

THE
Davies-Brickell System
for developing

**SCHOOL BOARD POLICIES
ADMINISTRATIVE RULES
SCHOOL BOARD BYLAWS**

AN
INSTRUCTIONAL HANDBOOK



WHAT'S SPECIAL ABOUT THE DAVIES-BRICKELL SYSTEM?

The DAVIES-BRICKELL SYSTEM for formulating policies and administrative rules has been proven in more than a decade of testing in more than 3,000 systems in this country and abroad. The original edition of 1957 has been constantly improved through the trial-and-error of everyday experience by alert school boards, experienced administrative teaching staffs, and Croft consultants.

Here's what's special about the DBS:

Board policies and administrative rules are separately identified by placing them on different colored paper in loose-leaf volumes. Policies are on blue paper, administrative rules on yellow paper.

Board policies are separated from board bylaws. The policies, governing the overall operation of the school system and the board, have their own section in the loose-leaf volumes, as do the bylaws governing the internal activities of the board.

Changes are simple. Placing only one item on each loose-leaf sheet means that the central office can issue a quick correction to everyone in a day's time. Snapping in a new page takes only a moment, requires no writing, no scissors and paste, no collection of bulky amended supplements.

Volumes stay up to date and can be trusted. The user can always read with confidence because he is sure of two points:

- 1) Changes in policies and rules will have been issued in writing.
- 2) Changes will be in their place in the volumes—not filed somewhere else with a stack of special bulletins.

Multiple revisions are never necessary. Since the contents of the volume change as policies and rules change, the need for numerous amendments at one time never arises. You don't need a committee to find out periodically what is wrong with the manual. One person can keep track and make immediate corrections.

It's extremely flexible. Any page on any topic can be added to or taken from any section at any time without affecting any other page. Shifting pages is just as easy. Two pages on a topic

THE BASIC THREE-WORD VOCABULARY: POLICY, RULE, BYLAW

This little three-word vocabulary will help you distinguish clearly between the board's job as policy maker and the superintendent's job as rule maker. The difference between a *policy* and a *rule* is the difference between the board's job and the superintendent's job. Although one sometimes shades into another, life is simpler and happier for boards and superintendent's who can tell them apart.

A *bylaw* is still something else. Its special meaning becomes clearer after we understand the first two. So let's take them one at a time—policy, rule, bylaw.

POLICY *A policy is a guide for discretionary action.*

It must give clear guidance to the superintendent while leaving room for him to use his own discretion in making decisions—room for him to maneuver as necessary in meeting the circumstances of individual cases. Policy adopting is the board's job. Board policies give the superintendent the sense of direction he needs without neutralizing the professional skills he is paid to exercise.

Suppose board members have been hearing remarks around town about teachers not being on hand before or after school to help individual children who are having trouble with their homework. The board discusses the matter with the superintendent, who talks it over with the principals and finds there is no consistent pattern. The board decides to express the wishes of the townspeople on the matter. It might adopt this policy statement:

Teachers shall be available to assist individual children outside of the regular school day.

Or it might go further:

All instructional personnel except those supervising student group activities shall be available to assist individual children both before and after scheduled class hours.

Or even further:

All instructional personnel shall be regularly available to assist individual children for a substantial amount of time both before and after scheduled class hours.

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But that is far enough.

Each of these statements is "a guide for discretionary action." The intention of each is clear, but each leaves leeway for the superintendent to decide exactly what to require of the teachers.

RULE A rule specifies a required action.

It tells exactly what is to be done, and it usually tells who is to do it and when. It leaves little room for individual judgment.

Rule making is the administrator's job. It is one of the methods he uses to carry out the board's intentions as expressed in policies. The superintendent makes rules when he wants to leave little or no room for individual deviations, when he wants to be positive that certain things will be done by certain people at certain times. A *rule* is an *administrative regulation*.

Suppose the superintendent were making rules to carry out the foregoing policy statements. He might, after conferring with the principals and the teachers, make this rule:

All classroom teachers should be in their rooms 15 minutes before classes begin each morning to help students who need special attention.

