

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;
4. Sexual abuse and assault awareness and prevention program; or
5. Firearms safety programs.

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 in advance of the instruction to be provided.

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 or a firearm safety 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. § 10-18c.
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 reading and studying)

Students in AP or college credit classes should be assigned a maximum of 45 minutes of homework per AP or college credit class (excludes 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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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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REVISED _____

PARENTAL ACCESS TO INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIAL

In accordance with federal law, state law, and Plymouth Board of Education (the “Board”) policy, parents or guardians shall be permitted access to instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum for any student and all curriculum approved by the Board’s curriculum committee established pursuant to section 10-220 of the Connecticut General Statutes and all associated curriculum materials (“Curriculum”). Curriculum does not include academic tests or academic assessments.

"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 and Curriculum. The district shall grant reasonable access to Instructional Material and Curriculum 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

State Law:

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-220, Duties of Boards of Education

Public Act 23-160, “An Act Concerning Education Mandate Relief and Other Technical and Assorted Revisions and Additions to the Education and Early Childhood Education Statutes.”

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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 that is submitted 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.

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

P-6009
Instruction

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:

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

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

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**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.
 - a. The District shall 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.

b. 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 this Section 3, 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.

c. Upon development by the Department of Education of a document concerning educational, safety, mental health, and food insecurity resources and programs available for students and their families, a teacher conducting a parent-teacher conference that is required in this Section 3 must provide a copy of such document to the parent prior to the parent-teacher conference.

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P-6009
Instruction

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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REVISED _____

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”) recognizes 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.

I. Calculation of Grade Point Average and Class Rank Percentile for Purposes of the Connecticut Automatic Admissions Program

The Board understands its obligation under state law to identify students in the District who are eligible for the Connecticut Automatic Admissions Program (“CAAP”).

In accordance with state law, for each student who completes eleventh grade, the District will: (1) calculate a grade point average using the standardized method established by the Board of Regents for Higher Education (“BOR”) for purposes of the CAAP (“CAAP GPA”), and (2) determine whether such student’s class rank percentile is above or below the minimum established by the BOR. The District shall share a student’s CAAP GPA and whether the student is above or below the minimum class rank percentile for the CAAP with the student, the student’s parent or guardian, the Connecticut State Department of Education (“CSDE”), and, upon request, a participating institution for purposes of applying to such institution under the CAAP.

The District shall notify each student enrolled in the student’s final year of high school, and the parent or guardian of such student, whether the student may be admitted to at least one participating institution under the CAAP based on the academic threshold established by such institution.

The District shall calculate each student’s CAAP GPA, identify institutions to which students are eligible for automatic admission under the CAAP, and generate student letters in accordance with guidance issued by the CSDE, as such guidance may be amended from time to time.

II. Calculation of Grade Point Averages For All Other Purposes

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

Connecticut General Statutes § 10-220q

Connecticut General Statutes § 10a-11h

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12/22/2022

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

P-6013
Instruction

- 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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