

PORTSMOUTH SCHOOL DEPARTMENT

SECTION I: INSTRUCTION

Section I of the NEPN/NSBA classification system contains policies, regulations, and exhibits on the instructional program: basic curricular subjects, special programs, instructional resources, and academic achievement.

| CODE | POLICY NAME | DATE APPROVED |
|---------------|---|--------------------|
| ICA | SCHOOL CALENDAR | March 23, 2004 |
| IFA | INSTRUCTION NEEDS WITH DIFFERENT TALENTS | February 9, 2010 |
| IGA | CURRICULUM | May 11, 2004 |
| IGD | EXTRA CURRICULAR | June 14, 2011 |
| IGE | PARENTAL OBJECTIONS TO SPECIFIC COURSE MATERIAL | July 8, 2014 |
| IHAK | CHARACTER AND CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION | June 8, 2010 |
| IHAL | TEACHING ABOUT RELIGION | June 10, 2014 |
| IHAM | HEALTH EDUCATION AND EXEMPTION FROM INST. | September 13, 2011 |
| IHAM-R | HEALTH EDUCATION AND EXEMPTION FROM INST. - FORM | April 14, 2015 |
| IHBAB | SPECIAL EDUCATION INDEPENDENT EVALUATIONS | October 8, 2013 |
| IHBAC | CHILD FIND | January 11, 2011 |
| IHBC | PROCEDURES IMPLEMENTING SECTION 504 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973 | February 10, 2015 |
| IHBH | EXTENDED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES | January 27, 2015 |
| IHBI | ALTERNATIVE LEARNING PLANS | February 9, 2010 |
| IHCA | SUMMER ACTIVITIES | June 8, 2010 |
| IHCD | ADVANCED COURSE WORK | February 9, 2010 |
| IIC | SCHEDULES | May 27, 2003 |
| IJA | SUBJECT AREAS | March 23, 2004 |
| IJO | COMMUNITY RESOURCES | September 13, 2011 |
| IJOA | FIELD TRIPS | February 12, 2008 |
| IJOC | VOLUNTEERS | January 10, 2012 |

| | | |
|--------------|---|--------------------|
| IK | EARNING OF CREDIT | February 9, 2010 |
| IKAA | INTERDISCIPLINARY CREDIT | February 9, 2010 |
| IKAD | CHANGING STUDENT GRADES | September 13, 2011 |
| IKB | HOMEWORK | February 9, 2010 |
| IKE | PROMOTION OR RETENTION | May 22, 2007 |
| IKF | GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS | June 8, 2010 |
| IKFA | EARLY GRADUATION | May 12, 2015 |
| IKG | AWARDS FOR ACHIEVEMENT | May 12, 2015 |
| IL | EVALUATION OF THE INSTRUCTION PROGRAM | March 8, 2005 |
| ILBA | ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS | November 7, 2011 |
| ILBAA | HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION COMPETENCIES | July 14, 2015 |
| IMAH | DAILY PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES | June 8, 2010 |
| IMBD | HIGH SCHOOL CREDIT FOR 7, 8 GR COURSEWORK | July 14, 2015 |
| IMG | ANIMALS IN THE CLASSROOM | October 8, 2013 |
| IMGA | SERVICE ANIMALS | September 13, 2011 |

School Calendar

The Portsmouth School Board shall be presented a proposed calendar for the ensuing school year at a regular meeting of the Board no later than the first meeting in February. After consideration, the Board shall adopt a calendar satisfying the requirements of RSA 189:1.

Legal Reference:

RSA [189:1](#), Days of School

NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed. [306.18](#), School Year

NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed. [306.19](#), School Calendar

NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed. [306.27 \(q\)](#), High School Schedule for Seniors/Graduation

Instructional Needs of Students with Different Talents

The Board recognizes that each student has unique and distinctive learning styles, and that not all students will excel in traditional classroom settings. To that end, the administration will design the district's instruction and curricular program to meet the instructional needs of students with different talents, interests, and development.

Administrators and teachers should collaborate to consider and address students' different talents, interests and academic development when planning the district's educational programs and curriculum.

In order to meet the instructional needs of students with different talents, administrators and staff should explore alternative learning programs such as extended learning opportunities, alternative learning plans, distance education, vocational/technical education, and others.

Legal References:

NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed [306.04\(a\)\(6\)](#), Instructional Needs of Students With Different Talents

NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed [306.04\(j\)](#), Instructional Needs of Students With Different Talents

Curriculum

The professional staff based upon the following considerations shall develop curriculum:

- New Hampshire Minimum Standards
- Actual studies and information concerning the needs of students within the Portsmouth School Department,
- The range of abilities, aptitudes and interests of all students,
- The aspirations of residents of the School District for the students,
- Diversity of the local populations,
- Research based upon best practices of teaching and learning.

The curriculum may also include innovative programs and pilot studies within the curriculum that have the approval of the Principal and/or the Superintendent.

Legal References:

N.H. Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed [306.26\(a\)\(2\)](#), Kindergarten through Grade 8 Curriculum, Instructional Program

N.H. Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed [306.27\(b\)\(3\)](#), High School Curriculum, Instructional Program

Extra-Curricular and Co-Curricular Activities

The School Board recognizes the importance of extra-curricular and co-curricular activities in student life and that they are an integral part of high school life. Extra-curricular and co-curricular activities require as much careful planning and supervision as academic subjects, and while extra-curricular activities provide an opportunity for student to develop other skills and knowledge outside the classroom, they are a supplement to, and do not take precedence over academics. Extra-curricular and co-curricular activities are also a privilege and in order for students to participate they are expected to be good citizens in their school community.

Supervision:

All activities conducted in the name of the Portsmouth School Department shall be under the general supervision of school authorities and student participants are subject to the discipline policies of the School Board.

Eligibility:

High School students will be required to meet academic standards established by this policy for participation in extra-curricular activities as follows:

Student participants shall maintain good citizenship.

Student participants must be passing all classes in which they are enrolled and have no more than one grade of D based upon the latest term grades.

In the case of all extra-curricular activities, unless otherwise mandated by New Hampshire Interscholastic Athletic Association (NHIAA) for athletics, students academically ineligible due to grades from the latest quarter may regain eligibility based upon a progress report that meets the eligibility standards.

All extra-curricular activities will be open to all students with open tryouts.

Intramural sports shall be encouraged so that all students may have the opportunity to participate.

Ineligibility from Participation:

Portsmouth High School students who violate Federal, State or Municipal statutes and ordinances or Portsmouth School Board policies may be determined ineligible from participation in extra-curricular activities. Violations will be considered as of the first date of enrollment at Portsmouth High School or the first date of participation in the extracurricular activity, whichever occurs first, through graduation or discontinued enrollment.

Prior to a student becoming ineligible from participation, the matter will be referred to the Disciplinary Committee. The Committee shall consider violations as follows:

Disciplinary Committee:

The Disciplinary Committee will review any violation of that might result in a student being determined ineligible from participation in extracurricular activities. The Committee will be chaired by the Principal of the High School, or the Principal's designee. The remainder of the Committee shall consist of the following individuals:

In the case of athletics:

Athletic Director

Designated Head Coach, selected by the Principal for a one year term

In the case of non-athletic clubs and extra-curricular activities:

A designated faculty advisor for non-athletic clubs and extracurricular activities, selected by the Principal for a one-year term

The Committee is free to consider input from the student's coach or faculty advisory, assistants or team captains in the case of athletics, or any other source the Committee deems appropriate.

First Offense – Extracurricular activities:

Students found to have consumed alcohol, been determined to have internal possession of alcohol or in the possession of alcohol shall be ineligible for 50% (fifty percent) of regular season and tournament games.

Students found to have hosted a party or event for the consumption of alcohol or drugs or who have been found to be in the possession of drugs or under the influence of drugs shall be ineligible for 75% (seventy-five percent) of regular season and tournament games.

Students found to have violated other school rules shall be determined to be ineligible for up to three regular season and tournament games.

