



2019
Annual Conference
Let Policy Answer Your Questions
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 MISSISSIPPI SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION
We are here for you!



POLICY

- What is it?

And

- Why is it important?



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What Is Policy?

- Policy is a clear statement that sets forth the purpose and prescribes the organization and programs of the school district.
- Policy is the voice of the board and speaks even when the board is not convened. It anchors the school district by providing consistency and stability.
- Think of policy as a rulebook.

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Why Is Policy Important?

The local school board's responsibilities shall pertain to matters of setting policy and shall not interfere in the day-to-day operations of the school district that include, but are not limited to, such duties as those relating to personnel and management decisions. Failure to comply shall result in the immediate downgrade of the district's accreditation status to Probation or Withdrawn. (MPSAS Process Standard 1)

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Why Is Policy Important?

Boards that do not understand policy and how to use policy as a governance tool often end up with a fragmented focus that easily leads to dysfunctional board operation and possible board/superintendent relationship problems.

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Why Is Policy Important?

Effective policy:

- Informs the public
- Ensures legal compliance
- Provides stability and continuity
- Aids orientation of new board members and staff

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Why Is Policy Important?

- Policy should connect to everything you do as a board member.
- School boards are required to maintain current, updated policies and to govern in compliance with these policies.
- School boards who do not comply with their board policies or do not have updated policies will risk having their accreditation adversely affected.

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THE BOARD'S JOB

The board's job is to make sure the right systems are in place and functioning well, but they are not a part of those systems.



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THE BOARD'S JOB

Boards establish, change, or abolish those systems through policy, and they monitor to ensure that policy is implemented.



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THE BOARD'S JOB

- The board uses policy to establish criteria for how problems will be solved.
- The power of the board rests in its role of governance through policy.

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GOVERNING BY POLICY

To "govern by policy" means the school board has adopted written policy that defines the work of the school board, the superintendent, and the staff.



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GOVERNING BY POLICY

- Policy is the tool that provides the board the power to allow or require action.
- Policy enables the board to govern schools effectively.
- Many problems a board faces can be prevented or resolved by the deletion of a poor policy or the addition of a good policy.

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GOVERNING BY POLICY

When a decision by the superintendent or staff is challenged, the board should first ask itself:

- “Did the decision or action reflect a reasonable interpretation of our policy?”

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GOVERNING BY POLICY

BBC – Governance Standards

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Social Media

- Defined as websites and applications that enable users to participate in social networking.
- A majority of both students and staff now use some sort of social media platform.



- A good policy needs to be in place to avoid potential risks with social media.

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Social Media

What would a good policy contain?

1. Relationship Restrictions

- Employees, faculty, and staff shall not friend students on social media.
- Employees shall not post anything that might result in the disruption of the classroom.
- Communications with parents and students should NOT happen over any social media platform.

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Social Media

2. Security Requirements

- Employees are solely responsible for the content they post on social media.
- Employees are solely responsible for the security of their account at all times.
- Employees are forbidden from acting as the school district while on social media.

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Social Media

3. Violations

- Violation can lead to disciplinary actions, including termination.
- Fraternalization over the internet is in violation of the Code of Ethics.

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Social Media

GABBA – Social Media Websites

GABB – Staff/Student Non-Fraternization

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Board Member Conflict of Interest

• A conflict of interest is when a person derives personal benefit from actions or decisions made in their official capacity.



• Any effort by a board member to realize personal gain through official conduct is a violation of the trust bestowed upon school board members.

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Board Member Conflict of Interest

What would a good policy contain?

1. Legal Requirements

• No public servant shall use his official position to obtain, or attempt to obtain, pecuniary benefit for himself, any relative, or any business with which he is associated other than provided by law. Miss Code 25-4-105.

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Board Member Conflict of Interest

• The board of trustees of any school district shall be authorized to contract with a teacher or school district employee to perform extra work without being in violation of the law.
• The board of trustees shall make a case by case determination of the possible conflicts of interest arising from any extra work contracts and such decision by the board shall be final. Miss Code 37-11-27.

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Board Member Conflict of Interest

2. Additional Information

• A board member’s spouse cannot be employed by the district. If already employed when the board member is elected, that spouse may finish out the school year.
• A child/relative of a board member may be employed in the district but must be totally financially independent. The board member would need to recuse himself/herself from issues involving that relative.

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Board Member Conflict of Interest

BHA – Board Member Conflict

BH – Code of Ethics for School Board Members

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Weapons Policy

- A school’s duty is to educate its students, however, equally important is those students’ safety.
- A detailed weapons policy needs to be in place not only for safety, but to protect those students who may not realize they are bringing a weapon to campus.



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Weapons Policy

What would a good policy contain?

1. Possession of a Weapon

- No student, employee, or visitor may possess a weapon on school grounds or at any school related function.
- A firearm may not be possessed or carried within a vehicle brought onto school property.

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Weapons Policy

2. Definition of Prohibited Weapons

- Weapons can take many forms other than knives and firearms.
- Other forms can include: razors, explosives, slingshots, blackjack, air/bb gun, and any other sharp objects.

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Weapons Policy

3. Look-Alike Weapons

- Look-alike weapons can cause issues due to their resemblance to their actual counterparts.
- A good policy point would be to state that no weapons, whether real or look-alike, shall be used in any school sponsored event or school sanctioned ceremony.

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Weapons Policy

4. Permitted Uses

- Weapons may be permitted on campus for: 1) law enforcement officers and other governmental officials, 2) JROTC programs, 3) replica firearms by a ceremonial color guard, and 4) approved safety class.

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Weapons Policy

5. Penalties for Violations

- Students will be suspended or expelled for violations.
- Employees shall be subject to disciplinary actions.
- Visitors will be asked to leave the campus.
- Any person may be subject to criminal action provided by law.

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Weapons Policy

JCDAE – Weapons

JCDAE(2) – Possession of Weapons on School Property

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Automobile/Parking Lot Use

- Parking for students can cause different problems such as lack of parking space, how parking spaces are handed out, and unwanted activities occurring in the parking lots.
- All of this and more needs to be taken into consideration while creating a parking policy for the school district.



PARKING

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Automobile/Parking Lot Use

What would a good policy contain?

1. School Purposes Only
 - District parking facilities are not public parking and are to be used for school purposes only.
 - Students shall not sit in or upon vehicles or loiter in parking lots on school campus.

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Automobile/Parking Lot Use

2. Safety
 - The district shall not assume any responsibility for damage to vehicles; therefore, students shall be responsible for locking their vehicles.
 - Student automobiles are subject to administrative searches.
 - Students shall be responsible for all prohibited objects such as weapons, drugs, etc. that are found in his/her vehicle.

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Automobile/Parking Lot Use

3. Violation
 - Parking on school property is a courtesy offered to students and others by the school board.
 - Failure to abide by vehicle regulations may result in the loss of the right to bring a vehicle to school or other disciplinary actions.

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Automobile/Parking Lot Use

JGFF – Automobile Use

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Telephonic Meetings/Executive Session

- Under Miss Code 25-41-5, a public body may conduct any meeting through teleconference or video means.



- Likewise, a board member may participate in all aspects of public meetings via telephonic methods.

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Telephonic Meetings/Executive Session

What would a good policy contain?

1. Open Meetings Law

- All official meetings of the board shall be open to the public at all times unless declared an executive session.
- If the board finds it's necessary to conduct a meeting through teleconference or video means, the board shall adhere to the Open Meetings Law.

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Telephonic Meetings/Executive Session

2. Notice of Option

- Notice is hereby provided that any school board member may participate in any school board meeting by teleconference or video means.
- Votes must be taken in a manner that is clearly audible or visible to all members present.

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Telephonic Meetings/Executive Session

3. Executive Session

- Any member of a public body may participate in all aspects of a public meeting via telephonic means including executive session.
- Once in executive session, any location that is public must be cleared. AG Opinion #2013-00516.

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Telephonic Meetings/Executive Session

BCAD – Teleconference or Video Board Meeting

BCBK – Executive Sessions

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Homeschooled Children and Extracurriculars

- Homeschooling has become an alternative avenue for education for many children in Mississippi. School districts have an option regarding participation in extracurricular activities.



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Homeschooled Children and Extracurriculars

What would a good policy contain?

1. Whether a school district allows participation.
 - There is no law in Mississippi mandating that homeschool children are allowed to participate in a school district's extracurricular activities.
 - The district will need to specify in policy whether they do or do not allow participation.

