

**SECTION I**  
**INSTRUCTION**

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## **ACADEMIC FREEDOM**

The 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 and submitted to the 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:

1. Elementary school will operate for a minimum of 180 days. Schools shall ensure that every elementary school student is scheduled to receive a minimum of 900 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.
2. Secondary schools will operate for a minimum of 180 days. Schools shall ensure that every secondary school 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 schools 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 and set by the Committee.

The Superintendent 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 that students will not be admitted into the school building until 15 minutes prior to the start of the official day unless bus schedules require earlier admittance.

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.

The structure will consist of multiple levels (for example, Primary/Elementary, Middle and Secondary levels).

The Primary/Elementary level includes schools with kindergarten through grade five. The Middle level consists of schools for grades six, seven and eight The Secondary level consists of schools with grades nine, ten, eleven, and twelve. \*

Special education services are integrated across each grade level in all schools.

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

## **SUPPORT SERVICES PROGRAMS**

To support the classroom activities and other instructional needs of the District, various educational services as listed shall be provided. The Support Services staff will work in cooperation with building staff and the administration of the District 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 Executive Director for Special Education and Student Services 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 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 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.

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, 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  
                          603 CMR 26:05

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

The School Committee will attempt to provide every student with an opportunity for wholesome and enriched educational experiences. It is the Committee's belief that the following basic aims and objectives of the physical education program will contribute to this goal:

1. To aid the development of the entire student so that a well trained mind may function properly in a healthy body.
2. To encourage student participation in vigorous physical activity while in school, and to teach the skills of those activities so that they will have a carry-over value for later activities in every day life.
3. To increase appreciation of physical fitness and its importance in regard to good health.
4. To impress upon students the importance of integrating one's mind, body and attitude in preparing to face the obligations of a complex society.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:1; 71:3  
Board of Education Regulations Pertaining to Physical Education, adopted  
4/25/78, effective 9/1/78  
603 CMR 26:05

## **OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION**

The School Committee recognizes that students in kindergarten through grade 12 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 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 School Committee is committed to a sound, comprehensive health education program as an integral part of each student's general education. **Health education will be taught as a separate academic discipline in grades K through 6 and as a separate class in grade 7.**

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 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**

New Bedford 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 schools will be notified in writing of the courses and curriculum we offer that primarily involve human sexual or human sexuality issues. The Superintendent of Schools 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 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 for review of the issue. The Superintendent 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's decision may send a written request to the School Committee for review of the issue. The 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 of Schools 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 in grades K-12.

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 Superintendent and approved by the School Committee.

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.

SOURCE: MASC March 2016

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

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

Adopted: September, 2016

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

The goals of this school system's special education program are to allow each child to grow and achieve at his 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 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 School Committee ensures equivalence in the provision of curriculum materials and supplies.

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

## **ENGLISH LEARNERS**

The District shall provide suitable research-based language instructional programs for all identified English Learners (EL) in grades Kindergarten through 12 in accordance with the requirements of state and federal statutes and Massachusetts Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) regulations and guidance on Identification, Assessment, Placement, and Reclassification of English Learners. Federal civil rights law requires districts to take appropriate steps to address the language barriers that prevent EL's from meaningfully participating in their education..

The District shall establish procedures in accordance with DESE guidelines to identify students whose native language is a language other than English through by administrating the DESE home language survey to all newly enrolled students. District shall administer screening assessments, and parents/guardian of initial placement. 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 native language is a language other than English, Districts shall address the linguistic, academic, and non-academic needs of EL's across their school trajectory, including after they have exited the district EL program.

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)

Every Students Succeeds Acts of 2016 (ESSA)

M.G.L. 71A

603 CMR 14.00; 14.02

Adopted/Reviewed/Updated: 10/24/2016

## **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 the Executive Director of Special Education and Student Services.

Homebound instruction is offered in basic elementary subjects and in secondary 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 or designee.

## **HOME SCHOOLING**

The Massachusetts General Law requires the School Committee to determine that a Home Schooling program meet with the minimum standards established for public schools in the Commonwealth prior to approving such a program.

When a parent or guardian of a student below the age of 16 wants to establish a home-based educational program for his/her child, the following procedures shall be followed in accordance with the law:

Prior to removing the child from public school:

The parent/guardian must submit written notification of establishment of the home-based program to the appropriate administrator 14 days before the program is established, and resubmit notification on an annual basis as long as the child or children are being educated in a home-based environment.

