

ACADEMIC FREEDOM

A major goal of education in a free society is to develop persons who can think critically, understand their culture, live compassionately with others, make sound decisions, and live with the consequences of their judgment. Public education in a pluralistic society must strive to present as objectively as possible varied events, activities, and perceptions reflected in history, literature, science, medicine, and every other source of mankind's thought and expression. Because points of view differ and biases exist, students must have access to materials that express this diversity of perspective.

It is the responsibility of the teacher to make certain that such access to materials presenting all sides of a situation is available and discussed. However, teachers must take into account the relative maturity of their students and the need for guidance and help in studying issues and arriving at balanced views. All instruction will conform to adopted courses of study.

The principle of academic freedom presupposes intellectual honesty on the part of the person who exercises it, that he (she) can and will discriminate between facts bearing on an issue and personal opinion. In expressing a personal opinion, a teacher will make it known to students that the view is his/her own and will not attempt to bring students to a commitment to that personal viewpoint.

SOURCE: Westwood

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 Commonwealth.

SOURCE: MASC October 2016

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 annually. 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 Elementary and Secondary Education:

1. The School Committee shall schedule a school year which includes at least 185 school days for each school in the District.
2. 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 regulation. 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.
3. Secondary schools will operate for a minimum of 180 days. Schools shall ensure that every secondary school student is scheduled to receive a minimum of 990 hours per school year of structured learning time, as defined in regulation. 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/guardians, the calendar will set forth the days schools will be in session; holidays and vacation periods; in service days; and parent conferences.

SOURCE: MASC April 2019

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 4:7; 69:1G; 71:1; 71:4; 71:4A; 71:73; 136:12
603 CMR 27.00

NOTE: When a policy covers two topics that appear consecutively in the classification system, the codes and headings can be combined, as shown at the top of this page.

The category "School Year" is designed for policies about the year for students, rather than the working year for teachers and other staff members.

SCHOOL DAY

It is the responsibility of the Westwood School Committee to establish the beginning and dismissal times at the various school levels. These hours will satisfy the time requirement established by Massachusetts law.

In the event of unusual circumstances, the administration is authorized to make minor changes in opening and closing times to facilitate the schedule of transportation; however, any major changes in schedule are subject to Committee approval.

SOURCE: Westwood

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/guardians will also be notified that students will not be admitted into the school building until the start of the official day unless circumstances require earlier admittance.

SOURCE: MASC April 2019

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 15:1G; 69:1G; 71:59
603 CMR 27.00

NOTE: Each Committee should verify the specific times set in the handbook for allowing students into the school building. In some cases, this may be established in the collective bargaining agreements.

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 multiple levels (for example, Primary/Elementary, Middle and Secondary levels).

The Primary/Elementary level includes schools with 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 Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education and to serve the needs of all students.

Note: The MASC Reference Manual includes the following references:

CROSS REFS: IC/ICA School Year / School Calendar

LEGAL REFS: 603 CMR 27.00

SOURCE: Westwood

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

All subject areas shall have a written course of study. The course of study guide shall be prepared by members of the teaching staff in conjunction with central office personnel and, when appropriate, curriculum consultants. Each course of study guide shall include the following: a mission statement; a philosophy; a list of proficiencies each student is expected to acquire; program; grade level; unit and instructional goals; a scope and sequence of the course; and a curriculum evaluation procedure.

All educators expected to implement the curriculum shall be provided with a copy of the course of study guide.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. [69:1E](#)
 603 CMR [26:05](#)

SOURCE: Westwood

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Constant adaptation and development of the curriculum is necessary if the District is to meet the needs of the students in its schools. To be successful, curriculum development must be a collaborative enterprise involving staff and administrators utilizing their professional expertise.

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

SOURCE: MASC April 2019

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 services for students who are not eligible for special education assistance, such as psychological services, speech correction, homebound and hospital teaching and such other programs as may be assigned.

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

SOURCE: Westwood

STUDENT SERVICES PROGRAMS

The Student Services staff will work in cooperation with District building staff and administration to coordinate and supervise the implementation of curriculum, the instructional program, and support services to meet the needs of all students.

The *Assistant Superintendent** shall be responsible for all services for students who are not eligible for special education assistance, such as psychological services, speech correction, homebound and hospital teaching and such other programs as may be assigned.

SOURCE: MASC April 2019

***NOTE: District to reflect local configuration**

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

CURRICULUM ADOPTION

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

The Superintendent will have authority to approve new programs and courses of study after they have been thoroughly studied and found to support educational goals. The Committee itself will consider, and officially adopt, new programs 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.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. [71:1](#); [69:1E](#)

SOURCE: Westwood

CURRICULUM ADOPTION

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

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

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

SOURCE: MASC April 2019

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 15:1G; 71:1; 69:1E

LITERACY EDUCATION K-12

The mission of the Westwood Literacy Program is to develop in all students effective reading, writing and communication skills as well as critical and creative thinking skills. Students will reason and use language purposefully as they comprehend and convey meaning. The following statements reflect the beliefs upon which the program is founded:

- Thinking and language develop together through interactive learning.
- Oral language development supports early literacy through challenging learning.
- The curriculum should build upon the language, experience and interests of students.
- In the early grades, an appropriate balance between systematic phonics instruction and focus on meaning is critical.
- The curriculum should include a wide range of literature that reflects our common literacy and cultural heritage and draws from many genres, time periods, and cultures.
- Writing is an essential way to develop and communicate ideas.
- Students should know and apply to their writing, the standard English conventions for sentence structure, usage, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.
- Students should develop the ability to write with clarity, coherence, and personal engagement in persuasive, expository, literary, and expressive discourse.
- Students should reflect on and evaluate their efforts to use different forms of spoken and written discourse for various purposes and audiences.
- Students should acquire techniques in electronic media to enhance traditional forms of discourse.
- Students should cultivate an appreciation and enjoyment of reading, writing, listening, and speaking as lifetime activities.
- An effective literacy program produces competent readers and writers, and helps prepare students to participate responsibly in civic life.

SOURCE: Westwood

K-12 MATHEMATICS PROGRAM MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Westwood mathematics program is to ensure that all students gain mathematical power, possess fundamental mathematical skills, and become mathematically literate.

The following student goals recognize the significance of mathematical literacy and serve as the core of the mathematical program so that all students can and will:

- learn to integrate and apply basic number operations
- become mathematical problem solvers
- become confident in their ability to do mathematics
- learn to communicate effectively with mathematics
- learn to reason mathematically
- learn to value mathematics

The K-12 mathematics curriculum must allow for the exploration, estimation, prediction and validation of solutions, thereby increasing the confidence and ability in all students to solve complex problems. Students will be immersed in the following math strands: number sense, numeration and number theory; concepts of whole numbers; computation with whole numbers, fractions and decimals; geometry and spatial sense; statistics and probability; measurement; patterns and relationships; algebra, trigonometry, calculus, and advanced mathematics. Conceptual as well as procedural knowledge will be highlighted so that students will be able to apply mathematical understandings of concepts and algorithms in meaningful and relevant ways.

Mathematics is important and should be accessible to all students at every grade level. Mathematics is, indeed, a gateway into the future and the staff will continue to work to guarantee that the study of mathematics serves all children in the school system.

SOURCE: Westwood

SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION

The Westwood School Committee believes that the central purpose of the K-12 social studies program is to prepare students to take their places in a democratic society as responsible citizens comprehending global relationships and appreciating cultural diversities with the capacity to draw from the past, deal with the present and plan for the future.

The social studies program should enable all students to demonstrate the following by the end of the twelfth grade:

1. a sense of civic responsibility and a commitment to active participation in civic, cultural and volunteer experiences.
2. varied perspectives on their own life experiences in light of the larger human adventure as exemplified in history.
3. a critical understanding of how the history, geography, ethnic makeup, and political, social, economic and cultural institutions of the United States contribute to the country's unity and diversity.
4. a critical understanding of how world history, cultures and geography contribute to similarities and differences within the global community.
5. analytical perspectives and critical attitudes appropriate to inquiry into the human condition.
6. an ability to utilize all resources available for research and learning, including information systems and computer technology.
7. an ability to write critically and effectively on topics drawn from history, the humanities and the social sciences.
8. an understanding of issues and varying perspectives concerning ethics and human rights.
9. a respect for the dignity of all people based on an understanding of different cultures and ways of life.

SOURCE: Westwood

THE TEACHING OF SCIENCE

The Westwood School Committee believes that science education has the responsibility to prepare students for a complex and ever-changing world. In this world students will be required to make informed ethical and moral decisions that will affect humankind. Therefore, the ultimate goal for our school system is to develop students' ability to think critically and creatively and to make ethical decisions. In the area of science these skills must be developed as students are in the process of gaining a thorough understanding of the way the natural world operates. We believe that in order to prepare students for this role the following elements are essential for our K- 12 science program:

- Developing critical thinking, scientific reasoning, and process skills that will enable students to assess and act on complex social issues.
- Helping students recognize the place of the individual in the universe through an understanding of physical, earth, and life sciences.
- Relating scientific thought and issues to the lives of students.
- Encouraging and building on the natural curiosity of students in order to foster a life long interest in learning science.