Students may have a one game reduction in their determination of ineligibility upon completion of 10 (ten) hours of community service. All community services shall be preapproved by the Conduct Committee and completion documented in writing.

First Offense – Co-curricular activities:

Although band, percussion and chorus are co-curricular activities, they are subject to this policy. Students may be determined to be ineligible from participation in performances. Students may not have their grades affected if they are ineligible for performances. The director of the activity shall determine the alternative to performance to be included in the grading process.

Students found to have consumed alcohol, been determined to have internal possession of alcohol or in the possession of alcohol shall be ineligible for 50% (fifty percent) of regular season and competition performances.

Students found to have hosted a party or event for the consumption of alcohol or drugs or who have been found to be in the possession of drugs or under the influence of drugs shall be ineligible for 75% (seventy-five percent) of regular season and competition performances.

Students found to have violated other school rules shall be determined to be ineligible for up to three regular season and competition performances.

Students may have a one performance reduction in their determination of ineligibility upon completion of 10 (ten) hours of community service. All community services shall be preapproved by the Conduct Committee and completion documented in writing.

Second Offense:

If the student commits a second offense within twelve (12) months of the first violation the student will no longer be permitted to participate in practices and will be removed from any association with the extracurricular activity up to a full twelve (12) months from the date of the second violation. The student may be required to provide evidence of completion of counseling

or community service to the Disciplinary Committee along with a mandatory petition for a reinstatement of eligibility.

Participation in Practices:

Students determined to be ineligible from participation in games/competitions are permitted to attend practices and games and performances. Students attending games and performances are not permitted to wear their uniforms.

Ineligibility determinations apply to both sports/activities for students participating in dual sports or activities.

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Parental Objections to Specific Course Material

The Board recognizes that there may be specific course materials which some parents/guardians find objectionable.

In the event a parent/guardian finds specific course material objectionable, the parent/guardian may notify the building principal of the specific material to which they object and request that the student receive alternative instruction, sufficient to enable the child to meet state requirements for education in the particular subject area. This notification and request shall be in writing.

The building principal and the parent must mutually agree to the alternative instruction. The alternative instruction agreed upon must meet state minimum standards.

School district staff will make reasonable efforts, within the scope of existing time, schedules, resources and other duties, to accommodate alternative instruction for the student. Alternative instruction may be provided by the school, through approved independent study, or through other method agreed to by the parent/guardian and the building principal. Any cost associated with the alternative instruction shall be borne by the parent.

Nothing in this policy shall be construed as giving parents/guardians the right to appeal to the school board.

Legal References:

RSA 186:11, IX-c, State Board of Education; Duties

New Sample Policy: January 2012

Character and Citizenship Education

Those in charge of curriculum development will have the responsibility for integrating into the curriculum, as appropriate, the following principles:

1. Each individual has dignity and worth.
2. A free society requires respect for persons, property, principles and self.
3. Each individual has a right to learn and freedom to achieve.
4. Each individual, regardless of age, gender, race, creed, color, religion, marital status, sexual orientation, national or ethnic origin, or disability, has the right to equal opportunity.
5. Each individual has the right to personal liberties.
6. Each individual is responsible for his/her own actions, and should exercise self-discipline where and when appropriate.
7. Each individual has a responsibility to the group as well as to the total society.
8. A democratic government is established by majority vote.
9. Democratic societies are based on law.
10. Problems are solved through reason and orderly processes.
11. An individual should be tolerant of another's beliefs and should have the freedom to express his/her own.
12. Each individual has the right to work, to pursue an occupation, and to gain satisfaction from personal efforts.

Teaching in the area of character and citizenship will take place throughout the K-12 program.

Legal References:

NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed [306:04\(a\)\(5\)](#), Character and Citizenship

NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed [306:04\(i\)](#), Character and Citizenship

Teaching about Religion

The Portsmouth School Board believes that the observance of religious holidays is not the responsibility of the public schools. Because a public school is not a place of worship, instructional materials, activities, decorations or assembly programs should not promote any religion. They should be seasonal, not religious.

The Board recognizes, however, that religion influences many areas of education, such as literature and history, and that teaching about religion's role in civilization does have a place in the public schools. Moreover, it is proper for teachers to teach and emphasize the generally accepted moral and ethical principles of all religions and to provide information and opportunities, which allow the study of various forms of religion. In summary, it is proper for teachers to teach about religion, rather than to teach particular sectarian beliefs.

In the process of teaching about religion, use of the Bible or other sacred documents as literary forms, or the use of music, art, drama, or other materials is acceptable. Such curricular aids should be utilized in a prudent and objective manner while teaching about the cultural and religious heritage of a particular holiday.

The use of religious symbols, provided they are used only as examples of cultural or religious heritage, is permissible as a teaching aid or resource. Religious symbols may be displayed only on a temporary basis as part of the academic program. Students may choose to create artwork with religious symbols, but teachers should not assign or require such creations. Decorations not tied to an academic program should be seasonal in nature, rather than religious.

While there are appropriate educational benefits to teaching about diverse religious traditions and cultures, teachers and administrators must avoid creating the impression that one set of holidays or beliefs is favored, or more acceptable than any other. It is imperative that tolerance of all religious beliefs, and the respect of others' rights to have different beliefs, be a central focus of those aspects of the curriculum, which touch on religion. Further, the Portsmouth School Board provides the following questions/guidelines for staff as they plan holiday activities.

- Do I have a distinct educational purpose in mind? If so, what is it? It should not be the purpose of the public schools to celebrate or observe religious holidays.
- If I use holidays as an opportunity to teach about religion, am I balanced and fair in my approach?
- Does the planned activity have the primary effect of advancing or inhibiting religion? Does it, for example, promote one faith over another or even religion in general? Remember that the school's approach should be academic not devotional. It is never appropriate for public schools to proselytize.

Health Education and Exemption from Instruction

Consistent with Department of Education requirements, health and physical education, including instruction about parts of the body, reproduction, and related topics, will be included in the instructional program.

Instruction must be appropriate to grade level, course of study, and development of students and must occur in a systematic manner. The Superintendent will provide opportunities for faculty members who present this instruction to receive continuing in-service training, conferences and workshops that include appropriate teaching strategies and techniques.

Parents/guardians will have the right to inspect and review health and physical instruction materials which will be made reasonably accessible to parents/guardians and others to the extent practicable.

Parents/guardians who wish to review or inspection health and physical education materials may arrange a meeting with the Principal to review the materials.

Opt-Out Procedure and Form:

Parents/guardians, or students over eighteen years of age, who do not want their child to participate in a particular unit of health or sex education instruction for religious or other reasons or for religious objections, are allowed to have their child opt-out of such instruction.

Parents/guardians who wish to have their child opt-out of such instruction are required to complete the district opt-out form and state the particular unit of curriculum in which the student is not to participate. Any student who is exempted by request of the parent/guardian under this policy may be given an alternative assignment sufficient to meet state requirements for health education. The alternative assignment will be provided by the health or physical education teacher in conjunction with Principal.

Parents/guardians who do not want their child to participate in a particular unit of health or physical education for religious reasons must complete a Health or Physical Education Opt-Out Form.

Opt Out Forms are available from the Principal.

Opt-out requests must be submitted annually and are valid only for the school year in which they are submitted.

Legal References:

NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed 306.40, Health Education Program

NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed 306.41, Physical Education Program

RSA 186:11, IX-b, Health and Sex Education

Health and Sex Education Exemption: Opt Out Form

I, _____ (parent/guardian) request that my child, _____ be excused from participating in certain units of health or sex education instruction based on religious objections.

I request that the District waive the class attendance of my child in a class or courses on:

- Comprehensive sex education, including in grades 6-12, instruction on the prevention, transmission, and spread of AIDS.
- Family life instruction, including in grades 6-12, instruction on the prevention, transmission, and spread of AIDS.
- Instruction on diseases.
- Recognizing and avoiding sexual abuse.
- Instruction on donor programs for organ/tissue, blood donor, and transplantation.

