



Pembroke Public Schools
School Committee Policy Manual

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POLICY 4.1: INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

The primary function of a school program is the instruction of students. All staff activities and efforts shall be directed toward providing a high quality, effective, and ever-improving instructional program.

There are primarily three functions involved in carrying out the instructional program:

- Operating Function
- Coordinating and Developing Function
- Evaluating Function

The operating function involves classroom instruction and building program management. The coordinating and developing function includes monitoring activities (curriculum development), in-service education for staff, and special services (ie psychological and special education services). The evaluation function involves student assessment, data collection and synthesis and establishing future direction.

LEGAL REFS.: 603 CMR 26:00



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POLICY 4.2: ACADEMIC FREEDOM

The School Committee seeks to educate students in the democratic tradition, to foster a recognition of individual freedom, social responsibility, and to inspire meaningful awareness of and respect for the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

Fairness in procedures will be observed both to safeguard the legitimate interests of the schools and to exhibit by appropriate example the basic objectives of a democratic society as set forth in the Constitutions of the United States and the State.

LEGAL REFS.: Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts
M. G.L. 71:2



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POLICY 4.3: SCHOOL YEAR/SCHOOL CALENDAR

The school calendar for the ensuing year will be prepared by the Superintendent and submitted to the School Committee for approval in the winter of each preceding year. The number of days or instructional hours scheduled for the school year will be determined in accordance with the following standard set by the Massachusetts Board of Education:

Grades 1 through 6 of each elementary school will operate for a minimum of 180 days. The Superintendent shall ensure that every elementary school student is scheduled to receive a minimum of 900 hours per school year of structured learning time, as defined in 603 CMR 27.02. Time which a student spends at school breakfast and lunch, passing between classes, in homeroom, at recess, in non-directed study periods, receiving school services, and participating in optional school programs shall not count toward meeting the minimum structured learning time requirement for that student.

Secondary schools (Grades 7 through 12) will operate for a minimum of 180 days. The Superintendent shall ensure that every secondary school student is scheduled to receive a minimum of 990 hours per school year of structured learning time, as defined in 603 CMR 27.02. Time which a student spends at school breakfast and lunch, passing between classes, in homeroom, at recess, in non-directed study periods, receiving school services, and participating in optional school programs shall not count toward meeting the minimum structured learning time requirement for that student.

.For the information of staff, students, and parents, the calendar will set forth the days schools will be in session; holidays and vacation periods; in service days; and parent conferences.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 4:7; 15:1G; 71:1; 71:4; 71:4A; 71:73; 136:12
Student Learning Time Regulations 603 CMR 27.00, Adopted 12/20/94



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POLICY 4.4: SCHOOL DAY

The specific opening and closing times of the schools will be recommended by the Superintendent and set by the Pembroke School Committee. The Superintendent is authorized to make minor changes in opening and closing times to simplify transportation scheduling; however, major changes in schedules will be subject to Committee approval.

Parents and guardians will be informed of the opening and closing times set by the Committee.

To help insure the safety of all children, students will not be admitted into the school building until proper supervision is available as determined by the building principal.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 15:1G; 71:1; 71:59
Board of Education Regulations for School Year and
Day, effective 9/1/75, Collective Bargaining
Agreements



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POLICY 4.5: ORGANIZATION OF INSTRUCTION

The District offers a diversified educational program compatible with the needs of the community and state standards. The organizational plan is designed to facilitate the philosophy of educating every student, each to his/her fullest potential. The structure will consist of three levels — the Primary, Middle and High School levels.

The Primary level includes schools with kindergarten through grade six. A Pre –K program will also be available. The Middle School level includes grades seven and eight, and the High School level includes grades nine through twelve. This organizational plan is designed to meet the Curriculum Frameworks as required by the State Department of Education and to serve the needs of all Pembroke students.



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POLICY 4.6: CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Pembroke School Committee believes that the constant review, adaptation and development of the curriculum are necessary if the District is to meet the needs of the students in its schools. Successful curriculum development must be a collaborative enterprise involving staff and administrators utilizing their professional expertise and gathering input from parents, and community.

