The Importance of Policy

Bob Whicker, Director
Consortium for Digital Learning and Policy Services
## FUNCTIONS OF SCHOOL BOARDS
From the AASB Board Standards Framework

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<tr>
<th>Vision</th>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Accountability</th>
<th>Advocacy</th>
<th>Conduct-Ethics</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creating a shared vision to enhance student achievement</td>
<td>Providing organizational structure to support the vision</td>
<td>Measuring and reporting district performance toward the vision</td>
<td>Championing the vision</td>
<td>Forthright conduct of the board toward the vision</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What Boards Can Do</th>
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</table>
| Encourage Community Involvement in Establishing:  
  - Vision Statement  
  - Mission Statement  
  Make Decisions Based on Vision and Mission Statements  
  Develop a District philosophy | Develop District Plans  
  **Adopt, Review & Evaluate Policies**  
  Request Reports about the Curriculum  
  Link the Budget to Student Achievement  
  Support Staff Recruitment and Development  
  Maintain Facilities | Perform an Annual Superintendent Evaluation  
  Perform an Board Self Evaluation  
  Ensure Staff Evaluations are Performed  
  Review Assessment Data  
  Request the Evaluation of Programs  
  Request Timely Financial Reports & Audits | Recognize Student and Staff Achievements  
  Promote Community Engagement  
  Develop Partnerships  
  Be a Student Advocate  
  Participate in Grassroots Lobbying  
  Support Parental Involvement | Respect Appropriate Roles  
  Provide a Board Orientation  
  Use Meetings Effectively  
  Following State Law and district policies  
  Conduct business in an ethical manner  
  Work toward developing a team |

*Adopt, Review & Evaluate Policies should probably be under every heading.*
What is Policy

• Provides the framework for the day-to-day operation of the district.

• Keeps decision-making situation-based and not person-based.

• Helps keep the Board focused on governance and Board business.
Purposes of Policy

Board policy, the accompanying administrative regulations and exhibits assist the district in:

• Providing direction and saving time
• Compliance with and implementing laws and regulations
• Creating and defining rights
• Creating stability and continuity
• Defining responsibilities and ensuring accountability
• Informing the community, parents, employees and students
• Protecting the district in case of a legal challenge
• Complying with state accreditation standards
What’s the Connection Between Policy and Governance?

- The Board’s purpose is to be accountable to the public and show that the school district works in the best interest of its students.
- Boards define their role through Board Bylaws and delegate through Policy.
- Policy makes clear the Board’s direction and intention.
Components of Policy

• Includes all requirements imposed by law or regulation
• Does not contain any provision outside of the district’s legal authority,
• Does not contain any language the district is not capable of implementing now.
Components of Policy

ARTICLE 5

STUDENTS

(Series 5000)

NOTE: The AASB comprehensive index/table of contents provides a standard index system designed to accommodate future policies/regulations and at the same time provides a table of contents for this manual. This manual contains only those Board policies (BP), administrative regulations (AR) and exhibits (E) specified in the right-hand column.

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<td>BP</td>
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<td>B. Role of Parents/Guardians</td>
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<td>C. School Discipline and Safety</td>
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<td>D. Student Nutrition and Physical Activity</td>
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<td>A. Attendance</td>
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<td>1. Admission</td>
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<td>a. District Residency</td>
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<td>b. Part-Time Enrollment</td>
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<td>a. Exemptions from Attendance</td>
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<td>c. Student Leave of Absence</td>
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<td>d. Part-time Employment</td>
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<tr>
<td>e. Open/Closed Campus</td>
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# Policy vs Administrative Regulation?

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<tr>
<th>Policies</th>
<th>Administrative Regulations</th>
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<tr>
<td>Written statements adopted by the Board that communicate the guidelines and limits within which the Superintendent and staff may take discretionary action.</td>
<td>Detailed <em>instructions</em> relate to the policy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They Tell: What is needed, why the need is important and how the board views the need.</td>
<td>They Tell: How to act, who should be involved, where and when it should occur.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The Policy Process

- **Identify the Need**
- **Analysis - Gather Facts, Identify Options**
- **Board Study, Discuss, Identify Basic Elements**
- **Draft the Policy**
- **Board Review, Public Input**
- **Develop Administrative Regs**
- **Disseminate and Implement**
Boards Lead Through Policy

• Understand the policy process
• Schedule policy review on a regular basis
• Review policy prior to acting on major agenda items
• Be familiar with the first policy in each of the different Titles
• Ask the right questions
The Importance of Policy
Asking the Right Questions

The Board should lead the policy discussion:
• Does this policy contribute to student achievement?
• Is the purpose of the policy clear?
• Does the language establish:
  • Why this is important?
  • What the Board wants/does not want?
  • Who is responsible for implementation?
  • Who is responsible for ensuring enforcement?
  • Any special evaluation or accountability requirements?
• Are terms used consistently, clearly and defined as necessary?
• Is the language as concise as possible?
AASB’s Role

- Resource
- Reference Policies (49 Districts)
- Review and Refresh (49 Districts)
- Policy Online (25 Districts)
- Back-Up

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<td>Advisory School Boards</td>
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<td>Bylaws of the Board</td>
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</table>
Resource

- National Data Base
- Policies you may not have!
- Is there a need for a policy?
  - Teachers are bringing dogs to school
  - My small horse is a service animal
  - Students are wearing shorts at the bus stop in winter – and it’s 35 below!
Reference Policies

- Complete Reference Manual
- Annual Updates
- Fixing the Oops!
Review and Refresh

- **Complete Manual Review:**
  - Lost
  - Totally Out Of Date
  - Joining New

- **Refresh**
  - We Forgot To Do The Update(s)
  - ...... And Now We Are In Trouble
  - Refresh Only Specific Policies Needing Work
“Do Nots” about Policy

- Have policy and not follow it.
- Have policy and not read it.
- Have policy and never review it.
- Think you know it.