

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
- Coordinating and Developing
- Evaluating and Assessment

Operating involves classroom instruction and building program management. Coordinating and developing includes monitoring activities (curriculum development), in-service education, and special services. Evaluation and assessment involves data collection and synthesis and establishing future direction.

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

LEGAL REFS.: 603 CMR 26:00; 26:05
 M.G.L. 69:1E

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

ACADEMIC FREEDOM

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

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

LEGAL REF.: Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts

SCHOOL YEAR/SCHOOL CALENDAR

The school calendar for the ensuing year will be prepared by the Superintendent and submitted to the School Committee for approval by April 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. Schools shall ensure that every elementary school student is scheduled to receive a minimum of 900 hours per school year of structured learning time, as defined in 603 CMR 27.02. Time which a student spends at school breakfast and lunch, passing between classes, in homeroom, at recess, in non-directed study periods, receiving school services, and participating in optional school programs shall not count toward meeting the minimum structured learning time requirement for that student.
2. Secondary schools will operate for a minimum of 180 days. Schools shall ensure that every secondary school student is scheduled to receive a minimum of 990 hours per school year of structured learning time, as defined in 603 CMR 27.02. Time which a student spends at school breakfast and lunch, passing between classes, in homeroom, at recess, in non-directed study periods, receiving school services, and participating in optional school programs shall not count toward meeting the minimum structured learning time requirement for that student.

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

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

SCHOOL DAY

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

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

Parents and guardians will be informed of the opening and closing times set by the Committee. To help insure the safety of all children, parents will also be notified that students will not be admitted into the school building until 15 minutes prior to the start of the official day unless bus schedules require earlier admittance.

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

ORGANIZATION OF INSTRUCTION

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

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 four levels – Primary, Elementary, Middle and Secondary levels.

The Primary level includes Grades Pre-K to 2. The Elementary level includes Grades 3-5. The Middle level consists of schools for grades six, seven and eight The Secondary level consists of schools with grades nine, ten, eleven, and twelve.

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

CURRICULUM ADOPTION

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

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

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

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

BASIC INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

State law requires that schools:

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

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

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

The Fundamental Skills

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

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

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

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 school books, 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 roles.
- (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.

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

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

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

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

HEALTH EDUCATION

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

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

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

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

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

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

CROSS REF: EB, Safety Program

PARENTAL NOTIFICATION RELATIVE TO SEX EDUCATION

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

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

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

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

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

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

REF.: Department of Education

SAMPLE NOTICE TO PARENT/GUARDIAN

[Date]

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Enclosed is an outline of our school's (grades 7 and 8) comprehensive health education curriculum. This program has been developed by our professional staff under the guidance of the community health education advisory council. The overall goal of the course is to continue efforts begun in earlier grades to promote the health and well-being of our students, and to help them make wise and informed decisions during their teen-age years and beyond.

Sex education is part of the health education curriculum in grades 7 and 8, including topics such as puberty; dating; relationships and communication skills; pregnancy; birth control; abortion; homosexuality; prevention of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases; and prevention of sexual abuse. The instructional materials we use for the course include a curriculum package and a video, listed on the enclosed outline. If you would like to review these materials at the school, you are welcome to do so. Please call me to arrange a convenient time.

During the course, students will be able to ask questions, which will be answered factually and in an age-appropriate manner. Each student's privacy will be respected, and no one will be put on the spot to ask or answer questions or reveal personal information. Material will be presented in a balanced, factual way that makes clear that people may have strong religious and moral beliefs about issues such as birth control and abortion, and that these beliefs must be respected.

Under Massachusetts law and School Committee policy, you may exempt your child from any portion of the curriculum that primarily involves human sexual education or human sexuality issues. To receive an exemption, simply send me a letter requesting an exemption for your child. No student who is exempted from this portion of the curriculum will be penalized. We may provide an alternative assignment to students who are exempted.

We look forward to working with you to ensure that your child has a positive and educationally enriching experience this school year. If you have any questions about sex education or any other matter concerning your child's education, please call me.

Sincerely,

Principal
[Phone Number]

Enclosure: [course outline; list of curriculum materials for sex 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.

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

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 Committee's belief that prevention requires education, and that the most important aspect of the policies and guidelines of the District should be the education of 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 School Committee.

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

CROSS REF.: JICG/JICH, Alcohol and Tobacco Use by Students

**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/her own level, to gain independence and self-reliance, and to return to the mainstream of school society as soon as possible.

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

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

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

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

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

LEGAL REFS.: The Individuals with Disabilities Ed. Act (PL 108-446 adopted 12/3/2004)
 Rehabilitation Act of 1973
 M.G.L. 71B:1 et seq. (Chapter 766 of the Acts of 1972)
 Board of Education Chapter 766 Regulations, adopted 10/74, as amended
 through 7/1/81
 603 CMR 28:00 inclusive

PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

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

OBSERVATIONS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

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

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

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

CROSS REF.: KI, Visitors to Schools

SOURCE: MASC

ADOPTED: September 2009

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

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

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

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

**COMPENSATORY EDUCATION
(Title 1)**

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

TITLE 1 - PARENT INVOLVEMENT POLICY

The goal of the Sutton Public Schools Title 1 Program is to ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education. Engaging families as partners is essential to the attainment of this goal. The Sutton Public Schools Title I Program welcomes the participation of parents/guardians in support of student learning and recognizes that parental involvement increases the opportunities for student success.

It is the Title I policy of the Sutton Public Schools to foster and maintain ongoing communication with parents/guardians concerning opportunities for their involvement, their children's eligibility for special programs, their children's educational progress, the professional qualifications of their children's teachers, and the status of their children's schools. The Sutton Public Schools Title I Program strives to provide such information in an understandable and uniform format, including alternate formats upon request, and, to the extent practicable, in a language that parent/guardians can understand.

To the extent possible, the Sutton Public Schools Title I Program shall provide full opportunities for the participation of parents/guardians with limited English proficiency, parents/guardians with disabilities and parents/guardians of migratory children, including providing information and school reports in a format and language that such parents/guardians understand. Communications with parents/guardians shall, at all times, respect the privacy of students and their families.

They will include, but not limited to:

The opportunity to assist in developing the Title 1 plan, review the program and formulate suggestions for improvement. To accomplish this:

- Parents will be invited to the annual meeting/forum. The agenda will include Title 1 objectives and regulations; description of instructional methods; the student selection process; test scores and how schools are identified for school improvement; and No Child Left Behind parent information.
- The program components listed above will also be made available to parents through the Title 1 articles in the school newsletter, at Title 1 events and Open Houses, and as information distributed at these events.

Title 1 support will be provided to parents and teachers as they plan and implement effective parent involvement by:

- Providing a variety of parent and family workshops based on needs and interest.
- Helping them develop individual Title 1 Home School Compacts specific to their child's strengths and needs.

- Providing current parent literature/materials through a variety of venues, in a format that is understandable to parents.

In order to promote the schools' and parents' capacity to form a strong partnership and work toward higher student academic achievement, the Title 1 Program will:

- Provide parents with information, which will increase their capacity to participate in decisions regarding the education of their children, and effectively work with educators to improve academic achievement. This will include, but not be limited to, assisting parents in understanding the State and local curriculum frameworks and assessments, how to monitor a child's progress, and how to interpret school performance reports.
- Inform parents of Title 1 activities through newsletters, mailings, and flyers.

