INTRODUCTION
POLICY MANUAL

Bethel School District Number I-003

Pottawatomie County, Oklahoma

The Bethel School District operates according to policies developed and established by the board of education. The board, which represents the local community, develops policies after careful study and deliberation, and the school administration implements those policies through regulations and procedures. The board will appraise the effects of its policies and make revisions as necessary.

This manual contains the policies, regulations, procedures, and exhibits which govern the Bethel School System. Policy development in a modern, progressive school system is a dynamic, on-going process. New problems, issues, and needs give rise to the continuing need to develop new policies or to revise existing ones. To facilitate periodic updating, the board uses a looseleaf format for the manual.

Each person, office, or agency should update its copy of this manual as new policies are distributed.

Manual Organization

This manual is organized according to the classification system used by the Oklahoma State School Boards Association. The system provides an efficient means of coding, filing, and finding policies. There are seven major classifications, each bearing an alphabetical code:

A - School District
B - School Board Operations
C - Business and Support Services
D - Personnel
E - Instruction
F - Students
G - Community Relations

Subclassification under each heading is based on logical sequence and alphabetical subcoding. A policy statement is first filed according to its major classification. Personnel policies are found in the D Section, student policies in the F Section, etc. Policies are then subcoded within various sections under the major classification. For example, FM is Student Activities, FMA is Extracurricular Activities, and FMAC is Cheerleaders and Spirit Groups. For an example of the subcoding system, examine the pages immediately following the tab for Section A - School District.

The pages that follow the tabs for each major section present the classification for that section and serves as a table of contents.

How to find Policy

There are two ways to find a policy in this manual:

> Consider where the policy would be filed among the seven major classifications. Turn to the table of contents for that section. Glance down the listing until you find the term that most closely fits the topic you are seeking. Use the code letters given for that term to locate the page that will appear in alphabetical order by code within that particular section. All pages of the manual are coded in the upper right corner.

or

> Turn to the cross-reference index, which is an alphabetical index of many terms used in education. Find your topic as in any index, find the code, and use the code to locate the correct page in the manual. The cross-reference lists more than 1800 terms, but no index of useful size could include every possibility. If the term you want is not included, use a synonym or a more general or specific term appropriate to that topic. If you can find the term and code but there is no policy, the school system probably has no written policy for that particular topic. All terms used in the codification system appear in the sectional tables of contents and the cross-reference to accommodate the coding, insertion, and finding of policies that may be adopted later. There is one other possibility. A brief statement related to the policy that you are seeking may be incorporated in a "superior" policy that covers that general area. This "superior" policy will be coded under a more general term. To find it, read up the classification system.

Legal References

Pertinent legal references are given to inform the reader as to where applicable statutes relating to a particular policy may be found. Unless otherwise noted, all legal references direct the reader to the Oklahoma Statutes Annotated. It is important to mention that other laws and court decisions may be applicable to a particular policy.

Cross-References

Certain policies are related to other policies. Cross-references may follow some statements to help the reader find all the related information regarding that particular topic.

Board Policies

Generally, the role of a board of education is to set policy, and the role of the school administration is to execute and support that policy. Following is the basic distinction between policies and regulations as set forth by the National School Boards Association:

> Policies are principles adopted by the board to chart a course of action. They tell what is what and may include why and how much. They are broad enough to indicate a line of action to be taken by the administration in meeting a number of day-to-day problems; they need to be narrow enough to give the administration clear guidance.
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> Regulations are the detailed directions developed by the administration to put the board's policy into practice. They tell how, by whom, where, and when things are to be done. Often the state and federal governments require school boards to make detailed rules. Many regulations are established by law and the Oklahoma State Board of Education. Additionally, the public may demand that the board, not the administration, establish specific rules and procedures in certain sensitive areas. Therefore, for the purposes of this manual, all edicts of the state (even though regulations) are considered to be mandated board policy. Where the board has written regulations required by law or in particularly sensitive areas, and has incorporated them into policy, the entire statement is presented as policy.

This manual contains all the current written policies of the Bethel Board of Education. The need for reducing policies to writing, adopting new policies, and revising old ones is apparent. Further, state law and state school board regulations may change. Therefore, a policy manual can never be totally complete and current. Policy development is a continuing process. From time to time, new policies will be developed, coded according to the classification system, and issued for insertion in this manual.

Order of Precedence

Board policies must be read and interpreted in the light of appropriate Federal and Oklahoma Statutes and regulations and state school board regulations. If, and where, inconsistencies of interpretation arise, the law and state regulations prevail.

Acknowledgment

The undersigned members of the Bethel Board of Education hereby acknowledge an agreement between the board of education and the Oklahoma State School Boards Association. The OSSBA has agreed to develop a manual of school policies for the board of education on a contractual basis with the understanding that in adopting the school policies, said board releases the OSSBA from any and all liability that might arise as a result of the implementation of said policies.

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