Or this one:

All classroom teachers should be in their rooms 15 minutes before classes begin each morning and 15 minutes after classes end each afternoon to help students who need special attention. All special teachers who work directly with children should follow the same plan in the buildings in which they are scheduled for the day.

Teachers who coach or who sponsor other student activities are not expected to be available to help individual students while those sponsored activities are in session.

Or even this one:

All classroom teachers should be in their rooms 15 minutes before classes begin each morning and 15 minutes after classes end each afternoon to help students who need individual attention. All special teachers who work directly with children should follow the same plan in the buildings in which they are scheduled for the day.

Student group activities should not be scheduled during these times since teachers will not be available to supervise them.

Teachers should inform students and principals should inform parents of the hours during which teachers will be on duty to help individual students.

BYLAW A bylaw is a rule governing the board's internal operations.

Like any other rule it specifies required actions, leaving little room for individual judgment. Good bylaws build stability into board operations, prevent the excitement of a moment from pushing the board into behavior it may later regret.

Suppose the board has decided that it doesn't wish to divide

itself into standing committees. It still needs an occasional temporary committee to do a short-run job that can't be handled by the superintendent. To provide for this, but to prevent the self-perpetuation of "temporary" committees, the board might adopt the following bylaw:

No standing committee shall be appointed to perform any of the board's functions. Temporary committees shall be appointed by the chairman only upon official authorization of the board. The chairman shall specify the functions of all such committees, shall regularly request reports to the board concerning their activities, and shall dissolve them when their specified functions have been completed.

Again, suppose the board wants to make certain it spends a fair share of its time studying the instructional program. Suppose also that it knows how often last-minute emergencies and business matters get piled in with the agenda of such meetings. It might adopt the following bylaw:

The board shall meet at 8:00 p.m. on the first Tuesday of each month to handle business affairs and matters requiring board action.

The board shall meet at 8:00 p.m. on the third Tuesday of each month to receive and to discuss information concerning the instructional program. No official action on any matter shall be taken at such meetings.

Or perhaps the board has just bought a check-signing machine and wishes to tell the district clerk exactly how to record the number of checks signed:

The district clerk shall make all entries in the Signature Control Register. He shall enter in the second column the number of the first check signed and in the third column the number of the last check signed. He shall mark through all blank spaces on any line in the Signature Control Register before initialing that line. In making corrections he shall cross out any incorrect items, making no erasures, and both he and one of the board's signatories shall initial the mark used in making any correction.

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COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT POLICY MAKING

We have discussed these ideas of policy making with board members and superintendents at workshops in several states. They have raised certain questions time after time during our conversations. We repeat below answers to the questions that have been most commonly asked.

1. What is a Policy?

A policy is *a guide for discretionary action*. It must be narrow enough to give clear guidance but broad enough to leave room for administrative discretion. Adopting policy statements is the job of the board.

2. What is a Rule?

A rule is *a specification of a required action*. It states exactly what must be done and often tells who is to do it and when. Making rules is the job of the administrator. The board should *not* make rules unless it has no other choice because it is obligated to do so by *law* or because the superintendent cannot take the risk of arousing strong local feelings toward himself.

3. What is a Bylaw?

A bylaw is *a rule for the board's internal operation*. Bylaws set strict limits on those board operations that should be firm and stable—meeting places, size of quorum, signatories, duties of officers, and so on.

4. Why Draw Sharp Lines Between Board Work and Administrative Work?

Some people feel that a sharp line will split the board from the superintendent. Actually, the best board-superintendent relationships exist where the dividing line is best understood and followed. The board and the superintendent each have a unique, irreplaceable function in creating good schools. It takes all the talent of each to do his own part well.

5. What is the Biggest Help the Board Gets from Policy Making?

More control.

6. What Is the Biggest Help the Superintendent Gets from Policy Making?

More freedom.

7. How Long Will It Take to Write Our Policies?

Forever. Policy making is a *process*, not a project. The number of hours the board spends formulating policies each month will be cut down as more and more statements are adopted, but you will never be *finished*.

