POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE

Mike McDonough, Deputy Superintendent
Wednesday, August 26, 2026, 3:00 PM Central Office

Hilliard City School District
Operations Department

Committee Members

Brian Perry, Board of Education
Kelley Arnold, Board of Education
Melissa Swearingen, Treasurer/CFO
Mike McDonough, Deputy Superintendent
William Warfield, Assistant Superintendent
Stacie Raterman, Communications Director
Jacob Grantier, Director of Measurement, Intervention & Enrichment
Erin Dooley, Director of Secondary Education
Herb Higginbotham, Director of Elementary Education
Jamie Lennox, Special Education Director
Matt Middleton, Principal Hilliard Darby HS
Katherine Hueter, Principal Hilliard Weaver MS
Matt Trombitas, Principal Hilliard Station Sixth Grade
Livi Constantinovich, Principal Darby Creek Elementary
Lauren Barkdull, Principal Horizon Elementary
Angie Rader, HEA Representative

SUMMARY

This committee meets quarterly each school year. One of the objectives of this committee is to study each issue thoroughly making sure we have appropriate policies that reflect the mission and vision of the Hilliard City School District.

The Policy Review Committee considers all proposed new policies, revisions of current policies and/or rescinding of a current policy before being presented to the Superintendent for submission to the Board of Education. Two readings at two separate meetings shall normally be required before a new or revised policy may be adopted. Action to adopt will take place at a subsequent third meeting. However, the Board does have the option of voting for adoption at the second meeting.

The following is a summary of the issues and policies discussed at the meeting on August 26, 2026.

Public Participation

None

Review of Policies/Regulations/Exhibits – OSBA JUNE 2026 PDQ

ATTENDANCE CHANGES REQUIRE BOARD POLICY UPDATE

JED – Student Absences and Excuses
JEDA - Truancy

Mike McDonough said we enlisted the help of Molly Walker as she has been leading the charge for our attendance initiative over the last four or five years or so. There are a significant amount of changes to this policy, some of which include taking items from our policy around truancy and moving it into this policy. There are a couple of things from state law that we need to add. The first one is that green statement there. Our current policy does not look like the OSBA sample policy, which makes these comparisons rather challenging. We made the decision to mirror OSBA’s policy because there was a checklist that Molly got, and it helped us navigate all the different changes we need to include. The first one would be adding that green statement. I don’t think anybody in here would disagree with that. Where ours starts to slightly differ, we are recommending taking this out. This is a carryover from our old policy. We are taking this out. We don't believe it is necessary to include that. What you will see that we did keep from our policy that is not in the OSBA sample, or at least it doesn't match what the OSBA sample policy has around trips. We have talked about that many, many years. Remember, it used to be 10 days, we reduced that to five days a couple of years ago. What has not changed is the types of absences that qualify for excused absences. This we've been up to date on, and we've kept accurate over the years. Where we start to get into what the legislator is now asking us to do, which are things that we already do, but they want us to spell it out more clearly in policy are some of the interventions and supports that come along with working with students that have some type of absence intervention need. Starting with interventions and support, we are going to be adding that information, then it goes on to discuss the current types of strategies that we would use. These are all things that we have in place already, but we are just clearly delineating that in policy. Where we did have to start putting some customizations was under notifications. If you recall, we already sent out notifications to families when students hit 10 days absence. That is roughly 5% of the year, and you needed to customize something that was lower than that that you would begin to send out warning letters. Molly suggested the 4%, or 8 days that we would send out that first notification. In tiered supports, we elected to, and for those of you that aren't in policy, we try not to get super prescriptive, and we were worried that this policy was getting very prescriptive. We took out some of the percentages that were requiring us to do some things in one, two and three here on this evidence-based academic and non-academic supports, just because there are several instances that we could point to that students would fall into that category, but they're not necessarily an attendance issue, whether it's an injury, an illness, those types of things that we didn't feel like necessarily needed to get so prescriptive here, but still following the same kind of format in terms of how we want to intervene if we need to. Molly, I don't know if I captured everything, or if there's anything that you would want to add.

Molly Walker said no, I would say for those of that are in the building, basically the law is catching up to what we've been doing. So, it's actually really nice that you guys are kind of ahead of the game.

Mike McDonough said JEDA is a policy around truancy. As I mentioned before, there's a lot of things that we took out of this policy and moved into policy JED. That first statement was moved into JED and so too was the list of things here, all the different strategies we talked about a moment ago, those are already in JED so we're not changing the substance of JEDA, because we are just adding that stuff into JED.

ALTERNATIVE EPINEPHRINE DELIVERY METHODS
JHCD – Administering Medicines to Students
JHCD-R (1) – Administering Medicines to Students

Mike McDonough said there must be some new kind of delivery system for EpiPens because all we're really doing to this policy is changing the word EpiPen or epinephrine autoinjector to epinephrine delivery system. We are not changing the practice, not changing what we do, just changing the terminology. Likewise in the regulation that is associated with it, JHCD-R.

