

Instruction

Grouping Policy

The placement of students in instructional groups, classrooms, and programs of study, has a significant impact on their educational and social development. No one grouping or placement practice is best for all children under all circumstances, but some general principles are common to all proper grouping and placement decisions. It is the policy of the Board of Education that grouping and placement decisions be based exclusively on educational considerations and that their primary goal be to promote the best educational interests of the students in question.

In making grouping and placement decisions, staff members must give due regard to the following general principles:

- Students can learn much from students whose skills and interests are different from their own in heterogeneous groups;
- Different students have different skills and interests;
- Students develop at different rates in different areas of learning;
- Students learn from other students as well as from adults; and

Grouping and placement decisions should also reflect the fact that changes in a student's educational development may require changes in his or her placement. Grouping and placement decisions, consequently, should be flexible, and they should be reviewed regularly to test their appropriateness.

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Grouping Procedures

Introduction

The New London Board of Education is committed to the appropriate grouping placement of all elementary students in instructional classrooms, groups and programs. Placement decisions should be based exclusively on educational considerations that best serve the needs and interests of students.

Research suggests that there is no one best way to group students, that students develop at different rates, that students have different skills and interests and that students can learn from other students as well as from adults.

In discussing grouping definitions and terms, researchers have identified no fewer than 32 commonly used grouping procedures, many of which involve grouping by ability in one way or another. In addition to the more traditional ability grouping practices, there have been other recent developments such as multi-grade, multi-age and open-space grouping practices.

The most commonly used forms of grouping are:

1. **Heterogeneous grouping**, which means the complete mixing of students regardless of ability.
2. **Tracking**, which means the assignment of students to a school or to a complete course of study on the basis of their ability.
3. **Ability Grouping**, which means the assignment of students to a particular classroom or classrooms on the basis of their abilities.
4. **Classroom Grouping**, which is the grouping of students within a classroom on the basis of ability in a particular subject area.

Elementary Schools: Self-contained classrooms

Responsibilities of the Principal

1. To develop with staff appropriate grouping procedures for all students prior to scheduling and/or assigning students yearly.
2. To ensure that flexibility is used in grouping students based on resources, building space and available personnel.

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Elementary Schools: Self-contained classrooms

Responsibilities of the Principal (continued)

3. To allow, when necessary, for more than one type of grouping within a building, i.e., departmentalized classrooms, combination grades, bilingual classes and special education.
4. To ensure that the grouping policy regulations are being carried out by staff on an ongoing basis.
5. The progress of all students should be monitored regularly and a process established that would allow student transfer within groups, levels and classes as a student's progress might warrant.

Principals' Responsibilities (Middle and High Schools)

1. To elicit periodic recommendations from subject supervisors regarding innovative and effective grouping practices.
2. To establish a school staff committee to address all issues raised by grouping policies. Recommendations for changes should be considered annually.