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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:

- Coordinating and Developing Function - Curriculum
- Operating Function - Instruction
- Evaluating and Assessment Function - Assessment

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

LEGAL REFS.: 603 CMR 26:00

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 May 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 (grades 6-12) 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 10 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 District offers a diversified educational program compatible with the needs of the community and state standards.

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

The structure will consist of three levels -- Primary/Elementary, Middle and Secondary levels.

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

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

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

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND RENEWAL

Constant adaption, development and renewal of the curriculum is necessary if the District is to meet the needs of the students in its schools. To be successful, curriculum development and renewal must be a collaborative enterprise involving staff and administrators using their professional expertise and gathering input from parents and community.

The Committee expects its faculty and administration to regularly evaluate the education program and to recommend modifications of practice and changes in curriculum content where necessary.

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

SUPPORT SERVICES PROGRAMS

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

Curricular Supervision and Coordination

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

Support Services

The Director of Student Services shall be responsible for all programs for educationally handicapped and gifted students' psychological services, speech correction, homebound and hospital teaching and such other programs as may be assigned to the Support Services.

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

CURRICULUM ADOPTION

The School Committee will rely on its professional staff to design and implement instructional programs and courses of study that will support 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 course 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.

BASIC INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

State law requires that schools:

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

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

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

The Fundamental Skills

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

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

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

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, and genders.
- (2) All school books, instructional and educational materials shall be reviewed for gender-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 shall in the aggregate, include characterizations and situations which depict individuals of both genders 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 gender nor designed to have an adverse impact on members of either gender.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:1, 2, 3; 71:13
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 5 and as a separate class in grade 6-8.

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.: ADF, Wellness Policy

**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 portion of the curriculum involved.

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

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

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

PARENTAL NOTIFICATION RELATIVE TO SEX EDUCATION

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

TEACHING ABOUT ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, AND DRUGS

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

The alcohol, tobacco, and drug education program shall address the legal, social, and health consequences of alcohol, tobacco, and drug 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 and skill development for delaying and abstaining from using, as well as skills for resisting peer pressure to use alcohol, tobacco, or drugs.

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

Objectives:

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

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

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

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

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

Adopted: June 2016

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

The goals of this school system's special education program are to allow each child to grow and achieve at his/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 (and cannot be) provided within the Cohasset School District, the school administration will work with the family to 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 a free and appropriate education 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

GIFTED AND TALENTED EDUCATION

"Gifted and talented" students are those students who demonstrate outstanding performance or the assessed potential for such performance or whose abilities, talents and potential for accomplishment in one or more areas of endeavor are so outstanding that they require special provisions to meet their educational needs.

A gifted and talented educational program shall be identified and provided for students in grades pre-kindergarten through twelve who are intellectually and creatively gifted.

The program shall be flexible, responsive to individual student needs and provide a variety of options for gifted students. These options should include higher level learning activities and experiences, opportunity for independent study, access to multiple resources and intellectual peer interaction.

The program shall provide gifted and talented students, families and educators an atmosphere of support and guidance.

**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.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

The District shall provide suitable research-based language instructional programs for all identified English language learners in grades pre-Kindergarten through 12 in accordance with the requirements of state and federal statutes and Massachusetts Department of Education regulations and guidance.

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

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

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

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

HOMEBOUND INSTRUCTION

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

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

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

HOME SCHOOLING

The Massachusetts General Law requires the School Committee to determine that a Home School 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 probably 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 public school activities of either a curricular or extracurricular nature upon approval of the Superintendent.

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)

ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL PROGRAMS

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

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

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

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:37I; 71:37J
Board of Education Regulations Pertaining to Section 8 of Chapter 636 of the Acts of 1974, Regarding Magnet School Facilities and Magnet Educational Programs, adopted 2/25/75

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 tests 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 the 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 (3) years beginning with the end of the school year when the adoption is made.

TEXTBOOK SELECTION AND ADOPTION

Responsibility for the review and selection of textbooks to be purchased shall rest with the Principal of each school. 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. Students and parents will be encouraged to serve.

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 all 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 their physical characteristics, durability, format and price.

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 the acquisition of 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, audio tapes, 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

ACCESS TO DIGITAL RESOURCES

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

Safety Procedures and Guidelines

The Superintendent, 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, email, 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 on the school network shall be implemented that effectively address the following:

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

The Cohasset School District shall provide reasonable public notice 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 online 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 District email, District devices, and District networks only for purposes directly related to educational and instructional purposes.

