

## **ACADEMIC FREEDOM**

The District School Committee seeks to educate students in the democratic tradition, to foster recognition of individual freedom and social responsibility, to inspire meaningful awareness of and respect for the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

Fairness in procedures will be observed both to safeguard the legitimate interests of the schools and to exhibit by appropriate example the basic objectives of a democratic society as set forth in the Constitutions of the United States and the State.

LEGAL REF.: Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts

## **SCHOOL YEAR/SCHOOL CALENDAR**

The school calendar for the ensuing year will be prepared by the Superintendent-Director and submitted to the District School Committee for approval annually. The number of days or instructional hours scheduled for the school year will be determined in accordance with the following standards set by the Massachusetts Board of Education:

The High School will operate for a minimum of 180 days. The school shall ensure that every student is scheduled to receive a minimum of 990 hours per school year of structured learning time, as defined in 603 CMR 27.02. Time which a student spends at school breakfast and lunch, passing between classes, in homeroom, at recess, in non-directed study periods, receiving school services, and participating in optional school programs shall not count toward meeting the minimum structured learning time requirement for that student.

For the information of staff, students, and parents, the calendar will set forth the days school will be in session; holidays and vacation periods; in service days; and parent conferences.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 4:7; 69:1G; 71:1; 71:4; 71:4A; 71:73; 136:12  
Board of Education Regulations for School Year and School Day, effective 9/1/75  
Board of Education, Student Learning Time Regulations  
603 CMR 27.00, Adopted 12/20/94

## **SCHOOL DAY**

The length of the school day is established in the collective bargaining agreements with the various school unions. The specific opening and closing times of the schools will be recommended by the Superintendent-Director and set by the Committee.

The Superintendent-Director is authorized to make minor changes in opening and closing times to simplify transportation scheduling; however, major changes in schedules will be subject to Committee approval.

Parents and guardians will be informed of the opening and closing times set by the Committee. To help insure the safety of all children, parents will also be notified of the time deemed appropriate by the administration that students will be allowed to enter the building.

LEGAL REFS.:       M.G.L. 15:1G; 69:1G; 71:59  
                          Board of Education Regulations for School Year and Day, effective 9/1/75

## **ORGANIZATION OF INSTRUCTION**

The District offers a diversified educational program compatible with the needs of the community and state standards.

The organizational plan is designed to facilitate the philosophy of educating every student, each to his/her fullest potential.

Special education services are integrated across each grade level.

The organization is designed to meet the standards established within the Curriculum Frameworks as required by the State Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education and to serve the needs of all students.

## **CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT**

Constant adaptation and development of the curriculum is necessary if the District is to meet the needs of the students in its schools. To be successful, curriculum development must be a collaborative enterprise involving staff and administrators utilizing their professional expertise.

The Committee expects its faculty and administration to regularly evaluate the education program and to recommend modifications of practice and changes in curriculum content as well as the addition or deletion of courses to the instructional program.

LEGAL REF.:           M.G.L. 69:1E  
                              603 CMR 26:05

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES PROGRAMS**

To support the classroom activities and other instructional needs of the District, various special educational services shall be provided. The Support Services staff will work in cooperation with building staff and the administration in (1) the coordination and the supervision of the curriculum implementation of the instructional program, and (2) support services programs.

### Curricular Supervision and Coordination

Coordinating personnel for specific curricular areas shall be assigned by the administration. These coordinators shall assist in the organization, supervision, and coordination of subject material and activities in the schools.

### Support Services

The Principal shall be responsible for all services for students who are not eligible for special education assistance, such as psychological services, speech correction, homebound and hospital teaching and such other programs as may be assigned.

CROSS REF.: ACE, Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Handicap

## **CURRICULUM ADOPTION**

The District School Committee will rely on its professional staff to design and implement instructional programs and courses of study that will forward the educational goals of the school system.

The Superintendent-Director will have authority to approve new programs and courses of study after they have been thoroughly studied and found to support educational goals. The Committee itself will consider, and officially adopt, new programs and courses when they constitute an extensive alteration in instructional content or approach and funding will be required.

The Committee wishes to be informed of all new courses and substantive revisions in curriculum. It will receive reports on changes under consideration. Its acceptance of these reports, including a listing of the high school program of studies, will constitute its adoption of the curriculum for official purposes.

LEGAL REF.:           M.G.L. 15:1G; 71:1; 69:1E

## **BASIC INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM**

State law requires that schools:

. . . shall give instruction and training in orthography (spelling), reading, writing, the English language and grammar, geography, arithmetic, drawing, music, the history and Constitution of the United States, the duties of citizenship, health education, physical education and good behavior...

The law further states that American history and civics, including the Constitution of the United States, the Declaration of Independence, the Bill of Rights, local history and government will be taught as required subjects in the public schools.

Physical education is compulsory for all students, except that no student will be required to take part in physical education exercises if a physician certifies in writing that such exercises would be injurious to the student.

### The Fundamental Skills

The business of the schools is to equip all children with the skills, tools, and attitudes that will lay the basis for learning now and in the future. This means giving highest priority to developing skills in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and solving numerical problems.

The first claim of the community's resources will be made for the realization of these priorities. School dollars, school talent, school time, and whatever innovation in program is required must be concentrated on these top-ranking goals. No student should be bypassed or left out of the school's efforts to teach the fundamental skills. Schooling for basic literacy must reach all students, in all neighborhoods, and from all homes.

LEGAL REFS.:       M.G.L. 71:1,2,3; 71:13; 74  
                          603 CMR 26:05



## **OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION**

Vocational Technical Education is purposefully designed to educate and prepare students of all ages for employment and continuing academic and occupational preparation through a balance of classroom instruction, supportive services and occupational experience to develop life-long skills so that upon completion of vocational technical programs, students are qualified to pursue, directly or indirectly, opportunities emanating from such vocational technical programs.

