

Section: I
Category: INSTRUCTION
File: IGA

CODE: CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Ongoing development, review, and adaptation and development of the curriculum is necessary if the Collaborative is to meet the needs of the students of its member districts. To be successful, curriculum development must be a collaborative enterprise involving staff and administrators utilizing their professional expertise and gathering input from parents and community.

The Board expects the Collaborative faculty and administration to regularly evaluate each education program and to recommend modifications of practice and/or changes in curriculum content which may include the addition or deletion of courses.

Adoption Date:

Revised:

Source: MASC Policy Reference

Legal References: MGL 69:1E
603 CMR 26:06

Section: I
Category: INSTRUCTION
File: IHA-E

CODE: BASIC INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

Curricula

1. The curricula of the Collaborative 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 CMR26.00 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.

Adoption Date:

Revised:

Source: MASC Policy Reference

Legal References:

Section: I
Category: INSTRUCTION
File: IHAM

CODE: HEALTH EDUCATION

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

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

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

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

Adoption Date: April 25, 2012

Revised:

Source: MASC Policy Reference

Legal References:

Section: I
Category: INSTRUCTION
File: IHAMA

CODE: PARENTAL NOTIFICATION RELATIVE TO SEX EDUCATION

In accordance with General Laws Chapter 71, Section 32A, the LPVEC 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.

Prior to instruction involving human sexual education or human sexuality issues, the LPVEC will notify parents/guardians of curricular content.

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 educational director 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 Executive Director to review the materials at the school and may also review them at other locations that may be determined by the Executive Director.

A parent/guardian who is dissatisfied with a decision of the Executive Director concerning notice, access to instructional materials, or exemption for the student under this policy may send a written request to the Executive Director for review of the issue. The Executive Director or designee will review the issue and give the parent/guardian a timely written decision, preferably within two weeks of the request. A parent/guardian who is dissatisfied the Executive Director's decision may send a written request to the Board for review of the issue. The Board 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.

Adoption Date: April 25, 2012

Revised:

Source: MASC Policy Reference

Legal References:

Section: I
Category: INSTRUCTION
File: IHAM-R

CODE: HEALTH EDUCATION EXEMPTION PROCEDURE

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

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

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

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

Adoption Date:

Revised:

Source: MASC Policy Reference

Legal References:

Section: I
Category: INSTRUCTION
File: IHBA

CODE: OBSERVATION 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 Director of Special Education or designee.
2. The Director of Special Education 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 Director of Special Education or designee will seek approval from the SpEd Supervisor 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 Director of Special Education or Program Supervisor 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. An LPVEC 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.

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."

Adoption Date: October 27, 2010

Revised:

Source: MASC Policy Reference

Legal References: MGL 71B:3

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Technical Assistance Advisory SPED 2009-2 dated January 8, 2009

File: IJJ-R

TEXTBOOK SELECTION AND ADOPTION PROCEDURES

An electronic format shall be developed for a school and district textbook inventory. Each Director (SpEd/OccEd) shall be responsible for the development and implementation of the textbook procedure that includes an annual textbook Inventory.

TEXTBOOK ADOPTION

For textbook adoption for a specific course or program, the Director shall:

- _ Establish an on-site textbook review process; and
- _ Submit a completed Textbook Adoption Form to the Director of Curriculum who shall present the textbook proposal to the Executive Director.

GUIDELINES

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

- _ align with the MA Curriculum Framework Guidelines for selection of instructional texts and materials;
- _ advance the educational goals and objectives of the school district and particular objectives of the course program;
- _ contribute toward on-going continuity, integration and result from articulation of curriculum in curriculum mapping; and
- _ serve as one educational resource among many that may be used in the effective delivery of curriculum to most impact improvement in student achievement.

Although many points must be examined in the textbook selection and adoption process, the Board directs staff to the following considerations:

- _ differentiation and needs of all learners;
- _ attention to gender depicted in the materials;
- _ expansion of teaching and learning beyond the scope of the textbook to a wide variety of other materials and educational experiences;
- _ sensitivity of the textbook in dealing with problems and issues of our times and encouragement of varied points of view; and
- _ special attention given to the physical characteristics, durability, format and price;

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR TEXTBOOK USE

In an effort to support teachers in the effective use and implementation of newly adopted textbooks with students, the appropriate Director or his/her designee shall notify the Director of Curriculum of any planned professional development or study groups that support this process.

IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION OF NEW TEXTBOOKS

An evaluation process that identifies successful use and implementation of newly adopted textbooks with students is an integral part of effective curriculum development and school improvement planning. Responsibility for successful implementation and regular classroom use of newly adopted textbooks shall rest with the Director of each program. The Director shall, in collaboration with the respective teachers designated to use the textbook, by the end of the school year, evaluate the use of the newly adopted textbook as an effective instructional classroom resource for students. The Director of Curriculum shall, in collaboration with Directors (SpEd, OccEd, Exec.), develop the New Textbook Evaluation Tool.

Section: I
Category: INSTRUCTION
File: IJJ

CODE: TEXTBOOK SELECTION AND ADOPTION

The Lower Pioneer Valley Educational Collaborative, in an effort to support its member districts' commitment toward improving student achievement, has generated a formalized textbook plan that shall be included in its improvement planning and the Strategic Plan. The purpose of the textbook plan is to organize and articulate a systemic focus for textbook adoption and/or replacement as an integral part of district and school improvement.

Responsibility for the review and selection of textbooks shall rest with the curriculum director in collaboration with the special education director, occupational education director, and teachers for determining the textbooks that best align with the direction and delivery of curriculum maps for each program, grade level and/or subject area.

The Director of Curriculum shall present the textbook proposal to the Executive Director for consideration. The Executive Director shall present the final textbook proposal to the Board as part of each fiscal year's budget.

Adoption Date:

Revised:

Source: West Springfield Public Schools

Legal References: M.G.L. 71:48; 30B:7; 71:50 ;603 CMR 26:05

Section: I
Category: INSTRUCTION
File: IJNDD

CODE: POLICY ON FACEBOOK AND SOCIAL NETWORKING WEBSITES

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

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

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

Adoption Date:

Revised:

Source: MASC Policy Reference

Legal References:

***Lower Pioneer Valley Educational Collaborative
Board of Governors Policy***

Section: I
Category: INSTRUCTION
File: IMG

CODE: ANIMALS IN SCHOOL

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

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

The School Principal, in consultation with the Health Services Provider 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 LPVEC'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 LPVEC school buildings:

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 Executive Director.

Service Animals (Guide or Assistance Dogs)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

When a student will be accompanied by a service animal at school or in other LPVEC 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 Executive Director his/her designee shall be responsible for developing procedures to accommodate a student's use of an assistance dog in LPVEC facilities and on school transportation vehicles.

Adoption Date:

Revised:

Source: MASC February 2011

Legal References: