

RSU #63

- a. **NEPN/NSBA Code:** **IMB-R**
b. **Title:** **Teaching About Controversial/Sensitive Issues**
c. **Author:**
d. **Replaces Policy:**
e. **Date Approved:** **04/27/2015** **RSU #63**
f. **Previously Approved:** **04/27/2015** **11/03/2003**
g. **Policy Expiration:** **Review as Needed**
h. **Responsible for Review:** **Curriculum Committee/Policy Committee**
i. **Date Reviewed:** **03/26/2015 (Curriculum) & 10/06/2021 04/06/2015 Policy Committee**
j. **References:** **Policies IMC – Controversial Speakers-Programs; Policy IMD – School Ceremonies and Observances; Policy IMDC – Religious Observances and Displays; Policy IA – Instructional Goals and Objectives; Policy IGA – Curriculum Development and Adoption and MSMA sample**

k. Narrative:

Teaching about controversial/sensitive issues is impossible, or at least severely hampered, if the community does not respect the principles of freedom and recognize that dissent does not necessarily mean disloyalty. However, one form of dissent, which is incompatible with freedom, is that which attempts to end freedom. Irrational fears do this, and thereby may block the **RSU #63** District (**the District**) in its efforts to handle controversial issues in an atmosphere of freedom and thoroughness.

- I.** Sensitive or controversial issues will be handled as they arise in the classroom and will not be avoided in order to restrict or restrain the academic freedom of either the teacher or the student. Neither teachers nor students in district classrooms will avoid an issue simply because it is of a sensitive or controversial nature. **If a teacher is unsure about ways to address a sensitive or controversial topic, they should consult the Principal.**
- II.** Parents will be notified prior to the introduction of a sensitive issue in class in order to have the opportunity to choose not to have their student participate.
- III.** It is the responsibility of the schools to make provision for the study of controversial issues. Every effort should be made to see that materials and references presenting all sides of a sensitive or controversial issue are available to students in the school library and that these materials are age appropriate.
 - A.** The policy on controversial issues should be defined in terms of the rights of students rather than in terms of the rights of teachers.

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- B. The study should be appropriate to the level of maturity of the students and their ability to reason and to comprehend the various perspectives of the subject matter being presented.
 - C. The study should be objective and scholarly with a minimum emphasis on opinion and a maximum emphasis on facts. The teacher will not suppress a student's view of the issue as long as the expression of that view is not derogatory, malicious, or abusive toward other students' views. Additionally, one student will not be permitted to dominate the discussion. In handling sensitive or controversial subjects in the classroom, teachers and students will be encouraged to keep an open mind and will be encouraged to come to their own conclusions regarding a particular problem after independent inquiry.
- IV. In the study of controversial issues, the students have the following rights:
- A. The right to study any controversial issue which has political, economic, or social significance and concerning which (at the appropriate level) ~~s/he~~ **they** should begin to have an opinion;
 - B. The right to have free access to all relevant information;
 - C. The right to form and express opinions on controversial issues without thereby jeopardizing relations with the teacher or the school; and
 - D. The right to study under competent instruction in an atmosphere free from bias and prejudice.
- V. The teacher employs the same methods in handling controversial issues as characterize the best teaching at any time.
- A. The teacher, in selecting both the content and the method of instruction, is mindful of the maturity level of the students **and alignment with approved curriculum.**
 - B. The teacher has assured ~~her/himself~~ **them** that the controversial subject to be discussed belongs within the framework of the curriculum to be covered, that the subject is significant as well as meaningful for the students, and that through the discussion, students will have the opportunity to grow.
 - C. The teacher handles the classroom presentation in ways that will ensure a wide range of information and interpretation for the students' consideration and strives to present a balance among many points of view.
 - D. The teacher does not use the classroom as a personal forum, **rather, the teacher serves as a facilitator to ensure points of view are presented in a civil manner.** ~~S/he~~ **They** does not employ the techniques of the demagogue or the protagonist for attention, for control, or simply for color. The teacher has the right

to identify and express ~~her/his~~ **their** own point of view in the classroom **for legitimate pedagogical purposes** as long as ~~s/he~~ **they** indicates clearly that it is ~~her/his~~ **their** own.

- E. The teacher emphasizes keeping an open mind, basing one's judgment on known facts, looking closely at facts to evaluate them in terms of the subject under discussion, and being ready to change one's opinion should new facts come into light.
- F. The emphasis **of student learning** always is on the method of forming an opinion **rather than** ~~as much as~~ on the opinion formed.