The District School Committee recognizes that students should:

1. Be afforded the opportunity to be informed about the world of work.
2. Be aware of the many vocations available to them.
3. Develop a respect for the dignity of work.
4. Be allowed the opportunity to develop an understanding regarding the technical, consumer, occupational, recreational and cultural aspects of industry and technology; they should also be afforded the opportunity to develop skills related to such aspects through creative problem solving experiences.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:37K; 71:38A through 71:38F; 74:1 et seq.  
Board of Education Chapter 74 Regulations, adopted 6/28/77, effective 9/1/77

## **HEALTH EDUCATION**

Good health depends upon continuous life-long attention to scientific advances and the acquisition of new knowledge.

The District School Committee believes that the greatest opportunity for effective health education lies within the public schools because of their potential to reach children at the age when positive, lifelong health habits are best engendered and because the schools are equipped to provide qualified personnel to conduct health education programs.

The District School Committee is committed to a sound, comprehensive health education program as an integral part of each student's general education.

The health education program will emphasize a contemporary approach to the presentation of health information, skills, and the knowledge necessary for students to understand and appreciate the functioning and proper care of the human body. Students also will be presented with information regarding complex social, physical and mental health problems, which they might encounter in society. In an effort to help students make intelligent choices on alternative behavior of serious personal consequence, health education will examine the potential health hazards of social, physical and mental problems existing in the larger school-community environment.

In order to promote a relevant, dynamic approach to the instruction of health education, the District School Committee will continue to stress the need for curricular, personnel, and financial commitments that are necessary to assure the high quality of the system's health education program.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:1

**HEALTH EDUCATION  
(Exemption Procedure)**

Exemption will be granted from a specific portion of health education curriculum on the grounds that the material taught is contrary to the religious beliefs and/or teachings of the student or the student's parent/guardian.

A request for exemption must be submitted in writing to the Principal in advance of instruction in that portion of the curriculum for which the exemption is requested. The request must state the particular conflict involved.

The Principal will confer with the teacher to determine the length of time a student will be exempt. The teacher will develop an alternative activity for which the student will receive credit.

The Principal will inform the parent/guardian of disposition of the request within a reasonable number of school days of receipt of the request.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:1

## **PARENTAL NOTIFICATION RELATIVE TO SEX EDUCATION**

In accordance with General Laws Chapter 71, Section 32A, the District School Committee has adopted this policy on the rights of parents and guardians of our students in relation to curriculum that primarily involves human sexual education or human sexuality issues.

At the beginning of each school year, all parents/guardians of students in our school will be notified in writing of the courses and curriculum we offer that primarily involve human sexual or human sexuality issues. The Superintendent-Director will determine the administrator(s) responsible for sending the notice(s). Parents/guardians of students who enroll in school after the start of the school year will be given the written notice at the time of enrollment. If planned curricula change during the school year, to the extent practicable, parents/guardians will be notified of this fact in a timely manner before implementation.

Each such notice to parents/guardians will include a brief description of the curriculum covered by this policy, and will inform parents/guardians that they may:

1. Exempt their child from any portion of the curriculum that primarily involves human sexual education or human sexual issues, without penalty to the student, by sending a letter to the school Principal requesting an exemption. Any student who is exempted by request of the parent/guardian under this policy may be given an alternative assignment.
2. Inspect and review program instruction materials for these curricula, which will be made reasonably accessible to parents/guardians and others to the extent practicable. Parents/guardians may arrange with the Principal to review the materials at the school and may also review them at other locations that may be determined by the Superintendent-Director of Schools.

A parent/guardian who is dissatisfied with a decision of the Principal concerning notice, access to instructional materials, or exemption for the student under this policy may send a written request to the Superintendent-Director for review of the issue. The Superintendent-Director or designee will review the issue and give the parent/guardian a timely written decision, preferably within two weeks of the request. A parent/guardian who is dissatisfied with the Superintendent-Director's decision may send a written request to the District School Committee for review of the issue. The District School Committee will review the issue and give the parent/guardian a timely written decision, preferably within four weeks of the request. A parent/guardian who is still dissatisfied after this process may send a written request to the Commissioner of Education for review of the issue in the dispute.

The Superintendent-Director will distribute a copy of this policy to each Principal by September 1 of each year.

REF.: Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education

## **TEACHING ABOUT ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, AND DRUGS**

In accordance with state and federal law, the District shall provide age-appropriate, developmentally appropriate, evidence-based alcohol, tobacco, and drug prevention education programs.

The alcohol, tobacco, and drug prevention program shall address the legal, social, and health consequences of alcohol, tobacco, and drug use, with emphasis on nonuse by school-age children. The program also shall include information about effective techniques and skill development for delaying and abstaining from using, as well as skills for addressing peer pressure to use alcohol, tobacco, or drugs.

The objectives of this program, as stated below, are rooted in the Committee's belief that prevention requires education, and that the most important aspect of the policies and guidelines of the District should be the education of children and youth on healthy decision-making:

- To prevent, delay, and/or reduce alcohol, tobacco, and drug use among children and youth.
- To increase students' understanding of the legal, social, and health consequences of alcohol, tobacco, and drug use.
- To teach students self-management skills, social skills, negotiation skills, and refusal skills that will help them to make healthy decisions and avoid alcohol, tobacco, and drug use.

The curriculum, instructional materials, and outcomes used in this program shall be recommended by the Principal and approved by the Superintendent-Director.

This policy shall be posted on the district's website and notice shall be provided to all students and parents in accordance with state law. Additionally, the district shall file a copy of this policy with DESE in accordance with law in a manner requested by DESE.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:1 ;71:96

CROSS REFS: GBEC, Drug Free Workplace Policy  
JICH, Drug and Alcohol Use by Students

**SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS AND ACCOMMODATIONS  
(PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS)**

The goals of this school's special education program are to allow each child to grow and achieve at his/her own level, to gain independence and self-reliance, and to return to the mainstream of school society as soon as possible.

