RSU 21 Policy Committee Minutes
April 29th 2026 (12:30 PM)
Kennebunk Elementary School Board Room A102

Committee Members Present: Leah Bares, Mandy Cummings (Chair), Brian McGrath, Wayne Sargent
Administration Members: Assistant Superintendent - Dr. Paul Rasmussen and Finance Director - Linda Dickson

The Policy Committee met on April 29th, 2026 to continue its work on priority policy updates and ongoing initiatives remaining from the April 2nd, 2026 Policy Committee meeting. This meeting was rescheduled from the April 15th date. Committee members present included Leah Bares, Mandy Cummings, Wayne Sargent, Brian McGrath. Committee member Kirstan Watson was absent and excused.

Policy Committee Goals

The committee briefly revisited its FY26 Policy Committee Goals, simply noting the budgetary transfers and policy style guide were on today's agenda to satisfy those goals. The Style Guide will be adopted as a procedure for the Policy Committee at the May 7th meeting. The goal of working through the J policies was prioritized and as such, the homework policy of IKB originally intended for new business on the April 2nd agenda will be moved to next year's policy committee timeline.

Legislative Updates

Dr. Rasmussen noted that the Governor's budget which recently passed included a personal electronic device bell-to-bell restriction. The committee took note of this development as relevant to the second read policy work in this area.

Policy Actions: Old Business

JICJ - Personal Electronic Devices

The Committee reviewed the FAQ document Dr. Rasmussen has been developing to accompany Policy JICJ. The FAQ was proposed by Brian at the April 2nd meeting as a way to address questions raised at the Board table during the first read without requiring changes to the policy itself. A key point of context the FAQ should articulate is the genesis of the policy: it originated under broader legislative authority than currently exists, and the final policy reflects two distinct pieces of legislation, including the recent Governor's budget provision establishing a bell-to-bell restriction. Several Board questions at the first read stemmed from that broader framing, and the FAQ is an opportunity to clarify the current legal landscape clearly. While the FAQ does not require Committee or Board approval, it is an important companion document intended to move forward alongside the second read of the policy. Committee members are encouraged to continue submitting comments. Leah requested that any policies referenced in the FAQ be hyperlinked and noted that adding sources of information throughout the document would be a meaningful value add. The Committee agreed to revisit the FAQ alongside the second read of JICJ at the May 7th meeting.

Policy Actions: New Business

DJB - Budget Transfer between Cost Centers

The Committee reviewed and discussed Policy DJB, which establishes a tiered framework for authorizing budget transfers between voter-approved cost centers during the fiscal year.

A central theme of the discussion was whether the transfer threshold would create operational friction for departments or buildings. Finance Director Linda confirmed that the vast majority of transfers at the department and building level would fall within the threshold, meaning day-to-day operational flexibility would not be impaired.

The eleven statutory cost centers vary considerably in size, and the Committee agreed a flat threshold risks being too restrictive for smaller cost centers or insufficiently protective for larger ones. The threshold was established as the greater of $50,000 or 0.5% of the total appropriation of the originating cost center, preserving the Superintendent's delegated authority for routine adjustments while keeping the Board appropriately engaged on transfers of material significance.

Wayne raised a practical scenario: if a building had a $150,000 line item for a boiler and ultimately did not purchase it, could those funds be redirected within the same cost center without Board oversight? The answer was yes under Maine Law. Brian affirmed that preserving this flexibility is beneficial, noting the Finance Committee already receives regular reporting on overall expenditures while this policy is singularly focused on cost center transfers.

Leah raised the question of what notice the Board would receive when transfers requiring Board approval are brought forward. Paul indicated these items would likely be presented as consent agenda items following the same reporting structure used for delegated authority transfers. No additional notice requirement was added at the first read.

The Committee broadly agreed the reporting requirement may carry more significance than the transfers themselves, as the value lies as much in the conversation the reporting prompts as in the financial transaction it documents, particularly leading into budget season.

Linda requested and introduced a provision allowing audit-initiated transfers to proceed without prior Board approval while remaining subject to reporting, which the Committee agreed to incorporate.

The Committee noted the policy prescribes what information must be included in transfer reports but intentionally does not prescribe the manner or format of reporting, leaving that to Finance Committee procedures. Because the Finance Director serves on the Finance Committee, there is built-in expertise to ensure those procedures remain practical and current.

A meaningful learning from the drafting process was the distinction between the legal definition of "cost center" under 20-A MRSA Section 1485 and the colloquial use of that term to refer to departments or buildings, and that operational clarity is improved by using terminology consistent with its legal meaning.

Action: Leah Motioned, Wayne Seconded - Approved unanimously (4–0)

KLGA - Relations with School Resource Officers and Law Enforcement Authorities

The Committee reviewed Policy KLGA, which was separated from the existing Policy KLG as part of an effort to give the School Resource Officer program its own dedicated policy framework. Previously, provisions governing SROs and general law enforcement relations were combined within a single document. The split allows each area to be addressed with appropriate specificity.

Leah raised a point to strengthen the language in the venue restrictions section to more clearly reflect the district's position on law enforcement presence on school grounds for matters unrelated to the school. The intent is to make the policy as protective of that boundary as the law permits, signaling clearly that school campuses should not be used as a venue for non-school-related police activity except where exigent circumstances require it. The Committee agreed and sharpened the draft language to reflect that position more directly.

The Chair raised the question of whether the policy should require that any interlocal agreement or memorandum of understanding between RSU 21 and the local police departments that assign SROs should include a provision giving the Superintendent unilateral authority to remove a specific officer from the program while leaving the overall program and the department's participation intact. The Committee recognized this as an important governance and operational question, particularly in situations where a relationship between an individual officer and the school community has broken down. Given the time remaining in the meeting, the Committee opted to defer that discussion to the second read rather than resolve it in this session.

Action: Wayne Motioned, Brian Seconded - Approved unanimously (4–0)

Next Meeting The next Policy Committee meeting is scheduled for **May 7th, 2026 at 12:30pm**