



# Building a Better **GRADUATE**

*Creating Career and College Ready Students*

## Improving **Student** Outcomes with **Board** Policy-Making? **Yes, *You* Can!**

Presented by **Greenville County Schools Trustees Crystal Ball O'Connor & Lisa Wells**

*South Carolina School Boards Association Annual Conference | February 17, 2018*







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## *Focus on Board Policies?* **WHY?**

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## *Focus on Board Policies?*

### **WHY?**

Clear vision & mission for board, administration, and staff

Clarity of expectations: When policies don't exist or practices don't align to policies, mixed messages and inconsistencies result.

Consistency over time: Boards and superintendents turn over often – policies remain.







# ***GCS Board Instructional Policies***

**Where we were.....**

- 51 instructional policies....as old as 1980



My 1985 Ford Escort:  
Slow, clunky  
No GPS or technology  
Old materials and design  
Missing innovation

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**ANYONE STILL DRIVE ONE OF THESE?**





# *WHO?*

- Board led effort

Committee of Board members

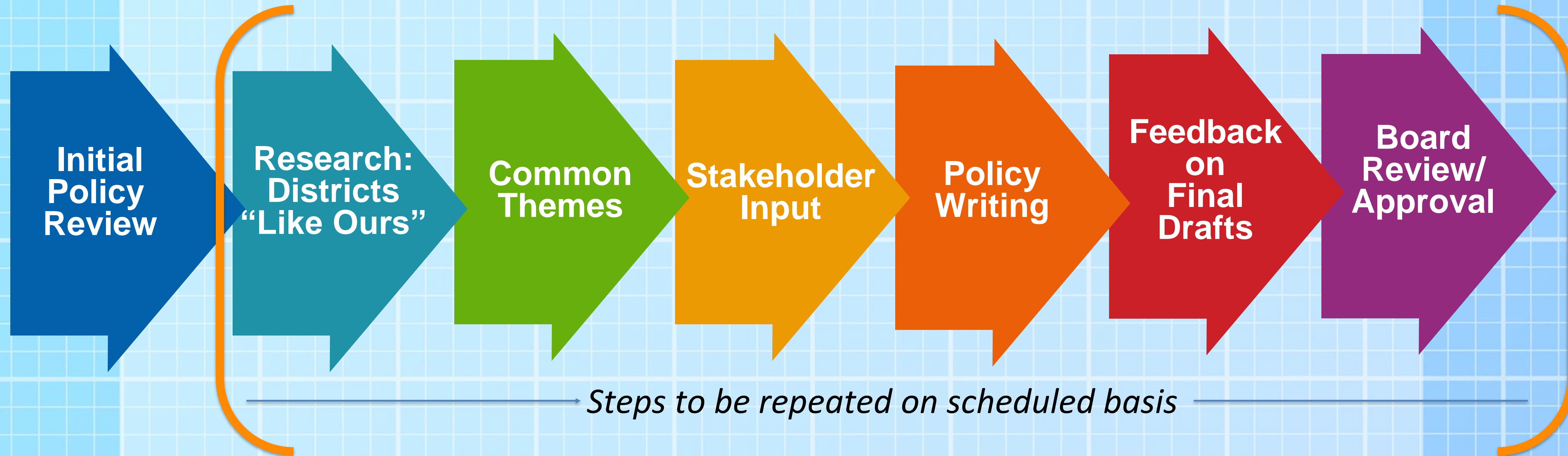
Supported by Superintendent's Designee

Additional support of district instructional staff based on topic





# HOW?



**Structured Repeatable Process**





# Step 1: Initial Policy Review

51 instructional policies



PRIORITY TO  
UPDATE

NEED UPDATE,  
NOT URGENT

CONSIDER  
ELIMINATION

New Policy  
Needs







Research:  
Districts  
“Like Ours”

## Step 2: Policy Research

- Districts “Like Ours”
  - ✓ Innovative practices
  - ✓ Diverse population
  - ✓ 'Whole child' approach
  - ✓ Size/Services
- Looking for
  - ✓ Content
  - ✓ Format/Structure
  - ✓ Specific topics based on our policy review





Common  
Themes

# Step 3: Common Themes

- Alignment with guiding documents
  - GCS Strategic Education Plan
  - SC Standards for Learning
  - Advanc-ED Standards for Accreditation
  - Profile of the South Carolina Graduate
- Education of the whole child (academic, emotional, social)
- Rigorous standards/expectations
- Student-centered teaching/learning based on research-based, innovative practices
- Personalized learning for all students

## Profile of the South Carolina Graduate



### World Class Knowledge

- Rigorous standards in language arts and math for career and college readiness
- Multiple languages, science, technology, engineering, mathematics (STEM), arts and social sciences

### World Class Skills

- Creativity and innovation
- Critical thinking and problem solving
- Collaboration and teamwork
- Communication, information, media and technology
- Knowing how to learn

### Life and Career Characteristics

- Integrity
- Self-direction
- Global perspective
- Perseverance
- Work ethic
- Interpersonal skills

Approved by SCASA Superintendents' Roundtable, SC Chamber of Commerce, and State Board of Education.







