

Bylaws of the Board

Policies and Bylaws

Introduction. Board of Education policies translate beliefs and desires of elected officials into action through the Superintendent of Schools and the school staff. Except for specific meeting decisions, policies are a Boards' best means of shaping district education through specifying in Board policy "what will be done." The Superintendent's administrative regulations provide the administrative "how it will be done" to accompany Board of Education policies.

Policies also make it clear, at least by implication, that superintendents are expected to follow the direction of the entire Board as it is expressed through its policies. On a daily basis, Board policies, except for bylaws, are primarily for the guidance of the Superintendent of Schools and his/her staff. It is, however, the Board's responsibility to ensure the Superintendent uses policies in making decisions; it is, similarly, the Superintendent's responsibility to insist that both policies and their amplifying regulations are followed by everyone in the school system.

Organization and Contents of Policy Manuals. Policy manuals contain three basic types of entries — Board of Education policies, Superintendent of Schools regulations, and Board of Education bylaws:

1. Policies are guides for discretionary action by the Superintendent of Schools and staff; not all policies require administrative regulations;
2. Regulations are the Superintendent's amplifications of Board policies into specific staff actions; not all administrative regulations require policies;
3. Bylaws are rules governing Boards of Education's internal operations.

Development of Board Policies. The development of sound educational policies is one of the primary duties of the Board of Education. Policies serve to promote democratic and responsive school governance and constitute a major method by which the Board exercises its leadership. Policies are guides for discretionary administrative action by the Superintendent of Schools and his/her staff. Policy development and revision should follow these principles:

1. Policies and regulations shall be given high priorities by the Board and by the Superintendent of Schools;
2. Procedures for development and revision of policies and regulations shall be clear and well understood; participants shall know their roles and authority; lines of communication shall be observed;
3. Use of policies and regulations as guides to action shall be stressed at all organizational levels, and policy or regulatory violations shall not be overlooked or condoned;

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4. Policy and regulatory effectiveness shall be monitored regularly by the Board of Education, the Superintendent of Schools, and by other staff members;

The Superintendent is encouraged to submit written recommendations for new policies and for revision of existing policies as necessary for the effective operation of the public schools.

Approved policies shall be in writing and coded according to the policy codification system approved by the Board, and made part of the official policy manual maintained by the superintendent. Policy manuals and copies of new and changed policies shall be distributed to all members of the Board of Education and school administrators, and shall be made available to the staff, students, and general public.

Adoption and/or Amendment of Board of Education Policies. Procedure for the adoption of a new policy or the amendment of existing policy shall be:

1. Upon referral to the policy committee, the committee will develop a statement of policy or change of existing policy based on the following:
 - a. Suggestions and requests from Board members;
 - b. Recommendations from the Superintendent of Schools;
 - c. Statutory requirements;
2. The policy committee shall present a policy statement, or revised policy statement, with its recommendations to the Board for a first reading at a regular Board meeting at which time amendments to the policy proposals may be made. No action shall be taken at this presentation meeting.
3. Following the first reading, the Board shall act on proposed policies at a regular meeting of the Board at which time further amendments to the policy proposals may be made and the policies approved if the changes are not a departure from the essence of the policy proposal; if the proposed changes are major, a policy should be brought back for a third review at the next regular meeting. Proposed policy changes approved by majority vote of the Board shall take immediate effect.

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Formal adoption of policies and/or amendments of policies shall be recorded in the minutes of the Board meeting. Only those written statements so adopted and recorded shall be regarded as official policies.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

10-221 Boards of education to prescribe rules, policies, and procedures.

Bylaw adopted by the Board: May 27, 1999

MARLBOROUGH PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Marlborough, Connecticut