



Policy Services Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

- ***How does Erie 1 develop new policies?*** Our staff researches changes to state and federal laws and regulations. When there is a change that affects education, it is analyzed to determine if it should be a policy, regulation or both. We then develop a new policy that reflects the intent of the new law and takes existing policies into account. Often, the wording is taken directly from the law to avoid confusion. After the draft policy is reviewed by our staff, it is placed in our catalog of sample policies. Your school district must subscribe to one of our maintenance services (Level 1, 2 or 3) or be completing a new policy manual with Erie 1 to receive new policies.
- ***How can a district determine when a policy or regulation is necessary?*** For districts that subscribe to our Policy or Administrative Update service, the Update cover letter is a thorough explanation of why a policy should be adopted or a regulation is necessary. These cover letters contain a description of the laws and regulations that guided our development of the policy. They cover relevant court decisions and provide background information. These will give your Board of Education the information they need to make sound, informed decisions on policy adoption after consulting with your own school attorney. All new policies should be reviewed and considered with the needs of your own school district and its students in mind.
- ***What is the law or legal authority this policy change is based on?*** Citations at the end of each policy give a reference to the law or regulation the policy is based on. New policies distributed through Updates contain links to laws within the cover letter. All links in the cover letter were active at the time of publication, but we can not guarantee that they remain that way. Any links to laws, regulations or government web sites, may no longer be active or may have changed. Our policies often contain language taken directly from law. If you have questions about legal citations or links to laws, feel free to contact your assigned Policy Coordinator.
- ***Why do my policy and regulation sound the same?*** Policy and regulation may have similar wording, as regulation is based on policy. Regulations are the means to implement policy in daily school district practices. Not every district has a regulations manual and repetition ensures that all districts get the language they need to be in compliance with law.
- ***Do we have to put suggested policies in the manual?*** While a policy may not be required, the law that prompted the policy must still be followed. For example, there is no law requiring districts to have a pesticide policy. However, districts must follow the law on the ban of pesticides on school playgrounds, which is included in the policy. Districts can edit the policy or choose not to adopt the policy, but they must still follow the law it cites. Always consult with your school attorney when editing or deleting a policy. In summary, while you may choose not put a suggested policy in your manual, you are still obligated to follow the law the policy is based on.
- ***When should we review our policy manual?*** Policy Services suggests that your manual be continually reviewed and updated. Laws and regulations are constantly changing, which affects Policy for school districts. Issues, changing needs and various district events may also affect policy. We offer three different levels of service to assist districts in the continuous maintenance of their policy manuals. Please refer to the “*Our Services*” and “*Definition of Terms*” documents

for further information on these services. If your policy manual hasn't been reviewed or revised in over three years, you may wish to consider the possibility of developing a new manual.

Some policies should be reviewed on an annual basis in accordance with law or regulation. For instance, the required policy on Student Attendance and the corresponding Regulation on Student Attendance Records should be reviewed annually, as called for in Commissioner's Regulations. The policy and regulations on purchasing and investments should be reviewed at least annually, as mandated by General Municipal Law.

- ***How do I access monthly Updates on the Erie 1 BOCES Web site?*** This is a password protected site for districts that participate in the monthly Update Service. If you subscribe to monthly Updates (or are in the process of developing a new Manual), you will receive an email with instructions and a username and password. Passwords change about once per year, usually in January. Please be sure to save the email with the current password information. The link to the Online Updates Library can be found under Policy Services on our website: www.e1b.org. Updates are stored chronologically and can be searched by key words. If you lose your password or have trouble with the Library, please contact your assigned Policy Coordinator for assistance. Since this is a paid service, we request that you do not share the password with other school districts.
- ***How do I access Quarterly Revisions on the Erie 1 BOCES Web site?*** This is a password protected site for districts that participate in the Quarterly Policy Revisions Service. If you subscribe to the Quarterly Revisions, you will receive an email with instructions and a username and password. Passwords change about once per year, usually in January. Please be sure to save the email with the current password info. The link to the Online Quarterly Library can be found under Policy Services on our website: www.e1b.org. Only the final or “clean” copies of the Policies are maintained on this site. Open the arrows to assess the quarterly summary and the actual Policies listed for each quarterly time period. If you need the “tracked” copy or are having difficulty accessing the Quarterly Revisions, contact your assigned Policy Coordinator or the Manager of Policy Services.
- ***Who do I contact for policy requests and sample policies?*** Each district is assigned a Policy Coordinator when they begin the process of developing a new manual. That coordinator will remain with your district throughout your service with Erie 1 BOCES. If you do not have your assigned Coordinator's name or phone number, call us at (716) 821-7072 for more information. You can also email your coordinator directly if you need assistance. Although you may receive email Updates and information from our support staff, they cannot be contacted for policy advice. All service requests should flow through the Policy Coordinators.
- ***How do I assign numbers to new policies?*** Look within the major categories in the Policy Manual for a section where the policy fits:

1000's	By-Laws
2000's	Internal Operations
3000's	Community Relations
4000's	Administration
5000's	Non-Instructional/Business Operations
6000's	Personnel
7000's	Students
8000's	Instruction

While searching through the sub-categories in each section, look for a policy on a similar topic. Select the next number in the sequence. If 0 through 9 in that sequence are already taken, move to the next set of ten numbers, if available.

Example:

1. The district wishes to add a new policy on a Student Volunteer Program as a new item – look for a policy a similar topic such as School Volunteers which is Policy #3150;
2. Look for other policies similar to Volunteers after #5410 – Most likely, there are none;
3. The new policy would therefore become #3151, which the next available number in the Volunteer sequence since it is a subheading of Volunteers in general;
4. Any corresponding Regulations or Forms relating to the Student Volunteer Program would be numbered to match the policy, #3151R or #3151F.

Contact your Policy Coordinator if you have additional questions about numbering policies.

For additional questions on any of the topics in this Q & A, please contact your assigned Policy Coordinator or Janell Hallgren, Manager of Policy Services, at (716) 821-7084 or jhallgren@elb.org.