

**SECTION I**  
**INSTRUCTION**

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**Note: Administrative Guidelines are not School Committee Policy. Guidelines are developed as a result of School Committee Policy. Such Guidelines are denoted (-P).**

## **INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS**

The primary function of a school program is the instruction of students. All staff activities and efforts shall be directed toward providing a high quality, effective, and ever-improving instructional program.

Adopted by the Reading School Committee on March 26, 2007

LEGAL REFS.: 603 CMR 26:00

CROSS REF.: AD, Educational Philosophy  
ADA, School District Goals and Objectives

## **ACADEMIC FREEDOM**

The School Committee seeks to educate students in the democratic tradition, to foster recognition of individual freedom and social responsibility, to inspire meaningful awareness of and respect for the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

Fairness in procedures will be observed both to safeguard the legitimate interests of the schools and to exhibit by appropriate example the basic objectives of a democratic society as set forth in the Constitutions of the United States and the State.

Adopted by the Reading School Committee on March 26, 2007

LEGAL REF.: Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts

## **SCHOOL YEAR/SCHOOL CALENDAR**

The school calendar for the ensuing year will be prepared by the Superintendent and submitted to the School Committee for approval by May 1st of each year. The number of days or instructional hours scheduled for the school year will be determined in accordance with the following standards set by the Massachusetts Board of Education:

1. Elementary school will operate for a minimum of 180 days. Schools shall ensure that every elementary school student is scheduled to receive a minimum of 900 hours per school year of structured learning time, as defined in 603 CMR 27.02. Time which a student spends at school breakfast and lunch, passing between classes, in homeroom, at recess, in non-directed study periods, receiving school services, and participating in optional school programs shall not count toward meeting the minimum structured learning time requirement for that student.
2. Secondary schools will operate for a minimum of 180 days. Schools shall ensure that every secondary school student is scheduled to receive a minimum of 990 hours per school year of structured learning time, as defined in 603 CMR 27.02. Time which a student spends at school breakfast and lunch, passing between classes, in homeroom, at recess, in non-directed study periods, receiving school services, and participating in optional school programs shall not count toward meeting the minimum structured learning time requirement for that student.

For the information of staff, students, and parents, the calendar will set forth the days schools will be in session; holidays and vacation periods; in service days; and parent conferences.

Adopted by the Reading School Committee on March 26, 2007

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 4:7; 15:1G; 71:1; 71:4; 71:4A; 71:73; 136:12  
Board of Education Regulations for School Year and School Day, effective 9/1/75  
Board of Education, Student Learning Time Regulations  
603 CMR 27.00, Adopted 12/20/94

## **SCHOOL DAY**

The length of the school day is established in the collective bargaining agreements with the various school unions. The specific opening and closing times of the schools will be recommended by the Superintendent and set by the Committee.

The Superintendent is authorized to make minor changes in opening and closing times to simplify transportation scheduling; however, major changes in schedules will be subject to Committee approval.

Parents and guardians will be informed of the opening and closing times set by the School Committee. To help insure the safety of all children, parents will also be notified that students will only have limited access to the school building until 15 minutes prior to the start of the school day.

Adopted by the Reading School Committee on March 26, 2007

LEGAL REFS.:       M.G.L. 15:1G; 71:1; 71:59  
                          Board of Education Regulations for School Year and Day, effective 9/1/75

## **ORGANIZATION OF INSTRUCTION**

The District offers a diversified educational program compatible with the needs of the community and state standards.

The organizational plan is designed to facilitate the philosophy of educating every student.

The structure will consist of four levels – Preschool (pre-k), Elementary (k-5), Middle (6-8) and Secondary (9-12) levels.

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

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

Adopted by the Reading School Committee on March 26, 2007



## **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, and gathering input from parents and community.

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

Adopted by the Reading School Committee on March 26, 2007

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 activities for specific curricular areas shall be assigned by the administration. These coordinators shall assist in the organization, supervision, and Prek-12 coordination of subject material and activities in the schools.

### Support Services

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

Adopted by the Reading School Committee on March 26, 2007

## **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 (through the budget process), new programs that constitute an extensive alteration in curricular 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 will constitute its adoption of the curriculum for official purposes.

Adopted by the Reading School Committee on March 26, 2007

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

## **BASIC INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM**

State law requires that schools:

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

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

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

### The Fundamental Skills

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

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

Adopted by the Reading School Committee on March 26, 2007

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

## **BASIC INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM**

### Curricula

- (1) The curricula of all public school systems shall present in fair perspective the culture, history, activities, and contributions of persons and groups of different races, nationalities, sexes, and colors.
- (2) All school books, instructional and educational materials shall be reviewed for sex-role and minority group stereotyping. Appropriate activities, discussions and/or supplementary materials shall be used to counteract the stereotypes depicted in such materials.
- (3) School books, instructional and educational materials purchased after the date of 603 CMR 26.00 shall in the aggregate, include characterizations and situations which depict individuals of both sexes and of minority groups in a broad variety of positive rolls.
- (4) Each school shall provide equal opportunity for physical education for all students. Goals, objectives and skill development standards, where used, shall neither be designated on the basis of sex nor designed to have an adverse impact on members of either sex.

Adopted by the Reading School Committee on March 26, 2007

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

## **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.

Adopted by the Reading School Committee on March 26, 2007

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

## HEALTH EDUCATION

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

The School Committee believes that the greatest opportunity for effective health education lies within the public schools because of their potential to reach children at the age when positive, lifelong health habits are best engendered and because the schools are equipped to provide qualified personnel to conduct health education programs.

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

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. Through a process and a learning environment that bolsters self-esteem and fosters problem solving, students will be empowered to recognize risky situations and develop the confidence and skills required to intervene and/or seek help. 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.

Adopted by the Reading School Committee on March 26, 2007

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

## **PARENTAL NOTIFICATION RELATIVE TO SEX EDUCATION**

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

At the beginning of each school year, all parents/guardians of students in our schools will be notified in writing of the curriculum we offer that primarily involves human sexual education or human sexuality issues. The Superintendent of Schools will determine the administrator(s) responsible for sending the notices. 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 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 the reasons said curriculum is offered. It will also inform parents/guardians that they may:

- (1) Exempt their child from any portion of said curriculum without penalty to the student, by sending a letter to the school principal requesting an exemption. Any student who is exempted by request of the parent/guardian under this policy may be given an alternative assignment.
- (2) Inspect and review program instruction materials for these curricula, which will be made reasonably accessible to parents/guardians and others. 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.

Any and all disputes arising under this policy shall be resolved in accordance with regulations adopted by the Massachusetts Department of Education.

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

Adopted by the Reading School Committee on March 26, 2007



**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.

Adopted by the Reading School Committee on March 26, 2007

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

## **TEACHING ABOUT DRUGS, ALCOHOL, AND TOBACCO**

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

The alcohol, tobacco/nicotine, and drug education program shall address the legal, social, and health consequences of alcohol, tobacco/nicotine, 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/nicotine, 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 youth on healthy decision making:

- To prevent, delay, and/or reduce alcohol, tobacco/nicotine, and drug use among youth.
- To increase students' understanding of the legal, social, and health consequences of alcohol, tobacco/nicotine, 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/nicotine, and drug use.

The curriculum, instructional materials, and outcomes used in this program shall be a district approved program

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

Adopted by the Reading School Committee on March 26, 2007

Revised and Adopted by the Reading School Committee on July 27, 2016

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

CROSS REF: 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 they need. These children should also be given the opportunity to participate in the school system's non-academic and extracurricular activities.

The Committee recognizes that the needs of certain children are so great that special programs, special classes or special schools may be necessary.

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. In accordance with applicable law, parents will be informed and conferred with whenever a child is referred for evaluation and in the event of any disagreement concerning diagnosis, program plan, special placement, or evaluation.

Adopted by the Reading School Committee on March 26, 2007

LEGAL REFS.:       The Individuals with Disabilities Ed. Act (PL 94-142 adopted 1/1/91)  
                          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

## **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.

Adopted by the Reading School Committee on March 26, 2007

LEGAL REF: 504/ IDEA

**SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS AND ACCOMMODATIONS  
EDUCATING CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**

The Reading Schools embrace the concept of "inclusion" which supports the educating of students with special needs with their peers within the regular education classrooms, and integration which enables students with special needs to have full access to, and be included in, all the activities of the school environment.

It shall be the practice of the Reading Public Schools to educate children with special needs in the "least restrictive environment." (Least Restrictive Environment is the legal principle in federal and state special education law that sets forth the right of students with special needs to be educated in the regular education environment to the maximum extent appropriate.)

Special education personnel will provide services to children with special needs within the regular classroom, in collaboration with the regular education teacher, using team teaching models. Children with special needs shall be placed outside the regular classroom only after options and/or modifications are attempted and only to the extent outlined in the student's IEP as agreed upon by the TEAM. Successful integration requires collaboration and co-operation among parents, teachers and administrators to create and maintain a successful educational experience for all students.

Adopted by the Reading School Committee on March 26, 2007

**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.

Adopted by the Reading School Committee on March 26, 2007

## **ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE**

In keeping with the intention of the state of Massachusetts to offer educational opportunities to those children whose dominant language is other than English, the District shall provide suitable instructional programs for all such students in grades kindergarten through 12 in accordance with the requirements of state statutes and the Massachusetts Department of Education.

Foreign exchange or visiting students are not eligible for English as a Second Language programs.

Adopted by the Reading School Committee on March 26, 2007

## **HOMEBOUND INSTRUCTION**

The schools may furnish homebound instruction to those students who are unable to attend classes for at least four 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 Pupil Services.

Homebound instruction is offered in basic elementary subjects and in secondary subjects that do not require laboratories and special equipment, subject in all cases to the availability of qualified teachers. Teachers are assigned to homebound instruction by the Director of Pupil Services.

Adopted by the Reading School Committee on March 26, 2007



## **Home Education**

The Reading School Committee recognizes the right of parents/guardians to educate their children outside of a school setting as provided by General Laws Chapter 76, Section 1. The law requires, however, that a child being educated outside of school must also be instructed in a manner approved, in advance, by the Superintendent or designee or the School Committee. The Reading Public Schools does not approve home education programs for anything less than a full time instructional program.

