impact of such conduct on attendance, student well-being, and learning. Members expressed support for strengthening the district's ability to respond while recognizing the need for careful application and ongoing review. Dr. Berrios shared an example involving harassment that occurs outside of school; however, he explained the nexus to school. Dr. Berrios described the impact to a child's education, which constitutes a nexus to school. Dr. Berrios identified the challenge of incidents that begin on children's devices via SnapChat and other social media platforms. Mr. Johnson responded and provided input about what can constitute a nexus to school. Mrs. Rash focused on how incidents, regardless of when and where they happen, permeate the halls. Mrs. Rash also focused on what could potentially create a threatening environment. Mrs. Rash shared her belief that the school should take more of a role in addressing matters that occur outside of school because it impacts the day regardless of what happens. Mrs. Taylor agreed with Mrs. Rash's comments to open up the

language in the policy as a form of mitigation. Mr. McMullen stated that a bell-to-bell restriction could help with managing these situations in school.

Mr. Johnson identified proposed language under authority. Mr. Trauger asked about reporting and the frequency of online reports. Mr. Johnson stated that we have received district-wide appropriately 6 to 8 reports. Administration confirmed that oral complaints can be addressed and that submitting a written form is not required for investigation of an allegation. Members supported policy language making that clear.

Mr. Johnson reviewed the subsections under guidelines. Mrs. Sciarrino asked and requested that the reporting form explain when families should expect a response and whom to contact if they do not hear back. Mr. Johnson described an expectation of contact on the same day or the next school day, depending on when the report is received. Members, Ms. Sciarrino and Mrs. Taylor, asked for language to be added to the form identifying a response time and a person to contact for follow-up.

Mrs. Taylor and other Members supported selecting “shall” rather than “may” in the education section of the policy.

Public Comment

Lee Rush (Perkasie) provided public comment.

The full recording for this meeting can be found here:

[Policy Committee Meeting October 5, 2026](#)

The next Policy Committee Meeting is scheduled for Monday, November 2, 2026.