

ARTICLE 6: INSTRUCTION

ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY INSTRUCTION

Introductory Statement

6000

The mission of McPherson County Schools is to provide educational opportunities for the development of responsible citizens, enabling them to function successfully in a changing society. The board of education recognizes and assumes its responsibility and obligation to offer the best instructional program possible by providing policies for a curriculum based on the recommendation of the superintendent of schools, school district employees, and the needs of the community. The board of education shall support and supplement the efforts of school district employees with regard to the educational program.

The board of education shall ensure that all students are afforded equal opportunity for participation in all programs offered by the school district. Students of both genders shall be provided equal access to and equal opportunities for participating in any course offering of the school district. All course offerings and all extra-curricular activities shall either be open to both male and female students regardless of the students' race, color, religion, disability, or national origin, or comparable courses or extra-curricular activities shall be offered.

School district employees responsible for guidance, counseling, and testing of students shall ensure that such guidance, counseling, and testing techniques do not discriminate based upon a student's sex, race, color, religion, disability, or national origin.

School district employees shall present evidence to the board of education of achievement, or lack of achievement, of students in light of the school district's stated goals. The superintendent shall also provide the board of education with a continuous assessment of the school district's instructional program.

Legal Reference: Neb. Rev. Stat. §§ 79-2,114 to 79-2,124

School Calendar and Work Day

6005

The board of education shall establish a school calendar each year upon the recommendation of the superintendent of schools that meets the laws of the State of Nebraska and the regulations of the Nebraska Department of Education. The school calendar shall be set each spring for the following school year.

Unless an emergency occurs, the regular school term shall include a minimum of: (a) time equivalent to 1032 instructional hours for elementary students, and (b) time equivalent to 1080 instructional hours for secondary students, when students are in attendance.

The school day shall be arranged and scheduled by the school district administration within the limitations of school facilities and requirements of state law. Generally, each school day shall commence no sooner than 7:55 a.m. and dismiss no later than 4:00 p.m., with a thirty-minute break for the midday lunch period. Schedules shall be printed in the student handbook. The superintendent shall approve any dismissal of classes during the school year.

School district employees are expected to be on duty before and after regular school hours to plan, to meet with students, and/or to carry out individual professional responsibilities. School district employees may, on occasion, be asked to work beyond (before or after) the normal school day to attend staff meetings, hold conferences with students or parents, or assist in school activities.

Refer to Policy 4220, Work Day (Classified Employees) and Policy 4505, Work Day (Certificated Employees).

Legal Reference: Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-101
 Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-201
 Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-211
 Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-526

Instruction Period, Activities, and Released Time

6010

The minimum number of instructional hours in the school year shall be 400 hours for kindergarten students in a half-day program, 1,032 for elementary students; and 1,080 for secondary school students, exclusive of lunchtime. Individual student absences because of illness or family-related activities shall be governed by the school district's attendance policies.

As used in this policy, "instructional hour" shall mean sixty minutes of instructional time. "Instructional time" shall mean any time when more than one-half of the teachers and students are present in the school building and engaged in learning activities, in regularly scheduled classes, or in approved activities under the supervision of teachers.

Learning activities on school premises shall include educational experiences associated with the day-to-day classroom teaching of students including, but not limited to, the use of textbooks or audio-visual aids, laboratory experiences, student learning associated with such technology tools as instructional television or cable television, computerized instruction and research, or use of other sources of interactive educational media. Learning activities on school premises shall also include assemblies, pep rallies, picture days, career and academic counseling, employee-supervised recess time, and other select academic-related events authorized by the school district administration and the board of education. Learning activities that take place off of school premises may include, but are not limited to, on-the-job training, class-related field trips, contests, fairs, leadership workshops, and other select academic-related events authorized by the school district administration and the board of education which are directly related to the curriculum.

It is the intent of the board of education that there be a sensible balance between time spent on academics and time spent on extracurricular activities. The board of education acknowledges that both play an important role in each student's total development. Therefore, the school district may participate in all activities approved by the Nebraska School Activities Association (NSAA). Students shall be eligible to participate in such activities according to the eligibility rules set forth by the NSAA. To the extent possible, practice for, travel to, and participation in activities sponsored by the NSAA and the Nebraska Department of Education shall be scheduled outside the regular instructional hour standard set forth above.

All full time school district employees and their spouses, and board of education members and their spouses shall be issued complimentary passes for general admission to all home school athletic events. Excess passes may be distributed at the discretion of the school district administration.

Legal Reference: Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-101
 Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-201
 Neb. Rev. Stat. §§ 79-211 to 79-213

Policy Adopted: September 10, 2015

Make-up Work and Exceptions

6010.1

Students may receive approval to miss classes due to:

- (a) Illness of the student;
- (b) Illness or emergency in the student's immediate family that requires the student's help at home;
- (c) Death in the student's family;
- (d) Medical or dental appointments, although an attempt should be made to schedule such appointments outside of the school day whenever possible; and
- (e) College visits, which are encouraged for students in good standing. Such students must make up their school work ahead of time and be ready to reenter the flow of the classroom upon their return to school.

Students shall be excused to participate in school district activities when such activities are approved by the school district administration. Students may be excused from school to attend a conference, district, or state activity if requested and such students are supervised by a parent or legal guardian. Students who miss classes to attend an activity must have their school work made up in advance. Students shall have their make-up slips signed by their teachers and turned in to the superintendent of schools' office before leaving for the activity. It is recommended that activity sponsors distribute a list of students in advance of such activities, and such students will not be required to obtain individual make-up slips, but all work must still be made up prior to the activity.

School district employees who miss school to attend or sponsor an activity must have all planning done for the substitute teacher. Class assignments shall be meaningful lessons and work for the students who remain in school.

An exception shall be made to this policy for state-sponsored activities and contests which are scheduled during normal school days and over which the school district has no control, but in which there are local students participating. The board of education and the school district administration may make other exceptions to this policy as they may deem appropriate.

Refer to Policy 5130, Attendance, Excessive Absenteeism, and Truancy.