Stakeholder  
Input

## Step 4: Process Input

# COLLABORATION

- Engage all stakeholder groups
  - Principals
  - District Executive Team
  - Academics Division Professionals
  - Teachers
  - Students

**Most valuable step. Come back to it often!**

Board policy without staff support, belief and buy-in is ineffective at best, counterproductive at worst.





Stakeholder  
Input

## Step 4: Process Input

# COLLABORATION

- Tips for effective input
  - Educational philosophy first – don't dive right into the weeds
  - Initial input structured around broad themes, not specific policy language
  - Ask for teacher input & show that you value it
  - Ensure all student groups are represented in feedback
  - Use multiple tools: Regular meetings, focus groups, optional 'drop-in' day, surveys





## Step 5: Policy Writing

Policy  
Writing

- Drive vision and mission
- Align policies with research-based best practices (maybe current practice but not always)
- Incorporate the common themes to create threads across policies
- Incorporate stakeholder input to ensure comprehensive and collaborative result
- Work for committee consensus by allowing deep, rich conversations





Policy  
Writing

## Step 5: Policy Writing Format

- Purpose (philosophy, Board's commitment)
- Policy language
- Desired Outcomes (if applicable)
- Evaluation Expectations

.....and now for some policies!





# Building a Better **GRADUATE**

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## **Policy IEB:** *Instructional Organization*







# Policy IEB: Instructional Organization

## *Purpose*

The Board of Trustees is committed to ensuring that each school is optimally organized for the following purposes:

- To provide **meaningful and challenging experiences** for all students that promote academic excellence through **student-centered, personalized learning**.
- To create **small learning communities** or other structures within the school that support **student interests**, foster **strong relationships** among students and staff, and encourage a **sense of belonging** for all students.
- To promote a **culture of integrity**, self-direction, positive interpersonal skills, a strong work ethic, and productive citizenship within the school.





## Policy IEB: Instructional Organization

### *Policy Statement*

The instructional day for each school shall promote student-centered learning through opportunities for **experiential, project-based, student directed, and collaborative learning**, as well as for focused **academic enrichment and support**. The schedule may support such learning through varied numbers and lengths of classes.





## Policy IEB: Instructional Organization

### *Policy Statement*

Students shall have the opportunity for focused academic enrichment and support during the school day through individual or supervised learning time. Extended opportunities for academic enrichment and support may also be offered before school and after school.





# Policy IEB: Instructional Organization

## *Policy Statement*

Each school shall provide opportunities through which **each student can be known well by multiple adults** in the school.





# Building a Better **GRADUATE**

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## **Policy IDB:** *Health & Wellness Education*







# Policy IDB: Health & Wellness Education

## *Policy Statement*

### Curriculum Dimensions

- Physical Education
- Nutrition Education
- Mental/Emotional Health Education
- Sexuality Education





# Policy IDB: Health & Wellness Education

## *Policy Statement*

### Comprehensive Plan of Instruction

- Reflect current research, evidence, and best practice
- Enhance students' **problem-solving, coping, and decision-making** skills
- Stress the benefits of living a **healthy life style**
- Accommodate the **needs** of **special students**
- Promote students' understanding of
  - **Consequences** of using unlawful drugs, alcohol, tobacco
  - **Causes and lasting effects** of violence, bullying and suicide





# Policy IDB: Health & Wellness Education

## *Policy Statement*

### Standards-based Curriculum

- Alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs
- Human growth/development and sexual health and responsibility
- Injury prevention/safety
- Mental, emotional, and social health
- Personal and community health
- Physical activity and nutrition





# Policy IDB: Health & Wellness Education

## *Policy Statement*

### Mental/Emotional Health Education

- Provide age-appropriate, standards-based instruction on the **effects of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs** on the human system
- Promote **connectedness** among students and staff to help **reduce the risk** of suicide, violence, bullying, and substance abuse
- Help students understand **warning signs** of depression and self-destructive behaviors
- Help students develop level of **trust** necessary to **confide in adults** when confronted with problems

