

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 community based public education and compliance with the School Act, the Northland School Division Act and other provincial as well as federal legislation.

Community based public education must also reflect the culture, beliefs, values and traditions of the communities served.

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 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 or a committee of the Board.

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 the other policies.

4. Evaluation

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

Specifically

1. Any person or party 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 will present the proposal to the Board or appropriate standing committee of the Board, for initial consideration and determination.
3. If necessary, the Superintendent or designate will draft amendments to an existing policy or a new policy as the case may be.
4. When appropriate, the Superintendent shall seek legal advice on the intent and the wording of the policy.
5. The Board will give each new or revised policy three (3) readings in public session as follows:
 - 5.1 Proposed policies will be circulated for no less than a total of sixty (60) days.
 - 5.2 First Reading
 - 5.2.1 The Board will consider the policy proposal and will determine the manner and timeline for receiving input from interested parties. In most cases, the policy proposal presented to the Board would be circulated to Division staff, principals, school staff, the Northland Local of the Alberta Teachers' Association and key stakeholders groups for consideration and reaction.
 - 5.2.1.1. The Principal is responsible to ensure the school council has opportunity to provide input.
 - 5.2.2 The circulation period may be waived in emergency situations or when there are legislative parameters or collective agreement stipulations precluding feedback.
 - 5.3 Second Reading
 - 5.3.1 The policy is discussed further by the Board after taking into consideration any input received and any amendments arising from input and comments received.
 - 5.3.2 The Board shall consider the information and reaction provided and will either approve the proposed policy in principle or recirculate if deemed appropriate.
 - 5.4 Third Reading
 - 5.4.1 The Board shall give final approval of the policy after it has been given approval in principle.

6. No more than two (2) readings of any policy proposal may be given at any one (1) meeting of the Board unless all trustees are present and unanimously agree to give the policy a third reading.
7. The circulation period may be waived:
 - 7.1 In emergency situations or,
 - 7.2 When there are collective agreement stipulations or legislative or other parameters precluding feedback or,
 - 7.3 When the changes are of a housekeeping nature which improve or align processes and do not change the intent of the policy.
8. Only those policies which are adopted and recorded in the minutes constitute the official policies of the Board.
9. In the absence of existing policy, the Board may make decisions, by motion, on matters affecting the administration, management and operation of the Division. Such decisions carry the weight of policy. If appropriate, specific written policy will be developed.
10. The Board may request the Superintendent to change an administrative procedure into a draft Board policy and will provide the rationale for same.
11. The Superintendent shall 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.
12. 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.
13. The Superintendent must inform the Board of any substantive directional changes in administrative procedures.
14. The Superintendent shall ensure all Board policies and administrative procedures posted on the Division's website are current.
15. The Board shall ensure that each policy has a specified date by which the policy must be evaluated in order to determine if it has brought about the intended result, is still necessary and is to be maintained or deleted.

Legal Reference: Section 60, 61, 113 School Act