The following guidelines are to be followed in considering home education plans:

### A. Procedure:

1. Parents/guardians must obtain approval from the Superintendent of Schools or designee prior to beginning a home education program.
2. If the home education plan is rejected, the Superintendent must detail the reasons for the decision, and allow the parents/guardians to revise their proposal to remedy its inadequacies. Responses by both parties should not exceed a two week period
3. If the home education plan is rejected, the Superintendent must provide the parents/guardians with an opportunity to explain their proposed plan and present witnesses on their behalf.
4. Any home education plan must be approved by the Superintendent or designee annually if the student is to continue in a home education program for more than one school year.

### B. Home Education Plan Requirements:

In obtaining approval from the Superintendent, the parents/ guardians must submit the following information:

1. Evidence that the proposed home education plan provides a structured learning time that equals in thoroughness and efficiency that of the Reading Public Schools.
2. The proposed curriculum and content in each of the proposed subjects. This will include a listing of subjects to be taught.
3. The general qualifications of the parent/ guardian / tutor who will be teaching the child.
4. The textbooks, workbooks, and other instructional aids to be used by the child, along with sample lesson plans and/or examples of learning experiences.
5. Plans for progress reports to be provided to the Principal of the school district in which the child resides for review. These may include sample work from each subject area instructed. Progress reports may entail a log, journal or portfolio or other written, oral or videotaped report or dated work samples; an independent evaluation made by someone acceptable to both school and parents, or a standardized test agreeable to parents and administrators; or any other method agreed to by both school officials and parents.

This information must be provided with a letter requesting approval for a home education program.

Review:

The Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee shall periodically review each home education program for compliance with the approved plan. Should a home education program be found to be not in compliance, approval may be withdrawn. Failure of a home educator to abide in good faith by the procedures outlined may result in the School Committee taking action under Massachusetts General Law Chapter 76, sections 2 and/or 4, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent. CHINS proceedings pursuant to Massachusetts General Law Chapter 119, section 21, will not be invoked for any child involved in an approved home education program.

**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.**

C. Diploma:

Home schoolers are not issued diplomas by the Reading School District.

Adopted by the Reading School Committee on March 26, 2007

Revised by the Reading School Committee on October 7, 2013

Legal Reference:      Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court case entitled Care and Protection of Charles, 399 Mass. 324 (1987).  
[M.G.L. Chapter 76, Section 1](#)

**SUMMER SCHOOL FOR SECONDARY STUDENTS**

High School students who attend approved summer schools for remedial, enrichment, or make-up purposes may be granted credit towards graduation requirements in line with guidelines of the School District.

Adopted by the Reading School Committee on March 26, 2007

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

## **ADULT AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION**

The Adult and Community Education Program shall operate a revolving fund. In addition to any appropriated monies, all registration and tuition fees shall be deposited in this account. All programs and courses shall be self supporting. Budget preparation and staff supervision shall be done by a part-time director.

Adopted by the Reading School Committee on March 26, 2007

## **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 materials, both print and non-print, found in school libraries which support curricular and personal information needs. Print items include books, magazines, newspapers, pamphlets, microfiche or microfilm. Non-print items include films, disc records, filmstrips, slides, prints, audiotapes, videotapes, compact discs, and computer software.

### 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 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 such books, which are deemed “standards” or “classics”, will be retained even though they rarely circulate).
- 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.

Adopted by the Reading School Committee on March 26, 2007

## **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 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.

The Superintendent shall develop an administrative guideline delineating the procedures for reconsideration.

Adopted by the Reading School Committee on March 26, 2007

## **INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS**

The School Committee believes that materials appropriate to the needs of the school program must be available to each student and teacher. These will be furnished by the School Committee subject to budgetary constraints.

The task of selecting instructional materials for programs will be delegated to the professional staff of the school system. Because instructional programs and materials are of great importance, only those that meet the following criteria will be approved by the Committee:

1. They must present balanced views of international, national, and local issues and problems of the past, present and future.
2. They must provide materials that stimulate growth in factual knowledge, literary appreciation, aesthetic and ethical values.
3. They must help students develop abilities in critical reading and thinking.
4. They must help develop and foster an appreciation of cultural diversity and development in the United States and throughout the world.
5. They must provide for all students an effective basic education that does not discriminate on the basis of race, age, color, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity, physical disabilities or sexual preference.
6. They must allow sufficient flexibility for meeting the special needs of individual students and groups of students.

Adopted by the Reading School Committee on March 26, 2007

Revised and Adopted by the Reading School Committee on April 8, 2013

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:48; 71:49; 71:50

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



## **TEXTBOOK SELECTION AND ADOPTION**

Responsibility for the review and selection of textbooks to be purchased shall rest with the Assistant Superintendent. The Assistant Superintendent 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.

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.

Adopted by the Reading School Committee on March 26, 2007

LEGAL REFS.: 71:48; 30B:7; 71:50  
603 CMR 26:05

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

## **SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS SELECTION AND ADOPTION**

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

For the purpose of this policy, supplementary materials shall be defined as any instructional materials other than textbooks including, but not limited to, books, periodicals, newspapers, pictures, diagrams, maps, charts, slides, films, records, audiotapes, websites, streaming video 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.

Adopted by the Reading School Committee on March 26, 2007

LEGAL REF.:           603 CMR 26:05

## **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 building Principal subject to the approval of the Superintendent.

Gifts of library books will be accepted in keeping with the above policy on selection.

The Superintendent of Schools has the authority and responsibility for overseeing the selection and review of all print and non-print materials. As such, the Superintendent shall have the authority to develop procedures for hearing the objections to the library materials. While the School Committee reserve final authority to hear an appeal from individuals, the School Committee shall not hear such an appeal until the Superintendent has affirmed that the individual has followed the challenge procedures leading up to the appeal to the School Committee.

Adopted by the Reading School Committee on March 26, 2007

LEGAL REF.: 603 CMR 26:05

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

## **Reading Public Schools SELECTION CRITERIA FOR SCHOOL LIBRARY MEDIA CENTER COLLECTIONS**

The Reading Public School Committee policy states that each school shall establish a Materials Review and Selection Committee to determine criteria for selecting materials to ensure that all instructional materials extend the knowledge and understanding of the District Curriculum. The following guidelines have been developed by the Office of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

School library media specialists are responsible for the review, evaluation, and selection of the school library media collection. They are guided by the district selection guidelines that embody the philosophy and procedures set forth in national, state, and county documents. Library media specialists work cooperatively with administrators and teachers to provide resources which represent diverse points of view, stimulate growth in thinking skills, and promote the overall educational program. Library media collections are developed to meet both curricular and personal needs. To ensure that these needs are met, library media specialists apply selection criteria and use recommended selection tools. All purchases, including gifts, should meet the same selection standards.

This selection policy reflects the philosophy and goals of the school system and supports the principles of intellectual freedom described in [\*Information Power: Guidelines for School Library Media Programs\*](#), the [\*Library Bill of Rights\*](#) (ALA), [\*Students' Right to Read\*](#) (NCTE), and other [position statements on intellectual freedom](#) from the American Library Association and the American Association of School Librarians. Reading Public Schools complies with federal laws regarding Internet safety and protection by requiring a filtering proxy server on its wide area network. See the Reading Public Schools Acceptable Use Policy.

### **Selection Criteria for Library Media Materials**

- **Appropriate for recommended levels**

Library media materials should be accessible to students of varied abilities, and meet informational and interest needs of all students.

- **Pertinent to the curriculum and the objectives of the instructional program**

Library media materials should be selected on the basis of assessed curricular needs. Materials should reflect the identified learning outcomes of the instructional program.

- **Accurate in terms of content**

Library media materials should present facts in an objective manner. Authority of the author, organization, publisher/producer should be a consideration in selection. Materials concerning human development and family life should contain facts which are presented in a manner appropriate to the level of the students.

- **Reflective of the pluralistic nature of a global society**

Library media materials should provide a global perspective and promote diversity as a positive attribute of our society. It is important to include materials by authors and illustrators of all cultures.

- **Free of bias and stereotype**

Materials should reflect the basic humanity of all people and be free of stereotypes, caricatures, distorted dialect, sexual bias, and other offensive characteristics. Library materials concerning religious, social, and political content should inform rather than indoctrinate.

- **Representative of differing viewpoints on controversial subjects**

Students have the right to information on all sides of a controversial issue. By having access to a variety of resources students will have the knowledge base to develop critical thinking and problem solving skills. The school library media center provides free and equitable access to all information.

- **Appropriate format to effectively teach the curriculum**

Library media materials should be available in variety of formats, e.g., print, nonprint, electronic, multimedia, to meet the needs and learning styles of a diverse student population.

- **Recent copyright date as appropriate to the subject**

Library media materials should be assessed for currency of the information as it relates to the content and purpose of the item.

- **Acceptable in literary style and technical quality**

Literary quality, technical merit, physical arrangement, and aesthetic characteristics should be considered as integral components in the evaluation of all media formats.

- **Cost effective in terms of use**

Library media materials should be evaluated for cost effectiveness in terms of accessibility, projected use, and durability.

- **Appropriate for students with special needs**

Library media materials should be provided to meet curricular needs and the individual needs, interests, and learning styles of all students at all levels.

### **Implementing the Selection Guidelines**

The objective of the selection guidelines is to increase the awareness of educators of the many considerations one must apply when making decisions about information resources available to students and teachers. The rapid production of knowledge as characteristic of the "Information Age" brings with it many challenges. According to John Naisbitt, "we have for the first time an economy based on a key resource (information) that is not only renewable, but self generating. Running out of information is not a problem, but drowning in it is."

Library media specialists take leadership in communicating to the educational community the purpose and scope of the selection guidelines. The responsibility for coordinating the selection of library materials rests with the library media specialist who seeks faculty, student, and parent recommendations for purchase of library media materials. Favorable reviews from professional review journals and authoritative selection references should be used when developing library media collections. Library media materials listed in the *Instructional Materials Catalog*, the *Periodicals Catalog*, and the *H.W. Wilson Catalog* have been evaluated by school library media specialists and approved for purchase. Wherever possible, direct examination of materials is advisable to ensure that they meet selection criteria.