The requirements of Chapter 71B and the Massachusetts General Laws (known as Chapter 766 of the Acts of 1972) and state regulations will be followed in the identification of children with special needs, in referrals for their evaluation, in prescribing for them suitable programs and in assessing their educational progress. In keeping with state requirements, all children with special needs between the ages of three through 21 who have not attained a high school diploma or its equivalent will be eligible for special education.

The District School Committee believes that most children with special needs can be educated in the regular school program if they are given special instruction, accommodations and the support they need. These children should also be given the opportunity to participate in the school system's non-academic and extracurricular activities.

The Committee recognizes that the needs of certain children are so great that special programs, special classes or special schools may be necessary. When appropriate programs, services, or facilities are not available within the public schools, the Committee will provide these children with access to schools where such instruction and accommodations are available.

It is the desire of the Committee that the schools work closely with parents in designing and providing programs and services to children with special needs. Parents will be informed, and conferred with, whenever a child is referred for evaluation. In event of any disagreement concerning diagnosis, program plan, special placement, or evaluation, the parents will be accorded the right of due process.

The Committee will secure properly trained personnel to work with the children with special needs. Since the financial commitment necessary to meet the needs of all of these children is extensive, the Committee will make every effort to obtain financial assistance from all sources.

LEGAL REFS.:           The Individuals with Disabilities Ed. Act (PL 108-446, adopted 12/03/04)  
                              Rehabilitation Act of 1973  
                              M.G.L. 71B:1 et seq. (Chapter 766 of the Acts of 1972)  
                              Board of Education Chapter 766 Regulations, adopted 10/74, as amended through  
                              7/1/81  
                              603 CMR 28:00 inclusive

**PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

In keeping with the intention of the state of Massachusetts to offer educational opportunities to all students that will enable them to lead fulfilling and productive lives, the District shall provide appropriate educational opportunities to all resident students in accordance with the requirements of state and federal statutes.

LEGAL REF.: Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504

## **OBSERVATIONS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

1. Parents' request to observe their child(ren), current program, or a potential placement must be made at least five days in advance with the Special Education Director or designee and/or Principal.
2. The Special Education Director or designee shall contact the parent(s) for initial scheduling conversation within five (5) days of receipt of the parents' request.
3. When a parent requests an observation of a special needs student or program, the Special Education Director or designee will seek approval from the Director of Special Education and the building principal before it is processed. Such approval may only be withheld for those reasons outlined within law and DESE regulation.
4. The Special Education Director or designee and/or Principal will work with the classroom teacher and the observer to set up the specifics of the observation (including, but not limited to, scheduling and placement of the observer in the classroom).
5. The number, frequency, and duration of observation periods will be determined on an individual student basis in accordance with law and regulation. The start and end time of observation periods and a schedule of observation periods will be stated in advance. In order to minimize classroom or student disruption, the length of individual observation periods may be limited.
6. If the observer is not the parent, the parent must sign a release for the individual to observe.
7. The number of observers at any one time may be limited.
8. The observer will be informed that he/she is not to interfere with the educational environment of the classroom. If his/her presence presents a problem, he/she will be asked to leave. This notice is particularly important, since the presence of parents can influence both the performance of their child(ren) and those of others.
9. The observer will be asked to submit his/her report of the observation in advance of any follow-up TEAM meeting.
10. The observer will be informed that he/she is there to evaluate the appropriateness of a specific educational program to meet the needs of an individual child. He/she is not there to evaluate a teacher's ability to perform his or her contractual job duties.
11. The observer will be instructed regarding the disclosure of confidential or personally identifiable information relating to other children. Staff must be mindful of removing materials which may be part of students' records from plain view. In the event that removal is not possible the observer may be asked to sign a non-disclosure agreement.



12. A school administrator, or designee, also will observe at the same time and take notes as to what is observed, paying particular attention to note anything that is non-typical concerning the period. This observation summary will be placed in the student's file and provided to the parent(s) prior to any follow-up TEAM meeting. .

LEGAL REF.: MGL 71B:3  
Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Technical Assistance Advisory SPED 2009-2 dated January 8, 2009

CROSS REF.: KI, Visitors to Schools

NOTE: The following quotes from the DESE Advisory are important points of understanding to the implementation of this policy.

“School districts and parents have reported that, typically, observations are between one and four hours. While useful as a general rule, the Department recommends that district policies and practices specify that the duration and extent of observations will be determined on an individual basis. Districts should avoid rigid adherence to defined time limits regardless of the student's needs and settings to be observed. The complexities of the child's needs, as well as the program or programs to be observed, should determine what the observation will entail and what amount of time is needed to complete it. Discussion between school staff and the parent or designee is a good starting point for resolving the issue.”

“The observation law states that districts may not condition or restrict program observations except when necessary to protect:

the safety of children in the program during the observation;  
the integrity of the program during the observation;  
and children in the program from disclosure by an observer of confidential or personally identifiable information he or she may obtain while observing the program.”

**COMPENSATORY EDUCATION  
(Title 1)**

Title 1 funds shall be used to provide educational services that are in addition to the regular services provided for District students. By adoption of this policy, the District School Committee ensures equivalence in the provision of curriculum materials and supplies.

LEGAL REF.: Title 1, Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended

## **ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS**

The District shall provide suitable research-based language instructional programs for all identified English language learners in accordance with the requirements of state and federal statutes and Massachusetts Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education regulations and guidance.

The District shall identify students whose dominant language may not be English through home language surveys that identify a primary home language is other than English (PHLOTE), observations, intake assessments, and recommendations of parents, teachers and other persons. Identified students shall be assessed annually to determine their level of proficiency in the English language.

