

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. 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.

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 shall be guided in its approach to policy making by ensuring adherence to the requirements necessary to provide public education and compliance with the School Act and provincial legislation. Further, while reserving unto itself the authority and responsibility to determine and adopt policies, the Board desires to collaborate with the community to carry out this responsibility. Obtaining comments from a broad base of stakeholders in the Division community is seen to be essential to ensure the adequacy, suitability and effectiveness of Board policies in ensuring that students have the opportunity to meet the standards of education set by the Minister.

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

1. Planning

- 1.1 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

- 2.1 The Board may develop the policy itself or may delegate the responsibility for development to the Superintendent.
- 2.2 The process for the development and review of policies will allow for the participation of interested and concerned groups and individuals as appropriate to their circumstances.

3. Implementation

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

4. Evaluation

- 4.1 The Board, in cooperation with the Superintendent, shall evaluate each policy in a timely manner in order to determine whether or not it is meeting its intended purpose.

Specifically

1. When the need for a new or revised Board policy is established, the Superintendent will prepare a draft policy. A draft policy will be taken to a Board Policy Committee meeting for consideration.
2. In the solicitation of comments with respect to a draft policy, drafts may be circulated to all schools, School Councils, and all employee groups, and any other groups deemed appropriate by the Board Policy Committee. Comments from the various groups will be reviewed by the Board Policy Committee and accepted as information in the process of the adoption of the policy.
3. When appropriate, the Superintendent shall seek legal advice on the intent and wording of the policy.
4. When, in the view of the Superintendent, a policy requires additional commentary from staff or the public, an ad hoc focus committee may be formed to carry out this function. The composition, duration, and frequency of meetings of the focus committee are left to the discretion of the Superintendent.
5. The Board will deal with policy issues at Policy Committee meetings and the subsequent adoption of any new policy or policy revision will take place at a regular Board meeting after the policy formulation process has been completed. Adoption of a policy shall be by Board motion.
6. 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.
7. The Superintendent must develop administrative procedures as specified in Policy 11 – 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.
8. The Board may request the Superintendent to change an administrative procedure to a draft Board policy, and will provide the rationale for same.
9. 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.
10. All Board policies shall be posted on the Division's website and notification of any changes sent to trustees, all principals and central office staff.
11. When a Board policy requires the development of a school policy, procedure, regulation or other action by the Principal, the Principal shall implement the requirement with due attention to the provisions of the School Act, Alberta Education Regulations, Board policies and administrative procedures. School procedures shall be submitted to the Superintendent for examination and review.

12. The Board shall review each policy on a Board approved schedule that states a minimum of two (2) years for a policy review.

Legal Reference: Section 20, 60, 61, 113 School Act

Approved: November 2005
Amended: June 1, 2011, January 13, 2016, March 21, 2018