Organizational Plan

6015

The organizational grade arrangement of the McPherson County Schools shall be as follows:

Elementary School

Kindergarten through Grade 7

Secondary School

Grade 8 through Grade 12

Legal Reference: Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-526

CURRICULUM

Introduction and Objectives

6200

The board of education and school district employees are responsible for maintaining a minimum program of instruction in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution of the State of Nebraska, the Nebraska Revised Statutes, the rules and regulations of the Nebraska State Board of Education, and the policies and regulations of the board of education. The board of education and school district employees shall also initiate improvements to the program of instruction beyond the minimum requirements.

The ultimate objective of the program of instruction is to help students develop a positive self-concept; be aware of individual responsibilities, rights, needs, and differences; have a sound background in academic fundamentals; be able to communicate and work effectively with others; and become rational, responsible citizens able to cope with future challenges. This objective is the shared responsibility of the home, the community, and the school district in order to prepare students to become contributing members of society through quality educational opportunities.

The District shall educate staff and students about the harms of copyright piracy.

Legal Reference: Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-526

Academic Standards

6201

The board of education and school district employees are responsible for adhering to the programs of instruction as outlined in the academic standards for language arts (reading and writing), mathematics, science, and social studies as approved by the Nebraska State Board of Education. The level of instruction shall be equal to or more rigorous than what is outlined in such standards. School district employees shall be responsible for doing everything possible to assist every student in becoming proficient in each of the standards contained therein.

The school district administration shall be responsible for implementing assessments on the academic standards in accordance with the procedures established by the Nebraska State Board of Education and Department of Education, including conducting assessments in the same subject areas and the same grade levels as established in the academic standards, and the reporting of scores and sub-scores.

Legal Reference: Neb. Rev. Stat. §§ 79-760.01 to 79-760.05

Multicultural Education

6205

Multicultural education is a reform movement to change the total educational environment so that students from diverse racial and ethnic groups will experience equal educational opportunities in schools, with special emphasis placed on human relations and sensitivity toward all races. The school district is committed to preparing students, through multicultural education, to appreciate and support the diversity that is part of our heritage and to function in a pluralistic society.

The school district shall fulfill the requirements of Neb. Rev. Stat. §§ 79-719 to 79-723 within the area of public education. The school district's plan for multicultural education shall focus on the culture, history, and contributions of African Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans, and European Americans. The school district shall utilize curriculum, instruction, in-service, counseling, and guidance resources to reflect the racial, ethnic, language, and cultural heritage of both the historical and modern-day United States of America with the following objectives:

- (a) To select materials and methods that will eliminate bias and stereotypes in the schools;
- (b) To conduct in-service programs for school district employees that will help them to understand a multicultural approach and to reflect it in their teaching and administrative duties;
- (c) To encourage all students to grow in self-esteem and develop their academic and human potential; and
- (d) To guard against grouping of students that reflects racial, ethnic, language, or cultural bias.

The principal shall provide an annual status report concerning the multicultural education program to the board of education.

The board of education recognizes that multicultural education is a shared responsibility. Therefore, the school district invites individuals, families, and religious/civic/community leaders to join the school district in promoting positive growth in our multicultural community.

Legal Reference: Neb. Rev. Stat. §§ 79-719 to 79-723

Curriculum Changes and Curriculum Guides

6210

School district administrators and teachers shall constantly evaluate the instructional program, which may lead to recommendations for modifications of practices, changes in curriculum content, and addition of new courses. When necessary and at the recommendation of the superintendent of schools, the president of the board of education may appoint a curriculum committee to study and review such recommendations. The board of education shall approve the addition or deletion of any courses to the curriculum. The procedures set forth in AR-6210, Curriculum Review Program, shall be followed prior to the addition or deletion of any courses. Also refer to AR-6215, Steps for Adding New Courses or Implementation of Experimental or Innovative Programs.

School district administrators and teachers shall prepare curriculum guides, consisting of course descriptions and/or courses of study, for adoption by the board of education. The school district administration shall be responsible for coordinating and overseeing the formation, review, and updating of all curriculum guides, course descriptions, and courses of study.

The school district has adopted a curriculum in accordance with state-approved academic standards and an assessment plan which includes a schedule and procedures for assessing success in achieving such standards. For purposes of this policy, assessments include both “standardized assessments” (including state assessments, norm referenced tests, and evaluations conducted for special education eligibility) and “coursework assessment” (including classroom tests, quizzes, and other evaluative tools used to assign grades).

Assessments are to be conducted in accordance with the assessment plan schedule and in a manner that ensures they accurately assess whether or not students are meeting the learning targets outlined by the academic standards. Teachers shall clearly articulate the learning targets and align instruction to the learning targets within each academic standard prior to students being assessed on each standard in order to provide learning opportunities for all students.

Teachers are responsible for maintaining the integrity of assessments to ensure that they provide a valid measure of student progress and accomplishment. Teachers shall not engage in any practice that may lead to assessment results that do not reflect student learning, knowledge, skills, or abilities in the area assessed. Standardized assessment instruments are not to be made available to students at any time before the students take the assessment. The assessment instrument is to be maintained in a secure manner. Coursework assessment instruments are to be periodically modified to keep assessments current and prevent students from effectively using “test banks.” For coursework assessments that are given on a repeat basis to students at different times (e.g., a test that is given to students throughout the school day), teachers shall remind students to not share the content of the assessment with other students who will be taking the assessment later.

Teachers may prepare students to do well on assessments in a manner that assures the assessment accurately reflects the student’s knowledge, rather than simply test preparation. Teachers shall teach the subject content, rather than “teaching to the test” by teaching based solely on the content of the assessment. The content is to be taught to students over an appropriate amount of time prior to the assessment. “Cramming” assessment content just before an assessment is not appropriate, whereas review of content previously taught is appropriate.

Teachers shall prepare students by teaching test taking skills independent of the subject matter being assessed. However, teachers shall not conduct reviews using earlier versions of a test, using alternate forms of the test, or using actual items from the current form of the test that will be administered to students. They shall also not conduct reviews using items of identical format (e.g., multiple choice) to the exclusion of other formats. Teachers shall communicate with students and parents when an assessment will be administered, the purpose of the assessment, and how the assessment results will be

used. Teachers shall read and be familiar with assessment administration directions in advance and communicate such rules to students clearly and accurately.

Teachers shall have sufficient assessment materials available for students. Distractions shall be eliminated. Teachers in nearby classrooms shall be informed that an assessment is to be administered so noises from such classrooms are kept at a minimum. Teachers shall arrange for activities for students who finish the assessment early so they do not cause a distraction to other students still taking the assessment.

Teachers shall monitor students while administering assessments to ensure that directions are being followed and that students are complying with standards of academic integrity, and shall report any student violating such standards of academic integrity to the school district administration. Assessments shall reflect students' work as submitted by them. Teachers shall not provide assistance to students while administering a standardized assessment, except as provided for in a student's IEP or Section 504 plan. This includes, but is not limited to, giving "hints," giving extra time, reading tests to students, defining or pronouncing words for students, allowing students access to instructional materials related to the content of the assessment, or allowing students access to mechanical aids. For coursework assessments, students may be allowed access to instructional materials or mechanical aids only when all students are allowed such access and it does not hinder the students from learning the content of the lesson. Teachers shall not change answers on a student's assessment sheet or otherwise participate in the submission of false or misleading assessment results.

All eligible students shall take assessments. Teachers shall develop lists of students who are exempted from assessment and the reason for such exemption. The lists shall be submitted to the principal for review and approval.

Teachers shall report assessment results in the manner and within the time directed by the school district administration. Assessment data shall be used to meet state standards, to provide students and parents with information about student progress, to enhance school improvement planning, and to improve instruction. Teachers shall use assessment data to monitor student learning and to improve instruction or terminate ineffective teaching practices.

Legal Reference: 92 NAC 10 005.01 to 005.03
 92 NAC 27 004.02 to 004.03

Policy Adopted: September 10, 2015
Policy revised: March 10, 2016

Assessments – Academic Content Standards

6212

The Board of Education adopts the academic content standards of the State Board of Education (“State Board”). The adoption of the academic content standards includes the:

- Language Arts standards that were adopted by the State Board in September, 2014;
- Mathematics standards that were approved by the State Board in September, 2015;
- Science standards that were adopted by the State Board in November, 2010;
- and
- Social Studies standards that were adopted by the State Board in December, 2012.

Unless other action is taken, the Board of Education adopts the standards of the State Board as such standards are subsequently adopted or amended by the State Board.

The administration shall be responsible for implementing assessments on the state standards in accordance with the procedures established by the State Board and the Department of Education, including conducting assessments in the same subject areas and the same grade levels as established in the state standards, and the reporting of scores and sub-scores.

This policy does not supersede the existing standards adopted by the Board of Education except as set forth herein.

Legal Reference: Neb. Rev. Stat. §§ 79-760 to 79-760.05

Policy Adopted: March 10, 2016

Experimental/Innovative Programs

6215

The school district shall seek improvement of its program of instruction through a continual evaluation and review of such program and any initiatives for curriculum change which may come from the community, students, teachers, administrators, research, availability of new materials, changing student needs, and various state and federal rules and regulations. The superintendent of schools may recommend substantial changes in curriculum, the development of experimental or innovative programs, or pilot studies, which must have the approval of the entire board of education. The board president may appoint a curriculum committee to review such recommendations. Long-term plans for curriculum changes shall be developed so that budget plans can include necessary provisions.

Refer to AR-6215, Steps for Adding New Courses or Implementation of Experimental or Innovative Programs.

Character Education/Citizenship

6220

All teachers employed by the school district shall arrange and present his or her instruction so as to give special emphasis to common honesty, morality, courtesy, obedience to law, respect for the national flag, respect for the United States Constitution and the Constitution of the State of Nebraska, respect for parents and the home, the dignity and necessity of honest labor, and other lessons of a steady influence which tend to promote and develop an upright and desirable citizenry.

Teachers shall also observe the conduct of all students and, if necessary, instruct them concerning school district policies and rules, regardless of whether the students are in the teacher's classroom, in school hallways, or on school grounds.

Legal Reference: Neb. Rev. Stat. §§ 79-725 to 79-727

Guidance Program

6225

The guidance program shall be an integral part of the total program of instruction. The guidance program shall provide a curriculum-based program of correction and prevention of antisocial behavior of students, and be directed toward the growth and improvement of all students in the school district, recognizing, however, that some students are in greater need of individual guidance than others. The guidance program shall endeavor to provide for each student a sense of belonging, self-respect, emotional security, achievement, recognition, and responsibility, as well as help students develop an appreciation and understanding of the world in which they live by providing a classroom and school environment where effective learning and good behavior take place.

The guidance counselor, along with the superintendent of schools, shall counsel with students and advise them of the importance for planning their course of action, both while they are attending school in the school district and after they leave the school district.

The guidance counselor and school district administration shall annually report to the board of education on student performance, as set forth by the school district's standardized testing program.

The guidance counselor shall consult with school district administration to develop and keep current a plan involving the implementation of a crises intervention team to be used for counseling of students in the event of an incident which would necessitate the counseling of small or large groups of students. Such plan shall be reviewed annually and shall be subject to the approval of the superintendent and the board of education.

Legal Reference: Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-2,107

Training

The superintendent of schools, or his or her designee, shall make available training approved by the chief medical officer of the State of Nebraska on how to recognize the symptoms of a concussion or brain injury and how to seek proper medical treatment for a concussion or brain injury to all coaches of school district athletic teams.

Education

The superintendent, or his or her designee, shall require that concussion and brain injury information be provided on an annual basis to students and their parents or legal guardians prior to such students initiating practice or competition. Such information shall include, but need not be limited to:

- (a) The signs and symptoms of a concussion;
- (b) The risks posed by sustaining a concussion; and
- (c) The actions a student should take in response to sustaining a concussion, including notification to his or her coaches.