The District shall certify to the Massachusetts Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education each year those students whose dominant language is not English, including specification of the number of non-English languages identified as dominant languages and the number and percent of students who speak each non-English language as their dominant language.

The District shall provide additional information as required by the Massachusetts Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education to comply with the No Child Left Behind Act.

LEGAL REFS.:       20 U.S.C. 3001 et seq. (language instruction for limited English proficient and immigrant students contained in No Child Left Behind Act of 2001)  
                          42 U.S.C. 2000d (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964)  
                          603 CMR 14.00

## **HOMEBOUND INSTRUCTION**

The schools may furnish homebound instruction to those students who are unable to attend classes for at least two consecutive weeks due to a physical injury, medical situation, or a severe emotional problem. The instruction is designed to provide maintenance in the basic academic courses so that when a student returns to school he/she will not be at a disadvantage because of the illness or the hospitalization.

To qualify for the program the student needs a written statement from a medical doctor requesting the homebound instruction, stating the reasons why, and estimating the time the student will be out of school. This statement needs to be sent to an administrator in the area of student services.

Homebound instruction is offered in subjects which do not require laboratories and special equipment, subject in all cases to the availability of qualified teachers. Certified teachers shall be assigned to homebound instruction by the Superintendent-Director or designee.

## **EXTENDED INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS**

The School District may establish and maintain programs to be kept open for the whole or any part of the summer vacation; but attendance thereon shall not be compulsory or be considered as a part of the School attendance required by law.

If the School District determines that sufficient need exists for providing a course of School instruction beyond the regular high school course of instruction, it shall study such need and methods of implementation, seek such state or other approvals as may be necessary, and thereafter establish and maintain such extended course of instruction, and may appropriate public funds for such purpose; provided that the course of instruction proposed by the School District conforms to the standards of the department of education.

## **SUMMER SCHOOLS**

The school system shall make available summer sessions as a supplement to the instruction offered during the school year, when funding for such programs is available. The focus of the program will be remedial work.

To attend summer school, students must have the approval of their classroom and/or special subject teachers.

Students at all instructional levels may attend approved summer schools for remedial, enrichment, or make-up purposes. Credit towards graduation requirements may be granted high school students in line with regulations of the School District.

All summer programs will be subject to annual approval by the District School Committee.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:28

## **ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

The School District will offer adult evening programs. All applicants must pay the required tuition with the application at the time of registration.

All other costs for program materials including texts, shop/lab equipment, safety glasses, and the like, are the responsibility of the student and must be paid at the time of registration or at the time of sale of the item(s).

All program costs are non-refundable, except in the event a course is cancelled due to insufficient enrollment prior to the start of classes, in which case only the registration and tuition fees are refundable. If a course is cancelled due to the lack of student attendance after the course has begun, no fees will be refunded. All other refunds will be done in accordance with guidelines published in the Keefe at Night catalog.

The tuition charge for a course not eligible for state reimbursement shall be fixed on the prorated basis of the state formula as it applies to a full time day school (state funded) student. A non-reimbursable course shall be offered only if sufficient enrollment exists to meet the costs incurred for the course.

Proof of residency may be required at the time of registration.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 69:1H; 69:9; 69:10; 71:71B; 71:71IE

## **INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS**

The District School Committee believes that materials appropriate to the needs of the school program must be available to each student and teacher. These will be furnished by the District School Committee subject to budgetary constraints.

The task of selecting instructional materials for programs will be delegated to the professional staff of the school system. Because instructional programs and materials are of great importance, only those that meet the following criteria will be approved by the Committee:

1. They must present balanced views of international, national, and local issues and problems of the past, present and future.
2. They must provide materials that stimulate growth in factual knowledge, literary appreciation, aesthetic and ethical values.
3. They must help students develop abilities in critical reading and thinking.
4. They must help develop and foster an appreciation of cultural diversity and development in the United States and throughout the world.
5. They must provide for all students an effective basic education that does not discriminate on the basis of race, age, color, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity, physical disabilities or sexual preference.
6. They must allow sufficient flexibility for meeting the special needs of individual students and groups of students.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:48; 71:49; 71:50  
BESE regulations 603 CMR 26.00

CROSS REF.: KEC, Public Complaints about the Curriculum or Instructional Materials



## RECONSIDERATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES

Material that is challenged usually belongs to one of the three basic categories: religion, ideology, or profanity/obscenity. Board policies regarding these areas shall be as follows:

**Religion -- Factual, unbiased material on religions has a place in school libraries.**

**Ideologies -- Libraries should, with no thought toward swaying reader judgment, make available a balanced collection of primary and factual material, on the level of their students on various ideologies or philosophies which exert or have exerted a strong force, either favorably or unfavorably, in government, current events, politics, education and other phases of life.**

**Profanity/obscenity -- Materials shall be subjected to a test of literary merit and reality in context using the criteria established.**

When a problem concerning instructional resources in a school arises, the disposition of the problem will be made in a reasonable period of time using District adopted procedures.

In accordance with the statement of philosophy, no questioned materials shall be removed from the school pending a final decision. Pending the outcome of the request for reconsideration, however, access to questioned materials can be denied to the students of the parents making the complaint, if they so desire.

If the decision of the District School Committee is that the questioned instructional resource be retained, the District will not convene a Review Committee relative to the same complaint for a period of three years. If a substantially different point of view is advanced, it will be investigated. (The period of three years does not apply in this instance).

If an individual or a group undertakes action to keep material from the shelves by checking it out and failing to return it, or by taking turns in keeping it checked out so that it is not available for student use, the Superintendent-Director shall request, in writing, the return of the material. If it is not returned within thirty (30) days, a bill for the current replacement cost of the item shall be rendered to the party holding the item.

