

Blackford County Schools  
Board Policy  
Series 6000  
Instruction

FIRST READING: APRIL 15, 2003  
SECOND READING: MAY 20, 2003  
(REVISIONS - 2006)

SERIES 6000  
ARTICLE 6

INSTRUCTION

**Table of Contents**

<b>6000 CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION, ASSESSMENT, AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>6111 SCHOOL CALENDAR.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>6112 SCHOOL DAY.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>6115 CEREMONIES AND OBSERVATIONS.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>6121 OBJECTIVES OF THE INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>6125 SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANS.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>6126 APPOINTMENT OF THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>6127 TITLE I SCHOOL FAMILY INVOLVEMENT POLICY .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>6130 HOMEWORK.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>6140 CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>6150 RECOGNITION OF RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND CUSTOMS.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>6155 CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES IN THE CLASSROOM.....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>6200 STUDENT FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>6305 EVALUATION OF THE INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM.....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>6310 CHANGES IN COURSE OFFERINGS OR GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS.....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>6320 PLACEMENT OF STUDENTS .....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>6330 ASSESSMENT OF CAPABILITIES AND PLACEMENT.....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>6380 FIELD TRIPS.....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>6385 NON-SCHOOL-SPONSORED TRIPS.....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>6400 EQUIPMENT, BOOKS, AND SUPPLIES.....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>6410 TEXTBOOK ADOPTION.....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>6420 STANDARDIZED TESTING.....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>6500 SCHOOL MEDIA CENTERS – SCHOOL LIBRARIES.....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>6520 PSYCHOLOGICAL TESTING .....</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>6550 SUMMER SCHOOL .....</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>6560 SUMMER DRIVER EDUCATION ENROLLMENT POLICY.....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>6600 COOPERATION WITH NON-PUBLIC AND OTHER EDUCATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND THE SCHOOLS.....</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>6620 ALTERNATIVE EDUCATIONAL PLACEMENT.....</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>6625 VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS.....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>6630 DAY REPORTING.....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>6635 GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING .....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>6640 RIGHT TO INSPECT CERTAIN EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS .....</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>6650 COURSE ADDITION/REVISION OR DELETION .....</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>6660 TEST SECURITY POLICY .....</b>	<b>40</b>

## **6000 CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION, ASSESSMENT, AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

The Board establishes the overall purposes and goals for the district and contributes to the instructional process by providing a supporting philosophy and the needed materials. The district and school administrators and staff are responsible for how those purposes and goals are met.

The alignment of curriculum, instruction, and assessment ensures that the planned and written objectives at each grade level and in each subject area match the objectives which are actually taught and assessed. The written curriculum is based on the high academic standards established by the state and delivered through instructional methods based in modern research-based “best practices.” This taught curriculum, in turn, is assessed through a variety of instruments in order that Blackford County Schools can adjust written curriculum and instruction to provide continuous growth in student learning.

Analysis of student learning using various assessments provides information from which high quality professional development can be planned on the district, school, and individual levels. The professional development will focus on improving the ability of staff, schools, and the district to help all students meet the high standards outlined in the curriculum. Professional development opportunities will help staff refine skills, inquire into their practices, construct new knowledge, and create self-renewing learning communities. These opportunities will be planned to achieve maximum impact through varied forms of job-embedded learning, professional collaboration, and attention to needed changes in organizational structures and processes. High quality professional development experiences will be planned, implemented, and evaluated in accordance with professional development standards, such as those articulated by the National Staff Development Council.

## **6111 SCHOOL CALENDAR**

School Calendar - In a regular meeting, the Board shall adopt the school calendar for the ensuing year. The superintendent of schools shall submit a proposed calendar to the Board in advance of the meeting.

The calendar should be organized to promote the maximum coordination with other schools and cooperatives.

## **6112 SCHOOL DAY**

The school day shall be arranged and scheduled by the administration to provide students the appropriate time for curriculum-based instruction and assessment. School bus transportation will be scheduled in coordination with all schools to assure students learning time.

## **6115 CEREMONIES AND OBSERVATIONS**

Care, Custody, and Display of the United States Flag:

Rules and Regulations Concerning the Care, Custody, and Display of the United States Flag, will be observed by all buildings in the school corporation.

Special Days and Events:

Commemoration of special days and events shall be arranged to the end that the effective observation of these occasions is a definite and valuable part of the school program.

