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Policy Development, Adoption, and Review

The development and adoption of policies that govern the School District is one of the School Board's most important functions. Board policies establish the goals, direction and structure of the district under the authority of applicable statutes and regulations. In addition to policies required by state and federal laws and regulations, the Board adopts policies to provide direction to the Superintendent and other administrators in the management of the district, to guide the education program, and to provide clear expectations for school staff, students and parents.

Board policies are intended to provide the framework for district operations and the educational system. In general, the operational details as to how policies will be implemented are contained in administrative procedures developed by the administration. However, the Board may adopt administrative procedures concerning its own operations, or when an issue is of sufficient legal importance to warrant a Board-level procedure.

- A. Policy Committee Responsibilities and Meetings. The Board’s Policy Committee with the advice and counsel of the Superintendent, is responsible for recommending policies and policy actions to the full Board for its consideration, including adopting new policies, revising existing policies and deleting obsolete policies.
- B. Policy Committee Meetings and Agendas. The Superintendent or his/her designee, in consultation with the Policy Committee Chair shall prepare all agendas for the meetings of the Policy Committee.
- C. Review of Existing Manual. The Policy Committee shall establish a schedule for reviewing existing Board policies, and forming recommendations regarding the same for the Board.
- D. Procedures for Policy Development and Review.
 - 1. Individual Board members, Board standing or special committees, the Superintendent or other interested persons may submit policy suggestions, concerns, and/or drafts to the Policy Committee, in care of the Superintendent.
 - 2. The Superintendent or designee is responsible for notifying the Board and the Policy Committee of all policy updates and revisions provided by the New Hampshire School Boards Association. The Policy Committee will review such updates and make recommendations deemed appropriate under this policy.

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3. The Policy Committee, with the assistance of the Superintendent, will review and research policy suggestions and prepare draft policies, as appropriate. The Policy Committee may delegate research and initial drafting to other Board standing committees, to District staff or others at the discretion of the Policy Committee and the Superintendent. (E.g., a policy concerning computer use may first be delegated to the Technology Committee.) If a policy is referred to a committee, staff, professional or other person for initial review/drafting, the policy shall be reviewed by the Policy Committee before submission to the full Board.
 4. The Superintendent, should seek counsel of the School Board’s attorney or the New Hampshire School Boards Association when there may be a question of legality or proper legal procedure in the substance of any proposed or current board policy.
 5. The Policy Committee may also seek input from other affected persons and/or groups as appropriate.
 6. The Policy Committee will provide reports to the full Board monthly. The reports will include the Policy Committee's recommendations for new policies (including full text of policies/revisions to be considered for action by the Board), as well as recommendations for repeal of existing policies. Policy Committee reports should also include any information requested by the full board, and any other information deemed appropriate by the Policy Committee.
- E. Board Actions Required to Approve, Revise or Repeal Policies. Any final action regarding the approval of a new policy, or revision or repeal of an existing policy, requires a majority vote of a quorum of the board at a public meeting.
1. Policy Committee reports shall be placed on the agenda of a regular Board meeting and will be made part of the agenda package for that meeting.
 2. All new policies, and/or revisions to existing board policies are subject to a "first reading" by the full board to occur at a regular board meeting. (There is no requirement that proposed policies/revisions be read aloud at the meeting, although either a majority of the Board or the Chair may determine that actual reading is appropriate).
 3. The Board will allow opportunity for public comment on policy proposals per Board policy BEDH.

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4. Any changes agreed upon or requested by the Board during the first reading shall be made by the Policy Committee prior to the second reading.
5. At the next Board meeting (or a later meeting if so agreed by the Board), the policy shall be placed on the agenda for a second (or additional) reading, and action. Amendments may be made and acted upon at that meeting, or may be referred for further revision, etc.
6. Prior to final approval by the Board, each policy will be titled, dated, and coded consistent with the classification system used by the New Hampshire School Boards Association.
7. Board action regarding the adoption, revision or repeal of policies will be included in the minutes of the meeting at which the official action is taken.
8. Approved policies become effective immediately unless the motion to approve the policy, or the policy itself, includes a specific implementation date.

F. Minor Revisions by Policy Committee.

The Board authorizes the Policy Committee to make non-substantive corrections and minor changes to existing policies provided that the Policy Committee shall document such modifications and report the same at the next meeting of the School Board. For the purposes of this policy, “non-substantive changes” shall include: grammatical, typographical or other clerical changes; addition or deletion of legal, cross or other references; policy code or policy class designation changes; or correcting misidentified or modified job titles (e.g., “school counselor” in place of “guidance counselor”). Upon review of such a report from the Policy Committee, the Board may take such action as the Board deems appropriate, including accepting the report without objection or other formal action.

G. Suspension or Waiver of Policy Process.

1. The Board may adopt, amend, or repeal written policies at any meeting by a majority vote of Board members in attendance, provided that public notice of the proposed action was given at least two (2) weeks at a previous Board meeting and that each Board member was notified of the proposed action. For purposes of notification, a meeting agenda delivered to each Board member is deemed sufficient if it identifies the policy to be acted upon.

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2. On matters of unusual or unexpected urgency, the Board may waive the second meeting limitation and take immediate action to adopt a new policy, or to suspend or revise an existing policy. In such instances, the meeting minutes should reflect the nature of the circumstances warranting the suspension of the normal procedures.

H. Policy Dissemination, Records and Manual Updates.

1. All Board policies, and any written administrative rules and regulations implementing such policies constitute governmental records and are subject to the provisions of RSA 91-A.
2. All current Board policies shall be readily available, including on the School District's website, with separate, clearly identified links on each school's independent website. Information about the location of the policies shall be included in all parent/student and employee handbooks.
3. The Superintendent will ensure that information about new Board policies and any Board policy revisions, repeals, or other changes is included in a timely manner on the District's website, is otherwise made publicly available, and is specifically communicated to affected groups (i.e., school staff, students, parents).
4. The Superintendent shall ensure that copies of all policies deleted from the Board policy manual as well as copies of former versions of revised policies are retained as permanent records of the School Board.
5. An up-to-date policy manual shall be maintained on the District's website with a hard copy, in the Superintendent's Office.

References:

RSA 189:74 School Board Public Comment Period
RSA 91-A:2 Meetings Open to Public