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 the required acceptable use documents or who violate District rules governing the use of District technology or networks shall be subject to loss or restriction of the privilege of using equipment, software, information access systems, and network.

Responsibility for Damages

Individuals may be required to reimburse the district 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; and
2. Monitoring online activities of minors.

The Superintendent or designee may monitor web sites to see if school personnel have posted inappropriate materials on-line. When inappropriate use of computers and web sites is discovered, the School Principals and Superintendent will promptly bring the inappropriate use to the attention of the staff member and may consider and apply disciplinary action up to and including termination.

LEGAL REFS: 47 USC § 254

SOURCE: MASC

CROSS REFS: IJNDB, EDCA-C

Updated: September 2016

EMPOWERED DIGITAL USE POLICY

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

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

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

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

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

The Superintendent or designee may monitor web sites to see if school personnel have posted inappropriate materials on-line. When inappropriate use of computers and web sites is discovered, the School Principals and Superintendent will promptly bring the inappropriate use to the attention of the staff member and may consider and apply disciplinary action up to and including termination.

SOURCE: MASC

Updated: September 2016

INTERNET PUBLICATION

I. PURPOSE

The School District has established a district-wide web site to provide information about school curriculum, instruction, school activities and other information. The web site links users to web pages for the district's individual schools and departments. The School District maintains these web pages for educational purposes only, in furtherance of the educational mission of the School District. All published pages and corresponding links to other sites must relate to the district's educational mission.

II. SUPERVISION AND APPROVAL OF WEB PAGES

Each school, department and teacher is responsible for overseeing their web pages and maintaining the web pages in a manner consistent with this policy and the School District's Acceptable Use Policy. Staff members may publish web pages related to their class projects or courses on their teacher web page. Any web sites accessed by students must originate from the District's web site and tie into the educational mission of the District.

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

III. CONTENT STANDARDS

Any school, department or staff member that creates a page is responsible for the content, currency and maintenance of that page. All subject matter must relate to curriculum, instruction, learning, school activities and general information must be consistent with the District's mission. All web page materials are expected to be accurate, grammatically correct and free of spelling errors. Student work may deviate from this standard depending upon the age and grade level of the student. Web pages should be well-organized and professional in appearance. Web pages must not contain copyrighted or trademarked material belonging to others unless written permission to display such material has been obtained from the owner and the owner is credited on the school's web page.

IV. SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

- A. In general
 - Identifying information about students, such as first and last names, personal phone numbers or home addresses, will not be published. First names or first names and the first letter of the student's last name may be used where appropriate.
- B. Student photographs
 - Student photographs may be published only with the written consent of the student's parent or guardian.
 - Student photographs will not be accompanied by identifying information about the student(s).
- C. Student work
 - Student work, e.g. voice, likeness, quotes, written material, musical pieces, and graphic or other artwork, may be published only with the written consent of the student's parent or guardian.

D. Staff photographs, identifying information and work

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

V. CONFORMANCE WITH DISTRICT POLICIES

All documents and other data on the web site must conform to all applicable laws and to District policies and regulations as well as established school guidelines. Copies of District policies are available on the web site. Persons developing or maintaining information on the web site are responsible for complying with these laws and policies. Some of the relevant issues and related District policies include but are not limited to, the following:

1. Documents created for the web and linked to the District web pages shall meet the criteria for use as an instructional resource.
2. Personal electronic publications such as student or staff personal web pages or resumes shall not be linked or included in any part of the District web site.
3. Electronic publications created by student as part of a class or school activity may be linked or included as part of the District web site provided that they are created under the supervision of a professional staff member. That staff member will check to ensure that the work complies with guidelines contained within this policy when reviewing and approving the work to be linked to or included as part of the school's website.
4. Any tampering with or misuse of the web site by employees, students or others shall be considered vandalism and a violation of student conduct policies and will result in disciplinary action in accordance with District policy and applicable law.
5. In determining whether a link to a non-District owned web site is appropriate, professional staff members shall consider whether the other web site is consistent with and in furtherance of the District's purpose of providing staff access to resources which relate to teaching, research, or professional development and providing students access to learning and other educational activities. All links must reflect the District's mission.

VI. OWNERSHIP AND RETENTION

All web pages on the Cohasset Public Schools web site, including, district, school, classroom, teacher, and student activity pages, are the property of the school district. All staff members are expected to adhere to all of the above policies. Failure to do so may result in the teacher/staff member's web page being deactivated and may result in the teacher/staff member's privileges being rescinded. All material placed on the web site shall be subject to copyright restrictions in accordance with the relevant law.

