Guilford County Board of Education
Policy Committee Meeting
Thursday, September 13, 2017, 2:30 p.m.
Board Room, GCS Central Administrative Offices

Committee Members:	Darlene Garrett, Chairperson	Nora Carr, Staff Liaison
	Wes Cashwell	
	Byron Gladden	
	Linda Welborn	

AGENDA	
Welcome and Introductions	*Discussion Leader: Darlene Garrett*
Review of Minutes for (08/09/17)	*Discussion Leader: Darlene Garrett*
Public Records Policy Update	*Discussion Leader: Nora Carr*
Constituent Services Policy	*Discussion Leader: Nora Carr*
Next Steps	*Discussion Leader: Darlene Garrett*
Other Business	*Discussion Leader: Darlene Garrett*
Next Meeting: *October 11, 2:30 p.m.*	
Adjournment	

Present: Darlene Garrett, Byron Gladden, Linda Welborn, Wes Cashwell
Staff: Sharon Contreras, Nora Carr, Kim Hipp, Jill Wilson

Approval of Minutes
Minutes from the July 20, 2017 meeting were approved as written.

Constituent Services Policy – *N. Carr*
Nora Carr collected input from the Committee regarding a district constituent services policy.

Sharon Contreras asked Nora to draft a constituent services policy, to include flowcharts, for the Committee to review.

The Committee and Sharon agreed to reach out to the Council of Great City Schools (CGCS) about utilizing them to facilitate a Board member training.

NCSBA Policy Services Update – *N. Carr*
GCS staff is sending the NCSBA a flash drive containing current GCS policies for the custom policy manual conversion process.

The Committee agreed to have the NCSBA begin the conversion process by reviewing Section J – Students policies first. Note: As part of the custom manual conversion process, GCS policies and procedures will be issued new names that correspond with the NCSBA's naming convention. The current GCS "Section J – Students" polices will become "Students – 4000."

Next Steps
• Nora Carr will draft a GCS constituent service policy for Committee review.
• GCS staff will send the NCSBA a flash drive containing current GCS policies and procedures.
• Nora Carr will advise the NCSBA to begin the policy conversion process with Section J – Students policies.
• Sharon Contreras will identify potential dates and times for the CGCS to facilitate Board training.

Next meeting
The next Policy Committee meeting is scheduled for September 13, 2017.

Submitted by:
Nora K. Carr, Ed.D.
Chief of Staff, Guilford County Schools

Public Comments on Proposed Policy 5070/7350 – Public Records Requests

1	**From:** sysop@wirecom.com [mailto:sysop@wirecom.com] **Sent:** Monday, July 24, 2017 12:05 PM **To:** Carr, Nora <carrn@gcsnc.com> **Subject:** Fwd: RE: Public records policy changes Good morning, As you promised, I received the draft record's policies. I received two. Since one seems to have more detail, I assume that is the more recent one. The policy seems quite thorough and nearly perfectly aligned with the law. However, I have thee observations you may find helpful. **1. Must complete web form** I don't know how "should" will be interpreted in mandating that records "should be requested in writing." Similarly, the requirement that requests "must" be completed on a web form seem problematic for two reasons. First, while many people may appreciate the convenience of a web interface, some people still do not have internet access so, as a practical matter, you may be shutting some people out. Second, I don't think this requirement conforms to the letter of the law. N.C. public records law specifies the instances when a request must be submitted in writing. Written requests are required only for certain types of requests. For the schools to mandate that requests be made by a specific means may not be defensible under the public records law. **2. *Never* compile a record that doesn't exist?** The following seems to create a mandate that I doubt the school system intends to adhere to. Do you really want to box the organization in like this? *The school system will not create or compile a record that does not exist; research or analyze data; or answer written questions in response to a public records request.* Never? Ever? What if someone asks for data that the school system thinks is in the public interest and wants to compile? By this mandate, it will be prohibited from doing so. **3. When to charge for 'excessive' clerical time is vague** The criteria of charging for records that require "more than four(4) hours to reproduce," is also vague enough to cause concerns that it could be misapplied to discourage certain requests and presents the possibility of a hardship for low income requesters. How is the time to be measured? Does it include the time an employee is waiting for a search query to execute or for a copier to make copies, even if personnel is merely waiting, or is it the actual personnel time spent? Will records be kept of the time spent on all requests so that school administrators and the public will know that these fees are being assessed fairly? I hope you find my comments helpful. Cordially, Roch Roch Smith, Jr
2	**From:** Laverne Carter [mailto:llacart116@yahoo.com] **Sent:** Wednesday, August 9, 2017 1:53 PM **To:** Welborn, Linda <welborl@gcsnc.com>; Darlene Garrett <dygarr@aol.com>; Byron Gladden <bishopdean85@gmail.com>; Cashwell, Wes <cashwew@gcsnc.com> **Cc:** Superintendent <superintendent@gcsnc.com>; gcscomments