### **District Curriculum and Collection Development**

The major emphasis of collection development should be to provide materials which meet curricular needs. To assess these needs, knowledge of the District Curriculum and access to these guides is important. It is recommended that a copy of each available curriculum map and Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks be housed in the library media center. The library media specialist needs to be familiar with changes and additions to the curriculum and how they effect collection development.

### **Teacher Recommendations**

Communication with teachers to assess curriculum needs and recommendations for purchase is an important part of the selection process. Since the library media collection is an integral part of the instructional and learning process, the strength and value of the collection are ensured when teachers are actively involved in the selection process. A sample form is included at the end of this document.

### **Student and Parent Recommendations**

Suggestions from students and parents is also an important part of the selection process. As students seek information for curricular purposes or use the library media center for personal interests, students and parents are encouraged to make recommendations of specific resources or subject areas where information is needed. A sample form is included at the end of this document.

## Professional Review Journals

The following online sources are recommended as tools to locate reviews. Most are considered professional review journals, e.g. Booklist, Book links, Multicultural Book Reviews, and School Library Journal; however, some are considered general popular review sources, a fact which should be kept in mind when using these sources. Many of the sources listed below are available for purchase on the *Periodicals Catalog*.

## Review Resources

- [The ALAN Review](#)
- Amazon.com [General](#); [Children](#); [Teens](#)
- Barnes and Noble
- [Book Links](#)
- [The Book Report](#)
- [BookReview.com](#)
- [Booklist Online](#)
- [The BookPage](#)
- [BookWire](#)
- [Boston Book Review](#)
- [Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books](#)
- [Caldecott Medal Home Page](#)
- [Carol Hurst's Children's Literature](#)
- [Children's Book Reviews](#)
- [Children's Books](#)
- [Children's Bookwatch](#)
- [Children's Literature Web Guide](#)
- [Coretta Scott King Award Home](#)
- [Education Review](#)
- [Educational Software Review](#)
- [Follett TITLWAVE](#)

- [Library Talk](#)
- [Multicultural Book Reviews](#)
- [Newbery Medal Home Page](#)
- [Neverending Stories](#)
- [Notes from the Windowsill](#)
- [School House Software Reviews](#)
- [Teen Hoopla Book Reviews](#)
- [Way Cool Software Reviews](#)
- [World of Reading](#) (reviews by children)
- [Young Adult Books](#)

### **Core Collection Tools**

Core collection tools are authoritative selection references to help assess the quality of the media collection and the availability of resources from various publishers/producers. Unlike review journals which are published monthly/bi-monthly, core collection references are updated annually.

### **Online Collection Development and Acquisitions**

Using technology to work effectively and efficiently is a goal of the Office of Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, and Technology. Online ordering greatly reduces the volume of paperwork and ensures more timely delivery of goods, as well as a savings to the school system by reducing the costs incurred with the preparation of Purchase Requisitions. This process will be our "preferred" method of collection development and acquisitions. The Office of Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, and Technology will continue to work with vendors and library media specialists to develop selection guides using the online ordering system and coordinate the process with the Office of Human Resource and Finances of the Reading Public Schools.

### **Vendor Catalogs**

Publisher and jobber catalogs can be useful in preparing orders and determining the availability of materials. The library media specialist should keep in mind that these are marketing tools, not selection tools. Some catalogs list review sources, but they may not necessarily be positive ones. Also, some jobbers will prepare upon request subject specific bibliographies of materials, e.g., multicultural with reference to reviews. These lists can be used to facilitate preparation of purchase requisitions.



## **CONSIDERATIONS FOR SELECTION OF PRINT MATERIALS**

There are general selection criteria which apply to all library media materials. The following media formats require additional considerations.

### **Books**

Due to the high cost of materials, it is important to examine books with the following additional criteria in mind before purchasing:

- Illustrations and layout
- Type style and text density
- Paper quality
- Durability of bindings
- Readability and interests levels
- Indexing

### **Paperbacks**

Paperbacks are an inexpensive way to supplement the library media collection for duplication of titles, in-depth studies, special projects, and leisure reading. It is recommended that first copies of picture books be hardbacks.

When deciding whether to purchase paperback books or hardbound books consider the following:

- Curricular demand placed on these books in the individual school
- Use of these materials for research, independent reading, duplication of classics, and popular fiction
- Cost and use of paperback books as compared to the cost of hardback books

### **Periodicals**

Periodicals support the curriculum and provide leisure reading for students. Professional review journals and library periodicals for instruction may be considered for purchase. Consider access to full text online periodical databases, e.g. InfoTrac and EBSCO host from the North of Boston Library Exchange (NOBLE).

## **Newspapers**

Newspapers may be ordered as needed. Consider access to full text online newspaper databases, e.g., *The Boston Globe*, *The Boston Herald* from Newsbank and eLibrary and the limited editions of the same titles on the World Wide Web.

## **Reference**

Reference materials in both print and electronic formats provide comprehensive information in both general and subject-specific areas. They also serve as access tools to information from other sources including school, public, academic, and electronic collections.

The following points need to be considered:

- Cost effective in terms of projected use
- Authority
- Arrangement and indexing
- User-friendly

## **SELECTION OF NONPRINT INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS**

### **Considerations for Selection of Nonprint Materials**

The criteria for selection of nonprint materials are essentially the same as for print materials. The quality of auditory and visual presentation should be considered as well as accuracy of information and the appropriateness of format.

Nonprint materials should:

- Promote instructional goals and support the curriculum
- Provide a variety of media formats to meet the needs of the curriculum
- Present content in appropriate format and acceptable technical quality.
- Assist a variety of learning styles.

## **Considerations for Selection of Electronic Resources**

The criteria for selection of electronic resources are essentially the same as for print materials. Electronic resources such as CD-ROM, computer software, and online services provide greater access to information. Remote access to these fee-based database services will be available via Edline.

Electronic resources should:

- Provide learner control through flexible pacing, variable difficulty, and optimal branching and linking
- Contain accurate and reliable maintained information.
- Enhance search capability and information retrieval.
- Provide record keeping and management options, if applicable
- Provide readable text, attractive graphics, and an appealing layout
- Have easy-to-understand, comprehensive documentation.
- Be user friendly
- Provide 24-hour access

### **Access to Internet Resources**

Access to the Internet is a right and privilege granted to all students by the Reading Public Schools, as stated by the Acceptable Use Policy. Through the annual notification process of the Reading Public Schools, parents or guardians will receive a handbook of all behavior expectations, including appropriate and safe use of the Internet. Parents or guardians who DO NOT want their child to have access to Internet resources must indicate that information on the Pupil Information Card. The Reading Public Schools Acceptable Use Guidelines Policy defines use of the Internet for "educational purposes," outlines expectations for appropriate and acceptable use, guidelines for school and office web publishing, and copyright compliance. Go to the Reading Public Schools District Edline Page for more information.

## **COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT**

The school library media program is an integral part of the instructional process. As part of the instructional process, the collection development is based upon the belief that all students, teachers, administrators, and support staff should have open access to all forms of information relevant to learning and teaching the curriculum. To ensure access to quality library media collections, a systematic process for assessing and building library media collections is essential.

Collection development is the ongoing process of identifying strengths and weaknesses of library media collections in terms of student needs. Collection development demonstrates that funds are being spent wisely and that library media collections meet the informational needs of the curriculum as well as independent reading and viewing needs of students. The three components involved in the collection development process are:

## **Analysis of the School Community**

In order to be responsive to the unique needs of each school, a collection development process must be based upon an analysis of student needs at that particular school. There will be some similarities among library media collections across the district, but the profile provided by this analysis will ensure that the specific needs of each school are addressed.

## **Assessment of the Library Media Collection**

Collection assessment is needed to determine the quality of the existing library media collection. It is an organized method for collecting statistics on the age of the collection, the number of titles in the collection, and the ability of the collection to meet curricular needs.

## **Selection and Acquisition of Materials**

The selection and acquisition of new library media materials will be based upon the needs of each library media center as determined by the collection assessment process and upon the availability of funding. The Reading Public Schools guidelines should be followed when selecting all library media materials.

## **ASSESSMENT AND INVENTORY PROCESS**

An essential step in collection development is regular assessment of the needs of the curriculum and student population with regard to library media resources.

Assessment of the collection includes taking inventory of existing materials, assessing materials in relation to needs of instructional units, and weeding outdated and inappropriate materials.

The inventory is a process by which holdings are checked against the automated cataloging system and the actual item to determine if the resource is still part of the collection and still meets selection criteria. The objective of this inventory is to ensure that the automated cataloging system accurately reflects the collection which is the key access point for students and teachers to locate information within the library. A biannual inventory is recommended as the data is critical to making collection development decisions about the quality and quantity of the collection in meeting the needs of students and staff. This procedure should not disrupt the library media program, as automation of school library holdings greatly speeds up the process

## **INVENTORY PROCEDURES**

### **Weeding Library Media Materials**

A good collection development plan must include weeding. The process of weeding is a key part of assessing the collection. It helps keep collections relevant, accurate, and useful; and it facilitates more effective use of space in the library media center.

Library media materials should be weeded if they:

- Are in poor physical condition
- Have not been circulated in the last five years
- Are outdated in content, use, or accuracy (copyright date should be considered; however, do not make a decision to weed based solely on the copyright date of the material. Some older material may be considered classic or may be of great historical value to your collection.)
- Are mediocre or poor in quality
- Are biased or portray stereotypes
- Are inappropriate in reading level
- Duplicate information which is no longer in heavy demand
- Have been superseded by new or revised information
- Contain outdated and unattractive format, design, graphics, and illustrations
- Contain information which is inaccessible because they lack a table of contents, adequate indexing, and searching capabilities
- Are not selected in accordance with general selection criteria

### **Withdrawing Library Media Materials**

Although the final decision to withdraw materials from the library media collection is one which is made by the library media specialist, subject area, grade level teachers, and other faculty members may be invited to review the items marked for withdrawal. Withdrawn materials should not be sent to classrooms; the same standard of quality applies to all other instructional materials within the school.

