

INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

The primary function of a school program is the instruction of students. All staff activities and efforts shall be directed toward providing a high quality, effective, and ever-improving instructional program.

There are primarily three functions involved in carrying out the instructional program:

- Operating Function
- Coordinating and Developing Function
- Evaluating Function

The operating function involves classroom instruction and building program management. The coordinating and developing function includes monitoring activities (curriculum development), in-service education, and special services. The evaluation function involves data collection and synthesis and establishing future direction.

Revised: January 18, 1996

SOURCE: MASC Policy

LEGAL REFS.: 603 CMR 26:00

CROSS REF.: AD, Educational Philosophy
ADA, School District Goals and Objectives

ACADEMIC FREEDOM

The Dracut 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.

SOURCE: MASC Policy

LEGAL REFS.: 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 Dracut School Committee for approval by June 1st of each year. 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. No later than the 1997-1998 school year, 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. No later than the 1997-1998 school year, all 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.

{ Adoption date }

SOURCE: MASC Policy

Revised: May 24, 1996

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 4:7; 15:1G; 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

NOTE: When a policy covers two topics that appear consecutively in the classification system, the codes and headings can be combined, as shown at the top of this page.

The category "School Year" is designed for policies about the year for students, rather than the working year for teachers and other staff members.

SCHOOL DAY

The length of the school day at various levels, as well as 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 admitted into the school building until staff is available for supervision.

SOURCE: MASC Policy

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 15:1G; 71:1; 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 three departments -- the Elementary level, the Secondary Education level, and Learning Support Services.

The Elementary level includes schools with pre-kindergarten through grade six. The Secondary Education level consists of middle level schools for grades seven and eight, and senior high schools for grades nine, ten, eleven, and twelve. Learning Support Services consists of special services, federal programs, curriculum evaluation and development, as well as other specialized programs of instruction.

The organization is designed to meet the standards of accreditation as required by the State Department of Education and to serve the needs of all students.

SOURCE: MASC Policy

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 as well as adhere to the mastery objectives as set forth in the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. To be successful, curriculum development must be a collaborative enterprise involving staff and administrators utilizing their professional expertise and gathering input from parents, and community.

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.

{ Adoption date }

SOURCE: MASC Policy

Revised: January 18, 1996

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

LEARNING SUPPORT SERVICES PROGRAMS

To support the classroom activities and other instructional needs of the District, various educational services as listed shall be provided. The Learning 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 Assistant to the Superintendent and/or Executive Director of Special Education shall be responsible for all programs for educationally handicapped and gifted students' psychological services, speech correction, homebound and hospital teaching, and such other programs as may be assigned to Learning Support Services.

SOURCE: MASC Policy

REMEDIAL INSTRUCTION

Remedial Reading

Remedial reading teachers and/or remedial reading tutors may be assigned to assist those students whenever applicable. Standard procedures will be established for entry into and exit from the remedial reading program. The procedures will be reviewed annually.

SOURCE: MASC Policy

ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMS

It is the philosophy of the District to provide programs for all its students. Where additional programs and/or environments could facilitate meeting the needs of students and the philosophy and objectives of the District, alternative programs may be established.

Definition

Alternative programs are defined as provisions within the public education system which offer major choices among diverse educational environments based on student needs, talents and interests; occupy a significant proportion of an individual student's time; and meet the District's philosophy and objectives.

Development

Any project shall have been discussed with the Administration and must receive its endorsement prior to development.

Alternative programs shall observe all policies and regulations that govern all of the schools and programs of the District unless specifically waived by the board.

Proposals for alternative programs must include a design for evaluating the effectiveness in achieving the purposes of the program and determining the extent to which it is successful in achieving the philosophy and objectives of the District. Alternative programs will be reviewed and evaluated annually for the first three years with a recommendation to the committee as to continuation of the programs.

Approval

Alternative programs shall be approved by the committee prior to implementation.

{ Adoption date }

SOURCE: MASC Policy

Revised: January 18, 1996

CURRICULUM ADOPTION

The Dracut 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.

{ Adoption date }

Revised: January 18, 1996

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

SOURCE: MASC Policy

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.

{ Adoption date }

Revised: January 18, 1996

SOURCE: MASC Policy

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

BASIC INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

Curricula

- (1) The curricula of all public school systems shall present in fair perspective the culture, history, activities, and contributions of persons and groups of different races, nationalities, sexes, and colors.
- (2) All schoolbooks, instructional and educational materials shall be reviewed for sex-role and minority group stereotyping. Appropriate activities, discussions and/or supplementary materials shall be used to counteract the stereotypes depicted in such materials.
- (3) School books, instructional and educational materials purchased after the date of 603 CMR 26.00 shall in the aggregate, include characterizations and situations which depict individuals of both sexes and of minority groups in a broad variety of positive rolls.
- (4) Each school shall provide equal opportunity for physical education for all students. Goals, objectives and skill development standards, where used, shall neither be designated on the basis of sex nor designed to have an adverse impact on members of either sex.

Revised: January 18, 1996

SOURCE: MASC Policy

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

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The Dracut 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.

{ Adoption date }

Revised: January 18, 1996

SOURCE: MASC Policy

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:1; 71:3

HEALTH EDUCATION

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

The Dracut 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 Dracut 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 Dracut 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.

{ Adoption date }

Revised: January 18, 1996

SOURCE: MASC Policy

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

PARENTAL NOTIFICATION RELATIVE TO SEX EDUCATION

In accordance with General Laws Chapter 71, Section 32A, the Dracut 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 curriculum 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 School.

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 1st of each year.

Adoption date: April 15, 1997

SOURCE: MASC Policy

REF.: Department of Education

**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.

{ Adoption date }

Revised: January 18, 1996

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

SOURCE: MASC Policy

TEACHING ABOUT DRUGS, ALCOHOL, AND TOBACCO

In accordance with state and federal law, the District shall provide age-appropriate, developmentally based drug and alcohol education and prevention programs in grades K-12.

The drug and alcohol education program shall address the legal, social, and health consequences of drug and alcohol use. It shall include special instruction as to the effects upon the human system; the emotional, psychological and social dangers of such use with emphasis on nonuse by school age children and the illegal aspects of such use. The program also shall include information about effective techniques for resisting peer pressure to use illicit drugs or alcohol.

The objectives of this program, as stated below, are rooted in the Board'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 each individual to the dangers of drugs, alcohol, and tobacco.

To create an awareness of the total drug problem-prevention, education, treatment, rehabilitation, and law enforcement on the local, state, national and international levels.

To relate the use of drugs and alcohol to physical, mental, social and emotional practices.

To develop the student's ability to make intelligent choices based on facts and to develop the courage to stand by one's own convictions.

To understand the personal, social and economic problems causing the misuse of drugs and alcohol.

To develop an interest in preventing illegal use of drugs in the community.

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

{Adoption date}

Revised: January 18, 1996

SOURCE: MASC Policy

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

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.

{ Adoption date }

Revised: July 29, 1996

SOURCE: MASC Policy

LEGAL REFS.: The Individuals with Disabilities Ed. Act (PL 94-142 adopted 1/1/91)
 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 also 603 CMR 28:00 inclusive

NOTE: A school system's procedures for implementing Chapter 766 are often too extensive to include in a policy manual. In such instances, a note can be added to the policy to point out the existence and availability of a document containing current procedures.

PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

In keeping with the intention of the state of Massachusetts to offer educational opportunities to all students, which 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.

SOURCE: MASC Policy

Observation of Education Programs by Parents and Their Designees for Evaluation Purposes

1. Receiving and Responding to Observation Requests

Parents wishing to observe a program for evaluation purposes must submit a written request to the Executive Director of Special Education. The request must include the name of the student at issue, the school the student attends, the name of the program that the parent requests to observe, the nature of the request, and contact information. The Executive Director reserves the right to request additional information if the request does not include the required information, and/or the request does not clearly identify the program/s and/or classrooms requested to observe.

If the request is from a parent designee and the school has no prior knowledge of the designee, the Executive Director will seek written confirmation from the parent that the designee is acting on his or her behalf. Consistent with 603 CMR 23.07(4) of the Student Records Regulations, this requirement extends to the review of student records by a designee.

2. Timely Access

Various observation requests may require more planning and observation time than others depending on the complexity of the student needs being evaluated, the program(s) to be observed, and the program schedule. Timely access does not mean that a district must allow observations on demand, or that parents or designees may unilaterally set a schedule for observations. District administrators may take a reasonable period of time to inform school staff and plan the logistical aspects of an observation. Additionally, the district reserves the right to designate certain periods of the year, such as during MCAS testing in the child's classroom or the first or last couple of weeks of school, as times in which observations will not be scheduled.

3. Sufficient Duration and Extent

The duration of observations will be determined on an individual basis. Experience has shown that typically, the duration of most observations is between one and four hours.

The extent of observations will be determined on an individual basis. In all cases the extent and duration of observations will be discussed and arranged with building principals.

4. Conditions or Restrictions on Observations

The district may set conditions or restrict program observations in circumstances where it seeks to protect:

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

Principals may exercise their discretion at any time to reschedule or terminate an observation in the event of a building emergency or a disruption that impacts the physical or emotional well-being of the children in the school or the program being observed.

Consistent with district policy, program observers are subject to a requirement to submit to a criminal offender record information (CORI) check.

Parents and designees must agree that in the event that they obtain personally identifiable or confidential information during the course of an evaluation/observation, they will not disclose such information (except when it is the information of the student being evaluated, in which case it will be used consistent with the parent's authority and direction).

Legal Ref:

M.G.L. c.71B §3

M.G.L. c. 71, §59B

M.G.L. c. 71, §38R

603 C.M.R. §23.02

603 C.M.R. §23.07(4)

603 C.M.R. §28.04(5)

U.S. 30 C.F.R §300.502

Dracut Public Schools
2063 Lakeview Ave.
Dracut, Ma. 01826
978-957-2660

Observations of Education Programs by Parents and Their Designees for Evaluation Purposes

Observation Request Form

Student Name: _____

School: _____

Specific Program to be Observed: _____

Nature of the Request: _____

Suggested Date: _____

Parent Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

e-mail: _____

Parent Designee (if applicable): _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

e-mail: _____

I agree that if, in the course of the requested observation, I obtain any personally identifiable information related to any child other than the child for whom the observation is occurring, I will not disclose such information in any fashion.

Parent

Date

Parent Designee (if applicable)

Date

Accepted By Dracut School Committee February 9, 2009

**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.

SOURCE: MASC Policy

BILINGUAL INSTRUCTION

As required by law, the Dracut School Committee will annually prior to March 1 determine the number of school-age children of limited English-speaking ability residing in the city. Whenever there are more than 20 such children of one language group (excluding children in parochial schools) the Dracut School Committee will provide a program in transitional bilingual education.

Any child whose primary language is other than English and who has difficulty performing ordinary class work in English may participate in these classes. The classes will consist of students of approximately the same age and level of educational attainment. Classes may also be offered in preschool and summer school programs.

Within 10 days after a student's enrollment in the transitional bilingual educational program, the student's parents or guardian will be provided with, in both English and their native language, the following information:

1. A clear statement of the purpose, method, and content of the transitional bilingual education program.
2. A statement of parental rights, which include:
 - a. visits to the transitional bilingual classes
 - b. conferences with school personnel
 - c. right to withdraw the student at any time upon written notification to the school authorities

The offering of this program makes it necessary to provide sufficient numbers of bilingual teachers and aides to implement it. The School Committee will make every effort to recruit and develop a highly qualified and motivated staff to carry out this program.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71A:1 et seq.
Board of Education Regulations for use in Administering Programs in
Transitional Bilingual Education

SOURCE: MASC Policy

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

The District shall provide suitable research-based language instructional programs for all identified English language learners in grades Kindergarten through 12 in accordance with the requirements of state and federal statutes and Massachusetts Department of 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 Department of 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 Department of Education to comply with the No Child Left Behind Act.

Legal Ref.: 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

Adopted by Dracut School Committee:
February 24, 2003

Revised: July 10, 2006

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 extra-curricular nature upon approval of the Superintendent.

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

SOURCE: MASC Policy

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)

Revised: March 10, 2003

HOME SCHOOLING

In March 1987, the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court decided the case entitled Care and Protection of Charles, 399 Mass. 324 (1987). The decision sets forth the legal standards for approval of home education programs for children of compulsory school age in Massachusetts. This advisory opinion, prepared by Rhoda E. Schneider, General Counsel of the Department of Education, is intended to inform public school officials and other interested parties of the standards set forth in the decision. It supersedes the department's January 4, 1980 Advisory Opinion on Home Education, although the approval guidelines established by the court are very similar to those in the 1980 advisory.

There are four main components to the decision, which may be summarized as follows:

I. The School Committee may enforce the compulsory school attendance law through a care and protection proceeding.

The court held that the Canton School Committee had authority to file a petition for care and protection (pursuant to General Laws Chapter 119, Section 24) with respect to three school-age children whose parents had not enrolled them in public school or an approved private school, and who had not been granted permission to educate them at home. The court noted that the compulsory school attendance law (General Laws Chapter 76, Section I) states that "the School Committee of each town shall provide for and enforce the school attendance of all children (ages 6-16) actually residing therein in accordance here-with," and concluded that one appropriate way for the School Committee to do so is a petition to find the children in need of care and protection with respect to their educational care.

II. The compulsory school attendance law provides adequate standards to determine a child's need for educational care and to withstand constitutional challenge.

The court held that General Laws Chapter 76, Section 1, the compulsory school attendance law, provides the standards by which a judge may determine that a child is in need of educational care, and is neither void for vagueness nor an unlawful delegation of legislative authority. In pertinent part, the statute provides:

Every child between the minimum and maximum ages established for school attendance by the board of education (6-16) . . . shall . . . attend a public day school . . . or some other day school approved by the School Committee . . . unless the child attends school in another town . . . but such attendance shall not be required of a child. . who is being otherwise instructed in a manner approved in advance by the Superintendent or the School Committee. (Emphasis added.)