## **6121 OBJECTIVES OF THE INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM**

The following goals represent the desired student outcomes at the end of the formal schooling experience in Blackford County Schools:

1. A continued desire for knowledge and maximum educational effort.
2. The ability to think clearly and accurately, draw conclusions, make decisions, and take action based on evidence.
3. Proficiency in the use of the basic tools of learning including technology, in functional problem solving and in the acquisition of information about the world and its people.
4. Proficiency in the skills of communication including the ability to express themselves clearly and accurately, both in writing and speech, and the ability to listen effectively and critically.
5. Knowledge of man, his nature, his environment, and his relationship to the society in which he lives, with emphasis on his responsibilities and rights as a citizen.
6. Knowledge of mathematics and proficiency in the use of the fundamental process of quantitative reasoning and expression.
7. Knowledge of health, both physical and mental, and the desire to participate in physical activities.
8. Development of effective study skills and habits.
9. The information, guidance, and training necessary to help make wise educational and occupational choices.
10. The social and moral competence for responsible membership in a democratic society.
11. The knowledge and practice of personal and community safety.
12. Experiences with the skills and attitudes necessary for satisfying self-expression in the creative arts.
13. An appreciation of lifelong learning and valuing its applications.

## **6125 SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANS**

The Board is committed to the realization of the objectives and purposes of P.L. 221, which outlines the school improvement process necessary for school accreditation in Indiana. The emphasis on the progress made by individual students, careful tracking of this progress, implementation of strategic and continuous school improvement and achievement plans at the school level, and school improvement strategies directed specifically at student needs will provide the means by which schools can help all students to achieve their full potential.

P.L. 221's emphasis on planning at the school level through a process coordinated by the school principal with input from a committee involving administrators, teachers, parents, and community business leaders is a part of its strength. This planning does, however, occur in a school district that already has a governing structure designed to guarantee that programs are conducted in a manner consistent with the needs of the entire district. Carrying out school-level planning in a way that respects district-level procedures and needs is a challenge that depends on adjusting to the needs of individual schools within the parameters of the entire district. Such adjustments rely heavily on continuous communication, cooperation, and collaboration between the schools and the district.

Blackford County Schools sees the professional development component as one of the most important parts of local P.L. 221 plans, and the district will make every effort to provide the professional development needed. The planning and implementation of the professional development is most efficiently and economically carried out through a district-wide professional development program that serves the common needs of all schools with variations possible at the school level to accommodate needs unique and specific to that school.

## **6126 APPOINTMENT OF THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE**

The school improvement committee is to be appointed by the building principal. P.L. 221 lists the general categories of persons to be included on the committee but is silent as to specific numbers, term length, and methods of operation. The committee has a key role in the implementation of P.L. 221 and the members can and should be expected to be key contributors in carrying out the educational objectives of the school served and the corporation in general. With these thoughts in mind, the following guidelines are offered for committee selection.

1. The committee should be broadly representative of the specific school community to be served and of the total school corporation. No one group should dominate a committee. These objectives can best be realized through joint planning and coordinated action on the part of the principals.
2. School committees should be of a size that will balance the need for diversity in membership with the need to facilitate effective operation.
3. The procedures used in contacting those selected for committee membership should be designed to inform the potential member of the nature and importance of the assignment and, at the same time, encourage acceptance of the invitation. An initial contact by phone followed by a letter is the preferred approach. The letter should include a description of the committee's role and the responsibilities of membership. A phone contact subsequent to forwarding the letter is suggested as the final step in promoting acceptance.
4. Given that P.L. 221 is envisioned as a continuous and ongoing process, consideration should be given to term lengths for committee members. It is suggested that all initial appointments be for a one-year period. This will give the principal the opportunity to observe the process and to engage in a joint evaluation with committee members regarding the demands of service and the kinds of persons best suited as committee members. Subsequent appointments might then be made starting with one, two and three-year terms with all reappointments for three years.

### **Operation of the School Improvement Committee**

The school improvement committees have specific responsibilities assigned by law. The committee is to develop the professional development program and submit the plan to the governing body. It is to provide input on the development of the school improvement plan and is to submit the plan to the superintendent for review. It reacts to the superintendent's recommendations and then forwards the plan to the governing body. It is to revise the school's plan based on the feedback received from the state regarding the level of improvement. The scope and specific nature of the committee's assignments are such as to suggest the need for a formal structure and the documentation of actions taken. With these factors in mind, the following guidelines regarding operation are offered.



Blackford County Schools  
Board Policy  
Series 6000  
Instruction

1. The school principal should either chair or co-chair the school's school improvement committee. If selection of the co-chair is to be made by the principal, the appointment should be announced at the first committee meeting. If the selection is to be left to the committee, the decision should be delayed until members have the opportunity to get to know each other.
2. Meetings should operate under approved parliamentary procedures with a quorum required and minutes kept and approved. It is suggested that the responsibility for keeping the minutes be assigned to a school employee.
3. Approval of operating procedures should be an initial item of committee business. It is suggested that a proposed set of guidelines be distributed in advance of the first meeting with the indication that discussion and action on the guidelines will be an early order of business.
4. Service on a school improvement committee will require that members become well informed regarding the school, its problems, and its accomplishments. The process should be open with information freely shared and discussed.

### **The Professional Development Program**

The school improvement committee is to develop and include within the school improvement plan a professional development program that emphasizes student learning and performance.