VI. Any resident of the appropriate district wishing to lodge a complaint about the use of sensitive or controversial subject matter or methods of teaching controversial subjects should direct such concerns to the Principal of the school involved. Complaints from anyone other than a district resident will be limited to the Principal and the complainant. The procedures outlined below should be followed in responding to such a complaint:

- A. The Principal will inform the teacher(s) involved of the nature of the complaint, and meet with the complainant to discuss the issue and to explain the review procedure.
- B. If the issue is not resolved with the initial discussion, the complainant will be requested to state the objection in writing, citing specific teaching methods and/or subject matter to which ~~s/he~~ **they** objects. The written objection will be submitted to the building Principal for ~~her/his~~ **their** review.
- C. The building Principal will meet with the teacher(s) involved to review the teaching approach and/or subject matter as to purpose, appropriateness, and content. The findings and recommendations of the Principal will be submitted, in writing, to the Superintendent or ~~her/his~~ **their** designee. Additionally, the Principal will inform the complainant and the teacher(s) involved.

VII. If the complainant and teacher(s) involved are satisfied with the decision of the building Principal, the process is complete. If the complainant or teacher(s) involved are not satisfied with the decision, the process continues.

- A. After receiving a formal written indication of dissatisfaction from the complainant or teacher(s) involved, the Principal will direct the appeal to the District Review Committee.
- B. The Committee will consist of:
 - 1. One classroom teacher from the appropriate grade level.
 - 2. One building administrator from the appropriate level other than the

Building Principal.

3. One member from the **RSU #63** Board of Directors (**the Board**).
4. One representative selected by the complainant.
5. One representative selected by the teacher(s).
6. A Chairperson will be selected from the Committee members listed above.

- VIII.** The District Review Committee will review the issues within 30 school days. The Committee will meet with both the complainant and the teacher(s) involved to review the teaching methods and/or subject matter for purpose, appropriateness, and content. The Committee should utilize the findings of the Building Principal, but is not bound by them and may conduct its own independent inquiry.
- IX.** Upon completion of the review, the Chairperson will present the written findings and recommendations to the Superintendent for action by the Board of ~~Directors~~. This information will also be provided to both the complainant and teacher(s) involved. The complainant and teacher(s) involved will be notified by the Superintendent or ~~her/his~~ **their** designee as to the specific date and time that the ~~district~~ Board of ~~Directors~~ will consider the findings and recommendations of the District Review Committee. The Superintendent will inform, in writing, the complainant and teacher(s) involved of the final decision of the ~~district~~ Board of ~~Directors~~.
- X.** Either party is afforded continued due process by direct appeal of the ~~district~~ Board of ~~Directors~~² decision to the Commissioner of Education.

RSU #63

- a. NEPN/NSBA Code: **IMBB**
b. Title: **Exemption from Required Instruction**
c. Author:
d. Replaces Policy:
e. Date Approved: **04/27/2015** RSU #63
f. Previously Approved: **04/27/2015** ~~06/27/2005~~
g. Policy Expiration: **Review as Needed**
h. Responsible for Review: **Curriculum Committee/Policy Committee**
i. Date Reviewed: **03/26/2015 (Curriculum) & 10/06/2021 04/06/2015 Policy Committee**
j. References: **Policies IMB-R, IMC, IMDC, and related MRSA sample policies**

k. Narrative:

~~The RSU #63's districts' (the District's)~~ curriculum is designed to reflect the learning expectations for all students in all content areas of the ~~system of~~ **Maine** Learning Results, as well as other statutory and regulatory requirements, and content areas specified by the ~~Districts'~~ Boards of Directors.

The ~~Boards of Directors~~ acknowledges that, from time to time, individual students may be exposed to some ideas and materials with which they or their parents/guardians disagree. Students and their parents/guardians cannot be required to adopt ideas with which they disagree, but such disagreement alone is not a sufficient basis to exempt a student from the required curriculum. Exemptions from the required curriculum should be minimized because they detract from the overall instruction provided to the class as a whole and the educational objectives sought to be achieved by the curriculum.

- I. ~~The Boards of Directors recognizes that~~ there could be topics in the curriculum that may be objectionable to individual students and/or parents/guardians based on their particular sincerely held religious, moral, or philosophical beliefs. Exemption from instruction that infringes on such beliefs may be requested by the parent/guardian.
- II. Requests for exemption from instruction must be made in writing and are subject to approval by the building Principal. The Principal ~~shall~~ **will** notify the Superintendent as soon as practicable of any request for exemption from instruction and/or ~~her/his~~ **their** decision. If the Principal denies an exemption request, the parent/guardian may appeal to the Superintendent. If the parent is still not satisfied, the parent may appeal to the ~~district Board of Directors~~, whose decision ~~shall~~ **will** be final.
- III. In considering requests for exemption, factors ~~that~~ the Principal should consider include:
 - A. The alignment of the curriculum with the ~~system of~~ **Maine** Learning Results,
 - B. Whether the course or content area is required by state law or Board policy,

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- C. The educational importance of the material or instruction from which exemption is requested,
 - D. Evidence regarding the sincerity of the belief on which the request is based,
 - E. Whether the school has a legal obligation to accommodate the exemption request,
 - F. The effect of exemption or accommodation on the validity of the local assessment system, and
 - G. Other factors that bear upon the particular request.
- IV. Exemption from required instruction does not excuse the student from meeting the requirements of the ~~system of~~ **Maine** Learning Results.

RSU #63

- a. NEPN/NSBA Code: IMDC
- b. Title: Religious Observances and Displays
- c. Author:
- d. Replaces Policy:
- e. Date Approved: 04/27/2015 RSU #63
- f. Previously Approved: 04/27/2015 04/05/2004
- g. Policy Expiration: Review as Needed
- h. Responsible for Review: ~~Curriculum Committee~~/Superintendent
- i. Date Reviewed: 03/26/2015 (~~Curriculum Com.~~) & 04/06/2015
10/06/2021 (Policy Committee)
- j. References: Materials provided by MSMA, policies IMB, IMB-R, IMC, IMD, and IMBB
- k. Narrative:

The ~~district~~ **RSU #63** Boards-of Directors (**the Board**) created this policy with a shared commitment of respect for individual religious beliefs expressed in the constitutional guarantee of religious liberty while ensuring its educational goal to advance students' knowledge and appreciation of the role that religion plays in the social, cultural, and historical development of civilization.

No religious belief or non-belief should be promoted by the **D**istricts or their employees and none should be disparaged. Instead, the **D**istricts encourage all students and staff members to appreciate and be tolerant of each other's religious views. The **D**istricts should use all opportunities to foster understanding and mutual respect among students and parents/**guardians**, whether it involves race, culture, economic background, or religious beliefs.

The intent of this policy and related regulations is to reflect a balance **of** the academic and instruction mission of our schools, the law, and legal guidelines related to the separation of church and state, the richness and diversity of our population, and sensitivity to the rights and dignity of the individual as they relate to the celebration of holidays.

I. Observance of Religious Holidays

- A. Holidays throughout the year, which have a religious and secular basis may be observed.
- B. The historical and contemporary values and the origins of religious holidays may be explained in an unbiased and objective manner without sectarian indoctrination.
- C. Music, art, literature, and drama having religious themes or basis are permitted as part of the curriculum for school-sponsored activities and programs (if presented in a prudent and objective manner) and as a traditional part of the cultural and religious heritage of the particular holiday.

II. Religion in the Curriculum

- A. The school calendar should be prepared to minimize conflicts with religious holidays of all faiths. Students will be granted excused absences, if requested in advance, in order to celebrate religious holiday(s) that occur on a school day.
- B. The use of religious symbols such as a cross, menorah, Star of David, Crèche, symbols of Native American religions, or other symbols that are a part of a religious holiday are permitted as teaching aids or resources, provided such symbols are displayed in an example of the cultural and religious heritage of the holiday and are temporary in nature. Religious institutions and orientations are central to human experience, past and present. An education excluding such a significant aspect would be incomplete. It is essential that teaching about – and not of – religion be conducted in a factual, objective, and respectful manner.
- C. The Districts supports the inclusion of religious literature, music, drama, and the arts in curriculum and in school activities provided it is intrinsic to the learning experience in the various fields of study and is presented objectively.
- D. The emphasis on religious themes in the arts, literature, and history should be only as extensive as necessary for a balanced and comprehensive study of the areas. Such studies should never foster any particular religious tenets or demean any religious beliefs.
- E. Student-initiated expressions to questions or assignments, which reflect their beliefs or non-beliefs about a religious theme, will be accommodated. For example, students are free to express religious belief or non-belief in compositions, art forms, speech, and debate, as long as such expression is done in a respectful manner.