The court concluded that this grant of authority to the Superintendent or School Committee to approve an alternative manner of instruction for a child (specifically, home instruction) is not unconstitutionally vague, because the school officials may draw approval criteria from three sources. First, the legislatures established a general framework for public education, by mandating the subjects that must be taught in public schools and qualifications public school teachers must meet. (See General Laws Chapter 71, Sections 1, 2, 3 and 38G.) Second, the court stated that proposed home education programs are subject to the same standard of approval as private schools under General Laws Chapter 76, Section 1:

For the purposes of this section, School Committees shall approve a private school when satisfied that the instruction in all the studies required by law equals in thoroughness and efficiency, and in the progress made therein, that in the public schools in the same town; but shall not withhold such approval on account of religious teaching.

Third, the court set forth specific procedures and approval guidelines for home education programs, which are discussed in section IV of this advisory. In light of all these factors, the court concluded that the law provides reasonable standards for reviewing and approving home education programs, and therefore meets constitutional requirements.

III. Parents have a basic right to direct their children's education, but that right is subject to reasonable regulation to promote the state's substantial interest in the education of its citizens.

Several United States Supreme Court decisions, cited by the court, have affirmed substantial state interest in the education of its citizenry, with which parents' basic right to direct children's education must be reconciled. The court agreed with the parents that "the state interest in this regard lies in ensuring that the children residing within the state receive an education, not that the educational process be dictated in its minutest detail." However, the court concluded that the approval process required under General Laws Chapter 76, Section 1 "is necessary to promote effectively the state's substantial interest," and that the School Committee may use that statutory approval process to impose on home education programs "certain reasonable educational requirements similar to those required for public and private schools."

IV. Guidelines for approval of home education plans.

Having concluded that the approval process under General Laws Chapter 76, Section 1 is constitutionally permissible the court set forth guidelines for parents and school officials to follow in considering home education plans. They may be summarized as follows:

A. Procedures.

1. Parents must obtain approval prior to removing the children from the public school and beginning the home education program.

2. The Superintendent or School Committee must provide the parents with an opportunity to explain their proposed plan and present witnesses on their behalf. A hearing during a School Committee meeting is sufficient to meet this requirement.
3. In obtaining approval from the Superintendent or School Committee, the parents must demonstrate that the home education proposal meets the requirements of General Laws Chapter 76, Section 1, in that the instruction will equal "in thoroughness and efficiency, and in the progress made therein, that in the public schools in the same town."
4. If the home education plan is rejected, the Superintendent or School Committee must detail the reasons for the decision, and allow the parents to revise their proposal to remedy its inadequacies. If they begin the home education program without the necessary approval, the School Committee may initiate a truancy proceeding or a care and protection petition, in which it would have to show that the instruction in the home does not meet the statutory standard for thoroughness, efficiency and educational progress.

B. Approval factors.

The court listed the following factors that may be considered by the Superintendent or School Committee in deciding whether or not to approve a home education proposal:

1. **The proposed curriculum and the number of hours of instruction in each of the proposed subjects.**

General Laws Chapter 71, Section 1, 2 and 3 list the subjects of instruction that must be taught in the public schools. Section 1 allows the School Committee also to require such other subjects, as it may deem expedient. In addition, the Superintendent or School Committee "may properly consider the length of the proposed home school year and the hours of instruction in each subject," noting that state law requires public schools to operate for a minimum of 180 days.

2. **The competency of the parents to teach the children.**

General Laws Chapter 71, Section 1 provides that teachers shall be "of competent ability and good morals." The court noted that parents providing education at home need not be certified, nor must they have college or advanced academic degrees. However, "the Superintendent or School Committee may properly inquire as to the academic credentials or other qualifications of the parent or parents who will be instructing 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.**

The Superintendent or School Committee need access to this material "to determine the type of subjects to be taught and the grade level of instruction for comparison purposes with the curriculum of the public schools," but they "may not use this access to dictate the manner in which the subjects will be taught."

4. **Periodic standardized testing of the children to ensure educational progress and the attainment of minimum standards.**

The Superintendent or School Committee may properly require such testing, and in consultation with the parents may decide where the testing will occur and the type of testing instrument to be used. The court noted that "where practical, a neutral party should administer the test," and that the school authorities and parents may agree to other means of measuring the children's progress, such as periodic progress reports or dated work samples. In addition, it suggested that on-site visits by public school representatives may be included, although "with appropriate testing procedures or progress reports, there may be no need for periodic on-site visits or observations of the learning environment by school authority personnel."

V. **Conclusion.**

The Supreme Judicial Court's decision provides both a legal framework and useful guidance for public school officials and parents with respect to proposals to educate a school-age child at home. We recommend that Superintendents and School Committees review their procedures and approval criteria for home education plans, to assure that they are consistent with the court's decision. As long as the school officials making the decision to approve or disapprove a home education program do so reasonably and in good faith, using the standards and procedures discussed above, it is likely that a court will uphold their educational judgments.

{ Approval date }

Revised: March 10, 2003

SOURCE: MASC Policy

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 69:1D; 76:1

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 Dracut 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.

SOURCE: MASC Policy

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

SUMMER SCHOOLS

The school system will conduct 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 in reading and mathematics.

To attend remedial 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 School Committee.

{ Adoption date }

SOURCE: MASC Policy

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

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 nonprint, found in school libraries, which support curricular and personal information needs. Print items include books, magazines, newspapers, pamphlets, microfiche or microfilm. Nonprint items include films, disc records, filmstrips, slides, prints, audiotapes, videotapes, realia, 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, which 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.

Adoption date: January 1996

SOURCE: MASC Policy

LEGAL REF.: 603 CMR 26:05

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.

Adoption date: January 1996

SOURCE: MASC Policy

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

The Dracut 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, physical disabilities or sexual preference.
6. They must allow sufficient flexibility for meeting the special needs of individual students and groups of students.

{ Adoption date }

SOURCE: MASC Policy

Revised: January 18, 1996

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:48; 71:49; 71:50

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

TEXTBOOK SELECTION AND ADOPTION

A. Areas of responsibility

The Dracut School Committee, working with the Dracut School Superintendent, the Principals of the different schools and the professional staff of the schools is responsible for establishing the guidelines necessary to attain the desired educational goals of the Dracut School System.

The Principals, under the direction of the Assistant to the Superintendent, are responsible for presenting the School Superintendent with the definite needs of the particular school. This includes the numbers of classes, the ages present in each school and the particular needs of specific classrooms: i.e., special needs etc.

The teachers in each building are responsible for working together to determine what materials will best fill the needs of the students in their classrooms. Department heads and Curriculum Leaders are responsible to take input from teachers and to recommend selection of materials for use in their disciplines. The librarian in each building is responsible for selection of all materials contained within the library. The role of the librarian is to select and coordinate, within the library, the additional print and non-print materials in a manner that best augments the defined educational goals of the school. He/she may also assist in finding reviews of materials included in the classroom and additional sources for new text selections. However, the professional responsibility for classroom material selection rests with the professional teacher and the building Principal.

603 Criteria for selection of classroom texts, resource books:

All materials selected in the school system must meet the educational goals of the school.

Materials selected for purchase:

Must have high standards in their factual content, creativity, social, aesthetic, and literary values.

Must support and enrich the curriculum.

Must avoid racism, sexism, stereotypic ethnic content, and should contain obvious respect for all peoples and cultures.

Must be appropriate for the levels where it is used.

Must reflect the varied interests, abilities and age levels of the school.

Must present a clear picture of both sides of an issue.