The Superintendent or designees may monitor web sites to see if school personnel have posted inappropriate materials on-line. When inappropriate use of computers and web sites is discovered, the School Principals and Superintendent will promptly bring that inappropriate use to the attention of the staff member and may consider and apply disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Source: MASC, Duxbury Public Schools File IJNDC

Cross References: IJND; IJNDB; IJNDD; EDCA-C

Adopted: September 2016

USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA SITES AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

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

1. Improper fraternization with students using any social media including but not limited to Facebook and other social sites or networks; other media sharing sites; chat rooms; telephone or cell phones; texting; or other digital means.
 - a. Staff members may not list or connect with current students on non-academic networking sites.
 - b. All e-contacts with students should be through administration approved sites.
 - c. Inappropriate contact via e-mail, phone, or texting is prohibited.
2. Inappropriateness of posting items with sexual content or advocating use of illegal controlled substances, including drugs and alcohol.
3. Monitoring and penalties for improper use of district computers and technology.
4. The possibility of penalties, including dismissal from employment, for failure to exercise good judgment in on-line conduct.

The Superintendent or designees may monitor web sites to see if school personnel have posted inappropriate materials on-line. When inappropriate use of computers and web sites is discovered, the School Principals and Superintendent will promptly bring that inappropriate use to the attention of the staff member and may consider and apply disciplinary action up to and including termination.

This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis.

Source: MASC

Adopted: September 2016

FIELD TRIPS, INCLUDING OVERNIGHT TRIPS

The Cohasset School Committee recognizes that Field Trips can provide students with useful learning opportunities. The School Committee expects staff to give appropriate consideration to student grade levels, maintaining time and learning standards, and student health and safety when planning and conducting Field Trips.

- I. Definitions. The following definitions apply for the purpose of this policy:
 - a. **Academic Field Trips** include all off-campus trips that are organized as part of a class curriculum. Participation by all members of the class is expected.
 - b. **Extra-Curricular Field Trips** are those off-campus trips that are organized by a school-sponsored club or group. Participation is voluntary. Away games or matches that are part of the athletic program are considered Extra-curricular Field Trips under this definition.
 - c. When an **Academic Field Trip** or **Extra-curricular Field Trip** is planned to occur between midnight and 6 a.m. or to require a student to stay overnight away from home, the procedures for planning and approving **Overnight Trips** apply.
- II. Approval Process
 - a. The building Principal, in consultation with the Superintendent, is responsible for the approval of all Field Trips that do not constitute Overnight Trips. Staff must seek and obtain such approval before Trip arrangements and/or fundraising plans are finalized. For athletic teams or other extracurricular school groups who routinely travel as part of their activities, the coach or advisor need submit only one proposal for the season.
 - b. Preliminary approval by the School Committee is required for all Overnight Trips. Once such preliminary approval is granted, the teacher, adviser, and/or athletic coach must obtain final approval from the Superintendent. The Superintendent will develop administrative guidelines for all preparations to be in place prior to granting of final approval. Such preparations will include at a minimum, all logistical details involving transportation, accommodation arrangements and fundraising efforts.

Where practicable, final approval must be sought from the Superintendent no less than 30 days prior to scheduled Trip dates.
- III. Transportation for Overnight Trips
 - a. The Cohasset Public Schools generally will contract with a commercial carrier to provide the **primary** transportation for Overnight Trips. The Superintendent or designee will conduct a pre-trip check of companies, drivers, and vehicles. Only carriers that are licensed for passenger transportation by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) and do not have a safety rating of "conditional" or "unsatisfactory" will be used. Where the primary transportation planned for an Overnight Trip is other than by commercial carrier, the form of transportation will be noted on the Consent/Waiver forms set for in Section VII (Consents and Waivers).

- b. Any contract with a private carrier must prohibit the use of subcontractors unless approved by the Superintendent. The Superintendent shall not approve use of any subcontractor unless the subcontractor meets the criteria referenced in above in paragraph (a) of this section.

IV. Chaperones, Background Checks, and Trip Planning

- a. The level of chaperone coverage for Field Trips is subject to the approval of the Principal.
- b. The Superintendent shall ensure that a CORI check has been conducted for all individuals (including parent volunteers and drivers) who may have direct and unmonitored contact with students while on a Field Trip as set forth in M.G.L. Chapter 71, Section 38R.
- c. Trip itineraries must leave enough time for drivers to rest in conformity with federal hour-of-service requirements. Whenever practicable, Trip schedules should avoid planning student travel between the hours of midnight and 6:00 a.m..

