



TO: Candy deCsipkes, Naomi Ledbetter

FROM: Cynthia Alexander

DATE: March 29, 2018

RE: Policy Review – April 6, 2018 Meeting

The Policy Sub-Committee is scheduled to meet on Friday, April 6, 2018 at 8:30 a.m. at the RSU5 Central Office.

**Agenda**

IIB – Class Size

BEDBA – Agenda Format - Review

IKFA – Early Graduation

IMBB – Exemption from Required Instruction

IHCDA – Post-Secondary Enrollment Options

JEA – Compulsory Attendance

## Class Size

The RSU No. 5 Board of Directors recognizes that there is a relationship between class size and pupil achievement and that this relationship varies greatly across grade levels, among subjects and by methods of instruction. Therefore, the recommended class size in the elementary and secondary schools shall be determined by several variables including grade level, subject area, nature of the pupils in the classroom, nature of the learning objectives, availability of classroom space, instructional methods and procedures used, skills, classroom space, strengths of the teachers and support staff, and budgetary constraints.

Keeping all of these variables in mind, the following student-teacher ratio targets shall serve as a general guide for the organization of classes in the elementary and secondary schools.

Grade Level/Span	Target	Threshold Action Level
Pre-K	16 to 1 *	<u>16 *</u>
K-2	18 to 1	20 to 1
3-5	20 to 1	22 to 1
6-8	21 to 1	24 to 1

\*Chapter 124 maximum class size for Pre-K is held at 16.

Higher class sizes will be allowed for the scheduling of large group instruction for special classes including: fine arts, physical education, instrumental and/or choral music and other special instructional arrangements.

Special Education teacher-student ratios are to be in compliance with Special Education caseload rules and State standards.

~~When any elementary or middle school class size clearly exceeds above ratios (by 2 or more students) or any high school course falls below a 5:1 ratio, the principal shall notify the superintendent. The superintendent, in consultation with the principal, shall consider options to resolve the issue.~~

The Superintendent and the building principal shall strive to achieve a student to teacher ratio closest to the target ratio. When any actual student to teacher ratio exceeds or is expected to exceed the above Target ratio for its respective Grade Level/span or any high school course falls below a 5 to 1 student to teacher ratio, the building principal shall consult with the Superintendent and consider options to resolve the issue.

Options may include, but are not limited to:

- No action required;
- Assigning additional staff; or
- Transferring some students to a different class; or
- Canceling the course; or
- Taking no action.

In no instance shall the Threshold Action Level ratio be exceeded without notification to the RSU No. 5 Board of Directors. When any actual student to teacher ratio meets or is expected to meet the above Threshold Action Level ratio for its respective Grade Level/Span, the Superintendent, in consultation with the Building Principal, shall inform the RSU No 5 Board of Directors and either:

- Assign additional staff.
- Transfer some students to a different class, or
- Take no action.

Decisions on staff assignments shall always be to best meet the needs of the students with the understanding that Board approval will be required to hire any additional staff.

The superintendent's decision will be communicated to the RSU No. 5 Board of Directors with the understanding that Board approval will be required to hire any additional staff.

The Superintendent will update the Board on enrollment twice a year at a Board meeting: once in September and once during budget season.

Adopted:

## AGENDA FORMAT

The order of business at regular Board of Directors meetings shall be as follows:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <del>A. Call to Order</del>  | <u>1. Call to Order</u>                         |
| <del>B. Pledge of Allegiance</del>                                 | <u>2. Attendance</u>                            |
| <del>C. Attendance</del>   | <u>3. Pledge of Allegiance</u>                  |
| <del>D. Consideration of Minutes</del>                             | <u>4. Consideration of Minutes</u>              |
| <del>E. Adjustments to the Agenda</del>                            | <u>5. Adjustments to the Agenda</u>             |
| <del>F. Good News &amp; Recognition</del>                          | <u>6. Good News &amp; Recognition</u>           |
| <del>G. Reports from Administrators/Education<br/>Committees</del> | <u>7. Public Comments</u>                       |
| <del>H. Report from Superintendent</del>                           | <u>8. Reports from Superintendent</u>           |
| <del>I. Public Comments</del>                                      | <u>9. Administrator Reports</u>                 |
| <del>J. Unfinished Business</del>                                  | <u>10. Board Comments and Committee Reports</u> |
| <del>K. New Business</del>   | <u>11. Policy Review</u>                        |
| <del>L. Financial Reports</del>                                    | <u>12. Unfinished Business</u>                  |
| <del>M. Communications</del>                                       | <u>13. New Business</u>                         |
| <del>N. Board Comments</del>                                       | <u>14. Personnel</u>                            |
| <del>O. Personnel</del>  | <u>15. Public Comments</u>                      |
| <del>P. Policy Review</del>  | <u>16. Adjournment</u>                          |
| Q. Adjournment   |   |

The order of business may be altered or items added or deleted from the agenda by a majority **vote** of Board members present.

