

# 5000 INSTRUCTION



## 5010 Equal Educational Opportunities

Students in M.S.D. Wabash County should be given the opportunity to develop skills and abilities to the maximum of their potential. Therefore, the school corporation shall foster an educational environment that provides equal educational opportunity for all students. Educational programs and services shall be designed to meet the varying needs of all students and shall not discriminate against any individual for any unlawful reasons.

## 5020 Curriculum Development

The School Board recognizes its responsibility for the quality of the educational program of the schools. To this end, the curriculum shall be developed, evaluated, and adopted on a continuing basis and in accordance with a plan for core curriculum growth established by the Superintendent.

For purposes of this policy, core curriculum shall be defined as the planned interaction of students with instructional staff, content, materials, resources, and procedures for evaluating the attainment of educational objectives.

The Board requires that the curriculum of this Corporation will be consistent with the Corporation's philosophy and goals and result in their achievement.

As educational leader of the Corporation, the Superintendent shall be responsible to the Board for the development and evaluation of curriculum and preparation of courses of study. S/He shall establish administrative guidelines for curriculum which ensures proper development, implementation, and evaluation.

The Superintendent shall make progress reports to the Board periodically.

The Superintendent may conduct such innovative programs as are deemed to be necessary to the continuing growth of the instructional program.

## 5030 Textbook Adoption Policy

The School Board shall approve all "textbooks" used as part of the educational program of this Corporation. "Textbook," for purposes of this policy, shall mean the principal source of instructional material for any given course of study, in whatever form the material may be presented (includes hardware, software, digital materials, etc.) that is available or distributed to every student enrolled in the course.

The superintendent will develop procedures for adoption of instructional material based on current Indiana law.

It is the policy of MSD of Wabash County to involve representative teachers, parents and administrators in an advisory capacity for preparation recommendations of instructional materials to be submitted to the Board for approval.

In adopting "textbooks", the Board shall carefully consider the rights, freedoms, and responsibilities of students, parents, and teachers. The Board's first commitment in adopting textbooks shall be the preservation of the students' right to learn in an atmosphere of academic freedom. The Board intends to support the teachers' right to exercise professional judgment in their work. At the same time, however, the Board expects teachers to balance this right with an awareness of their responsibility to meet the educational goals and objectives of the school corporation.

In addition, the Board recognizes the rights of parents to influence the education of their children. The Board shall not, however, allow the wishes of an individual parent or group of parents to infringe on the rights of the majority of the students.

Should a protest be filed, a hearing date shall be set when the petitioner may appear before the Textbook Advisory Committee.

The Board shall make textbooks available to all students on a rental basis.

## **5035 Challenges to Library, Media, and Other Supplemental Reading Materials**

The School Board recognizes the right of teachers, librarians, and administration to select books and other materials in accordance with the current trends in education and to make them available in schools.

Therefore, books and other reading material will be chosen for value of interest and enlightenment of all students in the community. A book will not be excluded because of the race, nationality, political, or religious values of the writer or of its style and language. Every effort will be made to provide materials that present all points of view concerning to the current international, national, and local problems and issues. Books and other reading material of sound factual authority will not be prescribed or removed from library shelves because of partisan doctrinal approval or disapproval.

The final decision on controversial reading material rests with the School Board after careful examination and discussion of the instructional material with school officials and/or other individuals the School Board may wish to consult. No parent or group of parents has the right to determine the reading matter for students other than their own children. The School Board recognizes the right of an individual parent to request that his or her child not have to read given instructional materials, provided a written request is made to the appropriate building principal.

### Procedures For Removal of Library, Media, and/or Other Supplemental Materials

Parents or guardians, having custody of any student enrolled in the school corporation or a community member who lives within the school corporation boundaries may request that the removal of library, media, and other supplemental instructional materials on the basis the materials are obscene or harmful to minors as defined in Indiana law according to the following procedures:

1. A person having a concern about the use of library, media, and/or other instructional materials should first discuss the concern with the school librarian.
2. If the individual is not satisfied after the discussion with the school librarian the individual should contact the building principal to discuss the matter.
3. If the individual is not satisfied after talking with the building principal, the individual may further the inquiry for removal of the material in question by completing a Request of Library, Media, and/or Other Supplemental Materials form available on the district website, which community members can access at home or through the school office, and submitting it to the building principal.
4. Upon receipt of the completed form, the building principal shall request a review of the challenged material by a review committee within fifteen working days. The challenged

material shall remain in use during the review process.