Please identify the grade level, class, and building. _____

I understand that I am requesting the school to excuse my child from certain units of curriculum that are required by state law. I further understand that in lieu of receiving instruction in this unit of health education, my child may be required to receive alternative learning in health education that is sufficient to enable my child to meet state requirements for health education. I further understand that this opt-out exemption is only valid for the school year in which it is signed and subsequent waivers may be necessary.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Administrator Signature

Date Received _____

Special Education Independent Evaluations

The State and Federal special education laws require that the SAU #52 school department evaluate children with disabilities who are in need of special education and related services. The department evaluates children upon referral for special education and re-evaluates educationally disabled children at least once every three years or when conditions warrant a re-evaluation.

The SAU #52 school department is committed to ensuring that each child's IEP team bases its decision on high quality, reliable and educationally sound special education evaluations. As a result, the SAU #52 school department has established the following list of criteria for all special education evaluations the department conducts, obtains or funds.

Unique circumstances may justify deviation from these criteria. If a parent or department staff member is aware of such unique circumstances, they should inform the student's special education teacher, building LEA or district's special education administrator immediately.

1. The evaluation must comply with the relevant provisions of the State and Federal Special Education Laws, including 34 C.F.R. 300.530-300.536 and NH Code of Administrative Rules Ed 1107.
2. The evaluation must be conducted in New Hampshire, by an evaluator whose principal office is located in New Hampshire, unless there is no qualified evaluator in New Hampshire.
3. The evaluator must hold a valid license or certification from the State of New Hampshire in the field related to the known or suspected disability. The evaluator must have extensive training and experience in evaluation in the area(s) of concern and be able to interpret the instructional implications of evaluation results. In instances where no "applicable license or certification" exists, the department must be satisfied that the evaluator has extensive training and experience related to the known or suspected disability.
4. All tests administered will be the current version of the test. The test must be norm referenced for the individual evaluation appropriate for the age and educational level of the child and measure the same cognitive, motoric and achievement skills as district tests, and meet the same standards of technical adequacy for reliability and validity.
5. The cost of the evaluation shall not exceed the usual and customary rate for such evaluations. The school department will not pay for the evaluation until it receives the evaluator's report.
6. The evaluator must review educational records located in the student's local public school and other relevant educational records.
7. The evaluator must either: a) observe the child in one or more educational settings; or b) make at least one contact with the child's general education teacher for the purpose of determining how the student is progressing in the general curriculum. In addition, evaluators are encouraged to make additional contacts with other involved general and special education teachers and related service providers.
8. The evaluator must be permitted to directly communicate and share information with members of the IEP team, the district's Special Education Administrator or the administrator's designees. The evaluator must also release the assessments and results, including any parent and teacher questionnaires, to members of the IEP team, the Special Education Administrator or the administrator's designees.

9. All evaluation reports will include the appropriate standardization and reporting methods as designed by the test publishers.
10. The district shall be entitled to inspect and obtain copies of the evaluator's records directly pertaining to the student being evaluated, including any records created by third parties. However, those records will not be deemed accessible to any school department personnel other than the evaluator, unless and until the district exercises its right to inspect or obtain copies of those records from the evaluator.

Parents have a right [34 C.F.R. 300.502(b)(2)] to request an independent educational evaluation at school department expense when the parent disagrees with the school department's evaluation. The provision for independent educational evaluation cannot be invoked by a parent who has refused to consent to a district evaluation.

The SAU #52 school department may deny a request for an independent educational evaluation at public expense and initiate a due process hearing to demonstrate that the district's evaluation was appropriate.

A parent always has the right to get an independent educational evaluation at his or her own expense. The team must consider the results of any independent educational evaluation, regardless of who pays for it, if the evaluation meets the district's criteria in decisions about the provision of a free and appropriate public education for the child.

Child Find Policy

The Portsmouth School Department ensures that a process of identifying, locating and evaluating all children with disabilities, including children attending private schools, and who reside within the Department's jurisdiction, will be developed and implemented in accordance with Federal and New Hampshire state legislation for the education of children with disabilities.

A Child Find Program has been developed for the Portsmouth School Department that ensures all potentially disabled children, including those attending private schools, highly mobile children with disabilities (such as migrant and homeless children) and those who are in need of special education and related services are identified, located, and evaluated.

When a child is suspected of being a child with a disability they will be referred to the Special Education Evaluation Team.

The Child Find Program includes, but is not limited to, the following guidelines:

1. Children ages 0-6 may participate in the Portsmouth School Department on-going screenings and child find activities. Screenings are designed to encourage parents, community day care providers, physicians and the public to be aware of the Department's Special Education Programs, who to contact and how to contact them for children suspected of having a disability.
2. Transitions from Early Intervention agencies into the Department's programs begin at age 2.5 for children already suspected of having a disability. These children are referred to the Pre-School IEP team for review, identification, evaluation and classification.
3. Parents, social services agencies, physicians, and other public agencies are notified annually through correspondence from the Superintendent of Schools, brochures and school newsletters of the Department's Child Find Policy.
4. Screenings include a process where trained professionals are able to identify potential academic, vision hearing, medical or language concerns. Children at-risk will be referred to a more detailed screening and/or a referral to the Department's IEP Team for an annual follow-up screening. All kindergarten children are screened by the School Department and children in grade one are screened using the Developmental Reading Assessment.
5. Students may be referred to the school's IEP Team for the following reasons:
 - (a) Failing to pass a hearing or vision screening.
 - (b) Unsatisfactory performance on a group achievement assessment or other performance measures.
 - (c) Receiving multiple academic or behavioral warnings.
 - (d) Repeatedly failing one or more subjects.
 - (e) Referral from outside agencies, parents, teachers who suspect a child may have a disability.
 - (f) Children who may have been referred to the special education process but may require further intervention.
 - (g) Private schools within the School Department's jurisdiction are notified of the Child Find Policy and referral procedures.

- (h) All private school children with disabilities, including children attending religious schools and who reside within the jurisdiction of the Portsmouth School Department, shall be located, identified and evaluated.
- (i) The activities to carry out this responsibility will be in accordance with responsibilities comparable to activities undertaken for children attending public schools.
- (j) The will annually contact representatives of private schools to determine how to undertake these activities.

Procedures Implementing Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

See Also ACE

The District provides the following Notice of Procedural Safeguards to parents/guardians and handicapped persons, as required by 34 C.F.R. Sections 104.7, 104.8, 104.22(4)(f), and 104.36 of the Regulations implementing Section 504 of The Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

The District does not discriminate on the basis of disability in admission or access to, or treatment of or employment in, its programs and activities.

The District provides a grievance procedure with appropriate due process rights. The Director of Pupil Support and Instruction is the designated employee, charged with coordinating efforts to comply with Section 504. The parent/guardian of handicapped students or any handicapped person may use the grievance procedure established by the Board.

Grievance Procedure

Parents/guardians of a student with a disability have the right to notify the above-designated employee with their complaint. Additionally, any disabled individual also has the right to notify the above-designated employee with their complaint.

The designated employee will provide an initial response within ten (10) days of receipt of the complaint. The parties will attempt to work out their differences informally in a prompt and equitable manner. A written record of the complaint resolution should be made within ten (10) working days of completion. Both parties will receive a copy of the written record. Additionally, the Superintendent will keep a copy on file.

If the issue is not resolved after the informal resolution process, the complainant may request that the Board places this matter on its agenda. This request may be made through the Superintendent.

If the Board schedules the matter for a hearing, the complainant may be represented by any person the complainant chooses, including legal counsel. The complainant may present information through documents and other evidence and witnesses, and may examine witnesses presented by the School District.

Within ten (10) working days of either of the above options, a written record should be made of the decision. Both parties will receive a copy of the written record. Additionally, the Superintendent will keep a copy on file.

Procedural Safeguards

As required by 34 C.F.R. Section 104.36, parents/guardians of a student who needs or is believed to need special instruction and related services have the right, with respect to any action regarding identification, evaluation, and placement to:

1. Notice of referral/identification, evaluation, and placement process, with appropriate consent form.
2. Examine all relevant records.