### **CONSIDERATION FILE**

Library media specialists should maintain a CONSIDERATION FILE for future purchases. This file should reflect school needs, staff recommendations, and reviews.

### **Rebinding Procedures**

Some books can be easily repaired by the library media specialist. If a book cannot be repaired locally, a decision must be made to rebind or reorder the book.

Rebinding is usually not an attractive or cost efficient option. Books that are rebound will have plain cloth covers without printed titles, illustrations, or book jackets. The best candidates for rebinding are expensive reference books and textbooks which are updated and expected to stay in the collection. Out of print books should be carefully evaluated as to their merit before rebinding. Books which have dirty, torn or brittle pages should be reordered and not sent for rebinding.

The cost of rebinding will be billed to the local school library. The total expenditure must be deducted from the next year's library materials allotment. Although the cost of rebinding varies yearly according to the bid price, an average book can be estimated at 25% of the replacement cost.

The *REBOUND BOOK* form is issued yearly in late spring along with updated price list and instructions. Follow these procedures for books that need rebinding:

- Be sure that books meet the minimum binding requirements of 3/4" to 1" inside margin for optimum readability
- Remove circulation cards from books.
- Update Winnebago Automation software to provide a record of books sent for rebinding
- Box books for pickup in accordance with rebinding RPS instructions
- Deduct the actual expenditure.

## **RECONSIDERATION of INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS**

When a concern is expressed about instructional materials or library media resources, the library media specialist needs to consider both the citizen's "right" to express an opinion and the principles of Intellectual Freedom. School library media specialists support the right of students, parents, or legal guardians to reject the appropriateness of materials for themselves or their child/ward.

The Citizen's Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Materials form is used to notify the Department of Curriculum and Instruction of an objection to information resources available in the library media center.

In the event that a staff member, citizen, or parent raises questions about the appropriateness of a particular selection for circulation from the library/media resource center, the following procedures should be employed:

- A. The person with a concern will be encouraged to discuss the questions and concerns with the Library Media Specialist and with the building principal in an effort to get the questions answered or to insure that the problems of appropriateness with the book will be fully understood.

School personnel will:

- Listen calmly and objectively.
- Explain briefly selection criteria/procedures established by the Reading Public Schools.
- Request the complainant to complete the CITIZEN'S REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS form. The complainant is responsible for sending the completed form to the appropriate office as indicated.
- Advise the Office of Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment and Technology of the resource in question and the nature of the complaint.
- Confer with the principal about the concern. Discuss the purpose and use of the resource, professional reviews, and the selection criteria/procedures. It is recommended that the item not be removed from the collection until the Materials Reconsideration Committee makes its decision.

- B. If the person is not satisfied with the action at the school level and still questions the appropriateness of the selection, a formal written complaint will be directed to the Office of the Superintendent. The complaint will be written on a form entitled "Citizen's Request for Reconsideration of Materials" and it may be obtained from the Coordinator of Library/Media Programs (944-8200) or from the office of the Superintendent. The form includes space for a detailed critique of the book and provides space for suggestions by the complainant of how the school should deal with the book.

When the completed form is received by the Office of the Superintendent, a review committee will be convened. It will consist of the Assistant Superintendent, the Coordinator of Library/Media Programs, a principal and Library/Media Teacher different from the original school in which the reconsideration occurred.

The committee may decide to ask administrators, teachers, parents or students to join them in reviewing the item in question. Committee meetings will be called by the Assistant Superintendent. Both the complainant(s) and the principal and Library Media Teacher of the school involved will have the opportunity to meet with the committee during the review process.

The review committee will make a recommendation for action to the Superintendent of Schools. If the action satisfies the complainant, the review committee will be disbanded.

If the recommended action does not satisfy the complainant, the review committee will remain in being to explain the reasons for the decision.

- C. The person can request School Committee consideration of the complaint. The review committee will share their views with the School Committee, and the School Committee will also hear the complaint of the person.

- D. The School Committee has the option to accept the findings of the review committee without conducting their own review.

The examination processes of any complaint or question about a particular book should revolve around the School Committee's rationale for establishing library/media resource centers in each school and the resulting objectives for the selection of books and other media.

As stated in Policy IJL, "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."



**READING PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
READING, MASSACHUSETTS**

**CITIZEN'S REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS**

*(to be submitted by all citizens requesting the reconsideration of school materials)*

Author \_\_\_\_\_ Hardcover \_\_\_\_\_ Paperback \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Publisher (if known) \_\_\_\_\_

Request initiated by \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Zone \_\_\_\_\_

Complainant represents:

\_\_\_\_\_ himself/herself

\_\_\_\_\_ (name of organization) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (identify the other group) \_\_\_\_\_

1. To what in the book do you object? (Please be specific; cite pages) \_\_\_\_\_
2. What do you feel might be the result of reading this book? \_\_\_\_\_
3. For what age group would you recommend this book? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Is there anything good about this book? \_\_\_\_\_

5. Did you read the entire book? \_\_\_\_\_ What parts? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Are you aware of the judgment of this book by literary critics? \_\_\_\_\_
7. What do you believe is the theme of this book? \_\_\_\_\_
8. What would you like your school to do about this book?  
\_\_\_\_\_ do not assign it to my child  
\_\_\_\_\_ withdraw it from all students as well as from by child
9. In its place, what book of equal literary quality would you recommend that would convey as valuable a picture and perspective of our civilization?

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Complainant

Please send this request to the building principal and:

John Doherty  
Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment  
Reading Public Schools  
82 Oakland Road  
Reading, Massachusetts 01867

You will receive a response from: The Department of Curriculum and Instruction

**FACULTY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR  
LIBRARY MEDIA CENTER MATERIALS**

[Form Only](#)

Teacher's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Subject Area: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade Level: \_\_ Reading Level: \_\_

Curriculum Unit \_\_\_\_\_

**Special Needs (Visually impaired, ELL, Special Education):**

**Type of media requested, e.g., book, video, computer software, CD-ROM**

**Please list specific recommendations:**

- Author
- Title
- Type of Media
- Publisher/Producer
- Copyright Date

Review Source (if known)

**Please list specific recommendations:**

- Author
- Title
- Type of Media
- Publisher/Producer
- Copyright Date

Review Source (if known)

[Form only](#)

**STUDENT and PARENT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR  
LIBRARY MEDIA CENTER MATERIALS**

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address** \_\_\_\_\_ **Telephone** \_\_\_\_\_

**I would like materials on these subjects in the library media center:**

**I would like the following books in our library:**

**The library needs more information on the following subjects:**

**I would like to have the following nonprint or electronic resources in the library media center:**

## **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 licensed staff member who recommends its use. The Principal should be informed and shall decide whether its use 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.

Adopted by the Reading School Committee March 26, 2007

LEGAL REF.: 603 CMR 26:05

## **Return of Student Work**

**Objective:** To establish specific guidelines regarding the timely grading and return of student work in order to provide to students with feedback of course progress that is timely, concise and relevant.

**Scope:** All student work, which includes quizzes, tests, essays, papers, term papers, written projects, oral projects, recitations, exams, and any other work assigned to students that is graded or reviewed and is considered feedback which is given to students in order to gauge progress in a particular subject area.

**Background:**

A delay in the return of student work makes it difficult for a student to determine their understanding of course material. Proper assessment requires timely feedback from both the teacher and student. Educational research clearly indicates the value of timely feedback.

Just as the School Committee has consistently advocated for respect for the faculty and staff of the Reading Public Schools, so too should the Reading School Committee advocate for respect for our students' efforts as they complete the coursework specified in the curriculum and in other course documents (i.e., syllabus) in the required deadlines.

Respect for student performance is part of the new Master School Improvement Plan for the Reading Public Schools and should be an integral part of the Teacher Assessment Protocol (TAP). This guideline/policy is designed to define those expectations upon which teacher performance will be assessed.

**Policy:**

**I. Return Guideline**

The following are guidelines and definitions concerning the return of assigned work, Deviation from these guidelines will require discussion with the Department Head (RMHS) or Building Principal concerning the reasons for the non-compliance. Student work is to be returned to the student with a grade and/or appropriate feedback in the timeframes as defined below. Time indicated is from the due date of the assignment or day that test, quiz etc, was administered.

**Quizzes, Tests, and Other In-Class Assessments:**

Quiz (written or oral) – return in 2 days

Test or Exam (written or oral) – return in 1 week (unless required to be returned earlier – i.e., final exams)

**Assigned Papers:**

Paper 1-2 pages in length – return in 1 week

Paper 3-5 pages in length – return in 2 weeks

Paper 6 or more pages in length (i.e., term papers) – return in 3 weeks

### Assigned Projects, Individual or Group:

Projects should be returned in a timeframe appropriate to the assignment, but never so long as to remove the beneficial aspects of timely feedback.

Whenever work is returned, all students in the class should receive their work at the same time. The piecemeal return of student work is discouraged, as this can create an unfair advantage to students during class participation, quizzes, and other assessments that may be given to students prior to the return of previous work.

### II. Return of Tests, Quizzes and any other assessment documents

Since test materials and results are important to both parents and students in understanding course expectations and review for future assessments, all graded test materials will be returned to the student for review with their parent. If the teacher finds it necessary to hold original documents, he/she will allow the student to take the test/quiz/paper home to the parents for review and allow the parent to copy the document in order to assist the student in future review.

### III. Dissemination of Policy

- a. Return of Work Policy will be included in the handbooks for the Middle Schools and High School.
- b. High school course syllabi should indicate when students should expect work returned, and should be in compliance with this policy.

Adopted by the Reading School Committee March 26, 2007

**CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**  
**Access to Electronic Media**

The 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 and responsible manner.

**Safety Procedures and Guidelines**

The Superintendent or designee shall develop and implement appropriate procedures to provide guidance for access to electronic media. Guidelines shall address teacher supervision of student computer use, ethical use of electronic media (including, but not limited to, the Internet, e-mail, and other District technological resources), and issues of privacy versus administrative review of electronic files and communications. In addition, guidelines shall prohibit utilization of networks for prohibited or illegal activities, the intentional spreading of embedded messages, or the use of other programs with the potential of damaging or destroying programs or data.