The organization of the curriculum is the responsibility of the Superintendent and should be consistent with the goals and objectives of the Pembroke School Committee. The Superintendent shall transmit annually to each member of the School Committee an outline of the instructional and co-curricular activities, both required and elective, to be offered in the Pembroke Schools, including the Program of Studies for the middle and high schools, curriculum overviews for the elementary schools interscholastic, intramural and co-curricular programs.

The Committee expects its faculty and administration to regularly evaluate the education program and to recommend modifications of practice and changes in curriculum content as well as the addition or deletion of courses to the instructional program.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 69:1E
603 CMR 26:05



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POLICY 4.7: ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMS

It is the philosophy of the District to provide educational programs for all its students. Where additional programs and/or environments could facilitate meeting the needs of students and the philosophy and objectives of the District, alternative programs may be established by a vote of the School Committee upon recommendation of the Superintendent.

Some students require more support and direct supervision than is reasonably available in conventional school settings. Also, some students, along with a highly structured academic experience, require a special focus on life skills and an appropriate career involvement.

The School Committee will provide alternative education programs where these needs have been identified, where establishment of such programs is feasible, and where the proposed programs fall within the function normally associated with the public school system. These alternative educational programs will seek to provide an appropriate academic, social, and work experience to aid these young people either to reenter the regular school system, move into another educational setting, or prepare them for successful employment.

Definition:

Alternative programs are defined as provisions within the public education system which offer major choices among diverse educational environments based on student needs, talents and interests; occupy a significant proportion of an individual student's time; and meet the District's philosophy and objectives.

Alternative programs shall be approved by the Committee prior to implementation.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:37I; 71:37J
Board of Education Regulations Pertaining to Section 8
of Chapter 636 of
the Acts of 1974, Regarding Magnet School Facilities



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POLICY 4.8: CURRICULUM ADOPTION

The Pembroke School Committee will rely on its professional staff to design and implement instructional programs and courses of study that will advance the educational goals of the school system. The Committee will consider, and officially adopt, new programs and courses as they are recommended by the Superintendent.

The Committee will to be informed of all new proposed courses and substantive revisions of curriculum. It will receive reports on changes under consideration, as they become available. Its acceptance of these reports, including a listing of the high school program of studies, will constitute its adoption of the curriculum for official purposes.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:1; 69:1E



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POLICY 4.9: BASIC INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

State law requires that schools: “. . . shall give instruction and training in orthography, reading, writing, the English language and grammar, geography, arithmetic, drawing, music, the history and Constitution of the United States, the duties of citizenship, health education, physical education and good behavior. . .”

The law further states that American history and civics, including the Constitution of the United States, the Declaration of Independence, the Bill of Rights, local history and government will be taught as required subjects in the public schools.

Physical education is compulsory for all students, except that no student will be required to take part in physical education exercises if a physician certifies in writing that such exercises would be injurious to the student.

The business of the schools is to equip all children with the skills, tools, and attitudes that will lay the basis for learning now and in the future. This means giving highest priority to developing skills in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and mathematics. The first claim of the community’s resources will be made for the realization of these priorities.

School dollars, talent, time, and whatever innovation in program is required must be concentrated on these top-ranking goals. No student should be bypassed or left out of the school’s efforts to teach the fundamental skills. Schooling for basic literacy must reach all students.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:1; 71:2; 71:3; 71:13
603 CMR 26:05



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POLICY 4.10: BASIC INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

Curricula and materials utilized in the Pembroke School System shall meet the following legal requirements and guidelines in accordance with Massachusetts General Law:

- (1) The curricular of all public school systems shall present in fair Perspective the culture, history, activities, and contributions of persons and groups of different races, nationalities, disabilities,
- (2) All school books, instructional and educational materials shall be reviewed for discriminatory stereotyping. Appropriate activities, discussions and/or supplementary materials shall be used to counteract the stereotypes depicted in such materials.
- (3) School books, instructional and educational materials purchased after the date of the adoption of 603 CMR 26.00 shall in the aggregate, include characterizations and situations which depict individuals of both sexes and of minority groups in a broad variety of positive roles
- (4) Each school shall provide equal opportunity for physical education for all students. Goals, objectives and skill development standards, where used, shall neither be designated on the basis of sex nor designed to have an adverse impact on members of either sex.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:1; 71:2; 71:3; 71:13
603 CMR 26:05



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POLICY 4.11: PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The Pembroke School Committee will attempt to provide every student with opportunities for wholesome and enriched educational experiences. It is the Committee's belief that the following basic aims and objectives of the physical education program will contribute to this goal:

1. To aid the development of the entire student so that a well trained mind may function properly in a healthy body.
2. To encourage student participation in vigorous physical activity while in school, and to teach the skills of those activities so that they will have a carry-over value for later activities in every day life.
3. To increase appreciation of physical fitness and its importance in regard to good health.
4. To impress upon students the importance of integrating one's mind, body and attitude in preparing to face the obligations of a complex society.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:1; 71:3
Board of Education Regulations Pertaining to Physical
Education, adopted 4/25/78, effective 9/1/78
603 CMR 26:05



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POLICY 4.12: ADMISSION TO TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

The Pembroke High School does not offer a vocational –technical program to high school students. However, the School Committee recognizes the right of a Pembroke student to attend State approved vocational-technical programs and its responsibility to both pay for them and provide transportation to the student.

Pembroke students Grades 8 – 10 have the right to apply for fall admissions to vocational and technical training programs offered by the Silver Lake Regional School District. Those students are given admission preference by the Silver Lake Regional School System. Additionally, if they exist and are certified by the state, Pembroke students are required to attend such programs, rather than enroll in similar programs offered by other vocational -technical Schools in Massachusetts. Students requesting programs other than those offered by Silver Lake Regional School District have the right to apply and attend such programs if accepted.

Written notice of Application for vocational – technical programs at Silver Lake Regional High School or at other vocational - technical school programs must be received by the Pembroke Superintendent by April 1st of the school year prior to starting the program. Applications received after that date will be placed on a waiting list in order received.



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POLICY 4.13: HEALTH EDUCATION

Good health depends upon continuous life-long attention to scientific advances and the acquisition of new knowledge. The School Committee believes that the greatest opportunity for effective health education lies within the public schools because of their potential to reach children at the age when positive, lifelong health habits are best engendered and because the schools are equipped to provide qualified personnel to conduct health education programs.

The School Committee is committed to a sound, comprehensive health education program as an integral part of each student's general education.

The health education program will emphasize a contemporary approach to the presentation of health information, skills, and the knowledge necessary for students to understand and appreciate the functioning and proper care of the human body. Students also will be presented with information regarding complex social, physical and mental health problems, which they might encounter in society. In an effort to help students make intelligent choices on alternative behavior of serious personal consequence, health education will examine the potential health hazards of social, physical and mental problems existing in the larger school-community environment.

In order to promote a relevant, dynamic approach to the instruction of health education, the School Committee will continue to stress the need for curricular, personnel, and make financial commitments, within the limits and constraints of the approved school budget, to assure the high quality of the system's health education program.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:1



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POLICY 4.14: PARENTAL NOTIFICATION RELATIVE TO SEX EDUCATION

At the beginning of each school year, all parents/guardians of students in Pembroke schools will be notified in writing of the courses and curriculum offered that primarily involve human sexual education or human sexuality issues in accordance with MGL, Chapt. 71, Sect.32A.

The Superintendent of Schools will direct building principals to distribute such material. Parents/guardians who enroll in school after the start of the school year will be given the written notice at the time of enrollment. If the planned curriculum changes during the school year, to the extent practicable, parents/guardians will be notified of this fact in a timely manner before implementation.

Notice to parents/guardians will include a brief description of the curriculum covered by this policy, and will inform them that they may:

1. Exempt their child from any portion of the curriculum that primarily involves human sexual education or human sexuality issues, without penalty to the student, by sending a letter to the Principal requesting an exemption. Any student who is exempted by request of the parent or guardian under this policy may be given an alternative assignment.
2. Inspect and review program instructional material for these curricula, which will be made reasonably accessible to parents/guardians and others to the extent practicable. Parents/guardians may arrange with the Principal to review the materials at the school. Materials will be available at the office of the Superintendent, a designee or with the building principal.

A parent/guardian who is dissatisfied with a decision of the Principal concerning notice, access to instructional materials or exemption for the student under this policy may send a written request to the Superintendent for review of this issue. The Superintendent or designee will review the issue and give the parent/guardian a timely written decision, preferably within ten school days of the request.

