



PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS
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Date: January 5, 2021
To: School Board
From: Mary Kane, Senior Legal Counsel
Subject: Professional Conduct Policy

BACKGROUND

The Professional Conduct policy was approved by the Board in October 2019. The policy required all contractors with the District to take Professional Conduct training. Upon approval, a committee was convened to develop training protocols for contractors. The committee, composed of staff from, among others, Human Resources, Purchasing & Contracting, Office of Technology and Information Systems, Title IX, and Security Services, determined that the policy was too broad in including contractors with little to no contact with students because there was very little risk to students and a significant administrative and logistical burden of administering and tracking the training for those contractors.

The policy also defined expectations about staff-to-student text communication. With the introduction of Comprehensive Distance Learning in response to the Coronavirus pandemic, the District incorporated new communication platforms to allow additional methods of access to communicate with students. One such platform allows District oversight of text communication between students and staff.

The policy revisions proposed allow for more targeted training of contractors and more expansive access to students and staff using District-approved platforms.

ANALYSIS OF SITUATION

This policy is centered on student safety and the modifications requested by staff will not compromise this goal.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (IF APPLICABLE)

This Policy was brought before the Board Policy Committee at its January 2, 2021 meeting. The committee reviewed the recommended revisions and moved that it be put before the full board for a first reading.

A copy of the proposed changes to the policy was also provided to PAT in the fall of 2020, and at this time there has not been feedback received. Additionally, the Training Committee shared its recommendation for changes to the policy with Deputy Superintendent Clair Hertz for approval.

TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION / EVALUATION

Once the Board approves the changes, the Training Committee will reconvene to finalize the training guidelines for contractors. This should be completed before the 2021-2022 school year. The communication platform is already in place.

BOARD OPTIONS WITH ANALYSIS

1. Approval of the changes will provide for more accurate training requirements for contractors and will allow for greater support of students during Comprehensive Distance Learning.
2. Maintaining the policy will create capacity and compliance issues for training requirements and will negatively impact student support and outreach efforts during Comprehensive Distance Learning.

CONNECTION TO BOARD GOALS

N/A

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval of these modifications.

As a member of the PPS Executive Leadership Team, I have reviewed this staff report.

_____ (Initials)

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Policy