

About Policy Development Services

What is the relationship between school board members and policy?

School board members are policy makers. School boards function as members of a governmental body in a representative democracy. Just as the laws of the legislature are in writing, the policies of a school board must be written.

What is the purpose of school board policy?

Board policies set a definite course of action and help to guide and determine present and future decisions. Board policy should tell administrators what to do without telling them how to do it. Policy statements are written in broad, general terms, but also narrow enough for clear, concise guidance.

Why does a school corporation need policies and a policy manual?

Local school corporations are governed through policies developed and adopted by the school board. Some policies are required by law and others by common sense. Some policy statements may be buried in board meeting minutes or other records. Your policy manual gathers all school corporation policies into one place which is easily accessible to board members, administrators, staff members, and members of the community.

What should an effective manual contain?

An effective manual should contain an index for each chapter, a table of contents, and all policies adopted by the school board. Administrative regulations implementing current policies may also be included in the policy manual. Student and employee handbooks include policies of the school board but should not be considered the board's policy manual.

What's the best way to arrange material?

Use a codification system. A flexible index should be utilized that can be expanded to cover all school governance situations without rearranging the policies with each new addition.

How is a policy manual kept up-to-date once it is assembled?

This can be done by constant monitoring of new legislation, administrative regulations, court decisions, negotiated contracts, and all actions of the board to determine whether they affect existing policies or require new policies. This is a time-consuming process. The Indiana School Boards Association Policy Development Service can provide professional help. Payment of ISBA annual dues entitles boards to use this service.

How can ISBA help?

The ISBA Policy Development Service provides sample policies on individual topics and legal review of current policies, creates and distributes sample policies on topics which the Indiana General Assembly or U.S. Congress mandates local school boards adopt, presents short clinic sessions on policy development to a local school board or educational groups, creates policies

on individual topics upon request, and reviews current policy manuals to determine the current needs of the school corporation's policy manual.

Can ISBA help to keep a local school board policy manual current?

Yes. The ISBA Policy Development Service can aid in monitoring your school corporation's need for new, revised or updated policies. ISBA also provides consultation services to determine if new policies developed by your board are legal and where they should be in the manual. ISBA publishes on a quarterly basis in the *ISBA Journal* an article containing information on board policy development and new policies required by law. It is entitled "Policy Advisor."

Who should be contacted to get more details?

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