

## **Policy and Procedure Development Guidelines**

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this procedure is to provide guidelines for the development of district policies, procedures, and forms.

### **Scope**

This policy applies to the Board of Directors, the Superintendent, Executive Assistant, administrators, staff, students, parents or guardians, and community members.

### **Procedure**

#### **1. PURPOSE**

- 1.1. The guidelines included in this document have been prepared to assist staff members who are responsible for preparing policies, procedures, and forms for the Valley School District (VSD).
- 1.2. Policies and procedures help the district to ensure that staff, students, and departments know what to expect of each other, act within established norms, and make rational, well-informed decisions. They help the district to be consistent in its approach to common practices, projects, processes, decision-making and problem-solving.
- 1.3. In order for staff and students to understand their responsibilities and how they relate to each other and between departments in the district, it is very important that policies and procedures are adopted and clearly communicated to everyone.
- 1.4. To be effective, policies, procedures, and forms must be: accessible, clear, and consistent.
- 1.5. To achieve this, policies, procedures, and forms must be:
  - (a) reflective of the philosophy, vision, mission, and goals of the school district;
  - (b) written within the scope of the school board's authority;
  - (c) adopted through appropriate legal, board, and administrative processes;
  - (d) respectful of legal and constitutional rights and requirements;
  - (e) written concisely in plain English;
  - (f) clearly expressed;
  - (g) consistently formatted;
  - (h) easy to follow;
  - (i) efficient to implement;
  - (j) relevant;
  - (k) communicated to the persons they will affect; and

- (l) easily accessible.

## 2. SCOPE

- 2.1. The guidelines included in this document apply to staff members who are responsible for preparing policies, procedures, and forms.
- 2.2. These guidelines do NOT apply to management directions (sometimes called policies or procedures) that are used by departments or groups within the organization to perform specific job functions. However, management directions must not be inconsistent with approved district policies or procedures.

## 3. TYPES OF DOCUMENTS

### 3.1. Document Hierarchy

- 3.1.1. Law (RCW)
- 3.1.2. Rule (WAC)
- 3.1.3. Policy
- 3.1.4. Procedure
- 3.1.5. Form
- 3.1.6. Training Resources
- 3.1.7. Handbooks

### 3.2. Policy

- 3.2.1. Policies identify the principles or standards of conduct that must be observed by staff (and, where relevant, students) in making decisions, participating in district activities or performing functions related to the district. Policies are designed to guide decision-making in relation to processes and activities in the district.
- 3.2.2. Policies require Board approval and must be compliant with relevant laws.
- 3.2.3. Observance of district policies is mandatory.
- 3.2.4. Feedback on district policies should be directed to the Board through the Superintendent who, by legal mandate, serves as Secretary to the Board of Directors.

### 3.3. Procedure

- 3.3.1. Procedures detail the individual steps which must be followed to carry out policy. Procedures provide specific directions about who carries out which part of the policy, and when they should do it.
- 3.3.2. Supporting documentation may be required to assist staff in implementing district policies and procedures. Supporting documentation includes, but is

not limited to: sample forms, images, charts, tables, guidelines, standards, etc.

- 3.3.3. Procedures must be approved by the Superintendent or designee and must be compliant with relevant policies.
- 3.3.4. Observance of district procedures is mandatory.
- 3.3.5. Feedback on procedures should be directed to a supervisor who is obligated to provide all feedback to the Superintendent or designee.

#### 3.4. **Form**

- 3.4.1. Forms are developed to assist users to collate necessary information, or to guide users through relevant procedural steps, in order to comply with a policy and procedure or part of a policy and procedure.
- 3.4.2. Forms require the approval of the Superintendent or designee.
- 3.4.3. Where a policy or procedure authorizes the creation of forms, use of the form is mandatory.
- 3.4.4. Feedback on forms should be directed to a supervisor who is obligated to provide all feedback to the Superintendent or designee.

