

EXEMPTION FROM REQUIRED INSTRUCTION

The curricula of the Scarborough School Department are designed to include statutory requirements and other areas of study deemed appropriate by the professional staff and the Board of Education. The curricula include topics and materials that are age and ability appropriate to the students.

The Board acknowledges that from time to time individual students may be exposed to some ideas and material with which they or their parent(s)/legal guardian disagree. Students and their parent(s)/legal guardian cannot be required to adopt ideas with which they disagree, but such disagreement alone is not a sufficient basis to exempt a student from the prescribed curricula. Exemptions from the required curricula should be minimized because they can detract from the overall instruction provided to the class as a whole and the educational objectives sought to be achieved by the curricula.

The Board recognizes, however, that there could be topics in the curricula which may be objectionable to individual students and/or parent(s)/legal guardian based on their particular, sincerely held religious, moral, or philosophical beliefs. Alteration of instruction which infringes on such beliefs may be requested by the parent(s)/legal guardian.

Requests for accommodation of beliefs in instruction must be made in writing to the building administrator. The building administrator shall notify the Superintendent as soon as practicable of any request for accommodation from instruction and his/her decision. If the building administrator denies an accommodation request, the parent(s)/guardian may appeal to the Superintendent, whose decision shall be final.

In considering requests for accommodation, factors that the building administrator will consider:

- A Whether the course of instruction is required by state law or regulations or Board policy;
- B Whether an accommodation will adversely affect the instruction provided to other students;
- C The educational importance of the material or instruction from which exemption is requested;
- D Evidence regarding the sincerity of the belief on which the request is based;
- E Whether the school has a legal obligation to accommodate the request. In the case of curriculum aligned with the system of learning results, if there is a conflict with the sincerely held religious beliefs of a student or his/her parent/legal guardian, accommodation in the curricula shall be made for the student. If the accommodation is so great that the validity of the local assessment system is compromised, the Superintendent will determine how to address this, subject to approval of the Commissioner of Education.
- F Other factors that bear upon the particular request.

When a student is granted an accommodation from a portion of the regular curricula, the staff will make reasonable efforts, within the scope of existing resources, to accommodate alternative instruction for the student. Alternative instruction may be provided by the school or through

approved independent study. Any alternative instruction shall be approved in advance by the building administrator in consultation with the classroom teacher, and shall meet the standards and objectives of the part of the curricula that is being replaced.

Legal References: 20-A MRSA § 6209
LD 1536, Chap. 51 Resolves
Chap. 127 and 131 (Me. Dept. of Ed. Rules)

Cross References: ADF – Commitment to Learning Results
ILA - Tests/Assessment
IJJ - Instructional and Library Materials Selection

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