After the District School Committee has adopted new materials or approved certain methods, that decision will not be reconsidered for a period of three years beginning with the end of the school year when the adoption is made.

## **LIBRARY MATERIALS SELECTION AND ADOPTION**

The District School Committee endorses the School Library Bill of Rights, as adopted by the American Library Association, which asserts that the responsibility of the school library is to:

1. Provide materials that will enrich and support the curriculum, taking into consideration the varied interests, abilities, and maturity levels of the students served.
2. Provide materials that will stimulate growth in factual knowledge, literary appreciation, aesthetic values, and ethical standards.
3. Provide a background of information that will enable students to make intelligent judgments in their daily lives.
4. Provide materials on opposing sides of controversial issues so that young citizens may develop under guidance the practice of critical reading and thinking.
5. Provide materials representative of the many religious, ethnic, and cultural groups and their contributions to our American heritage.
6. Place principle above personal opinion and reason above prejudice in the selection of materials of the highest quality in order to assure a comprehensive collection appropriate for the users of the library.

Initial purchase suggestions for library materials may come from all personnel--teachers, coordinators, and administrators. Students will also be encouraged to make suggestions. The librarian will recommend materials to be included in the school library. Final approval and authority for distribution of funds will rest with the building Principal subject to the approval of the Superintendent-Director.

Gifts of library books will be accepted in keeping with the above policy on selection. Complaints about library books will be handled in line with Committee policy on complaints about instructional materials.

LEGAL REF.: 603 CMR 26:05

CROSS REF.: KEC, Public Complaints about the Curriculum or Instructional Materials

## **LIBRARY RESOURCES**

The primary objective of the library/media center is to implement its resources to enrich and to support the educational program of the school.

### Definition of Library Resources

Library resources are those materials, both print and non-print, found in school libraries which support curricular and personal information needs. Print items include books, magazines, newspapers, pamphlets, microfiche or microfilm. Non-print items include films, disc records, filmstrips, slides, prints, audiotapes, videotapes, compact discs, and computer software.

### Criteria for Selection of Library Resources

The criteria for selection of library resources in the District are:

- Needs of the individual student  
Based on knowledge of students  
Based on requests of parents and students
- Needs of the individual school  
Based on knowledge of the curriculum of the school  
Based on requests from the professional staff
- Provision of a wide range of materials on many levels of difficulty with a diversity of appeal and the presentation of different points of view.
- Provision of materials of high artistic quality.
- Provision of materials with superior format.
- Reputable, unbiased, professionally prepared selection aids are consulted as guides.

In accordance with the District's policy of providing instructional materials on opposing sides of controversial issues, it should be noted that neither the media centers nor the District serve as advocates for the ideas expressed in any materials, nor does the presence of any material indicate automatic endorsement of the ideas expressed therein.

### Disclosure of Information/Privacy of Circulation Records

Circulation records shall not be made available to anyone except pursuant to such process, order, or subpoena as may be authorized by law.

### Re-evaluation (Weeding) of Library Resources

The continuous review of library/media center materials is necessary as a means of maintaining a useful and active collection. As new materials are selected and added, some older materials are withdrawn. The responsibility for determining which materials are to be withdrawn rests with the professional staff.

Among the reasons for withdrawing an item are the following:

- Curricular changes have rendered superfluous some materials (or multiple copies of materials) formerly used but no longer in demand.
- Some materials contain factual material that is no longer accurate nor current.
- Some materials intended for recreational reading have become dated or unattractive and are no longer in demand. (Some such books, which are deemed “standards” or “classics”, will be retained even though they rarely circulate).
- Some materials have become worn out, damaged or physically deteriorated and have lost utility and/or appeal.
- Some materials have been superseded by newer items, which present the same information, but in superior format.

Withdrawn library/media center materials are processed in one or more of the following ways:

- Made available to be used as resource or supplementary material by teachers.
- Offered to other media centers in the District, as it is possible that a material, which lacks utility in one building, may have some usefulness in another.
- Contributed to appropriate charitable or educational agencies.
- Discarded, when warranted.

Continuing evaluation is closely related to the goals and responsibilities of library/media centers and is a valuable tool of collection development. This procedure is not to be used as a convenient or expedient means to remove materials presumed to be controversial or likely to be disapproved by segments of the community. Materials are not to be proscribed or removed because of actual or potential partisan or doctrinal disapproval, nor because of the origin, background or views of those contributing to their creation.

## **ACCESS TO DIGITAL RESOURCES**

The District School Committee supports the right of students, employees, and community members to have reasonable access to various information formats and believes it is incumbent upon users to utilize this privilege in an appropriate manner.

### **Safety Procedures and Guidelines**

The Superintendent-Director, in conjunction with the Leadership Team, shall develop and implement appropriate procedures to provide guidance for access to digital resources. Guidelines shall address teacher supervision of student computer or tablet use, ethical use of digital resources and issues of privacy versus administrative review of electronic files and communications. In addition, guidelines shall prohibit utilization of digital resources for prohibited or illegal activities and for the use of other programs with the potential of damaging or destroying programs or data.

Internet safety measures shall be implemented that effectively address the following:

- Controlling access by minors to inappropriate matter on the Internet as defined by the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) and the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA);
- Safety and security of minors when they are using e-mail, instant messaging applications, and other forms of direct electronic communications;
- Preventing unauthorized access, including hacking, viruses, and other unlawful activities by minors online;
- Unauthorized disclosure, use and dissemination of personal information regarding minors.

The School District shall provide reasonable public notice to address and communicate its internet safety measures.

### **Empowered Digital Use**

All students and faculty must agree to and sign an Empowered Digital Use form prior to the student or staff member being granted independent access to digital resources and district networks. The required form, which specifies guidelines for using digital resources and district networks, must be signed by the parent or legal guardian of minor students (those under 18 years of age) and also by the student. This document shall be kept on file as a legal, binding document. In order to modify or rescind the agreement, the student's parent/guardian (or the student who is at least 18 years old) must provide the Principal with a written request.

### **Employee Use**

Employees shall use district email, district devices, and district networks only for purposes directly related to educational and instructional purposes.

### **Community Use**

On recommendation of the Superintendent-Director in conjunction with the Director of Technology, the district shall determine when and which computer equipment, software, and information access systems will be available to the community. All guests will be prompted to, and must accept the district's Access to Digital Resources Policy before accessing the district network.

### **Disregard of Rules and Responsibility for Damages**

Individuals who refuse to sign required Empowered Digital Use documents or who violate district rules governing the use of district technology or networks shall be subject to loss or restriction of the privilege of using equipment, software, information access systems, and network.

Individuals shall reimburse the district for repair or replacement of district property lost, stolen, damaged, or vandalized while under their care.

LEGAL REFS:           47 USC § 254

## **EMPOWERED DIGITAL USE POLICY**

### **Purpose**

The District School Committee recognizes the need for students to be prepared to contribute to and excel in a connected, global community. To that end, the district provides ongoing student instruction that develops digital citizenship skill sets for using technology as a tool. Information and communication technology are an integrated part of our curriculum across subjects and grades in developmentally appropriate ways and are aligned with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and standards, including seeking knowledge and understanding; thinking critically and solving problems; listening, communicating, and interacting effectively; and engaging and competing in a global environment.

### **Availability**

The Superintendent-Director or designee shall implement, monitor, and evaluate the district's system/network for instructional and administrative purposes.

All users shall acknowledge that they understand that using digital devices, whether personal or school owned, and the school district network is a privilege and when using them in accordance with School District guidelines they will retain that privilege.

The Superintendent-Director or designee shall develop and implement administrative guidelines, regulations, procedures, and user agreements, consistent with law and policy, which shall include but not be limited to the following:

- Digital devices, software, and networks shall be used in school for educational purposes and activities.
- An individual's personal information (including home/mobile phone numbers, mailing addresses, and passwords) and that of others shall be kept private.
- Individuals will show respect for themselves and others when using technology including social media.
- Users shall give acknowledgement to others for their ideas and work
- Users shall report inappropriate use of technology immediately

These procedures shall be reviewed annually by district administration together with students and teachers and shall provide a springboard for teaching and learning around topics such as internet safety, digital citizenship, and ethical use of technology.

## INTERNET PUBLICATION

### I. PURPOSE

The School District has established a district-wide web page that links users to web pages. The School District maintains these web pages for educational purposes only, in furtherance of the educational mission of the School District. All published pages and corresponding links to other sites must relate to the district's educational mission.

### II. SUPERVISION AND APPROVAL OF WEB PAGES

The Superintendent-Director (or his/her designee) may select the person or persons ("the School Leadership Team") responsible for overseeing the school district's web pages and maintaining the web pages in a manner consistent with this policy and the school district's Access to Digital Resources Policy. The School Leadership Team must approve all links from the district web pages to other sites on the Internet. The School Leadership Team will review the links to ensure that the links are related to the district's educational mission.

Staff members may publish web pages related to their class projects or courses on the school's web site. Staff members must submit their material to the School Leadership Team for approval before the material can be published. Staff members may not publish or link to personal web pages as part of the school district web site.

Student or staff work (e.g. voice, likeness, quotes, written material, musical pieces and graphic or other artwork) may be published on the district's web pages, as detailed below. All work that is published will be accompanied by a copyright notice written by the School Leadership Team that prohibits copying the work without the written consent of the copyright holder.

### III. CONTENT STANDARDS

All web page materials are expected to be accurate, grammatically correct and free of spelling errors. Student work may deviate from this standard depending upon the age and grade level of the student. Web pages should be well-organized and professional in appearance. Web pages must not contain copyrighted or trademarked material belonging to others unless written permission to display such material has been obtained from the owner and the owner is credited on the school's web page.



#### **IV. SAFETY PRECAUTIONS**

##### **A. In general**

Identifying information about students, such as personal phone numbers or home addresses, will not be published. First names or first names and the first letter of the student's last name may be used where appropriate. The student handbook contains information regarding parents/guardians ability to opt out of having their students information published.

##### **B. Staff photographs, identifying information and work**

- Photographs of staff members, accompanied by the staff member's full name, may be published only with the staff member's written consent.
- Staff work, e.g. voice, likeness, quotes, written material, musical pieces and graphic or other artwork, may be published only with the staff member's written consent.

## **POLICY ON FACEBOOK AND SOCIAL NETWORKING WEB SITES**

The Superintendent-Director and the School Principal will annually remind staff members and orient new staff members concerning the importance of maintaining proper decorum in the on-line, digital world as well as in person. Employees must conduct themselves in ways that do not distract from or disrupt the educational process. The orientation and reminders will give special emphasis to:

- 1) Improper fraternization with students using Facebook and similar internet sites or social networks, or via cell phone, texting or telephone.
  - a. Teachers may not list current students as “friends” on networking sites.
  - b. All e-contacts with students should be through the district’s computer and telephone system, except emergency situations.
  - c. All contact and messages by coaches with team members shall be sent to all team members, except for messages concerning medical or academic privacy matters, in which case the messages will be copied to the athletic director and the school principal.
  - d. Teachers will not give out their private cell phone or home phone numbers without prior approval of the district.
  - e. Inappropriate contact via e-mail or phone is prohibited.
- 2) Inappropriateness of posting items with sexual content
- 3) Inappropriateness of posting items exhibiting or advocating use of drugs and alcohol
- 4) Examples of inappropriate behavior from other districts, as behavior to avoid
- 5) Monitoring and penalties for improper use of district computers and technology
- 6) The possibility of penalties, including dismissal from employment, for failure to exercise good judgment in on-line conduct.