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

- Controlling access by minors to inappropriate matter on the Internet and World Wide Web;
- Safety and security of minors when they are using electronic mail, chat rooms, and other forms of director electronic communications;
- Preventing unauthorized access, including “hacking” and other unlawful activities by minors online;
- Unauthorized disclosure, use and dissemination of personal information regarding minors; and
- Restricting minors’ access to materials harmful to them.

**Permission/Agreement Form**

A written parental request shall be required prior to the student being granted independent access to electronic media involving District technological resources. The required permission/agreement form, which shall specify acceptable uses, rules of on-line behavior, access privileges, and penalties for policy/procedural violations, must be signed by the parent or legal guardian of minor students (those under 18 years of age) and also by the student. This document shall be kept on file as a legal, binding document. In order to modify or rescind the agreement, the student's parent/guardian (or the student who is at least 18 years old) must provide the Superintendent with a written request.



## **Employee Use**

Employees shall use electronic mail only for purposes directly related to work-related activities.

Employees shall not use a code, access a file, or retrieve any stored communication unless they have been given authorization to do so. (Authorization is not required each time the electronic media is accessed in performance of one's duties.) Each employee is responsible for the security of his/her own password.

## **Community Use**

On recommendation of the Superintendent or designee, the Committee shall determine when and which computer equipment, software, and information access systems will be available to the community. Upon request to the Principal or designee, community members may have access to the Internet and other electronic information sources and programs available through the District's technology system, provided they attend any required training and abide by the rules of usage established by the Superintendent or designee.

## **Disregard of Rules**

Individuals who refuse to sign required acceptable use documents or who violate District rules governing the use of District technology shall be subject to loss or restriction of the privilege of using equipment, software, information access systems, or other computing and telecommunications technologies.

## **Responsibility for Damages**

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

## **Responding to Concerns**

School officials shall apply the same criterion of educational suitability used to review other educational resources when questions arise concerning access to specific databases or other electronic media.

## **Audit of Use**

Users with network access shall not utilize District resources to establish electronic mail accounts through third-party providers or any other nonstandard electronic mail system.

The Superintendent or designee shall establish a process to determine whether the District's education technology is being used for purposes prohibited by law or for accessing sexually explicit materials. The process shall include, but not be limited to:

1. Utilizing technology that blocks or filters Internet access for both minors and adults to certain visual depictions that are obscene, child pornography, or, with respect to computers with Internet access by minors, harmful to minors;
2. Maintaining and securing a usage log; and
3. Monitoring online activities of minors.

Adopted by the Reading School Committee March 26, 2007

LEGAL REFS: 47 USC § 254

CROSS REFS: IJNDB, ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY – TECHNOLOGY

## **ACCEPTABLE USE REGULATIONS – COMPUTER AND INTERNET USE**

These Acceptable Use Guidelines serve as a written agreement between the Reading Public Schools and its students and staff. It outlines the appropriate uses for technology in the district as well as the consequences for failure to adhere to those guidelines.

### **Technology Use**

Technology in the Reading Public Schools will be used in collaboration with curriculum. Computers and other technology equipment are tools used to support the teaching and learning process. The use of this technology is to be regarded as a privilege, not a right. Students and staff will be responsible for following all conditions and rules of technology use as presented by the Reading Public Schools. Any violation of the conditions and rules may result in revocation of technology privileges.

All users who use the Internet access of the Reading Public Schools are expected to read these Guidelines and/or take part in a discussion of the Guidelines with a teacher. Adherence to the Guidelines is a condition for a user's privilege of Internet access.

All student use of the Internet is to be conducted under faculty supervision. Nevertheless, faculty members are not expected to monitor student use at every moment. Every student is expected to take individual responsibility for his or her appropriate use of the Internet.

### **User's Rights and Responsibilities**

Users of Reading Public Schools equipment have the right:

1. To use all authorized hardware and software, when available, for which they have received training to facilitate learning and enhance educational information exchange.
2. To access information from outside resources which facilitate learning and enhances educational information exchange.
3. To access district networks and the Internet to retrieve information, facilitate learning and enhance educational information exchange.

Users are responsible for:

1. Utilizing technology in the school only for facilitating learning and enhancing educational information exchange consistent with the educational mission of the Reading Public Schools.
2. Maintaining the privacy of passwords and are prohibited from publishing or discussing passwords.
3. Keeping all inappropriate materials, inappropriate text files, or files dangerous to the integrity of the school's network, equipment, and software from entering the school via the Internet.

4. Keeping hardware and software from being removed from school premises without prior consent.
5. Maintaining the integrity of the e-mail system and making only those e-mail contacts, which facilitate learning and enhance information exchange.
6. Keeping all food and drink away from computers, printers, etc.
7. Adhering to all copyright guidelines and avoiding plagiarism.
8. Adhering to the rules established for the use of hardware, software, labs, and networks in the school and through remote access.
9. Engaging in no sexual harassment. The Reading Public Schools Sexual Harassment Policy, which is included in the individual schools' handbooks, is applicable to Internet conduct.

Users are prohibited from:

1. Employing any profane, harassing, or otherwise offensive language or graphics.
2. Transferring, copying, downloading any obscene, immoral, or inappropriate images.
3. Posting private or personal information about another person.
4. Making any commercial use of the technology for product advertising or promotion of political candidates.
5. Infringing on any copyright or trademark laws.
6. Attempting to disrupt or interfere with the use of technology, either on a single piece of equipment or a network.
7. Attempting to access information for which the user does not have the right.
8. Attempting to log in through another person's e-mail account or to access another person's files
9. Posting chain letters or engaging in "spamming." ("Spamming" is the action of sending annoying or unnecessary messages to large numbers of people.)
10. Plagiarizing of any material for any reason; (See Student Handbook.)
11. Participating in any communications that facilitate any illegal activities or violate any other laws. (The user should know that any unlawful activity will be reported to the authorities.)
12. Users should never arrange a personal meeting with a person who was met on- line--without their parents' or guardians' knowledge and approval.

## **Security**

The user should:

1. Not allow others to use his/her account
2. Protect his/her password.
3. Not change or attempt passwords on individual machines or the network.
4. Not access information to which he/she does not have rights.
5. Promptly notify his/her teacher or systems administrator of any on-line communication that he/she feels is threatening, harassing, questionable, or otherwise inappropriate.
6. Never attempt to log on to the network as the systems administrator or as any other name other than one's own.

## **Network Etiquette**

The user should:

1. Use appropriate, courteous language at all times.
2. Never post private or personal information or that of family, friends, or colleagues
3. Know that e-mail is not guaranteed to be private.

## **Vandalism and Harassment**

1. See the Reading School Committee "Policy on Harassment and Discrimination."
2. Vandalism and/or harassment will result in revocation of technology privileges.

## **Consequences**

Failure to adhere to the technology conditions and rules of the Reading Public Schools will result in disciplinary action, which could include but not be limited to the following:

- Revocation of access to any Reading Public Schools computer in the building
- Revocation of network privileges and/or access
- Possible legal action

The ultimate consequences are at the discretion of the building administrator.

## **Disclaimer**

The Reading Public Schools make no warranties of any kind for the technology services provided. The school system will not be responsible for repair or replacement of equipment maliciously damaged by an individual. Protection of data is the responsibility of the user. The district will not be responsible for any loss in service or data. Use of all technology and networks is at one's own risk. The school system is not responsible for verifying accuracy of any information obtained through the technology or network.

## **Changes in the Acceptable Use Guidelines for Computer and Internet Use**

The Reading Public Schools reserve the right to change these Guidelines at any time.

Adopted by the Reading School Committee March 26, 2007

**ACCEPTABLE USE  
USER AGREEMENT**

(K-5: Any teacher having students go online; 6-12: all students)

We understand that by signing this form that we acknowledge that we have read and will abide by the above Acceptable Use Guidelines.

User (print): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent or Guardian (print): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent/Guardian Agreement**

- (1) I give permission for my child, \_\_\_\_\_ to access and produce information on the Internet. Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
- (2) I give permission for my child's photograph to be published on the Internet in conjunction with school-related projects. Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Parent or Guardian (print): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Adopted by the Reading School Committee

SOURCE: Reading

## **Social Networking Policy**

Social networking tools such as Facebook, Google +, LinkedIn, and Twitter are quickly become an integral part of our society. The Reading Public Schools encourage the use of social networking tools by educators for professional collaboration and communication, creating their own professional learning network, and for educational purposes with students. When communicating with students and families through any electronic media, it is important to maintain the appropriate boundaries in the student/teacher relationship or parent/teacher relationship.

The Superintendent and the School Principals will annually remind current staff members and orient new staff members concerning the importance of maintaining proper decorum in the on-line, digital world and adhering to appropriate boundaries in the student/teacher relationship. A separate set of guidelines for the educational use of social networking tools that are aligned with the Reading Public School's Acceptable Use Policy will be distributed and communicated annually to staff. The School Department's policy with regard to teacher interactions with students and families utilizing technology, such as electronic mail, social networking websites and cell phones is as follows:

- 1) Online Interactions With Students Using Facebook and Similar Internet Sites or Social Networks, or Via Cell Phone, Texting or Telephone.
  - a. Staff members may not list current Reading Public School students or former Reading Public School students below the age of 18, as "friends" on private or personal networking sites. Staff members may list current Reading Public School students on public social networking sites which are used for educational purposes. For those sites, staff members must use their Reading Public School email address.
  - b. All electronic contacts with students should be through the district's email, Edline and telephone systems, except in emergency situations. Staff members will not give out their private cell phone or home phone numbers, or personal e-mails, without prior approval of the Principal. This policy does not apply to family relationships.
  - c. Coaches and club/activity advisors will not give out their private cell phone or home phone numbers, or personal e-mails, without prior approval of the Principal. All contact and messages by coaches and club/activity advisors with team members shall be sent to all team members, except for messages concerning medical or academic privacy matters. Messages from coaches will be copied to the athletic director. The school principal will be copied on all contact and messages from coaches and club/activity advisors.

- d. The district will educate staff members on all capabilities of the district's Edline system as well as, other acceptable social networking tools in order that staff will not feel a need to utilize their own personal resources.