P.L. 221 specifically states that the State Board of Education will approve a school's program only if it meets the board's core principles for professional development and the following additional criteria:

1. To ensure high quality professional development, the program:
  - a. Is school based and collaboratively designed, and encourages participants to work collaboratively;
  - b. Has a primary focus on state and local academic standards, including a focus on Core 40 subject areas;
  - c. Enables teachers to improve expertise in subject knowledge and teaching strategies, uses of technologies, and other essential elements in teaching to high standards;
  - d. Furthers the alignment of standards, curriculum, and assessments; and
  - e. Includes measurement activities to ensure the transfer of new knowledge and skills to classroom instruction.
2. A variety of resources, including needs assessments, an analysis of data regarding student learning needs, professional literature, research, and school improvement programs, are used in developing the program.
3. The program supports professional development for all stakeholders.
4. The program includes ongoing professional growth experiences that provide adequate time and job embedded opportunities to support school improvement and student learning, including flexible time for professional development that provides professional development opportunities before, during, and after the regular school day and school year.

Blackford County Schools  
Board Policy  
Series 6000  
Instruction

5. Under the program, teacher time for professional development sustains instructional coherence, participant involvement, and continuity for students.
6. The program includes effective, research-based strategies to support ongoing developmental activities.
7. The program supports experiences to increase the effective use of technology to improve teaching and learning.
8. The program encourages diverse techniques, including inquiry, reflection, action research, networking, study groups, coaching, and evaluation.
9. The program includes a means for evaluating the effectiveness of the program and activities under the program.

P.L. 221 further requires that the State Board of Education is to develop an evaluation system to be used in measuring the success of programs included in the school professional development program. It further indicates that a school must meet the requirements of P.L. 221 to be eligible for grants from the department. The evaluation system has not yet been developed and it remains to be seen whether a future General Assembly will appropriate funds for professional development grants to schools.

Blackford County Schools sees the professional development component as one of the most important parts of P.L. 221. Blackford County Schools further believes that establishing adequate funding for these programs should have accompanied the passage of P.L. 221 and that specific funding should have been provided to help school personnel prepare for implementation of the legislation. There will still be the opportunity for this to occur during the forthcoming session of the General Assembly. In the meantime, Blackford County Schools will make every effort to provide the professional development that is needed. Until and unless state funding is assured, it must be assumed the professional program will be funded at the local level. With this in mind, the following suggestions/guidelines are offered.

1. The most efficient and economical way to plan and conduct the professional development program will be to have a corporation-wide program that serves the common needs of all schools with variations possible at the school level to accommodate needs unique and specific to that school.
2. Central office personnel will have the responsibility for reviewing the corporation's existing professional development program and making any changes necessary to guarantee that it meets the common needs of all schools and is consistent with criteria specified under P.L. 221.
3. Familiarizing the school improvement committees with this program will be the responsibility of the respective school principals.
4. Each school improvement committee, working under the leadership of the principal, will need to consider the unique and specific needs of the school and propose such modifications as may be needed to meet the needs of the school. It will be important that those involved with the corporation-wide program be a part of this process.
5. Funding the proposed professional development program will be an important consideration for each school committee. It will be necessary for a school committee to include, in its

Blackford County Schools  
Board Policy  
Series 6000  
Instruction

program, one category of activities that can be carried out within the limits of funds available from the local district level and the local building level, and a second category that would be undertaken if sufficient state funding is provided.

### **The Strategic and Continuous School Improvement and Achievement Plan**

The central element in P.L. 221 is the three-year strategic and continuous school improvement and achievement plan. This plan is to describe the improvement the school expects to realize and the means by that improvement is to be produced. P.L. 221 specifically indicates that improvement is to occur in the percentage of students meeting academic standards under the ISTEP program, attendance rate, and the graduation rate. Other indicators may still be added in the rules promulgated by the State Board of Education. The plan is to describe how the school expects to bring about the expected improvement. It is likely that the Department of Education will provide a template to be used in preparing the plan. The template is expected to go beyond what the law specifically requires adding items intended to make the plan easier to understand.

The following suggestions/guidelines are offered for developing the plan:

1. The central office when requested by each school committee will provide suggested wording for those parts of the school improvement plan that are common to all schools. Other descriptions such as the narrative description of the school, the community, and the educational programs should be drawn, to the greatest extent possible, from existing sources.
2. There must be a continuing awareness that each school in the corporation is operating as a part of a system that is designed with total corporation needs and resources in mind. While adjustment to individual schools is encouraged, that adjustment must come within parameters that make sense for the entire Blackford County School Corporation.
3. There is little benefit to be gained by going beyond what P.L. 221 requires in preparing the school improvement plan. The emphasis should be on doing a concise and effective job of providing what the state is requesting.
4. Uniformity in the nature of the individual school improvement plans will facilitate gaining community understanding and support. This suggests coordination, collaboration, and cooperating among principals in the development of their respective plans.
5. P.L. 221 would seem to require that each school guarantee the state improvement in specified categories. Absent an unexpected directive from the state, it will be up to each principal, working with the school improvement committee, to determine the amount of improvement to be guaranteed. The decisions should be made with the understanding that the payoff is not in the size of the guarantee but in meeting it once it is set. It should also be understood that P.L. 221 is based on the idea that improvement can and should occur every year. It is not a one-year process.
6. In determining interventions based on the school improvement goals, it should be understood that the corporation expects to continue the school improvement strategies that are already in place. These strategies should be the starting point with each committee. As with the professional development program, modifications to meet the unique and special needs of individual schools are appropriate; however, they will need to be consistent with the overall

Blackford County Schools  
Board Policy  
Series 6000  
Instruction

goals of the Blackford County Schools Corporation and within the limits of funding available.

### **Communication and Cooperation**

Blackford County Schools recognizes and supports the state's desire to give those at the school level greater responsibility for bringing about school improvement. The greater involvement that these school improvement committees will provide for the community is especially welcome. However, the potential problems created by asking principals and local committees to exercise specific authority within a structure in which principals and all other employees are directly responsible to the superintendent and the superintendent is, in turn, responsible to the governing body are obvious. There is, in effect, no possibility that a school can bring about significant and continuing school improvement without strong, proactive support from the superintendent and the governing body. By the same token, the governing body and the superintendent cannot effect school improvement without the support of those at the building level. With these understanding in mind, it should be understood that the implementation of P.L. 221 in this corporation will be characterized by communication, cooperation, and collaboration on the part of all those responsible for maintaining the public schools.

With these thoughts in minds, the following suggestions/guidelines are offered.

1. In the implementation of P.L. 221, vertical communication will be maintained from the building level through the governing body and horizontal communication will be maintained among individual schools. The intent will be to share and utilize the skills and strengths of all those who can assist in the school improvement process.
2. It is anticipated that the various school committees will involve and draw on the special skills of those staff members assigned the responsibility for specific areas such as curriculum, testing, research, community relations, etc.
3. The superintendent will have the specific responsibility of maintaining open channels of communication and guaranteeing the appropriate involvement of all personnel.
4. The superintendent and the school principals will share the responsibility for keeping the community informed regarding the school improvement effort.

Finally, the implementation of PL. 221 offers the opportunity to build on many of the things that we have already been doing to bring about school improvement. Plans already made and programs already in operation will go forward without interruption. What we have already accomplished will, in fact, enhance our effort to be even more effective. PL. 221 offers us the incentive and opportunity to continue to build. As we do so, it is important that we will detail the gains we are making and be aggressive in identifying and documenting the additional resources needed. The state has indicated it will provide resources once it knows what the needs are. Those of us at the local level need to do our part while, at the same time, holding the state responsible for meeting its role in providing accountability for student learning.

## **6127 TITLE I SCHOOL FAMILY INVOLVEMENT POLICY**

Blackford County Schools intends to follow the parental/family involvement guidelines in accordance with federal law. The Blackford County Schools Board of Education designates the principal in each Title I, Part A, school to distribute this policy to parents of students participating in the title I program.

Parents/guardians of students in the Title I program will be members of the school improvement committees operating annually in each Title I school. They will participate in the process of school review and improvement of the school's local plan. (See also section 6125)

This district will provide the coordination, technical assistance, and other support necessary to assist the Title I, Part A, school in planning and implementing effective parent/family involvement activities in order to improve student academic achievement and school performance.

This district will help build each Title I school's and all families' capacity for strong involvement as a component of family events, such as meet the teacher nights, family nights, parent/teacher conferences and other appropriate venues.

Blackford County Schools will coordinate and integrate parent/family involvement strategies under Title I, Part A, with parent/family involvement strategies under other programs operating within the district, such as Head Start, Reading First, Early Reading First, Even Start, Parents as Teachers, Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY), state-run preschool programs, and Title III language instructional programs. This work will generally be coordinated by the home/school counselor and the Family Centers.

Blackford County Schools will conduct, with the involvement of parents/guardians, an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of the parent involvement policy in improving the academic quality of the schools served with Title I, Part A funds. This evaluation will identify the barriers to greater participation by families in family involvement activities, with particular attention to parents who are economically disadvantaged, are disabled, have limited English proficiency, have limited literacy, or are of any racial or ethnic minority background. The district will then use the findings of the evaluation to design strategies for more effective family involvement. If a revision of this policy is necessary, parents/guardians involved in the activities of the schools will help with that revision.

Blackford County Schools intends that families of participating students be provided with frequent and convenient opportunities for full and ongoing participation in the Title I program. This shall include opportunities to jointly develop the Title I program plan and suggest modifications in the process for school review and improvement.

Any comments indicating families' dissatisfaction with the district Title I program will be collected by the Title I director and submitted along with the Title I Application for Grant to the

Blackford County Schools  
Board Policy  
Series 6000  
Instruction

Indiana Department of Education.

The Title I program will be designed to assist students to acquire the competencies and achieve the goals established by law, as well as the goals and standards established by the Blackford County Schools Board of Education. These goals and standards will be shared with families in a manner that will enable them to (1) participate in decisions concerning their child's education and (2) monitor and improve the educational achievement of their child.

Each school will submit its Title I school parent/family involvement policy, which must meet all legal requirements. This policy will be developed jointly with and distributed by the school to parents of participating students. The policy will be updated annually by July 1.

A copy of each school's parent involvement policy shall be kept on file with the school's Title I program plan in the Blackford County Schools Administrative Offices.

## **6130 HOMEWORK**

“Homework” shall refer to those assignments to be prepared outside of the classroom by the student. The Board supports teachers and administrators who are continually concerned that the purposes of homework lessons assigned for completion by students be carefully explained and who know that providing feedback on homework serves to enhance student achievement. Homework should always serve a valid learning purpose; it should never be used as a punitive measure.

Homework can be a meaningful and positive activity with purposes related to any one or more of four major categories:

1. Enrichment
2. Reinforcement
3. Preparatory
4. Skill development

Enrichment assignments are normally those lessons in which all students may realistically enhance their personal growth and development. Students are usually given great latitude regarding the topic and the scope of their reading and research. Except for general teacher guidelines, the students’ efforts may result in an original and creative lesson for that student..

Reinforcement lessons are not generally assigned to all class members since individual students have a varying need for this type of homework. In contrast to enrichment assignments, reinforcement lessons are generally on a daily basis and are also on a one-to-one basis with the teacher.

Preparatory homework is normally intended to familiarize the student with a content or topic and to serve as a basis for subsequent activity.

Skill development lessons are usually assigned to all students and are closely related to the regular current classwork. Analysis of weaknesses and strengths is noted regularly by the teachers and is used to assist the student through supervision by the teacher of the initial practice by the student before independent work is assigned.

The Board expects that great care must continually be exercised by the teacher to permit students adequate personal time and time for physical and cultural development. Every effort will be made to keep the average time devoted to outside assignments within that recommended by educational research. Parent involvement in homework should be kept to a minimum, primarily through providing time, space, and encouragement.

Homework assignments should be approached from a positive viewpoint so that they will enhance student success in school.

## **6140 CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT**

The Board recognizes its responsibility for the quality of the educational program of the schools. The curriculum shall be developed, evaluated, and adopted on a continuing basis in accordance with a plan established by the Superintendent.

Curriculum shall be defined as the sequence of standards and benchmarks that serve as the foundation of teaching and student learning.

The Board directs that the curriculum of this corporation will be:

1. Aligned with the IDOE standards and benchmarks in all subject areas;
2. Summarized in a user friendly guide available to teachers, staff, and community, which will be adopted by the board;
3. Understood by our teachers, students, and community as the foundation of daily lesson plans, instructional units, field trips, and other educational experiences;
4. Aligned in its written, taught, and tested forms;
5. Monitored by the classroom teacher and the principal for implementation;
6. Re-examined periodically as ISTEP and other assessment data become available to ensure data-driven decisions for the purpose of increasing student learning;
7. Revised in conjunction with the textbook adoption cycle or at such time as deemed necessary;
8. Knowledge and skills mastered in coordination with traditional grades;
9. Organized with vertical and horizontal articulation;
10. Reviewed with all teachers on a periodic basis in a professional growth model;
11. Discussed with a corporation Curriculum Coordinating Council with the Superintendent as chairperson.
12. Aligned to instructional best practices as indicated in modern educational research;
13. Promoted as the developmental acquisition of skills PK-12;
14. Evaluated using a variety of assessment approaches;
15. Observed directly by the principal through teacher discussions, classroom observations, lesson plans, and assessment data;
16. Engaging the students, which results in continuous learning, success, responsibility, and growth;
17. Taught using a variety of instructional strategies based in learning style theory;
18. Utilized for re-teaching, remediation, summer school, and enrichment activities;
19. Supported with fiscal resources to accomplish the academic goals of the corporation;
20. Reported to the community for program effectiveness;
21. Posted on the corporation website.



## **6150 RECOGNITION OF RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND CUSTOMS**

The instructional program of the schools should provide for informing pupils concerning the varied beliefs and customs stemming from religious, racial, and ethnic heritages. Such instruction should be designed to broaden pupils' understanding of and tolerance for the multiple ways of life enjoyed by the people of the world.

Students may choose to complete an alternate assignment if instruction is contrary to that pupil's religious belief.

## **6155 CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES IN THE CLASSROOM**

Training for effective citizenship is one of the major goals of public schools. Instructional programs developed to achieve this purpose place great emphasis upon teaching about the rights and privileges of citizens and the citizenship responsibilities that must be assumed in maintaining the American way of life.

In training pupils for effective citizenship, it is frequently necessary for them to study issues that are controversial. The schools should recognize the pupils' rights and/or obligations:

1. To study any controversial issues on which (at their level) they should begin to have an opinion.
2. To have free access to all relevant information.
3. To study under competent instruction in an atmosphere of freedom from bias and prejudice.
4. To form and express their own judgments on controversial issues without jeopardizing their relationship with teachers or the school.
5. To recognize that reasonable compromise is often an important facet in decision-making in this society.
6. To respect minority opinion.