The Superintendent-Director or designees will periodically conduct internet searches to see if teachers have posted inappropriate materials on-line. When inappropriate use of computers and websites is discovered, the School Principal and Superintendent-Director will promptly bring that inappropriate use to the attention of the staff member and may consider and apply disciplinary action up to and including termination.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

The District School Committee recognizes that firsthand learning experiences provided by field trips are a most effective and worthwhile means of learning. It is the desire of the Committee to encourage field trips as part of and directly related to the total school program and curriculum.

Specific guidelines and appropriate administrative procedures shall be developed to screen, approve, and evaluate trips and to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken for the safety of the participants. Said guidelines and procedures should be developed by the Administration and reviewed and approved by the District School Committee.

These guidelines and appropriate administrative procedures shall ensure that all field trips have the approval of the Principal and that all overnight trips have the prior approval of appropriate Administrative level.

CROSS REF.: JJH, Policy Relating to Field Trips Involving Late Night or Overnight Travel

## **COMMUNITY RESOURCE PERSONS/ SPEAKERS**

Human resources are those individuals or groups who are invited into the schools to present supplementary information and ideas to the classroom course of study. These experiences afford students the opportunity to benefit from community viewpoints. Care should be taken in selecting these speakers so that they are individuals who respect diversity in thinking and varying views and who are not attempting to inappropriately influence points of view.

CROSS REF.: ADDA, C.O.R.I. Requirements

## **SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS**

It is the policy of the District School Committee to encourage volunteer efforts in the school. Parents/guardians, business representatives, senior citizens, and other community volunteers are recognized as important sources of support and expertise to enhance the instructional program and vital communication links with the community. The volunteer program will be coordinated in cooperation with building administrators.

CROSS REF.: ADDA, Background Checks

## **STUDENT PROGRESS REPORTS TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS**

The District School Committee recognizes the school's obligation to give periodic reports of a student's progress and grades. The District School Committee further recognizes that these reports are a vital form of communication between the schools and parents. The District School Committee also believes that all progress reports must be based upon full information, accurately and honestly reported with the proper maintenance of confidentiality.

A report depicting the student's progress will be issued periodically following an evaluation by the appropriate teacher, teachers, or other professional personnel.

In addition to the periodic reports, parents will be notified when a student's performance requires special notification.

Grading and promotion will be based on improvement, achievement, capability of the student, and the professional judgment of the teacher and Principal.

Major changes in the reporting system shall be preceded by a cooperative study and evaluation by teachers, principals, parents, and the Superintendent-Director, who will submit the proposal to the District School Committee for consideration and approval.

## **PROMOTION AND RETENTION OF STUDENTS**

The District School Committee is dedicated to the best total and continuous development of each student enrolled. The professional staff is expected to place students at the grade level best suited to them academically, socially, and emotionally.

In evaluating student achievement, each teacher will make use of all available information, including results of teacher-made tests and other measures of skill and content mastery, standardized test results, and teacher observation of student performance. The Principal will direct and aid teachers in their evaluations and review grade assignments in order to ensure uniformity of evaluation standards.

Students will normally progress annually from grade to grade. Exceptions may be made when, in the judgment of the professional staff, such exceptions are in the best educational interest of the students involved. Exceptions will only be made after prior notification and explanation to each student's parents/guardians, but the final decision will rest with the building Principal.

## EVALUATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS

The District School Committee considers comprehensive and objective evaluation of the effectiveness of the curriculum to be of primary importance. The Superintendent-Director will provide for the translation of the stated instructional goals into objectives and for appraisal of their implementation in order to:

1. Determine educational needs and provide information for planning.
2. Indicate instructional strengths and weaknesses.
3. Check on the suitability of programs in terms of community requirements.
4. Show the relationship between achievement and the system's stated goals.
5. Provide data for public information.

Elements of this evaluation process may include:

1. Testing programs such as nationally standardized general achievement tests, nationally standardized tests in specific subject areas, and tests administered by other agencies.
2. Study of school achievement records.
3. Study of students' high school and drop-out records.
4. Use of outside services, participation in regional research studies, contracted evaluation services; evaluation services at cost to the school system must be approved in advance by the District School Committee.
5. Teacher and parent evaluation of student behavior.
6. State Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education specialists and services.
7. Evaluation by the regional accrediting association.
8. Evaluation by other agencies.

An evaluation of the curriculum and its effectiveness will be made periodically and reported to the Committee by the Superintendent-Director.



## **TEACHING ACTIVITIES/PRESENTATIONS**

It is the desire of the District School Committee that the best available strategies for bringing about learning be utilized in the District's school. The instructional staff shall be expected to keep abreast of new and promising instructional ideas and practices developed in schools throughout the nation and to apply those which have potential for improving the learning program in the District's school.

An educational climate shall be established which shall be conducive to rational thought, inquiry, and respect for the dignity of the individual. This educational climate will assist students in learning how to think rather than what to think and shall provide students the opportunity to identify, express, and defend their opinions without penalty or fear of reprisal or ridicule.

Nothing in this policy shall limit a parent/guardian's right to file a complaint to challenge the use of teaching activity or presentation.

## **SCHOOL CEREMONIES AND OBSERVANCES**

The United States Constitution and the Constitution of the State of Massachusetts and related court rulings clearly establish the concept of "church and state separation" and the "preclusion of sectarian instruction in public schools."

In order to help staff members abide by the spirit and letter of the law, and to avoid compromising any student's religious or conscientious beliefs or freedoms, the following guidelines have been established:

The observance of religious holidays is not the responsibility of the public schools.

While it is recognized that many activities are initiated with the approach of major holidays in order to capitalize on the readiness and interest that is generated at these times, it should be understood that such occasions frequently have religious underpinnings. Care should be taken to relate only to secular aspects of these holidays.

