

Demystifying Board Policy

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So, what is this thing we call policy?

- A course or principle of action adopted or proposed by a government, party, business, or individual.
- The rules by which an organization operates.



Wouldn't it be easier without policies?

AS 14.14.100 Bylaws and administrative rules

- a) The school board policies relating to management and control of the district shall be expressed in written bylaws formally adopted at regular school board meetings.
- b) Administrative rules that do not embody school district policy need not be adopted as bylaws; however; the rules must be in written form and readily available to all school personnel.

Anatomy of a Policy

- **Policy** – A written statement adopted by the Board that communicates the guidelines and limits within which the Superintendent and staff may take discretionary action. Policies tell what is needed and why the need is important.
- **Administrative Regulation** – Tell how to act, who should be involved, where and when it should occur.
- **Exhibits** – Examples of forms and/or documents.

The Purpose of Policies

- Provide direction and save time.
- Complying with and implementing laws & regulations.
- Creating and defining rights.
- Creating stability and continuity.
- Defining responsibilities and ensuring accountability.
- Informing community, parents, employees, and students.
- Protecting the district in case of a legal challenge.
- Complying with state accreditation standards

Components of a GOOD Policy

- Includes all requirements imposed by law or regulation.
- Does not contain any provision outside the district's legal authority.
- Does not contain any language the district is not capable of implementing.

Language of Policy

- **Contributes to the safety, health, and future of our students.**
- **The purpose of the policy is clear.**
- **Language establishes:**
 - **Why this important**
 - **What the Board wants/does not want**
 - **Who is responsible for implementation**
 - **Who is responsible for enforcement**
 - **Any special evaluation requirements**

Language of Policy cont.

- Terms are unambiguous and defined as necessary
- Terms are used consistently
- Acronyms are explained
- Policy is written as if the Board is speaking
- Language is as concrete as possible
- Shall (mandatory) vs. May (permissive)

The Policy Process

- Identification of the need
- Analysis – Gather facts, Identify options
- Board Study, Discuss, Identify basic elements
- Draft the policy
- Board review, Public input (1st & 2nd Reading)
- Corresponding Administrative Regulations
- Disseminate and implement
- Review

AASB Policy Manual

- 0000 – Philosophy, Goals, Objectives, Plans
- 1000 – Community
- 2000 – Administration
- 3000 – Business & Non-Instructional Operations
- 4000 - Personnel
- 5000 – Students
- 6000 – Instruction
- 7000 – New Construction
- 8000 – Advisory School boards
- 9000 – Bylaws of the Board



<https://boardpolicyonline.com/?b=aasb>

Looking at Policies

1. What is this policy trying to accomplish?
2. How does this policy or could this policy impact your district?



Policy On-Line

- Avoids the use of paper manuals
- Accessible to everyone (Administrators, teachers, community, parents, students)
- No out-of-date manuals
- Ensures student handbooks are aligned with Policy
- Ease of updating Policy manual

<https://aasb.org/services/policy/>

Policy Updates

- Created & vetted by AASB's legal counsel
- Cover new Alaska & federal legislation
- Provided to districts on a password protected web site
- Updates come out shortly after Alaska Legislature adjourns



Your Role in Policy

- Know where and how to find your policies.
- Keep School Board informed of policy updates.
- Keep track of policy timeline.



Questions?



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