Removal from Activity after Concussion and Parental Notification

A student who participates on a school athletic team shall be removed from a practice or game when he or she is reasonably suspected of having sustained a concussion or brain injury in such practice or game after observation by a coach or a licensed health care professional who is professionally affiliated with or contracted by the school district. The parent or legal guardian of the student shall be notified by the superintendent, or his or her designee, of the date and approximate time of the injury suffered by the student, the signs and symptoms of a concussion or brain injury that were observed, and any actions taken to treat the student.

Return to Play

A student who has been removed from a practice or game as a result of being reasonably suspected of having sustained a concussion or brain injury shall not be permitted to participate in any school-supervised team athletic activities involving physical exertion, including, but not limited to, practices or games, until the student:

- (a) Has been evaluated by a licensed health care professional;
- (b) Has received written and signed clearance to resume participation in athletic activities from the licensed health care professional; and
- (c) Has submitted the written and signed clearance to resume participation in athletic activities to the school district, accompanied by written permission to resume participation from the student's parent or legal guardian.

The coach or school district administration may require that the student's return to full activities be on a stepwise progression back to full participation, or otherwise establish conditions for return to participation that are more restrictive than those defined by the licensed health care professional if the coach or administration reasonably deems such to be appropriate.

The signature of an individual who represents that he or she is a licensed health care professional on a written clearance to resume participation that is provided to the school district shall be deemed to be conclusive and reliable evidence that the individual who signed the clearance is a licensed health care professional. The school district is not required to determine or verify the individual's qualifications.

Return to Learn

The superintendent, or his or her designee, shall develop a return to learn protocol for students who have sustained a concussion. The return to learn protocol shall recognize that students who have sustained a concussion and returned to school may need informal or formal accommodations, modifications of curriculum, and monitoring by medical or academic staff until the student is fully recovered. Refer to AR-6283, Concussions: Return to Learn Protocol.

Responsibilities of Coaches, Students, and Parents

Coaches shall comply with this policy and apply their safety and injury prevention training. A coach who fails to do so is subject to disciplinary action, including, but not limited to, termination of employment.

It is recognized that coaches cannot be aware of every incident in which a student has symptoms of a possible concussion or brain injury. As such, students and their parents or legal guardians have a responsibility to honestly report symptoms of a possible concussion or brain injury to coaches on a timely basis.

Legal Reference: Neb. Rev. Stat. §§ 71-9101 to 71-9106

Return To Learn from Cancer

6286

The Superintendent or designee shall make available training on how to recognize that students who have been treated for pediatric cancer and returned to school may need informal or formal accommodations, modifications of curriculum, and monitoring by medical or academic staff.

A 504 team meeting will be held, as appropriate, to develop individual return to learn accommodations and modifications.

EXTRA CLASS ACTIVITIES

Ceremonies and Observances

6305

An informed, loyal, just, and patriotic citizenry is necessary to a strong, stable, just, and prosperous America. Every student shall be fully acquainted with the nation's history, be in full accord with our form of government, and be fully aware of the liberties, opportunities, and advantages which we possess and the sacrifices and struggles made by others through whose efforts these benefits were gained. School district employees shall so conduct their educational activities, choose textbooks, and arrange the curriculum in such a way that the love of liberty, justice, democracy, and America shall be instilled in the students of the school district. In addition, appropriate patriotic exercises and the commemoration of special days and events shall be arranged to assure that the effective observation of these occasions shall be a definite and valuable part of the school program.

Legal Reference: Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-724

Assemblies and Public Programs/Performances

6310

Assemblies shall be scheduled through the school district administration and must be approved by the superintendent of schools. Assemblies must be educational and should not espouse a specific religious or political viewpoint or be of a sectarian nature. The superintendent shall include the cost for such assemblies as part of the annual budget to be approved by the board of education.

Public programs and/or performances by students have an important place in a well-rounded educational program, but they must be consistent with the educational goals of the school district. They should have both educational and motivational student value and should provide for a wide variation of student interests. The school district shall encourage student participation in public programs and/or performances.

Educational Trips and Community Service Activities

6315

Educational trips and community service activities are encouraged when they contribute to and/or enhance the learning process in a manner that cannot be achieved within the standard classroom setting. Each trip or activity shall be governed by the policies of the school district and any applicable administrative regulations established by the board of education or the superintendent of schools.

All educational trips and community service activities must be approved by the superintendent at least seven (7) school days prior to the trip or activity. The superintendent must also approve any solicitation of funds for trips or activities.

Student Services and Materials

6320

Students may provide services and produce materials in the schools for non-school use only when it furthers their educational development. The availability of students to provide services or to produce materials for non-school use (e.g., servicing personal automobiles in shop class) shall be as follows:

- (a) The project must fit into and/or benefit the overall educational development of the student, shall not take a student out of a scheduled class, and must have prior consent from the superintendent of schools;
- (b) The project must benefit the community, or organizations within the community, other than school district employees or members of the board of education; and/or
- (c) The project must benefit the school district and its employees.

Any project which may call for the solicitation of funds must have prior approval of the superintendent. Any costs for services provided by students or materials produced in schools for non-school use shall be borne by the user or consumer when such costs exceed normal instructional and material costs. Students and teachers shall discuss these costs prior to the onset of the project.

School district employees shall not use school time for the purpose of soliciting students for monies to support civic groups, church or charitable organizations, or using students to run personal errands for such employees.

Adult Education

6330

Adults who wish to prepare themselves for promotion in the areas of responsibility and remuneration, as well as those who desire to become more effective in life-long activities or civic affairs, shall be encouraged to attend adult education classes in these fields. The same shall apply for those persons who have social and recreational needs to be met and for those who may wish to satisfy skills in some particular subject.

The school district will cooperate with area community colleges, any state college, the University of Nebraska, and any other accredited institutions of higher education to provide adult education classes. The school district may also offer classes, usually vocational or recreational in nature, to be taught by local instructors. The number of classes will be determined by local interest. Any cost of these classes not financed through non-district sources shall be shared by those individuals enrolled.

The board of education shall appoint a local coordinator and interested patrons should contact this individual. Financial details shall be handled by the local school district or through the institution offering the classes.

INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES

Equipment, Books, and Materials of Instruction

6405

The board of education recognizes that appropriate textbooks, library reference materials, maps, globes, laboratory equipment, audiovisual equipment, instructional television, computers and associated equipment, art supplies, athletic equipment, current periodicals, standard tests and questionnaires, and similar materials are useful and reasonable tools of the school district. The board of education shall provide financial support, within the means of the school district, to maintain a desirable instructional program.

When selecting textbooks and other instructional materials, the initial responsibility in the selection process rests with classroom teachers, who shall review available materials and make comparisons to determine what materials would best meet the needs and objectives of the school district. Teachers shall then make recommendations to the superintendent of schools, who shall then determine if the materials are to be purchased, based upon the overall needs and availability of funds of the school district. Wherever feasible, each student should be provided a basic textbook in each field of study in which he or she is engaged.

Teachers shall serve on curriculum committees and meet with the school district administration for the purpose of recommending improvements in curriculum and materials. Upon the recommendation of teachers and school district administrators, the board of education shall approve any major textbook changes or adoptions. Refer to Policy 6210, Curriculum Changes and Curriculum Guides.

At the beginning of each school year, the board of education shall appoint a committee, known as the committee on Americanism, whose duties shall be to examine, inspect, and approve all textbooks used in the teaching of American history and civil government.

Refer to AR-6405, Textbooks and Workbooks.

Legal Reference: Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-724
 Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-734

Textbook Loan to Children Enrolled in A Private School

6405.1

The board of education authorizes the loan of textbooks to any child who is a resident of the school district and who is attending any private school which is approved for continued legal operation as provided by Nebraska law.

“Textbook” shall mean any book which has been designated for use in classroom instruction as the principle source of study material and which is used or in the possession of the school district, but shall not include library books, workbooks, or other books or supplies not considered as textbooks. The school district shall not be expected to expend school district funds for the purchase of textbooks unless these funds are to be reimbursed by Nebraska Department of Education.

On or before November 15, school district officials shall make available a list of textbooks that have been designated for use during the current school year, a list of any new textbooks that the school district has determined shall be used during the next school year, and a list showing, by title (including edition and copyright), the number of all textbooks previously purchased for the textbook loan program and still available for loan.

School district officials shall, at least ten days prior to the beginning of public school classes, provide written notification to the parent, legal guardian, or legal representative of each private school student at the address specified in the application, where and when textbooks will be made available.

Refer to AR-6405.1, Loaning Textbooks.

Legal Reference: Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-734
 92 NAC 4 001 to 004

A. Internet Safety Policy

It is the policy of [Name] Public Schools to comply with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) and Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA). With respect to the District's computer network, the District shall: (a) prevent user access to, or transmission of, inappropriate material via Internet, electronic mail, or other forms of direct electronic communications; (b) provide for the safety and security of minors when using electronic mail, chat rooms, and other forms of direct electronic communications; (c) prevent unauthorized access, including so-called "hacking," and other unlawful activities online; (d) prevent unauthorized online disclosure, use, or dissemination of personal identification information of minors; (e) obtain verifiable parental consent before allowing third parties to collect personal information online from students; and (f) implement measures designed to restrict minors' access to materials (visual or non-visual) that are harmful to minors.

1. Definitions. Key terms are as defined in CIPA. "Inappropriate material" for purposes of this policy includes material that is obscene, child pornography, or harmful to minors. The term "harmful to minors" means any picture, image, graphic image file, or other visual depiction that: (1) taken as a whole and with respect to minors, appeals to a prurient interest in nudity, sex, or excretion; (2) depicts, describes, or represents, in a patently offensive way with respect to what is suitable for minors, an actual or simulated sexual act or sexual contact, actual or simulated normal or perverted sexual acts, or a lewd exhibition of the genitals; and (3) taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value as to minors.
2. Access to Inappropriate Material. To the extent practical, technology protection measures (or "Internet filters") shall be used to block or filter Internet, or other forms of electronic communications, access to inappropriate information. Specifically, as required by the CIPA, blocking shall be applied to visual depictions of material deemed obscene or child pornography, or to any material deemed harmful to minors. Subject to staff supervision, technology protection measures may be disabled or, in the case of minors, minimized only for bona fide research or other lawful purposes.
3. Inappropriate Network Usage. To the extent practical, steps shall be taken to promote the safety and security of users of the District's online computer network when using electronic mail, chat rooms, instant messaging, and other forms of direct electronic communications. Specifically, as required by CIPA, prevention of inappropriate network usage includes: (a) unauthorized access, including so-called 'hacking,'

- and other unlawful activities; and (b) unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of personal identification information regarding minors.
4. Supervision and Monitoring. It shall be the responsibility of all members of the District staff to supervise and monitor usage of the online computer network and access to the Internet in accordance with this policy and CIPA. Procedures for the disabling or otherwise modifying any technology protection measures shall be the responsibility of the Superintendent and the Superintendent's designees.
 5. Social Networking. Students shall be educated about appropriate online behavior, including interacting with others on social networking websites and in chat rooms, and cyberbullying awareness and response. The plan shall be for all students to be provided education on these subjects. The Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee shall be responsible for identifying educational materials, lessons, and/or programs suitable for the age and maturity level of the students and for ensuring the delivery of such materials, lessons, and/or programs to students.
 6. Parental Consent. The District shall obtain verifiable parental consent prior to students providing or otherwise disclosing personal information online.
 7. Adoption. This Internet Safety Policy was adopted by the Board at a public meeting, following normal public notice.

B. Computer Acceptable Use Policy

This computer acceptable use policy is supplemental to the District's Internet Safety Policy.

1. Technology Subject to this Policy. This Computer Acceptable Use Policy applies to all technology resources of the District or made available by the District. Technology resources include, without limitation, computers and related technology equipment, all forms of e-mail and electronic communications, and the internet.
2. Access and User Agreements. Use of the District technology resources is a privilege and not a right. The Superintendent or designee shall develop appropriate user agreements and shall require that employees, students (and their parents or guardians), and others to sign such user agreements as a condition of access to the technology resources, as the Superintendent determines appropriate. Parents and guardians of students in programs operated by the District shall inform the Superintendent or designee in writing if they do not want their child to have access.

