POLICY DEVELOPMENT

What is policy

Policy is:

- Anything a government chooses to do or not do (Dye);
- A defined course or method of action selected among alternatives and in light of given conditions to guide and determine present and future decisions (Webster);
- Prudence or wisdom in the management of public affairs; sagacity (keen and farsighted judgement; wit (Wordsmyth);
- Rules, regulations, strategies, plans, guiding principles, courses of action, guidelines or procedures;
- A governing principle that mandates or constrains actions; and,
- Can be rigid or flexible and sets the general direction of the governing body.

Why You Need Policy

Having a clear policy allows for consistent approaches; having the necessary policies and procedures promotes a safe and organized school. Policies help to determine how schools are run. School communities are encouraged to develop their own school based policy. Policy that is clearly written communicates school values to all school members.

Policy Instrument

The policy instrument can vary depending on the authority, and the policy can be communicated in a variety of ways which include:

- **Statutory instruments** (i.e. legislation, regulation and/or formal policy or order)
- **Non-statutory instruments** (program or service, Minister’s statement, press releases, etc.)
**Public Policy vs. Operational / Administrative Policy**

*Public policies* are ones that affect the general public such as seat belt legislation, universal access to health care, motor vehicle licensing, etc.

*Operational / Administrative Policy* directs the internal operations of government and may also have a public policy element to it. These policies may apply to the government as a whole or only to specific programs.

**Policy and Education**

- Is rooted in the *Education Act*; it is ‘quasi-statutory’ (more like rules than guidelines);
- Provides general direction
- Binding

*(Examples)*

- *The Education Act* requires that special educational programs be made available to students with ‘intellectual, communicative, behavioural, physical or multiple exceptionalities…’
- The Administration of Medication to Students policy outlines standards and procedures that detail how medicine will be administered in the event that a child requires medication during the school day.

**Basic Steps to Developing Policy**

- Identify the issue and whether a policy is needed;
- Identify values and guiding principles (the major values and principles are in the Education Act);
- Research;
- Develop options and draft the policy and implementation plan;
- Consult with stakeholders;
- Approval and Signature by the Deputy Minister
- Implement and raise awareness of the new policy
- Evaluate
- Annual Review
  - Revise (if necessary)
Values and Principles

... the Yukon education system is to work in co-operation with parents to develop a whole child including the intellectual, physical, social, emotional, cultural and aesthetic potential of all students to the extent of their abilities so that they may become productive, responsible and self-reliant members of society...

Consultation Phase

Making Sure Policy Works for:

- Public Schools
- Administrators, teachers, school staff, etc.
- School Councils
- Parents/Guardians
- Students
- Yukon First Nations individually or through the Yukon First Nation
- Education Advisory Committee

How Are School Councils Engaged

School Councils are primary stakeholders in the development of department policies and are asked to comment on the policy, planning and evaluation (PPE) annual work plan. Upon request, School Council members are sent draft policies to review and comment on before the policy is implemented. The Policy and Planning Unit at the Department of Education is willing to work with School Councils in developing school based policy.

Policy Priorities

Every school year the Policy Unit develops a work plan in consultation with Public Schools and other education stakeholders (including School Councils).

This work plan outlines which policies will be developed that year; however it is subject to change if a policy priority arises. For example, if there is no 'safe schools' policy and there is a rash of bullying incidents occurring there may be a directive for the Policy Unit to develop a 'safe and caring schools' policy.

Education Policies

The Department of Education strives to develop policy that:

- Is in plain language;
- Simplifies the legislation and is clear;
- Is fair;
- Is easy to administer;
• Allows administration to work quickly, consistently and easily; and
• Enables teachers and administrators to provide high quality educational programs to students

Policy Revision

It is important to note that policy is a circular process. Policies are meant to be reviewed on a regular basis and revised or changed, so they meet the needs of schools, parents, teachers, the school community and most importantly students.