### 4. **STATUS OF DOCUMENTS**

- 4.1. Policies, procedures, and forms constitute a hierarchy of documents that inform and guide district decision-making and action. They may be stand-alone documents dealing with a particular aspect of the district's operations or form part of a series of strategic documents that guide overall operations and decision-making.
- 4.2. Within this hierarchy, procedures, and forms define how the policies of the district are to be implemented. Accordingly, all procedures and forms must be prepared with regard to the district's approved strategies and policies.
- 4.3. On some occasions, however, a procedure may not have been established to deal with a particular situation confronted by the district. In these cases, the principles set out in the policy should be sufficient to guide decision-making or action in the absence of a procedure, form or supporting documentation.

### 5. **AVOIDING INCONSISTENCY**

- 5.1. One of the main aims of developing policies, procedures and forms is to ensure consistency. When developing these documents, it is essential that consideration is given to all existing policies, procedures and forms to ensure that the approach is consistent and does not conflict with an existing policy.
- 5.2. Inconsistency can arise when:
  - (a) The outcome of following a procedure is inconsistent with the purpose and intent for which a policy has been approved.

- (b) A procedure requires a staff member to take steps that are inconsistent with the purpose and intent of the policy.
  - (c) A procedure is inconsistent with another policy that applies to the activity (two policies impose different requirements).
- 5.3. To the extent of any inconsistency, a policy will override any contrary requirements set out in procedures, forms or supporting documentation. As such, proposed amendments should only be developed after a thorough review of existing policies, procedures and forms, and the wording used must be clear and precise.
- 6. STEPS FOR DEVELOPING POLICIES, PROCEDURES, AND FORMS**
  - 6.1. Define the issue or problem.
    - 6.1.1. The process of policy development begins with recognizing the need for written policy. Often the Board or Superintendent faces a decision that would be easier to make if a policy existed.
    - 6.1.2. The Board is not alone in identifying policy needs. Parents, students, teachers, community members, the Superintendent, the state or federal government, and community groups are all sources of policy issues.
  - 6.2. Gather the necessary information on the issue.
    - (a) Sample policy language and analysis from the Washington State School Directors' Association (WSSDA) policies.
    - (b) Experience from other districts and organizations.
    - (c) Education research.
    - (d) State association seminars.
    - (e) State or federal laws and regulations.
    - (f) Staff and students.
    - (g) Public input.
  - 6.3. Secure recommendations from the Superintendent or designee.
  - 6.4. Discuss and debate the proposed policy, procedure, form, or supporting documentation.
    - (a) Is the content within the scope of the Board's authority?
    - (b) Is it consistent with local, state, and federal law? The U.S. and the state's constitution?
    - (c) Does it support the school district's philosophy, vision, mission and purpose?
    - (d) Is it good educational (personnel, business) practice?
    - (e) Is it reasonable? (Are any requirements or prohibitions arbitrary, discriminatory or capricious?)

- (f) Does it adequately cover the subject?
  - (g) Is it limited to one policy topic?
  - (h) Is it consistent with the Board's existing policies?
  - (i) Can it be administered? Is it practical? How much will it cost?
- 6.5. Draft the policy, procedure or form (see appendix D).
- 6.5.1. New Documents
    - 6.5.1.1. Create a descriptive folder to serve as the working folder for this document or a related groups of documents. You may choose to store the policy development folders locally on your computer or on Office 365 OneDrive.
    - 6.5.1.2. From the new folder created in the previous step, use one of the document templates in this library to create and develop the new document. Save the template as a new document with a title using the document numbering plan prescribed in section 8. The title may also include a date and designate whether the document is "new" or "revised," or a "draft" or "final" version.
    - 6.5.1.3. Use the folder created above to store related documents and resource materials used to develop the documentation.
  - 6.5.2. Existing Documents
    - 6.5.2.1. Check-out the appropriate document from the "Policy Masters" document library on SharePoint and save a working version titled as described in 6.5.1.2. in your local SharePoint drafts or development folder set up for this document or a related group of documents.
    - 6.5.2.2. Make the necessary modifications to the checked-out document. Track changes.
    - 6.5.2.3. Place a "DRAFT" watermark on the document.
- 6.6. **Document Review**
- (a) When the documents are ready to be reviewed by others, create a descriptive folder in Office 365 OneDrive. If these are sensitive documents, make sure the folder has the appropriate security applied.
  - (b) Upload the documents to be reviewed from your local working folder into the "review folder" that was created in the previous step.
  - (c) "Share" the folder with appropriate staff members. Provide a brief message in the automated email notification specifying the document review request and an explanation.