Music programs given at times close to religious holidays should not use religious aspect of these holidays as the underlying motive or theme. Although religious music is appropriate in the schools to the extent that it is sung or presented for musical rather than religious content, its use should not violate the secular nature of the school. Pageants, plays, recitals, and other literary or dramatic activities should not be used to convey religious messages. While the holidays represent a valid source of ideas for meaningful school art experiences, teachers should avoid assigning or encouraging art work that promotes religious aspects of such holidays. If, however, individual students choose to use a religious personage, event, or symbol as the vehicle for an artistic expression, they should be allowed to take this action.

The above statements should not be interpreted to preclude the factual and objective teaching about religions, religious holidays, and religious differences. Such instruction will be permitted in the schools since insights in this area can enhance the mutual understanding needed by all the people in a pluralistic society.

LEGAL REF.:           603 CMR 26:05

## ANIMALS IN SCHOOL

No animal shall be brought to school without prior permission of the building Principal.

The District is committed to providing a high quality educational program to all students in a safe and healthy environment.

School Principals, in consultation with the Health Services Providers, shall utilize the Department of Public Health publication "Guidelines for Animals in Schools or on School Grounds" and review student health records to determine which animals may be allowed in the school building. The decision of the Principal shall be final.

### Educational Program

Use of animals to achieve specific curriculum objectives may be allowed by the building Principal provided student health and safety is not jeopardized and the individual requesting that the animal be brought to school is responsible for adhering to the "Guidelines for Animals in Schools or on School Grounds" and any other conditions established by the Principal to protect the health and well-being of students.

### Student Health

The health and well-being of students is the District's highest priority. Animals may cause an allergic reaction or otherwise impair the health of students. No animals may be brought to school or kept in the school, classroom, office or common area that may negatively impact the health of any student who must utilize that area. Animals that cause an allergic reaction or impair the health of students shall be removed from the school immediately so that no student shall have his/her health impaired and each student shall have full access to available educational opportunities.

### Animals Prohibited from School

Rabies is a growing problem and any fur-bearing animal is susceptible to this very serious fatal disease. Infected animals can transmit this disease to students and staff. Based on the Massachusetts Departments of Health and Education recommendations the following animals are prohibited from schools within the School District.

**Wild Animals and Domestic Stray Animals** - Because of the high incidence of rabies in bats, raccoons, skunks, foxes and other wild carnivores, these animals should not be permitted in school buildings under any circumstances (including dead animals).

**Fur-Bearing Animals** (pet dogs,\* cats, wolf-hybrids, ferrets, etc.) - These animals may pose a risk for transmitting rabies, as well as parasites, fleas, other diseases and injuries.

**Bats** - Bats pose a high risk for transmitting rabies. Bat houses should not be installed on school grounds and bats should not be brought into the school building.

**Poisonous Animals** - Spiders, venomous insects and poisonous snakes, reptiles and lizards are prohibited for safety reasons.

**\*Exception: Guide, Hearing and Other Service Dogs or Law Enforcement Dogs** - These animals may be allowed in school or on school grounds with proof of current rabies vaccination.

Exceptions may be made with the prior approval of the Superintendent-Director of Schools.

### **Service Animals (Guide or Assistance Dogs)**

The District School Committee does not permit discrimination against individuals with disabilities, including those who require the assistance of a service animal. The District will comply with Massachusetts law concerning the rights of persons with guide or assistance dogs and with federal law and will permit such animals on school premises and on school transportation.

For purposes of this policy, a “service animal includes any dog that has been individually trained to do the work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability.” The regulations further state that “a public entity shall make reasonable modifications in policies, practices, or procedures to permit the use of a miniature horse by an individual with a disability if the horse has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of the individual with the disability.”

Service animals perform some of the functions and tasks that individuals with disabilities cannot perform themselves. Service animals are not pets. There are several kinds of service animals that assist individuals with disabilities. Examples include, but are not limited to, animals that:

- assist individuals who are blind or have severe sight impairments as “seeing eye dogs” or “guide dogs;”
- alert individuals with hearing impairments to sounds;
- pull wheelchairs or carry and pick-up items for individuals with mobility impairments; and
- assist mobility-impaired individuals with balance.

The District shall not assume or take custody or control of, or responsibility for, any service animal or the care or feeding thereof. The owner or person having custody and control of the animal shall be liable for any damage to persons, premises, property, or facilities caused by the service animal, including, but not limited to, clean up, stain removal, etc.

If, in the opinion of the School Principal or authorized designee, any service animal is not in the control of its handler, or if it is not housebroken, the service animal may be excluded from the school or program. The service animal can also be excluded if it presents a direct and immediate threat to others in the school. The parent or guardian of the student having custody and control of the animal will be required to remove the service animal from District premises immediately.

If any student or staff member assigned to the classroom in which a service animal is permitted suffers an allergic reaction to the animal, the person having custody and control of the animal will be required to remove the animal to a different location designated by the Building Principal or designee and an alternative plan will be developed with appropriate District staff. Such plan could include the reassignment of the person having custody and control of the animal to a different classroom. This will also apply if an individual on school transportation suffers an allergic reaction. In this case, an alternate plan will be developed in coordination with appropriate school, District, and transportation staff including the involvement of the parents/guardian of the student.

When a student will be accompanied by a service animal at school or in other District facilities on a regular basis, such staff member or such student’s parent or guardian, as well as the animal’s owner and any other person who will have custody and control of the animal will be required to sign a document stating that they have read and understood the foregoing.

The Superintendent-Director of Schools or his/her designee shall be responsible for developing procedures to accommodate a student's use of an assistance animal in District facilities and on school transportation vehicles.

LEGAL REF.: 28 CFR, Part 35