

**POLICY ADDRESSING ENROLLMENT IN AN ADVANCED COURSE OR PROGRAM AND CHALLENGING CURRICULUM**

The Plymouth Board of Education (the “Board”) understands the importance of providing opportunities for students to enroll in an advanced course or program and offering students challenging curriculum in the Plymouth Public Schools (the “District”). In accordance with Connecticut law, this policy shall explain the manner in which the District determines eligibility for enrollment in advanced courses or programs and creates academic plans for students in the District.

**I. Definitions**

For purposes of this policy:

"Advanced course or program" means an honors class, advanced placement class, International Baccalaureate program, Cambridge International program, dual enrollment, dual credit, early college or any other advanced or accelerated course or program offered by the Board in grades nine to twelve, inclusive.

“Advanced placement” program is a program authorized by the College Board that offers college-level courses and exams that students take in high school.

“Cambridge International program” is an internationally recognized academic program for students aged five (5) to nineteen (19). High school level courses, available only through approved Cambridge International Schools, provide students the opportunity to earn postsecondary credit that is accepted by colleges in the United States and abroad.

“Dual credit/Dual enrollment” courses are college courses offered by high schools in partnership with a college or university. Students taking these courses in high school are simultaneously enrolled with the partner higher education institution. Students who successfully complete a dual credit/dual enrollment course earn credit toward high school graduation as well as college course credit that appears on a student transcript issued by a college or university.

“International Baccalaureate (“IB”) program” is a program that offers international education through four programs for students aged three (3) to nineteen (19). The four programs are: Primary Years, Middle Years, Diploma Program, and Career-related Program. Schools must be authorized to teach IB programs. Every authorized school is known as an IB World School.

"Prior academic performance" means the course or courses that a student has taken, the grades received for such courses or courses and a student's grade point average.

## **II. Eligibility Criteria**

Consistent with state law, the District will identify students in grades eight and nine who may be eligible to take or enroll in an advanced course or program.

Eligibility for enrollment in an advanced course or program shall not be based exclusively on a student's prior academic performance. There are multiple methods by which a student may satisfy the eligibility criteria for enrollment in an advanced course or program, including:

- Recommendations from teachers, administrators, school counselors or other school personnel.

## **III. Creation of an Academic Plan/Challenging Curriculum**

The District will create an academic plan for each student who is identified in grade eight or nine as eligible for enrollment in an advanced course or program. Such a plan will be designed to enroll the student in one or more advanced courses or programs and allow the student to earn college credit or result in career readiness. Such academic plan will also be aligned with:

- The courses or programs offered by the Board,
- The student's student success plan, created pursuant to Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-221a(j),
- High school graduation requirements, and
- Any other policies or standards adopted by the Board relating to the eligibility for student enrollment in advanced courses or programs.

The academic plan may be part of the student's success plan, which plan is required for each student by Conn. Gen. Stat. §10-221a.

A student, or the student's parent or guardian, may decline to implement the provisions of an academic plan created for such a student.

## **IV. Guiding Principles and Implementation**

The Board recognizes that course access and academic planning should be guided by considerations beyond traditional course eligibility criteria

The Superintendent or designee shall be responsible for implementing this policy and developing procedures in furtherance of this policy and in accordance with guidance provided by the Connecticut Department of Education.

Legal Reference:

Connecticut General Statutes § 10-221a

Connecticut General Statutes § 10-221w

Connecticut General Statutes § 10-221x

Connecticut State Department of Education, *District Guidance for Developing an Advanced Course Participation Policy* (April 2022)

**ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS ADDRESSING ENROLLMENT IN AN  
ADVANCED COURSE OR PROGRAM AND CHALLENGING CURRICULUM**

The Plymouth Board of Education (the “Board”) understands the importance of providing opportunities for students to enroll in an advanced course or program and offering students challenging curriculum in the Plymouth Public Schools (the “District”). In accordance with the Board’s Policy Addressing Enrollment in an Advanced Course or Program and Challenging Curriculum, the administration adopts the following regulations:

1. The District will identify students in grades eight and nine who may be eligible to take or enroll in an advanced course or program.
2. Eligibility for enrollment in an advanced course or program shall be based on the following:
  - Recommendations from teachers, administrators, school counselors or other school personnel.
  - Prerequisite course requirements being fulfilled.
3. In addition to or as part of student success plans required by Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-221a(j), the District will create an academic plan for each student who is identified in grade eight or nine as eligible for enrollment in an advanced course or program. A student, or the student’s parent or guardian, may decline to implement the provisions of an academic plan created for such a student.
4. Such an academic plan will be designed to enroll the student in one or more advanced courses or programs and allow the student to earn college credit or result in career readiness.

**Legal Reference:**

Connecticut General Statutes § 10-221a

Connecticut General Statutes § 10-221w

Connecticut General Statutes § 10-221x

Connecticut State Department of Education, *District Guidance for Developing an Advanced Course Participation Policy* (April 2022)

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## **CREDIT FOR ONLINE COURSES**

The Plymouth Board of Education (“Board”), in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes § 10-221a, sanctions the receipt of online course credit to be used toward high school graduation requirements, in accordance with this policy.

### **I. CREDIT FOR ONLINE COURSES**

#### **A. Pre-approval of Courses**

To receive credit for online courses to be used toward high school graduation requirements, for courses that are not part of the Board’s remote learning model, students must, prior to registering for the course, receive approval from the high school principal or designee. The decision of the principal or designee with regard to online course credit approval is final. Pre-approval for online course credit may be granted if the requirements set forth below are met.

#### **B. Requirements for Online Coursework**

1. The workload required by the online course is equivalent to that of a similar course taught in a traditional classroom setting;
2. The content of the online course is rigorous and aligned with curriculum guidelines approved by the State Board of Education, where appropriate;
3. The course engages students and has interactive components, which may include, but are not limited to, required interactions between students and their teachers, participation in online demonstrations, discussion boards or virtual labs;
4. The program of instruction for such online coursework is planned, ongoing and systematic;
5. The courses are:
  - a. taught by teachers who are certified in Connecticut or another state and have received training on teaching in an online environment, or
  - b. offered by institutions of higher education that are accredited by the Board of Regents for Higher Education or regionally accredited; and

6. The principal has determined, in the principal’s professional judgment, that, given the student’s academic and disciplinary history, the student is appropriately suited to engage in online coursework.

**C. Additional Requirements**

Only students in grades 9-12 are eligible to receive credit toward high school graduation by taking online courses. Students who have been pre-approved shall receive such credit upon completing the online course and obtaining a passing grade.

Any expense incurred for taking an online course identified by the student and/or parent to supplement the District’s curricular offerings shall be the responsibility of the student/parent and shall not be the responsibility of the Board.

**Legal References**

Public Act No. 22-80, “An Act Concerning Childhood Mental and Physical Health Services in Schools”

Connecticut General Statutes § 10-4w

Connecticut General Statutes § 10-220

Connecticut General Statutes § 10-221a

Connecticut State Department of Education, Standards for Remote Learning Grades 9-12 (February 2022), *available at* <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Remote-Learning-Commission/CT-Standards-for-Remote-Learning-Grades-9-12-FINAL.pdf>.

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**P-6002**  
**Instruction**



## **CURRICULAR EXEMPTIONS**

### Mandatory Curricular Exemptions:

Upon the written request of a parent or guardian received by the school district prior to planned instruction in the areas set forth below, the Plymouth Board of Education (the “Board”) shall permit curricular exemptions for instruction in the following areas:

1. Dissection;
2. Family life education;
3. HIV/AIDS; or
4. Sexual abuse and assault awareness and prevention program.

### Definitions:

“Dissection Instruction” is defined as instruction in which a student must participate in, or observe, the dissection of any animal.

“Family Life Education Instruction” is defined as instruction pertaining to family planning, human sexuality, parenting, nutrition and the emotional, physical, psychological, hygienic, economic and social aspects of family life.

“HIV/AIDS Instruction” is defined as ongoing and systematic instruction on Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) offered by the district pursuant to state law.

“Sexual abuse and assault awareness and prevention program” is defined as the state-wide program identified or developed by the Department of Children and Families, in collaboration with the Department of Education and Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services, Inc. (or a similar entity) that includes age-appropriate educational materials designed for children in grades kindergarten to twelve, inclusive, regarding child sexual abuse and assault awareness and prevention that may include, but not be limited to, (A) the skills to recognize (i) child sexual abuse and assault, (ii) boundary violations and unwanted forms of touching and contact, and (iii) ways offenders groom or desensitize victims, and (B) strategies to (i) promote disclosure, (ii) reduce self-blame, and (iii) mobilize bystanders.

### Written Request for Mandatory Exemption:

Parents who wish to exercise such exemptions must notify the school district in writing within the first two weeks of school.

Permissive Curricular Exemptions:

Except for the mandatory curricular exemptions noted above, or otherwise required by law, the Board does not require teachers to exempt students from any other aspect of the curriculum.

Alternative Assignments:

1. Any student excused from participating in, or observing, the dissection of any animal as part of classroom instruction shall be required to complete an alternate assignment to be determined by the teacher.
2. Any student excused from participating in the sexual abuse and assault awareness and prevention program shall be provided, during the period of time in which the student would otherwise be participating in such program, an opportunity for other study or academic work as determined by the teacher.
3. Any student excused from any other aspect of the curriculum may be required by the teacher to complete an alternative assignment as determined by the teacher.

Legal References:

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-16c.  
Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-16e.  
Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-18d.  
Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-19(b).  
Conn. Gen. Stat. § 17a-101q.

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## **HOMEWORK**

It is the policy of the Plymouth Board of Education (the “Board”) to ensure that all students comply with the homework requirements imposed by the school in which the child is enrolled. It is also the policy of the Board that any imposition of homework should be related to the curriculum goals and standards recognized as appropriate for the student's grade.

To be educationally meaningful, homework should:

1. Reinforce skills introduced in the classroom by providing additional practice.
2. Be at an appropriate level of challenge and allow for personalization.
3. Promote engagement in classroom activities and student success.
4. Provide opportunities for students to reflect on their learning and current performance.

Homework is independent practice and a reinforcement of skills. Homework will not be graded and will not have a significant impact on the true assessment of a child’s learning. A maximum weight of 5% can be utilized to represent a child’s habits of mind grade each quarter/trimester (homework being one of the contributing factors).

### **Plymouth Center School**

Reading and developing literacy skills is a priority in the elementary curriculum.

Students in kindergarten through grade 2 should be assigned a maximum of 30 minutes of homework per night:

- 20 Minutes of Reading (independently or with a parent)
- 10 Minutes of math, social studies or science

\* Homework should not be assigned on weekends, holidays, or extended breaks.

### **Harry S Fisher Elementary School**

Reading and developing literacy skills is a priority in the elementary curriculum.

Students in grade 3 through grade 5 should be assigned a maximum of 45 minutes of homework per night:

- 30 Minutes of Reading (independently or with a parent)
- 15 Minutes of math, social studies or science

\* Homework should not be assigned on weekends, holidays, or extended breaks.

### **Eli Terry Jr Middle School**

Reading continues to be a priority for learners at the middle school level. Ideally, students should read outside of school on a daily basis, in addition to any other homework assigned.

Students in grade 6 through grade 8 should be assigned a maximum of 90 minutes of homework per night:

- 10 minutes in core subject areas only (excludes studying)
- 30 Minutes of Reading

\* Homework should not be assigned on weekends, holidays, or extended breaks.

