

**SCHOOL COMMITTEE POLICY MANUAL  
WARE PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
WARE, MASSACHUSETTS 01082**

This manual contains the official policies of the School Committee (*reproduced on white paper*); the major regulations intended to implement policy (*yellow paper*) and certain reference or “exhibit” documents that relate to policies and/or regulations (*green paper*).

Policy development in a modern, forward-looking school system is a dynamic, ongoing process. New problems, issues and needs give rise to the continuing need to develop new policies or to revise existing ones. This is why the School Committee employs the loose-leaf format for this manual. It is easy to keep up to date.

Each person, holding a copy of this manual, should make a diligent effort to keep it up to date as new policies, regulations and exhibits are distributed by the central office.

**How to use this Manual**

The school department operates according to policies established by the School Committee. The School Committee then appraises the effects of its policies and makes revisions as necessary.

In the interest of harmony, efficiency, uniformity of interpretation, coordination of effort, and in fairness to all concerned, the School Committee makes this manual available to all who are affected by its policies.

*Please Note:* All copies of this manual are the property of the Ware Public School System.

## INTRODUCTION

### How the Manual is Organized

The manual is organized in accordance with the classification system developed by the National School Boards Association. This system provides an efficient means of coding, filing and finding policies and other documents. There are 12 major classifications each assigned an alphabetical code:

- A.....FOUNDATIONS AND BASIC COMMITMENTS
- B.....SCHOOL BOARD GOVERNANCE AND OPERATIONS
- C.....GENERAL SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION
- D.....FISCAL MANAGEMENT
- E.....SUPPORT SERVICES
- F.....FACILITIES DEVELOPMENT
- G.....PERSONNEL
- H.....NEGOTIATIONS
- I.....INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM
- J.....STUDENTS
- K.....SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS
- L.....EDUCATION AGENCY RELATIONS

Sub classification under each heading is based on logical sequence and alphabetical sub coding. For an example of the sub coding system, examine the white pages immediately following the tab for Section A--Foundations and Basic Commitments.

The white pages that follow the tab for each major section present the classification system, section by section, and serve as the tables of contents for each section or “chapter” of this manual.

### How to Find a Policy

Consider where the policy statement (or regulation) would be filed among the 12 major classifications. Turn to the Table of Contents for that section and 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 policy you need. The pages are arranged in alphabetical order by code within the section. All pages are coded in their upper right-hand corner.

### Using the Signs and Symbols

Various signs and symbols are used in connection with the classification system. They are for your use in locating and/or in examining policies. Included are the following:

Also: Certain policies bear two codes in the upper right-hand corner. The second is in parentheses and is preceded by ‘Also’. This means the *identical* policy (or regulation) is filed under both codes.

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- R This symbol following a code indicates that the statement is a *regulation*, not a School Committee policy. The statement appears on a yellow, rather than a white sheet.
- E Exhibit. This symbol following a code indicates that the statement is a *reference* document such as a calendar, application form, etc., rather than a policy. Such statements are printed on green paper.
- DATES: Where possible, the original date of adoption/issuance appears immediately following each policy or regulation. In other instances, an approximate adoption or re-approval date is used.
- LEGAL REF.: Pertinent legal references are given to inform the reader where in state law he/she may find the statutes which relate to a specific policy. Unless otherwise noted, all references direct the reader to the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (cited as M.G.L., Chapter and Section).
- CONTRACT REF.: Agreements reached through negotiations with recognized staff organizations have the full force of School Committee policy. References to negotiated agreements are provided, as appropriate, to direct the reader to statements in these agreements.
- CROSS REF.: Certain policies and regulations relate to others. Cross-references are provided following many statements to help the reader find all of the related information he/she needs.

### **About Policies and Regulations**

Generally, the role of a School Committee is to set policy and the role of the administration is to implement it through regulations. Written policies are the chief means by which a School Committee governs the schools, and regulations are one of the means by which the School Committee's policies are implemented. The following definitions provide a distinction between these two types of statements:

*POLICIES* are principles adopted by the School Committee to chart a course of action. 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 while being narrow enough to give the administration clear guidance.

*REGULATIONS* are detailed directions usually developed by the administration to put policy into practice.

These definitions are serviceable some of the time. They reflect sound theory of governance and administration; but policies and regulations are obviously closely related. They can and do merge, making it difficult to ascertain where one begins and the other ends. For example:

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- State and federal governments require School Committees to make or officially approve detailed regulations and procedures in certain areas.
- A School Committee signs contracts and agreements, which may contain and interweave policies, regulations and procedural detail.
- The public, staff or School Committee members may demand the School Committee itself, not the administration, establish specific regulations and procedures in certain sensitive areas.

It is the intermingling of policy and regulations in law, in contracts and in adopted statements of the School Committee, that can cause confusion. Sometimes, they are not easily separated. Therefore, the separation of policies and regulations in this manual follows several “rules of thumb” in addition to basic theory:

1. When the school system’s practice in a particular area is established by law, any informational statement, covering the practice, is presented as “policy” and is printed on a white page. (A law may, of course, be quoted or referred to in a regulation.)
2. When a school system’s practice in a particular area has been established through a negotiated agreement, any statement pertaining to that practice is presented as “policy”.
3. Where the School Committee has interwoven regulations with policy, and where separation would interfere with their meaning, the entire statement is presented as a policy.
4. Where the School Committee has adopted rules and by-laws concerning its own organizational and operating procedures, these statements appear as policy.

As long as the administration operates within the guidelines of policy, adopted by the School Committee, it may issue regulations without prior approval, unless School Committee action is required by law, or unless the School Committee has specifically asked that certain types of regulations be submitted for School Committee approval. The School Committee is to be informed of all school system regulations issued by the administration. All such regulations are subject to School Committee review.

## INTRODUCTION

### **Is the Manual Complete?**

No. The manual contains all of the current *written* policies of the School Committee to date; however, the need for putting additional policies in writing, for adopting new or revising existing ones, becomes apparent.

Additionally, state laws and regulations change. No matter how well conceived and well developed, a policy manual can never be 100% complete and 100% up-to-date. Policy development is a continuing process. From time to time, new policies, regulations and reference documents will be developed, coded under the classification system and issued for insertion in the manual.

### **Order of Precedence**

School Committee policies and regulations, as well as negotiated agreements with staff bargaining units, must be read and interpreted in the light of the Massachusetts General Laws and State regulations. Wherever inconsistencies of interpretation arise, the law and state regulations prevail. A conflict between a local policy or regulation, and a negotiated agreement must be interpreted in line with the contract for members of the particular bargaining unit.

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It is the hope of the School Committee that this collection of policies and regulations will make greater harmony and efficiency possible in all areas of school operations. This will enable the School Committee to devote more time to its primary duty--the development of long-range policies and planning for the future of the school system.

*Ware School Committee*

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