5. The building principal shall appoint the review committee and shall include but is not limited to a media professional, a classroom teacher, and a parent. For materials at the middle or high school level, a student representative may also be appointed.
6. The review committee shall take the following steps after receiving the challenged materials:
  - a. Read, view, or listen to the material in its entirety.
  - b. Review the definition of obscene and harmful to minors as defined in the Indiana criminal code.
  - c. Judge the material as a whole and not in part in determining whether the material meets the definition of obscene and/or harmful to minors.
7. The review committee shall make a written determination as to whether the material is Obscene and/or harmful to minors and should be removed from the school library. The review committee's written determination shall be given to the building principal, the superintendent, and the person who made the request to remove the materials.
8. The person requesting the removal of the materials has the right to appeal the review committee's decision to the school board. The appeal must be in writing to the superintendent within ten days of the receipt of the review committee's determination.
9. The school board shall determine based upon the findings of the review committee whether to retain or remove the challenged material at its next public meeting after receiving the appeal. The school board may also consider other resources in making its determination.

LEGAL REFERENCE: IC 20-26-5.5-1 (a)  
IC 35-49-2-1  
IC 35-49-2-2

## **5040 Academic Freedom and Responsibility**

The Board recognizes that academic freedom is essential to the fulfillment of the educational purposes of the M.S.D. Wabash County. Academic freedom is defined as:

1. The freedom and responsibility to teach and learn about economic, political, scientific, or social issues in a classroom environment which is conducive to the free exchange and examination of those issues.

2. The freedom and responsibility of teachers to assist the administration in selecting materials which are relevant to the levels of ability and maturity of the students.
3. The freedom and responsibility of teachers to express their conscience as private citizens outside of the classroom, and to participate fully in the public affairs of the community.
4. The freedom of students to hold divergent ideas as long as the expression of their dissent is done within the guidelines of debate and discussion which are generally accepted by teachers in a normal classroom environment.

Matters concerning academic freedom and responsibility may be brought to the attention of the appropriate persons pursuant to policy #2040.

## **5050 Religious Beliefs, Customs, Observances, & Instruction**

The Board of Education of the M.S.D. Wabash County believes that all persons ought to be free to follow their own religious beliefs, without government interference, according to the dictates of their own consciences and in accordance with law. In this spirit of the Board's understanding of both the legal and ethical requirements of respecting this very significant part of the American culture, the following policies have been established to assure proper respect, sensitivity, and protection to all religious cultures and faiths in our the pluralistic society:

1. Cultural material having a religious origin shall be allowed as long as the material to be used or studied is of instructional value to the classes concerned and is not being used for a sectarian and/or theological purpose.
2. Where religion is properly a part of course content, it must be used in the appropriate context. Inclusion of sacred writings, music and art in the educational program of the schools is to be based on their independent educational merits. While explanation of a religious belief may be necessary, classes shall not be used for religious instruction.
3. Individual student expressions portraying religious symbols or scenes are acceptable as long as students are not required to embrace a sectarian belief.
4. Students shall not be required to participate in prayers. In student groups in which membership is elective, prayer shall be a matter of personal preference.
5. Religious groups may use school facilities in accordance with policy #2120.
6. Students and school personnel are to show respect for those persons subscribing to religious beliefs differing from their own.
7. Student participation in religious activities shall be on a voluntary basis.

## **5055 Character Building Class**

The Board directs the Administrative Cabinet to provide school facilities and thirty (30) minutes per five (5) day week per classroom in order for students in grades 3-6 to attend Character Building Class. The Character Building Class instructor will secure parental permission slips prior to a child's participation.

## **5060 Selection of Media Materials**

The M.S.D. Wabash County shall strive to provide a wide range of instructional materials on all levels of difficulty, with diversity of appeal, and the presentation of different points of view. In order to assure that the school media program is an integral part of the educational program of the school, the corporation has identified the following objectives:

1. To provide materials that enrich and support the curriculum and personal needs of the users, taking into consideration their varied interests, abilities, learning styles, and community standards.
2. To provide materials that will stimulate growth in factual knowledge, literary appreciation, aesthetic values, and ethical standards.
3. To provide a background of information which will enable pupils to make intelligent judgments in their daily lives.
4. To provide materials on opposing sides of controversial issues so that users may develop under guidance the practice of critical analysis.
5. To provide materials that realistically represents our pluralistic society and reflects the contributions made by those groups and individuals to our American heritage.
6. To place principle above personal opinion and reason above prejudice in the selection of materials of the highest quality in order to assure a comprehensive media collection appropriate for the users.