Must be up-to-date, valid in content and help students gain an understanding of the world in which they live.

Must, in the inclusion of foreign language materials, adequately fit the needs of the students and be selected with the same criteria as English language materials.

{ Adoption date }

Revised: January 18, 1996

SOURCE: Dracut

LEGALREFS.: 71:48; 30B:7; 71:50

603 CMR 26:05

KEC, Public Complaint About the Curriculum or Instructional Material

CROSS REF.:

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS SELECTION AND ADOPTION

The Dracut School Committee recognizes that knowledge is changing and expanding and that it may be necessary to use various types of supplementary materials in addition to the basic and fundamental textbooks.

For the purpose of this policy, supplementary materials shall be defined as any instructional materials other than textbooks including, but not limited to, books, periodicals, newspapers, pictures, diagrams, maps, charts, slides, filmstrips, films, records, audiotapes, and suitable technological applications which relate directly to the adopted curriculum.

The Dracut School Committee believes that teachers and administrators should have a large role in selection and recommendation of supplementary materials. Teachers are encouraged to use a wide range of learning aids, provided the expense incurred in purchasing these aids remains within the limits of the budget.

{ Adoption date }

Revised: January 18, 1996

LEGAL REF.: 603 CMR 26:05

SOURCE: MASC Policy

SPECIAL INTEREST MATERIALS SELECTION AND ADOPTION

Organizations, institutions, and individuals at times develop materials that are offered to schools free or inexpensively. As a general rule, sponsored materials present a particular point of view, and extreme care must be exercised in evaluating and using them. The responsibility for using sponsored materials rests with the certified staff member who recommends its use. The Principal shall be informed and the Superintendent or designee shall decide whether its use in the best interests of the students.

Sponsored materials must meet the same basic selection criteria as any other learning material, as well as the following special criteria.

Any expression of a point of view should be clearly identified.

Any advertising that appears on or with any material should be in good taste and unobtrusive.

The source of all material should be clearly identifiable.

{ Adoption date }

SOURCE: MASC Policy

Revised: January 18, 1996

LEGAL REF.: 603 CMR 26:05

Dracut Public Schools
Technology Acceptable Use Policy
Revised 2014

The Dracut Public Schools (DPS) encourages the use of information technology to assist staff and students with academic success, preparation for the workplace, and lifelong learning. The Dracut Public Schools provides access to a wide range of information technology to support learning and communicating with others. Information technology will be used to increase communication, enhance student engagement, and assist staff and students in acquiring new skills.

This Technology Acceptable Use Policy for the Dracut Public Schools has been created to provide the parents, students, and staff with a statement of purpose and explanation of the use of technology within the Dracut learning community. This policy is reinforced by practice, acceptable use standards and is required to be read before accessing the technology devices, digital resources, and network infrastructure of the Dracut Public Schools. Students and parents/guardians as well as all staff members of DPS must also read and sign the accompanying Statement of Responsibilities.

Definitions

"Technology devices, digital resources, and network infrastructure" are defined as the Dracut Public Schools network, the Internet, email, hardware, software, printers, peripheral devices, individual computer devices, and web-enabled devices.

"Information Technology" is defined as Internet access, blogging, podcasting, email, published and non-published documents, and various forms of multimedia technology.

"Educational use" is defined as a use that supports communication, research, teaching and learning.

"Devices" refers to district owned/leased, staff owned devices, and student owned devices.

Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA)

Congress enacted the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act, 15 U.S.C. §6501, et seq. (COPPA) in 1998. COPPA required the Federal Trade Commission to issue and enforce regulations concerning children's online privacy. The Commission's original COPPA Rule became effective on April 21, 2000. The Commission issued an amended Rule on December 19, 2012 that became effective on July 1, 2013.

Dracut Public Schools works diligently to comply with COPPA requirements. Dracut Public Schools does not collect student personal information or transmit such information directly to online entities for the purpose of creating web based accounts. In cases of web based account creation, Dracut Public Schools will use an internal school district identification number to represent each student user.

Content Filtering

The Dracut Public Schools uses software and hardware designed to block access to certain sites and filter content as required by the Children's Internet Protection Act, 47 U.S.C. §254 (CIPA). Dracut Public Schools is aware that not all inappropriate information can be filtered and the district will make

an effort to correct any known gaps in the filtering of information without unduly inhibiting the educational use of age appropriate content by staff and students. Users will inform teachers or administrators of any inadvertent access to inappropriate material, in order that there is appropriate modification of the filtering profile.

User Access and Explanation of Guideline

Access to information technology through the Dracut Public Schools is a privilege, not a right. Students, parents, and staff shall be required to read the DPS Technology Acceptable Use Policy and sign and return the Statement of Responsibilities.

The Dracut Public School Acceptable Use Policy shall govern all use of technology devices, digital resources, and network infrastructure. Use of technology resources, digital resources, web-enabled devices, and network infrastructure will be governed by the applicable disciplinary policies as outlined in faculty/staff handbooks of the district and the student handbooks.

The Dracut Public Schools provides students access to its technology devices, digital resources, and network infrastructure, along with information technology for educational use. If a student has doubts regarding whether a resource has educational merit, he/she should ask a staff member.

Scope of Technology Policies

Policies, guidelines and rules refer to all computing devices including but not limited to computers, mobile web enabled devices, Tablets, MP3 players, portable memory storage devices, calculators with interfacing capability, cell phones, digital cameras; as well as technology infrastructure, associated peripheral devices, and/or software.

Policies, guidelines, and rules refer to any computing or telecommunication devices owned by, leased by, in the possession of, or being used by students and/or staff that are operated on the grounds of any district facility or connected to any equipment at any district facility by means of web connection, direct connection, telephone line or other common carrier or any type of connection including both hardwired, fiber, infrared and/or wireless.

Because information technology is constantly changing, not all circumstances can be anticipated or addressed in this policy. All users are expected to understand and comply with both the "letter" and the "spirit" of this policy and show good judgment in their use of these resources.

Expectation of Privacy/Monitoring

The Dracut Public Schools monitors the use of the school department's network to protect the integrity and optimal operation of all computer and system networks. There is no expectation of privacy related to information stored and transmitted over the Dracut Public Schools network. The information on the network in general files and email is not private and is subject to review by the network manager at the request of the Superintendent of Schools to substantiate inappropriate activity, to comply with legal action, and to comply with requests of law enforcement agencies as part of their investigations.

The Dracut Public Schools will cooperate with copyright protection agencies investigating copyright infringement by users of the computer systems and network of the Dracut Public Schools.

Technicians and computer system administrators maintain full access rights to all storage devices, and may need to access/manage such storage devices as part of their duties. Routine maintenance and monitoring of the system may lead to discovery that a user has or is violating the Dracut Public

Schools Technology Acceptable Use Policy, other school committee policies, state laws, or federal laws.

Search of particular files of a user shall be conducted if there is a reasonable suspicion that a user has violated the law or Dracut School Committee policies. The investigation will be reasonable and in the context of the nature of the alleged policy violation.

At any time and without prior notice, the administration reserves the right to monitor, inspect, copy, review, and store any and all usage of technology devices, digital resources, and network infrastructure, along with information technology as well as any information sent or received in connection with this usage. Staff and students should not have any expectation of privacy regarding such materials.