3. An impartial hearing, at any time, with respect to any actions regarding identification, evaluation, or placement of persons who need or are believed to need special education and related services; an opportunity for participation by the parent/guardian and representation of counsel as provided under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.
4. A process for reviewing complaints raised under these Procedural Safeguards. Such review process need not be formal.

Legal References:

34 C.F.R. Part 104, Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Handicap
Section 504 of The Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Extended Learning Opportunities

The Portsmouth School District shall allow students to request extended learning opportunities (“ELOs”) at the high school level as a means of meeting their diverse learning styles, talents, and interests. ELOs may include, but are not necessarily limited to, internships, independent study, on-line courses and community service. All ELOs must be aligned with District educational goals and objectives, as well as Portsmouth High School’s established academic competencies. It is anticipated that this policy will be revisited as ELO’s become recognized by more post secondary education programs.

Awarding of Credits for ELOs:

In general, students will be limited to a total of four credits for ELOs, and no more than two credits in each of their junior and senior years. ELO credit will generally only be approved for elective graduation credits and not as a replacement for Portsmouth High School core subject area graduation credits.

In order for core, subject area graduation credits to be approved for an ELO, one of the following conditions must apply:

1. The ELO is being utilized as a credit recovery opportunity for a course, which the student did not pass. In such cases, the course may fulfill a subject area credit requirement, but the grade will not be computed in the student’s GPA or class rank.
2. The course of study is not available at Portsmouth High School, but is offered on-line and is aligned with New Hampshire State education standards, GSEs and is overseen by a certified teacher. In such cases, the course may fulfill a subject area credit requirement, but the grade will not be computed in the student’s GPA or class rank.
3. A student completes a Portsmouth High School course as an independent study because the course is not offered due to low enrollment or when a student has a schedule conflict that prevents him/her from taking the course. In such cases, the course may fulfill a subject area credit requirement and the grade will be computed in the student’s GPA and class rank.

Exceptions to the conditions above may only be made with the recommendation and support of both the Principal and Guidance Director.

ELO Standards and Approval Process:

For an ELO to be approved for credit, it must meet rigorous, measurable standards comparable to Portsmouth High School course competencies. A student must have the permission of his/her parents and have a sponsoring teacher or guidance counselor (except that a sponsoring teacher/guidance counselor is not required for on-line courses taught by certified teachers).

All ELO requests require the recommendation of the Guidance Director and approval of the Principal. In cases where ELO requests are not approved for credit purposes, the Principal has the discretion to allow the ELO to be used as a prerequisite for advanced courses if the student can demonstrate the appropriate competencies for the particular course.

ELO Expenses:

Students and/or their parents shall be responsible for ELO expenses, including but not limited to tuition, textbooks, supplies and transportation and extraordinary administrative experiences. In extenuating circumstances, the District may pay a portion of the expenses. The Principal and the Superintendent must approve any such request.

Procedures:

The Portsmouth High School Principal, in consultation with appropriate school staff, shall develop procedures to implement this policy. All such procedures must be consistent with applicable laws and this policy, and be approved by the Superintendent.

Legal References:

NH Code of Admin. Rules 306.04 (a) (4); 306. 22; 306. 26(f); 306.27 (b) (4); 306.27 (q)

Alternative Learning Plans

Purpose:

In an effort to reduce the number of students who do not complete the requirements to graduate from high school and earn a diploma, the Board establishes a program for alternative learning plans for students to obtain a high school diploma or its equivalent. The District, through an Alternative Learning Plan team comprised of teachers, administrators, and guidance counselors, are directed to identify students who may be at risk for dropping out of high school, for developing alternative learning plans consistent with this policy, and for assisting students who are participating in alternative learning plans.

Alternative learning plans may include, but are not limited to, extended learning opportunities, independent study, private instruction, performing groups, internships, community service, apprenticeships, online courses/distance education, or other opportunities approved by the Superintendent or his/her designee, in conjunction with Board policies.

The purposes of alternative learning plans are to provide students with educational experiences that are meaningful, to provide students with opportunities to explore and achieve at high levels, and to meet State and District requirements to obtain a high school diploma or its equivalent. In order to maximize student achievement, this policy permits students to employ alternative learning plans that fulfill or exceed the expectations set forth by State minimum standards and applicable Board policy.

Alternative learning plans may include extended learning opportunities taken for credit or taken to supplement regular academic courses. If the alternative-learning plan includes extended learning opportunities taken for credit, the provisions of INAA, *Extended Learning Opportunities*, will apply. The granting of credit shall be based on a student's mastery of course competencies. If credit is not granted, the extended learning opportunity may be used to fulfill prerequisite requirements for other courses.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Alternative learning plan components shall have specific instructional objectives aligned with the State minimum standards and District curriculum standards. All alternative learning plans will comply with applicable laws and regulations, including child labor laws and regulations governing occupational safety.

Teachers, Guidance Counselors and Administrators should inform students of the District's promotion of alternative learning plans and similar programs. District employees who believe a student may be at risk for dropping out of high school should inform either the Principal or the Guidance Counselor of the Teacher's concerns. The Principal will then schedule a meeting with the student, the Principal, the Guidance Counselor, and the student's parent/guardian to discuss the student's participation in an alternative learning program.

Students expressing interest in pursuing such a plan or program should be referred to the Guidance Counselor, Principal, or the Principal's designee.

The Guidance Counselor or Principal's designee is responsible for assisting students and their parents/guardians in preparing application forms and other necessary paperwork for alternative learning plans. The alternative learning plan components will be determined through a team

consisting of the student, school personnel, parent/guardian and other appropriate people based on the individual student need.

The Principal or Principal's designee and the designated team will have primary responsibility and authority for approval and implementation of alternative learning plans and will oversee all aspects of such programs. The Principal will be responsible for reviewing and approving alternative learning plans and credits awarded toward the attainment of a high school diploma or its equivalent.

Parents/guardians and/or students may appeal decisions rendered by the Principal within the provisions set forth below (see Appeal Process).

Students approved for alternative learning plans must have parent/guardian permission to participate in such a program. Such permission will be granted through a Memorandum of Understanding for Educational Services signed by the parent/legal guardian and returned to the district before beginning the program. For alternative learning plans that require off-campus attendance, the District will require a signed agreement among the school, the student, and a designated agent of the third-party host. The agreement should specify the roles and responsibilities of each party.

Students engaged in alternative learning plans will remain as enrolled students of their district.

Approval Process:

1. The student/parent/guardian seeking an alternative learning plan shall meet with the guidance counselor or principal to discuss alternative learning plan options and initiate the formation of an alternative learning plan team. The team, including the student and parent/guardian, will meet to design the alternative learning plan designed to enable the student to remain enrolled in school and complete educational requirements.
2. The Superintendent or Superintendent's designee will review the paperwork and will determine whether or not to approve the alternative learning plan. The Superintendent or designee's decision will be made within ten (10) days of receipt of the paperwork. The student and parent/guardian will be notified in writing of the decision. If additional information is requested, the information must be submitted within ten (10) days of receipt of the request.
3. It is the student's responsibility to maintain academic standing and enrollment in the approved program. Any failure to complete an approved program may jeopardize the student's ability to remain in the program and receive credit towards obtaining a high school diploma or its equivalent. The student and parent/guardian recognize that in the event the student withdraws from an approved program, the District cannot guarantee placement in an equivalent District-offered course.
4. The District reserves the right to determine the number of credits to be awarded. The course name and actual grade earned will be noted on the student's official transcript.

