

EXEMPTION FROM REQUIRED INSTRUCTION

The curriculum of the Sanford School Department is designed to reflect the learning expectations for all students in all content areas of the system of *Learning Results*, as well as other statutory and regulatory requirements and content areas specified by the School Committee

The School Committee acknowledges that from time to time individual students may be exposed to some ideas and materials with which they or their parent(s)/legal guardian disagree. Students and their parent(s)/legal guardian 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 prescribed curriculum. Exemptions from the required curriculum should be minimized because they can detract from the overall instruction provided to the class as a whole and the educational objectives sought to be achieved by the curriculum

The School Committee recognizes, however, that there could be topics in the curriculum which may be objectionable to individual students and/or parents(s)/ legal guardian may appeal to the Superintendent

In considering requests for exemption, factors that the Principal should consider may include:

- A. The alignment of the curriculum with the system of *Learning Results*;
- B. Whether the course or content area is required by state law or School Committee policy
- C. The educational importance of the material or instruction from which exemption is requested;
- D. Evidence regarding the sincerity of 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

Exemption from required instruction does not excuse the student from meeting the requirements of the Learning Results or from total credit hours or other requirements for graduation, or from performing alternative work.

When the Principal determines that the curriculum that has been aligned with the system of Learning Results conflicts with sincerely held religious beliefs of a student or his/her parent or legal guardian, reasonable accommodation in the curriculum shall be made for the student, within the scope of existing resources. Alternative instruction may be provided by the school or through approved independent study. Any alternative instruction shall be approved in advanced by the Principal in consultation with appropriate instructional staff and shall meet the standards and objectives of the part of the curriculum that is being replaced. When requests for exempting from required curriculum that is requested is so great that the validity of the local assessment system is

compromised, the Superintendent will determine how to address the situation, subject to the approval of the Commissioner.

When a student is exempted from any portion of the regular curriculum for other than religious reasons (exemption based on sincere philosophical or moral beliefs) the staff will make reasonable efforts, within the scope of existing resources to accommodate alternative instruction for the student. Alternative instruction may be provided by the school or through approved independent study. Any alternative instruction shall be approved in advance by the Principal in consultation with the classroom teacher, and shall meet the standards and objectives of the part of the curriculum that is being replaced. When requests for exemption from required curriculum are made for philosophical or moral reasons, a parent/guardian who is dissatisfied with the Principal's decision may appeal to the Superintendent. If the parent/guardian is dissatisfied with the Superintendent's decision, the parent/guardian may appeal the decision to the School Committee.

Legal Reference: 20-A MRSA ss 6209
 LD 1536, Chap. 451 Resolves
 Ch. 127 ss 3.07 (Me. Dept. of Ed. Rules)
 Ch. 131 (Me. Dept. of Ed. Rules)

Cross Reference: ADF- School District Commitment to Learning Results
 IJJ- Instructional and Library Material Selection
 IMB- Teaching about Controversial/Sensitive Issues
 IMBAA- Alternatives to Biological Dissection

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SANFORD SCHOOL DEPARTMENT