

SOUTHAMPTON COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
COURTLAND, VIRGINIA

SCHOOL BOARD POLICY MANUAL

INTRODUCTION

This manual contains the policies of the Southampton County School Board.

Policy development in a modern, forward-looking school system is a dynamic, ongoing process. New problems, issues, and needs give rise to the continuing need to develop new policies or to revise existing ones. This is why the Board employs the loose-leaf format for this manual. It is easy to keep up to date.

Each person holding a copy of this manual is to make a diligent effort to keep it up to date as new policies are distributed by the superintendent's office of the Southampton County Public Schools. The clerk of the Board will provide up-to-date policies to each person, office, or library holding a copy of this manual.

How to Use This Manual

The Southampton County Public Schools operate according to policies established by the Southampton County School Board. The Board, which represents the state and local community, develops policies after careful deliberation, and the school administration implements these policies through specific regulations and procedures. The Board then evaluates the effects of its policies and makes revisions as necessary.

In the interests of harmony, efficiency, uniformity of interpretation, coordination of effort, and in fairness to all concerned, the Board makes this manual available to all who are affected by its policies. Copies are to be maintained in school libraries, public libraries, principals' offices, teacher lounges, and School Board/superintendent's office.

Please Note: All copies of this policy manual are the property of the Southampton County Public Schools.

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How the Manual is Organized

The manual is organized according to the classification system developed by the Educational Policies Services of the National School Boards Association. The system provides an efficient means of coding, filing, and finding policies, regulations, and other documents.

There are 12 major classifications, each bearing an alphabetical code:

- A -- FOUNDATIONS AND BASIC COMMITMENTS
- B -- SCHOOL BOARD GOVERNANCE AND OPERATIONS
- C -- GENERAL SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION
- D -- FISCAL MANAGEMENT
- E -- SUPPORT SERVICES
- F -- FACILITIES DEVELOPMENT
- G -- PERSONNEL
- H -- NEGOTIATIONS
- I -- INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM
- J -- STUDENTS
- K -- SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS
- L -- EDUCATION AGENCY RELATIONS

Sub-classification under each heading is based on logical sequence and alphabetical sub-coding. Each of the 12 major classifications is tabbed. Following the tab page is a table of contents for that section.

How to Find a Policy

Consider where the policy would be filed among the 12 major classifications. Turn to the tab and table of contents for that section and glance down the listing until you find the term that most closely fits the topic that you are seeking. Use the code letters given for the term to locate the sheet which will appear in alphabetical order by code within the particular section. (All pages of the manual are coded in the upper right-hand corner.)

What if you can't find the policy that you are seeking?

If the policy that you are seeking is not included, look for a synonymous, more general, or more specific policy appropriate to the topic.

What if you can't find the policy and there is no such policy?

This probably means that the school system has not written policy in the particular area. However, if you are still interested in the particular area, please contact the superintendent who will explain the administration's interpretation of that particular area.

Dates

Wherever possible the original date of adoption/approval appears immediately following the policy.

Legal reference

Pertinent legal references are given to advise the reader the legal authority for the policy. References direct the reader to Title 22.1 of the Code of Virginia, the bylaws and regulations of the Board of Education of the Commonwealth of Virginia (referred to in this manual as "Regulations of the Virginia Board of Education"), and to some other federal laws, regulations and cases.

About Board Policies

Generally, the role of a School Board is to set policy and the role of the administration is to execute it. The basic distinction as set forth by the National School Boards Association is as follows:

Policies are principles adopted by a School Board to chart a course of action. They tell what is to be done and may also include why and how much. They are broad enough to indicate a line of action to be taken by the administration in dealing with day to day activities. They are narrow enough to give the administration clear guidance. Policies are binding.

Regulations are the detailed directions developed to put policy into practice. They are the administrative procedures. Superintendents may promulgate regulations without prior School Board approval unless board action is required by law or unless the board has specifically asked that certain types of regulations be given prior board approval. The Board shall be kept informed of all regulations issued by the administration. Regulations are binding.

Guidelines: set forth best practice and procedures for implementing policy.

The administration develops guidelines unless board action is required by law or unless the Board has specifically asked that certain types of guidelines be given prior Board approval. Guidelines are not binding, they are discretionary.

These distinctions are serviceable most of the time. They reflect sound theory of government and administration. But the real world does not always conform. For example, often the state and federal governments require School Boards to make detailed rules; and many regulations are established by law or by the Virginia Board of Education. Additionally, the public may demand that a School Board itself, not the administration, establish the specific rules and procedures in certain sensitive areas. Thus, the separation of policies and administrative regulations in this manual follows several rules of thumb in addition to "basic theory" as follows:

1. All edicts of the Virginia Board of Education are considered mandated Board policy;
2. When the School Board has written regulations required by law or in particularly sensitive areas and has incorporated them in policy, the entire statement is to be considered Board policy; and
3. When the School Board has adopted rules (bylaws) concerning its own operations, (for example, how to conduct meetings), these statements concerning operations of the Board appear as Board policy.

As long as the administration operates within the guidelines of policy adopted by a School Board, it may issue regulations without prior Board approval unless board action is required by law or unless the Board has specifically asked that certain types of regulations be given prior Board approval. The Board, of course, is kept informed of all school system regulations issued by the administration, and all are subject to Board review. Also, in the absence of policy thought necessary, it is the superintendent's responsibility to recommend policy to the School Board.

Is the manual complete?

No. The manual contains all the current written policies of the School Board. But there is a continual need to adopt new policies, and revise old ones. Additionally, state and federal laws and agency regulations change. No matter how well conceived and well developed, a policy manual can never be 100% complete and 100% up-to-date. Policy development is a continuing process.

School Board policies and regulations must be read and interpreted in the light of the federal and Virginia statutes and regulations. Wherever inconsistencies of interpretation arise, federal and Virginia law and regulations prevail.

It is the hope of the School Board that this collection of policies will make a greater harmony and efficiency possible in all areas of school operations. This will enable the Board to devote more time to its primary duty - the development of long-range policies and planning for the future of the school system.