SOURCE: Westwood

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

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

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

SOURCE: Westwood

THE ARTS IN THE WESTWOOD SCHOOLS - MISSION STATEMENT

The Westwood School Committee defines the "Fine Arts" as art, music, dance and theater. The mission of the Fine Arts programs is based upon the following assumptions: the arts humanize the total education process; the arts are a critical part of the curriculum for every student; the arts require serious study through sequential and coordinated curricula; and students need active engagement in the arts in order to experience the processes of creating and performing.

The program in each of the arts, therefore, strive to:

1. Provide students with the knowledge and critical thinking skills necessary to perceive, interpret and evaluate artistic expression
2. Develop students' artistic skills and creative potential
3. Expand students' abilities to communicate and understand feelings and ideas through artistic expression
4. Help students achieve a greater awareness and understanding through the study of the artistic heritage of our own and other cultures
5. Promote the development of an aesthetic sense that will enrich the lives of students through adulthood.

Underlying every aspect of these programs is the belief that by providing opportunities for student self-expression, experimentation and the exercise of imagination, the arts help students of all ages to develop a greater knowledge of self and a sense of self-esteem.

In summary, the arts act as a catalyst which enables students to combine the intellectual, sensory, emotional and physical domains. The arts synthesize critical thinking and feeling, creativity and communication, the self and the environment, and the individual and society. Making these connections constitutes the basis of an aesthetic education.

SOURCE: Westwood

THE TEACHING OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE

The Westwood School Committee believes that the learning of a language other than one's own is an educational experience which enhances students' capacities for communicating with others, expands their perspectives, and, ultimately, deepens their understanding of their own language and culture.

The mission of the foreign language department in Westwood, therefore, is to:

1. Foster linguistic literacy by developing the essential communication skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing in a second language.
2. Expand students' awareness and appreciation of other cultures by opening their eyes to new worlds and new ways of thinking.
3. Increase students' self-confidence and self-esteem by providing them with opportunities to take risks in learning. The curriculum, and the way it is taught, should provide opportunities for students to use their language skills in ways that students find useful and challenging.

SOURCE: Westwood

OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION

The School Committee recognizes that students in pre-kindergarten through grade 12 should:

1. Be afforded the opportunity to be informed about the world of work.
2. Be aware of the many vocations available to them.
3. Develop a respect for the dignity of work.
4. Be allowed the opportunity to develop an understanding regarding the technical, consumer, occupational, recreational and cultural aspects of industry and technology; they should also be afforded the opportunity to develop skills related to such aspects through creative problem solving experiences.

SOURCE: MASC October 2016

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:37K; 71:38A through 71:38F; 74:1 et seq.
603 CMR 4.00

NOTE: This category may be used for career education, vocational education, or both. If a school district participates in collaborative programs, the details of such programs are more appropriately filed under LBB, Cooperative Educational Programs.

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 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 REFS.: M.G.L. [71:1](#)

SOURCE: Westwood

HEALTH EDUCATION

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, research-based health education program as an integral part of each student's general education. **Health education will be taught as a separate academic discipline in grades K through 6 and as a separate class in other grades.***

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 district's health education program.

***NOTE: Highlighted sentence should be changed to reflect district practice.**

SOURCE: MASC April 2019

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

**HEALTH EDUCATION
(Exemption Procedure)**

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

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

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

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

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. [71:1](#)

SOURCE: Westwood/MASC

FAMILY LIFE/SEX EDUCATION

The Westwood School Committee believes that the purpose of family life and sex education is to help students acquire factual knowledge, attitudes, and values that will result in behavior that contributes to the well-being of the individual, the family, and society.

Helping students attain a mature and responsible attitude toward human sexuality is a continuous task of every generation. Parents have the prime responsibility to assist their children in developing moral values. The schools should support and supplement parent's efforts in these areas by offering students factual information and opportunities to discuss concerns, issues, and attitudes inherent in family life and sexual behavior, including traditional moral values.

In addition to the requirements listed below, the customary policies and regulations concerning the approval of new curriculum contents, units, and materials will apply to any course(s) dealing with family life and sex education offered by the system:

1. Instructional materials to be used in family life /sex education will be available for review by the parent or guardian during school hours.
2. If, after review of the materials used and a conference with the instructor and Principal, a parent requests that his/her child not participate in a given aspect of the course, an alternative educational assignment will be arranged for the student with the approval of the Principal.
3. Teachers who provide instruction in family life/sex education will have professional preparation in the subject area, either through pre-service or in-service education.

SOURCE: Westwood

PARENTAL NOTIFICATION RELATIVE TO SEX EDUCATION

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

At the beginning of each year, all parents/guardians of students in our schools will be notified in writing of the courses and curriculum we offer that substantially involve human sexual education 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 the planned curriculum changes 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 substantially involves human sexual education or human sexuality 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 will 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 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 dispute.

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

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. [71:32A](#)

Note: The MASC Reference Manual codes this policy IHAMA, replaces the highlighted legal reference in the first sentence “General Laws Chapter 71, Section 32A with “law” and updates the legal references as shown below:

*LEGAL REFS: M.G.L. 71:32A
 603 CMR 5*

SOURCE: Westwood

TEACHING ABOUT DRUGS, ALCOHOL, AND TOBACCO

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

The drug, alcohol and tobacco education program shall address the legal, social, and health consequences of drug, alcohol and tobacco use. It shall include special instruction as to the effects upon the human system; the emotional, psychological and social dangers of such use with emphasis on nonuse by school age children and the illegal aspects of such use. The program also shall include information about effective techniques for resisting peer pressure to use illicit drugs, alcohol or tobacco.

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

To create an awareness of the total drug problem--prevention, education, treatment, rehabilitation, and law enforcement on the local, state, national and international levels.

To relate the use of drugs, alcohol and tobacco to physical, mental, social and emotional practices.

To develop the student's ability to make intelligent choices based on facts and to develop the courage to stand by one's own convictions.

To understand the personal, social and economic problems causing the misuse of drugs, alcohol, and tobacco.

To develop an interest in preventing illegal use of drugs in the community.

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

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. [71:1](#)

SOURCE: Westwood

TEACHING ABOUT ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, AND DRUGS

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

The alcohol, tobacco, and drug prevention program shall address the legal, social, and health consequences of alcohol, tobacco, and drug use, with emphasis on nonuse by school-age children. The program also shall include information about effective techniques and skill development for delaying and abstaining from using, as well as skills for addressing 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:

- To prevent, delay, and/or reduce alcohol, tobacco, and drug use among children and youth.
- 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/guardians 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.

SOURCE: MASC March 2016

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

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

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

The goals of this school system's special education program are to allow each child to grow and achieve at his 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. These children should also be given the opportunity to participate in the school system's non-academic and extracurricular activities.

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

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

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

LEGAL REFS.: The Individuals with Disabilities Ed. Act (PL 108-446, adopted 12/03/04)
 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

SOURCE: Westwood

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

The goals of this school district's special education program are to allow each child to grow and achieve at their own level, to gain independence and self-reliance, and to return to the mainstream of school society as soon as possible.

The requirements of law and regulation 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 to twenty-two 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 district's non-academic and extracurricular activities.

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

It is the desire of the Committee that the schools work closely with parents/guardians in designing and providing programs and services to children with special needs. Parents/guardians 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/guardians 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.

SOURCE: MASC April 2019

LEGAL REFS.: The Individuals with Disabilities Ed. Act (PL 108-446, adopted 12/03/04)
Rehabilitation Act of 1973
M.G.L. 71B:1 et seq.
603 CMR 28:00 inclusive

NOTE: A school district's procedures for implementing Special Education laws and regulations are often too extensive to include in a policy manual. In such instances, a note can be added to the policy to point out the existence and availability of a document containing current procedures.

SPECIAL EDUCATION MISSION STATEMENT

The Westwood School Committee believes that the Special Education Program shares the system's mission to develop students' critical and creative thinking skills and to expect them to reason ethically and act morally. To achieve these outcomes, special education focuses on addressing a range of learning styles and developmental stages. Underlying this process, our central purpose is to enable students with special learning needs to understand and compensate for them so that they may fulfill their potential in their personal lives, school, and in the workplace. The success of this mission requires the collaborative efforts of faculty, parents, and students.

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

LEGAL REFS.: The Individuals with Disabilities Ed. Act (PL 108-446, adopted 12/03/04)
 Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504
 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

SOURCE: Westwood

PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

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

LEGAL REF.: Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504

SOURCE: MASC

OBSERVATIONS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

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

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

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

CROSS REFS.: [KI](#), Visitors to Schools

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."