Consequences for Violation of Technology Policies

Use of the computer network and Internet is an integral part of research and class work, but abuse of this technology may result in loss of privileges. Those who use technology devices, digital resources, and network infrastructure, along with information technology inappropriately, may lose their access privileges and may face additional disciplinary or legal action.

Unacceptable Uses of Technology Resources (Including but not limited to)

1. Interfering with the normal functioning of devices, computer systems, or computer networks
2. Damaging or theft of devices, computer systems, or networks
3. Accessing, modifying, or deleting files/data that do not belong to you.
4. Sending or publishing offensive or harassing messages/content
5. Accessing dangerous information that, if acted upon, could cause damage or danger to others
6. Giving your username or password to any other person, or using the username or password of someone else to access any part of the system
7. Sharing and/or distribution of passwords or using another student or faculty
8. Intentional viewing, downloading or distribution of inappropriate and/or offensive materials
9. Gaining unauthorized access to computer and or telecommunications networks and resources
10. Viewing, transmitting or downloading pornographic, obscene, vulgar and/or indecent materials
11. Using obscene language, harassing, insulting or bullying others, posting of private or personal information about another person, spamming email, violating any federal or state law, local regulation or school committee policy
12. Violating copyright laws and/or the district policy on plagiarism
13. Copying software or applications on Dracut Public School devices through any electronic means unless the particular licensing agreement in place for the software allows user distribution
14. Intentionally wasting limited network or bandwidth resources
15. Destruction/vandalism of system software, applications, files, hardware, or other network resources
16. Employing the network for commercial or political purposes
17. Using of unauthorized use of the network /Internet to buy or sell products
18. "Hacking" and other illegal activities in attempt to gain unauthorized access to restricted files or

devices

19. Uploading any harmful form of programming, bypassing filters, installing any type of server, aliasing/spoofing, and peer-to-peer networking or remote-control software
20. Possession of and/or distribution of any of software tools designed to facilitate any of the above actions will also be considered an offense
21. Saving inappropriate files to any part of the system, including but not limited to:
 - Music
 - Movies
 - Video games of all types, including ROMs and emulators
 - Offensive images or files
 - Programs which can be used for malicious purpose
 - Files for which you do not have a legal license
 - Any file which is not needed for school purposes or a class assignment
22. Uses that contribute to the violation of any other student conduct code including but not limited to cheating, plagiarism, hazing or harassment, theft, falsification of records, possession of banned substances/items, etc.
23. Using the district's network for gambling
24. Discussing confidential information through the district email system

Anonymizing services

The use of anonymizing services, networks, browser plugins, and application are prohibited.”

Staff Privacy Protocol

All documents, pictures, movies, and data need to be saved to cloud services such as Google Drive and Dropbox. Student record information and grades must not be stored locally on individual devices. Staff issued district owed devices must exercise care and diligence of district owed devices both on school grounds and off school property.

Due Process

When possible, the Dracut Public Schools will seek to apply progressive discipline for violations of the district policy and signed Acceptable Use Agreement Form which may include revocation of the privilege of a user's access to technology devices, digital resources, and network infrastructure, along with information technology. Other appropriate disciplinary or legal action may be undertaken by the Dracut Public Schools administration. The nature of investigations will be reasonable.

Dracut Public Schools Limitations of Liability

The Dracut Public Schools makes no warranties of any kind, implied or expressed, that the services and functions provided through the Dracut Public Schools technology devices, digital resources and network infrastructure, along with information technology will be error free or without defect. The Dracut Public Schools will not be responsible for damages users may suffer, including but not limited to loss of data or interruption of service.

The Dracut Public Schools, along with any persons or organizations associated with the school department internet connectivity will not be liable for the actions of anyone connecting to the internet through the school network infrastructure. All users shall assume full liability, legal, financial or otherwise for their actions while connected to the internet. The Dracut Public Schools assumes no responsibility for any information or materials transferred or accessed from the internet.

Parents/Guardians should read this DPS Technology Acceptable Use Policy. Parents/guardians should discuss the technology use responsibilities with their children. Questions and concerns can be forwarded to the Dracut Public Schools and appropriate offices.

Parents and guardians agree to accept financial responsibility for any expenses or damages incurred as a result their student's inappropriate or illegal activities on the Dracut Public Schools network, including the use of district owned devices.

Implementation of this Policy

The Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee(s), shall develop and implement administrative regulations, procedures, terms and conditions for use and user agreement is consistent with the purposes and mission of the Dracut Public Schools as well as with applicable laws and this policy.

Modification

The Dracut School Committee reserves the right to modify or change this policy and related implementation procedures at any time.

References:

603 CMR 23.00

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99)

CROSS REFERECNE: IJNB-A, Social Media and Internet Use Policy

DRACUT PUBLIC SCHOOLS
STUDENT/PARENT STATEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES

Student Expectations

I have read, understand and will follow this Acceptable Use Policy. If I break this agreement, the consequences could include suspension of computer privileges and/or disciplinary action. I also understand the school network and email accounts are owned by Dracut Public School and that Dracut Public Schools has the right to access any of the information used through the mediums provided through the school at any time.

Parent/Guardian Acceptable Use Signature

Parent collaboration is a crucial focus of Dracut Public Schools. Through our technology integration, we want to work with parents so they understand the different initiatives that are taking place at school. As parents, students and teachers working together, we become a strong learning community, therefore, creating more opportunities for our students to become successful.

As the parent or guardian of this student, I have read the Dracut Public Schools Acceptable Use Policy. I understand that technology is provided for educational purposes in keeping with the academic goals of Dracut Public Schools, and that student use for any other purpose is inappropriate.

I recognize it is impossible for the school to restrict access to all controversial materials, and I will not hold the school responsible for materials acquired on the school network. I understand that children's computer activities at home should be supervised as they can affect the academic environment at school.

I understand and will support my student in adhering to this Acceptable Use Policy. I am aware that if my child breaches this agreement, the consequences could include suspension of computer privileges and/or disciplinary action. I also understand the school network and email accounts are owned by Dracut Public Schools and that Dracut Public Schools has the right to access any of the information used through the mediums provided through the school at any time. I hereby give permission for my child to use technology resources in Dracut Public Schools.

Parent or Guardian Name (please Print)

Student Name (Please print)

Parent or Guardian Signature

Student Signature

Date

Date

School Location

DRACUT PUBLIC SCHOOLS
EMPLOYEE STATEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES

Staff Expectations

I have read, understand and will follow this Acceptable Use Policy. I understand access is designed for educational purposes. If I break this agreement, the consequences could include suspension of computer privileges and/or disciplinary action. I also understand the school network and email accounts are owned by Dracut Public School and that Dracut Public Schools has the right to access any of the information used through the mediums provided through the school at any time.

Staff Name (please print)

Department/School Location

Staff Signature

Date

Staff Device Delivery, Access, and Use Statement

Please be aware that all documents, pictures, movies, and data must be saved to cloud services such as Google Drive and Dropbox. When staff laptop computer devices require service, devices may be picked up and exchanged. Staff may not have the opportunity to save or transfer local data upon the exchange.