## **6200 STUDENT FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION**

The primary liberties in a student's life have to do with the processes of inquiring and learning and of exchanging ideas. This requires that students have the right to appropriately express opinions, publicly and privately. These expressions shall not be disruptive to the educational process of the school. The school should strive to avoid interference with these liberties or with the student's access to or expression of controversial points of view.

## **6305 EVALUATION OF THE INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM**

The board expects both faculty and administration to evaluate the instructional program regularly. Such evaluation may lead to recommendations for modifications of the curriculum.

## **6310 CHANGES IN COURSE OFFERINGS OR GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS**

Proposals for changes in the courses offered to students or to the local requirements for graduation will be collaboratively planned among teachers, principals, and superintendent. Such proposals must be approved by the Board.

## **6320 PLACEMENT OF STUDENTS**

Principals, with input of teachers, and parents shall be responsible for the placement of students and student scheduling.

## **6330 ASSESSMENT OF CAPABILITIES AND PLACEMENT**

A student transferring to Blackford County Schools from a non-accredited program shall take the end-of-course examinations or comparable placement tests given by the district for those courses/levels the student has just completed in the non-accredited program. The scores will be used to determine placement at the most appropriate level of study. At the high school level, credits will be awarded and grades will be recorded on the transcript documents, but those grades will not be used to determine grade point averages for purposes of class rank.

## **6380 FIELD TRIPS**

Student trips which have value in meeting educational objectives and do not seriously interfere with the educational routine of students are permitted.

The teacher should make a request on the appropriate field trip request form to the principal at least ten days prior to the proposed date of the trip whenever possible. The purpose of the trip and its relation to the course of study must be stated on the field trip request form.

Teacher must notify parents of the field trip prior to the trip. The “general” field trip release form must be on file in the school for each student who participates on the trip. Elementary and secondary field trips which can be conducted within one school day are subject to approval by the school principal and the superintendent.

Field trips that extend beyond the normal school day must have the “specific” field trip release form completed by parents for each trip.

Overnight field trips require the “specific” field trip release form but also require additional detailed information about arrangements. The request for such a trip must be submitted for Superintendent Approval at least 30 days prior to departure.

The overnight activity commonly referred to as the “lock-in” must occur on non-educational time and should be approved by both the building administrator and the superintendent at least 30 days prior to the lock-in. Additional requirements shall be the prerogative of the building administrator.

All trips to athletic contests sanctioned by the Indiana High School Athletic Association are subject to the approval of the athletic director and principal. When an athletic trip will require an overnight stay outside the school district or is located more than 100 miles from the school district, the superintendent’s office shall be informed of each trip.



## **6385 NON-SCHOOL-SPONSORED TRIPS**

Teachers who wish to sponsor trips during non-school time, such as foreign trips, must take the necessary steps to assure both students and parents clearly understand that such activities are not sponsored by the Blackford County Schools. For any non-school-sponsored trips, the following procedures must be followed:

1. All written communication with students and parents regarding the trip must include the following statement: "This activity is not sponsored by Blackford County Schools, and the school district assumes no responsibility for the trip, for accidents, or for any liability regarding this trip. I am sponsoring this trip as an individual-not as an employee of Blackford County Schools."
2. Any verbal representations concerning sponsorship of such non-school field trips must be consistent with the above required disclaimer of school sponsorships and may not state nor imply that such field trips are school-sponsored or that the school district will be responsible for accidents or for any liability arising from participation in the field trip.
3. All meetings with students and parents regarding any non-school-sponsored trip must be held off school property.

## **6400 EQUIPMENT, BOOKS, AND SUPPLIES**

All teachers are responsible for books, equipment, and non-expendable supplies obtained from libraries, classrooms, supply rooms, or the instructional materials center.

Teachers shall keep an accurate list of all books and equipment issued to students. Losses must be reported to the principals as soon as possible. Pupils will be charged for any losses or damages beyond normal usage. The disposition of textbooks shall be accomplished under the direction of the superintendent in accordance with state and district administrative regulations.

Some courses/classes require specific materials. Students will be required to pay for the materials used in their individual projects.

## **6410 TEXTBOOK ADOPTION**

A textbook adoption committee will be appointed each year by the superintendent or his/her representative to select and recommend to the board the adoption of all textbooks and supplementary instructional materials for the content areas under consideration that year.

Each textbook adoption committee shall consist of principals, teachers, and parents, with parents comprising at least 40% of the committee membership or as otherwise stipulated by state statute. The committee will review and evaluate the state-approved materials in terms of the match with the locally adopted curriculum and current research-based instructional practices.

The committee will make a recommendation to the board no later than May 31 of each year.