The parent/guardian must certify in writing, on a form provided by the District, the name, age, place of residence, and number of hours of attendance of each child in the program.

The Superintendent shall give the notice to produce records required by law if there is probable cause to believe the program is not in compliance with the law. Factors to be considered by the Superintendent or School Committee in deciding whether or not to approve a home education proposal may be:

1. The proposed curriculum and the number of hours of instruction in each of the proposed subjects.
2. The competency of the parents to teach the children,
3. The textbooks, workbooks and other instructional aids to be used by the children and the lesson plans and teaching manuals to be used by the parents.
4. Periodic standardized testing of the children to ensure educational progress and the attainment of minimum standards.

**A student being educated in a home-based program within the District may have access to public school activities of either a curricular or extracurricular nature upon approval of the Superintendent.**

**A student, with the approval of the School Committee, may be awarded a high school diploma if he/she or she has satisfied the Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education's competency requirements and has met the District's educational standards for graduation.**

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 69:1D; 76:1, Care and Protection of Charles  
Care and Protections of Charles - MASS. Supreme Judicial Court 399 Mass.  
324 (1987)

## **HOME EDUCATED STUDENTS/ATHLETIC ELIGIBILITY**

Home educated students will be eligible to participate in interscholastic athletics at New Bedford High School if the following conditions are met:

1. The educational plan for the home educated student has been approved by the Superintendent or his/her designee.
2. The Headmaster has determined appropriate high school grade placement (9-12) for each home educated student in conjunction with chronological age and educational plan.
3. The student resides in the school district that serves New Bedford High School and must be living with his/her parents or legal guardians in the family residence.
4. The Headmaster is satisfied that the student meets the guidelines for athletic participation required for all other students as defined in the current MIAA Handbook. This should include, but not be limited to, those rules governing transfers, academic eligibility, age requirements, and the number of consecutive seasons of athletic eligibility beyond grade eight.
5. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian/student to notify the Headmaster in writing by August 1 for fall sports, November 1 for winter sports, and March 1 for spring sports of a home educated student's desire to participate for that season.
6. MIAA requirements relative to academic eligibility must be reviewed by the Headmaster at the same times that all other student athletes are to be certified as academically eligible. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian/student to make grade reports available to the Headmaster one week prior to the start of each season and one week prior to the issuance of report cards to the students at New Bedford High School.
7. If the Headmaster determines that all eligibility standards detailed above have been met, the Headmaster may declare the student immediately eligible to participate in interscholastic competition. The rights, privileges, and responsibilities associated with all other students attending MIAA members schools will apply to home educated students who have satisfied the requirements above.

## **ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL PROGRAMS**

Some children have great difficulty coping with the conventional school program and as a result will drop out of school. Some children require more support and direct supervision than is reasonably available in conventional school settings. And, some children, along with a highly structured academic experience, require a special focus on life skills and an appropriate vocational involvement.

The School Committee will provide alternative education programs where these needs have been identified, where establishment of such programs is feasible, and where the proposed programs fall within the function normally associated with the public school system.

These alternative educational programs will seek to provide an appropriate academic, social, and vocational experience to aid these young people either to reenter the regular school system, move into another educational setting, or prepare them for successful employment.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:37I; 71:37J

Board of Education Regulations Pertaining to Section 8 of Chapter 636 of the Acts of 1974, Regarding Magnet School Facilities and Magnet Educational Programs, adopted 2/25/75

Adopted/Reviewed/Updated: 10/24/2016

## **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 program will focus on enrichment opportunities, remedial work, and the continuity of a student's educational program.

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.

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

Adopted/Reviewed/Updated: 10/24/2016

## INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

The 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 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

Adopted/Reviewed/Updated: 10/24/2016

## 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 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 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 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.

Adopted/Reviewed/Updated: 10/24/2016

## LIBRARY MATERIALS SELECTION AND ADOPTION

The 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.