While selection of materials involves many people, including media personnel, teachers, students, administrators, and community persons, the responsibility for coordinating and recommending the selection and purchase of instructional materials rests with the certified media personnel. In selecting materials for school media programs, the media personnel shall evaluate the existing collection, assess curricula needs as they relate to state academic standards, examine materials, and consult reputable, professionally prepared selection aids.

Acceptance of gifts, whether books or other materials, shall be decided by the media personnel on the basis of their suitability to the purposes and needs of the library in accordance with this policy. The media personnel shall determine use or disposal of gift material.

## **5070 Weeding and Evaluation of Media Materials**

Materials which no longer meet the stated objectives of the MSD Wabash County School libraries shall be discarded according to accepted professional practices. The method of disposing of the weeded library materials shall be at the discretion of the media personnel, subject to any policy or resolution adopted by the Board.

## **5080 Copyright Compliance**

The Board of Education of M.S.D. Wabash County acknowledges that unlawful copying and use of copyrighted materials encourages an attitude of disrespect for the law which is in conflict with the educational goals of the school corporation. Unlawful copying also contributes to higher costs for materials and lessens the motives for development of quality educational materials.

It is the intent of the Board that all employees follow the provisions of Title 17 of the United States Code ("Copyrights"), and subsequent federal legislation and guidelines regarding duplication, retention, and use of copyrighted materials, including software. To promote adherence to these provisions, the Board directs that:

1. Unlawful copies of copyrighted material, including individual copies or networked versions of software, may not be produced on corporation owned equipment.
2. Unlawful copies of copyrighted material, including individual copies or networked versions of software, may not be used on corporation owned equipment, within corporation owned buildings, or for corporation-sponsored functions.

3. The legal and/or insurance protection of the corporation shall not be extended to employees who unlawfully copy and use copyrighted materials.

Employees who make and/or use copies of copyrighted materials in their jobs are expected to be familiar with published provisions regarding fair use and public display and are further expected to be able to provide to their supervisor, upon request, the justification under Sections 107 or 110 of Title 17 of the United States Code for copies that have been made or used.

Employees who use copyrighted materials, which do not fall within fair use or public display guidelines, should be able to substantiate that the materials meet one of the following tests:

1. The materials have been purchased from an authorized vendor by the individual employee or the corporation, and a record of the purchase exists.
2. The materials are copies covered by a licensing agreement between the copyright owner and the corporation or the individual employee.
3. The materials are being reviewed or demonstrated by the user to reach a decision about future purchase or licensing, and a valid agreement exists which allows for such use.

## **5090 Review/Reconsideration of Media and/or Instructional Materials**

Parents, guardians, or persons having custody of any student enrolled in the M.S.D. Wabash County may request that the use of media materials, basic textbooks, and other instructional materials be reviewed and/or reconsidered according to the following procedures:

1. Basic textbooks, other instructional materials supportive to the basic textbooks, and additional instructional materials selected by individual teachers may be reviewed by appointment.
2. A person having a concern about the use of media materials, basic textbooks and other instructional materials should first discuss the concern with the classroom teacher or building media personnel.
3. If the individual is not satisfied after the discussion with the classroom teacher or building media personnel, the individual should contact the building principal to discuss the matter.
4. If the individual is not satisfied after talking with the building principal, the individual may further the inquiry for a review or reconsideration of the use of the material in question by completing a Request for Review/Reconsideration of Library and/or Instructional Materials form available in any school office, and submitting it to the building principal.
5. Upon receipt of the completed form, the building principal and Director of Media shall request review of the challenged material by an ad hoc materials review committee within fifteen working days. The challenged material shall remain in use during the review/reconsideration process.
6. The review committee shall be appointed by the building principal, and/or Chief Academic Officer and may include an administrator, media professional, a classroom teacher, and parent. For materials at the middle or high school level, a student representative may also be appointed.

The review committee shall take the following steps after receiving the challenged materials:

1. Read, view, or listen to the material in its entirety.
2. Check general acceptance of the material by reading reviews and consulting



recommended lists.

3. Determine the extent to which the material supports the curriculum.
4. Complete the Instructional Materials Review Committee Checklist, judging the material for its strength and value as a whole and not in part.
5. The review committee shall provide a written recommendation to the Superintendent for final determination.