- (d) Monitor the feedback and incorporate the appropriate changes to the document when the review period is complete.
- (e) Send a copy of the new or revised policy to the Superintendent for review, and to the Executive Assistant so the policy review can be added to the agenda of the next regularly scheduled board meeting.
- (f) Ensure that the Superintendent or designee approves the final draft of the document before proceeding with Board review of the policy or distribution of the procedure or form.
- (g) Once the document is approved and ready to implement, finalize the document. Remove the “DRAFT” watermark and add the date the Board and/or Superintendent adopted or approved the document, as appropriate. Upload the document in the “Policy Masters” document library in SharePoint, overwriting the existing document, as appropriate.

**6.7. Board Review**

- 6.7.1. Once in writing and approved by the Superintendent, the policy draft is placed on the Board’s agenda for a first reading, giving notice to everyone interested that the Board has a specific policy under consideration. At this time the Board has the opportunity for preliminary discussion of the proposed policy and, if the Board chooses, may hold a public hearing. This is recommended for important or controversial draft policies. However, some policies are adopted on the first reading.
- 6.7.2. The period between the first and second reading allows time for all concerned persons to ask questions, make comments, and offer suggestions for changes and improvements. Revise the policy based on the information gained from the questions, comments and suggestions obtained after the first reading.
- 6.7.3. The policy draft is placed on the Board’s agenda for the second reading and policy adoption, as recommended and approved by the Board.

**6.8. Document Distribution**

- (a) Upload new policies, procedures and forms into the “Policy Masters” document library on SharePoint and edit the appropriate document properties.
- (b) Check-in revised policies, procedures and forms into the “Policy Masters” document library on SharePoint and edit the appropriate document properties.
- (c) Create a PDF version of the document and upload this into the “Policies and Procedures” document library on SharePoint and edit the appropriate document properties.
- (d) When development work is complete, move the “working folder” of documents into the Archive folder in the SharePoint library.

## 7. **FORMATTING STYLE**

- 7.1. The following format must be used for policies and procedures. Document templates should contain the necessary formatting style.
- (a) Use Times New Roman 12 font for the text.
  - (b) Left justify the text.
  - (c) Only subdivide if there are two (2) or more clauses or sub-clauses. Whenever possible, do not subdivide if there is only one clause or sub-clause.
  - (d) Use decimal numbering with indentation for the various levels of subdivision. For example, clause 1 can be subdivided into sub-clauses 1.1, 1.2, etc., and sub-clause 1.1 can be sub-divided into sub-clauses 1.1.1, 1.1.2, etc.
  - (e) Try to limit decimal numbering to three (3) subdivision levels (e.g. 1.1.1), if possible, but no more than four (4) levels (e.g. 1.1.1.1). If further subdivisions are needed, then use bullet points.
  - (f) Use (a), (b), (c), etc. for a list of items. If you want to subdivide items within a list, then use bullet points, separated by single or double line spaces.
  - (g) Insert a six-point line space between each clause, sub-clause and listed item.
  - (h) Type major headings in bold capital letters. Type minor headings in bold, lower case letters.
  - (i) Use appendices to present information that would otherwise be difficult to integrate into the policy or procedure. They are written as part of the document. NOTE: Attachments are separate documents that have been added to the policy or procedure because of their relevance. Number each appendix or attachment and place it on a new page.
  - (j) Record the version details and document history (i.e. revision dates) for each document. Policies, procedures and forms may have different versions and revision dates.