\*\* Middle School Core Subject Areas: reading, writing, math, social studies, science, spanish

### **Terryville High School**

Reading through the content areas is a priority for learners at the high school. Ideally, students should read outside of school on a daily basis, in addition to any other homework assigned.

Students in grade 9 through grade 12 should be assigned a maximum of 105 minutes of homework per night (does not apply to AP and college credit classes):

- 15 minutes in each subject area (excludes studying)

Students in AP or college credit classes should be assigned a maximum of 45 minutes of homework per AP or college credit class (45 minutes includes reading).

\* Homework should not be assigned on holidays or extended breaks with the exception of AP or college credit class.

Legal Reference:

Connecticut General Statutes §10-221(b)

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**INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT - ALTERNATIVE  
ASSESSMENTS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES FOR STATEWIDE  
AND DISTRICT-WIDE ASSESSMENTS**

The Plymouth Board of Education will, in all respects, comply with the requirements of state and federal law with regard to the special education of students with disabilities. Decisions about whether a student with a disability eligible for special education and related services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act shall participate in alternative assessment(s) to particular statewide or district-wide assessments shall be made by each student's planning and placement team in accordance with applicable state and federal law.

Legal References:

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-14q

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), 20 U.S.C. § 1400 *et seq.*

34 C.F.R. § 300.320 *et seq.*

Connecticut Alternate Assessment (CTAA) Test Administration Manual, English Language Arts and Mathematics (Dec. 9, 2019), *available at* <https://ct.portal.cambiumast.com/core/fileparse.php/51/urlt/CTAA-Test-Administration-Manual-TAM.pdf>.

CTAA and Alternate Science Learner Characteristics Inventory (LCI), *available at* <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Student-Assessment/Special-Populations/LCI.pdf?la=en>.

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## Limited Exemptions from In-Person School and Eligibility for and Provision of

### I. INTRODUCTION

On July 15, August 9, November 4, and December 31, 2021, the Connecticut State Department of Education (“CSDE”) provided guidance to local and regional boards of education related to the provision of continued educational opportunities during the 2021-2022 school year (together, the “CSDE Guidance”). The CSDE Guidance confirms that school districts are not currently authorized to provide remote learning in lieu of in-person instruction on a district-wide or school-wide basis. However, in connection with the current COVID-19 pandemic circumstances, the CSDE Guidance explains that school districts may offer continued educational opportunities, which may include remote learning or other forms of out-of-school instruction, in the following limited circumstances:

- (1) for students who must be in isolation due to a confirmed COVID-19 infection or who must quarantine due to close contact with a confirmed case;
- (2) in rare and individualized circumstances, for students with live-in family members who have documented an unusual vulnerability to COVID-19;
- (3) in rare cases in which a Planning and Placement Team (“PPT”) determines that instruction in the home provides the student with a free appropriate public education (“FAPE”) in the least restrictive environment and revises the student’s Individualized Education Program (“IEP”) accordingly; and
- (4) should there be an order issued at some point during the remainder of the 2021-2022 school year that requires school or district closures pursuant to an emergency declaration. Such declarations can only be issued pursuant to legislative or gubernatorial authority and *not* by local health districts.

The CSDE Guidance acknowledges that a student’s inability to attend school in person and eligibility for continued educational opportunities will be “rare,” and encourages school districts to develop administrative procedures or regulations to determine and document such eligibility “with equity and consistency in mind.” The CSDE Guidance also encourages school districts to address the continued educational opportunities available to students, with appropriate consideration of the following:

- Individualized, case-by-case programmatic decisions;
- Variety of continued educational opportunities;
- Best practices in the development and/or implementation of continued educational opportunities;

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- Documentation of eligibility with equity and consistency in mind;
- Consideration of the frequency and with what restrictions access will be granted;
- Ensuring that any student who is approved for continued educational opportunities is counted “in attendance” if they spend not less than one half of the school day engaged in activities that satisfy the CSDE’s four-part framework, *i.e.*, (a) virtual classes, (b) virtual meetings, (c) activities on time-logged electronic systems, and (d) the completion and submission of assignments; and
- Acknowledgement that such procedures or regulations may require amendment in the event of changing conditions and public health necessities during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Consistent with the CSDE Guidance, the Plymouth Public Schools (the “District”) has developed these administrative procedures to address both (1) a student’s inability to attend school in-person and the provision of continued educational opportunities and (2) the content of continued educational opportunities. The Administration acknowledges that these administrative procedures may be amended in response to individual student need and/or in the event of changing conditions and public health necessities during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The Administration notes that there may be state laws, regulations, policies and/or procedures that are not intended to be affected by these administrative procedures, including the state regulations and school rules governing the provision of homebound and hospitalization instruction.

## II. ELIGIBILITY FOR EXEMPTION FROM IN-PERSON SCHOOL AND CONTINUED EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

### A. Isolation or Quarantine

The Administration, in consultation with local and/or state public health officials (“health officials”), will develop guidelines and protocols for students who must be in isolation due to a confirmed COVID-19 infection or who must quarantine due to close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19. The purpose of the procedures set forth below is to outline student eligibility for continued educational opportunities in connection with any short-term isolation or quarantine of students.

The District, in consultation with its medical advisor and/or health officials, may determine that it is necessary for one or more students to isolate or quarantine at home on a short-term basis due to infection from, or exposure to, COVID-19. The District will inform parents/guardians of any such decision in a timely manner. Students shall not be permitted to attend school in person during the period of isolation or quarantine. The period of isolation or quarantine will be determined by the District in consultation, as appropriate, with its medical advisor and/or health officials.



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B. Students with Health Needs or Live-In Family Members Who Have Documented an Unusual Vulnerability to COVID-19

Consistent with the CSDE Guidance and applicable law, the Administration has established procedures governing access to continued educational opportunities when a student cannot attend in-person school because of the health needs of the student or in a rare and individualized circumstance in which the student has live-in family member(s) who have documented an unusual vulnerability to COVID-19. Generally, students, parents or guardians will initiate the request for continued educational opportunities in these circumstances.