A parent/guardian who is dissatisfied with the Superintendent's decision may send a written request to the School Committee for review of the issue. The School Committee will review the issue and give the parent/guardian a timely written decision, preferably within five weeks of the request. A parent or guardian who is still dissatisfied after this process may send a written request to the Commissioner of Education for review of the issue in dispute.

The Superintendent of Schools will distribute a copy of this policy to each principal prior to the start of each school year. All teachers should be made familiar with this policy through notice in the faculty handbook and by the principal.



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POLICY 4.16: TEACHING ABOUT DRUGS, ALCOHOL, AND TOBACCO

In accordance with state and federal law, the District shall provide age appropriate, developmentally based drug and alcohol education and prevention programs in grades K-12.

The drug and alcohol education program shall address the legal, social, and health consequences of drug and alcohol use. It shall include special instruction as to the effects upon the human system; the emotional, psychological and social dangers of such use with emphasis on nonuse by school age children and the illegal aspects of such use. The program also shall include information about effective techniques for resisting peer pressure to use illicit drugs or alcohol.

The objectives of this program, as stated below, are rooted in the School Committee's belief that prevention requires education, and that the most important aspect of the policies and guidelines of the District should be the education of each individual to the dangers of drugs, alcohol, and tobacco.

Objectives of instruction about drugs, alcohol and tobacco shall be as follow:

To create an awareness of the total drug problem-prevention, education, treatment, rehabilitation, and law enforcement on the local, state, national and international levels.

To relate the use of drugs and alcohol to physical, mental, social and emotional practices.

To develop the student's ability to make intelligent choices based on acts and to develop the ability to stand by one's own convictions.

To understand the personal, social and economic problems causing the misuse of drugs and alcohol.

To develop an interest in preventing illegal use of drugs in the community.

The curriculum, instructional materials and outcomes for this program shall be recommended by the Superintendent and approved by the Board.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:1



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**POLICY 4.17: SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS AND ACCOMODATIONS
(PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS)**

The goals of the District's Special Education Program are to provide each students with special needs with the opportunity to achieve at his/her own level, and to gain Independence and self-reliance so that every student can become a functional and productive member of society.

The District is committed to educating every student in the least restrictive environment in which effective progress can be made while ensuring that the student has access to a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). The requirements of the Federal Law (IDEA) and the Massachusetts Special Education Regulations (Chapter 28) will be followed in the evaluation and identification of students with special needs and the determination of appropriate services and educational programming.

In accordance with the state regulations, all children with special needs between the ages of three and twenty-two who have not attained a high school diploma or its equivalent will be eligible for special education services. The School Committee believes that most children with special needs can be educated in the general education setting when provided with appropriate supports, accommodations and specialized instruction. A continuum of services ranging from full inclusion to substantially separate programs is provided within the district.

The Committee ALSO recognizes that the needs of some children are so unique that a more intensive level of programming may be necessary to ensure that all students can access the general education curriculum. In those rare instances when appropriate programs, supports and services are not available within the District, the Committee will provide students with access to out of district programs where such instruction and specialized programming are available.

It is the desire of the Committee that the schools work closely with parents in designing and providing programs to students with special needs. Parents are viewed as equal partners and are encouraged to be active participants in all aspects of the special education process. In the event of any disagreement concerning evaluation, eligibility determination, program development and placement, the parents will be accorded the right of due process.

Legal Refs.: The Individuals with Disabilities Act 2004 (PL 108-446)
Massachusetts Board of Education Regulations (603 CMR
28.00 et seq.)
Massachusetts General Laws (Chapter 71B et seq.)



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POLICY 4.17: PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

In keeping with the intention of the state of Massachusetts to offer educational opportunities to all students which will enable them to lead fulfilling and productive lives, the District shall provide appropriate educational opportunities to all resident students in accordance with the requirements of state and federal statutes.

LEGAL REF.: Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

CROSS REF.: ACE, Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Handicap

File: IHBD



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POLICY 4.18: COMPENSATORY EDUCATION: TITLE I

Title 1 funds shall be used to provide educational services, in accordance with State and Federal requirements, at Title One eligible schools which are in addition to the regular services provided for district students. By adoption of this policy, the School Committee ensures equivalence in the provision of curriculum materials and supplies.



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POLICY 4.21: SUMMER SCHOOL

The Pembroke school system will conduct summer sessions as a supplement to the instruction offered during the school year, when funding for such programs is available. The focus of the program will be remedial work in major academic areas. All local summer programs will be subject to annual approval by the School Committee.