Cross Reference: BEDB - Agenda Preparation and Dissemination

Adopted: November 18, 2009  
Reviewed: March 23, 2011  
Reviewed: January 22, 2014  
Revised: \_\_\_\_\_

## EARLY GRADUATION

All students are required to enroll in a minimum of 6 full-time subjects each school year. However, this does not eliminate the possibility of students graduating after completing three years of high school.

Junior students who acquire credits in all courses required by the state and the school unit, which gives a total accumulation of 22 units, may receive their high school diplomas at the end of the junior year.

Before registration for the junior year, the student and parent/guardian must notify the high school administration, in writing, that they wish the student to complete his/her high school requirements at the conclusion of the student's junior year.

After this notification, and prior to registering for courses, the student and parent/guardian will have a conference with the Principal/designee and guidance counselor to discuss the request.

The student will be awarded a high school diploma at the conclusion of the student's junior year if all courses are successfully completed, if the student has met State standards and other local requirements, and if the student and parent or guardian fully approve at that time.

Students who enroll after the junior year in a college from which credits are transferred back to the high school are also eligible to receive a high school diploma after all credits have been earned. Prior to the conclusion of the junior year, the student and parent/guardian will notify the high school administration, in writing, that they wish the student to complete his/her high school requirements at a college where the student has been accepted. The student and parent/guardian will confer with the Principal and guidance counselor to agree on a course of study that will fulfill high school requirements. On successful completion of the courses, the student will be awarded a high school diploma.

Cross Reference:     IKF – Graduation Requirements  
                          IKFC – High School Credits for Pre-High School Courses

Adopted:     February 24, 2010  
Reviewed:    December 12, 2012

## **EXEMPTION FROM REQUIRED INSTRUCTION**

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

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

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

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

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

- A. The alignment of the curriculum with the system of Learning Results;
- B. Whether the course or content area is required by state law or Board policy;
- C. The educational importance of the material or instruction from which exemption is requested;
- D. Evidence regarding the sincerity of the belief on which the request is based;
- E. Whether the school has a legal obligation to accommodate the exemption request;
- F. The effect of exemption or accommodation on the validity of the local assessment system; and
- G. Other factors that bear upon the particular request.

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

When the Principal determines that the curriculum that has been aligned with the system of Learning Results conflicts with sincerely held religious beliefs of a student or his/her parent or legal guardian, reasonable accommodation in the curriculum shall be made for the student, within the scope of existing resources. Alternative instruction may be provided by the school or through approved independent study. Any alternative instruction shall be approved in advance by the Principal in consultation with appropriate instructional staff and shall meet the standards and objectives of the part of the curriculum that is being replaced. When requests for exemption from required curriculum are made for religious reasons, a parent/guardian who is dissatisfied with the Principal's decision may appeal to the Superintendent. If the accommodation in the curriculum that is requested is so great that the validity of the local assessment system is compromised, the Superintendent will determine how to address the situation, subject to the approval of the Commissioner.

When a student is exempted from any portion of the regular curriculum for other than religious reasons (exemption based on sincere philosophical or moral beliefs), the staff will make reasonable efforts, within the scope of existing resources, to accommodate alternative instruction for the student. Alternative instruction may be provided by the school or through approved independent study. Any alternative instruction shall be approved in advance by the Principal in consultation with the classroom teacher, and shall meet the standards and objectives of the part of the curriculum that is being replaced. When requests for exemption are made for philosophical or moral reasons, a parent/guardian who is dissatisfied with the Principal's decision may appeal to the Superintendent, whose decision shall be final.

Legal Reference: 20-A MRSA § 6209  
LD 1536, Chap. 51 Resolves  
Ch.. 127 § 3.07 (Me. Dept. of Ed. Rules (Me. Dept. of Ed. Rules)  
Ch. 131 (Me. Dept. of Ed. Rules)

Cross Reference: ADF – School District Commitment to Learning Results  
IJJ – Instructional and Library Material Selection  
IMB – Teaching About Controversial/Sensitive Issues  
IMBAA – Alternatives To Biological Dissection

Adopted: July 8, 2009  
Revised: February 24, 2010  
Reviewed: December 12, 2012

## **POST-SECONDARY ENROLLMENT OPTIONS**

The intent of this policy is to establish the requirements for student enrollment in post-secondary courses taken before high school graduation.

### **Eligible Institutions**

Students may take courses at eligible post-secondary institutions within Maine, which include the University of Maine System, the Vocational Technical College System and Maine Maritime Academy.

### **Student Eligibility Requirements**

A student may take no more than one course per semester and two courses per academic year.