The parent involvement guidelines will be distributed and reviewed annually by parents, teachers, staff and the Title 1 Director to accommodate the changing needs of the parents and schools, in an ongoing effort to increase parental involvement and input in the Title 1 program.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

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 Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) 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 DESE 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 DESE to comply with the No Child Left Behind Act.

G.L.c. 71A School District Program Waivers for English Learners

Requirements and Procedures

General Laws Chapter 71A, as amended (known as “Question 2”), requires that publicly-funded students in Massachusetts who are English learners (i.e., limited English proficient) be instructed through the use of sheltered English immersion, unless the student is placed in a two-way bilingual program or wishes to “opt out” and be placed in a general classroom not tailored for English learners. English learners who wish to participate in a transitional bilingual program or receive some other type of language support may not do so unless they have received a waiver from the requirements of G.L.c. 71A.

Section 5 of G.L.c. 71A provides for waivers for individual students under certain conditions if the parent or guardian **annually** applies for the waiver by visiting the student’s school and providing written informed consent. At the time of the visit, parents are to be provided with “*a full description in a language they can understand*” of the educational materials to be used in the different educational program choices and all the educational opportunities available to the student. Foreign language classes for students who are not limited English proficient, two-way bilingual classes for students in grades kindergarten through grade 12, and services delivered according to an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan for students with disabilities are not subject to the requirements of G.L.c. 71A. Therefore, these students do not need waivers to participate in such classes or services.

The decision to issue a waiver is made by the superintendent or his/her designee, under guidelines established by, and subject to the review of, the local school committee. The district’s

guidelines may, but are not required to, contain an appeals process for parents whose waiver requests are denied by school officials. However, the final decision on waiver requests remains with the district. Each school district must establish and implement its waiver guidelines by the commencement of the 2003-2004 school year.

Individual schools in which 20 students or more of a given grade level receive a waiver shall be required to offer such students classes in bilingual education or other generally recognized educational methodologies permitted by law.

For students under age 10, G.L.c. 71A allows waivers with parental consent under the following conditions:

- a. The student has been placed in an English language classroom for at least 30 calendar days before the parent or guardian applies for the waiver;
- b. Documentation by school officials in no less than 250 words that the student's special and individual physical or psychological needs, separate from lack of English proficiency, make an alternative course of education better suited to the student's overall educational development and rapid acquisition of English;
- c. Inclusion of such documentation in the student's permanent school record; and
- d. Authorizing signatures on the waiver application of both the school superintendent and the school principal.

For students age 10 and older, G.L.c. 71A allows waivers, with parental consent, when it is the informed belief of the school principal and educational staff that an alternate course of action would be better suited to the student's overall educational progress and rapid acquisition of English.

LEGAL REFS.: 20 U.S.C. 3001 et seq. (language instruction for limited English proficient and immigrant students contained in No Child Left Behind Act of 2001)
42 U.S.C. 2000d (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964)
603 CMR 14.00
General Laws Chapter 71A

Adopted October 19, 2010

First Reading of Revision, August 26, 2013

Second Reading of Revision, September 9, 2013

Third Reading and Adoption, September 23, 2013

HOMEBOUND INSTRUCTION

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

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

Homebound instruction is offered in basic elementary subjects and in secondary subjects which do not require laboratories and special equipment, subject in all cases to the availability of qualified teachers. Certified teachers are assigned to homebound instruction by the Director of Special Education with the approval of the Superintendent.

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 aides 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 the school's extracurricular activities.

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

HOME SCHOOLING

1. Requirements for approval of home instruction will include:
 - a. The parent or legal guardian must request permission to hold home instruction on an annual basis.
 - b. A home instruction application form will be provided to the parents or legal guardian. This form must be completed and returned to the Superintendent before approval may be granted.
 - c. The Committee delegates the approval of home instruction to the Superintendent. Any approval or rejection of an application by the Superintendent is subject to review by the Committee.
2. Children in home instruction may, at the discretion of parents or guardian, attend the public schools on a part-time basis. It may be an advantage for a home-taught child to attend specialized classes in the public school.
3. Parents or a legal guardian in charge of home instruction should make provision for regular testing or use of other indicators of student progress such as standardized achievement tests. As an alternative to home testing and at the request of those in charge of the home instruction, the School District will make provision for inclusion of home-taught children in the annual achievement test battery, which is usually administered in February or March of each school year. The home instruction summary form must include either a summary of home testing results for each required subject for each child or the results of the achievement test that is administered through the School District.
4. Auditing functions of the Committee for the home instruction will include:
 - a. The Committee at any time may request a review by the Superintendent of the attendance rolls, records of test scores or other achievement indicators in each required subject for any child in home instruction.
 - b. The Committee may request at any time that the Superintendent review the instructional materials and methods used by the person(s) responsible for the home instruction.
 - c. The Superintendent will prepare for the Committee an annual summary of the children included in home instruction. This report will also summarize, in general, the appropriateness or possible deficiencies of home education situations.

5. Within one week of the ending date of the home instruction, as indicated on the home instruction application form, the School District will mail the parents or legal guardian a home instruction summary form. The completed form should be returned to the School District within 30 days. This summary form must be returned to the School District office before annual approval of home instruction can be made for any succeeding years.
6. The Committee will act in a responsible, cooperative manner to ensure that all children in the School District receive competent, adequate instruction. This concern includes children in home education. If the Committee determines that a home instruction situation is inadequate, a conference between the parents or legal guardian and the Superintendent will be scheduled to find mutually acceptable ways to correct any deficiency.
7. If deficiencies in a home education situation are not corrected or the proper annual application or summary is not completed by the parents or legal guardian, an appropriate referral will be made.

HOME EDUCATION PROPOSAL

Please read the attached School Committee policy on home education. Complete this form (attaching any supportive documents) and forward it to the Superintendent of Schools, Boston Road, Sutton, MA 01590 at least twenty (20) days prior to the planned start of a home education program.

Parent name(s) _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

Please list name(s) of student(s) who will be taught at the above designated home and current comparable public school grade level(s):

Name _____	Grade _____
Name _____	Grade _____
Name _____	Grade _____
Name _____	Grade _____
Name _____	Grade _____
Name _____	Grade _____

Period of time for which approval is sought:

_____ through _____
month/year month/year

Teachers

Please attach a statement providing the following information about any persons who will serve as teachers in this program:

Name, teaching responsibility, college degrees (if any,) college major and minor, past teaching experience (if any,) teaching certification (if any,) and any other evidence to describe their teaching competence for the task to be assigned.

Subjects

Attach a description of each subject to be taught including the scope, major goals and objectives for the child, and the major materials and methods to be used in each area.

Schedule

Attach a description of the schedule you plan for instruction during the period for which approval is requested. Include the number of hours and days planned.

Evaluation

Attach a statement describing the tests or measurements that you plan to use to evaluate your child's educational growth during this period. If this home education plan is approved the school department will expect to review a periodic evaluation of the child's progress and may set guidelines and standards for this purpose to insure the evaluation of reasonable educational progress.