SOURCE: Westwood

Note: The MASC Reference Manual replaces "parent(s)" with "parent(s)/guardians(s)"

**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.

LEGAL REF.: Title 1, Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended

SOURCE: MASC

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

The District shall provide suitable research-based language instructional programs for all identified English language learners in grades Kindergarten through 12 in accordance with the requirements of state and federal statutes and Massachusetts Dept. of Elementary and Secondary 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 Dept. of Elementary and Secondary 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 Dept. of Elementary and Secondary 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](#)

SOURCE: Westwood

ENGLISH LEARNER EDUCATION

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

The District shall identify students whose dominant language may not be English through

- home language surveys that identify a primary home language is other than English
- observations
- intake assessments
- recommendations of parents/guardians, 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 DESE each year those students whose dominant language is not English, including specification of the number of non-English languages identified as dominant languages and the number and percent of students who speak each non-English language as their dominant language.

The District shall provide additional information as required by DESE to comply with federal law.

SOURCE: MASC April 2019

LEGAL REFS.: Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended
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 shall be assigned to homebound instruction by the Superintendent or designee.

SOURCE: Westwood

HOMEBOUND INSTRUCTION

The schools may furnish homebound instruction to any student who must remain at home or in a hospital on a day or overnight basis, or any combination of both, for medical reasons and for a period of not less than 14 school days in any school year. The instruction is designed to provide maintenance in the basic academic courses so that when a student returns to school they 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 Pupil 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 shall be assigned to homebound instruction by the Superintendent or designee.

LEGAL REF.: 603 CMR 28.03 (3)(c)

SOURCE: MASC – June 2020

HOME SCHOOLING

The Massachusetts General Law requires the School Committee to determine that a Home Schooling program meet with the minimum standards established for public schools in the Commonwealth prior to approving such a program.

When a parent or guardian of a student below the age of 16 wants to establish a home-based educational program for his/her child, the following procedures shall be followed in accordance with the law:

Prior to removing the child from public school:

The parent/guardian must submit written notification of establishment of the home-based program to the appropriate administrator 14 days before the program is established, and resubmit notification on an annual basis as long as the child or children are being educated in a home-based environment.

The parent/guardian must certify in writing, on a form provided by the District, the name, age, place of residence, and number of hours of attendance of each child in the program.

The Superintendent shall give the notice to produce records required by law if there is probable cause to believe the program is not in compliance with the law. Factors to be considered by the Superintendent or School Committee in deciding whether or not to approve a home education proposal may be:

1. The proposed curriculum and the number of hours of instruction in each of the proposed subjects.
2. The competency of the parents to teach the children,
3. The textbooks, workbooks and other instructional aids 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.

A student, with the approval of the School Committee, may be awarded a high school diploma if they have satisfied the Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education's competency requirements and has met the District's educational standards for graduation.

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)

Note: The MASC Reference manual includes the highlighted last paragraph in red

SOURCE: Westwood

Westwood Public Schools

HOME SCHOOLING

1. Requirements for approval of home instruction will include:
 - a. The parent or legal guardian must request permission to hold home instruction on an annual basis.
 - b. A home instruction application form will be provided to the parents or legal guardian. This form must be completed and returned to the Superintendent before approval may be granted.
 - c. The Committee delegates the approval of home instruction to the Superintendent. Any approval or rejection of an application by the Superintendent is subject to review by the Committee.
2. Children in home instruction may, at the discretion of parents or guardian, attend the public schools on a part-time basis. It may be an advantage for a home-taught child to attend specialized classes in the public school.
3. Parents or a legal guardian in charge of home instruction should make provision for regular testing or use of other indicators of student progress such as standardized achievement tests. As an alternative to home testing and at the request of those in charge of the home instruction, the School District will make provision for inclusion of home-taught children in the annual achievement test battery, which is usually administered in February or March of each school year. The home instruction summary form must include either a summary of home testing results for each required subject for each child or the results of the achievement test that is administered through the School District.
4. Auditing functions of the Committee for the home instruction will include:
 - a. The Committee at any time may request a review by the Superintendent of the attendance rolls, records of test scores or other achievement indicators in each required subject for any child in home instruction.
 - b. The Committee may request at any time that the Superintendent review the instructional materials and methods used by the person(s) responsible for the home instruction.
 - c. The Superintendent will prepare for the Committee an annual summary of the children included in home instruction. This report will also summarize, in general, the appropriateness or possible deficiencies of home education situations.
5. Within one week of the ending date of the home instruction, as indicated on the home instruction application form, the School District will mail the parents or legal guardian a home instruction summary form. The completed form should be returned to the School District within 30 days. This summary form must be returned to the School District office before annual approval of home instruction can be made for any succeeding years.

6. The Committee will act in a responsible, cooperative manner to ensure that all children in the School District receive competent, adequate instruction. This concern includes children in home education. If the Committee determines that a home instruction situation is inadequate, a conference between the parents or legal guardian and the Superintendent will be scheduled to find mutually acceptable ways to correct any deficiency.
7. If deficiencies in a home education situation are not corrected or the proper annual application or summary is not completed by the parents or legal guardian, an appropriate referral will be made.

SOURCE: MASC

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 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

Note: The MASC Reference Manual updates the legal references as shown below:

**LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:37I; 71:37J
603 CMR 17.00**

SOURCE: Westwood

REMOTE LEARNING

In the event of a district-specific emergency requiring the use of remote learning, the superintendent of schools may declare such emergency and shall, as soon as possible, obtain the approval of the school committee. The remote learning plan below will be applicable in cases of disease, weather emergencies, destruction or damage to schools rendering them inaccessible, or other extraordinary circumstances, including emergencies declared by government officials, the school committee, or the superintendent.

When it becomes necessary for the school district to provide support to students who are unable to attend classes or access appropriate services due to an extended closure, the superintendent shall establish a plan and procedures to ensure that such services are provided. The provision of educational services may include the use of technology and devices, and strategies designed to support student learning away from school.

The remote learning plan will, to the extent possible:

- Ensure the safety of all students and faculty in coordination with appropriate local and state departments and agencies;
- Provide support for student social and emotional wellbeing and address the implications of trauma experienced by students or faculty as a result of the emergency;
- Identify goals and strategies for maintaining standards of student achievement and school improvement plans;
- Ensure instruction and services are delivered by district educators and personnel as much as practicable;
- Utilize the most effective tools and resources available for students and faculty, including the skills and talents of district personnel, in the delivery of instruction and services and share resources as needed;
- Provide resources and services equitably to meet the needs and circumstances of all students;
- Identify remedial strategies necessary after the emergency to advance student achievement (i.e. after-school, extended day, summer school, and contingency scheduling to cancel vacations.);
- Gather information both during and after the period of emergency regarding the most effective means of remote learning to implement as appropriate.

In developing a remote learning plan, the superintendent will:

- Identify and prepare effective means for communicating with faculty, students, parents and community stakeholders.
- Collaborate with municipal agencies that support the schools and community.
- Consult with the school committee to identify any extraordinary actions necessary or authority required to administer emergency and remote learning plans. This includes any changes to district policies on the school calendar, grading, promotions and retentions, local graduation requirements, testing, and standards and accountability.

- Consult with administrators and principals to ensure the continuing education of students at all levels, including:
 - use of the most appropriate resources, tools and strategies to deliver the curricula given local circumstances and conditions;
 - equitable access to appropriate content for all students;
 - specific accommodations for students at high risk, including clients of special education, students with disabilities, English learners, students at economic disadvantage, homeless students, students in foster care and students of military families.
- Utilize available technological resources suitable for serving students at all levels. This inventory will be prepared in advance in anticipation of an emergency.
- Ensure the privacy rights of students, faculty and families are protected, including assessing the security of district technology.
- Consult with bargaining units to determine if modifications to collective bargaining agreements need to be established for the period of the emergency.
- Identify the financial implications of the emergency plan and recommend transfer of funds as may be necessary.

LEGAL REFS.: 20 U.S.C. §1232g Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)
 15 U.S.C. §§ 6501–6506 Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA)

CROSS REFS.: EBCD – Emergency Closings
 IGA – Curriculum Development
 IGB – Support Services Programs
 IHBEA – English Learner Education
 IJND – Access to Digital Resources
 IJNDB – Empowered Digital Use
 IJNDC – Internet Publication
 IJNDD – Policy on Social Media
 IHBEA – English Language Learners
 JB – Equal Educational Opportunities
 JBB – Educational Equity

SOURCE: MASC – May 2020

REMOTE LEARNING ADDENDUM

Issues to consider when developing remote learning plans:

- Which of these issues requires policy or policy changes?
- What are the policy implications and what should school committees delegate to the superintendent for operating protocols?
- Do we learn anything from earlier experiences in emergencies?
- What can we learn from our current services to students who are unable to attend school because of illness or other disability or for disciplinary reasons?