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## **6420 STANDARDIZED TESTING**

The district will establish and maintain a testing program using standardized tests in order to assess student growth in achievement over several years in accordance with the requirements of P.L. 221 and Blackford County Schools' commitment to continuous student and school growth. More specifically, the testing program will:

1. Provide quantitative data regarding curriculum and instruction for charting and reporting the overall status and growth;
2. Make data available which allows comparison to Indiana and/or national groups of students the will be reported annually to the Board;
3. Provide data to influence the guidance and counseling of individual children;
4. Provide continual formative assessment data to develop and refine a high quality curriculum, high quality instruction, and a high quality professional development program.

The testing program shall include those tests required by state law.

## **6500 SCHOOL MEDIA CENTERS – SCHOOL LIBRARIES**

The Board endorses the School Library Bill of Rights, as drawn by the American Library Association, which asserts that the responsibility of the school library is:

1. To provide materials that will enrich the curriculum, taking into consideration the varied interests, abilities, and maturity levels of the pupils served.
2. To provide materials on opposing sides of controversial issues so that young citizens may develop under guidance the practice of critical reading and thinking.
3. To provide materials representative of the many religious, ethnic, and cultural groups and their contributions to our American heritage.

Recommendations for materials to be purchased for the school media centers can be made by members of the school board, administration, faculty, students, and parents.

The objectives for selection of materials which include such teaching aides as books, recordings, films, filmstrips, periodicals, tapes, pamphlets, slides, transparencies, film loops, microcomputer software, and others are to supplement the educational programs of the schools. Development of reading skills, discrimination in choice of materials, and instruction in the use of books and other media are important objectives of the media centers.

Criticism of materials that are in the media centers should be submitted in writing on a “Request for Reconsideration of Materials form” to the building principal. As soon as the principal receives a “Request for Reconsideration of Materials” form, the principal shall call a meeting of the school’s librarian, a teacher, and the principal, to discuss the criticism. The material in questions shall remain in place pending final decision unless otherwise directed by the superintendent of schools or the board of trustees.

If this body of three, having read the material, cannot come to consensus, the principal shall appoint a committee to review the concern. This committee shall consist of the following representatives from the school involved: faculty member, librarian, two parent representatives one of which could be the president, or his designee, of the parent-teacher organization, Director of Instruction and Assessment. After having read the material in question, this committee shall make its recommendation to the superintendent. The superintendent shall notify all those involved in writing of his decision. An appeal of the decision may be made to the school board by a written request to the superintendent. The school board will have the final decision.

## **6520 PSYCHOLOGICAL TESTING**

The school board will provide psychological testing through the special education cooperative. These services are primarily for the evaluation and placement of special needs students; however, in certain situations these services may be provided for other individual cases.

## **6550 SUMMER SCHOOL**

The school district may conduct a summer school program each year. Its purpose will be to provide additional opportunities for pupils to receive remedial instruction and participate in enrichment activities. Students attending the high school summer classes may receive credit toward high school graduation.

## **6560 SUMMER DRIVER EDUCATION ENROLLMENT POLICY**

Blackford High School may offer summer driver education with enrollment limited to students enrolled. The course is not offered for credit. When space is limited in the classes, grade level and birth date will be used to determine eligibility for enrollment.

A fee will be assessed for driver education sufficient to offset part of the cost for the vehicle, fuel, and insurance. This fee must be paid on a predetermined date for the student to attend classes.



**6600 COOPERATION WITH NON-PUBLIC AND OTHER  
EDUCATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND THE SCHOOLS**

The board recognizes the importance of cooperative relationships with other schools, colleges, and educational organizations. It encourages members of the school staff to work with such organizations on educational matters within the framework established by the statutes, state regulations, and board policy.

## **6620 ALTERNATIVE EDUCATIONAL PLACEMENT**

The school district may conduct an alternative educational setting to provide additional opportunities for pupils to receive instruction. Students attending classes may receive credit toward graduation.

## **6625 VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS**

Blackford County School students may have the option to participate in Career Technical Educational (CTE) programming available through our CTE partnership agreements with Area 18 and the Muncie Area Career Center. Those students that wish to attend one of these programs must complete a request through the Blackford High School guidance office. If space is available and the student meets all of the criteria of both Blackford High School and the receiving school, the student shall be permitted to attend the CTE program.

## **6630 DAY REPORTING**

The school district may conduct an educational program for students who have been suspended from their regular educational placement.

## **6635 GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING**

The board requires that a planned program of guidance and counseling be an integral part of the educational program of the Corporation. Such a program should:

1. Assist students in achieving educational goals;
2. Enable students to draw benefit from the offerings of the instructional program of the schools;
3. Aid students in identifying options and making choices in vocational and academic course areas;
4. Assist students in career awareness and planning;
5. Help integrate all the student's experience so that s/he can better relate school activity to life outside the school;
6. Help students learn to make their own decisions and solve problems independently;
7. Offer individual or group counseling to students

A program of guidance and/or counseling shall be offered to all students and shall include the services of professional guidance personnel and other designated faculty and staff members who provide employment counseling and placement services to students who do not intend to enroll in an institution of higher learning after graduation or desire employment in conjunction with their continued education.