A student must meet the following criteria prior to enrolling in a post-secondary course:

- A. Have a minimum of a “B” average in his/her courses overall;
- B. Meet the course admission standards of the eligible institution;
- C. Provide evidence of parent/guardian approval for taking the course; and
- D. Obtain approval from the principal and guidance counselor. The student must meet with his/her guidance counselor to develop a plan describing how the course will help the student meet graduation requirements in order to obtain approval.

### **Exceptions to Eligibility Requirements**

A student enrolled in grade 11 or 12 who does not meet the “B” average in his/her courses overall is eligible to take a post-secondary course provided that he/she:

- A. Has been assessed and received a recommendation to take the course from the school administration; and
- B. Has been approved for participant in the course by the eligible institution.

### **Awarding of Credits**

The eligible institution shall grant full credit to any student who successfully completes a course.



**Financial Assistance**

- A. The Maine Department of Education shall pay applicable tuition costs for any student enrolled in a course under this policy if the eligible institution requires tuition payment.
- B. The student and his/her parent/guardian are responsible for paying for all textbooks, course fees and transportation costs.

**School Unit Reporting Requirements**

The Superintendent shall ensure that information concerning post-secondary enrollment options is made available to parents and students.

Legal Reference: 20-A MRSA § 4771 et seq.

Adopted: July 8, 2009

Reviewed: November 28, 2012

## COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE

Under state law, full-time school attendance is required of all children from their 7th to their 17th birthday except:

- A. A person who graduates from high school before their 17th birthday;
- B. A person who has:
  - 1. Reached the age of 15 years or completed the 9th grade;
  - 2. Permission to leave school from that person's parent;
  - 3. Been approved by the principal for a suitable program of work and study or training;
  - 4. Permission to leave school from the Board or its designee; and
  - 5. Agreed in writing with that person's parent and the Board or its designee to meet annually until that person's 17th birthday to review that person's educational needs. When the request to be excused from school has been denied pursuant to this paragraph, the student's parent may appeal to the Commissioner; or
- C. A person who has matriculated and is attending an accredited, post-secondary, degree-granting institution as a full-time student. An exception to the attendance in public school under this paragraph must be approved by the Commissioner.

### Alternatives to Attendance at Public Day School

- A. Equivalent instruction alternatives are as follows:
  - 1. A person shall be excused from attending a public day school if the person obtains equivalent instruction in:
    - a. A private school approved for attendance purposes pursuant to 20-A MRSA § 2901;
    - b. A private school recognized by the department as providing equivalent instruction;
    - c. A home instruction program that complies with the requirements of 20-A MRSA § 5001-A(3)(A)(4); or

- d. Any other manner arranged for by the Board and approved by the Commissioner.
- B. A person may be excused from attendance at a public day school pursuant to 20-A MRSA § 5104-A (other public or private alternative programs) or § 8605 (student attendance in adult education courses).

**Credit for Attendance at a Private School**

A student shall be credited with attendance at a private school only if a certificate showing the name, residence and attendance of the person at the school, signed by the person or persons in charge of the school, has been filed with the school officials of the administrative unit in which the student resides.

**Discontinuation of Home Instruction**

If the home instruction program is discontinued, students of compulsory school age must be enrolled in a public school or an equivalent instruction alternative as provided for by law. The receiving school shall determine the placement of the student. At the secondary level, the principal of the receiving school shall determine the value of the prior educational experience toward meeting the standards of Maine's system of Learning Results.

**Excusable Absence**

A person's absence is excused when the absence is for the following reasons:

- A. Personal illness;
- B. An appointment with a health professional that must be made during the regular school day;
- C. Observance of a recognized religious holiday when the observance is required during the regular school day;
- D. A family emergency;
- E. A planned absence for a personal or educational purpose that has been approved;

- F. Education disruption resulting from homelessness, unplanned psychiatric hospitalization, unplanned hospitalization for a medical emergency, foster care placement, youth development placement or some other out-of-district placement that is not otherwise authorized by either any individual education plan or a superintendents' student transfer agreement. "Education disruption" does not apply to a student who is out of school for 10 or more consecutive school days as a result of a planned absence for a reason such as a family event or a medical absence for planned hospitalization or recovery.

Parents are responsible for the school attendance of students who are under 17 years of age. The Board shall work with families in an effort to ensure compliance.

Secondary school students 20 years of age or more will only be admitted to the school unit with prior Board approval.

Legal Reference: 20-A MRSA § 5001-A; 5003; 5201  
Ch. 125 § 8.06 (Maine Dept. of Ed. Rules)

Cross Reference: IHBG - Home Schooling  
JFC - Student Withdrawal From School/Dropout Prevention Committee  
JHB - Truancy

Adopted: July 8, 2009  
Reviewed: January 23, 2013