Students at all instructional levels may attend accredited summer schools for remedial, enrichment, or make-up purposes. Credit towards graduation requirements may be granted high school students in accordance with the regulations of the school district. A maximum of twenty (20) credits earned in summer school over a 4-year period may be applied toward the total credits needed for graduation. (Note: Please refer to the Parent Student Handbooks for further information).

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:28



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POLICY 4.22: LIBRARY RESOURCES

The primary objective of the library/media center is to provide resources which will enrich and support the educational programs of the school. The Pembroke School Committee is committed to providing its school libraries with a wide range of materials at all levels of difficulty, with diversity of appeal and the presentation of different points of view.

Definition of Library Resources:

Library resources are those materials both print and non-print, found in school libraries, which support curricular and personal information needs. Print items include books, magazines, newspapers, pamphlets, microfiche or microfilm. Non-print items include films, disc records, filmstrips, slides, prints, audiotapes, videotapes, compact discs, and computer software.

Selection of Library Resources:

The School Committee expects that librarians will place personal opinion and reason above prejudice in the selection of materials of the highest quality so as to assure a comprehensive library collection appropriate to the needs of the users of the Library Media Center. The responsibility for the selection of library materials is delegated to the licensed Library teacher or the building administrator. Although selection of materials may involve other members of the school community, such as professional staff input and requests, the ultimate responsibility for selection rests with the school librarian or the school administration.

The guidelines for selection of library resources in the Pembroke District are as follow:

1. Provision of materials to support and enrich the Pembroke Curriculum, the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, and the personal needs, abilities and interests of its users.
2. Provision of materials to stimulate growth in factual knowledge, literary appreciation, aesthetic values and ethical standards.
3. Provision of information to enable students to make intelligent judgments in their daily lives.
4. Provision of materials on opposing sides of controversial issues so that students may become critical evaluators and users of information.
5. Provision of materials which realistically represent our diverse society and reflect the contributions made by group and individuals to our American culture.

Materials to be considered for purchase are to be judged on the basis of the following:

1. Overall purpose and direct relationship to instructional objectives and/or district curriculum
2. Accuracy, reliability and authenticity
3. Quality of writing / works of merit
4. Developmental appropriateness
5. Fairness and clarity of treatment of subjects without bias
6. Durability and visually attractiveness
7. Accessibility of format and text
8. Special features and usefulness of illustrations, maps, charts, graphs, etc.
9. Potential use by school community members



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In accordance with the District's policy of providing instructional materials on differing sides of controversial issues, it should be noted that neither the media centers nor the District serve as advocates for the ideas expressed in any materials, nor does the presence of any material indicate automatic endorsement of the ideas expressed therein.

Disclosure of Information/Privacy of Circulation Records Circulation records shall not be made available to anyone except pursuant to such process, order, or subpoena as may be authorized by law.

All materials circulated from the Library Media Centers are the property of Pembroke Schools. It is the responsibility of the borrower to return items in good condition. The borrower must reimburse the Pembroke Schools for the replacement of any material which is lost or badly damaged. Determination of the condition of the item will be the responsibility of the Library Teacher or building administrator in charge of the Library Media Center from which the item was borrowed. Non-payment of lost/damaged material charges may result in the suspension of borrowing privileges or withholding of participation in the school graduation ceremony.

Re-evaluation (Weeding) of Library Resources

The continuous review of library/media center materials is necessary as a means of maintaining a useful and active collection. As new materials are selected and added, some older materials are withdrawn. The responsibility for determining which materials are to be withdrawn rests with the professional staff.

Reasons for withdrawing an item from the library media center collection are the following:

1. Curricular changes have rendered superfluous some materials (or multiple copies of materials) formerly used but no longer in demand.
2. Materials contain factual information which is no longer accurate nor current.
3. Materials intended for recreational reading have become dated or unattractive and are no longer in demand. (Some such books which are deemed "standards" or "classics" will be retained even though they rarely circulate).
4. Materials have become worn out, damaged or physically deteriorated and have lost utility and/or appeal.
5. Some materials have been superseded by newer items which present the same information but in superior format.