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

Adopted/Reviewed/Updated: 10/24/2016

## 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.

Adopted/Reviewed/Updated: 10/24/2016

## ACCESS TO DIGITAL RESOURCES

The 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, in conjunction with the Director of Technology, 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 Director of Technology 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 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

Adopted/Reviewed/Updated: 10/24/2016

## **EMPOWERED DIGITAL USE POLICY**

### **Purpose**

The 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 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 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.

Adopted/Reviewed/Updated: 10/24/2016

## **INTERNET PUBLICATION**

### **I. PURPOSE**

The School District has established a district-wide web page that links users to web pages for the district's individual schools. 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 (or his/her designee) may select the person or persons ("the Webmaster") 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 Webmaster must approve all links from the district web pages to other sites on the Internet. The Webmaster 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 their school's web site. Staff members must submit their material to the Webmaster 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 Webmaster 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 first and last names, 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.

B. Student photographs

- Student photographs may be published only with the written consent of the student's parent or guardian.
- Student photographs will not be accompanied by identifying information about the student(s).

C. Student work

Student work, e.g. voice, likeness, quotes, written material, musical pieces, and graphic or other artwork, may be published only with the written consent of the student's parent or guardian.

D. 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.

Adopted/Reviewed/Updated: 10/24/2016

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

The Superintendent and the School Principals 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 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 Principals and Superintendent 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.

Adopted/Reviewed/Updated: 10/24/2016

## **FIELD TRIPS**

The School Committee recognizes the educational value of field trips, tours and excursions, when an adjunct to an approved program and designed to attain specific program objectives. The School Committee feels that field trips are a privilege and not an entitlement. To the extent that budgetary resources permit, the Committee encourages and sanctions student trips and other out-of-district school activities, including participation in community civic projects and international travel which are of value in helping achieve each participating student's educational objectives.

All field trips require both the Principal and the Superintendent's administrative approval. Requests for overnight trips must be approved by the Superintendent or designee, with attention paid to the specific instructional objectives and the overall educational value of the trip. All out of state or extended (overnight) trips and excursions, except those required for student participation in tournament competition or contests, must have advance approval of the School Committee. Fund-raising activities for such trips shall be subject to approval by the Superintendent or designee. All Committee policies and administrative regulations concerning students will be in effect for all approved field trips, excursions and travel experiences.

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

Adopted/Reviewed/Updated: 10/24/2016

## 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

Adopted/Reviewed/Updated: 10/24/2016

## SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS

It is the policy of the School Committee to encourage volunteer efforts in the schools. 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

Adopted/Reviewed/Updated: 10/24/2016

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

The School Committee recognizes the school's obligation to give periodic reports of a student's progress and grades. The School Committee further recognizes that these reports are a vital form of communication between the schools and parents. The 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 Assistant Superintendent, who will submit the proposal to the School Committee for consideration and approval.

Adopted/Reviewed/Updated: 10/24/2016

## **PROMOTION AND RETENTION OF STUDENTS**

The 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.

Adopted/Reviewed/Updated: 10/24/2016

**GRADUATION EXERCISES  
(NEW BEDFORD HIGH SCHOOL)**

To maintain a graduation exercise which offers dignity and reflects a well-organized and orderly presentation, the following steps shall be observed:

1. The number of tickets issued to each graduating senior shall be eight (8).
2. Adults will perform the duty of ticket collectors, along with police security. The cadets/students will distribute booklets.
3. EVERY INDIVIDUAL, including all children, will require a ticket.
4. There will be a special seating section for up to one hundred (100) NBHS staff members only.
  5. Required policy security will be set as recommended by the Graduation Committee.
  6. The officer in charge of the police detail for graduation shall meet with the headmaster and his designees a week before graduation day.
  7. Events connected to the ceremony, such as positioning of graduates, practice of the conclusion of the ceremony, decorations, sound system, etc., shall be reviewed annually.
  8. Communications in the form of newsletters, parent letters, media publications, etc., shall be issued to explain the school's expectations to the students, parents and guests.
  9. Security of the field will be reviewed annually.
  10. Handicap seating will be located on the track or pre-arranged designated area and will require a special ticket. Additionally, only ONE PERSON will be allowed to accompany the individual given the special seating. The headmaster's designee shall be in charge of this area.
  11. Media personnel asking to access the field will be contacted and given passes and notified of the specific expectations of the school administration.
  12. A decision regarding postponement of the graduation exercises will be made by the Headmaster by 5:00 pm.