Specific items to consider in developing a plan:

- When is remote learning appropriate?
- Designating a remote learning point person
- Reviewing the various models for remote learning
- Equity – how to ensure that students have access to tools to learn remotely.
- Internal vs. external resources.
- Collective bargaining implications
- Responsibilities of remote educators
 - Evaluating remote educators and programs
 - Who may observe remote instruction
 - Teacher professional development to incorporate various elements of remote learning
 - Common planning time
- Identifying cost implications and approving spending
- Special constituencies:
 - Special education students
 - English Language Learners
 - Physically challenged students
 - Homeless students
 - Students in foster care
 - Students of military families
 - Pregnant and parenting students
- Facilitating collaboration/removing barriers to collaboration.
- Protecting privacy rights of students and parents
 - FERPA (Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act and COPPA (Children’s On Line Privacy Protection Act)
 - What privacy protections do vendors and districts/schools have in place.
- Health and nutrition issues that may impact student wellness and/or privacy
- Internet security for students and faculty.

- Protecting educators and others who identify threats to student wellbeing via remote learning.
- Engaging district partners including companies, consultants, media (i.e., public television).

- Impact on decisions to retain or grant professional status educators.
- Academic implications (testing, grading, educator accountability, curriculum adaptations)
- Parental rights (opting in or opting out)
- Data gathered remotely or on-line (who gathers, aggregates, or analyzes).

SOURCE: MASC – May 2020

SUMMER SCHOOLS

The school system may make available summer sessions as a supplement to the instruction offered during the school year, when funding for such programs is available. The focus of the program will be remedial work.

Students at all instructional levels may attend approved summer schools for remedial, enrichment, or make-up purposes. Credit towards graduation requirements may be granted high school students in line with regulations of the School District.

All summer programs will be subject to annual approval by the School Committee.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. [71:28](#)

SOURCE: Westwood

SUMMER SCHOOLS

The school district shall make available summer sessions as a supplement to the instruction offered during the school year, when funding for such programs is available. The focus of the program will be remedial work.

To attend summer school, students must have the approval of their classroom and/or special subject teachers.

Students at all instructional levels may attend approved summer schools for remedial, enrichment, or make-up purposes. Credit towards graduation requirements may be granted high school students in line with regulations of the School District.

All summer programs will be subject to annual approval by the School Committee.

SOURCE: MASC

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:28

NOTE: This category is for statements on the summer program the summer instruction, services, and facilities provided students. Personnel policies pertaining to summer schools should be filed in the appropriate category in the personnel section.

CLASS SIZE

The Westwood School Committee is committed to favorable class sizes at all grade levels as one important element of the learning experience for students. To the extent possible, the School Committee will maintain reasonable class sizes in all classrooms throughout the system. Recommended class sizes are listed below, with the understanding that these are guidelines rather than absolute limits requiring strict, literal adherence, and should serve as a guide for budgeting purposes and in response to the enrollment of new students into classes that are near or at the numbers listed below:

<u>Grade Level</u>	<u>Class Size</u>
K-3	18-22
4-5	18-24
6-12	Reasonable class sizes (18-24), ideally not higher than 28, with the exception of traditionally large group classes (e.g. band)

In the event that a class in grades K-3 reaches 23 students or a class in grades 4-5 reaches 25 students, or if a principal believes that a particular class is not functioning properly, the superintendent in consultation with the building principal may recommend one of the following actions:

1. Reallocate or increase literacy or math specialist support
2. Reallocate or increase literacy paraprofessional support
3. Assign an instructional assistant to the class for part or all of the day
4. Provide an additional teacher in a co-teaching model
5. Open an additional class section at that grade
6. Use other practical solutions as may be deemed appropriate

If, in the judgment of the superintendent, it is necessary to take action that would affect the budget, such as increasing professional staffing, a recommendation will be brought to the School Committee for approval.

First Reading: November 16, 2017

Second Reading: December 14, 2017

Approved: December 14, 2017

SOURCE: Westwood

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, physical disabilities or sexual preference.
6. They must allow sufficient flexibility for meeting the special needs of individual students and groups of students.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. [71:48](#); [71:49](#); [71:50](#)

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

SOURCE: Westwood

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

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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 orientation.
6. They must allow sufficient flexibility for meeting the special needs of individual students and groups of students.

SOURCE: MASC – Cross Reference Update 2022

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 30B:7; 71:48; 71:49; 71:50
BESE regulations 603 CMR 26.00

CROSS REF.: KE, Public Complaints

NOTE: A broad policy, such as the sample above, can establish the framework for the selection and adoption of all instructional materials used in the school district. Regulations, however, might be needed to cover procedures for selection of textbooks and supplementary and library materials.

RECONSIDERATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES

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

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

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

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

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

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

If the decision of the School Committee is that the questioned instructional resource be retained, the District will not convene a Review Committee relative to the same complaint for a period of three years. If a substantially different point of view is advanced, it will be investigated. (The period of three years does not apply in this instance).

If an individual or a group undertakes action to keep material from the shelves by checking it out and failing to return it, or by taking turns in keeping it checked out so that it is not available for student use, the Superintendent shall request, in writing, the return of the material. If it is not returned within thirty (30) days, a bill for the current replacement cost of the item shall be rendered to the party holding the item.

After the School Committee has adopted new materials or approved certain methods, that decision will not be reconsidered for a period of three years beginning with the end of the school year when the adoption is made.

SOURCE: Westwood/MASC

TEXTBOOK SELECTION AND ADOPTION

Responsibility for the review and selection of textbooks to be purchased shall rest with the Superintendent or designee. The Superintendent or designee 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.: M.G.L. [71:48](#); [30B:7](#); [71:50](#)
603 CMR [26:05](#)

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

SOURCE: Westwood

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS SELECTION AND ADOPTION

The School Committee recognizes that knowledge is changing and expanding and that it may be necessary to use various types of supplementary materials in addition to the basic and fundamental textbooks.

For the purpose of this policy, supplementary materials shall be defined as any instructional materials (printed or electronic) other than textbooks including, but not limited to, books, periodicals, newspapers, pictures, diagrams, maps, charts, slides, filmstrips, films, records, audiotapes, and suitable technological applications which relate directly to the adopted curriculum.

The School Committee believes that teachers and administrators should have a large role in selection and recommendation of supplementary materials. Teachers are encouraged to use a wide range of learning aids, provided the expense incurred in purchasing these aids remains within the limits of the budget.

LEGAL REFS.: 603 CMR [26:05](#)

SOURCE: Westwood

LIBRARY MATERIALS SELECTION AND ADOPTION

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

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

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

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

LEGAL REFS.: 603 CMR [26:05](#)

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

Note: The MASC Reference Manual updates the cross reference as shown below:

CROSS REF.: KE, Public Complaints

SOURCE: Westwood

LIBRARY RESOURCES

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

Definition of Library Resources

Library resources are those print, non-print, and digital materials found in school libraries which support curricular and personal information needs.

Criteria for Selection of Library Resources

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

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

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

Disclosure of Information/Privacy of Circulation Records

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

Re-evaluation (Weeding) of Library Resources

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

Among the reasons for withdrawing an item are the following:

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

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

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

Continuing evaluation is closely related to the goals and responsibilities of library/media centers and is a valuable tool of collection development. This procedure is not to be used as a convenient or expedient means to remove materials presumed to be controversial or likely to be disapproved by segments of the community. Materials are not to be proscribed or removed because of actual or potential partisan or doctrinal disapproval, nor because of the origin, background or views of those contributing to their creation.

SOURCE: MASC October 2016

SPECIAL INTEREST MATERIALS SELECTION AND ADOPTION

Organizations, institutions, and individuals at times develop materials that are offered to schools free or inexpensively. As a general rule, sponsored materials present a particular point of view, and extreme care must be exercised in evaluating and using them. The responsibility for using sponsored materials rests with the certified staff member who recommends its use. In any questionable instance, the Principal should be informed and shall decide whether its use is in the best interests of the students.

Sponsored materials must meet the same basic selection criteria as any other learning material, as well as the following special criteria.

Any expression of a point of view should be clearly identified.

Any advertising that appears on or with any material should be in good taste and unobtrusive.

The source of all material should be clearly identifiable.

LEGAL REFS.: 603 CMR [26:05](#)

SOURCE: Westwood

ACCESS TO DIGITAL RESOURCES

The 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, in conjunction with the Director of Technology, shall develop and implement appropriate procedures to provide guidance for access to digital resources. Guidelines shall address teacher supervision of student computer or tablet use, ethical use of digital resources and issues of privacy versus administrative review of electronic files and communications. In addition, guidelines shall prohibit utilization of digital resources for prohibited or illegal activities and for the use of other programs with the potential of damaging or destroying programs or data.

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

- Controlling access by minors to inappropriate matter on the Internet 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 School District shall provide reasonable public notice to address and communicate its internet safety measures.