## 8. **DOCUMENT NUMBERING PLAN**

- 8.1. The procedure and form will be recognized using an alphanumeric identifier that will include the policy number. This numbering representation ties the form to the procedure and the procedure to the policy.
- 8.2. Policies numbers are four digits in length and policies are assigned a policy number in one of the following WSSDA policy classifications.
- (a) 0000 Strategic Planning
  - (b) 1000 Board of Directors
  - (c) 2000 Instruction
  - (d) 3000 Students

- (e) 4000 Community Relations
  - (f) 5000 Personnel
  - (g) 6000 Management Support
- 8.3. Procedures are identified by appending the letter ‘P’ and a number to the policy number (i.e. P1, P2, P3, etc.).
- 8.4. Forms are identified by appending the letter ‘F’ and a number to the policy number (i.e. F1, F2, F3, etc.).
- 8.5. Document numbering examples with document titles included.
- (a) 2255-Alternative Learning Experience Program (Policy)
  - (b) 2255P1-CVA Student Attendance (Procedure)
  - (c) 2255F1-Unexcused Absence (Form)

## 9. IMPLEMENTATION

- 9.1. Policy implementation is a dynamic process that includes an evaluative component. Oversight is intended to make sure that the policy accomplishes its goal. Policy oversight can provide guidance on whether to continue or modify the policy and to determine future courses of action.
- 9.2. Communicating changes to the document management system or policy and procedure guidelines to staff members is essential.
- 9.3. Training on these guidelines and the operation of the document management system will be performed on an as-needed basis.

## 10. MANAGEMENT

- 10.1. Policies, procedures and forms will be managed in Microsoft Office 365 SharePoint document libraries.
- 10.2. Version control and auditing are functions of the SharePoint document library.
- 10.3. **Document Lifecycle**
- (a) Policies, procedures and forms should be reviewed on a regular schedule to ensure relevance and compliance. These documents can become out of date, unclear, or even contrary to the way in which the school district is operating. When this occurs the policy needs modification or elimination. The policy amendment process is the same as the policy adoption process. The Board sets policy and the Superintendent implements the policy and manages the schools within the guidelines set forth in Board policy. In the absence of policy, the Superintendent must use his/her own judgment.
  - (b) Obsolete policies will be retired with Board action. Rescinded, suspended and retired policies should be archived and the date of Board action added to the document history.

(c) Obsolete procedures and forms may be retired without Board action.

## 11. TEMPLATES

- 11.1. Document templates are used for policies, procedures and forms.
- 11.2. Policies and procedures should include, as a minimum, the purpose and scope of the document, the body of the document, and the document history. All other sections of the document are optional. Headings and sub-headings within the body of the document should be chosen to reflect the content of the document.
- 11.3. References to other documents or publications should be used for the purpose of helping the reader to better understand the document under review, and to identify information that may contribute to the successful implementation of the policy or procedure.
- 11.4. See appendices to view VSD Document Templates.

### Supporting Documentation

N/A

### Document History

<b>Action:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
New	March 1, 2010
Revised	April 19, 2017
Revised	
Revised	

Previous Procedure Number 3006P1

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**Appendix A – Board Policy Template**

VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 070  
Board of Directors Policy

Policy #  
Section:  
Page 1 of 1

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**[Title]**

**Purpose**

[Identify the reasons for the existence of this policy]

**Scope**

[Identify the target audience, and if necessary, those not covered by this policy]

**Policy**

1. [This is the body of the document]

**Related Procedures**

[List district procedures that are related to this policy]

**Policy Cross References**

[List board policies that are related to this policy]

**Policy Legal References**

[List legal references]

**Management Resources**

[List relevant WSSDA Policy Newsletters or other management resources]

**Policy History**

Action:	Date:
Approved by the Board	
Revised	
Revised	
Revised	

## Appendix B – District Procedure Template

VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 070  
District Procedure

Procedure #

Page 1 of 1

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[Title]

**Purpose**

[Identify the reasons for the existence of this procedure]

**Scope**

[Identify the target audience, and if necessary, those not covered by this procedure]

**Procedure**

[This is the body of the document]

**Supporting Documentation**

**Document History**

Action:	Date:
New	
Revised	
Revised	
Revised	

**Appendix C – District Form Template**

DRAFT

**Appendix D – Typical Document Workflow**