Adopted/Reviewed/Updated: 10/24/2016

## **EVALUATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS**

The School Committee considers comprehensive and objective evaluation of the effectiveness of the curriculum to be of primary importance. The Superintendent 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 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.

Adopted/Reviewed/Updated: 10/24/2016

## **TEACHING ACTIVITIES/PRESENTATIONS**

It is the desire of the School Committee that the best available strategies for bringing about learning be utilized in the District's schools. 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 schools.

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.

Adopted/Reviewed/Updated: 10/24/2016

## **TEACHING ABOUT CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES/CONTROVERSIAL SPEAKERS**

An important goal of the schools is to help prepare students for intelligent and conscientious participation as citizens in our democratic society. One step toward meeting this goal is to introduce students to reasoned and dispassionate approaches to the analysis of contemporary social and political issues. To insure that these issues can be examined in an atmosphere as free from emotion and prejudice as the times permit, the School Committee establishes the following guidelines for discussion of controversial issues in the schools.

### Teacher-Planned Classroom Discussions

1. Controversial issues selected by teachers for classroom discussion must relate directly to the objectives and content of courses approved by the School Committee for inclusion in the curriculum.
2. The teachers' right to introduce controversial issues in classroom presentations does not include the right of advocacy. Teachers must refrain from using their positions to express partisan points of view.
3. The approach to discussion of these issues in the classroom must be objective and scholarly with minimum emphasis on opinion and maximum emphasis on intelligent analysis.
4. Teachers must ensure that the reasoned arguments of all sides of an issue are given equal presentation and emphasis in classroom discussions.
5. Teachers may invite visitors from outside the schools to give presentations on controversial issues when the visitors offer qualifications and resources not available in the schools. All visitors are to be guided by the standards of language usage that prevail in the classrooms and by the standards of scholarly inquiry set forth above. Whenever possible, teachers who invite visitors to present one side of an issue will also invite visitors to present the other side(s).
6. In all cases teachers must obtain from the appropriate Principal permission to invite visitors for classroom presentations. Permission must be requested at least 48 hours before the scheduled time of presentation.

### Student-Initiated Forums on Controversial Issues

Student groups may request permission to conduct forums on controversial issues in the schools. The Principal may grant such requests under the following conditions:

1. Preparation for presentation of a forum will not cause any student or teacher to miss class and will not cause the cancellation of any class.

2. Adequate advance planning must be conducted for each forum. A request to hold a forum must be received by the Principal at least three weeks before the scheduled date of presentation. For each request the Principal will appoint, after consultation with the requesting student group, an adult advisory group consisting of at least two parents and two faculty members.

3. The standards for approach to discussion, style of presentation, and use of visitors as defined above will apply to student-initiated forums.

#### Requests from Groups or Individuals Outside the Schools

No permission will be granted non-school groups or individuals to make presentations on controversial issues in the schools during school hours. Requests for after-school or evening use will be processed in accordance with the Committee's policy on community use of school facilities.

No permission will be granted outsiders for distribution of literature on controversial issues to students in general or to class groups.

A Principal may grant an outside group or individual permission to post one notice of a public meeting for discussion of issues if the language of that notice conforms to the standards that prevail in the community. The Principal will determine the appropriate bulletin board for such notices.

Adopted/Reviewed/Updated: 10/24/2016

## 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

Adopted/Reviewed/Updated: 10/24/2016

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

New Bedford Public Schools strives to develop in our students an understanding of how the principles of democracy, equality, freedom, law and justice evolve in American society.

The New Bedford School Committee recognizes the importance of the Pledge of Allegiance in teaching these ideals.

The New Bedford School Committee affirms Massachusetts General School Law (Chapter 72, Section 69) on the display of the flag and the reciting of the Pledge on a daily basis.

The method of reciting the Pledge of Allegiance shall be left up to the discretion of the building principal.

The School Committee also affirms that students or teachers cannot be disciplined or singled out for failing to salute the flag.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 72:69

Adopted/Reviewed/Updated: 10/24/2016

## ANIMALS IN SCHOOL

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

The School 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 in each building, 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 and School Grounds

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 and school grounds 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 of Schools.

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

The 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 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

Adopted/Reviewed/Updated: 10/24/2016