1. *Student Health Needs - Students with Disabilities and/or Medically Complex Students*

Section 504 teams and/or PPTs may need to consider whether a student with disabilities and/or a medically complex student may require a placement due to the unique health needs of the student. In accordance with the CSDE Guidance, remote learning or out-of-school instruction will be available in rare cases in which the Section 504 team or PPT determines that instruction in the home provides the student with FAPE in the least restrictive environment. The Section 504 team and/or PPT shall make such decisions on an individualized basis as required by applicable law and will revise and implement Section 504 plans and/or Individualized Education Programs accordingly.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (“AAP”) has stated: “At this point in the pandemic, given what we know about low rates of in-school transmission when proper prevention measures are used, together with the availability of effective vaccines for those eligible, ... the benefits of in-person school outweigh the risks in almost all circumstances.” The AAP has further stated that “schools and school-supported programs are fundamental to child and adolescent development and well-being and provide our children and adolescents with academic instruction; social and emotional skills; safety, reliable nutrition, physical/occupational/speech therapy, mental health services, health services, preventive oral health care, and opportunities for physical activity, among other benefits.”<sup>1</sup>

Accordingly, parents/guardians or eligible students seeking an exemption from in-person instruction shall complete the Request for Exemption from In-Person School and Request for Provision of Continued Educational Opportunities (“Request Form,” attached as Appendix A hereto). As noted in the Request Form, an individual seeking continued educational opportunities when a student cannot attend in-person school must provide authorization for school officials to exchange information with the student’s treating physician(s) to determine whether there are any mitigating measures or other

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<sup>1</sup> American Academy of Pediatrics, *COVID-19 Guidance for Safe Schools and Promotion of In-Person Learning*, available at <https://www.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/clinical-guidance/covid-19-planning-considerations-return-to-in-person-education-in-schools/> (last updated November 1, 2021).

strategies that would permit in-person attendance, including on a part-time basis. If the Section 504 team or PPT determines that such placement is appropriate and the Administration approves such a request, the Administration shall make an initial decision as to the length of time and any conditions that will be required. Given the changing circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Section 504 team, PPT, and /or Administration may determine, in accordance with applicable law, that access to continued educational opportunities will be time-limited with an opportunity for renewal based on, among other considerations, the unique health needs of the student.

2. *Documented Unusual Vulnerability to COVID-19 of a Live-In Family Member or Guardian*

There may be circumstances in which the parents or guardians of a student (or an eligible student) may wish to request access to continued educational opportunities when a student cannot attend in-person school due to live-in family member(s) or guardian(s) with documented unusual vulnerability to COVID-19. Parents/guardians or eligible students seeking such opportunities shall complete the Request for Exemption from In-Person School and Request for Provision of Continued Educational Opportunities (“Request Form” attached as Appendix A hereto). As noted in the Request Form, an individual seeking continued educational opportunities when a student cannot attend in-person school must provide authorization for school officials to exchange information with the appropriate treating physician(s) to determine whether there are any mitigating measures or other strategies that would permit in-person attendance, including on a part-time basis. As set forth above, the AAP has confirmed that students need to attend school in-person and that “[r]emote learning...was detrimental to the educational attainment of students of all ages and worsened the growing mental health crisis among children and adolescents.”<sup>2</sup> Accordingly, the District may consider consulting first with a student’s treating physician regarding any request that affects a student’s access to in-person school. If the Administration approves such a request, the Administration shall make an initial decision as to the length of time and any conditions that will be required.

C. Legislative or Gubernatorial Order to Close School

Should there be legislation or an order issued by the Governor at some point during the 2021-2022 school year that requires school closures pursuant to an emergency declaration, the District will provide continued educational opportunities to all students, in accordance with applicable law, for the duration of such closure.

### III. PROVISION OF CONTINUED EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

A. General Considerations

The CSDE Guidance encourages school districts to develop administrative regulations or procedures for rare circumstances resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic

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<sup>2</sup> See footnote 1.

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in which students may require programming options besides regular in-person instruction. **Continued educational opportunities may, but are not required to, include remote learning opportunities.** “Remote learning” is defined under applicable law as instruction by means of one or more Internet-based software platforms as part of a remote learning model. Consistent with CSDE Guidance, the Administration will make individualized decisions as to continued educational opportunities. In developing the specific continued educational opportunities on a case-by-case basis, the Administration may consider factors, including, without limitation, the following:

- Grade level of the student;
- Expected duration of interruption to in-person attendance;
- Input of student’s teacher(s) as to specific educational skills or targets for the period of continued educational opportunities;
- Necessity of synchronous or asynchronous instruction;
- Student ability to perform independent work; and
- Opportunities for feedback from teacher(s).

The District will comply with all applicable state regulations and CSDE guidance in determining school attendance. Consistent with applicable law and guidance, the District will count the attendance of any student who spends not less than one-half of the school day during remote learning or equivalent out-of-school instruction engaged in (a) virtual classes, (b) virtual meetings, (c) activities on time-logged electronic systems, and (d) the completion and submission of assignments. However, as noted above, continued educational opportunities may, but are not required to, include remote learning opportunities. As such, there may be circumstances in which students are (1) not able to attend school in person, (2) eligible for and provided with continued educational opportunities; and (3) considered to have an excused absence from school. In other circumstances, as determined by the Administration on a case-by-case basis and consistent with all applicable laws, rules, and guidance, students may be (1) unable to attend school in person, (2) eligible for and provided with continued educational opportunities; and (3) counted as “in attendance.”