The recommendation of the review committee may be appealed to the Board in conduction with policy #2040.

## **5095 Written Surveys, Analysis, or Evaluations**

No written survey, analysis, or evaluation shall be distributed to a student as a part of any school program or curriculum without prior written consent of the student's parent or guardian (or, in the case of a student of at least 18 years of age or an emancipated minor, the prior written consent of the student), in which the primary purpose is to reveal information concerning:

1. Political affiliations;
2. Mental and psychological problems potentially embarrassing to the student or his/her family;
3. Sexual behavior, practices, or attitudes;
4. Illegal, antisocial, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
5. Critical appraisals of other individuals with whom respondents have close family relationships;
6. Legally recognized privileged and analogous relationships, including but not limited to, attorney/client, doctor/patient, clergy/parishioner;
7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or student's parents; or
8. Income (other than that required by law to determine eligibility for participation in a program or for receiving financial assistance under such program).

Parents shall be informed prior to such instrument being administered and shall be entitled to inspect those materials.

## **5100 Field Trips**

Field trip procedures shall be developed by the administration and approved by the Board of School Trustees. The Board authorizes the administration to approve educational field trips directly related to curriculum and educational goals of the school corporation if 175 or less round trip and not requiring an overnight stay in accordance with the adopted procedures. Field Trips requiring round trip mileage in an excess of 175 miles or overnight and/or out of state require Board approval.

All chaperones who are not school employees must have a criminal history report before going on the trip.

Requested field trips that do not meet the procedures approved by the Board may be appealed at a school board meeting at least one month prior to the proposed trip. Appeal requests must include an explanation of the trip, exceptions to the approved procedures, student selection criteria and appropriate rationale and information.

## **5105 Summer Camps and Summer Classes**

Summer Camps and Summer School Classes will only be considered a school sponsored event, when:

1. It has as its primary goal, the purpose of providing an educational, athletic or recreational experience to participants;
2. It involves students or parents of students of the school district;
3. It will have as its supervisor and instructor at least one current MSDWC employee;
4. Camp registration fees shall be collected and accounted for by the ECA treasurers; and
5. It is formally approved by the Board of School Trustees.

The school corporation assumes no liability for events or activities that have not been approved by the Board of School Trustees.

Normal field trip procedures must be followed for these summer programs.

## **5120 Research**

Proposals for research to be conducted in M.S.D. Wabash County shall be submitted to the Superintendent. To be considered, research projects must be of direct benefit to the school(s) or contribute to the advancement of education generally. Research projects conducted in M.S.D. Wabash County must be approved by the Superintendent.

## **5130 Postsecondary Enrollment Program**

A student may enroll in courses offered by an accredited public or private college or university located in Indiana that grants a baccalaureate or associate degree on a full-time or part-time basis during grades 9-12. Expenses associated with this option, including tuition, books, and transportation, shall be assumed by the student or parents. A student who participates in the program shall be considered a student enrolled in the school corporation in computing average daily membership as defined.

If a course has been approved for secondary credit by the school corporation, a student is entitled to credit toward graduation requirements for each course the student successfully completes at that institution. The student's school records must indicate that the credits were earned at an eligible institution.

To be eligible to participate in the postsecondary enrollment program, a student must have the approval of the building principal. Such approval must verify that:

1. The course or courses are appropriate to receive secondary credit.
2. Verification of the student's enrollment in the postsecondary program will not delay the student's progress toward high school graduation.

## **5140 Homework**

Homework should be an extension of class work and related to curricular objectives. It should not be assigned as a punishment. When making assignments teachers should be conscious of students' need for personal time, recreation and cultural development. Assignments should be reasonable in length and appropriate for the students' readiness and academic level. Teachers should provide ample time for students' questions when making the assignment. They should also engage in periodic monitoring and feedback, especially for long-term assignments. All criteria for the successful completion of the assignment shall be given at the time of the assignment.



Students and parents have important roles in the successful completion of homework. Students need to learn to budget their time, take home needed materials, clarify assignments and return work in a timely manner. Students will be encouraged to use instructional technology, as it is available to them to do their homework. Parents need to establish a regular time for homework and provide a suitable place to work.