Evaluation Criteria:

The Superintendent or designee will evaluate all applications of students wishing to participate in an alternative learning plan or program. At a minimum, any alternative learning plans must meet the following criteria:

Provides for proper administration and supervision of the program or plan

- Provides that certified school personnel oversee and monitor the program

- Requirement that each extended learning opportunity, if included in the alternative learning plan, meets rigorous standards, including the minimum standards established by the State Board of Education and all other applicable District standards
- Includes age-appropriate academic rigor and the flexibility to incorporate the student's interests and manner of learning
- Are developed and amended, if necessary, in consultation with the student, a school Guidance Counselor, the school Principal and at least one parent/guardian of the student

Appeal Process:

If the submitted plan is rejected, the Superintendent or designee will provide the student/parents with a rationale as to why the proposal was rejected. Students whose application has been denied by the Superintendent may appeal that decision to the School Board. The School Board will place the item on its agenda for its next regularly scheduled meeting. Alternatively, if scheduling and time constraints do not allow for the matter to be placed on the agenda at the Board's next meeting, the Board may hold a separate meeting to hear the matter. The matter will be discussed in non-public session, pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II, unless the parents request the Board hear the matter in public session, in which case the request will be honored. If the School Board upholds the Superintendent's determination, the decision of the School Board may be appealed to the State Board of Education, consistent with applicable law. The School Board will inform the student/parents of their appeal rights.

Program Integrity:

In order to insure the integrity of the learning experience approved under this program, the student will be required periodically or upon demand to provide evidence of progress. The Principal will be responsible for certifying completion of the plan or program and the award of credits, consistent with the District's policies on graduation.

If a student is unable to complete the alternative learning plan for valid reasons, the Principal will evaluate the experience completed to date and make a determination for the award of partial credit or recommend an alternative experience. The Principal will determine the validity of such reasons on a case-by-case basis.

If a student ceases to attend or is unable to complete alternative learning plan for insufficient reason (lack of effort, failure to follow through, indecision, etc.), the Principal may determine that the student's transcript be adjusted to reflect the experience as a failure.

In order to certify completion of curricular programs and activities based upon specific instructional objectives aligned to the standards, the Principal will develop appropriate mechanisms to document student progress and program completion on student personnel records.

Legal References:

RSA 193:1, Duty of Parent; Compulsory Attendance by Student

NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed 306.04(a) (13), Extended Learning Opportunities

NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed 306.27(b) (4), Extended Learning Opportunities – High School

Summer Activities

To promote summer learning by students, each grade level shall be provided with a suggested summer reading list, community resources such as library programs, and other activities that support student learning.

Legal Reference:

NH Code of Administrative Rules Section Ed. [306:14\(h\)](#), Instructional Program; Summer Activities That Support Student Learning

Advanced Course Work/Advanced Placement Courses

Any student who is capable of and wishes to do advanced course work or take advanced placement classes while in high school should be permitted to do so. School district administrators and guidance counselors will provide assistance to students who wish to enroll in such courses. If advanced course work or advanced placement courses are not available within the school district, administrators or guidance counselors are instructed to assist students in identifying alternative means of taking such classes. These means may include taking courses at a different public school or a private school, or through distance education courses or other suitable means.

Any student whose eligibility for taking advanced course work is recommended by his/her counselor may enroll in a course. Credit may be given, provided the course comports with applicable District policies and state standards. The District will not be responsible for any tuition, fees, or other associated costs incurred by the student for enrollment in such courses.

Legal References:

NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed 306.14(g), Advanced Course Work

Schedules

The principal shall be responsible for the development of the master schedule, to include assignment of teachers and students, and approved by the Superintendent of Schools.

Legal References:

N.H. Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed [306.26\(b\)](#), Local Time Schedule

Subject Areas

Each school level shall provide instruction in the following subject areas:

Elementary

1. Reading/Literacy
2. Mathematics
3. Music, Performing Arts, and Visual Arts
4. Science
5. Social Studies
6. Physical and Health Education
7. Technology

Middle School:

1. Language Arts
2. Social Studies
3. Mathematics
4. Physical and Health Education
5. Music, Performing Arts, and Visual Arts
6. Physical and Natural Science
7. Fundamentals of International Languages
8. Technology

High School:

1. English
2. Mathematics
3. Social Studies
4. Science
5. Technology
6. Physical Education and Health
7. Music, Performing Arts, and Visual Arts
8. International Languages
9. Business & Consumer Science
10. Career Education

Instruction in additional subject areas may be determined at each level in order to provide a child specific education for children of all abilities.

Legal References:

N.H. Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed [306.26\(a\)\(2\)](#), Kindergarten through Grade 8 Curriculum, Instructional Program

N.H. Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed [306.27\(b\)\(3\)](#), High School Curriculum, Instructional Program

Community Resources

See Also: KA, KC

The School Board recognizes the importance of having a strong partnership between the school system and the parents of our students as well as the community at large. It is therefore the policy of the Board to define standards for involvement between the schools, the community, and the parents of all students enrolled in District schools. The Superintendent is directed to implement these standards.

- District schools are a welcoming place, clearly accessible to parents and the community.
- Communication between home and school is regular, two-way and meaningful.
- Parents are full partners in the educational decisions that affect children and families.
- Parents will be encouraged to visit their schools for beginning of the year events such as "Open House" and new student orientations. These events will be used to disseminate information on school policies, discipline procedures, assessment tools and school goals.
- Opportunities are provided to guide parents on ways to assist with homework, give feedback to teachers, and how parents can help their children improve skills and perform well on assessments.
- Parents are encouraged to attend school-sponsored parent workshops to learn about parenting skills, health, safety, nutrition, home environments that support education and other topics of child and adolescent development throughout the year.
- Reasonable efforts will be made to communicate with parents in their primary language or in the language in which they feel comfortable.
- For the purposes of this policy, the term "parent" refers to any adult – mother, father, older sibling, aunt, uncle, grandparent, and guardian, mentor – who plays a significant role in the care of a student or students enrolled in District Schools.
- Students and parents will receive information regarding cultural, recreational, academic, health, social and other resources that serve families within the community.
- The support of area businesses, agencies and faith-based organizations will be sought through financial, goods and services, and volunteer contributions.
- Partnerships will be developed with local organizations, local city and county governments, and talented individuals to strengthen school programs, family practices and student learning.
- Student participation in community service will be encouraged.
- Business partnerships will also be developed to assist students in the successful transition to employment or further education.

Legal References:

NH Code of Administration Rules, Section Ed 306.04(a)(11), Community Partnerships

NH Code of Administration Rules, Section Ed 306.04(k), Community Partnerships

Field Trips

General:

The Portsmouth School Board supports field trips that:

- Meet educational objectives and related to the curriculum;
- Fulfill obligations in inter-scholastic activities; and
- Allow participants and non-participants to carry on their schoolwork with a minimum of lost school time.

The building principal may authorize field trips, with notification to the Superintendent of Schools and upon compliance with field trip request procedures.

Permission for Field Trips:

The teacher, in requesting permission to take a class off school grounds on a field trip, should submit the details of the trip to the Principal pursuant to the field trip request procedures. Upon authorization of a field trip, a signed permission form by the parent or guardian is required for each student participating in the trip. No student may leave the school grounds on a field trip unless a parent or guardian has properly signed the form.

Permission forms of those participating in the field trip shall be maintained on file at the direction of the Principal.

Financial arrangements for field trips must be made prior to the trip at the direction of the Principal. If fees are involved, all necessary funds must be submitted to the Principal prior to the trip.

Transportation for field trips shall be on a certified school bus with a certified bus driver wherever possible. If transportation is by private vehicle, proof of insurance is required in the amount of \$100,000/\$300,000 in bodily injury and \$100,000 in property damage liability.

A report shall be made to the Office of the Superintendent of Schools on the day students will be offsite on field trips.

Out of State Trips and Overnight Trips, including On-Site Overnight Events:

Requests for permission for out-of-state, overnight trips and on-site overnight events shall be made to the Superintendent of Schools.

Requests for permission must:

- Be made at least one month prior to the proposed trip or event
- Be made by the Principal, advisor and student (where applicable);
- Include signed permission slips
- Include arrangements for transportation
- Include the staff to student ratio, including non-school chaperones
- Include a list, by name, of non-school chaperones
- Include cost of trip and any fundraising activities associated with financing the trip
- State the educational objective and how it is related to the curriculum

Upon satisfactory completion of the foregoing, the Superintendent is authorized to grant permission for the trip, subject to final approval by the School Board. The Superintendent may consider other factors in the decision to grant permission including security for the students and staff on the trip.