## 2) Privacy of On-Line Content.

Staff members are reminded that items placed on-line are never fully private and may affect how students, parents, administrators and peers perceive them. Posting items with sexual content and those exhibiting or advocating use of illegal drugs or alcohol is poor judgment and may be deemed inappropriate. The Superintendent or designees may periodically conduct internet searches to see if Staff 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.

## 3) Monitoring of On-Line Conduct.

The School Department retains the right to monitor its internal technology systems. When inappropriate use of computers and websites reaches the attention of administration, the School Principal will promptly bring this to the attention of the staff member and the Superintendent. After investigation, and due process, disciplinary action for failure to exercise good judgment in on-line conduct, may be applied.

## 4) Staff Shall Adhere to Existing Standards of Conduct in Connection With Electronic Communications with Students.

Staff are already under an obligation to maintain appropriate boundaries in their relationships with students (e.g., Staff should avoid excessive attention to a student, communicate only on school-related activities, maintain professionalism, etc). These same standards apply to electronic communications with students (e.g., social networking, e-mail, "texting," or other cell phone communications).

Adopted by the Reading School Committee on August 29, 2011



## READING SCHOOL COMMITTEE POLICY ON STUDENT FIELD TRIPS

### Academic Field Trips

The Reading School Committee (SC) recognizes that academic field trips are an extension of the classroom experience that expand and reinforce concepts learned in the classroom and can provide new and unique experiences not available in the classroom setting. An academic field trip is defined as a visit to a location beyond school grounds that has a direct relationship to a curricular field.

Reading Public Schools will sponsor academic field trips for students only when trips meet the following criteria:

- **Time and Learning** – The trips are appropriate for the age groups involved and the learning activities associated with the field trip map to the curriculum frameworks and satisfy time and learning requirements.
- **Equal Opportunity/Accessibility** - The right of a student to participate in any school-sponsored program is not infringed upon or impaired because of gender, race, ethnicity, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sexual orientation, or disability group, or any other reason not related to his/her individual capabilities.
- **Students with Disabilities** - Any concern about the safety or appropriateness of a disabled student's participation in a field trip will be referred to the student's liaison (if a special education student) or to the Section 504 Coordinator (if the student is on a Section 504 plan), whichever may be applicable, for the scheduling of a Team Meeting. The Team will review the concern, review any other relevant documents, make a Team determination how the student can participate and what, if any, accommodations are necessary for the student's participation in the field trip.
- **Affordability** - Field trips should be affordable and accessible to all qualified and interested students. Students may be allowed but not required to participate in reasonable group fundraising efforts to defray the cost of field trips. No student is denied the opportunity to participate in an academic day field trip because of the inability to pay.
- **Scheduling**-Trips are not scheduled during the State Assessment examination periods for students taking the MCAS/PARCC exams. If unique and special circumstances present an academic opportunity, the principal and superintendent will consider and evaluate each request with care.
- **Teacher Supervision**-While there must be adequate supervision, the principal must also minimize the number of teachers missing classes due to chaperoning.
- **Educational Alternatives** - Students who cannot participate in field trips shall receive educational alternatives that have related academic and intellectual value. Instruction of students unable to attend the field trip should not be lessened due to an inability to attend. Students who attend school in lieu of a field trip can receive regular classroom instruction as an educational alternative.
- **Health and Safety** - The health and safety of students and staff are given utmost consideration in the approval, planning and conduct of all school-sponsored trips. Staff

involved in planning a field trip will include the District nursing staff in the planning process in accordance with the District nursing protocol to determine specific health/medical needs of students, the inclusion of nursing staff on the field trip, or other medical care required.

- **Student Behavior** - Students participating in any type of field trip are required to adhere to school rules and regulations. Attendance on school-sponsored trips is not a student's right, but a privilege. No student may attend such a trip if, in the determination of the principal or his/her designee as part of disciplinary action unrelated to a disability, the student's behavior has been so inappropriate or antisocial as to be deemed disruptive to the planned trip.
- **Supervision** - Staff from the requesting school direct the trip, and a staff member is identified as the Staff-in-Charge and is in attendance to ensure compliance with this policy.
- **Volunteer Chaperones**-All chaperones must be at least 21 years of age and cleared as school volunteers by the building principal and through the CORI/SAFIS process prior to the trip. Each volunteer will need to read and sign the *Reading Public Schools Volunteer Field Trip Guide* prior to attending a field trip. The adult/student ratio shall be a minimum of 1:10 or less. If a student group has members of each sex then chaperones of each sex should accompany the group. All chaperones on trips shall agree to adhere to Reading Public Schools school policies and codes of conduct.
- **Transportation** – Reading Public Schools uses its regular contracted bus service for most field trips. Use of vans and private automobiles for field trips without prior approval from the Superintendent of Schools, or designee, is prohibited. A field trip that proposes to use private passenger vehicles must follow the guidelines in School Committee Policy EEAG and must be submitted in advance to the Superintendent of Schools, or designee, for review of the trip itinerary, driver information (license, adequate insurance coverage, liability release form, CORI, SAFIS, etc.) and consideration of all safety concerns with respect to the proposed transportation. The Superintendent, or designee, will make the final decision as to the acceptable mode of transportation for the field trip. Selected carriers for late night, overnight or out of state travel must be licensed for passenger transportation by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA). Carriers with an FMCSA safety rating of “conditional” or “unsatisfactory” will not be used. Selected carriers will be prohibited from using subcontractors unless sufficient notice is provided to the district to allow for verification of the subcontractor's qualifications and safety rating. Travel itineraries must allow enough time for drivers to rest in conformance with federal hour-of-service requirements and common sense. If a planned trip exceeds ten (10) consecutive hours of driving, a second driver must be utilized or the driver must be off duty for eight (8) consecutive hours before driving again. Public transportation may also be used, subject to review and approval by the Principal and/or Superintendent, particularly with respect to number of chaperones, time in transit, and accessibility to all students.
- **Overnight Accommodations (if applicable)**-Overnight accommodations at all hotels, motels, or other lodging, with established rules and regulations to ensure student well-being should be made in advance with student safety and security in mind. Accommodations will include enough rooms so that no chaperones are rooming with students.

### **Exchange Programs**

The School Committee has established foreign exchange programs which have specific requirements and approval processes. All of the above criteria may not be applicable to these programs. The Exchange field trips must follow the same approval process as academic field trips.

### **Enrichment Field Trips**

An enrichment field trip is defined as attendance at contests, regional events, or other trips beyond the school grounds that is not a part of the curriculum and does not count toward meeting the time and learning requirements. While they may be valuable experiences for students, every effort should be made to mitigate the effect of enrichment field trips on time and learning. Costs associated with enrichment field trips will be the responsibility of the individual student/family. Where appropriate, there may be fund raising to help defray costs. All fundraising must be done in compliance and accordance with Reading Public Schools and individual school policies. The Enrichment field trips must follow the same approval process as academic field trips.

### **Compliance with State Ethics Disclosure of Financial Interest**

In no event shall staff members involved in organizing and/or attending an approved field trip be compensated, directly or indirectly, from any company, sponsor or others for his or her role in attending the field trip. However, the State Ethics Commission does allow for the costs of the trip for the staff member/chaperone to be covered, in which case the staff members(s)/chaperone(s) must file a Disclosure of Financial Interest Form with the Superintendent and Town Clerk.

The Superintendent shall first make the determination that the trip serves a legitimate educational purpose and that the benefits to the students and the education process outweigh the private benefit to the teacher, the tour company and/or the chaperones.

### **Related Definitions:**

**Chaperone** - A person, other than a teacher and instructional assistant, age 21 or older, who accompanies and supervises the students on a field trip. A satisfactory Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) check is required of all chaperones and a Statewide Applicant Fingerprint Identification System (SAFIS) is required of any chaperone who is supervising an after school or overnight field trip.

**Staff** - All paid school personnel.

**Staff-in-Charge** - The teacher attending the trip designated to ensure compliance with this policy.

### **Approval Criteria**

The table below lists the terms used for trips of various lengths and the approval required. Note that out of-state travel requires School Committee approval regardless of the trip length. In no case will a trip exceeding five school days be approved.

X - Approval is required by the indicated person.

<b>Trip Length</b>	<b>Principal</b>	<b>Superintendent</b>	<b>School Committee</b>
<b>Day</b> -Within the School Day	X		
<b>Extended</b> -A visit extending beyond the school day, but returning prior to midnight.	X	X	
<b>Overnight</b> -A visit that involves overnight travel (after midnight) and/or overnight stay.	X	X	X
<b>Out of State</b> -A visit that involves travel outside of Massachusetts, whether a day trip or an overnight trip.	X	X	X
<b>Foreign</b> -A visit to a foreign country.	X	X	X

### **Approval**

All foreign trips requiring School Committee approval must be received prior to the school year in which the trip is to take place and prior to making any final financial and/or contractual arrangements. All field trips must be approved in writing by the appropriate authority as specified in this policy. The initial documentation to request a field trip must include:

### **Documentation**

1. The purpose of the trip including a mapping to the curriculum frameworks.
2. Proposed dates.
3. Proposed itinerary.
4. Estimated number of students expected and percentage of eligible students participating
5. Cost per student (if applicable).
6. Ratio of chaperones/teachers to students.
7. Description of transportation arrangements, including rest time for drivers.
8. Description of arrangements for meals and lodging (if applicable).
9. Means of financing.
10. A draft copy of any contract associated with the trip.
11. A description of the educational alternative, and mapping of that alternative, for students not attending the trip.
12. A description of the process that will be used to determine student eligibility.
13. Compliance with State Ethics Disclosure of Financial Interest
14. Compliance with CORI and SAFIS Requirements

After the initial trip approval, subsequent approval documentation must include information detailing how the above trip conditions have changed since the initial trip was approved. All participating students must submit a signed parent/guardian permission form that includes appropriate authorization for emergency medical care and administration of medication. An emergency crisis plan will also be documented and provided to the Administration before the departure of any field trip. International trips must include a printout of the State Department Travel Advisory and Homeland Security Alert Status for all countries to be visited. Should an

emergency situation occur, the sponsoring faculty member is responsible for notifying the Principal by telephone as soon as possible but no later than twenty-four (24) hours after the emergency situation occurs. The faculty member is also responsible for notifying the parent/guardian of record by telephone, text, or email once the emergency situation stabilizes but no later than twenty-four (24) hours after the emergency situation occurs;

### **Restrictions**

**Non-School Sponsored Trips**-Staff members are prohibited from soliciting privately run trips through the school system. Teachers and other school staff who privately conduct educational tours or trips must clearly state that these trips are not school-sponsored and that the Reading School Committee and the Reading Public Schools do not sanction the trip nor assume any responsibility or liability for the trip.