Empowered Digital Use

All students and faculty must agree to and sign an Empowered Digital Use form prior to the student or staff member being granted independent access to digital resources and district networks. The required form, which specifies guidelines for using digital resources and district networks, 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 Director of Technology 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.

Community Use

On recommendation of the Superintendent in conjunction with the Director of Technology, the district shall determine when and which computer equipment, software, and information access systems will be available to the community. All guests will be prompted to, and must accept the district's Access to Digital Resources Policy before accessing the district network.

Disregard of Rules and Responsibility for Damages

Individuals who refuse to sign required Empowered Digital 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.

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

SOURCE: MASC

LEGAL REFS: 47 USC § 254

Adopted: August 2015

Note: FCC regulations that went into effect April 20, 2001, implementing The Children's Internet Protection Act (47 U.S.C. § 254) require each school/district to certify compliance with certain policy requirements in order to maintain eligibility for Internet access discounts and other services provided by the federal government.

WESTWOOD PUBLIC SCHOOL ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

1. Purpose

The Westwood Public Schools provides technology resources to support the District's educational, instructional, administrative and operational activities. The use of these resources is a privilege that is extended to members of the Westwood Public Schools community. As a user of these services and facilities, you have access to valuable district resources, to sensitive data, and to internal and external networks. This policy explains the District's expectations for using these resources in a productive, responsible, ethical, and legal manner.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all users of technology resources owned or managed by the Westwood Public Schools. Individuals covered by this policy include but are not limited to employees, students, members of the School Committee, volunteers, guests, and external individuals and organizations accessing the District's technology resources whether on school grounds or in another location. Computing resources include all District-owned, licensed, or managed hardware and software or any use of the district network via a physical, wireless, or remote connection, regardless of the ownership of the computer or device connected to the network.

2.1 Consequences

If a user violates this policy, the District will take appropriate action, which may include restriction and loss of technology privileges, payments for damages or repairs, and discipline under appropriate District policies up to and including suspension, termination of employment, and referral to legal authorities. Users may also be held personally liable under applicable state and federal civil or criminal laws. Employee discipline procedures will be in accordance with the terms of applicable collective bargaining agreements. Users are encouraged to report misuse or violations of this policy to appropriate personnel, including building administrators and the Director of Technology, Learning, and Innovation.

2.2 Definitions

The Massachusetts Public Record Law is a law that gives the public the right to request access to information from a Massachusetts governmental agency. The **Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)** is a law that gives the public access to information from the federal government. A public records request can be made to the Westwood Public Schools for electronic documents/communications stored or transmitted through district systems unless that information is specifically exempted from disclosure by law.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) protects the privacy of student education records. Personal information stored or transmitted by the Westwood Public Schools

must abide by FERPA. The Westwood Public Schools also are required to protect the confidentiality, integrity, and security of student records under MA law and Board of Education regulations.

Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) requires schools that receive federal funding through the E-Rate program to protect students from content deemed harmful or inappropriate. The Westwood Public Schools is required to filter Internet access for inappropriate content, monitor the internet usage of minors, and provide education to students and staff on safe and appropriate online behavior.

Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) imposes certain requirements on operators of websites or online services directed to children under 13 years of age, and on operators of other websites or online services that have actual knowledge that they are collecting personal information online from a child under 13 years of age. The primary goal of COPPA is to place parents in control over what information is collected from their children online.

3. Policy

3.1 Responsible Use - General Principles

We expect users to conduct business in accordance with the letter, spirit, and intent of all relevant laws and to not do anything that is illegal, dishonest, or unethical. By using Westwood Public Schools technology resources the user agrees to follow all District policies, regulations, and guidelines and state and federal law. Students are expected to and employees are required to report misuse or breach of protocols to appropriate District personnel.

- All technology resources furnished to employees are property of the Westwood Public Schools and are intended for educational or business use that is consistent with the mission of the District.
- We expect users to exercise good judgment in the use of these resources and to have the highest standards of conduct and personal integrity. Users are responsible for knowing and complying with the regulations and policies and laws that apply to the appropriate use of District technology and resources. If you are not sure if an action is legal, ethical, or appropriate, you should discuss the matter with your teacher or supervisor.
- All federal, state, and local laws and District policies and behavior guidelines that cover student and employee conduct on school premises and at school-related activities similarly apply to the online environment in those same venues.
- District computing resources are intended for job and education related activities. We permit brief personal use, or use for reasons permitted by state law, within reasonable limits as long as such activities don't interfere with employee work tasks.

- Any use of the District's computing resources in ways that disrupt the school environment, is inappropriate and/or unprofessional, contributes to creating a harassing workplace, or creates a legal risk to the District is prohibited.
- Access to view, edit, or share personal data of students and employees must be by authorized individuals only, who must abide by federal and state laws and regulations, including ensuring privacy. When educational records, personal information, or other private data is transmitted or shared electronically, staff are expected to protect the privacy of data. Staff must also ensure records are sent to individuals with a right to said records and ensure that only the intended recipient(s) are able to access the data.
- Using computing resources to create or disseminate content that could be considered discriminatory, obscene, threatening, harassing, defamatory, retaliatory, or intimidating to any other person is not allowed and could lead to disciplinary action by the District as well as legal action by those who are the recipient of these actions.
- District computing resources may not be used to access, post, or send items with sexually obscene content. Similarly, images exhibiting or advocating the illegal use of drugs or alcohol is prohibited.
- Users must not photograph or make audio/video recordings without the consent of those being recorded and/or permission granted by a parent/guardian of those being recorded. This shall not apply to "directory information" or other fair use authorized under federal or state student records law.
- District computing resources may not be used to solicit and/or promote others for commercial ventures or personal economic gain, for religious or political causes, for outside organizations, or other non- District matters.
- All activity that is composed, transmitted, or received via our technology resources is considered the property of the Westwood Public Schools and part of our records and may be subject to disclosure to law enforcement or other third parties.
- Nothing in this policy will be read to limit an individual's constitutional rights to freedom of speech or expression or to restrict an employee's ability to engage in concerted, protected activity with fellow employees regarding the terms and conditions of their employment. Notwithstanding this, when staff members speak through social media on matters concerning their work, they should be aware that they are speaking as employees of the Westwood Public Schools.

3.1.2 Student and Staff Records Privacy

The District has a legal obligation to protect the personal data of students, families, and staff. Personal information for students/families and staff must be stored and transmitted using approved practices and systems.

The Westwood Public Schools complies with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA), and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), as well as state law and regulations concerning the security and confidentiality of employee information and to protect against unauthorized access to or use of such information.

Employees who use third-party software/applications/cloud-storage services to facilitate student learning must verify that the District has approved the use of said resources. Approved resources are vetted for compliance with all relevant student data privacy laws and regulations. This information can be found on the District's Database of Online Resources web site. If the resource is not listed in the database, staff can utilize the Digital Resource Request procedure to obtain authorization to use the resource.

3.1.3 Copyright and Intellectual Property

The Westwood Public Schools does not allow the unauthorized use, installation, copying, or distribution of copyrighted, trademarked, or patented software or material (including music, videos, games, images, text and other media) or any other unauthorized software or material on the Internet.

As a responsible user of the District's computing and network resources, you must abide by all applicable copyright laws and licenses and observe copyright laws. As a general rule, if you did not create the material, you do not own the rights to it, or if you have not received authorization for its use, you may not put the material on the Internet, including works created by students and staff.

3.1.4 Online Communication

The Westwood Public Schools encourages the appropriate use of online communication, including social media, to increase student and staff learning, parent and community engagement, and operational efficiency.

When using online tools, members of the Westwood Public Schools community when acting as representatives or employees of the Westwood Public Schools will use appropriate behavior when the communication impacts or is likely to impact the classroom or working environment in the Westwood Public Schools.

- Employees should model and actively practice positive digital citizenship and help students use new technologies in a safe, and responsible way. Employees utilizing online communication platforms with students are expected to educate students about digital citizenship, which includes appropriate and safe online behavior, interacting with individuals on social networking websites, and cyber-bullying awareness.
- Employee activities on District-affiliated social media or social networking websites should not reflect negatively on students, staff, or the District.

- Employees who use internal or external social media sites are expected to maintain professionalism at all times. This includes refraining from discussing confidential information and/or discussing specific students. Content that can be traced back to a specific student or could allow a student to be publicly identified should not be posted on any social media sites.
- Employees and students are provided with online tools to support teaching and learning and to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of communication, both within the organization and with the broader community. Staff and students in grades 6 through 12 are also provided with District email accounts. Employee communication over email should be consistent with professional practices used for all correspondence.
- All communication sent by an employee using District resources or regarding District business could be subjected to public record requests. Users need to be aware that emails, chats, data and other material/files maintained on the District's systems or the cloud may be subject to review, disclosure, or discovery.
- Employee use of personal email accounts and communication tools to conduct school business is strongly discouraged and may, in turn, cause an individual's personal account to be subject to public records requests under state and federal law.
- The District maintains a database of approved online resources that facilitate student learning and enhance work productivity. Before using an online resource, staff are required to refer to this database and verify it has been approved for use. Approval indicates that the resource meets Westwood's standard for student data privacy and aligns with Westwood's curriculum and instruction standards.
- New online resources are continuously being developed and marketed to educators. Staff are required to utilize the Digital Resource Request procedure to obtain approval to use any resource that is not currently listed in the District's database of online resources.
- Unapproved third-party sites are prohibited.
- Employees are prohibited from exchanging personal contact information and/or friending/following on social media with current students of any age without explicit written permission of the Principal.
- Coaches or club/activity advisors should refrain from exchanging personal contact information with student team, club/activity members, or their parents/guardians. Rather, coaches and advisors shall use District approved communication platforms for the purpose of communicating with these individuals. It is strongly recommended that

electronic or telephone contact by coaches and club/activity advisors with students will be sent to two or more team members, except for messages that would compromise confidential information, such as medical or academic privacy matters.

- The Westwood Public Schools has established a comprehensive set of Social Media Guidelines. Members of the Westwood Public Schools community are required to follow these guidelines, along with the expectations contained within this Acceptable Use Policy.
- The Westwood Public Schools has established a comprehensive set of Email Guidelines. Members of the Westwood Public Schools community are required to follow these guidelines, along with the expectations contained within this Acceptable Use Policy.

3.1.5 System Security

Users should not share their password or use another person's password, another user account, access a file, or retrieve any stored communication without authorization from the building Principal or Central Office.

Hacking or attempting to access computer systems without authorization, vandalism (including the uploading or creation of computer viruses, worms, or malware), fraud, phishing, spamming, and/or unauthorized tampering with computer systems is prohibited and may result in District disciplinary action as well as legal action. Users may not use proxy or VPN services to negate or otherwise bypass the District's filtering and monitoring of content.

Users must take responsible measures to prevent a device from being lost or stolen. In the event an electronic device is lost or stolen, the user is required to notify appropriate school staff. The District will attempt to recover the lost property and ensure the security of any information contained on the device.

4. Monitoring

All technologies that we furnish are the property of the Westwood Public Schools, and users should have no expectation of privacy. We reserve the right to monitor local network and Internet traffic, including information sent or received through our online connections or stored on our computer systems for any reason, including but not limited to ensuring quality control and investigate system problems, ensuring student and employee safety and district security, ensuring appropriate use, or as may be necessary, ensuring that the District is not subject to claims of misconduct.

The Superintendent or designee will approve access to files on District-owned equipment or information only when there is a valid reason to access those files. Authority to access user files

can only come from the Director of Technology in conjunction with requests and/or approvals from the Superintendent or designee. External law enforcement agencies may request access to files through valid subpoenas and other legally binding requests. The District's legal counsel will review all such requests. Information obtained in this manner can be admissible in legal proceedings or in a District discipline hearing.

5. User Compliance & District Liability

Students are not permitted to use school-based technology resources without yearly parent sign-off in our student information system. Likewise, staff are required to electronically agree to the terms of this Acceptable Use Policy during the new-hire onboarding process.

When you use District computing services and accept any District-issued computing accounts, you agree to comply with this policy and all other computing-related policies. You have the responsibility to keep up-to-date on changes in the District computing environment via District electronic and print publication mechanisms, and to adhere to those changes.

The Westwood Public Schools and its representatives do not encourage or endorse access to inappropriate materials or persons. The Westwood Public Schools makes no warranties of any kind, whether expressed or implied, for the technology-related services it provides and will not be responsible for any damages resulting from delays or service interruptions caused by its own negligence or the user's errors or omissions information obtained via the Internet is at the user's own risk. The Westwood Public Schools specifically denies any responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through its computer services.

4. Policy Review and Notice

The Director of Technology or designee will review this policy annually.

District administration will provide written notice annually to staff, students and parents/guardians of this policy. Such notification will include, but not be limited to, student/parent handbooks, and the District website.

Revised: September 8, 2022

Adopted: November 9, 2022

LEGAL REFS: M.G.L. [66 §10](#): Massachusetts Public Record Law;
M.G.L. [71 §34D](#) and 603 CMR [23.00](#): Mass. Student Records Law and Regulations;
M.G.L. [71 §37H](#): Publication of School Committee Rules and Regulations Relative to the Conduct of Teachers and Students; Freedom of Information Act (FOIA); Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA); Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA); Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA)

OTHER REFS: Mansfield Public School Acceptable Use Policy and
Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC)

SOURCE: Westwood

EMPOWERED DIGITAL USE POLICY

Purpose

The School Committee recognizes the need for students to be prepared to contribute to and excel in a connected, global community. To that end, the district provides ongoing student instruction that develops digital citizenship skill sets for using technology as a tool. Information and communication technology are an integrated part of our curriculum across subjects and grades in developmentally appropriate ways and are aligned with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and standards, including seeking knowledge and understanding; thinking critically and solving problems; listening, communicating, and interacting effectively; and engaging and competing in a global environment.

Availability

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 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 will 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.

SOURCE: MASC

Adopted: August 2015

ACCEPTABLE USE - ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

1. Commercial use of the system/network is prohibited.
2. The district will provide training to users in the proper use of the system/network.
3. The district will provide each user with copies of the Acceptable Use Policy and Procedures.
4. Copyrighted software or data shall not be placed on the district system/network without permission from the holder of the copyright and the system administrator.
5. Access will be granted to employees with a signed access agreement and permission of their supervisor.
6. Access will be granted to students with a signed access agreement and permission of the building administrator or designee(s).
7. Account names will be recorded on access agreements and kept on file.
8. Passwords are confidential. All passwords shall be protected by the user and not shared or displayed.
9. Students completing required course work will have first priority use of equipment.
10. Principals or their designee will be responsible for disseminating and enforcing policies and procedures in the building(s) under their control.
11. Principals or their designee will ensure that all users complete and sign an agreement to abide by policies and procedures regarding use of the system/network.
12. Principals or their designee will ensure that training is provided to users on appropriate use of electronic resources.
13. Principals or their designee shall be authorized to monitor or examine all system activities, including electronic mail transmissions, as deemed appropriate to ensure proper use of electronic resources.
14. Individual users shall at all times, be responsible for the proper use of accounts issued in their name.
15. The system/network may not be used for illegal purposes, in support of illegal activities, or any activity prohibited by district policy.
16. System users shall not use another user's account.

17. System users should purge electronic information according to district guidelines.
18. System users may redistribute copyrighted material only with the written permission of the copyright holder or designee. Such permission must be specified in the document or in accordance with applicable copyright laws, district policy, and administrative procedures.
19. System administrators may upload/download public domain programs to the system/network. System administrators are responsible for determining if a program is in the public domain.
20. Any malicious attempt to harm or destroy equipment, materials, data, or programs is prohibited.
21. Deliberate attempts to degrade or disrupt system performance may be viewed as violations of district policy and/or as criminal activity under applicable state and federal laws.
22. Vandalism will result in the cancellation of system privileges and will require restitution for costs associated with hardware, software, and system restoration.
23. Forgery or attempted forgery is prohibited.
24. attempts to read, delete, copy, or modify the electronic mail of other users or to interfere with the ability of other users to send/receive electronic mail is prohibited.
25. Use appropriate language; swearing, vulgarity, ethnic or racial slurs, and other inflammatory language is prohibited.
26. Pretending to be someone else when sending/receiving message is prohibited.
27. Transmitting or viewing obscene material is prohibited.
28. Revealing personal information (addresses, phone numbers, etc.) is prohibited.
29. The district will cooperate fully with local, state, or federal officials in any investigation concerning or relating to misuse of the district's system/network.

A user who violates district policy or administrative procedures will be subject to suspension or termination of system/network privileges and will be subject to disciplinary action and/or prosecution.

SOURCE: Westwood

INTERNET PUBLICATION

I. PURPOSE

The School District has established a district-wide web page that links users to web pages for the district's individual schools. 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

The Superintendent (or their designee) may select the person or persons ("the Webmaster") responsible for overseeing the school district's web pages and maintaining the web pages in a manner consistent with this policy and the school district's Access to Digital Resources Policy. The Webmaster must approve all links from the district web pages to other sites on the Internet. The Webmaster will review the links to ensure that the links are related to the district's educational mission.

Staff members may publish web pages related to their class projects or courses on their school's web site. Staff members must submit their material to the Webmaster for approval before the material can be published. Staff members may not publish or link to personal web pages as part of the school district web site.

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 will be accompanied by a copyright notice written by the Webmaster that prohibits copying the work without the written consent of the copyright holder.

III. CONTENT STANDARDS

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.