Motor vehicle transportation for trips shall be on a certified school bus with a certified bus driver wherever possible. If transportation is by private vehicle, proof of insurance is required in the amount of \$100,000/\$300,000 in bodily injury and \$100,000 in property damage liability.

Post trip:

Within two weeks of the completion of the trip there shall be a follow-up meeting with the Superintendent to insure that all objectives were met.

Volunteers

The Portsmouth School Department recognizes the valuable contribution made to the total school program through the volunteer assistance of parents and other citizens.

Volunteers serve in the capacity of assistants and shall not be assigned to any role that requires specific professional training. Instructional services shall be rendered under the supervision of certified staff.

Volunteers should receive appropriate training at the building level, consistent with their tasks and existing District standards. This training should be developed under the leadership of the principal in consultation with the professional staff member overseeing the volunteer. This shall include, but not be limited to: general responsibilities and information about school facilities, routines and procedures, including safety and evacuation and the importance of confidentiality.

All volunteers shall sign annually a confidentiality agreement, and refrain from discussing the performance or actions of a student except with the student's teacher, counselor or Principal. Principals shall cause all "designated volunteers" to undergo a background check and procedures for a criminal records check.

A volunteer may be terminated when the program and/or duties are no longer needed or in the sole judgment of the administration, his/her conduct does not meet the standards of the district.

Volunteers should only function under the direct supervision of a school employee.

Volunteer coaches of individual sports must be certified in that sport and be in compliance with the Standards set by NHIAA.

Designated Volunteers:

Designated volunteers will be required to undergo a background investigation and criminal records check as outlined in Policy GBDC: Background Investigation and Criminal Records "Designated volunteer" means any volunteer who

1. Meet with students on a one-on one basis;
2. Assists with any **seasonal** co-curricular or extra-curricular activity.
3. Any other volunteer so designated by the School Board or Superintendent.

Legal Reference

RSA 189:13-a, School Employee Volunteer Background Investigations

Earning of Credit

Students can earn course credit by demonstrating mastery of the required coursework and material. Mastery is defined as: sufficient evidence of attainment of the required content, concepts, and skills of a particular course. Student assessment of mastery is the responsibility of the building principal.

Credit will be awarded upon satisfactory demonstration and mastery of the required course competencies. Additionally, credit may also be awarded if a student is able to demonstrate learning experience in compliance with the district-specified curriculum and assessment standards.

Legal References:

NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed 306.04(a)(14), Earning of Credit

NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed 306.14(f), Awarding of Credit

NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed 306.27(d), Mastery of Required Competencies

Interdisciplinary Credit

High school students may earn course credit in one content area required for graduation, and apply said credit in a different content area through the awarding of interdisciplinary credit. Interdisciplinary credit may be counted only once in meeting graduation requirements.

The high school Principal or designee is charged with approving courses for interdisciplinary credit if: (1) the course has been adopted by a faculty team/committee; and (2) the course addresses the objectives for the subject area in which the credit is to be counted.

Legal References:

NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed 306.04(a)(14), Earning of Credit

NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed 306.14(f), Awarding of Credit

NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed 306.27(d), Mastery of Required Competencies

NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed 306.27(p), Counting Credits

Changing Student Grades

Every teacher shall maintain an evaluation record for each student in the teachers' respective classes. Parents/guardians if a student, or the student him/herself if the student is 18 years of age or older, may request to have his/her grade changed only for grades on final exams or grades at the end of a marking period.

Final grades can only be changed for the following reasons:

1. A miscalculation of test scores;
2. A technical error in assigning a particular grade or score;
3. The teacher agrees to allow the student to do extra work that may impact the grade;
4. The inappropriate grading system used to determine the grade; or
5. An inappropriate grade based on an appropriate grading system.

Administrators will not change the final grade assigned by the teacher without first notifying the teacher. Additionally, the Superintendent is charged with promulgating administrative rules to be followed when a request for a change is letter grade made.

Homework

Homework is a constructive tool in the teaching/learning process when geared to the needs and abilities of students. Purposeful assignments not only enhance student achievement, but also develop self-discipline and associated good working habits. As an extension of the classroom, homework must be planned and organized, must be viewed as purposeful to the students, and should be evaluated and returned to students in a timely manner.

Teachers may give homework to students to aid in the student's educational development. Teachers may assign homework as part of their curriculum. If homework is to be used by teachers as part of a student's grade, the teacher will explain to students how such homework assignments relate to the teacher's grading system. Homework should be an application or adaptation of a classroom experience, and should not be assigned for disciplinary purposes.

Legal References:

NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed 306.14(b), Policy on Homework

Promotion or Retention of Students

The decision to promote or retain a student shall be considered on an individual basis. In the event that the professional staff is considering retention, parents should be notified as early in the process as possible.

A decision to retain a student shall be made with input by pertinent school staff to include the principal, teachers, guidance, reading, special education staff, nurse or any other professional staff knowledgeable about the student and the parents or legal guardian.

The decision should consider the following factors:

1. Academic achievement
2. Intellectual development
3. Developmental and chronological aspects
4. Social development

The final decision to promote or retain the student shall be made by the principal and the decision may not be appealed. The results of any conference regarding retention must be summarized in writing and included as part of the student's cumulative record. The conference summary must include those who attended the meeting, major concerns presented, and the rationale for the decision. Parents shall be given a copy of the meeting summary.

The final decision to promote a student shall be made by the principal and that decision shall be final.

Graduation Requirements

Students will receive a Portsmouth High School Diploma upon the completion of the following:

- The completion of the Individual Education Plan and upon the recommendation of the Student's Evaluation/Placement Team, the Principal of the High School and the Student Services Director for those students with an identified disability pursuant to the New Hampshire Rules for the Education of Children with Disabilities.

OR

- Twenty-six (26) credits have been completed in the areas indicated.

| | | |
|--|---|-------------------|
| ENGLISH | | 4 CREDITS |
| SCIENCE Including: | | 3 CREDITS |
| 1 CREDIT IN | PHYSICAL OR BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES | |
| SOCIAL STUDIES Including: | | 3 CREDITS |
| 1 CREDIT IN | US HISTORY AND NH HISTORY | |
| ½ CREDIT IN | US AND NH GOVERNMENT/CIVICS, WORLD HISTORY, GLOBAL STUDIES OR GEOGRAPHY | |
| MATHEMATICS Including an algebra credit that can be earned through a sequential, integrated or applied program. | | 3 CREDITS |
| ECONOMICS | | ½ CREDIT |
| PHYSICAL EDUCATION | | 1 CREDIT |
| COMPUTER COURSE | | ½ CREDIT |
| FINE ARTS EDUCATION (Drama, music, visual arts, architecture, media or dance) | | ½ CREDIT |
| HEALTH EDUCATION | | ½ CREDIT |
| ELECTIVES | | 10 CREDITS |
| MINIMUM CREDITS TO GRADUATE | | 26 CREDITS |

Legal References:

NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed [306.04\(a\)\(14\)](#), How Credit Can Be Earned

N.H. Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed [306.14\(f\)](#), Awarding of Credit for Required Subjects and Open Electives

N.H. Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed [306.27\(d\)](#), Mastery of Required Competencies

N.H. Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed [306.27\(m\)](#), Credits Required for Graduation

Early Graduation

The Board supports early graduation as a means to earn a high school diploma. Parental approval for students under the age of 18 is required. The high school principal shall approve such requests if he/she determines that all state and local graduation requirements will be met.

Legal References:

NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed 306.04(a)(14), Earning of Credit

NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed 306.14(f), Awarding of Credit

NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed 306.27(d), Mastery of Required Competencies

Awards for Achievement

Staff may recognize student scholastic and distinguished service achievements through awards. No offer of award will be accepted by the School Board that discriminates on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, or sex.