8. How Can We Take Time Off from Current Business to Make Policies?

It is not "time off." Policy making is your business. You start making one decision where you once made twenty. You start getting home before midnight. You begin to have fewer special meetings and "emergencies." And you begin to look around for new jobs as your swollen burden of routine business shrinks to its proper size—about an hour or two each month.

9. Who Recommends Policies?

The superintendent, usually. Increasingly they are hammered out in employee contract negotiations. Once in a while a citizens committee, the PTA, a staff committee, or a board member will suggest a policy. But usually they will work through the superintendent. One reason for working through the superintendent is that the board will not want to adopt a policy without his reaction and advice. So time is often saved if he can help groups formulate the policies they wish the board to consider.

10. Who Writes Policies?

A member of the school staff, preferably an administrator. Or a member of a negotiating group. Board members should be saved for more important work; other citizens will lack the necessary background for the job. Another point: *Writing* is a one-man job. A "committee of writers" is a contradiction in terms. Choose one person.

11. Are Rules Needed to Carry Out Every Policy?

No. Some policies can be translated directly into daily administrative decisions. Some superintendents feel that clear rules are exceedingly helpful in most school activities, while other superintendents like to make as few rules as possible.

12. Can Rules Be Made Where There Is No Board Policy?

Yes. This will happen often. If it develops that the board does not like the superintendent's rules on some matter, it can formulate a policy to guide him in amending those rules.

13. When Should the Board Make Rules?

Almost never. The board should hammer our *policies* to guide the administrators, but should not make the rules, unless:

- 1) State law requires the board to make rules, or
- 2) The matter is so important the administrator *cannot*

bear the responsibility alone and needs specific board action on each small detail of the rules.

14. Does the Board Adopt the Superintendent's Rules?

No. The board gets copies like everyone else. If the board does not think his rules will carry out the policy they were designed to carry out, it tells him so. It may clarify the *intention* of its policy, even rewrite it if necessary, but it does not amend the superintendent's rules. *He* can amend them, or try them out for a while if he chooses. But making rules is part of his administrative job, and he must be free to administer as he sees fit.

15. Is the Law Included?

No, not "included." Legal sources are *referred to* in footnotes but are never intermixed with local policies or rules.

16. Who Gets the Policies, Rules, and Bylaws?

Policies, rules, and bylaws go at least to board members, the clerk, administrators. Additional copies should be available to all employees and interested citizens.

17. Can Employee Contract Provisions Be Included?

Yes. Every contract item can be coded with specific reference to the contract.

A FEW WORDS ABOUT OUR POLICIES AND RULES

In order to operate a school system, it is essential to have policy. It is also essential to have rules and regulations to carry out and administer that policy.

Policy adoption is the function of the board. Policy development is a cooperative function variously involving board, administration, employees, employee organizations, and interested members of the community. A policy is a guide for discretionary action. It expresses the intent of the board concerning what it expects of those to whom it gives authority. Policy statements guide the board in making decisions and indicate certain practices the administration will follow.

Rules and regulations are needed to implement, interpret, and carry out the board's intentions as expressed in policies. Rules and regulations specify a required action or describe administrative arrangements. They tell exactly what is to be done and usually tell who is to do it and when. Formulating rules and regulations is the job of the superintendent and his staff.

Bylaws are rules that govern the board's internal actions. They specify meeting requirements, size of quorum, board organization and related matters of board procedure. Bylaws appear as a section of the policy book.

Policies and bylaws are printed on blue paper. Rules and regulations are printed on yellow paper. Both are placed in loose-leaf binders. Each administrative and supervisory office will have a copy. Several copies will be available in all schools for handy reference of all personnel.

Policies and rules and regulations are coded according to the DBS table of contents. Anyone wishing to find a policy or a rule may easily locate it as soon as he becomes familiar with the table of contents.

The statements in this book do not provide answers for all questions which will arise in the operation of the schools. Policies and regulations will be added as needed. Statements already adopted or approved are subject to continuous revision and updating as conditions, statutes, court decisions, employee agreements change.

If proper attention is given to carrying out our policies, personnel will be given more freedom and less restriction. By the development of adequate policy, operational decisions can be made effectively at the school or department level.