

CLUES TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN POLICIES AND REGULATIONS

I. Board Policy Defined

School board policies are ideas with power to set the direction for the school system to bring about prudent action by administrators, school employees and the board itself.

Policies are statements that set forth purposes and prescribe in general terms the organization and program of a school system.

A soundly constructed policy will . . . tell administrators enough so that they can get to work on the task in accordance with the board's wishes. . . .

[Policies] tell what is wanted. They may also indicate why and how much.

(From the National School Boards Association)

II. Administrative Regulations or Procedures Defined

Administrative regulations or procedures are directives prepared by the school administration that sets forth the mechanics for implementing board policy, telling how, by whom, where and when things are to be done.

(From the National School Boards Association)

III. Clues to Policy Status

1. Is the statement one of goals, or purposes?
2. Does the statement concern how the board, itself, operates?
3. Does the board assign responsibility or authority in the statement to the superintendent?
4. Does the statement establish the board's position on a topic of concern?
5. Does the statement establish a function that the board reserves to itself?
6. Would only the board have authority to make such a statement?
7. Generally, does the statement answer the questions what and why, rather than how?

III. Clues to Regulation Status

1. Does the statement set forth mechanics for implementing goals?
2. Does the statement list a number of specific do's and don'ts?
3. Does the statement list required step-by-step procedures?
4. Does the statement contain a large amount of detail?
5. Generally, does the statement answer the question how rather than what and why?