

B-32 BOARD POLICY DEVELOPMENT

There are seven very important criteria to apply to any School Board policy. Hopefully, one will be able to respond "yes" to each question. A "no" answer is a danger signal. It could be a sign that the given policy, if contested by staff, students, or public, could be overruled in court or by a state education authority.

The author of the criteria is Fred H. Combs, Jr., assistant commissioner of education, New Jersey State Department of Education. The division he heads does the research on controversies and disputes that form the basis for rulings issued by the New Jersey Commissioner of Education. The criteria are from a talk delivered in October at the 20th Annual Workshop of the New Jersey School Boards Association.

1. Is the policy within the scope of the Board's discretionary authority as granted by state statutes?
2. Is it consistent with state and federal law and with the provisions of the United States Constitution?
3. Is it reasonable and free from arbitrariness and capriciousness?
4. Is it judicious?
5. Does it have as its purpose the realization of an educationally valid and desirable end or objective?
6. Does it have a substantial relationship to a legitimate purpose?
7. Does it reflect sound judgment, wisdom, and forbearance?

The Plainfield Community School Board has added the following question:

8. Are we certain that this is a policy matter rather than an administrative matter?

SOURCE: Plainfield Community School Corporation
Plainfield, IN
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