The Superintendent and designees are authorized and directed to establish and implement such other regulations, forms, procedures, guidelines, and standards to implement this Policy.

The technology resources are not a public forum. The District reserves the right to restrict any communications and to remove communications that have been posted.

3. Acceptable Uses. The technology resources are to be used for the limited purpose of advancing the District's mission. The technology resources are to be used, in general, for educational purposes, meaning activities that are integral, immediate, and proximate to the education of students as defined in the E-rate program regulations.
4. Unacceptable Uses.

The following are unacceptable uses of the technology resources:

- a. **Personal Gain:** Technology resources shall not be used, and no person shall authorize its use, for personal financial gain other than in accordance with prescribed constitutional, statutory, and regulatory procedures, other than compensation provided by law.
- b. **Personal Matters:** Technology resources shall not be used, and no person shall authorize its use, for personal matters unless the User has entered into a lease agreement or other similar agreement with the School District that makes such use permissible under law.

Occasional use that the Superintendent or designee determines to ultimately facilitate the mission of the District is not prohibited by this provision. Examples of occasional use that may be determined to ultimately facilitate the mission of the District: sending an e-mail to a minor child or spouse; sending an e-mail related to a community group in which an employee is a member where the membership in the community group facilitates the District's mission.

This occasional use exception does not permit use by employees contrary to the expectations of their position. For example, employees may not play games or surf the net for purposes not directly related to their job during duty time; nor may students do so during instructional time.

The occasional use exception also does not permit use of the technology resources for private business, such as searching for or

ordering items on the internet for non-school use; or sending an e-mail related to one's own private consulting business.

- c. Campaigning: Technology resources shall not be used, and no person shall authorize its use, for the purpose of campaigning for or against the nomination or election of a candidate or the qualification, passage, or defeat of a ballot question.
- d. Technology-Related Limitations: Technology resources shall not be used in any manner which impairs its effective operations or the rights of other technology users. Without limitation,
 - 1. Users shall not use another person's name, log-on, password, or files for any reason, or allow another to use their password (except for authorized staff members).
 - 2. Users shall not erase, remake, or make unusable another person's computer, information, files, programs or disks.
 - 3. Users shall not access resources not specifically granted to the user or engage in electronic trespassing.
 - 4. Users shall not engage in "hacking" to gain unauthorized access to the operating system software or unauthorized access to the system of other users.
 - 5. Users shall not copy, change, or transfer any software without permission from the network administrators.
 - 6. Users shall not write, produce, generate, copy, propagate, or attempt to introduce any computer code designed to self-replicate, damage, or otherwise hinder the performance of any computer's memory, file system, or software. Such software is often called a bug, virus, worm, Trojan horse, or similar name.
 - 7. Users shall not engage in any form of vandalism of the technology resources.
 - 8. Users shall follow the generally accepted rules of network etiquette. The Superintendent or designees may further define such rules.
- e. Other Policies and Laws: Technology resources shall not be used for any purpose contrary to any District policy, any school rules to which a student user is subject, or any applicable law. Without limitation, this means that technology resources may not be used:
 - 1. to access any material contrary to the Internet Safety Policy; or to create or generate any such material.
 - 2. to engage in unlawful harassment or discrimination, such as sending e-mails that contain sexual jokes or images.
 - 3. to engage in violations of employee ethical standards and employee standards of performance, such as sending e-

mails that are threatening or offensive or which contain abusive language; use of end messages on e-mails that may imply that the District is supportive of a particular religion or religious belief system, a political candidate or issue, or a controversial issue; or sending e-mails that divulge protected confidential student information to unauthorized persons.

4. to engage in or promote violations of student conduct rules.
 5. to engage in illegal activity, such as gambling.
 6. in a manner contrary to copyright laws.
 7. in a manner contrary to software licenses.
5. Disclaimer. The technology resources are supplied on an “as is, as available” basis. The District does not imply or expressly warrant that any information accessed will be valuable or fit for a particular purpose or that the system will operate error free. The District is not responsible for the integrity of information accessed, or software downloaded from the Internet.
6. Filter. A technology protection measure is in place that blocks and/or filters access to prevent access to Internet sites that are not in accordance with policies and regulations. In addition to blocks and/or filters, the District may also use other technology protection measures or procedures as deemed appropriate.

Notwithstanding technology protection measures, some inappropriate material may be accessible by the Internet, including material that is illegal, defamatory, inaccurate, or potentially offensive to some people. Users accept the risk of access to such material and responsibility for promptly exiting any such material.

The technology protection measure that blocks and/or filters Internet access may be disabled only by an authorized staff member for bona fide research or educational purposes: (a) who has successfully completed District training on proper disabling circumstances and procedures, (b) with permission of the immediate supervisor of the staff member requesting said disabling, or (c) with the permission of the Superintendent. An authorized staff member may override the technology protection measure that blocks and/or filters Internet access for a minor to access a site for bona fide research or other lawful purposes provided the minor is monitored directly by an authorized staff member.

7. Monitoring. Use of the technology resources, including but not limited to internet sites visited and e-mail transmitted or received, is subject to monitoring by the administration and network administrators at any time to maintain the system and insure that users are using the system responsibly, without notice to the users. Users have no privacy rights or

expectations of privacy with regard to use of the District's computers or Internet system. All technology equipment shall be used under the supervision of the Superintendent and the Superintendent's designees.

8. Sanctions. Violation of the policies and procedures concerning the use of the District technology resources may result in suspension or cancellation of the privilege to use the technology resources and disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion of students and termination of employees. Use that is unethical may be reported to the Commissioner of Education. Use that is unlawful may be reported to the law enforcement authorities. Users shall be responsible for damages caused and injuries sustained by improper or non-permitted use.

See AR-6410.