The professional staff is authorized to review, approve or reject proposed awards (trophies, prizes, scholarships or other awards from non-school donors) based upon all of the following criteria being met:

1. The proposed award is free from motives of personal or corporate gain and publicity
2. The criteria and process for making the award is under the control of the Portsmouth School Department
3. The purpose of the award is consistent with the mission of the Portsmouth School Department

The offering of trophies, prizes or awards from persons or organizations not affiliated with the School Department is permitted upon the approval from the Superintendent of Schools.

Evaluation of the Instructional Program

Evaluation:

Faculty and the administration shall regularly evaluate the education program. Such evaluation is expected to lead to recommendations to the Board for modifications of best practices, changes to the curriculum and for new courses.

The Assistant Superintendent of Schools shall be primarily responsible for the coordination and the development process of the curriculum working closely with the Curriculum Council. All staff are expected to participate in curriculum development.

New Course Recommendation:

- All new courses shall be approved by the School Board
- New courses shall be planned by the faculty and approved by the Administration and Curriculum Council
- New courses shall be planned by the faculty and approved by the Administration and Curriculum Council
- Courses may be offered on a trial basis if recommended by the Administration and approved by the School Board
- The Assistant Superintendent shall make periodic reports to the School Board on the status of curriculum development activities

Legal References:

NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed [306.08](#), Instructional Resources

NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed [306.14\(e\)](#), Basic Instructional Standards

Assessment of Educational Programs

The Superintendent will develop and manage an assessment program that provides ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of the curriculum on improving student performance. The program must adhere to the processes for selection, use, and interpretation of assessment instruments specified below. This program will include both local and statewide assessment tools. The program must be aligned with the goals of the School Department and be designed to assess each student's progress toward meeting the defined curriculum objectives.

Definitions:

For the purposes of assessment of high school course work through the demonstration of student mastery of course competencies, the following definitions are established:

Course Level Competency: the expected content, concepts, and skills to be mastered in a course.

Competency Assessment: the process by which a student demonstrates sufficient evidence of learning.

Mastery: a student presenting sufficient evidence of attainment of the required competencies.

Selection of Assessment Instruments:

The selection process will include input from the professional staff in its efforts to investigate new assessment tools and evaluate existing ones. Assessment instruments selected will provide an authentic evaluation of student learning outcomes through multiple formative and summative assessment instruments including, but not limited to, teacher observation of project-based learning, including off-site learning projects; competency-based assessments; and teacher-designed quizzes and tests. Additional instruments may include written examinations, oral examinations, alternative questions, demonstrations, writing exercises, individual projects, group projects, performances, student portfolios, and samples of the student's best works.

Administration and Use of Assessment Instruments:

Each building principal will provide assurance that test procedures are followed at the school level, including the distribution and collection of test materials, test security, use of test results and testing dates as well as other pertinent requirements. Readiness assessment shall be administered to all children entering first grade. Disabled students must be provided the opportunity to participate in all student assessments. Any modifications in administration should be made and documented during the Individualized Education Program (IEP) review.

Assessment Results:

Assessment results will be analyzed and used with other data for the following purposes:

- To identify individual student strengths and weaknesses in skill development;
- To diagnose strengths and weaknesses of groups;
- To individualize instruction;
- To report progress to parents;
- To select curriculum materials;

- To set the pace of instruction;
- To select methods of instruction;
- To counsel students;
- To help determine revisions needed in the curriculum.

Interpretation of Assessment Instruments:

The Superintendent or designee is responsible for the scores of individual students and they shall be made available only to appropriate personnel within the school in which the student is enrolled and to parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of each student as provided by law. Interpretation of test results shall be made available to parents and students.

The Board will provide funding for the student assessment program, including professional development for teachers in the use of tools to understand assessment results, to adjust instruction to meet personalized needs of students, and to monitor progress.

The Superintendent will provide an ongoing evaluation of the assessment program, and will provide regular reports to the Board showing the effectiveness of the curriculum on improving student performance.

Evaluation of Assessment Instruments:

The Superintendent will evaluate the instructional programs annually in accordance with Board policies and state guidelines. He/she shall have the responsibility to report annually to the Board on the progress the District is making towards the attainment of its educational goals.

Legal References:

RSA 193-C, Statewide Education Improvement and Assessment Program

NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed 306.24(b)(1), Local Assessment

NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed 306.24(c)(4), Evaluation of Curriculum

High School Graduation Competencies

Course credit will be awarded through the demonstration of a student's evidencing of the competencies of the course. Grades and credit granted through demonstration of competence will be included in the student's grade point average. Students must be enrolled in the particular course in order to receive course credit.

"Competencies" means student learning targets that represent key content-specific concepts, skills, and knowledge applied within or across content domains. Specific and required types of competencies include district competencies and graduation competencies.

Students who are involved in an approved extended learning opportunity to satisfy course requirements in whole or in part shall demonstrate mastery through a method or methods as approved by the course instructor, as specified in Policy IHBH.

The Superintendent shall establish rules for implementing this policy in cooperation with the high school Principal and shall be responsible for ensuring that all high school courses include appropriate competency assessments. Competency Assessments will be selected, conducted, and reviewed in conjunction with the provisions of Policy ILBA.

Assessments shall be aligned with clearly defined educational standards that specify what students should know and be able to do. The assessment items and tasks shall be valid and appropriate representations of the standards students are expected to achieve.

Legal References:

Ed 306.02(d), Competencies

Ed 306.02(g), District competencies

Ed 306.02(j), Graduation competencies

Ed 306.02(l), Mastery

Ed 306.04(a)(16), Tracking Achievement of Graduation Competencies

Ed 306.04(a)(25), (26), Graduation competencies

Ed 306.141(a)(6), Achievement of District and Graduation Competencies

Daily Physical Activity

The Board recognizes that developmentally appropriate daily physical activity, exercise and physical education are ways to minimize health risks created by chronic inactivity, childhood obesity, and other related health problems. The Board recommends that students and staff participate in developmentally appropriate physical activity and exercise at for at least 30 to 60 minutes each day as a way to minimize these health risks. The Board recommends the following practices:

- (1) Encourage parents/guardians to support their children's participation in enjoyable physical activities, and recognize that parents/guardians act as role models for active lifestyles;
- (2) Support special programs such as student and staff walking programs, family fitness events, and events that emphasize lifelong physical activity;
- (3) Integrate health and physical activity across the school curriculum;
- (4) Encourage student-initiated activities that promote inclusive physical activity on a school-wide basis;
- (5) Commit adequate resources that include program funding, personnel, safe equipment, and facilities;
- (6) Provide professional development opportunities for all school staff that will assist them to effectively promote enjoyable and lifelong physical activity among youth, and that will help school staff recognize their influence as role models for active lifestyles;
- (7) Establish relationships with community recreation and youth sports programs and agencies to coordinate and complement physical activity programs;
- (8) Encourage physical activity recess periods; and
- (9) Periodically evaluate programs so that all students are engaging in developmentally appropriate daily physical activity.

Legal References:

RSA [189:11-a](#), Food and Nutrition Programs

NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed [306.04\(a\)\(15\)](#), Daily Physical Activity

NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed [306.04\(l\)](#), Daily Physical Activity

NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed [310](#), Daily Physical Activity

High School Credit for 7th/8th Grade Coursework

Students in 7th or 8th grade may take advanced courses and apply the credit of those courses toward high school graduation, provided the course demonstrates content requirements consistent with related high school courses and the student achieves satisfactory standards of performance. School Board policies relative to assessment, mastery and competency shall apply.

Upon enrollment in the class, parents need to opt out of the course being taken for credit by their student. The high school principal shall approve such course work and credit prior to the student enrolling in the class in order for such credit to be applied toward high school graduation. Completion of the course, grades and credits earned shall be noted on the transcript, but shall not be calculated in the student's GPA.

Portsmouth High School shall maintain a list of approved courses available to 7th and 8th grade students to take for credit.

Legal References:

Ed 306.26(f), Granting High School Credit for 7th/8th Grade Coursework (until July 1, 2017)

Ed 306.261(e), Granting High School Credit for 7th/8th Grade Coursework (after July 1, 2017)

Animals in the Classroom

The Board recognizes that under the proper conditions, animals can be an effective teaching aid. In order to protect both children and animals, the following guidelines are adopted for use in all schools in the district.

