

BERKLEY SCHOOL DEPARTMENT

**EVALUATION PROCESS FOR REVIEW OF
SCHOOL COMMITTEE POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

In the monthly review of Berkley district School Committee policies, the following questions need to be addressed as part of the review process:

1. Does this policy and/or program discriminate on the basis of age, gender identity, race, color, sex, religion, national origin, sexual orientation or disability?
2. Does this policy and/or program limit educational access due to age, gender identity, race, color, sex, religion, national origin, sexual orientation or disability?

Approved: 3/18/02

Amended: February 10, 2020

INTRODUCTION TO OFFICIAL POLICY MANUAL

Among the most important and fundamental principles that guide school committee, superintendent-director, staff, and community relationships are: first, that the school committee is the formal, legally recognized body of lay citizens composed of individuals who represent the public of a school district. Second, though a school committee must be concerned with how the schools function, what the schools teach, and how much money is spent, it is generally agreed that its major responsibility is that of broad general policy-making under which the schools may effectively operate in pursuit of a program of quality education.

Not only must the school committee and the superintendent-director work together to determine the areas which involve policy, they must also agree on what policies should be and put those policies in writing. Equally important, written policies are based on a thorough understanding of the differences between the policy formation and the administrative management function. This understanding, if carefully observed, makes for a more business-like school committee operation and improves the school committee-superintendent relationship.

In a real sense, the school committee is the "legislative" policy-making body of the school district. It is empowered to make effective state educational plans in the school district even beyond the mandatory provisions of those plans. It is empowered to provide a program of education conditioned by interpretation of community needs. Finally, it has the responsibility to report to the district concerning how it has carried out its responsibilities.

The purpose of written policies is:

- To create an atmosphere in which the talents and the abilities of the individual staff members will be released to maximum efficiency in the performance of their respective jobs.
- To develop and maintain an organizational structure that will enable all employees to participate appropriately in the improvement of instruction.
- To place authority and responsibility as close to the point of actual operation as is consistent with the competence and duties of the personnel responsible.
- To provide for the personal welfare of all personnel, and to provide uniform and consistent procedures which will help attract and keep qualified new employees.
- To clarify school committee, superintendent-director, and employee relations.
- To keep the school district informed of the opportunities, accomplishments, problems, and needs of education in the school district.
- To orient new school committee members and employees to the structure and operation of the school district.

This policy manual can be viewed as an "operational guide" for school committee members. It contains:

- **Policies which serve as a guide for the superintendent-director.**
- **Selected sections of state law as well as guidelines provided by the Department of Education.**
- **Important provisions of legal agreements and negotiated contracts which are binding on the school committee.**
- **Introductory and transition pages which help create the internal organization of the manual.**
- **An open number system and table of contents within each series which will provide continuing flexibility (and future "capacity") over a period of years.**
- **A glossary of key educational terms used in Massachusetts.**
- **An index to assist the school committee member in finding all of the policies which pertain to a given topic or position.**

In summary, the Official Policy Manual provides the school committee with the important information which it needs to function effectively within a format and structure which permits continuing flexibility.