Staff Name (please print)

Staff Signature

Date

Social Media and Internet Use Policy

The Dracut Public School District acknowledges the role that various emerging methods of communication play in 21st century learning. As such, teachers, students, and parents engaging in these methods of communication for collaboration and learning is a necessary component. It is important to build an environment of trust and individual accountability. Therefore, members of the Dracut Public School District must understand that information shared through social media or a related method is a reflection of the larger school district.

The Dracut Public Schools provides the following rules of use and social media guidelines meant to encourage employees to participate in relevant online social activities in ways that do not distract from or disrupt the educational process.

The administration will annually remind staff members and orient new staff members concerning the importance of maintaining proper decorum in the online, digital world. Such reminders shall include the possibility of disciplinary action, including dismissal from employment, for failure to exercise good judgment in online conduct.

The Superintendent or designees may periodically conduct internet searches to determine if teachers have posted inappropriate materials. When inappropriate use of computers, websites and/or social media is discovered (in violation of this policy and/or the district's Acceptable Use Policy), the administration 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.

General Guidelines:

1. Inappropriate contact via e-mail, phone or other social media is prohibited.
2. It is inappropriate to post items with sexual content.
3. It is inappropriate to post items exhibiting or advocating use of tobacco products, drugs, and/or alcohol.
4. Adherence to all applicable privacy laws and regulations must be followed at all times.
5. Be aware of what you post online. Social media venues are very public. What you contribute leaves a digital footprint for all to see. Do not post anything you wouldn't want friends, parents, teachers, or a future employer to see.
6. Protect your privacy. By using social media sites you are broadcasting to the world. Even the strictest privacy settings may become public.
7. Be aware that others can view the sites that you bookmark.
8. Be aware of words used to tag or describe the bookmark.
9. Be aware of URL shortening services. Verify the landing site to which they point before submitting a link as a bookmark. It would be best to utilize the original URL if not constrained by the number of characters as in micro blogs.
10. Your online behavior should reflect the same standards of character used in the school setting.
11. The use of anonymizing services, networks, plug-ins, or applications is prohibited.

Employee Guidelines:

1. It is improper to fraternize with students using social media/networks, or via cell phone, texting, or telephone.

2. All e-contacts with students should be through the district's email/telephone system or through a depersonalized social media platform, set up through the district's existing network, except in emergency situations.
3. Extra-curricular advisors and/or coaches wishing to establish a social media platform must do so by using a Dracut Public Schools email address to do so. In such cases, the password will be provided to the district in a manner it proscribes.
4. All contact and messages by extra-curricular advisors and/or coaches with group/team members shall be sent to more than one member (i.e. captains, officers), except messages concerning medical or academic privacy matters, in which case the messages will be copied to the school principal and/or the athletic director.
5. Employees may not list current students as "friends/followers" on networking sites.
6. Teachers shall not give out their private cell phone or home phone numbers without prior approval of the district.
7. Official business of the school should occur through existing school provided platforms (phone, email, authorized social media platforms).
8. Before posting photos and videos, parental authorization to utilize a student's image must be sought.
9. Authorization to utilize a colleague's image must also be sought.
10. Dracut public school employees are personally responsible for the content they publish online.
11. The lines between public and private, personal and professional are blurred in the digital world. If you identify yourself as a Dracut employee you are now connected to colleagues, students, parents and the community. It is not recommended that you identify yourself as a Dracut employee on your personal social media.
12. When contributing online, do not post confidential student information.
13. Disclaimers should be placed on school-based social media.
14. It is required that teachers moderate content contributed by students in the course of an assignment and report any inappropriate material.
15. No addresses or phone numbers should appear on school-based social media.
16. When uploading digital pics or avatars that represent yourself make sure you select an appropriate image. Images reflect on your professionalism.
17. Remember a social networking site is an extension of your personality, and as such an extension of your professional life and your classroom. If it would seem inappropriate to put a certain photo in the wall, is it really correct to put it online?
18. Employees should be aware of the public and widespread nature of such media and again refrain from any comment that could be deemed unprofessional including personal views and beliefs.

Student Guidelines:

1. Follow the school's code of conduct when writing online. It is acceptable to disagree with someone else's opinions, however, do it in a respectful way. Make sure that criticism is constructive and not hurtful. What is inappropriate in the classroom is inappropriate online.
2. Be safe online. Never give out personal information, including, but not limited to, last names, phone numbers, addresses, exact birthdates, and pictures. Do not share your password with anyone besides your teachers and parents.

3. Be aware that pictures may also be protected under copyright laws. Verify you have permission to use the image or it is under *Creative Commons* attribution.
4. How you represent yourself online is an extension of yourself. Do not misrepresent yourself by using someone else's identity.
5. If you run across inappropriate material that makes you feel uncomfortable, or is not respectful, tell your teacher right away.
6. Students who do not abide by these terms and conditions may lose their opportunity to take part in the project and/or access to future use of online tools.
7. Be aware that consistent with School Committee Policies (see harassment, discrimination, bullying) actions taken on social media platforms, whether school based or private, that impact the school environment, may lead to disciplinary action.

References:

603 CMR 23.00

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99)

CROSS REFERECNE: IJNB, Technology Acceptable Use Policy

Adopted By Dracut School Committee September 8, 2014

DRACUT PUBLIC SCHOOLS FIELD TRIP POLICY

File IJOA

The Dracut Public Schools seek to provide students with a rich opportunity for learning both inside and outside the schools. Excursions away from the school building during the school hours may flow naturally from curriculum topics being explored in the classroom. Additionally, field trips may stem from the need to reinforce ideas of cooperation and productive community living.

Types of Field Trips

Staff members will work within the following guidelines in their selection of appropriate field trips.

1. *Field Trips that are integral to a specific curriculum unit:* These would include a focused visit to a museum, the seashore, an historical location, etc.
2. *Field Trips that build group identity:* Such trips might include an outward-bound day trip or camping trip experience with an overnight commitment. Community building trips might reinforce relationships in an existing grouping of students; they might also prepare students for significant transition into a new structure or community, i.e. students entering grades 6, 7, 8, 9. The context of such field trips is to help children work collaboratively, making decisions, and evaluate success.
3. *Field trips that enrich general curriculum goals:* These fields trips, which might include visits to foreign countries for drama festivals or language immersion; visits to governmental bodies, such as the United Nations, would be viewed as extra opportunities for those students who are interested in participating on a voluntary basis.
4. *Field Trips that celebrate or culminate group work:* These field trips might be scheduled at the end of the school year for 8th grade students to mark the completion of their elementary school years.

Preparation for Field Trips

In preparing for all trip requests, teachers will complete the form listed below, which lists the objectives of the trip, and activities planned before, during and after the trip. Additionally, teachers will secure parent permission for all students. Additionally, high school students will obtain signed permission slips, excusing them from all classes, which will be missed during the field trip. No student will be allowed to go on a field trip if these signed permissions are not returned to the teacher responsible for the field trip. Both teacher and principal or coordinator will be sensitive to lost class time, especially when a field trip necessitates acquiring a substitute teacher for other classes.

Cost of field trips

Whole class trips: Teachers will provide information on costs, supervision, dates, etc. Provisions will be so that no student will be denied access to a field trip planned for a whole class.

Voluntary trips: Where trip expenses are high, the following steps will be taken to assure equal access to all interested students.