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Homeschooled Children and Extracurriculars

MO – Relations with Home Schooled Students/Programs

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Early Graduation

- Early graduation is a process in which a student has completed all of his/her academic requirements in less than a traditional four-year program.
- If a school district allows early graduation, there needs to be a policy in place with the necessary requirements.



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Early Graduation

What would a good policy contain?

1. Number of Carnegie units and other requirements
 - Student must complete number of required Carnegie units.
 - Student must complete 8 semesters worth of work.
 - Any other standards required by the district.

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Early Graduation

2. Submit a Request
 - The student must submit an early graduation request to the principal at least 1 semester in advance of the beginning of the school year in which the student wishes to graduate.
3. Termination
 - A student's plan may be terminated at any time due to academic, behavioral, or attendance issues.

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Early Graduation

IFG – Early Graduation

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Public Comments at Board Meetings

- The public has the right to attend board meetings; however, there is no inherent right to speak.
- The board may allow the public to speak.



- A policy needs to be established to set expectations and regulate the conduct of board meetings.

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Public Comments at Board Meetings

What would a good policy contain?

1. Whether Public Comments are allowed.
 - (If not allowed) No public comments will be allowed during board meetings. OR
 - (If allowed) In order to allow public input at board meetings, the board authorizes a “Public Comments” item on its agenda for its regular board meetings.

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Public Comments at Board Meetings

2. Limitations for Comments

- The school board will allow 30 minutes on the agenda for public comments.
- Public comments are reserved for the first ten people signing the roster who will get 3 minutes each.
- The board will not debate any issues raised through public comments except to decide if the issue needs further consideration.

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Public Comments at Board Meetings

3. Parameters

- The public is reminded that issues protected by privacy laws cannot be discussed in open session and will be ruled out of order.
- Anyone who may be causing a disturbance during the meeting shall be asked to leave.

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Public Comments at Board Meetings

BCAF – Public Comments at Board Meetings

BCBI – Public Participation at Board Meetings

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Vaping

- Electronic cigarettes have recently surpassed conventional cigarettes as the most commonly used tobacco product among youths.
- Restrictions on e-cigarettes need to be included in standing tobacco policies or a new policy should be created.



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Vaping

What would a good policy contain?

1. Definitions

- Electronic Cigarette – An electronic product or device that produces a vapor that delivers nicotine or other substances to the person inhaling from the device to simulate smoking, and is likely to be offered to, or purchased by, consumers as an electronic cigarette, electronic cigar, electronic cigarillo, or electronic pipe.

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Vaping

- Vaping – The act of inhaling and exhaling the aerosol (often called vapor) produced by an electronic cigarette or similar battery-powered device.

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Vaping

2. Prohibition

- The MSBA Sample Board of Education recognizes that the use of electronic cigarettes is detrimental to the health and safety of students, staff, and visitors and is therefore prohibited at all times.
- This policy applies to all students, staff, parents, and any visitors while on school grounds or any school-related activity or school-sponsored event.

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Vaping

3. Confiscation

- When there is evidence that a student is in possession of any tobacco products or tobacco paraphernalia, administrators or other designated staff may confiscate such items.
- Anyone found in violation of this policy shall be disciplined in accordance with policy ____.

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Vaping

A current MSBA sample policy is under development.

Included in another policy: GBRM – Smoking and Other Uses of Tobacco

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Board Member Visits to Schools

- Each school board member has a duty to spend one full day in one or more of the District's schools. Miss Code 37-7-306.
- However, board members should not be in the school on a daily basis as it can be disruptive to students and the administration.



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Board Member Visits to Schools

What would a good policy contain?

1. Legal Requirements

- Each board member shall spend one full day in one or more of the District's schools. Miss Code 37-7-306.
- The board, in their discretion, may as a body periodically visit schools in the district. Miss Code 37-7-301.

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Board Member Visits to Schools

2. Visitation Options

Each board member may choose one of the following options:

- Spend 1 seven-hour day visiting any one, or combination of school(s) in the district.
- Spend 3 1/2 hours on two separate days visiting any school or schools.
- Spend 7 hours visiting any one, or combination of schools over several days.

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Board Member Visits to Schools

3. Record Keeping

- The superintendent shall annually provide each school board member with a board member visitation form which shall be filled out and returned before June 30th of each year.