<gcscomments@gcsnc.com>
Subject: Old Business: Public Information Request Policy

To the GCS Policy Committee:

Since June 2017, I have observed Board of Education Policy Committee discussions, as it relates to staff's recommendation to implement administrative regulations and district policies concerning public information requests. However, I am writing to address the following:

*The volume of public information requests has been monitored by the District since 2009, but has never been uplifted as a District burden. Prior to presenting to the entire Board, GCS Staff has never provided specific information to the Policy Committee as to **all the names of school districts and of the policies that they researched prior to making the July 2017 Staff Report** (nor an analysis of the number of NC districts that do and do not charge).

*Staff never provided to the Policy Committee **all the data collected since 2009** (i.e. the Excel spreadsheet showing the volume and actual examples).

The Policy Committee appears to lack sufficient information to make a policy recommendation **that includes charging the public for public information** requests.

Implementing district-wide policies MUST include sufficient research and valid information before making presenting to the Board for District decisions.

Rev. Laverne Carter

3	**From:** Megan [mailto:purplemegan@gmail.com]

From: Megan [mailto:purplemegan@gmail.com]
Sent: Monday, August 21, 2017 9:30 PM
To: gcscomments <gcscomments@gcsnc.com>
Subject: Public Information Policy Comments - please acknowledge receipt

It has come to my attention that it seems my comments on the Public Information Policy are being dismissed because I was "confused." While I was confused about the policies that were attached to the policy meeting agenda, my points are still valid. So I would like to reiterate and make my comments "official" so they are given appropriate consideration.

I have some questions and comments about the Public Information Policy.

Regardless of what policies were attached to the agenda, I still have the same concerns.

1)   Charges for records - District Relations staff advised me that across the nation systems charge, but in North Carolina typically they did NOT; why should we set that precedent?

It was also mentioned that it is expected that not many requests would meet the criteria for a fee. Shouldn't the data be completely analyzed to see who would have been

charged for an information request last year? I'd be interested to see if it's the media or parents or whomever else, to see who the charges would inconvenience the most. It seems irresponsible to move forward with this policy without determining the full consequences to our parents and community members.

2)   There is still not a clear outline as far as the time that it should take to process requests.

3)   Our policy states that electronic records are free, but also then states that there is no obligation to make records electronic that aren't already. Does that include scanning documents into a pdf that can be provided electronically?

For example: If staff scan documents and then send as electronic that means it was not electronic in the beginning.

4) If the concern is that some people asked for tons of records and then never picked them up, how many times did that actually happen? Why not put it in place that if that happens then they will be charged a fee before they can do a second request?

5) I don't care what anyone says; I know what I saw with my own eyes. I looked at that public comment page several times and it was not there. I've learned my lesson – I'll take screenshots next time.

I still have concerns that this is being pushed through now when parents are less aware and involved with what is going on. Could there be a pilot period? Or a time when more research can be done to see how this will affect our parents?

District staff failed to adequately publicize the 1stRead documents in a timely manner and I am asking each of the board members to VOTE no on implementing the policy at this time to allow 1st Read regarding the policy during the 2017-2018 school year. In addition, this will also give time for staff to research and answer all the unanswered inquiries because the presentation in front of the board was very limited.

I am asking each of you to revisit how public comments are being solicited. The district has an email distribution list and connect ed phone messages and something this major that impacts the entire district and county should be communicated to the level as the State of Our Schools events. As a district and board if you were truly asking for "public" comment why does it feel so rushed and hidden?

Thank you for your consideration on this matter.

~Megan Tarver

| 4 | **From:** Sarah Sills [mailto:sarahbsills@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, September 6, 2017 6:44 PM
To: gcscomments <gcscomments@gcsnc.com>
Subject: Public Info Policy |

Hello,

Hello. I was at the Board of Education meeting a while ago where there were public comments regarding the public information policy. After doing a little bit of research, I have some questions myself.

First of all, I was wondering what the impetus was for this policy change? Has there been an inordinate amount of information requests? Has the Guilford County Schos budget had to be adjusted because of the expense of printing? Why did this even become an issue?

As I understand it, the policy states that electronic records are free, but also then states that there is no obligation to make records electronic that aren't already. I feel like this could be used to discourage people from asking for records, and an errant staff member could potentially use this to coerce people into not getting information they would like.

 I think each of the board member should VOTE NO on implementing the policy at this time.