RSU 63

- a. **NEPN/NSBA Code:** **IJOC**
- b. **Title:** **School Volunteers**
- c. **Author:**
- d. **Replaces Policy:**
- e. **Date Approved:** **03/23/2015 RSU #63**
- f. **Previously Approved:** **03/23/2015 10/22/2007**
- g. **Policy Expiration:** **Review as Needed**
- h. **Responsible for Review:** **Curriculum Committee/Policy Committee**
- i. **Date Reviewed:** **10/06/2021 Policy Committee**
- j. **References:** **20-A MRSA, Chapter 1002.1.B.**

k. Narrative:

The districts' ~~RSU #63~~ Boards of Directors (**the Board**) recognizes the need to develop a volunteer program to support instructional programs and extra curricular activities. The Boards appreciate the dedicated parents/**guardians** and community members who volunteer and assist with activities to ensure the success of ~~the RSU #63's~~ (**the District**)s' educational process.

I. The purpose of the volunteer program is to: will be as follows:

- A. Assist employees in providing more individualized and enriched instruction.
- B. Build an understanding of school programs among interested citizens, thus stimulating widespread involvement in the total education process.
- C. Strengthen school/community relations through positive participation and involvement.
- D. Share specialized knowledge in a particular area that would be a benefit to the students.

II. A volunteer is a person **an adult who volunteers on an occasional or regular basis at school sites or other educational facilities to support the efforts of professional personnel. Such an adult volunteer will serve in that capacity without compensation or employee benefits of any type, except for liability protection as provided by the District's insurance. ~~program.~~****III. Use of volunteers within a **the District** is not to conflict with or replace any regularly authorized personnel.****IV. Before beginning, volunteers will receive orientation conducted by the school principal **or** and his/her **their** designee, which ~~shall~~ **will** include signing the District's Confidentiality Form and the federally required Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) agreement. The school secretary will provide the documents for signature.****V. Volunteers may overhear or become aware of information, which ~~is to~~ **must** remain**

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~~confidential, and not carried from the school or discussed. Similarly, volunteers may become aware of~~ Information about students that should ~~may~~ not be discussed outside the classroom with anyone other than the assigned teacher. This is for the protection of all students, parents/guardians, ~~employees, and volunteers, and teachers.~~

- VI. Volunteers who work with students or assist ~~the a~~ teacher must be under the immediate supervision and direction of the teacher.
- VII. Volunteers ~~will~~ **must** comply with the **District** policies, rules, and regulations **as well as state and federal laws.** ~~set forth within the District.~~
- ~~VIII.~~ Volunteers should not ~~come to school~~ **be** accompanied with ~~pre-school-age~~ **by** children. ~~as the children may be a distraction to the students in the classroom and the teacher. In addition, there is the possibility of the children getting into areas of the classroom or common areas that are off limits to anyone but the teacher or school personnel.~~
- IX. Volunteers should not take up the teacher's time and attention with personal concerns about their own children who may be students within the **District**. There are procedures within the **District** for parents/guardians to make an appointment in advance to meet with the teacher.
- ~~X.~~ Any room within an **RSU 63 facility** ~~school~~ designated as the ~~Teachers' Staff~~ **Staff** Room is a place for ~~the teachers staff to go to get a break from their duties. It is not a place for~~ **volunteers.** ~~continuing discussions not associated with the volunteers' assigned duties. The principal's office and any area associated with the principal's office is not a social place to spend time unless the volunteer is there on school business.~~
- XI. The ~~Boards of Directors recognizes~~ **any school's schools have** designated parent-volunteer association designed to raise funds, recruit volunteers, and generally work with ~~the school's staff to strengthen school/community relations through positive participation and involvement. Volunteer activities must be pre-planned and scheduled with the school principal's permission.~~

**AOS #81
(Comprised of CSD #8 and RSU #63)**

- a. NEPN/NSBA Code: ECB
- b. Title: Pesticide Applications/Notification
- c. Author:
- d. Replaces Policy:
- e. Date Approved: ~~02/26/2015 CSD #8, 02/23/2015~~ RSU #63
- f. Previously Approved: ~~02/23/2015 06/07/2004~~
- g. Policy Expiration: Review as Needed
- h. Responsible for Review: ~~Trans./Ops Committee~~ **Transportation and Facilities Director/Policy Committee**
- i. Date Reviewed: ~~02/10/2015~~ **10/06/2021 Policy Committee**
09/17/2021 Transportation and Facilities Director
- j. References: 7 MRSA Sections 601 through 625; 22 MRSA Sections 1471-A through 1471-X; ME Dept. of Agriculture 01-026, Chap. 27
- k. Narrative:

The **RSU #63** Boards of Directors (**the Board**) ~~of both districts~~ recognizes structural and landscape pests can pose significant problems for people and **RSU #63 (the District)** property. Some pesticides also pose health and safety risks to people, property, and the environment. It is the policy ~~of both the~~ districts to incorporate Integrated Pest Management principles and procedures for control of structural and landscape pests.