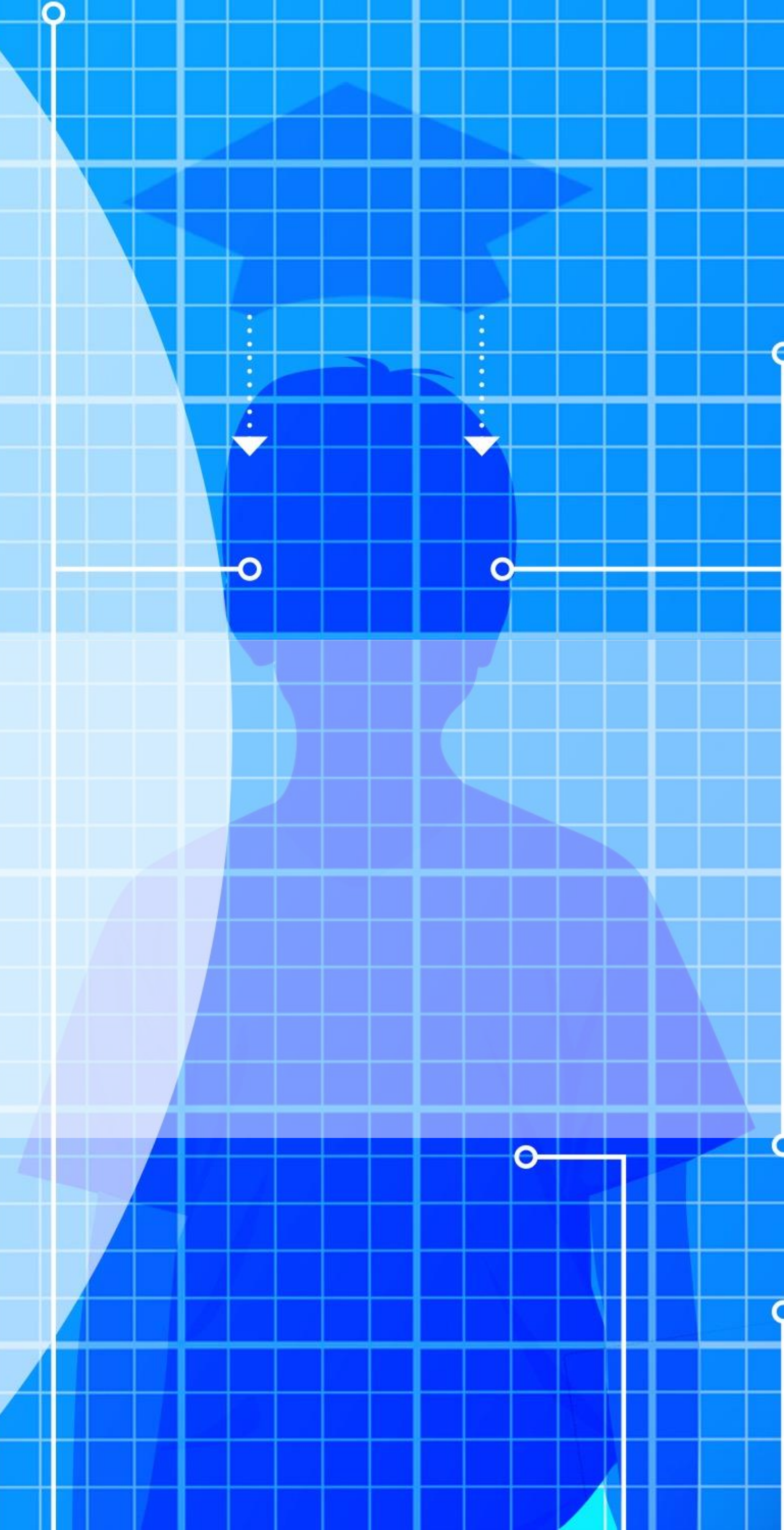




# Building a Better **GRADUATE**

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## **Policy IDBA:** *Sexuality Education*







# Policy IDB: Sexuality Education

## *Policy Statement*

### Instructional Goals

- Promote the **home** as the **primary information source**.
  - Promote **abstinence** for school-age youth.
  - Provide **accurate, age-appropriate knowledge** about reproductive health.
  - Promote the development of **responsible personal values and behaviors**.
  - Teach students to make **responsible, respectful, and healthy decisions**.
  - Prevent sexual misconduct, exploitation, harassment, and abuse of students.
- ❖ Provide professional development/training for all appropriate personnel.





# Policy IDB: Sexuality Education

## *Policy Statement*

### Comprehensive Plan of Instruction

- Reflect current research, evidence, and best practice.
- Teach that **no form of sexual expression** or behavior is **acceptable when harmful** to one's self or others.
- Teach the definitions, legal requirements and **implications of consent** (included Erin's Law).
- Teach skills to **recognize** sexual misconduct and grooming; to **resist** peer & adult pressure; to **report** such behaviors; to encourage safe bystander behavior.
- Teach how to identify attitudes/behaviors that violate sexual boundaries.





## Step 6: Feedback

**Final  
Draft  
Feedback**

- Final draft review, as appropriate
  - Principals
  - District Executive Team
  - Academics Division Professionals
  - Teachers
  - Students
- Dialogue with Administration





## Step 7: Board/Review/Approval

Board  
Review/  
Approval

- Committee of the Whole monthly meeting
  - Presentation of Final Drafts
  - Board questions/dialogue/discussion
  - Committee recommendation





# Almost There!

- 32 policies updated/approved by Board
  - 13 policies eliminated (some content subsumed in other policies, where appropriate)
  - 2 moved elsewhere in policy manual
  - 4 in progress
- 
- 2 new policies added
    - Credit/Content Recovery
    - Non-Traditional Learning Programs





# Policy Non-negotiables!

- Quality research
- Extensive, focused input/collaboration
- Allegiance to common themes
- Quality committee discussions
- Broad concepts/language





# Contact Us

To contact our Board or find our policies,  
go to [www.greenville.k12.sc.us](http://www.greenville.k12.sc.us)  
and select Board of Trustees page