Legal Reference: Children's Internet Protection Act, 47 USC § 254
Children's Online Privacy Protection Act, 15 U.S.C. § 6501
FCC Order adopted August 10, 2011
47 USC § 254(h)(1)(b); 47 CFR 54.500(b) and 68 FR 36932 (2003)
(E-rate restrictions)
Neb. Rev. Stat. § 49-14,101.01 (Political Accountability and
Disclosure Act)

Policy Adopted: September 10, 2015
Policy Revised: February 8, 2017

The primary objective of the school district's instructional materials shall be to implement, enrich, and support the educational program. The school district shall provide a wide range of instructional materials with all levels of difficulty, diversity of appeal, and the presentation of different points of view.

Selection of Instructional Materials

The selection of instructional materials shall be a cooperative, continuing process in which school district administrators, teachers, media specialists, and students participate. The basic factors used in selecting instructional materials shall be the curriculum and the reading interest, abilities, backgrounds, and maturity levels of students. The school district administration shall coordinate the selection process and make recommendations for purchase. The board of education's Americanism committee shall review all recommendations as appropriate.

The selection of instructional materials shall also utilize the following guidelines:

- (a) Materials should enrich and support the curriculum, taking into consideration the varied interests, abilities, maturity levels, and ethnic backgrounds of the students served;
- (b) Materials should stimulate growth in factual knowledge, literary appreciations, aesthetic values, and ethical standards;
- (c) Materials should provide a background of information, thus enabling students to make intelligent judgments in their daily lives;
- (d) Materials should present opposing sides of controversial issues, so students may develop under guidance the practice of critical reading and thinking;
- (e) Materials should represent all religious, political, ethnic, and social groups and their contribution to our American heritage;
- (f) Materials should be in harmony with the Constitution and laws of the United States and the State of Nebraska; and
- (g) Materials made available through individuals or outside agencies shall be referred to an appropriate school district administrator for screening.

Review of Instructional Materials

The board of education recognizes the right of individuals to challenge the use of certain instructional materials. Such challenges shall be handled by the following procedures:

- (a) Challenges shall be made to the school district administration in writing and must be signed by the individual making the challenge so that a reply can be given. Refer to AR-6414, Request for Reconsideration of Media.
- (b) The school district administration shall appoint a committee of two teachers and the school district media specialist. The committee shall review the challenged material and determine whether it conforms to the principles of the school district. The committee shall complete a report within thirty (30) school days and present such report to the superintendent of schools. The challenger shall be notified of the decision of the committee.

- (c) If the challenger does not agree with the decision of the committee, he or she may file a notice of appeal with the superintendent within ten (10) school days following receipt of such decision. The matter shall then be presented to the board of education at a regularly scheduled meeting. The decision of the board of education shall be final.

Disposal of Discontinued Instructional Materials

Non-consumable instructional materials may become surplus to the school district for a variety of reasons, among them:

- (a) Obsolete or to be replaced by updated materials;
- (b) Expiration of adoption period;
- (c) Torn, soiled, or defaced; or
- (d) Damaged to the extent that the material is not economically repairable.

The school district administration shall be responsible for directing the disposal of instruction materials classified as no longer needed by the school district.

The primary purpose of McPherson County Schools is to educate the youth of the school district so that they may take their place in society as productive citizens. Therefore, it is appropriate that parents and patrons of the school district be periodically provided information about the accomplishments of students and the performance of the school district.

The board of education shall reserve a portion of one regular board meeting each year to receive a summary of the results of the following assessments or studies:

- (a) A review of the school district's participation in standardized norm-referenced assessment instruments;
- (b) A review of the school district's participation in criterion-referenced assessments in reading, writing, and mathematics;
- (c) A review of a follow-up study of high school graduates of the school district (including at least the prior three years);
- (d) A learning climate assessment conducted biennially;
- (e) A review of the school district's financial climate;
- (f) A review of the school district's demographics;
- (g) A review of the school district's educational goals; and
- (h) A review of any other information deemed important.

Test scores of individual students shall be kept confidential. If test information would relate to grades or classes with fewer than five students, then detailed information shall not be presented.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Special Education Services to Disabled Students

6505

McPherson County School District adopts this special education policy with the intent that the policy maintain the District's compliance with all applicable laws affecting special education services and programs. The Superintendent or designees shall develop regulations or procedures to implement these policies. Employees and contractors of the District are expected to comply with these policies and all regulations, guidelines and procedures related to this policy in all respects.

The District will abide by all state and federal laws relating to special education. The District's special education policy and regulations, guidelines and procedures related to this policy are to be interpreted so as to be in compliance with such laws. In the event of changes in law, the school administration shall be authorized to implement modifications of practice to comply with such changes (whether the changes impose more or less stringent procedural or substantive requirements) until such time as amended policies are adopted by the Board of Education. References herein to 92 NAC 51 citations are made to Rule 51 as in effect on the date of the adoption of these policies. In the event of renumbering or other revisions to Rule 51, the policy shall be interpreted and implemented consistent with such renumbering or revisions.

The school district hereby adopts the following special education policies.

- Policy 6505.1, Free Appropriate Public Education
- Policy 6505.3, Full Educational Opportunity Goal
- Policy 6505.5, Child Find
- Policy 6505.7, Identification, Evaluation, and Verification
- Policy 6505.9, Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)
- Policy 6505.13, Participation in Assessments
- Policy 6505.15, Least Restrictive Environment
- Policy 6505.17, Children in Nonpublic Schools
- Policy 6505.19, Procedural Safeguards and Confidentiality
- Policy 6505.20, Surrogates
- Policy 6505.21, Transportation
- Policy 6505.25, Personnel Standards and Personnel Development
- Policy 6505.27, Performance Goals and Indicators
- Policy 6505.29, Suspension and Expulsion Rates
- Policy 6505.31, Access to Instructional Materials
- Policy 6505.33, Prohibition on Mandatory Medication

Legal Reference: Neb. Rev. Stat. §§ 79-1110 to 79-1184

Policy Adopted: September 10, 2015

Policy Revised: March 10, 2016

Free Appropriate Public Education

6505.1

A free public education shall be made available to all children with disabilities residing in the school district from date of diagnosis through the school year in which the student reaches 21 years of age, including children with disabilities who have been suspended or expelled from school.