B. Section 504 Team and/or Planning and Placement Team

Consistent with federal and state law, school districts must offer a continuum of placements for students with disabilities, including instruction in the home. The Section 504 Team and/or PPT shall determine, on an individual basis, the appropriate placement for students with disabilities. The Section 504 Team and/or PPT should consider what instructional supports will be implemented in the student’s recommended placement. **School teams should contact the Kathleen Mozak-Pezza, Director of Curriculum and Instruction (504) or Beth Melillo, Director of Special Education and Pupil Personnel (PPT) for additional information regarding**

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**continued educational opportunities for students with disabilities and the implementation of IEPs and/or Section 504 plans.**

C. Short-Term Continued Educational Opportunities

School officials will determine short-term continued educational opportunities for students on a case-by-case basis. Consistent with the CSDE Guidance, the District may, but is not required to, provide remote learning to such students. Continued educational opportunities may include synchronous and asynchronous instruction. The Administration may wish to consider the short-term nature of the interruption in student's in-person school attendance when determining the details of continued educational opportunities. The Administration will work with teachers and other appropriate school staff members to identify the essential learning targets or skills for students during the period of isolation or quarantine.

D. Extended Continued Educational Opportunities

The CSDE Guidance encourages school districts to provide continued educational opportunities that may be necessary when a student cannot attend in-person school due to the student's health needs or due to live-in family member(s) or guardian(s) with documented unusual vulnerability to COVID-19. The District will determine the continued educational opportunities for any such student on a case-by-case basis. The duration of continued educational opportunities granted when a student cannot attend in-person school due to student and/or family health needs will need to be considered in light of the individual health needs and pandemic circumstances. It is possible that such circumstances may warrant continued educational opportunities for an extended time period during the 2021-2022 school year. Consistent with the CSDE Guidance, the District may, but is not required to, provide remote learning to such students. Continued educational opportunities may include synchronous and asynchronous instruction. The Administration may consider, among other things, the expected duration when determining the details of continued educational opportunities. The Administration will work with teachers and other appropriate school staff members to identify the essential learning targets or skills for students during the period of the student's continued educational opportunities.

IV. CONCLUSION

The District acknowledges that the above administrative procedures are designed to provide procedures to school officials and parents/guardians in the unlikely event that COVID-19 directly and substantially interferes with a student's ability safely to attend in-person instruction during the 2021-2022 school year. The District acknowledges that these procedures may require amendment in the event of changing conditions and public health necessities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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## **PARENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT POLICY FOR TITLE I STUDENTS**

In accordance with Section 1010 of the Every Student Succeeds Act (“ESSA”), Public Law 1114-95, it is the policy of the Plymouth Board of Education (the “Board”) to provide parents and family members of students participating in the district’s Title I programs meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children within these programs. To facilitate parental and family participation, the Board encourages parents and family members of Title I eligible students to be involved in regular meetings, communications, and activities that will inform them about the district’s Title I programs, to participate in the improvement of such programs and to help improve their child’s progress within these programs.

This policy has been developed jointly with, and agreed upon by, parents and family members of children participating in Title I programs. The district shall distribute this written Parent and Family Engagement Policy to parents and family members of participating students in an understandable and uniform format and, to the extent practicable, in a language the parents can understand. The policy shall be made available to the public and updated periodically, as necessary to carry out the requirements of the parent and family engagement portion of Section 1010 of ESSA.

The Board shall conduct, with the meaningful involvement of Title I parents and family members, an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of this policy in improving the academic quality of the schools receiving Title I funds. The Board shall use the findings of such evaluation to design evidence-based strategies for more effective parental involvement, and to revise, if necessary, the policy. Such annual evaluation shall include identifying:

1. barriers to greater participation by parents in activities authorized by 20 U.S.C. § 6318 (with particular attention to parents who are economically disadvantaged, are disabled, have limited English proficiency, have limited literacy, or are of any racial or ethnic minority background);
2. the needs of parent and family members to assist with the learning of their children, including engaging with school personnel and teachers; and
3. strategies to support successful school and family interactions.

Each year, each school within the district that is involved in Title I programs shall conduct a meeting, at a convenient time, to involve parents in the planning, review and improvement of programs funded by Title I. All parents of participating children must be invited and encouraged to attend. At this meeting, parents shall be given a description and explanation of the Title I programs, the curriculum in use at the

school, the forms of academic assessment used to measure student progress, the achievement levels of the challenging State academic standards, and information regarding the importance of parental involvement and their right to be involved.

In addition to the required annual meeting, and if requested by parents, schools within the district that are involved in Title I programs shall offer opportunities for regular meetings at flexible times of the day in order to allow parents to formulate suggestions for the Board's Title I programs and their application to their child(ren)'s programs; and to participate, as appropriate, in decisions related to the education of their children. Parents will be given opportunities to participate in the joint development of the district's Title I plan, as required by Section 1006 of ESSA, and in the process of any school review and improvement in accordance with the State's plan, as required by Section 1111 of ESSA. At any time, if a parent is dissatisfied with a school's Title I program, he/she shall have the opportunity to submit comments for review at the district level.

The Board will provide the coordination, technical assistance and other support necessary to assist and build capacity of Title I schools in planning and implementing effective parent and family involvement activities to improve student academic achievement and school performance. Parental and family engagement in Title I programs shall be coordinated and integrated with parental and family engagement strategies, to the extent feasible, under other federal, state, local and district programs.

In order to build the schools' and parents' capacity for strong parental involvement, the Board shall:

1. provide assistance to parents of students participating in Title I programs in understanding topics such as the challenging state academic standards, state and local academic assessments, the requirements under Title I, and how to monitor their child's progress and work with educators to improve the achievement of their children;
2. provide materials and training to help parents to work with their children, such as literacy training and using technology (including education about the harms of copyright piracy);
3. educate teachers, specialized instructional support personnel, staff and administrators, with the assistance of parents, about how to better communicate and work with parents;
4. to the extent feasible and appropriate, coordinate and integrate parent involvement programs and activities with other federal, state and local programs, including public preschool programs, conduct other activities that encourage and support parent participation;

5. ensure that information related to school and parent programs, meetings and other activities is sent to participating parents in a format and, to the extent practicable, in a language the parents can understand;
6. provide such other reasonable support for parental involvement activities as parents may request; and
7. inform parents and parental organizations of the existence and purpose of parent resource centers within the State.