Response by School Authorities

Ordinarily, you will receive a response to your proposed plan within twenty (20) days from receipt of your application.

Hearing

As parents, you have the right to a hearing before the school authorities, if you wish, to allow you an opportunity to explain your plan further and answer questions about it. You may be represented by counsel. If you wish to take this option please so state your wish below by providing two possible times when this would be convenient for you.

Yes, a hearing is requested. The following two possible dates and times are suggested:

Date _____ Time _____

Date _____ Time _____

Date of Application _____

Signature of person completing application _____

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: "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.

SOURCE: MASC

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

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

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

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

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

SOURCE: MASC

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

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

RECONSIDERATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES

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

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

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

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

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

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

If the decision of the 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.

SOURCE: MASC

TEXTBOOK SELECTION AND ADOPTION

Responsibility for the review and selection of textbooks to be purchased shall rest with the Principal of each school in conjunction with the Superintendent or her/his designee. The Principal is encouraged through the School Committee to establish a review committee to assist in the process to determine the textbooks that best meet the curriculum guidelines of the district. The review committee should include teachers who will use the texts and other staff members as found desirable.

Principles that apply generally to the selection of instructional materials and library materials shall apply to textbooks. Additionally, basic textbooks and textbook support materials shall be chosen:

- To advance the educational objectives of the school system and particular objectives of the course program,
- To contribute toward continuity, integration, and articulation of the curriculum, and
- To establish a general framework for the particular course or program.

Because the instructional purposes of textbooks, as stated above, are of such importance, particular care shall be taken in their selection as to content.

Although many points must be examined, the School Committee directs the staff to be mindful of the following considerations:

- The needs of the learners must be provided for.
- Attention should be given to gender roles depicted in the materials.
- The textbook and textbook support materials should lead the student and teacher beyond the textbook into a wide variety of other materials and educational experiences.
- If the textbook deals with problems and issues of our times, it should present and encourage examination of varied points of view.
- Because textbooks are selected for several years use, special attention also shall be given to their physical characteristics, durability, format and price. Major textbook purchases shall be consistent and made on a system-wide basis.
- Aligned with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks.

LEGAL REFS.: 71:48; 30B:7; 71:50
603 CMR 26:05

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

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS SELECTION AND ADOPTION

The 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 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.

LEGAL REF.: 603 CMR 26:05

LIBRARY MATERIALS SELECTION AND ADOPTION

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

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

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

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

LEGAL REF.: 603 CMR 26:05

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

LIBRARY MATERIALS SELECTION AND ADOPTION

The continuous review of integrated learning center (library) 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 shall be withdrawn shall rest with the professional staff.

Among the other reasons for withdrawing an item shall be the following:

- Curricular changes have rendered as superfluous materials (or multiple copies of materials) formerly used but no longer in demand.
- Materials contain information which is no longer accurate or current.
- Materials intended for recreational reading have become dated or unattractive and are no longer in demand. Some books which are deemed standards or classics shall be retained even though they rarely circulate.
- Materials have worn out, been damaged or physically deteriorated, and have lost utility, and/or appeal.
- Materials have been superseded by newer items, which present the same information, but in superior format.

LEGAL REF.: 603 CMR 26:05

LIBRARY RESOURCES

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

Definition of Library Resources

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

Criteria for Selection of Library Resources

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

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

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

Disclosure of Information/Privacy of Circulation Records

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

Re-evaluation (Weeding) of Library Resources

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

Among the reasons for withdrawing an item are the following:

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

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

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

Continuing evaluation is closely related to the goals and responsibilities of library/media centers and is a valuable tool of collection development. This procedure is not to be used as a convenient or expedient means to remove materials presumed to be controversial or likely to be disapproved by segments of the community. Materials are not to be proscribed or removed

background or views of those contributing to their creation.

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. In any questionable instance, the Principal should be informed and shall decide whether its use is 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.

LEGAL REF.: 603 CMR 26:05

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

Access to Electronic Media

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

Safety Procedures and Guidelines

The Superintendent or designee shall develop and implement appropriate procedures to provide guidance for access to electronic media. Guidelines shall address teacher supervision of student computer use, ethical use of electronic media (including, but not limited to, the Internet, e-mail, and other District technological resources), and issues of privacy versus administrative review of electronic files and communications. In addition, guidelines shall prohibit utilization of networks for prohibited or illegal activities, the intentional spreading of embedded messages, or the use of other programs with the potential of damaging or destroying programs or data.

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

- Controlling access by minors to inappropriate matter on the Internet and World Wide Web;
- Safety and security of minors when they are using electronic mail, chat rooms, and other forms of director electronic communications;
- Preventing unauthorized access, including “hacking” and other unlawful activities by minors online;
- Unauthorized disclosure, use and dissemination of personal information regarding minors; and
- Restricting minors’ access to materials harmful to them.

The District shall provide reasonable public notice of, and at least one (1) public hearing or meeting to address and communicate its Internet safety measures.

Permission/Agreement Form

A written parental request shall be required prior to the student being granted independent access to electronic media involving District technological resources. The required permission/agreement form, which shall specify acceptable uses, rules of on-line behavior, access privileges, and penalties for policy/procedural violations, must be signed by the parent or legal guardian of minor students (those under 18 years of age) and also by the student. This document

shall be kept on file as a legal, binding document. In order to modify or rescind the agreement, the student's parent/guardian (or the student who is at least 18 years old) must provide the Superintendent with a written request.

Employee Use

Employees shall use electronic mail only for purposes directly related to work-related activities.

Employees shall not use a code, access a file, or retrieve any stored communication unless they have been given authorization to do so. (Authorization is not required each time the electronic media is accessed in performance of one's duties.) Each employee is responsible for the security of his/her own password.

Community Use

On recommendation of the Superintendent or designee, the Committee shall determine when and which computer equipment, software, and information access systems will be available to the community. Upon request to the Principal or designee, community members may have access to the Internet and other electronic information sources and programs available through the District's technology system, provided they attend any required training and abide by the rules of usage established by the Superintendent or designee.

Disregard of Rules

Individuals who refuse to sign required acceptable use documents or who violate District rules governing the use of District technology shall be subject to loss or restriction of the privilege of using equipment, software, information access systems, or other computing and telecommunications technologies.

Responsibility for Damages

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

Responding to Concerns

School officials shall apply the same criterion of educational suitability used to review other educational resources when questions arise concerning access to specific databases or other electronic media.

Audit of Use

Users with network access shall not utilize District resources to establish electronic mail accounts through third-party providers or any other nonstandard electronic mail system.

The Superintendent or designee shall establish a process to determine whether the District's education technology is being used for purposes prohibited by law or for accessing sexually explicit materials. The process shall include, but not be limited to:

1. Utilizing technology that blocks or filters Internet access for both minors and adults to certain visual depictions that are obscene, child pornography, or, with respect to computers with Internet access by minors, harmful to minors;
2. Maintaining and securing a usage log; and
3. Monitoring online activities of minors.

LEGAL REFS: 47 USC § 254

CROSS REFS: IJNDB, Acceptable Use Policy

SOCIAL NETWORKING

1. Internet AUP still in force

This policy is adopted in addition to, and not as a substitute for, the Sutton School District's Internet Acceptable Use Policy, which governs use of the school district's technological resources.