1. The bringing of animals into the classroom must not violate city/state/federal ordinances.
2. The only animals and animal products (e.g., owl feces for dissection) allowed in a classroom must be for a specific and appropriate educational purpose and shall be allowed for the amount of time necessary to achieve the educational goal.
3. Precautions should be taken to minimize transmission of all diseases and injuries (e.g., Salmonella, rabies, ringworm, bites, scratches, etc.)
4. All animals must be in good physical condition and vaccinated against transmittable diseases. Dogs, cats, and ferrets require proof of current rabies vaccination. Animals are to be kept clean and free of intestinal parasites, fleas, ticks, mites, and lice.
5. Certain groups of people may be more susceptible to diseases, including infants, children, pregnant women, and those with weakened immune systems. Consult with parents to determine special considerations needed for children who are immune compromised, who have allergies, or who have asthma.
6. The teacher will be responsible for the proper control of animals brought to school for instructional purposes, including the effective protection of children when animals are in the school. This will include keeping the animal in an appropriate cage or container, supervising human-animal contact, and handling fecal material in a sanitary manner.
7. No animals are to be allowed to run freely in the classrooms, food areas, or activity areas.
8. Areas should be designated for animal contact. Such areas should be properly cleaned regularly and after animal contact. Food or drink should not be consumed in these areas.
9. All fecal material must be cleaned from the cage of any mammal or bird on an as needed basis (at a minimum of one time per week), and appropriate sanitizer used. Reptiles, fish, and insects must be cared for in a manner to minimize odor and maintain health. Teachers shall be responsible for cleaning cages and must wear gloves, masks, and glasses or goggles.
10. Wash hands after contact with animals, animal products, or their environment. Hand hygiene should be stressed, using verbal and written educational materials.
11. Certain animals pose additional risks and contact should not be permitted with students.
12. Wild or exotic animals are not permitted in classrooms, unless under the control of a professional.

It will be the responsibility of the teacher to provide for a plan of care for classroom housed animals in the event of an emergency school closing which might cause disruption of the routine care of the animals. In each school where these animals are housed, there should be a plan

whereby the staff member who visits the school daily during the emergency closing will be aware of the animals' presence and see to their care. If no staff member visits the school daily in such circumstances, the teacher is responsible for the daily care of the animal(s).

Teachers must be contacted prior to having animals in their classroom. No animal shall be at school unless the teacher involved is familiar with the appropriate care, feeding, and handling of that animal and of any potential dangers caused by that animal. It shall be the responsibility of the teacher to become familiar with each animal as it relates to the well being of the individual students in that particular classroom.

The principal shall be advised of any animals to be housed in the classroom. At the principal's discretion, permission to keep the animal may be denied based on these considerations: (1) the purpose for the animal's presence, (2) the ability of the teacher to control the animal, and/or (3) the past practice in the classroom.

Unauthorized Animals on School Grounds

Unauthorized animals are not allowed in school buildings or on school grounds. Children and staff will be instructed to keep their own animals off the school grounds. The appropriate town official will be called and requested to impound all animals taken into custody by school personnel.

The Superintendent shall develop procedures stating which animals are unauthorized as well as proper handling and caging procedures of animals in buildings or on school grounds.

Legal References:

National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians, Inc., Compendium of measures to Prevent Disease Associated with Animals in Public Settings, 2006.

<http://www.nasphv.org/documentsCompendia.html>

Service Animals

Purpose:

This policy addresses the use of service animals within school buildings and on school grounds. As established and defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act and its accompanying regulations, individuals with disabilities shall be permitted to bring their service animals in school buildings or on school grounds in accordance with this policy. Conditions relative to pets and non-service animals within the school building and on school grounds are found in Board Policy IMG.

“Service Animal” Defined:

In accordance with 28 CFR 35.104 (effective March 15, 2011) a “service animal” is defined as:

Any dog that is individually trained to do or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability. Other species of animals, whether wild or domestic, trained or untrained, are not service animals for the purpose of this definition. The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the handler’s disability. Examples of work or tasks include, but are not limited to, assisting individuals who are blind or who have low vision with navigation and other tasks, alerting individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing to the presence of people or sounds, providing non-violent protection or rescue work, pulling a wheelchair, assisting an individual during a seizure, alerting individuals to the presence of allergens, retrieving items such as medicine or telephone, providing physical support and assistance with balance and stability to individuals with mobility disabilities, and helping persons with psychiatric and neurological disabilities by preventing or interrupting impulsive or destructive behaviors. The crime deterrent effects of an animal’s presence and the provision of emotional support, well-being, comfort, or companionship do not constitute work or task for the purpose of this definition.

This definition shall be construed to include a “hearing ear dog,” “guide dog,” or “service dog,” as those terms are currently defined in NH RSA 167-D:3.

Permissible Inquires:

The District will not make the inquiry about the nature or extent of an individual’s disability in determining whether to allow a service animal in a school building or on school grounds. When it is not patently obvious as to the role of the service animal, the District may ask whether the animal is required because of a disability and what work or task the animal has been trained to perform.

When a student or employee’s disability requires the presence of a service animal in a school building or on school grounds during the school day, the District shall also require annual submission of proof of current vaccinations and immunizations of the service animal and a current veterinary health certificate.

Access to the School Buildings and Grounds:

In accord with federal regulations, individuals with disabilities shall be permitted to be accompanied by their service animal in all areas of District schools, where members of the public, participants in services, programs, or invitees, as relevant, are allowed to go.

Animals for Children with Educational Disabilities or a Section 504 Plan:

If a student with an educational disability or a Section 504 Plan seeks to bring an animal on a school campus that is not a service animal, the request shall be referred to the IEP or Section 504 Team to determine whether the animal is necessary for the student to receive a free and appropriate education (FAPE).

Management of Service Animals:

Service animals must be under control of their handlers. A service animal shall have a harness, leash, or other tether, unless either the handler is unable because of a disability to use a harness, leash, or other tether, or the use of a harness, leash, or tether would interfere with the service animal's safe, effective performance of work or tasks, in which case the service animal must be otherwise under the handler's control (e.g., voice control, signals, or other effective means).

Care of and Responsibility for Service Animals:

The District is not responsible for the care or supervision of a service animal. The owner or handler of the service animal shall be solely responsible for:

- Supervision and care of the animal, including feeding, exercising, clean-up and stain removal;
- Restraint of the animal at all times;
- Damages to the school buildings, property and vehicles caused by the animal;
- Injuries to students, employees, volunteers and visitors caused by the animal; and
- Annual submission of documentation of vaccinations and immunizations

Animals for Employees:

Use of a service animal by a qualified employee with a disability will be allowed when such use is necessary to enable the employee to perform the essential functions of his/her position or to enjoy the benefits of employment in a manner comparable to those similarly situated non-disabled employees.

Circumstances Under Which a Service Animal Will Be Prohibited from Campus:

The Superintendent or other designee may ask an individual with a disability to remove a service animal from the campus or school event, or may even deny a request for use of a service animal on campus or at a school event if:

- The animal is out of control and the animal's handler does not take effective action to control it;
- The animal is not housebroken;
- The presence of the animal will require a fundamental alternation of the program or will significantly disrupt or interfere with the educational process;
- When the animal is to be used regularly during the school day or at school events, the handler fails to submit proof of current vaccinations and immunizations of the service

animal and a current veterinary health certificate;

- To the extent applicable, the handler fails to comply with NH RSA 167-D.

If an animal is properly removed or prohibited from the premises, the District will continue to give the individual with a disability the opportunity to participate in District services, programs, or activities without having the service animal on the premises.

A decision to remove or prohibit a service animal from District schools may be appealed to the Superintendent of Schools.

Legal References

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act – 29 U.S.C. 794

Americans with Disabilities Act – 42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.

Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability, Title 28 CFR Part 35, Part 36 NH RSA 167-D