

FIVE TOWN CSD POLICY

EXEMPTION FROM REQUIRED INSTRUCTION

The curriculum of the Five Town CSD is designed to reflect the learning expectations for all students in all content areas of the system of Learning Results, as well as other statutory and regulatory requirements and content areas specified by the Board.

The Board acknowledges that from time to time individual students may be exposed to some ideas and materials with which they or their parent(s)/legal guardian disagree. Students and their parent(s)/legal guardian may not agree with all aspects of the curriculum, but such disagreement alone is not a sufficient basis to exempt a student from the prescribed curriculum. Exemptions from the instruction should be minimized because they can detract from the overall curriculum provided to the class as a whole and the educational objectives required in the Maine Learning Results.

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

Requests for exemption from instruction must be made in writing to the Building Principal and are subject to the approval of the Building Principal. The Building Principal shall notify the Superintendent as soon as practicable of any request for exemption from instruction and of his/her decision. If the Building Administrator denies an exemption request, the parent(s)/legal guardian may appeal to the Superintendent.

In considering requests for exemption, factors that the Building Principal should consider may include:

1. The alignment of the curriculum with the system of Learning Results;
2. Whether the course or content area is required by state law or Board policy;
3. The educational importance of the material or instruction from which exemption is requested;
4. Evidence regarding the sincerity of the belief on which the request is based;
5. Whether the school has a legal obligation to accommodate the exemption request; and
6. Other factors that bear upon the particular request.

Exemption from required instruction does not excuse the student from meeting the requirements of the Learning Results or from total credit hours or other requirements for graduation, or from performing alternative work.

When the Building Principal determines that the curriculum, aligned with the system of Learning Results, conflicts with sincerely held religious, moral, or philosophical beliefs of a

student or his/her parent or legal guardian, reasonable accommodation in the curriculum shall be made for the student within the scope of existing resources.

When a student is exempted from any portion of the regular curriculum for other than religious reasons (exemption based on sincere philosophical or moral beliefs), the staff will make reasonable efforts, within the scope of existing resources, to accommodate alternative instruction for the student.

In both situations above, alternative instruction may be provided by the school or through approved independent study. Any alternative instruction shall be approved in advance by the Building Principal in consultation with the classroom teacher and shall meet the standards and objectives of the part of the curriculum that is being replaced. When requests for exemption from required curriculum are made for religious, philosophical, or moral reasons, a parent/guardian who is dissatisfied with the Principal's decision may appeal to the Superintendent, whose decision shall be final.

Legal Reference:

- 20-A MRS § 6209
- Ch. 127 § 3.07 (Me. Dept. of Ed. Rules (Me. Dept. of Ed. Rules)
- Ch. 131 (Me. Dept. of Ed. Rules)

Cross Reference:

- ADF - School District Commitment to Learning Results
- IJJ - Instructional and Library Material Selection
- IMB - Teaching About Controversial Issues
- IMBAA - Alternatives to Biological Dissection

History:

Adopted: 03/10/03

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