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## **6640 RIGHT TO INSPECT CERTAIN EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS**

The parent or guardian of a child enrolled in a school within the Blackford County School Corporation shall be entitled to inspect any instructional materials which will be used in connection with a survey, a personal analysis, or an evaluation which is not a direct part of the academic instruction. Instructional materials include teacher's manuals, student texts, films, other video materials, or tapes.

Any complaints arising under this policy may be submitted in accordance with the policy for parental (public) complaints.

### **STUDENT SUBMISSION TO SURVEYS, PERSONAL ANALYSIS, OR EVALUATIONS OF SCHOOL CURRICULUM**

No student shall be required without prior written consent of the student's parent or guardian, or prior consent of a student is the student is an adult or is emancipated, to submit to a survey, a personal analysis, or an evaluation not directly related to the academic instruction which reveals information concerning:

1. Political affiliations;
2. Religious beliefs or practices;
3. Mental or psychological conditions that may embarrass the student or his/her family
4. Sexual behaviors and attitudes;
5. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
6. Critical appraisals of other individuals with whom the student has a close family relationship;
7. Legally recognized privileged or confidential relationships, including a relationship with a lawyer, physician, or minister; or
8. Income (except as required by law to determine eligibility for participation in a program or for receiving financial assistance under a program.)

Any consent form used in compliance with this policy must state the contents and nature of the personal analysis, survey, or evaluation.

LEGAL REFERENCE: I.C. 20-10.1-4-15

## **6650 COURSE ADDITION/REVISION OR DELETION**

### **Adding and Revising Courses**

The superintendent shall set guidelines for adding, revising, renaming, or deleting courses. All courses will follow the course titles, numbers, names, descriptions, and standards that have been adopted by the Indiana State Board of Education. The Board shall annually approve the Course Description Guide.

## **6660 TEST SECURITY POLICY**

1. All testing materials will be delivered to individual school entities no more than one week in advance of test administration.
2. Secure test materials (except for the *Examiner's Manual*) will not be available to staff more than 24 hours in advance of test administration.
3. Security of the assessment materials during testing and storage of all secure assessment materials before, during, and after testing will be ensured through:
  - a. All materials are secured in a central, locked location in each school building.
  - b. All materials are inventoried by school test coordinators, signed out and signed in by teachers.
4. Blackford County School Corporation will ensure that all appropriate staff have knowledge of the *Indiana Ethical Testing Practices and Procedures* and understand how to secure, administer, and handle the assessments while in their possession. School Test Coordinators will ensure that meetings are scheduled to review the *Indiana Ethical Testing Practices and Procedures* each year. These meetings will include:
  - a. The communication of, at least once annually for all appropriate staff, how standards and procedures will be monitored.
  - b. The communication to all appropriate staff of the purpose(s) of each statewide, corporation-wide, and school-wide assessment.
  - c. The communication for all appropriate staff all security procedures established for each assessment.
  - d. The provision of information and professional development necessary to ensure that all appropriate staff has the knowledge and skills necessary to make ethical decisions related to preparing students for an assessment, administering the assessment, and interpreting the results from assessment.
  - e. The established testing schedule.
  - f. The procedures for dissemination of test materials that allows all appropriate staff to have access to test administration manuals prior to the administration of the test, but prohibits the unsupervised reviewing of any secure test questions before, during, or after the assessment administration.
  - g. The process that ensures that all student assessments are secure when they are not being administered.
  - h. The guidelines for reviewing practices and materials used in the entity to prepare students for assessments.
  - i. The established channels of communication that allow teachers, administrators, students, parents, and other community members to voice their concerns about practices they consider in appropriate .
  - j. The established procedures for investigating any complaint, allegation, or concern about inappropriate testing practices, and insuring protection of both the rights of individuals and of the integrity of the assessment.
5. Each entity shall investigate any complaint of inappropriate testing practices or testing irregularities.
  - a. Investigations will include the following:



Blackford County Schools  
Board Policy  
Series 6000  
Instruction

1. A formal process by which all complaints are documented and can be tracked to their resolution which will include:
  - a. An initial inquiry by the test coordinator or principal to determine whether there is credible evidence that such an event has occurred must be conducted within one school day of receipt of a verified complaint, allegation, or concern about inappropriate testing practices, or a report of testing irregularity.
  - b. If any evidence of an inappropriate testing practice or testing irregularity exists, a report to the Office of Student Assessment will be sent within the next seven calendar days.
  - c. Provision will be made for protection of the integrity of any ongoing assessments.
  - d. A final written report to the Office of Student Assessment will be made within four weeks, unless a written request for a timeline extension has been granted.
2. The final report will indicate any recommendations or findings that would impact the reliability or validity of student scores and specifically detail actions that Blackford County School Corporation recommends the state to take.