RECENT STATE AGENCY GUIDANCE: NEED TO KNOW
Auditor of State
DJH – Credit Cards

Mike McDonough said I am going to turn over to Melissa because this is about credit cards and/or purchasing cards.

Melissa Swearingen said this is another one where our current policy doesn't necessarily mirror what OSBA is recommending. It does have a lot of the components, and we do have, if you look at our practice and the agreement that individuals sign when they check out a credit card or when they are issued a credit card, it does encompass almost all of this. I am working with the department, and we are going to formalize what our current practice and procedures are. I don't have that ready for today, however, but we're not looking to change any of our current procedures. We're just going to formalize those within the policy, and I think we are going to also create a regulation that provides a little bit more detail on all of the day-to-day practices. The one piece of the policy, our policy does not point out is the fact for the most part, the credit card policy piece doesn't apply to the purchasing cards, like the PNC cards that the administrators are issued or the buildings have, because those purchasing cards are regulated to where there are expenditure categories where there are allowable and categories where they are not allowable. So, there are certain businesses that you could not go in and use that card, so it really restricts the purchasing categories that we have in place. We are going to make sure we make that differentiation and then actually highlight our procedures. The one piece that is in green here on the OSBA recommended policy, there was an auditor of state advisory that came out earlier this year, and I was hoping they would give us a little bit more than what they are giving us here in terms of recommended language. But it centers around credit card convenience fees. I have taken a stab at creating some language, and the one piece of it says that the board directs the treasurer to establish the policies and procedures. I'd rather just formalize what those policies and procedures are, and actually put them in the policy. I think it makes it clearer to everyone and that that's in one place. Mike has it pulled up on the screen here and I can read it. Here is what I came up with:

The Board recognizes that credit card convenience fees assessed by vendors or service providers may be unavoidable and recognizes these as a normal cost of business. When feasible, alternative payment methods that do not include such convenience fees – such as ACH transfers, checks, or other direct payment options – should be utilized to minimize costs. The Board has determined:

1. *Convenience fees are justified due to operational necessity, efficiency or timing considerations.*
2. *Alternative payment methods are required or prioritized when the fee will occur on a recurring transaction, the fee is above a de minimis amount of $5, or the fee exceeds 10% of the item/service being procured.*

In that example, if you were doing a conference registration and it was a $25 conference registration, but it was a $7.95 transaction fee, it wouldn't make sense to pay that fee on that larger dollar but if it was a $500 conference registration for a national conference, maybe that was an easier method in order to register for that event. Now, if they take a PO and we can issue a check, that is the preferred method but if it is something that popped up last minute or there was no way to plan for it, then we would consider that to be within reason.

3. *If the fee exceeds the thresholds outlined above, documentation is required as to the timing/efficiency considerations or lack of other available payment option to avoid the fee. If documentation is not provided or does not demonstrate that the fee was unavoidable or necessary, the school employee will be asked to reimburse the District.*

Basically, with your visa statement, you turn in that documentation of oh, this was the only payment method that was available, or here was my emergency where we had to, we needed this item for a special ed student, and we had to order it right away and just include that documentation.

Then it also adds the language, which this was not part of OSBA's recommendation, but it was in the state auditor's advisory, it is just saying that differentiating between a convenience fee and a late fee or a penalty that those are arising from untimely payments or failure to establish obligations and that those aren't acceptable and routine expenses.

> *Convenience fees are incurred as part of the payment process and represent a standard transactional cost. In contrast, late fees and penalties arise from untimely payments or failure to meet established obligations and are not considered an acceptable or routine expense. Staff should take appropriate steps to avoid incurring late fees and penalties, as these costs do not fall within the same category as convenience fees.*

Mr. Perry said question on section number two, alternative payment methods are required or prioritized. I think it makes sense to scratch the word required because it's required to be required or prioritized it can't really be both. I think what we're actually saying is that it's prioritized that the documentation be required. There's no definition of when it would be required or prioritized…inaudible. I would scratch required.

Mike McDonough said I think the plan for this policy is prior to, obviously, we put this on the agenda for the first reading that we would make an update, make sure you guys get your eyes on it and get it in the board packet accordingly, and then potentially a regulation to accompany that to provide some of those processes that align with that.

UPDATE

After the committee meeting and further review, Melissa Swearingen would like to add the regulation mentioned above for policy DJH-Credit Cards and also policy DJI-Purchasing Cards and regulation DJI-R-Purchasing Cards. The credit card policy applies only to cards in the district's name that are signed in/out for use (i.e. Kroger, Lowe's). The majority of our cards are considered procurement/purchasing cards, and we do not currently have a policy that covers them. We feel that the newly created policy and regulation do a good job of memorializing our current procedures and expectations.