Lastly and most importantly, I feel like this is being pushed through when board has not been provided enough research and your constituents are being punished. More research is needed to determine why staff feels there needs to be a charge.

Thanks,
Sarah Sills

CONSTITUENT SERVICE

The Guilford County Board of Education (the Board)values its relationships with and services to district constituents, and is committed to two-way communication with the public about the organization and operation of the Guilford County Schools. This commitment includes keeping the public regularly informed about the district and providing opportunities for the public to interact with the Board and Guilford County Schools (GCS) officials.

The Board routinely receives a large number of requests for information, issue resolution, appeals, suggestions and follow-up from various members of the community. The Board recognizes that its ability to respond to these requests in an efficient, timely and courteous manner is a critical component necessary to promote system improvement, inform and educate the public, and support the needs of the school district.

It is the intent of the Board to provide constituent service through well-defined protocols that facilitate the administration's ability to resolve problems quickly and effectively. Ideally, this resolution occurs at the original point of contact, e.g. the classroom teacher, school principal, or department administrator.

A.   PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to set forth standards and to outline processes Board members will use in responding to constituent problems, issues, complaints, requests for information and questions addressed to the board for resolution and for use in systemic improvements.

B.   DEFINITIONS

As elected officials acting on behalf of the public, Board members have a responsibility to be accessible to the public and assist citizens with suggestions, questions, or complaints regarding GCS. The Board further recognizes that while it is essential to provide high quality service to all constituents, it also is essential that individual board members not involve themselves in administrative matters that are the responsibility of management.

For purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply:

1.   **Constituents** are Guilford County citizens who are represented by elected members of the Guilford County Board of Education, or whose children or family members receive educational services from our public schools. Constituents are receivers of public services and/or providers of public funds for those services. Constituents include students, parents, guardians, and other members of the community.

2. **Governance** is the primary role of the Guilford County Board of Education. Governance involves ensuring the delivery of required educational and support services in the district by providing management oversight and policy to the Superintendent regarding those services and desired results. The Board governs the district through the following three means: supervising the Superintendent, setting policy, and approving the budget. All administrative and/or operational matters are within the Superintendent's authority.

3. **Management** is the responsibility of the Superintendent, who is the employee of the Board and operates within district policy established by the Board and all applicable local, state and federal laws and regulations. Management includes directing staff, allocating resources, administering programs and providing support services to improve school system effectiveness and successfully achieve district academic and operational objectives.

4. The **Constituent Service Process** ensures that management takes responsibility for helping citizens receive the information and services that Guilford County Schools provides, using the systems and resources provided for those services. The Constituent Services Process does not include board member involvement in the management or delivery of specific services or desired results. This ensures that board members do not confer, or are not perceived as conferring, special advantage on staff members, parents, students, vendors, or any other person(s), or entity outside the regular decision-making processes established by policy or management to ensure fairness, equity, and compliance with all applicable laws, policies and rules.

5. **Employees** are required to follow the established protocols in requests for information, complaints, and suggestions. When employees approach board members with work-related issues, board members will direct the concern to to the Superintendent or his/her designee. Employees who have followed this regulation shall not be disciplined regarding their communication with board members or for advocating for their own child(ren) consistent with applicable policies, rules, and laws.

C. CONSTITUENT SERVICES SYSTEM

The Board and Superintendent will develop a system for constituent service that includes, but is not limited to, the following components:

*   A protocol (see D below) for handling constituent requests for information or assistance.
*   A primary contact person in the Superintendent's Office to whom board members will refer constituent service requests.
*   A form (may be electronic) for the primary contact person to document constituent service requests.

- An information management system for referring, tracking, storing, categorizing and analyzing requests.
- A feedback process so that Board members know the resolution of requests.
- Annual reports to the Superintendent and Board regarding constituent service request trends, patterns, and system improvements.

D.   PROTOCOL FOR FORWARDING PROBLEMS AND CONCERNS TO THE ADMINISTRATION

1. The board member contacts the Superintendent or his/her designee, and copies the superintendent's executive assistant, with the problem or concern, and the contact information of the affected party.
2. The Superintendent or his/her designee will coordinate the administration's response and inform the board member of the status of the resolution within five (5) business days.
3. The Superintendent or his/her designee will maintain a record of Board inquiries that includes the actual response time.
4. The Superintendent or his/her designee will provide an annual report to the Board regarding constituent inquiry volume, categories, patterns, and response times.

The Board and Superintendent will review these protocols annually.

In no case shall board members confer special advantage on staff, parents, students, vendors, or any other person(s) or entity(ies) outside regular decision-making processes established by policy or management to ensure fairness, equity, and compliance with all applicable laws, policies, and rules.

Issued: tbd

Revised: