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To: School Board Members
From: Misty Shelton
Date: July 2025

Up for 1st Reading: Additions to the policies are highlighted in yellow. Deletions are struck through.

Policy 1.1021 - Student Board Member (HCSS policy number 1.206 Student Board Representative)

Public Chapter 359 requires Boards that operate at least one high school to adopt a policy authorizing a student board member. Boards that already have policies on student board members or student advisory groups may maintain the current language. TSBA said the current policy 1.206 meets the criteria.

Policy 1.407 - School District Records

Previously, state law permitted individuals to submit a records request via fax. Public Chapter 94 removes this option.

1.700- School District Goals and 5.100- Personnel Goals

TSBA has received questions from districts about Public Chapter 494 and how it impacts Boards. This new state law removes the requirement for educator diversity goals. Further, it prohibits districts from making hiring decisions on metrics other than merit. Additionally, the State Board of Education recently deleted the requirement for local Boards to maintain a policy on this topic. Roughly half of Boards maintain policy language that would need to be revised. Based on this, they recommend that Boards review policies that may contain language on this topic along with any other relevant documents.

1.901 Charter School Applications

We are recommending changes to several charter school policies based on Public Chapter 275. This new law shifts certain responsibilities to the State Board of Education and the TN Public Charter Schools Commission. Additionally, there is a new requirement that Boards report all charter applications received to the TN Public Charter Schools Commission.

Policy 2.403 - Surplus Property Sales

In the past, federal regulations required that certain actions be taken when property valued at $5,000 or below was disposed of. This limit has been increased to $10,000. Additionally, Public Chapter 500 includes new criteria for posting notices on news and information websites. This new law clarifies that the website is not intended to be the same newspaper of general circulation utilized for the printed publication.

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The Hickman County School System does not discriminate in its educational programs, activities, or employment practices on the basis of race, sex, national origin, religion, creed, age, marital status, or disability as required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964, Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. All necessary accommodations are made for equitable participation by constituents without regard to race, gender, disability, economic status, or special needs as required by Section 427 of the General Education Provision Act & P. L. 107-110-NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND.

Policy 3.202 - Emergency Preparedness Plans
Public Chapter 315 clarifies that no more than two fire drills are required to occur within the first thirty full school days.

Policy 3.204 - Threat Assessment Team
There are new reporting requirements regarding threats and significantly disruptive behavior. A report must be made to parents/guardians within forty-eight hours of the district reporting to law enforcement. Additionally, there must be a quarterly report of incidents provided at board meetings.

Policy 4.100 - Instructional Program
Policy 5.500 - Discrimination/Harassment of Employees
Policy 6.304 - Student Discrimination, Harassment, Bullying, Cyber-bullying, and Intimidation
Public Chapter 293 requires Boards to include the definition of antisemitism in anti-discrimination policies. The full definition is included in the updated version of policy 4.100, and policies 5.500 and 6.304 have been updated to refer to that definition.

Policy 4.212 - Virtual Education Program
Public Chapter 484 permits districts to use hybrid learning in the event of dangerous or extreme weather or in an emergency, as determined by the Director of Schools. If a district uses hybrid learning, the Board must have a policy in place regarding student attendance.

Policy 4.301 - Interscholastic Athletics
Students attending virtual schools will now be permitted to participate in interscholastic athletics in accordance with TSSAA or TMSAA guidelines. If a school is not a member with these organizations, virtual school students zoned for the particular school shall be able to participate in interscholastic athletics to the same extent as other students.

Policy 4.403 - Library Materials
A recent change to state law clarifies that materials may not be excluded from school libraries solely on the grounds that they are religious.

Policy 4.406 - Use of the Internet
The Teen Social Media Act specifies limits that must be in place for district internet use regarding age-appropriate content and protecting personal information. This new law also requires that districts prevent students from accessing social media platforms on district-provided internet unless expressly authorized by a teacher for educational purposes.

Policy 4.601 - Reporting Student Progress
Report cards for students in grades K-8 must now include the student's score on the most recently administered universal reading screener and the results of a dyslexia screener, if applicable.

Policy 5.110 - Compensation Guides & Contracts
State law now permits Boards to determine whether to compensate a teacher's estate or designated beneficiary for unused leave time. If the Board would like to offer this benefit, TSBA recommends adding a provision to the policy.