SOURCE: MASC

Adopted: August 2015

POLICY ON FACEBOOK AND SOCIAL NETWORKING WEBSITES

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 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 district's computer and telephone system, except emergency situations.
 - c. All contact and messages by coaches with team members shall be sent to all team members, except for messages concerning medical or academic privacy matters, in which case the messages will be copied to the athletic director and the school principal.
 - d. Teachers will not give out their private cell phone or home phone numbers without prior approval of the district.
 - e. 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 districts, as behavior to avoid
5. Monitoring and penalties for improper use of district computers and technology
6. The possibility of penalties, including dismissal from employment, for failure to exercise good judgment in on-line conduct.

The Superintendent 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 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: Westwood

POLICY ON SOCIAL MEDIA

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 social media or other electronic means.
 - a. Teachers may not friend or follow current students on social media.
 - b. All electronic contacts with students should be through the district's computer and telephone system, except emergency situations.
 - c. Team, class, or student organization pages, accounts, or groups will be created only in conjunction with the coach or faculty advisor. All groups must include the appropriate administrator as a member. Access to the page will remain with the coach or faculty advisor.
 - d. All contact and messages by coaches and faculty advisors with team members shall be sent to all team members, except for messages concerning medical or academic privacy matters, in which case the messages will be copied to the appropriate administrator.
 - e. Teachers will not give out their private cell phone or home phone numbers without prior approval of the district.
 - f. Inappropriate contact via phone or electronic device 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 districts, as behavior to avoid
- 5) Monitoring and penalties for improper use of district computers and technology
- 6) The possibility of penalties, including dismissal from employment, for failure to exercise good judgment in on-line conduct.

The Superintendent 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 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 October 2016

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips can bring the school and the community closer together, which can result in real life experiences that enrich the curriculum for students and also bring about better public relations. The School Committee will also encourage field trips as an integral part of the instructional programs in the schools.

The Superintendent will establish regulations to assure that:

1. All students have parental permission for trips.
2. All trips are properly supervised.
3. All safety precautions are observed.
4. All trips contribute substantially to the educational program.

All extended (overnight) trips and excursions, INCLUDING those required for student participation in tournament competition or contests, must have advance approval of the School Committee. Fundraising activities for such trips will be subject to approval by the appropriate Administrator.

CROSS REFS.: [JJH](#), Policy Relating to Field Trips Involving Late Night or Overnight Travel

SOURCE: Westwood

FIELD TRIPS

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The Superintendent will establish regulations to assure that:

1. All students have permission from a parent or guardian for trips.
2. All trips are properly supervised.
3. All safety precautions are observed.
4. All trips contribute substantially to the educational program.
5. All trips allow student access without regard of family ability to pay.

All out-of-state or extended (overnight) trips and excursions, except those required for student participation in tournament competition or contests, must have advance approval of the School Committee. Fundraising activities for such trips will be subject to approval by the appropriate Administrator.

CROSS REF.: JJH, Policy Relating to Field Trips Involving Late Night or Overnight Travel

SOURCE: MASC October 2016

NOTE: Brief policies on field trips, such as the sample above, usually require School Committee-approved guidelines and implementing regulations.

COMMUNITY RESOURCE PERSONS/ SPEAKERS

Human resources are those individuals or groups who are invited into the schools to present supplementary information and ideas to the classroom course of study. These experiences afford students the opportunity to benefit from community viewpoints. Care should be taken in selecting these speakers so that they are individuals who respect diversity in thinking and varying views and who are not attempting to influence inappropriate points of view.

CROSS REFS.: [ADDA](#), C.O.R.I. Requirements

Note: The MASC Reference Manual replaces “Human” with “Community” and updates the cross reference as shown below:

CROSS REF.: [ADDA](#), Background Checks

SOURCE: Westwood

SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS

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

CROSS REFS.: [ADDA](#), C.O.R.I. Requirements
[KI](#), Visitors to the Schools

Note: The MASC Reference Manual updates the cross reference as shown below:

CROSS REF.: [ADDA, Background Checks](#)

SOURCE: Westwood

STUDENT PROGRESS REPORTS TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS

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

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

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

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

Major changes in the reporting system shall be preceded by a cooperative study and evaluation **under the direction of the Superintendent or designee**, who will submit the proposal to the School Committee for consideration and approval.

CROSS REFS.: [KBBA](#), Non-Custodial Parents Rights

Note: The MASC Reference Manual replaces "under the direction of the Superintendent or designee" in the last paragraph with "by teachers, principals, parents/guardians, and the Assistant Superintendent"

SOURCE: Westwood

HOMEWORK

The Westwood School Committee affirms its belief in the value of homework as a means of promoting independent study habits and responsibility. Homework is defined as activities that include review and/or practice and/or application of concepts and skills. Homework assignments are determined by the classroom teacher. Homework should be tailored to fit the educational needs of individual students.

Homework is one way that parents can learn about classroom programs and individual student's progress. Parents are encouraged to read aloud to youngsters throughout the elementary grades. Starting in first grade, students are expected to read at home every day.

At the elementary level, the following guidelines establish the typical amount of homework which should be assigned on a consistent basis. Homework is in addition to nightly reading.

Students will be exempt from homework that interferes with the observance of religious holidays.

- K. No homework assigned regularly
- Grade 1: 10-20 minutes of homework, two to three times a week
- Grade 2: 10-20 minutes of homework, four times a week
- Grade 3: 20-30 minutes of homework, four times a week
Long-term assignments
- Grade 4: 40-50 minutes of homework, four times a week
Long-term assignments
- Grade 5: 50-60 minutes of homework, four times a week
Long-term assignments

SOURCE: Westwood

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.

SOURCE: Westwood/MASC

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

In order to graduate from _____ High School, a student must have earned at least 95 credits and complied with all state accountability requirements. Course requirements are the following:

- Four years of English
- Four years of Mathematics including completion of Algebra II or an Integrated Math equivalent
- Three years of lab-based Science which may include technology/engineering
- Three years of History/Social Science including US History and World History
- Two years of Foreign Language
- Four years of Physical Education
- One year of the Arts

Other requirements may be established by the school administration in relation to the particular program, otherwise the additional credits needed for a graduation may be selected from among elective courses. For the total number of credits required please see the high school program of studies or student handbook.

Credit for Foreign Study: Students who are away for a term or year to participate in a student exchange program or otherwise study abroad may receive credits toward high school graduation when (1) study plans are approved by the school administration in advance; and (2) the institution where the study occurred submits a record of the student's work. In these instances, the Principal and student's guidance counselor will evaluate the work and assign credit for it according to standards prevailing in _____ High School.

SOURCE: MASC October 2016

NOTE: If there are test requirements for graduation, these should be noted in the policy on Graduation Requirements. However, a policy on competency testing is properly filed in category IL, Evaluation of Instructional Programs, or a special subcategory of that code.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

The College Preparatory Program of Studies is a pattern of courses designed to prepare students for admission to a four-year college or university. Almost all students spend four years completing this program. A student following this program may opt for more difficult classes in his or her areas of strength. Please see the Program of Studies Booklet for specific course suggestions.

To receive a Westwood High School diploma, a student must earn a minimum of 115 credits (meeting minimum credit requirements in subject areas listed below) and pass the MCAS examination in Math, English Language Arts.

Of these credits, the following subject area requirements must be met: (Credits may be earned at levels I, II, or III.)

20.00	Credits of English
1.25	Credits of Oral English
15.00	Credits of Mathematics
17.00	Credits of Science
10.00	Credits of Social Studies (including United States History)
5.00	Credits of Wellness
5.00	Credits of Fine Art (Art, Music, or Performing Arts courses)
10.0	Credits of Foreign Language (must complete a 2 year sequence in one language)

Credits necessary to advance to the next grade level:

To advance to the 11* grade:	52.5 credits
To advance to the 12th grade:	85 credits
Graduation Requirement	115*

(Credits may be earned at levels I, II, or III.)

20.00	Credits of English
1.25	Credits of Oral English
15.00	Credits of Mathematics
17.00	Credits of Science
10.00	Credits of Social Studies (including United States History)
5.00	Credits of Wellness

5.00 Credits of Fine Art (Art, Music, or Performing Arts courses)

10.00 Credits of Foreign Language (must complete a 2 year sequence in one language)

**Please note that the 115-credit requirement is not simply a total. Students must meet subject area credit requirements listed above in order to graduate from Westwood High School.*

SOURCE: Westwood

EVALUATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS

The Westwood School Committee believes that students will be better served if all instructional programs are evaluated on a systematic and regular basis. Therefore, all instructional programs shall be evaluated at least once every five years.

It is the responsibility of the Superintendent to organize the staff and develop the techniques for assessing the educational program.

Each program evaluation shall include: an analysis of student needs; a statement of the program's mission and philosophy which reflects the school system's philosophy; the goals of the program and a statement of learning outcomes expected at the end of each grade or course; recommended instructional materials; and a method of evaluating student progress.

All program evaluations will include a report to the School Committee.