### **Discipline of Students and Field Trips-Domestic and International**

1. All Reading Public School policies on student behavior, student handbook rules and regulations, Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) rules and regulations, and trip rules will apply and be in effect at all times for academic and extracurricular field trips.
2. If a student violates any Reading Public Schools student conduct policy, student handbook rules or regulations, MIAA rules and regulations, trip rules, or otherwise misbehaves while on a field trip, the student will be given appropriate consequences which could include, but not limited to, a suspension from the field trip and sent back to school or home, as appropriate, by the faculty sponsor at the parent's/guardian's expense. In addition to being sent home, the individual will be subject to the consequences for the action/infracton upon his/her return to school as defined by the aforementioned student conduct policies, student handbook rules and regulations, and MIAA rules and regulations.

### **Cancellation of Field Trip**

The Reading Public Schools reserves the right to cancel a trip up to the departure date or to recall a trip in progress if national and/or international conditions so warrant or if security and safety concerns over which the Reading Public Schools had no control render it appropriate to cancel the trip. The Reading Public Schools will take the following criteria into consideration when making its decision:

- U.S. Department of State Travel Advisory
- Homeland Security Advisory
- Declaration of War or Armed Conflict

In the event that a trip must be cancelled, school officials will make a reasonable effort to obtain a refund of monies paid by students and parents. However, such refunds are not guaranteed. The students and parents understand that he/she/they may lose any and/or all of the funds he/she/they have expended for the voluntary trip.

**References:**

Massachusetts Department of Education Regulations 603 CMR 27.00: Time and Learning.

M.G.L. c.71, s. 37N – Policy for School-Sponsored Student Travel

M.G.L. c.71, s.38R – Criminal Records: Checks of Application

M.G.L. (c. 268A, s. 17 (a)) – Conduct of Public Officials, Employees; Municipal employees; gift or receipt of compensation from other than municipality; acting as agent or attorney.

Reading School Committee Policy EEAG, *Private Vehicle Student Transportation on Field Trips and Activities*

**Additional Resources:**

US Department of State Advisory <http://travel.state.gov>

Homeland Security Advisory <http://www.dhs.gov/dhspublic>

Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) Carrier Ratings <http://www.fmcsa.gov>

United Motorcoach Association – Student Motorcoach Travel Safety Guide

<http://www.uma.org/consumerhelp/syudentguide.asp>

Department of Defense's approved list of motor carriers

<http://www.mtmc.army.mil/content/504/approvedlist.pdf>

Revised and Adopted by the Reading School Committee on November 3, 2014

## **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 inappropriately influence points of view.

Adopted by the Reading School Committee March 26, 2007

## **VOLUNTEERS IN THE SCHOOLS**

It is the policy of the Reading Public Schools to encourage volunteers from the community to assist in the general operation of the schools. Through the use of volunteers, the Reading School Committee sees the following educational benefits:

- more constructive use of teacher skills and time
- more resources, both human and material, in our schools
- improved instructional programs
- improved school-community relationships

The Committee encourages the broadest possible use of volunteers in both instructional and non-instructional tasks, where appropriate, and as directed by the Superintendent, according to general guidelines developed by the Superintendent of Schools. Guidelines shall include that all volunteers shall be subject to CORI background checks.

Adopted by the Reading School Committee March 26, 2007

CROSS REF: ADDA – CORI Requirements



## **ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT**

The philosophy of the School Committee concerning academic achievement, as well as children's social growth and development, is based on the premise that children have diverse capabilities and individual patterns of growth and learning.

Therefore, the Committee feels it is important that teachers have as much and as accurate knowledge of each student as possible in order to assess his/her needs and growth, and make instructional plans for him/her. A sharing of information among parent, teacher, and student is essential.

The Committee supports staff efforts to find better ways to measure and report student progress. It will require that:

1. Parents/guardians be informed regularly, and at least four times a year, of the progress their children are making in school.
2. Parents/guardians should be alerted and conferred with as soon as possible when a child's performance or attitude becomes unsatisfactory or shows marked or sudden deterioration.
3. Insofar as possible, distinctions will be made between a student's attitude and his academic performance.
4. When grades are given, the school staff will take particular care to explain the meaning of marks and symbols to parents.

Adopted by the Reading School Committee March 26, 2007

## **HOMEWORK**

The term "homework" refers to an assignment to be prepared by the student during a period of supervised study in class or outside of class.

The purposes of homework are to improve the learning processes, to aid in the mastery of skills, and to create and stimulate interest on the part of the student.

Homework is a learning activity which should increase in complexity with the maturity of the student. With increased maturity, learning should become an independent activity for each student. This should be established through consistent assignments which encourage students to investigate for themselves and to work independently as well as with other students.

Homework assignments should be consistent in terms of the amount given each day and the time required for each assignment so that a pattern of meaningful homework can be established by the teacher and/or the student.

The information for any homework assignment should be clear and specific so that the student can complete the assignment.

Homework should not require the use of reference materials not readily available in most homes, school libraries, or the public library, and should require the use of those materials only when the student has had instruction in the use of them.

There are many other learning activities in the life of a student besides homework. Such things as participating in school activities, pursuing cultural interests, participating in family living, and exploring personal interests should be considered by teachers when planning consistent assignments.

Homework is not to be used as a form of punishment under any circumstances.

Adopted by the Reading School Committee March 26, 2007

## **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.

Adopted by the Reading School Committee March 26, 2007

## GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

As students progress through high school, they should become both educated and well-rounded. They are not best served by planning narrowly focused four year courses of study. This is true for college-bound and non-college-bound students alike. College admissions officers stress the importance of a student with a balanced program and an interest in extra-curricular activities as well as a solid academic record. Employers prefer an employee with transferable skills and broad interests who can see an integrated whole.

Business, music, fine arts, and technology courses offered at RMHS help students to better understand the greater world around them and also equip them to be better preferred as total persons for whatever they choose to do upon graduation from high school and in future endeavors. All RMHS students should take courses in these subject areas to balance their courses and broaden their experiences.

RMHS students are required to schedule six classes plus Physical Education. Of the six classes, at least four classes should be chosen from the departments of English, Mathematics, Social Studies, Science and Foreign Language.

It is the Reading School Committee's policy that the following be the course requirements for graduation from Reading Memorial High School.

### 1. Basic Requirements for Promotion

- a. In order for a freshman to be promoted to sophomore year, s/he must have earned at least 18 credits. (Most students earn 25 credits or more by the end of grade 9.)
- b. In order for a sophomore to be promoted to junior year, s/he must earn at least 40 credits. (Most students earn 50 credits by the end of grade 10.)
- c. In order for a junior to be promoted to senior year, s/he must earn at least 65 credits. (Most students earn 75 credits by the end of grade 11.)

If a student is lacking credits at any time, it is his/her responsibility to make up those credits by scheduling a full program and/or summer school courses.

### 2. Reading Memorial High School Graduation Requirements

The curriculum includes a combination of required and elective courses to meet the needs of all students. RMHS students are ability-grouped in major academic courses based on teacher, counselor and parent recommendations. The precise requirements in effect when a class enters RMHS in effect for all members of that class until graduation. All required classes must be passed.

Students have elective choices in their high school careers which enable them to explore and pursue courses in Business and Computer areas. We strongly encourage students to take the responsibility and the opportunity to select courses from the elective arena which will give them a truly comprehensive and well-balanced education. Because of the important role computers are playing in our everyday lives and throughout the curriculum at RMHS, it is strongly recommended that all students enroll in a Keyboarding course in order to acquire the necessary skill to be more effective and efficient in operating computer hardware and software.

In order to graduate from Reading Memorial High School, a student must have earned at least 90 credits. Course requirements are the following:

Students must achieve a passing grade in all of the following required courses:

8 semesters of English	2 semesters of Practical Arts
6 semesters of Mathematics*	1 semester of Decisions
6 semesters of Science	2 semesters of Fine Arts
6 semesters of Social Studies**	4 semesters of Physical Education
4 semesters of Foreign Language	

\*Every student must take 6 semesters of Mathematics. (Business Math may be applied toward the math requirement, but at least 2 years or 4 semesters of math must include courses offered by the Mathematics Department.)

\*\*Students are required to take 1 year of U.S. History.

All students must pass all state and federal requirements for high school graduation, including but not limited to the MCAS tests, in order to graduate from RMHS.

Early Graduation: A student who has completed the courses required for graduation and who has earned 90 or more credits by the end of his junior year may be graduated at the discretion of the School Committee.

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 Reading Memorial High School.

Adopted by the Reading School Committee March 26, 2007

## 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.
4. Show the relationship between achievement and the system's stated goals.
5. Provide data for public information.

An evaluation of the curriculum and its effectiveness will be made periodically and reported to the Committee by the Superintendent or designee.

Adopted by the Reading School Committee March 26, 2007

## **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.

Adopted by the Reading School Committee March 26, 2007

## **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 5 school days before the scheduled time of presentation.

### Requests from Groups or Individuals Outside the Schools

No permission will be granted non-school groups or individuals to make presentations 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 to students in general or to class groups.

Adopted by the Reading School Committee March 26, 2007



## SCHOOL CEREMONIES AND OBSERVANCES

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:

Holidays: Any observance of holidays shall be celebrated from an educational perspective.

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.

### American Flag and Pledge of Allegiance:

An American flag shall be displayed in each assembly hall or other room in each such schoolhouse where the opening exercises on each school day are held. Each teacher at the commencement of the first class of each day in all grades in all public schools shall lead the class in a group recitation of the "Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag." A flag shall be displayed in each classroom in each such schoolhouse.