2. General Concerns

The Sutton Public Schools recognizes the proliferation and, in some instances, usefulness, of online conversation between staff and students and/or their parents or guardians. However, due to the nature of social networking sites, there exists a risk, without care and planning, that the lines between one's professional life and personal life will be blurred. Our staff should always be mindful of how they present themselves to the world, online and otherwise. Should an educator "friend" a student on Facebook, subscribe to a student's "twitter" account, regularly engage in email "chat" with a student, exchange text messages with students or engage in other electronic communication, the school district is concerned, and the educator should be concerned, that such activities may undermine the educator's authority to maintain discipline, encourage inappropriate behaviors and compromise the educator's ability to remain truly objective with his or her students.

In addition, any online communication using one's own personal resources, as opposed to school district resources, compromises the staff's, as well as the school district's ability to retain public records in accordance with the requirements of the Commonwealth's public records laws. The law requires public employees who send, receive or maintain records in their capacity as public employees, to retain, disclose and dispose of such records in compliance with strict provisions of the public records law. This law applies whether or not the record is in the form of a paper document or an electronic communication. When staff members communicate through school-based resources, such as staff email or school sponsored web pages, such records are retained and archived through the school's information technology department. If, however, a staff member communicates outside of these resources, such information is not retained. The burden falls on the staff member to comply with public records laws when using personal email or social network accounts to communicate with students and/or parents and guardians.

3. Expectations of Staff

With these concerns in mind, the Sutton Public Schools has instituted this "Social Networking Policy," and announces its expectations for staff members' use of social networks such as Facebook, Linked-in, Twitter, personal email accounts, text message features of cell phones, use of blogs, and other electronic or technologically based communication systems.

1. Before endeavoring to establish any social networking account, staff members should familiarize themselves with the features of any account they choose to use. For example, Facebook requires account holders to take specific steps to “privatize” the information they place online. You must educate yourself to these features of Facebook or any other social networking site you select. You will be responsible should any information you intended to be “private” becomes “public” due to your own ignorance of the features of the social network you have decided to use or your failure to properly use such features.
2. You must also know that any information you share privately with a recipient could be re-distributed by such recipient, without your knowledge or consent. The same principles you apply to in person communication should be applied to online conversation: use discretion, and do not place your trust in individuals who have not proven themselves trustworthy. In essence, nothing you post online is ever truly “private.”
3. The school district expects you to keep the line between your professional life and your personal life clearly drawn at all times. There is no reason why this cannot be done, even in light of the proliferation of social networking sites. All that is required is some forethought before using social networking for both your professional and personal life, to be sure that these lines never become blurred. For example, if the district does not maintain a web portal for staff to communicate outside of school hours as necessary with students and families, and an educator wishes to establish a Facebook or personal email account through which he or she will communicate with students, he or she should establish a Facebook identity and email identity that is separate from his/her “personal” Facebook identity or personal email account. He/she should only use his/her educational Facebook account or educational email account to communicate with students and/or parents and guardians on matters directly related to education. The “friends” associated with such educational Facebook account should only be members of the educational community, such as administrators, staff, students, and parents of such students. It is strongly recommended that staff members will reject friend requests from individuals who do not fit into any of these categories.
4. At all times, and in the use of any form of communications, staff members will always adhere to student privacy rights and the rights of employees to have their personnel and medical information kept confidential. Information that is protected by law from disclosure to third parties will not be communicated online in a way that unreasonably exposes such information to retrieval by those third parties. For example, through an educational Facebook account, a staff member may not post confidential

student information on the “wall,” the “information” section, or through any part of that Facebook account that would be accessible to other of the staff member’s Facebook “friends” associated with that account. If a staff member wishes to communicate privately with a student through the educational Facebook account, such communication shall be conveyed only through the private email/message feature of Facebook, so that only the student may view the message and respond to it.

5. Staff members are encouraged to communicate with students and parents on educational matters only, and only through school-based resources, such as school-provided email or web portal accounts. Use of one’s personal email account or social networking account to discuss school business with students and parents is discouraged. It should be noted that, just because a staff member uses his/her personal email as opposed to a school email account, this does not shield such email from the provisions of the public records law or from discovery in litigation. It only prevents the archiving of such messages through the school district’s automatic email archiving system. We again remind staff that information sent or received by them, even through personal email or social network accounts that are related to their capacity as a school employee are still subject to public records retention, exemption and disclosure requirements.”
6. If a staff member conveys school related messages to students and parents on his/her private account, he/she should save such email or any communication conveyed through a social networking site, or print and save a paper copy of such email or other online communication, and file it, and regard its privacy, as he/she would any other document concerning that student. The staff member should forward copies of any such emails or online communications to his or her school based email account so that it can be properly retained and archived in compliance with the requirements of the public records law. Any document created or received by a public employee in his or her capacity as such is subject to retention and perhaps disclosure under the public records law.
7. No matter what medium of communication a staff member selects, he/she should adhere to appropriate staff/student boundaries. You are a role model, not a student’s friend, and you should always conduct yourself in accordance with this understanding.
8. This policy is not intended to infringe upon a staff member’s right to speak publicly on matters of public concern, or to communicate with fellow members of their union on workplace issues, so long as such communication adheres to appropriate time, place and manner restrictions and does not interfere with the performance of your duties. However,

when you speak via social networking sites or tools on matters concerning your work, you are speaking as an employee and not as a citizen; restrictions may be placed upon your freedom to express yourself. Those restrictions are intended to preserve student confidentiality, maintain your status as an educator who should command and receive the respect of students, be able to maintain order and discipline in your classroom, and remain objective with respect to your students.

9. Staff members are discouraged from using home telephones, personal cell phones, personal email accounts and personal Facebook accounts to communicate with students. Your communications with students, even if you do not use school resources for such communications, are within the jurisdiction of the school district to monitor as they arise out of your position as an educator. Any conduct, whether online or not, that reflects poorly upon the school district or consists of inappropriate behavior on the part of a staff member, may expose an employee to discipline up to and including discharge. Even if you are not using a school telephone, computer, classroom or the like to engage in contact with a student that such contact is not outside of the school district's authority to take appropriate disciplinary action. If your behavior is inappropriate, undermines your authority to instruct or maintain control and discipline with students, compromises your objectivity, or harms students, the school district reserves the right to impose discipline for such behavior. A staff member may also face individual liability for inappropriate online communications with students and/or parents and guardians, as well as exposing the district to vicarious liability in certain instances.

At the same time, the district recognizes that, in limited cases, use of cell phone text messages or cell phone calls or emails outside of regular school hours may be reasonably necessary. For example, in connection with school sponsored events for which staff members serve as duly appointed advisors, they may need to convey messages in a timely manner to students and may not have access to school based email accounts, school provided telephones or school based web pages. In such limited circumstances, the district anticipates that staff members will make reasonable use of their cell phones or smart phones to convey time sensitive information on scheduling issues and the like.

10. Staff members may not access their personal email accounts or private Facebook accounts using school district computer resources.
11. If you are communicating as an employee of the district in your online communications, you must be aware that readers will assume you "speak for the school district." Therefore, all of your online communications,

when you are actually acting on behalf of the district, or creating the appearance that you are doing so, must be professional at all times and reflect positively on the school district.