V. Student Behavior

Students participating in any Field Trip are expected to conduct themselves in a manner appropriate to the circumstances of the Trip, including but not limited to adhering to general school rules and codes of conduct, as well as rules that have been established for the Trip. In the event a student fails to meet this expectation, the school staff may contact the student's parents, and staff shall have the discretion to send the student home. The student's parent or guardian shall be responsible for any additional expense incurred in such circumstances. Students may also be disciplined in accordance with the school's Code of Conduct.

VI. Fundraising

- a. Fundraising events and activities may be planned to offset the costs of Field Trips. Any such fundraising shall take place in accordance with the Cohasset Public Schools' policy on fundraising.
- b. Where an individual fee is charged for an Academic Field Trip, the Principal may provide a partial or full scholarship to a student if, due to financial hardship, such scholarship is necessary to allow a student's participation. However, no student is guaranteed a full or partial scholarship for the purpose of attending any Field Trip.

VII. Consents and Waivers

- a. A consent form signed by the student's parent/guardian is required prior to a student taking part in an Academic Field Trip.
- b. A consent and waiver form signed by the student (if appropriate) and the student's parent/guardian is required prior to a student taking part in any Extracurricular Field Trip. The waiver will include any and all claims related to or arising out of the Field Trip as well as those claims related to/arising out of cancellation by the Superintendent as described in Section VIII below. For athletic teams or other extracurricular school groups that routinely travel as part of their activities, parents/students may submit one consent/waiver form to cover all events for the season.

- c. The consent forms set forth in Paragraphs a. and b. above must contain appropriate authorization for emergency medical care and administration of medication.

VIII. Cancellation

The Superintendent reserves the right to cancel any field trips up until the time of departure for any reason. In such event, school officials will make a reasonable effort to obtain a refund of monies paid by students and parents. However, such refunds are not guaranteed.

IX. Non-school Sponsored Trips

Teachers and other school staff sometimes privately conduct educational tours or trips involving the participation of Cohasset students. The School Committee neither sanctions nor prohibits such activities, nor assumes any responsibility for them. Teachers and other school staff are prohibited from soliciting students for privately run trips through the school system.

Teachers and other school staff are expected to clearly state that such trips are not school-sponsored and that the Cohasset School Committee and the Cohasset Public Schools do not sanction the trip or assume any responsibility.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:37N; 71:38R
603 C.M.R. 27.00

CROSS REFS.: **[Insert relevant policy references], e.g., FUNDRAISING**

ADD'L RESOURCES: Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA)
<http://www.fmcsa.gov>
United Motorcoach Association - Student Motorcoach Travel Safety Guide (includes "Motorcoach Safety Checklist")
<http://www.uma.org/consumerhelp/studentguide.asp>
Department of Defense's approved list of motor carriers
<http://www.mtmc.army.mil/content/504/approvedlist.pdf>

Approved: September 21, 2006

SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS

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

All volunteers who will have direct, unsupervised contact with students must pass a C.O.R.I. check prior to the date of volunteer services.

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

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 four 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.

STUDENT PROGRESS REPORTS TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS

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

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

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

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

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

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.

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.

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. **The Superintendent will provide for an annual presentation to the School Committee on District Program Assessments.**

SCHOOL CEREMONIES AND OBSERVANCES

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

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

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

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

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

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

LEGAL REF.: 603 CMR 26:05

ANIMALS IN SCHOOL

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

The 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, safety, and allergic sensitivity is not jeopardized and the individual requesting that the animal be brought to school is responsible for adhering to the "Guidelines for Animals in Schools or on School Grounds" and any other conditions established by the Principal to protect the health and well-being of students.

Student Health

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

Animals Prohibited from School

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Service Animals (Guide or Assistance Dogs)

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

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

Service animals perform some of the functions and tasks that individuals with disabilities cannot perform themselves. Service animals are not pets. There are several kinds of service animals that assist individuals with disabilities.

Examples include, but are not limited to, animals that:

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

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

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

If any student or staff member assigned to the classroom in which a service animal is permitted suffers an allergic reaction to the animal, the person having custody and control of the animal will be required to remove the animal to a different location designated by the Building Principal or designee and an

alternative plan will be developed with appropriate District staff. Such plan could include the reassignment of the person having custody and control of the animal to a different classroom. This will also apply if an individual on school transportation suffers an allergic reaction. In this case, an alternate plan will be developed in coordination with appropriate school, District, and transportation staff including the involvement of the parents/guardian of the student.

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

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

LEGAL REF.: 28 CFR, Part 35
SOURCE: MASC October 2016

UPDATED: April 2017