Adopted by the Reading School Committee March 26, 2007

LEGAL REF.: 603 CMR 26:05

## ACCOMODATIONS FOR RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES

The Reading Public Schools educates children from many different religious and ethnic backgrounds. It shall be the Policy of the Reading Public Schools, out of respect for family values and our different religious and ethnic traditions, and in accordance with state and federal law, to provide accommodations for those students who are absent from school for religious observances.

### **I. District Policy**

In accordance with M.G.L. c. 151C, § 2B, students who are unable, because of religious beliefs, to attend classes or to participate in any examination, study, or work requirement on a particular day, shall be excused from any such examination or study or work requirement, and shall be provided with an opportunity to make up such examination, study, or work requirement which he or she may have missed because of such absence on any particular day; provided, however, that such makeup examination or work shall not create an unreasonable burden upon the school. No fees of any kind shall be charged by the Reading Public Schools, PTO or Booster group for making available to the student such opportunity. No adverse or prejudicial effects shall result to any student because of his availing himself of the provisions of M.G.L. c 151C, § 2B.

#### **A. Major Non-National Religious Holidays-**For the purpose of this policy, major non-national religious holidays are identified as the following:

- Two days of Rosh Hashanah (holiday begins at sundown the night before);
  - Yom Kippur (holiday begins at sundown the night before);
  - The first day of Passover, which begins at sundown the night before with the first Seder supper and ends after the second Seder supper on the evening of the first day; and
  - Good Friday
1. No assignments will be due for any student the day of or the day after a Major Non-National Religious Holidays.
  2. No tests or quizzes will be scheduled on the day of a Major Non-National Religious Holiday.
  3. No one-time events such as field trips, music performances, theatre plays and productions, auditions, and back to school functions will be scheduled on the day of a Major Non-National Religious Holiday.
  4. The Superintendent will develop a set of implementation regulations (See IMDA-R), which will be communicated each year to staff and the school community prior to major non-national religious holidays.

#### **B. Calendar**

1. Prior to the School Committee approving the annual calendar, the Superintendent of Schools will identify and recommend other (if any) major non-national religious

- holidays on an on-going basis and communicate them on the school calendar at the beginning of the school year.
2. School calendars distributed to teachers, staff, and families shall include those major religious and ethnic holidays whose observance would require absence from school or other accommodations;
  3. The first day of the school year shall not be scheduled on a major non-national religious holiday.

## **II. Individual Accommodations for Students Who Observe Other Religious Holidays**

- A. For other religious holidays not mentioned above, teachers should work in a proactive and sensitive manner with students who are observing those religious holidays to provide individual accommodations, and to reassure students by affirming school policy whenever appropriate.

## **III. Absences on Religious Holidays**

- A. Parents and students (if age appropriate) are encouraged to notify the school in advance when their child will be not be attending school because of religious or ethnic observance.
- B. Discrimination against any student, because of such individual's religious/ethnic belief or practice, or any absence based on said belief or practice is prohibited.
  1. Any pupil absent from school because of a religious or ethnic holiday may not be deprived of any award or eligibility or opportunity to compete for any award because of such absence;
  2. Students whose conscientious observance of a religious or ethnic holiday conflicts with participating in a school-scheduled event such as tryouts, athletic contests, theatricals, or concerts, will not be required to participate nor penalized for their non-participation;
  3. Any absence because of religious or ethnic holiday must be recorded as an excused absence for religious observance in the school register or in any group or class attendance record.

Approved by Reading School Committee on January 13, 2014.

Revised and Approved by Reading School Committee on September 11, 2017.

References: Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 151C, Section 2B

## ACCOMODATIONS FOR RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES

### *Implementation Regulations*

There are many cultures and religions that celebrate holidays during the school year. The major non-national religious holidays, as defined in School Committee Policy, IMDA, are as follows:

- Two days of Rosh Hashanah (holiday begins at sundown the night before);
- Yom Kippur (holiday begins at sundown the night before);
- The first day of Passover, which begins at sundown the night before with the first Seder supper and ends after the second Seder supper on the evening of the first day; and
- Good Friday.

It is important to note that even though a holiday may end at sundown, students and families may still be gathering as part of the observance and will not be available to attend events and complete assignments for the rest of that day and evening.

State and federal laws require schools to make reasonable accommodation to the religious needs of students in observance of holy days. With respect to students, Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 151C, section 2B reads in relevant part as follows:

***“Any student in an educational or vocational training institution...who is unable, because of his religious beliefs, to attend classes or to participate in any examination, study or work requirement on a particular day shall be excused from any such examination or study or work requirement, and shall be provided with an opportunity to make up such examination, study or work requirement which he may have missed because of such absence on any particular day....No adverse or prejudicial effects shall result to any student because of his availing himself of the provisions of this section.”***

As with any policy, implementation is important and each stakeholder plays a critical role in the implementation. Below are the guidelines for administrators, teachers, parents and students in implementing Policy IMDA.

#### **I. Administrators**

- a) Send out the School Committee approved district calendar listing all religious holidays;
- b) The first day of the school year shall not be scheduled on a major non-national religious holiday;
- c) Communicate to remind parents to contact their child’s teacher or school and let them know that their child will be absent for religious observances. The main office shall let the child’s teacher or teachers know the students that will be out on the religious holidays;
- d) Parent, student or school community events should not be scheduled on major non-national religious holidays;
- e) Any pupil absent from school because of a religious holiday may not be deprived of any award or eligibility or opportunity to compete for any award because of such absence;
- f) Any absence because of religious holiday must be recorded as an excused absence for religious observance in the school register or in any group or class attendance record; and

## II. Teachers, Coaches, Advisors

1. Teachers, coaches, and advisors shall refrain from the following teaching and learning activities and extracurricular opportunities on major non-national religious holidays:
  - a) Teaching difficult to make-up material;
  - b) Having a single day of exam preparation;
  - c) Scheduling tests or quizzes;
  - d) Assigning homework;
  - e) Scheduling one-time events such as field trips, music performances, theatre plays and productions, auditions, and back to school functions; and
  - f) Scheduling home athletic/extra-curricular events, and, if possible, offsite/away athletic/extra-curricular events.
2. Teachers are encouraged to facilitate and provide regular instruction on major non-national religious holidays which include hands-on learning, classroom discussions, and mini-lessons of direct instruction as aligned with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. Planning for these days should include the type of accommodations that can be made for any student who will be absent and how they will be able to access the classroom information.
3. No assignments will be due the day of or the school day after a major non-national religious holiday. [For example, a long term assignment cannot be due the day of Yom Kippur or the next school day after Yom Kippur.]
4. Any materials needed for make-up such as movies or media, should be easily and flexibly accessible within a reasonably determined time frame.
5. Coaches and advisors may hold practices, meetings or rehearsals on school days during major non-national religious holidays. However, students whose conscientious observance of a religious or ethnic holiday conflicts with participating in a practice or rehearsal will not be required to participate nor penalized for their non-participation. [For example, if a student-athlete is absent from school to observe the Good Friday religious holiday and misses track practice, they will not be penalized by not being able to participate in the next meet.]
6. Students may miss school and extra-curricular activities in order to participate in celebrations of their families' major religious and ethnic holidays and will not be penalized in any way. For example, if a student misses school to observe Rosh Hashanah and their teacher gives a participation grade, they will not receive a participation grade of zero for class on those days.
7. Parent, student or school community events should not be scheduled on major non-national religious holidays.
8. Individual accommodations will be provided to students which allow them to participate in their family religious or ethnic observances without detriment to their education or grades. Some examples of these accommodations could include, but are not limited to the following:
  - a) Extensions of due dates on assigned work (at a minimum the extension should be the number of days absent plus one additional day);
  - b) Opportunities to make up material missed in class;
  - c) Rescheduling of a test or quiz for students who missed the preparation day;
  - d) Videotaping the lesson and allowing the student to access the video;
  - e) Having a classroom peer take notes from the lesson and share it with the student.

- f) Altering the time of a student's presentation;
- g) Allowing extra-credit assignments to substitute for missed class work;
- h) Arranging for an increased flexibility in assignment dates. The guidepost for any extensions in assignment due dates should be reasonableness. For example, if the student had a relatively long period of time in which to complete the assignment, an extension may not be necessary. On the other hand, if the assignment was assigned with relatively short notice, and completion of the assignment would require the student to work over the religious holiday, an extension should be allowed;
- i) Letting a student attend a different discussion section for the same class that week;
- j) Assigning the student appropriate make-up work that is intrinsically no more difficult than the original assignment; and
- k) Other reasonable accommodations as may be appropriate.

### **III. Parents and Students**

1. Parents and students (if age appropriate) are encouraged to notify the school in advance when their child will be not be attending school because of religious or ethnic observance.
2. Parents should follow the normal procedures when their child is going to be absent to observe the religious holiday and call the parent verification system at the school on the day of the absence or notify the school in advance by email, written note, or phone. If a child is to receive an excused absence for religious observance, the parent must indicate that information in the correspondence with the school.
3. Parent, student or school community events, including PTO and School Council meetings, should not be scheduled on major non-national religious holidays.

## **ANIMALS IN SCHOOL**

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

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

School Principals, in consultation with the Health Service Providers in each building, shall utilize the Department of Public Health publication “Guideline 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.

Due to safety, allergies, and student comfort level with animals, non-approved animals/pets will not be permitted in a school building or on school property; this includes the school playground, and other public areas outside of a school. This includes a pet on a leash.

### **Educational Program**

Use of animals to achieve curriculum objectives may be allowed by the building Principal provided student health and safety 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 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 Reading Public 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 buildings.

**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 prior approval of the Superintendent of Schools.

### **Service Animals (Guide or Assistance Dogs)**

The Reading 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 of 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 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 the 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 location. This will also apply if an individual on school transportation suffers an allergic reaction. In this case, an alternative plan will be developed in coordination with appropriate school, District, and transportation staff including 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 of 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 assistance animals in District facilities and on school transportation vehicles.

Source: MASC February 2011

First Reading: July 25, 2011

Adopted by the Reading School Committee on August 29, 2011