12. In the use of your Facebook account or other social networking site, you may not, without the expressed permission of the superintendent of schools, use the school's logo, likeness or any school photographs or other property that belongs to the school.
13. References to "Facebook" are not included to limit application of their policy to use of that program. All online, electronic or computerized means of communication are subject to this policy. Given the rapid pace of technological change it is not possible to identify all proprietary or commonly named or identified means of such communications.

First Reading – September 26, 2011

Second Reading – October 18, 2011

Final Reading and Adoption – November 7, 2011

SUTTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

Sutton Public Schools provides student and staff access to the district's electronic network. This network includes Internet access, computer services, video conferencing, computers, and related equipment for educational and administrative purposes. The purpose of this network is to assist in preparing users for success in life and work in the 21st century by providing them with electronic access to a wide range of information and the ability to communicate with people throughout the world. This document contains the rules and procedures for the acceptable use of the Sutton Public Schools' electronic network (Network).

- The Network has been established for limited educational and administrative purposes. The term "educational purpose" includes classroom activities, career development, and limited high-quality, self-discovery activities.
- The Network has not been established as a public access service or a public forum. Sutton Public Schools has the right to place reasonable restrictions on material that is accessed or posted throughout the Network.
- Parent/guardian permission is required for all users under the age of 18. Access is a privilege not a right.
- It is presumed that users will honor this agreement that they and their parent/guardian have signed. The district is not responsible for the actions of users who violate them beyond the clarification of standards outlined in this policy.
- The district reserves the right to monitor all activity on the Network. Users will indemnify the district for any damage that is caused by their inappropriate use of the Network.
- Users are expected to follow the same rules, good manners and common sense guidelines that are used with other daily school activities, as well as the law, in the use of the Network. By logging on to the Network, users have agreed to abide by the Sutton Public Schools' Acceptable Use Policy.

General Unacceptable Behaviors

Unacceptable behaviors include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Users will not post information that, if acted upon, could cause damage, danger or disruption of the educational process.
- Users will not engage in personal attacks, including prejudicial or discriminatory attacks.

- Users will not harass another person. Harassment is persistently acting in a manner that distresses or annoys another person. If a user is told by a person to stop sending messages, they must stop.
- Users will not knowingly or recklessly post false or defamatory information about a person or organization.
- Users will not use criminal speech or commit a crime such as threats to the president, instructions on breaking into computer networks, child pornography, drug dealing, purchase of alcohol, gang activities, threats to an individual, etc.
- Users will not use speech that is inappropriate in an educational setting or violates district rules.
- Users will not abuse Network resources such as sending chain letters or "spamming."
- Users will not display, access or send offensive messages or pictures.
- Users will not use the Network for commercial purposes.
- Users will not offer, provide, or purchase products or services through the Network.
- Users will not use the Network for political lobbying. Users may use the Network to communicate with elected representatives and to express their opinions on political issues.
- Users will not attempt to access non-instructional district systems, such as student information systems or business systems.
- Users will not use any wired or wireless network (including third party internet service providers) with equipment brought from home. Example: The use of a home computer on the Network or accessing the internet from any device not owned by the district.
- Users will not use district equipment, Network, or credentials to threaten employees or cause a disruption to the educational program.
- Users will not use the district equipment, Network, or credentials to send or post electronic messages that are abusive, obscene, sexually oriented, threatening, harassing, damaging to another's reputation, or illegal.

- Users who receive email that is confidential in nature, should keep the information confidential, only sharing with the appropriate personnel.
- Users will not post private information about another person.
- E-mail distributed or received through the Network is a public record, and is retained according to the law.
- Users will not send e-mail that does not coincide with the educational process.
- Users will not send confidential information via e-mail.

World Wide Web

- Elementary School Level - Access to information for users on the Web will generally be limited to prescreened sites that are closely supervised by the teacher.
- Elementary Students are not to enter any personal information into a Web site (name, phone number, address, etc.)
- Middle and High School Level - Access to information for users on the Web will generally be provided through prescreened sites and in a manner prescribed by their school.

Telnet and FTP

Telnet and FTP services will be not available to users.

Message Board/Usenet Groups

The district will provide access to selected newsgroups that relate to subjects appropriate for educational use. Messages posted locally that are in violation of this policy will be removed. The district reserves the right to immediately terminate the account of a user who misuses the message boards or Usenet groups.

Real-Time, Interactive Communication Areas

- Users will not use chat or instant messaging, unless approved by the Director of Technology.
- Users will not use proxy Web sites to bypass filtering
- Users will not use social networking Web sites such as MySpace, Facebook, etc.

Web Sites

- Elementary and Middle School Level - Group pictures without identification of individual users are permitted. Student work may be posted with either student first name only or other school-developed identifier (such as an alias or number.)
- High School Level - Students may be identified by their full name with parental approval. Group or individual pictures of users with student identification are permitted with parental approval. Parents may elect to have their child assigned to the elementary/middle school level of use.
- Material (graphics, text, sound, etc.) that is the ownership of someone other than the student may not be used on Web sites unless formal permission has been obtained.

Personal Safety

- Users will not share personal contact information about themselves or other people. Personal contact information includes address, telephone, school address, or work address.
- Elementary and middle school users will not disclose their full name or any other personal contact information for any purpose.
- High school users will not disclose personal contact information, except to educational institutes for educational purposes, companies or other entities for career development purposes, or without specific building administrative approval.
- Users will not agree to meet with someone they have met online.
- Users will promptly disclose to a teacher or other school employee any message received that is inappropriate or makes the student feel uncomfortable.

System Security

- Users are responsible for their individual accounts and should take all reasonable precautions to protect their accounts. Under no conditions should users provide their password to another person.
- Users must immediately notify a teacher or the system administrator if they have identified a possible security problem. Users should not go looking for security problems, because this may be construed as an illegal attempt to gain access.
- Users will not attempt to gain unauthorized access to any portion of the Network. This includes attempting to log in through another person's account or access another person's folders, work, or files. These actions are illegal, even if only for the purposes of "browsing."
- Users will not make deliberate attempts to disrupt the computer system or destroy data by spreading computer viruses or by any other means. These actions are illegal.
- Users will not attempt to access Web sites blocked by district policy, including the use of proxy services, software, or Web sites.

- Users will not use sniffing or remote access technology to monitor the Network or other user's activity.

Software and Files

- Software is available to users to be used as an educational resource. No user may install, upload or download software without permission from the district technology department.
- A user's account may be limited or terminated if a student intentionally misuses software on any district-owned equipment.
- Routine maintenance and monitoring of the Network may lead to discovery that a user has violated this policy or the law. Users (staff and students) should not expect that files stored on district servers or computers are private.

Technology Hardware

- Hardware and peripherals are provided as tools for educational purposes. Users are not permitted to relocate hardware (except for portable devices,) install peripherals or modify settings to equipment without the consent of the district technology department.

Vandalism

- Any malicious attempt to harm or destroy data, the Network, other network components connected to the Network backbone, hardware or software will result in cancellation of network privileges. Disciplinary measures in compliance with the school's discipline code and policies will be enforced, as well as potential legal action.