- I. Definition: Integrated Pest Management (IPM), for the purpose of this regulation means
 - A. The selection, integration, and implementation of pest damage prevention and control based on predicted pest damages, and managing pests and natural enemies;
 - B. Selecting the appropriate system of pest disposal, either by mechanical or chemical prevention;
 - C. Defining “pests” as living organisms (animals, plants, or micro-organisms) that interfere with the intended use of school facilities, equipment, and/or grounds;
 - D. Recognizing that “pesticide” is any substance or mixture of substances intended to prevent, destroy, repel, or mitigate any pests and/or to regulate, defoliate, or desiccate plants.
- II. The IPM Coordinator is the **District’s Transportation and Facilities Director** ~~of Operations, who shall be~~ **and is** responsible for the following:
 - A. Proper management of pest control, which includes proper training of any staff assigned pest control duties.

- B.** Notifying building occupants of any pest problem as soon as possible following detection;
- C.** Ensuring proper steps are followed for pest disposal, in accordance with state laws and district policy;
- D.** Identifying and maintaining pest management objectives;
- E.** Maintaining a safe, sustainable school environment;
- F.** Protecting human health by suppressing pests that threaten public health and safety;
- G.** Reducing exposure of humans, particularly children, to pesticides;
- H.** Reducing or preventing pest damage to District properties;
- I.** Reducing environmental pollution;
- J.** Preventing pests from spreading beyond District properties; and
- K.** Enhancing the quality of life for students, staff, and others using District properties.

III. State law has exempted notification of use for the:

- A.** Application of ready-to-use general pesticides by hand or non-powered equipment to control or repel stinging or biting insects when there is an urgent need to eliminate a pest that threatens the health or safety of any student, staff, or other occupant.
- B.** Application of general use products by hand or with non-powered equipment to interior or exterior surfaces and furnishings during the course of routine cleaning procedures and application of paints, stains, or wood preservatives that are classified as general use pesticides.

IV. Notification:

- A.** When pesticide application is necessary, a licensed applicator will take into account the toxicity of the recommended products and choose the lowest risk products based on the signal word on the pesticide label and the commercial safety data sheet. Other toxicology data and any other label language indicating special problems such as toxicity to wildlife or likelihood of contaminating surface or ground water must be reviewed with the ~~district's~~ **Transportation and Facilities** Director ~~of Operations~~ before any application.
- B.** The attached Building Occupants Notification form ~~shall~~ **will** be completed and delivered to the District's superintendent and building supervisor ~~no less than one~~

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~~(1)-week~~ prior to any pesticide control treatment **as required by state and federal laws.**

- V. **To the extent possible, applications ~~shall~~ will occur on weekends and during school vacations. They will not occur when students are present.**

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**NOTIFICATION
to
BUILDING OCCUPANTS
of
PESTICIDE APPLICATION**

FROM: _____ DATE: _____
RSU 63 Transportation and Facilities Director/Pesticide Coordinator
202 Kidder Hill Road
Holden, ME 04429

TO: _____

The _____ School will be treated for
pesticide control on _____ (date). A written policy
for pesticide management control has been developed. This plan is available for inspection at the
district's Central Office at 202 Kidder Hill Road, Holden, ME.

Description of Control Action:

Sincerely,

RSU #63 Transportation and Facilities
Director/Pesticide Coordinator

AOS #81**(Comprised of CSD #8 and RSU #63)**

- a. NEPN/NSBA Code: **IMD**
b. Title: **School Ceremonies and Observances**
c. Author:
d. Replaces Policy:
e. Date Approved: **03/25/2015 CSD #8, 03/23/2015 _____ RSU #63**
f. Previously Approved: **03/23/2015 11/03/2003**
g. Policy Expiration: **Review as Needed**
h. Responsible for Review: **Curriculum Committee/Policy Committee**
i. Date Reviewed: **3/22/2015 (Curriculum) & _____ 03/02/2015 Policy Committee**
j. References: **Policies IMDC, IMB-R, IMB, and IMC**
k. Narrative:

~~SCHOOL CEREMONIES AND OBSERVANCES~~

During the course of the school year, many opportunities are available to ~~the~~ **RSU 63's** districts' **(the District)** instructional staff to recognize the plural characteristics of American culture. The ceremonies and observances of various cultures help our educational communities understand the total society and are a unifying principle of democracy.