- a. The teacher and appropriate principal propose an out-of-state trip for School Committee approval several months in advance of the trip. Once the trip is approved, eligible students and their parents will receive formal notification of trip specifics.
- b. The trip coordinator will be available to parents and students to answer questions and assist families in developing viable financial arrangements.

Distance Considerations

In-State Field trips

Teachers requesting field trips within Massachusetts must submit a request to the appropriate principal and curriculum coordinator for curriculum related field trips such as those described in #1 and #3 or the Principal for trips that fall under category #2 or #4.

Over Night and Out of State Field Trips

Teachers must follow the same procedures as that described for in-state trips. Additionally, teachers requesting out-of-state field trips must submit a request through the principal or coordinator to the Superintendent of Schools prior to the announcement of the field trip to students. This request must be submitted to the School Committee for final approval. Should an overnight or out-of-state field trip occur between School Committee meetings, the Superintendent of Schools may approve the request with notification to School Board Members, if possible. Out of State trips are allowed to a forty (4) mile radius as approved by the School Committee (see map)

Cancellation of field trips

The School Committee reserves the right to cancel any field trip up to the time of departure.

Emergency cancellation of field trips

In the event of circumstances arising, that, in the judgment of the Superintendent, make it imprudent to go forward with a field trip, the Superintendent may cancel the field trip, provided that he/she makes a good faith effort to consult with the members of the School Committee, and it is not feasible to bring the approval for reconsideration to a School Committee meeting.

- Fill in application, including list of names, etc.
- Meeting of chaperones/staff leaders
- 10:1 ratio for chaperones
- Completed CORI on all chaperones
- Explicit written guidelines
 - Procedures for attendance
 - Medications
 - Hotel (bed check, curfews, guarantees, etc.)
 - Early notification if a nurse must accompany on the trip

- Airport or terminal procedures
- Carrying of money
- Passports, birth certificates
- Up to three (3) parent meetings
 - Meeting #1: informational, explicit discussion of possible financial implications
 - Meeting #2: specifics
 - Meeting #3: last minute adjustments/changes to trip

- Concurrently, meetings with students
 - Meeting #1: informational
 - Meeting #2: behavior policies
 - Meeting #3: last minute adjustments/changes to trip

- Concurrent with these meetings, process letters for parents and students

- Set a timetable for when permission slips, forms, etc. need to be returned

- Plan assessments for students who remain in Dracut

- Upon submission of trip request, a certificate of liability insurance policy, with a non-cancellation date of thirty (30) days of the return date of the trip, must be made available to the Superintendent of Schools.

- Final check of State Department advisory and Consular statement. Please send copies of any Department of State Advisories to the Superintendent as well as to the parents one week before departure.
 - Explicit document to parents and Superintendent – where to check on-line

The School Committee and the Superintendent may cancel a trip at any time. Parents should be informed of this possibility, including up to the day of departure. This may have financial implications for parents, who should be informed of this possibility.

- Leaders on trips must have a cell phone with cell numbers at the school office, if applicable.

Application for Overnight, out of state and/or out of country field trips

Please submit this form to the Superintendent of Schools:

- a. Before the trip is announced to students;
- b. Four (4) weeks in advance for a one (1) or two (2) day trip;
- c. Three (3) months in advance if the cost per student is greater than \$300;
- d. Six (6) months in advance if the trip is longer than two (2) days, the cost is more than \$300, or the trip is out of the country.

School _____ Grade Level _____

Purpose of Trip _____

Date(s) of trip _____

Destination _____

Date and time leaving school _____

Days missed from school _____

Method of transportation (school bus, chartered bus, car, etc.) _____

Number of students _____

Who is eligible for trip _____

Where students will be staying _____

Staff contacts _____

Names of adults who will accompany students _____

EDUCATIONAL RELEVANCE:

What plans are being made to cover classes that these adults usually teach? _____

Describe activities before trip _____

Describe activities during trip _____

Describe activities after trip _____

Dracut Public Schools

FUNDING:

How is field trip being funded? Be sure to outline entirely the total cost of trip. If from a budget account, please indicate the code.

If students cannot afford to pay, what arrangements are made

SAFETY:

What is the name and location of the nearest medical facility

Cell phone numbers of adults on the trip

Please indicate Department of State Advisory Review and Notification, and include copy of Consular Statement

SIGNATURES:

Applicant

Date

Principal

Date

STUDENT INFORMATION SHEET

Name of Student _____

Homeport Room _____ Circle: Senior, Junior, Sophomore, Freshman

Home Address _____

Telephone Number _____

Mother's/Guardian Name _____

Telephone Day _____ Night _____

E-Mail Address _____ Cell Phone _____

Father's/Guardian Name _____

Telephone Day _____ Night _____

E-Mail Address _____ Cell Phone _____

In case of emergency, whom should be contacted first:

#1 Name _____ Telephone _____

#2 Name _____ Telephone _____

#3 Name _____ Telephone _____

Physician _____

Telephone _____

Medical Insurance Company _____

Insurance Number _____

For International Trips

Passport Number

or Visa Number

or Birth Certificate

To be carried on trip by all staff chaperone
Health information sheet for field trips

Name of student _____ Date of Birth _____
Home Address _____ Telephone _____
Mother/Guardian _____

Home Telephone _____ Work Telephone _____

Father/Guardian _____

Home Telephone _____ Work Telephone _____

Physician _____ Telephone _____

Any food or drug allergy? Yes No If yes, what?

Other allergies? _____

Has your child been exposed to any communicable diseases within the past 21 days?
Yes No If yes, what? _____

Is there any chronic medical problem other than allergies, i.e. heart, recent fracture or surgery, etc?
If yes, specify: _____

Date of last tetanus shot (very important) _____

Is your child bringing medication? If yes, what? _____
Should medication be refrigerated? _____ Reason for taking: _____

Instructions for administering medication _____

Any other medical concerns? _____

Medical Insurance Company _____

Medical Insurance Number _____

Parent Authorization:

IN CASE OF MEDICAL EMERGENCY, I understand that every effort will be made to contact parents or guardian of student. In the event I cannot be reached, I hereby give permission to the physician selected by director(s) in charge of the field trip to hospitalize, secure proper treatment for, and to order injections, anesthesia or surgery for child as named above.

Signature of parent/guardian

date signed

Out of State and International Travel

Permission and release form for study trip to _____

I/we _____ parent and/or guardian of _____,

a minor who is a student of _____ of the Dracut Public Schools, hereby grant

(name of school)

permission to the Town of Dracut, its School Committee, and its employees

and agents for our minor child to participate in a school exchange trip to

_____ and from _____.

It is my/our understanding that _____, and _____

teachers at Dracut High School will accompany the group. In consideration of the educational value of travel to foreign lands, or to other states, and other privileges and advantages to be gained by my/our child's participation in said exchange.