Plagiarism and Copyright Infringement

- Users will not plagiarize works found on the Internet. Plagiarism is taking the ideas or writings of others and presenting them as if they were the user's.
- District policies on copyright will govern the use of material accessed and used through the Network.
- Copyrighted material will not be placed on any system without the author's permission. Permission may be specified in the document, on the system, or must be obtained directly from the author.

Video Conference

- Video conferencing for educational purposes is permitted. Video conferencing is a way that users can communicate with other users, speakers, museums, etc. from other parts of the country and the world. With video conferencing equipment, users can see, hear, and speak with other users, speakers, museum personnel, etc., in real-time.

- Video conference sessions may be videotaped by district personnel or by a participating school involved in the exchange in order to share the experience within ours or their building or district.
- User's voices, physical presence, and participation in the video conference are transmitted to participating sites during each session. Rules and procedures relative to acceptable use and behavior by users apply during all video conference sessions.

User Rights

- User's right to free speech applies to communication on the Internet. The Network is considered a limited forum, similar to the school newspaper, and therefore the district may restrict a student's speech for valid educational reasons. The district will not restrict a student's speech on the basis of a disagreement with the opinions that are being expressed.
- An individual search will be conducted if there is reasonable suspicion that a student or staff member has violated this policy or the law. The investigation will be reasonable and related to the suspected violation.

Due Process

- The district will cooperate fully with local, state, or federal officials in any investigation related to any illegal activities conducted through the Network.
- In the event there is an allegation that a student or staff member has violated the district acceptable use policy, the student or staff member will be provided with a written notice of the alleged violation. (The student will be provided with notice and an opportunity to be heard in the manner set forth in the disciplinary code.)
- Disciplinary actions will be tailored to meet specific concerns related to the violation and to assist the student in gaining the self-discipline necessary to behave appropriately on an electronic network. Violations of the acceptable use policy may result in a loss of access as well as other disciplinary or legal action.
- If the infraction also involves a violation of other provisions of school rules, it will be handled in a manner described in the school rules. Additional restrictions may be placed on a student's use of his/her Network account.

Limitation of Liability

- The district makes no guarantee that the functions or the services provided by or through the Network will be error-free or without defect. The district will not be responsible for any damage suffered, including but not limited to, loss of data or interruptions of service.
- The district is not responsible for the accuracy or quality of the information obtained through or stored on the Network. The district will not be responsible for financial obligations arising through the unauthorized use of the Network.

Violations of this Acceptable Use Policy

Violations of this policy may result in loss of access as well as other disciplinary or legal action. User's in violation of this policy shall be subject, but not limited to the consequences as indicated within this policy as well as other appropriate discipline:

- Use of Network only under direct supervision
- Suspension of Network privileges
- Revocation of Network privileges
- Suspension of computer privileges
- Suspension from school
- Expulsion from school and/or
- Legal action and prosecution by the authorities
- Dismissal or suspension for employees

The particular consequences for violations of this policy shall be determined by the school administrators. The superintendent, or designee, and the school committee shall determine when school expulsion and/or legal action or actions by the authorities are the appropriate course of action. The use of the Sutton Telecommunications Network is a privilege, not a right.

Adopted February 28, 2011

Sutton Public Schools – Acceptable Use Policy

USER SIGNATURE

I have read and understand this document. I understand that any violations of the above provisions outlined in this document may result in the loss of my user account, and or further disciplinary or legal actions. I agree to report any misuse of the electronic information resources to the Director of Technology.

Signature _____ Date _____

PARENT OR GUARDIAN SIGNATURE

As a parent or guardian of this student, I have read the Acceptable Use Policy and understand that access to electronic information resources in the Sutton Public Schools is designed for educational purposes only. I understand that it is impossible for the Sutton Public School District to restrict access to all controversial materials, and will not hold the district responsible for controversial materials my child may access on the Sutton Telecommunications Network. It is our hope that parents of young children can paraphrase the important points of this document. Please help them understand the importance of Acceptable Use Policy in the Sutton Public Schools.

Signature_____ Date_____

File: IJNDC

SCHOOL AND DISTRICT WEB PAGES

The Sutton Public School District realizes the limitless potential for information and communication provided by the World Wide Web. The availability of this communication vehicle provides an opportunity for students and staff to access and contribute to the world of information related to curriculum, instruction, school, District, and school community related activities. Therefore, the Sutton Public School District will use the Internet as an effective, efficient and timely source of information, method of communication and vehicle for resource collection. In order to take advantage of the opportunities the Internet provides, the Committee authorizes the creation of school and/or District Web pages on the Internet.

Only those web pages maintained in accordance with Committee policy and established procedures shall be recognized as official representations of the District or individual schools. All information on a school or District Web page must accurately reflect the mission, goals, policies, program, and activities of the school and District. The Web pages must have a purpose that falls within at least one of three categories:

1. Support of curriculum and instruction – intended to provide links to Internet resources for students, parents and staff in the District.
2. Public information – intended to communicate information about the schools and District to students, staff, parents, community, and the world at large.
3. District technology support – intended to provide and respond to instructional and administrative technology needs of students and staff.

The Superintendent shall designate an individual(s) to be responsible to maintaining the official District web page and monitoring all District Web page activity. A building Principal shall make such designation for an individual school. Schools or departments that wish to publish a Web page must identify an appropriately qualified publisher and/or author.

As with any instructional materials or publication used by or representing the school or District, the building Principal or Superintendent, respectively, are ultimately responsible for accuracy and appropriateness of the information made available at the Web site. Concern about the content of any page(s) created by students or staff should be directed to the building Principal or to the Superintendent's office when related to the District Web site.

Web sites developed under contract for the Sutton Public School District or within the scope of employment by Sutton Public School District employees are the property of the Sutton Public School District.

Adopted February 28, 2011

WEB SITE GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES FOR APPROVAL

Unlike the Internet itself, schools and the District can control the type of information placed on Web pages. Documents created for the Web and linked to District Web pages shall meet the criteria for use as public information or an instructional resource. The following considerations should be considered when determining the information to include on a school or District Web page: Copyright/trademark issues; applicability to the curriculum or communication goals of the school or District; privacy issues; and related School Committee policies. Links to other Web pages should be carefully selected based on the above issues.

Defined Purpose

A Web page must have a clearly defined purpose that is published on the Web page. Included in the purpose, the target audience must be specified and defined; however, all Web site users are reminded that their audience includes the worldwide community.

Content Standards

All subject matter on Web pages should relate to curriculum, instruction, school-authorized activities, general information supporting student safety, growth, and learning, or public information of interest to others. Therefore, neither staff nor students may publish on the District Web site personal pages or pages for individuals or organizations not directly affiliated with the District. Staff or student work may be published only as it relates to a class project, course, or other school-related activity. Parent groups, partnerships, and municipal or educational cooperatives are considered affiliates of the District. No confidential information is to be published on or linked to a Web page.

Quality Standards

All Web page work must be free of spelling and grammatical errors. Documents may not contain objectionable material or link directly to objectionable materials. Objectionable material is addressed in more detail in the School Committee policy for instructional material selection and reconsideration. Authors and publishers are reminded that a Web site is a virtual doorway to your school. A site and a school will be judged on its ease for the user, the design, and the content. It is strongly recommended that a school form a building committee of interested individuals including staff, administrators, parents, students, and community members for the development of the Web site. Thoughtful consideration should go into decisions regarding purpose, usefulness, and appearance of each item on the Web site. As much as possible, publishers are encouraged to include student pictures and work. As the District represents itself to the world through this medium, assurances should be provided that students are the focus of the Sutton Public School District. Written student and parent consent must be secured for publication of student work.