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Board Member Visits to Schools

BBBCB – School Board Member Visits to Schools

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Displaying Political Materials on Campus

- An employee of a school district does not lose their right to campaign for office; however, the school should not be involved.
- A policy should be in place to address the do's and don'ts of political activity on school campuses.



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Displaying Political Materials on Campus

What would a good policy contain?

1. Prohibitions

- Employee shall not involve the district in political campaigns.
- Employees shall not poll pupils, circulate or display campaign materials on campus, solicit campaign workers, use school time for campaign purposes, cannot use position to further political race, etc.

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Displaying Political Materials on Campus

2. Allowed Political Activity

- Any appropriate activity that encourages students to become involved in the political process.
- Political figures may still be resource persons in the classroom in appropriate settings.
- Community political activities on election days for polling places.

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Displaying Political Materials on Campus

3. Notification of Candidacy

- An employee intending to campaign for office shall notify the school board at the earliest possible moment.
- The board must then determine if the employee's activities are compatible with the time requirements for fulfilling his/her job with the district.

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Displaying Political Materials on Campus

GAHB – Political Activity of Staff Members

KJ – Advertising in the Schools

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Accepting Gifts to School Districts

- Gifts, whether to the school district itself or individual teachers, can cause issues if not handled correctly.
- These donations must be handled appropriately and go through proper channels.
- A good policy can preempt any issues regarding gifts and donations.



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Accepting Gifts to School Districts

What would a good policy contain?

1. Gift Approval Provisions

- It must be compatible with the district's goals, objectives, and standards.
- It must have a legitimate school use.
- It must not incur negative responsibility or cost to the district.
- Etc.

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Accepting Gifts to School Districts

2. Recording the Gift

- The minutes shall reflect the contributor, amount, and purpose of the donation.
- All monies shall be placed into the school's activity fund and deposited in that bank account.
- All donations and contributions shall be formally submitted to the Board for acknowledgement and acceptance.

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Accepting Gifts to School Districts

3. Crowdfunding (GoFundMe, Donors Choose)

- Establish guidelines for employees using crowdfunding methods.
- Preference for donation of supplies over money.
- Strict requirements on employees when using these methods such as pre-approval, recording, items remain property of district, and personal responsibility.

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Accepting Gifts to School Districts

DFK – Gifts and Bequests to School Districts (Donations)

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Month	Policy Section	IN CONJUNCTION WITH
July	G. Personnel 1/3 of Section	Professional Development Plan Travel Requests
August	F. Facilities	District Security/Crisis Plan
September	I. Curriculum & Instruction	Test Scores / Curriculum Review Goals Review
October	E. Business Management A. School District Organization	Goal Setting - District Operations Review Transportation, Facilities.
November	K. General Public Relations, L. Organization Relations M. Education Agency Relations	Community /Engagement Review Goals Review
December	B. School Board Operations	After School Board Elections
January	C. General School Administration	Superintendent & Administrator's Contract Renewals
February	G. Personnel 1/3 of Section	Employee Evaluations Employee Recommendations
March	J. Students	Approval of Student Handbook
April	J. Students 1/2 Section	Review of Discipline and Attendance Reports
May	D. Finances	Budget Preparation Goals Review
June	G. Personnel 1/3 of Section	Approval of Employee Handbook

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How Do I Find Sample Policies?

1. First, navigate to your policy website. Ex: magnolia.msbaonline.org
2. Next, click “Login” in the top right corner and enter your login information. (If you do not remember your information, contact MSBA.)
3. Next, hover over the “District Policies” tab and click on “Sample Policies” from the drop down menu.

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4. From the screen below, you can search all MSBA Sample policies as well as other district's policies.

© Sample Policies

IMPORTANT: This page will search ALL Policies for all districts. Do not click the SEARCH button without entering some criteria, or you may experience a very long delay in response.

Data Field Search Value

District:

Section:

Policy Code:

Revision Date: -

Adopted Date: -

Last Updated: -

Policy:

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5. From this menu, simply select the district, section, and policy code that you wish to search. Not every box has to be selected. The more boxes selected, the more refined your search will be.

CAUTION: Do not click the search button without entering at least one search criteria or you will experience a very long delay in response.

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Questions?



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“ To ensure quality school board performance through Advocacy, Technical Assistance, Leadership Training, and Information Dissemination ”