

CODE: CH.BP

EFFECTIVE DATE: (12-06-2012)

TOPIC: Framework for Policy Development and Review

ISSUE DATE: (29-06-2015)

REVIEW YEAR: (2019)

PURPOSE

To provide clarity around the Board's governance role through policy and to create coherence and consistency across all board policy by establishing the Board's expectations for process, content development, structure and format to guide the development and review of policies.

The *School Act* legislates that a board must establish policies respecting the provision of educational programs and services affecting student learning. The Board governs the District through the adoption of carefully developed policies which have the force of local law applied to Edmonton Public Schools. Policies provide parameters on and guidance for the action of the Board, Trustees, the Superintendent of Schools, staff, students, electors and others with respect to Edmonton Public Schools.

DEFINITIONS

Policy is a statement of intent, belief, governing principles and expectations regarding specific areas of Board responsibility, formally adopted by a majority vote of the Board and intended to guide future actions.

Board Governance Policy is a policy statement that applies to the Board's own internal operations and expectations of its members which may also include specific directives and regulations for the Board and Trustees.

Administrative Regulations are the directions, procedures and assignment of responsibilities established by the Superintendent of Schools that direct the implementation of and achievement of desired outcomes of board policy and the operation of the District.

Stakeholders are individuals and groups who are affected by a policy and have a vested interest in its implementation. Stakeholders may include, but are not limited to students, parents, staff, school councils, associations, unions, community members and organizations.

POLICY

The Board believes that a coherent, consistent and transparent approach to policy development and regular review will improve alignment with the Board's vision, mission and priorities, increase accountability and help translate the intention of the Board into actions for its students.

The Board is committed to making student learning its primary focus when meeting its responsibility to develop policy in keeping with the requirements of legislation and the values of the community. The Board believes that the development and review of policy is enhanced when the process allows for the meaningful involvement of staff, parents, students and other interested groups and persons.

When developing policy, the Board strives to achieve a balance between the responsibility of the Board to govern by the adoption of policy to guide the District and the responsibility of the Superintendent of Schools and school administrators to exercise professional expertise and judgment in the management of the District by implementing policy.

EXPECTATIONS

1. The Board may adopt new or revise existing policy to:
 - a. comply with legislative requirements and fulfill the Board's mandate;
 - b. give substance to the Board's vision, mission and priorities;
 - c. provide the Superintendent of Schools with parameters for the effective operation of the District and to inform and guide actions of staff;
 - d. provide the Board of Trustees with parameters for effective Board governance; and
 - e. articulate the District's culture and communicate the Board's values and philosophy to students, parents and the public.

2. All statements of board policy shall meet the following criteria:
 - a. conform to the *School Act* and regulations, policies and orders issued under the authority of the *School Act*, and other relevant provincial and federal legislation;
 - b. support the Board's Vision, Mission and Priorities;
 - c. be consistent with other board policies;
 - d. create a framework within which the Superintendent of Schools can exercise professional judgment in discharging responsibility for the administration of the District;
 - e. be broadly stated to provide guidance and the flexibility to address diverse situations while ensuring consistency across the system;
 - f. be capable of implementation, review and evaluation; and
 - g. be developed and reviewed with appropriate stakeholder engagement in accordance with the Board's policy on stakeholder engagement, with due consideration for the contentiousness of the policy topic, its impact on student learning and wellness, and whether the policy is new or expected to be significantly revised.

3. All board policies shall have a consistent format and the following sections as appropriate:
 - a. Purpose: include a purpose statement indicating the intent and rationale for the policy;
 - b. Definitions: may include definitions of terminology used specific to the understanding of the policy statement;
 - c. Policy: include statements of belief, values and philosophy or approach;
 - d. Expectations: may include statements of specific expectations, outcomes or results to be achieved by the Board itself or by the Superintendent of Schools and the Administration;
 - e. Accountability: include a statement of how the effectiveness of the policy implementation will be measured and reported to the Board; and
 - f. References: include a listing of references pertinent to the understanding of the policy such as related legislation, policies and administrative regulations.

4. The decision to initiate a policy change, that is, the development of a new policy or the review of an existing board policy that may result in policy affirmation, amendment or rescission, resides with the Board of Trustees.