Consistence Standards

Each existing school or department Web site shall have a link to the District Web site once the District Web site is online. For consistency, all school District Web sites must contain certain elements:

- At the bottom of each page there must be a link to the home page (to be defined by the school or District home page once online).
- At the bottom of the Web page, there must be an indication of the date of the last update to that page and the name or initials of the person(s) responsible for page update. It shall be that person's responsibility to keep the Web page current. Repeated failure to do so may result in revocation of approval. It is strongly recommended that a building set up a system of checks and balances for the Web site (for example: all incoming e-mail is blind copied to the Principal or department head).
- All Web sites must display the name and approved logo of the Sutton Public School District.
- All Web pages must be given names that clearly identify them.
- Links to student e-mail accounts are not allowed.
- Student directory data is prohibited from publication, except for the first name and grade level of a student in relation to a photo or work.
- Web pages may not contain links to other Web pages not yet completed. If additional pages are anticipated, but not yet developed, the text that will provide such a link should be included. However, the actual link to said page(s) may not be made until the final page is actually in place.
- All Web sites must include: the author or publisher's name; the publisher or school's e-mail address; appropriate copyright citations.
- Authors must exhibit care when creating Web pages with extensive background, large graphics, applets, animation, and audio or video clips. Such files require extensive download time, are frustrating for modem users, and slow down file servers.

Adopted February 28, 2011

STUDENT FIELD TRIPS

The Sutton School District will strive to provide the opportunity for all students to participate in appropriate educational programs away from school.

Students must submit a signed parent/guardian permission form, including appropriate authorization for emergency medical care and administration of medication for all trips. Forms must be held for the period of time recommended by the school department's insurance carrier.

The building Principal must approve all day trips in advance. Requests for approval of day trips will be submitted on a form approved by the Superintendent.

In acting on a request, the Principal will consider:

- The enrichment value of the trip in relation to its cost,
- The availability of scholarships, where needed,
- Grade level appropriateness,
- Adequacy of teacher/volunteer supervision,
- Learning opportunities for students not participating, and
- Such other factors as may, in his/her judgment, be pertinent.

All overnight trips and trips requiring travel between midnight and 6:00 a.m. must be approved in advance by the School Committee. Trip sponsors are responsible for ensuring that all necessary forms and supporting documentation are available to the Committee.

The Committee will take into account all logistical details of the trip, including:

- Transportation,
- Accommodations,
- The enrichment value of the trip in relation to its cost,
- The fundraising required of students, and
- The availability of scholarships, where needed.

With the exception of the senior class trip, no fundraising may take place until the School Committee approves the trip.

The minimum procedures for planning transportation, trip scheduling, fundraising, and student supervision for an overnight or late night trip are included in IJOA-R-2. At least ten (10) days before the trip is to begin, the trip sponsor must provide documentation, satisfactory to the Superintendent or his/her designee, that these procedures have been followed.

The School Committee's approval of any trip is always contingent upon the receipt of this documentation and failure to provide it in timely fashion will automatically cancel its approval for the trip.

The longstanding tradition of the senior class trip will be allowed provided students' time on learning requirements are met. Group fundraising for this trip may begin during the freshman

year of high school for the respective class. All Field Trip Procedures in IJOA-R-2 must be followed in planning this trip.

File: IJOA (also JJH)

Teachers and other school staff are prohibited from soliciting for privately run trips through the school system and in the schools. The School Committee will only review for approval school-sanctioned trips. The School Committee will not review or approve trips that are privately organized and run without school sanctioning.

Adopted October 19, 2010

STUDENT FIELD TRIP OPERATING GUIDELINES

The trip organizer/leader should obtain a set of field trip forms from their respective Principal's office. Forms should be completed and approved by the appropriate parties **PRIOR TO ANY ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE TRIP TO STUDENTS.**

Day trips must be approved by the building Principal.

Overnight trips within Massachusetts must be approved by the Principal, Superintendent, and the School Committee.

Overnight trips outside of Massachusetts must be approved by the Principal, Superintendent, and the School Committee.

Copies of all field trip forms must be sent to the Superintendent and business office.

Field Trip Permission Forms will be distributed to students after approval of the trip.

The trip organizer/leader should complete the top of Field Trip Permission Form -Part 1. The form should then be photocopied making enough copies for the number of participants. Be sure your permission forms are copied on both sides. Part 1 and Part 2 must all be filled out. Forms are then distributed to students to obtain parental permission to attend the trip.

No student should be allowed to participate in a school field trip unless he/she has turned in the proper permission slip.

Complete the Field Trip Cost Analysis form and return it to the business office.

To coordinate bus plans with the bus company:

- Obtain a purchase order from the building Principal.
- Complete the purchase order and have it signed by the Principal.
- Make the arrangements with the bus company using the number of the completed and approved purchase order.

Collect student permission forms and money.

Compile a list of all students going on the trip and distribute the list to all teachers and personnel that the trip affects. This should be done at least one week prior to the trip.

Submit all monies collected to the office and request a check (if necessary.)

Notify food services of the date of the trip and the number of student involved.

A few days before the trip:

- Confirm the travel reservations with the bus company.

Make sure you have directions to your destination in order to provide them to the bus driver.

Arrange coverage (substitute) for students left at school and for EACH chaperone that will miss the day(s) at school. Make sure each chaperone leaves appropriate substitute lesson plans.

Make a list of students not going on the trip and leave it with the office.

Prepare copies of student lists for chaperones.

After boarding the bus for your trip take attendance and submit a final, accurate, list to the office of students going on the trip. Please include the student's name and home phone number.

Bring all Student Permission Forms with you along with other pertinent papers.

Be sure to take attendance EACH TIME you disembark and before leaving your destination and returning to school.

Adopted October 19, 2010

FIELD TRIP PROCEDURES

The following are the minimum procedures that will be used to determine whether transportation, trip scheduling, fundraising, and student supervision issues have been appropriately considered in planning a student trip involving an overnight stay or travel between the hours of 10:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m.

TRANSPORTATION:

1. The use of leased vans or private automobiles is prohibited. These trips must use commercial vehicles unless an exemption has been approved by the Superintendent.
2. Planning for trips should include pre-trip checks of companies, drivers, and vehicles. Carriers must be licensed for passenger transportation by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) and cannot have an FMCSA safety rating of "conditional" or "unsatisfactory." (FMCSA carrier ratings are available at www.safersvs.org). The qualifications of bus carriers may be established through the ratings of the Dept. of Defense approved list of motor carriers for troop transport (www.mtmc.army.mil/content/504/approvedlist.pdf) or similar public entity. Other resources are available through the FMCSA (www.fmcsa.dot.gov). The United Motorcoach Association has a Student Motorcoach Travel Safety Guide with a Motorcoach Safety Checklist (www.uma.org/consumerhelp/studentguide.asp).
3. The contract with the carrier should prohibit the use of subcontractors unless sufficient notice is given to allow verification of the subcontractor's qualifications.
4. School vehicles may be used with the approval of the business manager and with appropriate licensure and insurance.