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Policy 5.119 - Employment of Retirees
Public Chapter 159 makes several changes that will impact employing retirees in the 2025-2026 school year. Importantly, there is now a requirement for a bona fide separation of service prior to reemployment. This includes a sixty-day separation of service, and there can be no previous agreement to return to work. TSBA recommends adopting the model policy.

Policy 5.305 (Family and Medical Leave)
A clean-up bill, Public Chapter 235, made several changes to state law. One significant change is to the paid parental leave statute and which employees may use this type of leave. Under the new law, employees must satisfy the following criteria to be eligible for this paid leave: (1) have received a license or an emergency credential from the Department of Education required for the relevant position; and (2) be in a full-time position that requires the relevant license or emergency credential for at least twelve consecutive months. The changes to state law also clarify how this leave can be taken. Now, employees may choose whether to take the leave consecutively or nonconsecutively but in increments of no less than one week.

5.701 (Substitute Teachers)
Public Chapter 235 changes the number of days that a substitute teacher can teach without a license. This was previously set at twenty days and has been increased to thirty.

Policy 6.200a - Attendance
Public Chapter 401 requires entities that provide released time courses to submit proof of compliance with state law on background checks. TSBA maintains an optional provision on released time courses in its alternate version of policy 6.200. This version of the model policy has been updated to highlight the responsibility of these independent entities.

Policy 6.303 - Questioning Students and Searches
There is a new training requirement for school personnel who may conduct searches of students. Going forward, any searches of students must be carried out by a school resource officer, a school security officer, or a school administrator who has completed state-required training. Public Chapter 244 requires the Department of Education to develop this training.

Policy 6.312 - Use of Wireless Communication Devices
Public Chapter 103 requires Boards to adopt a policy on student use of wireless communication devices.TSBA has created two versions of this model policy to assist Boards that may desire to have different practices for younger students. Both versions include exceptions required by state law (e.g., use during emergencies).

Policy 6.411 - Student Wellness
Previously, state law required elementary students to receive 130 minutes of physical activity per week. This has now been increased to 40 minutes each full school day. Middle and high school students are still required to receive 90 minutes of physical activity per full school week. These requirements are separate from physical education classes.

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Policy 6.600 - Student Records

If a student transfers from one school to another, Public Chapter 156 requires the district to provide a copy of the student's records to the new school within five business days.

Informational Items

TSBA sent out the following items for informational purposes. While these items do not necessarily require any policy changes, they wanted you to be aware of the new legal requirements and how they may impact board policy and operations.

Public Chapter 165 - Seizure and First Aid Training

This law requires districts to ensure that at least one full-time employee at each school receives seizure and first aid training. Further, this law excludes the school nurse from the definition of employee, so districts will need to ensure that there is another trained individual at each school.

Public Chapter 225 - Pre-K Eligibility

If the number of at-risk children seeking pre-kindergarten enrollment does not exceed the class size maximum, this new state law permits districts to enroll additional children who meet certain requirements.

Public Chapter 299 - Bus Driver Contracts

Boards are now prohibited from extending the immunity in the Governmental Tort Liability Act to independent school bus contractors. Contracts with these individuals must now require sufficient limits for tort liability exposures related to school-related transportation services. TSBA recommends working with the board attorney on these provisions.

Public Chapter 347 - Update to the Families' Rights and Responsibilities Act (FRRA)

This Public Chapter updates the FRRA with clarifying language. Of note, these changes permit recording if the district has requested parental consent and allow employees to assist with non-emergency first aid (e.g., providing a Band-Aid, ice packs).

Public Chapter 453 - Preferred Name and Pronoun Legislation

Public Chapter 453 states that students, teachers, employees, and contractors are not required to use the preferred name or pronoun of any student, teacher, employee, or contractor if these are inconsistent with the individual's sex and/or their legal name. This applies to nicknames if the name is not derivative of the individual's legal name.

Up for Review:

6.311 Care of School Property
6.313 Code of Behavior and Discipline Procedures
6.314 Corporal Punishment
6.315 Detention
6.316 Suspension
6.317 Disciplinary Hearing Authority
6.318 Admission of Suspended or Expelled Students
6.319 Alternative Education

Thank you for your careful consideration of these policies.

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