### **School-Parent Compact**

This policy further requires that each school involved in Title I programs shall jointly develop with parents of participating children a school-parent compact that outlines how parents, staff, and students will share the responsibility for improved student academic achievement and the means by which the school and parents will build and develop a partnership to help children achieve the State's high standards. The school-parent compact shall:

1. describe the school's responsibility to provide high-quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive and effective learning environment that enables Title I students to meet the challenging State academic standards;
2. indicate the ways in which each parent will be responsible for supporting their child's learning, volunteering in their child's classroom, and participating, as appropriate, in decisions related their child's education and positive use of extracurricular time;
3. address the importance of ongoing teacher-parent communication through parent-teacher conferences, frequent reports to parents, reasonable access to school staff, and opportunities to volunteer, participate in, and observe their child's classroom activities; and
4. ensure regular, two-way, meaningful communication between family members and school staff, and, to the extent practicable, in a language that family members can understand.

The Board authorizes the Superintendent, or his/her designee, to develop a school-parent compact and other procedures such as those relating to meetings, parent communication and parental involvement activities, as he/she deems necessary in order to ensure compliance with this policy.

The Superintendent is required to include information about parental involvement and actions taken to improve parental involvement in the strategic school profile he or she submits annually to the Board and Commissioner of Education. Such



actions to improve parental involvement may include methods to engage parents in the planning and improvement of school programs and to increase support to parents working at home with their children on learning activities.

**Legal References:**

**Connecticut General Statutes:**

§ 10-220(c). Duties of Boards of Education

**Federal Law:**

20 U.S.C. § 6318. Parent and family engagement

20 U.S.C. § 7801. Definitions

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**PARENTAL ACCESS TO INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIAL**

In accordance with federal law and Board policy, parents or guardians shall be permitted access to instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum for any student.

"Instructional material" means any instructional content that is provided to a student, regardless of its format, including printed or representational materials, audio-visual materials, and materials in electronic or digital formats (such as materials accessible through the Internet). The term does not include academic tests or academic assessments.

Upon request, the district shall permit parents or guardians to inspect any instructional material. The district shall grant reasonable access to instructional material within a reasonable period of time after a request is received from a parent or guardian.

Legal Reference:

Federal Law:

Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, 20 U.S.C. § 1232h, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act, Pub. L. 114-95

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**Instruction**

## **PARENT-TEACHER COMMUNICATION**

The Plymouth Board of Education (the “Board”) believes that parents should be knowledgeable about the education that the Plymouth Public Schools (the “District”) provides to enrolled students. The Board believes that parents are most knowledgeable when they have regular communication with teachers. Therefore, it is the policy of the Board to encourage parent-teacher communication. The Superintendent or designee shall be responsible for developing procedures in furtherance of this policy.

The Superintendent is further required to include information about parental involvement and actions taken to improve parental involvement in the strategic school profile he or she submits annually to the Board and Commissioner of Education. Such actions to improve parental involvement may include methods to engage parents in the planning and improvement of school programs and to increase support to parents working at home with their children on learning activities.

The procedures developed in furtherance of this policy may include monthly newsletters, required regular contact with all parents, drop-in hours for parents, home visits, and the use of technology such as homework hotlines to allow parents to check on their children’s assignments and students to receive assistance if needed.

Such procedures shall require the District to conduct two flexible parent-teacher conferences for each school year. In addition, the procedures shall require the District to:

- A. offer parents the option of attending parent-teacher conferences by telephonic, video, or other conferencing platform,
- B. conduct one parent-teacher conference, in addition to the two flexible parent-teacher conferences described above, during periods when the District provides remote learning for more than three consecutive weeks, and one additional parent-teacher conference every six months thereafter for the duration of such period of remote learning (for purposes of this policy, and in accordance with applicable law, “remote learning” means instruction by means of one or more Internet-based software platforms as part of a remote learning model), and
- C. request from each student’s parent the name and contact information of an emergency contact person who may be contacted if the student’s parent cannot be reached to schedule a parent-teacher conference required during periods of District-provided remote learning.

On or after January 1, 2022, the procedures must also require a teacher conducting a parent-teacher conference that is required in section (B) above to provide a copy of the document, to be developed by the Department of Education, to provide information concerning educational, safety, mental health, and food insecurity resources and programs available for students and their families, to the parent prior to the parent-teacher conference. If, after making three attempts, a teacher is unable to make contact

with a student's parent in order to schedule a parent-teacher conference required in section (B) above, the teacher shall report such inability to the school principal or designee. Such principal or designee shall contact any emergency contact person designated by the student's parent to ascertain such student's and family's health and safety.

Legal reference:

Connecticut General Statutes:

Public Act No. 21-46, "An Act Concerning Social Equity and the Health,  
Safety, and Education of Children"

June Special Session, Public Act No. 21-2, Section 390.

