

Policy 8

POLICY MAKING

Policy development is a key responsibility of the Board. Policies constitute the will of the Board in determining how the Division will be operated and communicate the Board's values, beliefs and expectations. Policies provide effective direction and guidelines for the action of the Board, Superintendent, staff, students, electors and other agencies. Policies also serve as sources of information and guidelines to all who may be interested in or connected with the operation of the Division. Adoption of new Board policies or revision of existing policies is solely the responsibility of the Board.

The Board shall be guided in its approach to policy making by ensuring adherence to the requirements necessary to provide public education and compliance with legislation.

Board policies shall provide an appropriate balance between the responsibility of the Board to develop the broad guidelines to guide the Division and the opportunity for the Superintendent to exercise professional judgment in the administration of the Division.

The Board believes in the establishment and review of policy which reflects its values and perspectives.

The Board shall adhere to the following stages in its approach to policy making:

1. Planning

The Board, in cooperation with the Superintendent, shall assess the need for a policy, as a result of its own monitoring activities or on the suggestion of others, and identify the critical attributes of each policy to be developed.

2. Development

The Board may develop the policy itself or delegate the responsibility for its development to the Superintendent.

3. Implementation

The Board is responsible for the implementation of policies governing its own processes. The Board and Superintendent share the responsibility for implementation of policies relating to the Board-Superintendent relationship. The Superintendent is responsible for the implementation of other policies.

4. Evaluation

The Board, in cooperation with the Superintendent, shall evaluate each policy in a timely manner on a rotational basis in order to determine if it is meeting its intended purpose.

Specifically

1. Any trustee, employee, taxpayer, parent, student or School Council of the Division may make suggestions regarding the possible development of a policy or the need for policy revisions on any matter by presenting a proposal for a policy or revisions, in writing, to the Superintendent. The proposal shall contain a brief statement of purpose or rationale.
2. The Superintendent or designate will draft amendments to an existing policy or a new policy as the case may be.
3. When appropriate, the Superintendent shall seek legal advice on the intent and the wording of the policy.
4. The policy draft is then brought by the Superintendent to the Board for first reading.
5. If accepted in principle by the Board, the policy draft shall then be distributed to the stakeholder groups listed below for feedback by the date stipulated on the covering notice.
 - 5.1 This date will typically be eight (8) or more weeks from the date of first reading.
 - 5.2 The policy draft will also be posted on the Division website.
 - 5.3 All requests to extend the feedback deadline will be given due consideration.
6. Stakeholder groups included in the general policy development feedback process include:
 - 6.1 The Foothills Administrators' Association.
 - 6.2 School staffs.
 - 6.3 School Councils.
 - 6.4 The Foothills ATA Local.
 - 6.5 The Joint Committee established with the ATA Local (when the proposed policy or policy amendment relates to working conditions).
 - 6.6 Foothills School Division Maintenance Association.
 - 6.7 The Association of Drivers of the Foothills School Division.
 - 6.8 The Foothills CUPE Local.
 - 6.9 Other interested or effected groups and/or individuals as deemed appropriate (e.g. Student Councils).
7. Comments and suggestions on the policy draft will be reviewed by the Superintendent and/or designate(s).
8. Substantive additional changes to a policy draft may be made in response to stakeholder feedback.
 - 8.1 In such cases, the revised draft will be re-circulated to the Board and to the stakeholder groups for further feedback by the date stipulated on the covering notice.
 - 8.2 This date will typically be four (4) or more additional weeks.

9. Once stakeholder comments have been taken into account, the policy will be recommended to the Board for final approval.
10. Notwithstanding the general policy development process outlined above, the Board retains the right to develop, amend, delete or approve any of its policies at any time through its exceptional policy development process.
11. In cases where the Board deems it advisable to forgo the regular policy development process, the reasons for choosing the exceptional policy development route will be publicly communicated at a regular Board meeting.
12. Only those policies which are adopted and recorded in the minutes constitute the official policies of the Board.
13. In the absence of existing policy, the Board may make decisions, by resolution, on matters affecting the administration, management and operation of the Division. Such decisions carry the weight of policy until such time as specific written policy is developed.
14. The Board may request the Superintendent to change an administrative procedure to a draft Board policy and will provide the rationale for same.
15. The Superintendent shall develop administrative procedures as specified in Policy 10 – Board Delegation of Authority and may develop such other procedures as deemed necessary for the effective operation of the Division. These must be in accordance with Board policies.
16. The Board may also delete a policy and subsequently delegate the Superintendent authority over this area. The Superintendent may choose to then develop an administrative procedure relative to this matter.
17. The Superintendent must inform the Board of any substantive changes to administrative procedures.
18. The Superintendent shall arrange for all Board policies and administrative procedures and subsequent revisions to be posted on the Division's website, in a timely manner, for staff and public access.
19. The Board shall review its policies on a rotational basis.

Legal Reference: Relevant Legislation and Regulations