- a. A Trustee, a Board Committee, the Administration, or an individual or community delegation may make suggestions for policy development or review of a board policy to the Board. The request for policy change must include a rationale for the request.
 - b. The development of a new policy or the review of an existing policy shall be initiated by a Board approved motion.
 - c. The Board shall be provided the opportunity to give preliminary guidance to the Policy Review Committee as to the desired intent of the policy change.
5. The Board shall formally review each existing policy a minimum of every seven (7) years*, with the exception of:
 - a. the District Priorities, which the Board shall review at the beginning of its term;
 - i. The Board's District Priorities Committee shall assist the Board in this process by facilitating an open stakeholder consultation process and enveloping recommendations for the Board's consideration.
 - b. board governance policies, also known as the Trustees' Handbook, which the Board shall review the year prior to a Board election in preparation for the newly elected Board of Trustees.
 6. The Board shall be responsible for the development, review and approval of its board governance policies in the manner and frequency it deems necessary.
 7. The Board's Policy Review Committee shall be responsible for assisting the Board in its policy role by:
 - a. overseeing the review of proposed board policy changes in accordance with this policy, *Framework for Policy Development and Review*;
 - b. giving advance notice of board policy review discussions and providing the Board the opportunity to give preliminary input prior to policy development or review by providing regular reports to Board on the status of policies coming up for and currently under review; and
 - c. recommending policies meeting the Board's expectations for policy to the Board for approval.
 8. The Superintendent of Schools shall be responsible for assisting the Board and the Policy Review Committee in their roles by assigning resources for drafting new and revised board policy for consideration in accordance with the *Framework for Policy Development and Review*. The draft should be accompanied by a Recommendation Report that provides information on the process used and stakeholders involved in the development, an analysis of intended and unintended consequences of the policy and relevant supporting data that may be helpful to the understanding of the Policy Review Committee.
 9. With the exception of board governance policies, every new policy or substantive change to the intent of an existing policy shall receive three separate considerations by the Board before the policy is finally approved. Not more than two considerations may be given at any one meeting unless the Trustees present at the meeting unanimously agree.
 - a. First Consideration: The proposed policy change is recommended by the Policy Review Committee to provide the Board the opportunity to seek clarification, request additional information and make suggestions for change.

- b. After first consideration of a proposed policy change, the Policy Review Committee shall oversee the updating of the draft policy as needed and request the Superintendent of Schools to circulate the draft policy for broad stakeholder review. At minimum, each policy shall be made available on the District website for four weeks for stakeholder input.
 - c. The Superintendent of Schools shall review and summarize the stakeholder input received and recommend any changes to the Policy Review Committee as deemed necessary. The
 - i. Policy Review Committee shall review stakeholder input received, and consider any recommended changes.
 - d. Second Consideration: The proposed policy, with changes as needed, is recommended by the Policy Review Committee to the Board for second consideration. Amendments may be made.
 - e. Third Consideration: The proposed policy, with changes as needed, is recommended by the Policy Review Committee for approval.
10. Only those statements meeting the Board's criteria for policy and approved by the Board as policy shall be recorded as board policy.
11. The Superintendent of Schools shall ensure that approved board policies and administrative regulations are available and accessible to staff, students, parents and the public on the District's website.
12. The Board shall be responsible for implementing Board governance policies which govern the Board's own operations.
13. The Superintendent of Schools shall be responsible for implementing board policy through the establishment of administrative regulations and processes and assignment of responsibilities as needed.
14. The Superintendent of Schools shall report to the Board on the implementation of board policy on a regular basis. Accordingly, the Board shall be informed of new administrative regulations and substantive changes to existing administrative regulations prior to these regulations being made public.

ACCOUNTABILITY

The Board shall evaluate implementation of this policy on an annual basis as part of the Board's evaluation process.

***ADDENDUM** The minimum seven year review cycle for existing policy shall be suspended for the duration of the *Full Review of Board Policy Project*, approximately three (3), years September 2015.

The Board approved the following motion January 31, 2012:

That the Board undertake a full review of all its policies and update them using a standard framework for process, content development, structure and format. That the review process and standard framework be developed by the Policy Review Committee and recommended to the Board for approval.

REFERENCES

AA.BP - Stakeholder Relations

CH.AR - Policy Development and Review

CHA.BP - Board Delegation of Authority

IA.BP - Parent and Community Involvement

Trustees' Handbook - Policy Review Committee Terms of Reference

School Act - Sections 60, 113