Homework assignments are made when students have attained the study and organizational skills required to carry out the assigned tasks independently. It will generally fall within one of these categories:

1. Enrichment assignments are intended to promote personal growth and development. They often provide students with opportunities for choice and the scope of their involvement. Apart from general guidelines, the students' efforts may result in an original and creative product.
2. Reinforcement lessons are individually assigned to students who will benefit from such homework.
3. Skill development lessons are closely related to current class work. Supervision should be provided during initial practice before homework is assigned. After analyzing student strengths and weaknesses, the teacher should modify the type and length of the assignment as needed for specific students.
4. Preparatory homework is intended to familiarize students with concepts or topics prior to the next day's class work. Failure to complete this type of homework will generally interfere with students' ability to successfully participate in the day's activities and to pass quizzes.

Make-up work will be provided on the second consecutive day of a student's excused absence. School officials are not expected to provide assignments or to give credit for work missed when a student is unexcused or truant. Make-up work shall be provided for activities required for class credit i.e., tests, quizzes and labs. The assignments shall be made at the discretion of the teacher and may be equivalent, but not necessarily identical, to the instruction missed in class.

## **5150 Instructional Staffing/Class Size**

The Superintendent shall develop guidelines for making staffing decisions to establish equitable teacher loads throughout the district. In approving these guidelines, the board will strive to keep individual class size, teacher loads, and instructional staff ratios at reasonable levels. Such levels will generally be influenced by the needs of the students and instructional programs, financial conditions of the school corporation, building facilities available, equipment required and available, availability of qualified teachers and other staff, changes in enrollment and attendance, and other reasons determined to be appropriate by the board.

## **5160 Credit for High School Courses Taken at Middle School**

Junior High students may take high school level courses for credit upon approval of administration.

## **5170 Flag and Pledge of Allegiance**

The United States flag shall be displayed in every classroom within the School District. Each student shall have the opportunity to voluntarily recite the Pledge of Allegiance in his or her classroom each day. A student is exempt from participation in the Pledge of Allegiance and may not be required to participate in the Pledge of Allegiance if the student chooses not to participate, or the student's parent chooses to have the student not participate.

## **5180 Moment of Silence**

Under federal and state law, all students have the right to the free exercise of religion within the School District. Each student shall be free from coercion either to engage in or refrain from religious observation on school grounds. Pursuant to state law, each classroom shall have a daily observance of a moment of silence. During this moment of silence, the teacher will ensure that all students remain seated or standing and silent. Further, students shall make no distracting display that interferes with, distracts, or impedes other students in the exercise of their individual rights.

## **5190 Animals in Classrooms**

Live animals with the exception of fish in aquariums are to be in the school for educational purposes. No live animal will be allowed to stay in a classroom longer than a school year. At no time will animals considered dangerous be brought into the classrooms.

When an animal is to be brought into a classroom, a note will be sent home with the students of that class notifying the parents that an animal will be present. If known in advance this will be done at the beginning of the school year. Parents are to notify the teacher or principal if their student is allergic to the animal. Upon such notice, the principal will confer with the teacher and determine what options are available which may include changing to a different species with no allergy problems or not having an animal in the classroom. The school will not reveal the name of the student with allergy issues to students or parents. If after an animal is brought into the classroom, the parent finds their student is allergic to the animal, the school will work with the parent and teacher to resolve the issue. If necessary, housekeeping will clean all surfaces in the classroom to remove any animal dander that may still cause an allergic reaction by the student.

Examples of educational purposes where animals would be in the classroom are:

- 1) Animals used in health class to demonstrate effects of different diets.
- 2) Animals used in biology to show developmental changes or diversity.
- 3) Eggs incubated to show development.

Examples of educational purposes where animals are in the classroom for one day or less:

- 1) Pets/animals brought into the classroom to allow students exposure to a variety of species.
- 2) Pets/animals used to demonstrate obedience training.

The principal, when requested by a teacher, has the authority to determine if it is appropriate to bring an animal into the classroom.

Cleaning: Cages shall be cleaned by the teacher in charge of the animal on a routine basis to avoid offensive odors or pest issues. Aquariums with fish are to be maintained by the teacher including cleaning as needed.

Keep animals in cages or localized areas as much as possible: do not let them roam.

Locate animals away from ventilation system vents to void circulating allergens throughout the room or building.

Store food and bedding materials in sealed containers to avoid attracting pests.

When appropriate, teachers may allow students to handle and/or feed the animals.

LEGAL REFERENCE: 410 I.A.C. 33-4-7

DATE ADOPTED: November 10, 2020