§ 10-220(c) Duties of Boards of Education

§ 10-221(f) Boards of Education to prescribe rules, policies and  
procedures

**ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS**  
**REGARDING PARENT-TEACHER COMMUNICATION**

**Plymouth Public Schools Procedures**  
**Regarding Parent-Teacher Communication**

The Plymouth Board of Education (the “Board”) believes that parents should be knowledgeable about the education that the Plymouth Public Schools (the “District”) provides to enrolled students. The Board believes that parents are most knowledgeable when they have regular communication with teachers. In accordance with the Board’s Parent-Teacher Communication policy, the administration has adopted the following procedures:

1. Principals will send home monthly newsletters, for each individual school, with activity and event information.
2. Teachers will contact all parents of students with academic or behavioral concerns in a timely manner.
3. Individual teachers are required to contact parents (through a discussion or mutual email exchange), prior to the end of each academic quarter/trimester, of all students receiving a D or F in a middle school or high school course and a score of PROGRESSING (P) or NOT YET MEETING (N) in the elementary level.
4. Teachers will utilize age appropriate reporting forms/platforms to provide parents with academic information on their children in a timely manner.
5. The District shall conduct parent-teacher conferences. Parents shall have the option of attending parent-teacher conferences by telephonic, video, or other conferencing platform.
6. In addition to parent-teacher conferences, during periods when the District provides remote learning for more than three consecutive weeks, the District shall conduct one parent-teacher conference, and one additional parent-teacher conference every six months thereafter for the duration of such period of remote learning. For purposes of these Administrative Regulations, and in accordance with applicable law, “remote learning” means instruction by means of one or more Internet-based software platforms as part of a remote learning model.

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## **POLICY FOR THE EQUITABLE IDENTIFICATION OF GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS**

The Plymouth Board of Education (the “Board”) will use equitable methods to identify students enrolled in the Plymouth Public Schools (the “District”) that have an extraordinary learning ability and/or outstanding talent in the creative arts, the development of which requires programs or services beyond the level of those ordinarily provided in regular school programs. Such students will be identified as gifted and/or talented.

### **I. Definitions**

For purposes of this policy:

“Extraordinary learning ability” means a child identified by the planning and placement team as gifted and talented on the basis of either performance on relevant standardized measuring instruments, or demonstrated or potential achievement or intellectual creativity, or both.

“Gifted and talented” means a child identified by the planning and placement team as (A) possessing demonstrated or potential abilities that give evidence of very superior intellectual, creative or specific academic capability and (B) needing differentiated instruction or services beyond those being provided in the general education program in order to realize the child’s intellectual, creative or specific academic potential. The term includes children with extraordinary learning ability (“gifted”) and children with outstanding talent in the creative arts (“talented”).

“Outstanding talent in the creative arts” means a child identified by the planning and placement team as gifted and talented on the basis of demonstrated or potential achievement in music, the visual arts or the performing arts.

“Planning and placement team (“PPT”),” for purposes of the evaluation, identification or determination of the specific educational needs of a child who may be gifted or talented, means a group of certified or licensed professionals who represent each of the teaching, administrative, and pupil personnel staffs, and who participate equally in the decision making process.

### **II. Referral**

Any student enrolled in grades kindergarten through twelve, inclusive, in a District school may be referred to the PPT to determine eligibility as gifted and

talented. A referral may come from any source, including the student's teacher, an administrator, the student's parent/guardian, or the student.

### **III. Evaluation and Identification**

The PPT shall be responsible for conducting evaluations and identifying whether students are eligible as gifted and talented, and shall meet, as needed during the school year to determine the eligibility of groups of children for whom evaluation and identification as gifted and talented are planned. When a child has been individually referred to the PPT for consideration as a gifted and talented child, the PPT shall provide the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) with written notice of the referral.

The Board requires the use of multiple methods of identification of gifted and talented students. The PPT will use the following methods of evaluation in determining whether a student is eligible as gifted and talented:

Group Assessment. The PPT may use an appropriate standardized test administered to all students in a particular grade. In administering standardized tests, the PPT will use a locally normed cut score to identify students for consideration for gifted and talented classification. Parent/guardian consent is not required prior to the administration of a group assessment.

Individual Evaluation. Individual evaluations may be recommended by the PPT in appropriate circumstances, such as when there is a possibility of identifying the student as gifted and talented in areas that are not typically addressed by large-scale standardized tests, such as social studies, a technical discipline, music, creative arts, or performing arts. The PPT may also recommend an individual assessment for a student referred to the PPT for an evaluation when the student is in a grade level in which group assessments are not administered. Before a student is individually evaluated for identification as gifted or talented, the PPT must secure the written consent from a parent/guardian.

After the PPT has determined from an individual or group assessment that a student has potential for or has demonstrated extraordinary learning ability or outstanding talent in the creative arts, the student will be identified as gifted and talented only if the PPT determines that the child requires differentiated instruction or services beyond those provided in the general education program in order to realize the child's intellectual, creative or specific academic potential.

The results of the PPT meeting concerning a determination of the child's identification as gifted or talented shall be provided to the parent or guardian electronically or, if the District does not have the parent or guardian's e-mail address on file, in writing. Such notice shall include, but is not limited to, (1) an explanation of how such student was identified as gifted and talented; and (2) the contact information for (A) the District employee in charge of the provision of services to gifted and



talented students, or, if there is no such employee, the District employee in charge of the provision of special education and related services, (B) the employee at the Connecticut State Department of Education who has been designated as responsible for providing information and assistance to boards of education and parents or guardians of students related to gifted and talented students and, (C) any associations in the state that provide support to gifted and talented students.

If a parent/guardian disagrees with the results of the evaluation conducted by the PPT, the parent/guardian has a right to a hearing.

The District may identify up to ten (10) percent of the total student population for the District as gifted and talented.

#### **IV. Provision of Services**

The provision of services for gifted and talented students by the Board is discretionary.

#### Legal Reference:

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-76a  
Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-76xx

Conn. Agencies Regs. § 10-76a-1  
Conn. Agencies Regs. § 10-76a-2  
Conn. Agencies Regs. § 10-76d-1  
Conn. Agencies Regs. § 10-76d-9(c)

Connecticut State Department of Education, *Gifted and Talented Education: Guidance Regarding Identification and Service* (March 2019), available at <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Gifted-and-Talented/Gifted-and-Talented-Education---Guidance.pdf>

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## **PROMOTION AND RETENTION**

It is the policy of the Plymouth Board of Education that student promotion shall be determined by academic performance and social and emotional maturity. The Administration and faculty shall apply these criteria when determining whether to promote or retain a student. Retention is an extraordinary measure that should be the result of the combined professional judgment of the school principal, teachers, guidance counselor and/or other support personnel.

