TOPIC CATEGORY: **INSTRUCTION**
NUMBER CATEGORY: **6000**
TITLE: **REVIEW OF/ACCESS TO EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS**
NUMBER: **6320**

The District recognizes the importance of parental involvement in the education of their children. To the extent practicable, the District will make a reasonable effort to make any learning materials, including original materials, available for inspection by a parent upon request. Requests to review textbooks, instructional materials, resources, tests, and library materials used in the District will be made in writing to the Assistant Superintendent, or designee, as described in this Policy. Only requests submitted by a parent / guardian of a student currently enrolled at Westside or a District resident will be considered. The District retains the right to maintain security of its testing instruments. For purposes of this Policy, and the accompanying regulation, "parent" includes a parent, guardian, or educational decision maker (a person designated or ordered by a court to make educational decisions on behalf of a student).

ACCESS TO COURSES, ASSEMBLIES, COUNSELING SESSIONS AND OTHER INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES

Parent visits to the school are permitted, subject to the District's responsibility to control school property, maintain order, and foster a safe and appropriate learning environment for students and staff. Observations that last more than 60 minutes or occur on consecutive days are typically disruptive and will not be permitted absent unusual circumstances, in the sole discretion of the building principal. The District shall have the discretion to limit access when it is determined that access may interfere with any of these responsibilities. All visitors, including parents, must report to the school office before visiting other areas of the building.

Parents may request to attend their child's counseling session by making a request, reasonably in advance of the counseling session, to the building principal. Upon receipt of such a request, the principal and counselor will consult regarding the request and will discuss any recommendations with the parent.

EXCUSING STUDENTS FROM CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION, TESTING OR OTHER SCHOOL EXPERIENCES

The District acknowledges the importance of sensitivity and fairness toward the personal beliefs of all students. Parents may request that their child(ren) be excused from classroom instruction, testing, or other school experiences when participation would result in an unconstitutional burden on the student's free exercise of his or her religion or personal values. Requests must be made in writing, reasonably in advance of the activity, in accordance with the procedures set forth below.

REQUESTS TO THE DISTRICT TO DISCONTINUE USE OF EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

Requests to discontinue use of any instructional material, resource, or library material must be made in writing to the Assistant Superintendent or designee as described in the accompanying regulation.

ANNUAL NOTIFICATION TO PARENTS

Parents will be directly notified of this Policy annually, and within a reasonable time after any substantive change in the Policy. The annual notification may be contained in the District's notification to parents of rights under the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA).

REQUESTS TO REVIEW INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

All requests to review books, instructional textbooks, tests, activities information; digital materials; websites or applications used for learning; training materials for teachers, administrators, and staff; procedures for the review and approval of training materials, learning materials, and activities; and other curriculum materials ("Curricular Materials") must be made in writing by completing the ***Request To Review Materials Form (Form A)***. Only requests submitted by a parent of a student currently enrolled at Westside or a District resident will be considered.

Forms should be obtained and returned to the appropriate building Principal or designee. After the receipt of the necessary completed form, books and other instructional materials may be loaned to parents or other community members for a reasonable length of time for their review or arrangements may be made for on-site review. The District retains the right to maintain security of its testing instruments.

A parental request to review specific Curricular Materials (written, visual, or audio) should be made to the principal of the building where the Curricular Materials are used.

The building principal will assess the request and determine the allowable volume and time frame of the review to prevent disruption to the efficient operations of the District.

The purpose of this provision is to allow reasonable access to the extent practicable. Individuals who make requests **(a)** for the purpose of adding staff burden; **(b)** at an unreasonable frequency or volume; or **(c)** for purposes inconsistent with the efficient operations of the District may be denied access to materials.

A parental request to review specific standardized and criterion - referenced tests used in the District should be made in writing to the building principal. Copies of the most recent tests used in the District will be available for parent review. Parents wishing to review statewide assessments will be provided with sample questions and a copy of a practice test but will not be provided with copies of the actual assessment due to testing security. In the case of other secure tests such as the ACT, parents must contact the publisher to obtain copies of the test.

REQUESTS TO HAVE STUDENTS EXCUSED FROM CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION, TESTING, AND OTHER SCHOOL EXPERIENCES

Requests by parents to have their children excused from classroom instruction, tests (except as provided below), or other school experiences must be presented in writing to the building Principal on the ***Request to Excuse Student From Participation Form (Form B)***. Only requests submitted by a parent of a student currently enrolled at Westside or a District resident will be considered.

When a request is received, the Principal will acknowledge its receipt, answer any questions regarding procedure, and, after conferring with the teacher, determine whether the student will be excused. Building principals may excuse a student from any school events at the parent's written request if, in the principal's professional judgment, excusal from the activity would not result in diminution of the student's educational experience. When the building principal determines it appropriate, alternative experiences may be provided to the student by the school.

Unless a compelling interest of the District otherwise exists, a student shall be excused when participation would require a student to:

- Engage in an act prohibited by the student's religious beliefs or personal values;
- Refrain from engaging in an act required by the student's religious beliefs or personal values; or
- Affirm or disavow a belief forbidden or required by the student's religion or personal values.

If the student is excused under one of the above three criteria, the student's teacher, in cooperation with the Principal, will arrange for an alternative assignment if a reasonable and educationally appropriate alternative exists. The participation of other students in the experience from which a student is being excused shall not be restricted.

In the event that the building principal determines that none of the above three criteria for excusal are present, the building principal has the discretion to determine whether or not the request for excusal will be granted, taking into consideration the nature and extent of the request, and whether any reasonable and educationally appropriate alternatives exist.

Parents will be informed through the student handbook and District Policies of the manner that the District will provide access to records of students (See Policy 5220).

Parents will be informed of the standardized and criterion-referenced District testing program. Parents may request additional information from the building principal. Parents will be informed of the circumstances under which they may opt-out of state and federal assessments.

In accordance with federal law, at the beginning of the school year, the District shall provide notice of the right to request a copy of this Policy to parents of students attending schools receiving Title I funds. The District will provide a copy of this Policy to a requesting parent in a timely manner.

STATE ASSESSMENTS

State and federal law simultaneously require students to take state assessments, with few exceptions, but also permit parents to request to opt their students out of these assessments by completing. Approval of opt out requests is contrary to the mandatory testing laws, so the District cannot "approve" the request. Parents who do not present their child for testing will result in the child receiving the lowest score possible on the assessment.

NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS

As a condition of receiving federal funds, the District participates in the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). To help ensure that the District has a representative sample of students taking the NAEP, which will allow the District to assess the quality and effectiveness of its programming on a national level, the District strongly encourages all eligible students to participate. However, student participation in NAEP is voluntary.

The District shall provide parents of eligible students with reasonable notice prior to the exam being administered. Parents wishing to opt their students out of the NAEP assessment must notify the district in writing at least three days prior to the exam date to ensure that the District can coordinate supervision and alternative activities for students who have opted out.

SURVEYS / OPT-OUT PROCEDURES

Parents will be notified of their right to remove their children from surveys prior to District participation in surveys.

The principal must approve all surveys intended to gather information from students before they are administered to students.

Students' participation in surveys is voluntary. Parents may restrict their child from participating in any survey.

If the school administers **(1)** a survey requesting that students provide sexual information, mental health information, medical information, information on health-risk behaviors, religious information, information of political affiliation, or any other information that the school board deems to be sensitive in nature or **(2)** a non-anonymous survey requesting students provide information relating to drug, vape, alcohol, or tobacco use, the District shall, at least fifteen days prior to the administration of the survey, notify parents of students that are to receive such survey. The notice will be made through the school's electronic notification system or by physical mail to the address on file for the student. The notice will describe the nature and types of questions included in the survey, the purposes and age-appropriateness of the survey, how information collected by the survey will be used, who will have access to such information, the steps that will be taken to protect student privacy, and whether and how any findings or results of such survey will be disclosed.

Parents have the right to: **(1)** request that a copy of the survey be sent through the school's electronic notification system or physical mail to the address on file for the student; **(2)** review the survey in person at the school; and **(3)** exempt their child from participating in the survey.

Unless required by federal or state law or regulation, school personnel administering any survey shall not disclose personally identifiable information of a child.

No survey requesting sexual information of a student shall be administered to any student in kindergarten through grade six.

The District will also comply with any survey requirements found in the District's Policy on Protection of Pupil Rights (Policy 2235 – Conducting Research)).

POLICY AVAILABILITY

The District will make this Policy accessible by a prominently displayed link on its public website. Any amended Policy will be made accessible within a reasonable time of its amendment.

Legal Reference: Neb. Rev. Stat. 79-532 (Laws 1996), 20 U.S.C 1232h (PPRA)

POLICY ADOPTED:	December 1, 2008 (Previously contained in Policy 5700)
POLICY REVISED:	September 6, 2022
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