I/we do hereby forever release, acquit, discharge and covenant to hold harmless the Town of Dracut, its School Committee, its employees and agents and their employees who are accompanying the students on the aforementioned trip, from all actions, causes of action, claims, demands, damages, loss of service, expenses and compensation on account of, or in any way growing out of any and all personal injuries and property damage which may result at any time during the trip, and which they may hereafter have as the parents and/or guardian of said minor child, as well as claims or rights of action for damages which the said minor child may hereafter have either before or after he/she has reached majority. I/we further promise to bind myself/ourselves jointly and severally to reimburse to the said releases any sum of money which it/they may be compelled to pay, because of any injury or damage or for any reason, on behalf of said student while on said exchange. I/we further agree that should said minor child, behave in a manner, which in the judgment of trip leaders/chaperones (or) _____ may endanger the health, safety, or welfare of that student or others in the group (this of course includes any infraction of the alcohol, drug rules) then _____ and _____ in their sole discretion, have my/our permission and assent to the following:

1. Space will be secured on the next available flight returning to the United States and my/our child will be placed on such flight.
2. I/we shall be totally responsible for reimbursing any and all expenses for such transportation for my child.
3. Upon notification of such decision by trip leaders/chaperones, at their sole discretion, I/we agree to meet and be responsible for my/our minor child upon his/her arrival at Boston.

I/we have been notified that my/our minor child will have a certain amount of time each day when he/she may not be with a chaperone. He/she will be responsible for managing time spent on his/her own in accordance with the schedule of activities.

The Dracut School Committee and the Superintendent of Schools reserve the right to cancel any trip, up to and including day of departure, and the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be responsible for any monies already paid toward this trip. Trip organizers have been instructed to obtain any applicable State Department advisories and provide copies to parents and the Superintendent of Schools.

Signature

Date

APPROVED: November 18, 2002

REVISED: January 12, 2004, March 8, 2004, September 27, 2010

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.

Adoption date: January 1996

SOURCE: MASC Policy

SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS

It is the policy of the Dracut School Committee to encourage volunteer efforts in the schools. Parents, 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. All volunteers shall be subject to a CORI check.

Adoption date: January 1996

SOURCE: MASC Policy

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

The philosophy of the Dracut School Committee concerning academic achievement, as well as children's social growth and development, is based on the premise that children have diverse capabilities and individual patterns of growth and learning.

Therefore, the committee feels it is important that teachers have as much and as accurate knowledge of each student as possible in order to assess his/her needs, his/her growth, and make instructional plans for him/her. A sharing of information among parent, teacher, and student is essential.

The committee supports staff efforts to find better ways to measure and report student progress. It will require that:

1. Parents are informed regularly, and at least four times a year, of the progress their children are making in school.
2. Parents will be alerted and conferred with as soon as possible when a child's performance or attitude becomes unsatisfactory or shows marked or sudden deterioration.
3. Insofar as possible, distinctions will be made between a student's attitude and his/her academic performance.
4. At comparable levels, the school system will strive for consistency in grading and reporting except as this is inappropriate for certain classes or certain students.
5. When no grades are given but the student is evaluated informally in terms of his/her own progress, the school staff will also provide a realistic appraisal of the student's standing in relation to his/her peers.
6. When grades are given, the school staff will take particular care to explain the meaning of marks and symbols to parents.

Adoption date: January 1996

SOURCE: MASC Policy

NOTE: A broad policy, such as the one above, may cover a variety of sub-categories related to Academic Achievement. This category may also be used to file lists of basic skill competencies students must achieve for promotion or graduation.

STUDENT PROGRESS REPORTS TO PARENTS

The Dracut 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.

The appropriate teacher, teachers, or other professional personnel will provide information depicting the student's progress.

In addition to progress reporting, parents will be notified when a student's performance requires special notification.

Grading and promotion will be based on development of the student, as measured in the professional judgement of the teacher and Principal.

Major changes in the reporting system will be communicated to the School Committee.

Adoption date: January 1996

SOURCE: MASC Policy

Adopted by Dracut School Committee April 25, 2016

HOMEWORK

The term "homework" refers to an assignment to be prepared during a period of supervised study in class or outside of class.

The purposes of homework are to improve the learning processes, to aid in the mastery of skills, and to create and stimulate interest on the part of the student.

Homework is a learning activity, which should increase in complexity with the maturity of the student. With increased maturity, learning should become an independent activity. This should be established through consistent assignments, which encourage students to investigate for themselves and to work independently, as well as with others.

Homework assignments should be consistent in terms of the amount given each day and the time required for each assignment so that a pattern of meaningful homework can be established by the teacher and/or the student.

The information for any homework assignment should be clear and specific so that the student can complete the assignment.

Homework assignments should take into consideration individual differences of students such as health, ability, conditions at home, and educational resources at home. Homework should not require the use of reference materials not readily available in most homes, school libraries, or the public library, and should require the use of those materials only when the student has had instruction in the use of them.

There are many other learning activities in the life of a student besides homework. Such things as participating in school activities, pursuing cultural interests, participating in family living, and exploring personal interests should be considered by teachers when planning consistent assignments. Homework is not to be used as a form of punishment under any circumstances.

Adoption date: January 1996

SOURCE: MASC Policy

PROMOTION AND RETENTION OF STUDENTS

The Dracut 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, but the final decision will rest with the building Principal.

Adoption date: January 1996

SOURCE: MASC Policy

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

A student must earn enough units of credit each year to complete 22 units of course work, including Physical Education in order to graduate. Specific requirements include:

4.5 units English, including MCAS and writing skills

4 units Social Studies

3 units Science

3 units Math

1 unit Physical Education/Wellness

1 unit Foreign Language

Students must enroll in at least 7 units and pass 5.5 units each year, and pass the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment Exams in order to fulfill graduation requirements. Credits are earned when (a) the student earns a passing grade, and (b) the student is in compliance with the attendance policy. A student who does not pass a required course must retake the course.

Students who desire a recommendation to college must meet the college preparatory requirements as outlined in the Program of Studies. Please refer to the Program of Studies for additional information regarding actual courses offered and how credit may be earned by taking courses outside of DHS.

Credit for Foreign Study: Students who are away for a term or year to participate in a student exchange program or otherwise study abroad may receive credits toward high school graduation when (1) study plans are approved by the school administration in advance; and (2) the institution where the study occurred submits a record of the student's work. In these instances, the Principal and student's guidance counselor will evaluate the work and assign credit for it according to standards prevailing in Dracut High School.

Adoption date: January 1996

SOURCE: MASC Policy / Dracut

AMENDED: July 14, 2003

EVALUATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS

The Dracut 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. To 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 dropout 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 Department of 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.

Revised: January 18, 1996

SOURCE: MASC Policy

DISTRICT PROGRAM ASSESSMENTS

A district program of testing for assessment/evaluation shall be coordinated throughout the school district by the appropriate administrator who shall be responsible for scheduling, disseminating, and collecting tests and for reporting and interpreting all group test results.

Measurements of educational achievement shall be prepared so that data is consistent for comparison purposes within the school district from year to year and with other school districts to the extent required by rules of the State Board of Education.

{ Adoption date }

SOURCE: MASC Policy

Revised: January 18, 1996

TEACHING ACTIVITIES/PRESENTATIONS

It is the desire of the Dracut 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.

Adoption date: January 1996

SOURCE: MASC Policy

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 reason 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 Dracut 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 7 school days 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.

Adoption date: January 1996

SOURCE: MASC Policy

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 artwork 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.

{ Adoption date }

Revised: January 18, 1996

LEGAL REF.: 603 CMR 26:05

SOURCE: MASC Policy