TRIP SCHEDULING:

1. Overnight accommodations should be made in advance with student safety and security in mind. Whenever possible, trip schedules should avoid student travel between the hours of 10:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. due to the increased risk of vehicular accidents during this time period.
2. Whenever possible, overnight trips should be scheduled on weekends or during school vacations to minimize lost classroom time. Non-academic field trips are considered "optional school programs" and do not count toward meeting structured learning time requirements under 630 CMR 27.00.
3. Trip itineraries must leave enough time for drivers to rest in conformity with federal hour-of-service requirements.
4. Trip scheduling should take into account the likelihood of delays due to weather, traffic, stragglers, and other unanticipated factors.

5. If substantially all members of a class are participating in a trip, appropriate substitute activities should be provided for any students not participating.

FUNDRAISING:

1. The amount of time devoted to fundraising should be reasonable and commensurate with students' obligations for homework, after-school activities, and jobs.

2. The trip organizer will initiate group fundraising activities. Students should not be assigned individual fundraising targets.
3. If students are charged individual fees for participation, every effort should be made to provide scholarships where needed. No student will be denied participation based on financial need.

STUDENT SUPERVISION:

1. Students shall be accompanied by an appropriate number of chaperones, taking into account the age of the students, the nature of the trip, scheduling, and logistics. For elementary students the preferred ration is one (1) chaperone for five (5) students; for secondary students one (1) chaperone for every ten (10) students. All chaperones, including parents and volunteers, must have a C.O.R.I. check in accordance with M.G.L. c.71 S.38R. At least one chaperone must be a school employee.
2. C.O.R.I. checks are required for all bus drivers who do not regularly work for the school district. A chaperone must always be present whenever students are on the bus.
3. All participating students must submit a signed parent/guardian permission form, which shall include appropriate authorization for emergency medical care and administration of medication.
4. Appropriate support staff must be available so that students with disabilities are not excluded from participation in any field trip.

TRIP ORGANIZER/LEADER

1. The trip organizer/leader will ensure that all students who wish to participate are aware of scholarship opportunities.
2. Upon completion of the field trip or school-sponsored trip, a written report must be prepared by the trip organizer/leader and submitted to the Principal. The report should assess the education benefit of the trip and detail any injuries, discipline problems, or other incidents that occurred while on the field trip or school-sponsored trip.
3. The trip organizer/leader must ensure that C.O.R.I.s are done for all adults on the trip.
4. It is the responsibility of the trip organizer/leader to ensure that the selected carrier complies with the specifications and requirement in Item 2, Transportation.

CHAPERONES

1. C.O.R.I. checks are required for all chaperones.
2. Chaperones will only be allowed to bring adult family members on the field trip or school-sponsored trip at the discretion of the Principal. Adults accompanying chaperones must have a C.O.R.I. check and are expected to pay for all transportation, room, board, and meal costs while on the trip.

3. Chaperones will be given a list of the students for whom they are responsible with the name and phone numbers of their parents/guardians.
4. Whenever feasible and appropriate, chaperones will share rooms.

Adopted October 19, 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.

Adopted October 19, 2010

SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS

It is the policy of the School Committee to encourage volunteer efforts in the schools. Parents/guardians, business representatives, senior citizens, and other community volunteers are recognized as important sources of support and expertise to enhance the instructional program and vital communication links with the community. The volunteer program will be coordinated in cooperation with building administrators. All volunteers must obtain a CORI report through the business office before participation in any school trip or activity.

REF. File:ADDA, CORI Data

Adopted October 19, 2010

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

The philosophy of the 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 and 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/guardians be informed regularly, and at least three times a year, of the progress their children are making in school.
2. Parents/guardians 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.

Adopted October 19, 2010

STUDENT PROGRESS REPORTS TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS

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

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

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

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

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

Adopted October 19, 2010

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.

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.

Adopted October 19, 2010

PROMOTION AND RETENTION OF STUDENTS

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

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

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

Adopted October 19, 2010

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

In order to graduate from Sutton High School, a student must have earned at least 26 credits as follows:

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Credits Required</u>
English	4 credits
Government	1 credit
World History	1 credit
U. S. History	2 credits
Mathematics	4 credits
Science	3 credits
Fine Arts	1 credit
Physical Education	1 credit
Anatomy & Health	1 credit
World Language (recommended for college admission)	2 credits

Balance of 26 credits are achieved through elective choice.

Course Enrollment at Institutions of Higher Education

Course Eligibility

Courses must be approved within an accredited institution of higher education. Courses may be online or traditional. The course must not be available to the student at Sutton High School. The course must be part of the student's comprehensive course of study or an approved elective as determined by the Principal and department heads. Credits earned for courses at institutions of higher education will be applied to graduation requirements. They will not, however, be used for class standing or grade point average (GPA) calculation.

Credit for Alternative or Foreign Study

Seniors who have passed MCAS and are in good academic standing who are away for a term or year to participate in a student exchange program or otherwise study abroad may receive credits toward graduation when (1) student plans and courses are approved by the school administration **no later than April 1st** of the preceding year; and (2) the institution where the study occurred submits a record of the student's work. In these instances, the Principal and department heads will evaluate the work and comparable hours and assign credit for it according to standards prevailing at Sutton High School. The review will include examination of course syllabus, textbooks and/or relevant materials to determine comparability to Sutton High School work. As determined by the administrator, credits earned for alternative or foreign study will be applied to graduation requirements. They will not, however, be used for class standing or Grade Point Average (GPA) calculation.

Adopted May 15, 2006

Readopted October 19, 2010

EVALUATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS

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

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

Elements of this evaluation process may include:

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

Adopted October 19, 2010

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.

Adopted October 19, 2010

TEACHING ACTIVITIES/PRESENTATIONS

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

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

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

Adopted October 19, 2010

TEACHING ABOUT CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES/CONTROVERSIAL SPEAKERS

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

Teacher-Planned Classroom Discussions

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

Student-Initiated Forums on Controversial Issues

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

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

2. Adequate advance planning must be conducted for each forum. A request to hold a forum must be received by the Principal at least three weeks before the scheduled date of presentation. For each request the Principal will appoint, after consultation with the requesting student group, an adult advisory group consisting of at least two parents and two faculty members.
3. The standards for approach to discussion, style of presentation, and use of visitors as defined above will apply to student-initiated forums.

Requests from Groups or Individuals Outside the Schools

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

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

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

Adopted October 19, 2010

SCHOOL CEREMONIES AND OBSERVANCES

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

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

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

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

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

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

LEGAL REF.: 603 CMR 26:05

Adopted October 19, 2010

ANIMALS IN SCHOOL

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

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

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

Educational Program

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

Student Health

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

Animals Prohibited from School

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

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

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

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

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

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

Exceptions may be made with the prior approval of the superintendent of schools.

Service Animals (Guide or Assistance Dogs)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The superintendent of schools or his/her designee shall be responsible for developing procedures to accommodate a student's use of an assistance dog in district facilities and on school transportation vehicles.

SOURCE: MASC

LEGAL REFS.: Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADDA)

Adopted: May 2, 2011