

Policy Book Preamble

One of the most important responsibilities of a School Board is to develop policies to guide the direction of the school district. The School Board's role is to set policy, while the role of the Superintendent is to implement those policies and use them in the day-to-day management of the district. The Board of Directors for Seattle Public Schools (SPS) takes this responsibility seriously and believes:

- That policies should be high level and directional, giving the Superintendent, staff, families and members of the public a clear idea about the goals, mission and vision of the district;
- That policies are a key governance tool to be used in making decisions such as budget, evaluation of the Superintendent, and development of a strategic plan;
- That School Board policies can be used by the Superintendent to hold staff accountable; and
- That policies should be aspirational, but should also be implementable.

Beginning in September, 2009, the Board and senior staff evaluated the existing policy book and determined that many of the existing policies were incomplete, out of date, or otherwise unsatisfactory. A three-phase policy revision process was developed, and a consultant from the Washington State School Directors Association (WSSDA) was brought in for Phase I.

Phase I which began in March 2010, included renumbering the policies into the WSSDA system, updating legal references, filling any gaps in the policy book, and making smaller revisions to language. Phase II is a more extensive review and may include more substantive changes to existing policies. Phase III involves the regular upkeep and review of the policy book, typically on a three-year cycle, and will begin when Phase II is complete.

Phase II will begin after Phase I is complete, upon the adoption of the new Series 6000. In Phase II, the following process shall be followed:

- The Board's policy website shall clearly delineate which policies are being reviewed, the timeline for the review, the lead staff assigned to the policy, the committee that will review the policy, a link to the draft policy presented at a Board committee or work session, and how to send feedback on the policy.
- Phase II policies will proceed through the committee process, and will return to committee as many times as necessary for a majority of the committee to recommend that it proceed to introduction to the full Board. To make an edit to a proposed policy, two Board members must request the change.

- It is not expected that individual policies will require full Board work sessions, however, policies to be reviewed by a committee will be sent to the full Board and called out in the agenda in order to allow for Directors to offer feedback.
- The appropriate key partners, which may include SPS labor partners, members of the SPS Student Senate and the Seattle Council of Parent, Teacher, and Student Associations (SCPTSA), will be provided the draft policies presented to a committee, and the opportunity for them to participate in the committee discussion will be guided by the Community Partners Participation Protocol (Protocol) approved by the Executive Committee. Experts outside of those listed in the Protocol may participate at the discretion of the committee's chair.
- The action report presented to the Board for Introduction of a policy shall include a description of the proposed policy and any changes made to the current policy (if applicable). The action report will also reference any changes that are being proposed in order to comply with state or federal law.
- When proposing adoption of a reform policy, the policy will be introduced at one Board meeting, skip the next meeting, and scheduled for action at the third in order to allow more time for community and Board input. Routine policies will be introduced at one Board meeting and scheduled for action at the next meeting.
- There is an expectation that Directors will stay involved throughout each phase of the policy review process by reviewing materials and either attending committee meetings or providing input to both the committee chair and lead staff prior to introduction, if possible.