SOURCE: Westwood

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 district'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 district must be approved in advance by the School Committee.
5. Teacher and parent/guardian evaluation of student behavior.
6. State Dept. of Elementary and Secondary 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.

SOURCE: MASC

STUDENT ASSESSMENT AND TESTING

The Westwood Public Schools believe that the purpose of assessment should be to provide a description of student performance in order to enhance learning, to evaluate progress and to provide staff, administration and parents with information with which to make decisions about individual students, curricula, and programs.

Assessments allow us to do the following:

1. to determine how well a student is understanding classroom lessons and is developing skills,
2. to assess the strengths and weaknesses of individual students and determine need,
3. to gauge the individual student's progress over time,
4. to see how Westwood's students are performing in relation to students in other districts,
5. to evaluate the effectiveness of our program and,
6. to provide a means to provide feedback to parents regarding their child's progress,
7. to provide accountability to the public regarding the quality and equity of our school system.

Appropriate methods of assessment shall include the following:

1. Classroom tests which shall include quizzes, weekly tests, unit tests, end of term tests, book reports, oral presentations, essays, demonstrations of certain skills, observations, journals, portfolios, projects and exhibitions in accordance with Administrative Regulation ILC-R.
2. Individual testing of children referred for special instruction and special services.
3. Standardized norm referenced general achievement tests given at certain grades annually.
4. State mandated Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS)) tests given annually.
5. Encouraged participation in the College Entrance Examination Boards (CEEB) testing program which may include, but not limited to, the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and Advanced Placement (AP) tests.

A comprehensive assessment program shall provide students with opportunities to demonstrate the ability to integrate their knowledge, skills, and concepts. It is important that assessment information and results are communicated clearly and on a regular basis to parents and students.

Assessment methods shall be continuously reviewed to determine consistency and effectiveness in light of the school system's mission, philosophy and goals.

SOURCE: Westwood

STUDENT SUBMISSION TO EDUCATIONAL SURVEYS AND RESEARCH

In this policy, "surveys, analyses, or evaluations" refer to methods of gathering data for research purposes.

Without the prior written consent of the student's parent/guardian, or of the student if they are at least 18 years of age, no student shall be required as part of any program wholly or partially funded by the U.S. Department of Education to submit to any survey, analyses, or evaluation that reveals information concerning:

1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student's parent/guardian;
2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or student's family;
3. Sex behavior or attitudes;
4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
5. Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships;
6. Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers;
7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents/guardian; or
8. Income, other than as required by law to determine eligibility for school programs or for receiving financial assistance under such program.

All instructional materials, including teachers' manuals, films, tapes, or other supplementary material which will be used in connection with any such survey, analysis, or evaluation shall be available upon request for inspection by the student's parent/guardian. For the purpose of this policy, "instructional material" does not include academic tests or assessments.

A parent/guardian may inspect, upon request, a survey created by a third party before the survey is administered or distributed to a student.

The Superintendent or designee will be responsible for implementing any procedures necessary to protect the privacy of participating students and to provide parents/guardians with access to surveys within a reasonable time before administration or distribution.

The School District will notify parents/guardians of this policy at least annually at the beginning of the school year and within a reasonable time of any substantive change in policy. Where practical, the District will also directly notify parents/guardians annually at the beginning of the school year when surveys, analyses, or evaluations are scheduled or anticipated. Parents/guardians shall have the opportunity to opt their child out of participation in any survey, analysis, or evaluation. Students who are 18 years of age or older may opt out of such surveys, analyses, or evaluations.

Parents/guardians or eligible students who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with the Family Policy Compliance Office of the U.S. Department of Education.

LEGAL REF.: Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment, 20 U.S.C. § 1232h
CROSS REF.: JRA, Student Records
SOURCE: MASC February 2018

TEACHING ACTIVITIES/PRESENTATIONS

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

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

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

Note: The MASC Reference Manual includes the highlighted last sentence in red

SOURCE: Westwood

TEACHING ABOUT CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES/CONTROVERSIAL SPEAKERS

An important goal of the schools is to prepare students for intelligent and conscientious participation as citizens in our democratic society. One step toward meeting this goal is to introduce students to reasoned and dispassionate approaches to the analysis of historical and contemporary social, and political issues. To ensure that these issues can be examined in an academic context, the School Committee establishes the following guidelines for discussion of controversial issues in the schools.

1. In all cases teachers must obtain from his/her appropriate Principal or designee permission to invite visitors for classroom presentations. Permission must be requested at least one week before the scheduled time of presentation. When relevant, the Principal or designee may request copies of the presentation materials in advance. Furthermore, the Principal reserves the right to speak with references of the presenter.
2. If the Principal or designee determines that the discussion topic may generate a disruptive level of controversy, he/she is advised to seek permission from his/her supervisor to hold such discussion.

Teacher-Planned Classroom Discussions

1. Controversial issues selected by teachers for classroom discussion must relate directly to the objectives and content of courses approved by the School Committee for inclusion in the curriculum.
2. When planning classroom discussions, teachers should consider the appropriateness of the topic relative to the students' development.
3. The teachers' right to introduce controversial issues in classroom presentations does not include the right of advocacy. Teachers must refrain from using their positions to express partisan points of view.
4. The approach to discussion of these issues in the classroom must be objective and scholarly with minimum emphasis on opinion and maximum emphasis on intelligent analysis.
5. Teachers may invite visitors from outside the schools to give presentations on controversial issues when the visitors offer qualifications and resources not available in the schools. All visitors are to be guided by the standards of language usage that prevail in the classrooms and by the standards of scholarly inquiry set forth above. Whenever possible, teachers who invite visitors to present one side of an issue will also invite visitors to present the other side(s).

Student-Initiated Forums on Controversial Issues

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

1. Preparation for presentation of a forum will not cause any student or teacher to miss class and will not cause the cancellation of any class.
2. Adequate advance planning must be conducted for each forum. A request to hold a forum must be received by the Principal at least three weeks before the scheduled date of presentation.
3. The standards for approach to discussion, style of presentation, and use of visitors as defined above will apply to student-initiated forums.

Requests from Groups or Individuals Outside the Schools

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

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

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

First Reading: February 16, 2012

Second Reading: March 15, 2012

Adopted: April 12, 2012

SOURCE: Westwood

TEACHING ABOUT CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES/CONTROVERSIAL SPEAKERS

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

Teacher-Planned Classroom Discussions

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

Student-Initiated Forums on Controversial Issues

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

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

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

Requests from Groups or Individuals Outside the Schools

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

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

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

SOURCE: MASC

LEARNING ABOUT DIVERSITY

The Westwood School Committee believes that part of its educational mission is to prepare students for life in a society that is increasingly diverse. Students must learn that the society in which they live is composed of numerous ethnic groups, races and cultures. Through its educational program the Westwood Schools will allow students to develop an awareness of and respect for all members of society, regardless of their differences in values, beliefs, practices, etc. As members of a diverse society, students should appreciate what they have in common with, and what is unique to, each other member of that society. The Westwood School Committee supports the hiring of staff members who reflect the diversity of our society.

SOURCE: Westwood

CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

The perpetuation of the fundamental principles of American Democracy requires the guarantee that there will be freedom for teachers and learners within the school to read, to listen, to speak, to assemble for rational discussion of controversial issues, to support alternative viewpoints, and to reach informed judgments according to individual conscience.

With the help of the teacher, the students should be free to learn the techniques of critical analysis, to learn to make independent judgments, to learn to evaluate sources of information, and to reinforce the student's right to present and support his/her conclusions before persons who have opposing points of view.

The School Committee is committed to a student reading program that takes appropriate account of literary value, student interest, balance and diversity of content, and suitability to the developmental stages of the students and affirms its confidence in the teaching and administrative staffs to exercise responsibly their professional judgments in these regards.

The following principles should govern the teaching of controversial issues:

1. The right to study controversial issues which have political, economic, or social significance on which, at his/ her level, the student should begin to have an opinion.
2. The right to study under competent instruction in an atmosphere free from bias and prejudice.
3. The right of access to all relevant information freely available in the school or public libraries.
4. The right to hear outside speakers present both sides of an issue.

SOURCE: Westwood

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.

Students shall not be expected to take tests, or complete major assignments, on a holiday or the day after the holiday. Observance of a religious holiday may have an impact on the next school day and teachers should be sensitive to this possibility.

School sports and extracurricular activities should be scheduled so that students will not be penalized for being unable to participate due to their observance of a religious holiday.

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 REFS.: 603 CMR [26:05](#)

Note: The MASC Reference Manual does not include the highlighted 4th and 5th paragraphs

SOURCE: Westwood

ANIMALS IN SCHOOL

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

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

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

Educational Program

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

Student Health

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

Animals Prohibited from School

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

Note: The MASC Reference Manual includes the following legal reference

LEGAL REF.: 28 CFR, Part 35

SOURCE: Westwood