Legal Reference: Neb. Rev. Stat. §§ 79-1110 to 79-1184
 92 NAC 51 004.01 to 004.03
 92 NAC 51 007.07C2 to 007.07C6

Policy Adopted: September 10, 2015
Policy Revised: March 10, 2016

Full Educational Opportunity Goal

6505.3

The school district has a goal of providing a full educational opportunity for all children with verified disabilities and that such children have available to them the variety of educational programs and services available to children without disabilities in the areas served by the school district, including art, music, industrial arts, family consumer science education, and vocational education.

Legal Reference: Neb. Rev. Stat. §§ 79-1110 to 79-1184
 92 NAC 51 004.11A

Child Find**6505.5**

All children with disabilities residing in the school district, including children with disabilities who are homeless, wards of the state, or attending non-public schools, who are in need of special education and related services, shall be identified, located, and evaluated, regardless of the severity of their disabilities. A practical method shall be developed and implemented to determine which children with disabilities are currently receiving needed special education and related services.

Legal Reference: Neb. Rev. Stat. §§ 79-1110 to 79-1184
 92 NAC 51 006.01

Identification, Evaluation, and Verification

6505.7

Children with disabilities shall be identified and evaluated in accordance with 92 NAC 51 006. The school district shall ensure that testing and evaluation materials and procedures utilized for the purposes of evaluation and placement of children with disabilities are selected and administered so as not to be racially or culturally discriminatory. Such materials or procedures shall be provided and administered in the child's native language or mode of communication, unless it is clearly not feasible to do so, and no single procedure shall be the sole criterion for determining an appropriate educational program for a child.

Legal Reference: Neb. Rev. Stat. §§ 79-1110 to 79-1184
 92 NAC 51 003.10
 92 NAC 51 006

**Individualized Education Program (IEP) or
Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)**

6505.9

The school district shall ensure that an individualized education program (IEP) or an individualized family service plan (IFSP) is developed, reviewed, and revised for each child with a disability in accordance with 92 NAC 51 007.

Legal Reference: Neb. Rev. Stat. §§ 79-1110 to 79-1184
 92 NAC 51 007

Participation in Assessments

6505.13

The school district shall ensure that all children with disabilities are included in all general state and district-wide assessment programs, with appropriate accommodations and alternative assessments where necessary and as indicated in their respective individualized education programs. The school district shall make available to the Nebraska Department of Education the information necessary to carry out its duties relating to the reporting of children with disabilities participation in assessments.

Legal Reference: Neb. Rev. Stat. §§ 79-1110 to 79-1184
 92 NAC 51 004.05

Least Restrictive Environment

6505.15

To the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, shall be educated with children who are not disabled. Special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular education environment shall occur only when the nature or severity of a child's disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

Legal Reference: Neb. Rev. Stat. §§ 79-1110 to 79-1184
 92 NAC 51 008.01 to 008.011

Children in Nonpublic Schools

6505.17

To the extent consistent with the number and location of children with disabilities in the school district who are enrolled by their parents in nonpublic elementary and secondary schools in the school district, provision shall be made for the participation of those children in the school district's programs for special education and related services.

Legal Reference: Neb. Rev. Stat. §§ 79-1110 to 79-1184
 92 NAC 51 012.08
 92 NAC 51 013
 92 NAC 51 015

Procedural Safeguards and Confidentiality

6505.19

The school district shall ensure that children with disabilities and their parents are afforded the procedural safeguards required by law. The confidentiality of student records and information shall be maintained in accordance with law.

Legal Reference: Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-1110 to 79-1184
 92 NAC 51 009

Surrogates

6505.20

The school district shall appoint a surrogate and take any other actions to ensure the rights of children with disabilities as required by law.

Legal Reference: Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-1110 to 79-1184
 92 NAC 51 009.10

Transportation

6505.21

Transportation will be provided for children with disabilities who are eligible for transportation and residents of the school district as required by law.

Legal Reference: 92 NAC 51-014.01 through 014.02

Personnel Standards and Personnel Development

6505.25

The school district shall ensure that all personnel providing special education or related services to children with disabilities are appropriately and adequately prepared in accordance with federal and state statutes and regulations. The school district shall take measureable steps to recruit, hire, train, and retain personnel meeting the legal requirements to provide special education or related services to children.

Legal Reference: Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-1110 to 79-1184
 92 NAC 51 010

Performance Goals and Indicators

6505.27

The school district shall use performance indicators established by the state to assess the progress of children with disabilities in achieving goals. Such goals shall be consistent, to the maximum extent appropriate, with other goals and standards for children established by the state.

The performance indicators shall:

- (a) Ensure that free appropriate public education is given to children, designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for employment and adult living;
- (b) Ensure that the rights of children with disabilities and their parents are protected; and
- (c) Ensure that educators and parents have the necessary tools to improve educational results for children with disabilities and ensure the effectiveness of efforts to educate children with disabilities.

The school district shall report to the Nebraska Department of Education on the progress of children with disabilities toward performance goals and on assessment, drop-out rates, and graduation rates.

Legal Reference: Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-1110 to 79-1184

Suspension and Expulsion Rates

6505.29

The school district will examine data, including data disaggregated by race and ethnicity, to determine if significant discrepancies are occurring in the rate of long-term suspensions and expulsions of children with disabilities.

Legal Reference: 92 NAC 51-004.06E

Access to Instructional Materials

6505.31

The school district shall provide instructional materials to students with blindness or other students with print disabilities at the same time as other students.

Legal Reference: Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-1110 to 79-1184
 92 NAC 51 004.15

Prohibition on Mandatory Medication

6505.33

The school district shall not at any time require children or parents to obtain a prescription for a controlled substance as a condition of attending school, receiving an evaluation to determine whether a child has a disability or the nature and extent of special education and related services the child needs, or receiving special education services.

Legal Reference: 21 U.S.C. § 812(c)
 92 NAC 51 004.11D