The Superintendent or his/her designee shall be responsible for developing procedures, in furtherance of this policy, that are designed to foster student achievement and reduce the incidence of social promotion. Such procedures shall:

- 1) include objective criteria for the promotion and graduation of students,
- 2) provide for the measuring of the progress of students against such criteria and the reporting of such information to parents and students,
- 3) include alternatives to promotion such as transition programs, and
- 4) provide for supplemental services.

Such procedures may require students who have substantial academic deficiencies that jeopardize their eligibility for promotion or graduation to attend after school programs, summer school or other programs that are designed to assist students in remedying such deficiencies.

Legal Reference:

Connecticut General Statutes § 10-221(b)

Connecticut General Statutes § 10-223a

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## **WEIGHTED GRADING AND CALCULATION OF GRADE POINT AVERAGES**

The Plymouth Board of Education (the “Board”) understands the importance of parents and students understanding the manner in which grade point averages are calculated within the Plymouth Public Schools (the “District”). In accordance with Connecticut law, this policy shall explain the manner in which grade point averages are calculated within the District.

The Board believes that, due to the rigorous nature of certain classes, the grades earned in such classes deserve additional weight for purposes of calculating grade point average and determining class rank. Therefore, it is the policy of the Board to grant grades earned in such courses additional weight for the aforementioned purposes:

### **COMPUTERIZED WEIGHTING CHART**

#### **Level of Course**

AP Numeric Grade Point average x 1.20  
H Numeric Grade Point average x 1.075  
CP Numeric Grade Point average x 1.025

AP – Advanced Placement & Early College Experience Courses

H – Honors

CP – College Preparatory Courses

The Superintendent or designee shall be responsible for implementing this policy and developing procedures in furtherance of this policy, if necessary.

Legal Reference:

Connecticut General Statutes § 10-220g

Public Act 21-199, “An Act Concerning Various Revisions and Additions to the Statutes Relating to Education and Workforce Development”

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## **Curriculum, Course and Textbook Approval**

### **Curriculum and Course Approval:**

The curricula of the schools shall be in harmony with the Board of Education's adopted goals and legal requirements.

Curriculum development by the certified staff shall be guided by such factors as the following:

1. Actual studies and information concerning the needs of students in this school district.
2. The range of abilities, aptitudes and interests of the students.
3. Aspirations of residents of the school district for the students.
4. The mobility of the population, making it necessary to provide education for the students useful anywhere in the world.
5. Avoidance of discrimination.

The Board of Education reserves the responsibility for establishing and approving curricula/courses for the school district. Teachers shall teach within the approved curricula.

### Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

10-15 Towns to maintain schools.

10-15c Discrimination in public schools prohibited.

10-16b Prescribed courses of study.

10-18 Courses in United States history, government and duties and responsibilities of citizenship.

10-18a Contents of textbooks and other general instructional materials.

10-19 Effect of alcohol, nicotine, or tobacco and drugs to be taught.

10-220 Duties of boards of education as amended by PA 08-153.

10-221a High School graduation requirements.

(cf. 6121 – Non-discrimination in Instructional Program)

(cf. 6141 – Curriculum Development/Revision)

**Textbook Approval:**

The Plymouth Board of Education will provide the educational materials necessary to support instruction for all students and implement the curriculum. These instructional materials include but are not limited to textbooks, supplementary books and material, educational software, print and non-print materials in the libraries, and audio-visual materials.

Except for a change of textbooks, the Plymouth Board of Education delegates the review and selection of these educational materials to the professional staff. A change of textbooks requires, under Connecticut statute, a two-thirds vote of the Plymouth Board of Education who will receive notice of the intended change in a meeting of the Plymouth Board of Education held at least one week before the scheduled vote on the change.

**Procedures for Approval of All Textbooks and Instructional Materials:**

1. All textbooks are subject to the following approval process. Only textbooks deemed appropriate to support the approved district curriculum and related learning objectives will be recommended by the administration for approval by the Plymouth Board of Education. Final recommendations for approval will also take into consideration the diverse interests, ages and maturity of students.
2. The following steps will be implemented by the administration of the district each time textbooks are being considered, changed (includes new editions of those previously approved) and recommended for Plymouth Board of Education approval:
  - District staff, operating under the direction of the Director of Curriculum & Instruction, will review and select appropriate textbooks.
  - District staff, operating under the direction of the Director of Curriculum & Instruction, will present their selection of appropriate textbooks to the Plymouth Board of Education. Presentations of textbooks will include written summaries of the following:
    1. Title
    2. Author(s)
    3. Publication date and publisher
    4. Statement of correlation to district strategic plan
    5. Statement of correlation of approved district curriculum
    6. List of other textbooks considered
    7. List of other CT school districts using recommended textbooks, as applicable
    8. Confirmation that the recommended textbooks have online, as applicable, internet support or other supports

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- All textbooks being recommended for consideration and approval by the Plymouth Board of Education requires no less than a two-thirds approval.
- All requests for approval of textbooks by the Plymouth Board of Education will be listed as “New Business” on any meeting agenda.

Legal Reference:

Connecticut General Statutes

10-18a Contents of textbooks and other general instructional materials.

10-221 Boards of education to prescribe rules.

10-228 Free textbooks, supplies, materials and equipment.

10-228a Free textbook loans to pupils attending nonpublic schools as amended by PA 07-190, An Act Concerning Textbook Loans.

10-229 Change of textbooks.

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