

Scituate Public Schools

Policy

Manual



Scholarship • **P**artnership • **S**tewardship

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INTRODUCTION

The Scituate Public Schools Policy Manual is intended to publish exemplary policies and regulations for the school system. Policy development is a dynamic, ongoing process in a modern, forward looking school system. New issues, problems and needs continually require a school system to develop new policies or revise exiting ones. Like Congress, state legislatures, and city or county councils, school boards establish the direction and structure of their school districts by adopting policies through the authority granted by state legislatures. School board policies have the force of law equal to statutes or ordinances. Policies establish directions for the district; they set the goals, assign authority, and establish controls that make school governance and management possible. Policies are the means by which educators are accountable to the public.

How to Use This Policy Manual

The Scituate Public Schools operate according to policies established by the School Committee. The School Committee, which represents both the state and local community, develops the policies after careful deliberation, and the school administration implements them through specific rules and regulations. Then, the School Committee appraises the effects of its policies and makes appropriate revisions.

How the Policy Manual is Organized

The Policy Manual is organized according to the classification system developed in 1991 by the National Education Policy Network (NEPN). The system is designed to provide a logical, permanent, and expandable framework for classifying policies and regulations under standard terms ("descriptors") and letter codes. The system provides 635 discrete terms in logical arrangement, accompanied by letter codes in alphabetical order. The first letter of a code indicates a major section; the second letter a major category of that in the section; the third letter a subcategory under the major category; the fourth letter a subsidiary category under the subcategory; and so forth.

There are twelve (12) major sections, or chapters, each bearing an alphabetical code as follows:

- A. Foundations and Basic Commitments
- B. School Board Governance and Operations
- C. General School Administration
- D. Fiscal Management
- E. Support Services
- F. Facilities Planning and Development
- G. Personnel
- H. Negotiations
- I. Instruction
- J. Students
- K. School-Community-Home Relations
- L. Education Agency Relations

Each section has its own subcategories that provide a logical sequence and alphabetical sub-coding. The order in which the policies appear in the classification system does not imply importance; the order establishes a logical sequence for filing polices and regulations. The system uses the letter symbols - R and – E following letter codes to distinguish regulations (-R) and exhibits (-E) from policies.

Regulations consist of procedures, administrative rules, the means of policy implementation. Directive prepared by the school administration that sets forth the mechanics for implementing School Committee policy. They identify by whom, where, and when things are done. Exhibits are reference documents, such as forms, calendars, salary schedules, etc., rather than policy.

How to Find a Policy

There are two ways to locate a policy or regulation in this Policy Manual:

1. One way is to consider in what major section such a policy would appear, then turn to the classification pages for that section until you find the term that most closely fits the topic you are seeking. Use the code letters for the term to locate the policy.
2. If you are in doubt about the major section, go immediately to the Code-Finder Index and look up the topic alphabetically, as you would in any index. It is important to note that: on regulations the code is followed by -R; on exhibit documents (information material that is neither policy nor regulation), the code is followed by -E.

NOTE: All pages of the Manual are coded in the upper right-hand corner.

What if you cannot find the term you are seeking? The Code-Finder lists over 3,500 terms, however, no index of useful size could include every possibility. If the term you are seeking is not included, look up a synonym or a more general or specific term appropriate to the topic.

What if you can find the term and code, except there is no policy? This probably means that the School has no written policy or important regulation in that particular area. All terms used in the classification system appear in the sectional sub-codes and Code-Finder to accommodate the coding, insertion and finding of policies or regulations that may be issued at a later date. The other possibility could be a brief statement related to the policy you are seeking may be incorporated in a universal policy which covers the area generally. The policy will be coded under a more general term. For example, a policy statement which relates to all nondiscrimination might be filed under Discrimination (AC) rather than Sexual Harassment (ACA).

There are a few descriptors that appear twice in the classification system, in different sections, and they are essential policy areas in both. For example, you will find in Section B (Board Governance and Operations): BHC, Board Communications with Staff (Also GBD), and you will find in Section G (Personnel): GBD, Board Communications with Staff (Also BHC).

About School Committee Policies

Generally, the role of a school committee is to set policy and the role of the administration is to execute it. The Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) defines policy, regulations and bylaws as follows:

Policy – rules, guidelines, statements of goals adopted by the school Board as a legal entity, traditionally considered as guides to discretionary action; statement adopted by a school Board or an administrative agency outlining principles to be followed with respect to specific matters; usually requires rules or regulations to be formulated for its implementation, and is broad enough to provide for administrative decisions regarding the manner in which it will be implemented.

Regulations – procedures, administrative rules, the means of policy implementation. Directive prepared by the school administration that sets forth the mechanics for implementing Board policy. Tells how, by whom, where and when things are to be done.

Bylaws – usually identical to rules of procedure that govern the internal affairs of the school Board such as order of Board business, voting, setting agenda, calling of meetings, etc. A code or collection of rules adopted by a Board for the regulations of its own organization and proceedings; must not conflict with the statute or charter by which the Board is created, but may go further into detail to carry out the intent of the legal guidelines.

These definitions are serviceable most of the time. They reflect sound theory of governance and administration. However the real world of School Committees does not always conform. For example:

Often the State and Federal Governments confuse the distinction and require school committees to make detailed rules; and many regulations are established by law or by the State Department of Education.

A school committee also signs contracts which incorporate rules and regulations. There is no distinction in negotiations between policy and rules, yet all the details of negotiated contracts become, in effect, mandated school committee policy.

Additionally, the public may demand that the school committee, itself, not the administrator establish the specific rules and procedures in certain sensitive areas.

Is The Policy Manual Complete

No. The Manual contains all of the current written policies of the School Committee to date. However, the need for continually putting additional policies in writing, for adopting new ones, and revising old ones becomes apparent. No matter how well conceived and well developed, a policy manual can never be 100% up to date. Policy development is a continuing process. So from time to time, new policies, regulations, and reference documents will be developed, coded according to the classification system, and issued for insertion in the Manual.