Withdrawn library/media center materials are processed in one or more of the following ways. They may be made available to be used as resource or supplementary material by teachers. They may be offered to other media centers in the District, as it is possible that a material which lacks utility in one building may have some usefulness in another. Such materials can also be contributed to appropriate charitable or educational agencies or discarded, as approved by a vote of the School Committee, when warranted.



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Continuing evaluation is closely related to the goals and responsibilities of library/media centers and is a valuable tool of collection development. This procedure is not to be used as a convenient or expedient means to remove materials presumed to be controversial or likely to be disapproved by segments of the community. Materials are not to be proscribed or removed because of actual or potential partisan or doctrinal disapproval, nor because of the origin, background or views of those contributing to their creation.



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POLICY 4.23: RECONSIDERATION OF LIBRARY RESOURCES AND MATERIALS

The Pembroke School Committee supports the principles of intellectual freedom inherent in the First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States and expressed in the Library Bill of rights of the American Library Association and the School Library Bill of rights of the American Association of School Librarians.

Material that is challenged usually belongs to one of the three basic categories: religion, ideology, or profanity/obscenity. Board policies regarding these areas shall be as follows:

Religion—Factual, unbiased material on religions has a place in school libraries.

Ideologies—Libraries should, with no thought toward swaying reader judgment, make available a balanced collection of primary and factual material, on the level of their students on various ideologies or philosophies which exert or have exerted a strong force, either favorably or unfavorably, in government, current events, politics, education and other phases of life.

Profanity/obscenity—Materials shall be subjected to a test of literary merit and reality in context using the criteria established.

When a problem concerning instructional resources in a school arises, the disposition of the problem will be made in a reasonable period of time using District adopted procedures.

In accordance with the statement of philosophy, no questioned materials shall be removed from the school pending a final decision. Pending the outcome of the request for reconsideration, however, access to questioned materials can be denied to the students of the parents making the complaint, if they so desire.

If the decision of the School Committee is that the questioned instructional resource be retained, the District will not convene a review committee relative to the same complaint for a period of three years. If a substantially different point of view is advanced, it will be investigated. (The period of three years does not apply in this instance).

If an individual or a group undertakes action to keep material from the shelves by checking it out and failing to return it, or by taking turns in keeping it checked out so that it is not available for student use, the Superintendent shall request, in writing, the return of the material. If it is not returned within thirty (30) days, a bill for the current replacement cost of the item shall be rendered to the party holding the item.

After the School Committee has adopted new materials or approved certain methods, that decision will not be reconsidered for a period of three years beginning with the end of the school year when the adoption is made.



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Procedures for Complaint

If a complaint is made regarding a specific book or materials in the school library the Librarian together with the Principal will initiate the following procedures:

1. Inform the complainant of the library selection procedures and make no commitments.
2. Request the complainant to submit a formal written **Citizens Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Materials.**
3. Inform the Superintendent who will inform the Pembroke School Committee.
4. Keep the challenged materials on the shelves during the reconsideration process.
5. Upon receipt of the completed request form, the Principal will notify the Superintendent that the review process is underway and request a review of the challenged material by a materials review committee within fifteen (15) days. The review committee will be appointed by the Principal.
6. The review committee will review the challenged material in its entirety, consult with recommended lists, determine the extent to which the material supports the curriculum and evaluate the material for its strength and value as a whole and make a written recommendation to the Superintendent and School Committee.

The School Committee shall make the final determination as to whether or not challenged materials will be retained or withdrawn from the library media center.

The following form shall be used by citizens to request reconsideration of instructional materials.



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CITIZENS REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

Name _____ Date _____

Address _____ Phone _____

Organization Represented _____

1. Material being questioned for re-consideration (Be specific; cite pages, video, etc.)
2. Have you completely read the book or examined the audio visual material?
3. Specifically describe your objection to this material .
4. What you believe will be the impact of this material on the user?
5. For what age group do you feel this material would be suited?
6. What do you believe is the general purpose or value for using this in this material?
7. What do you believe the author's purpose is in this material?
8. What would you like your library/ school to do about this work?
9. Have you examined any professional reviews of this material and can you provide copies of them to the materials review committee?
9. In its place, what material would you recommend which could convey as valuable a picture or perspective of the subject of this material?

Signature _____ Date _____



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POLICY 4.24: SELECTION OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

The School Committee believes that materials appropriate to the needs of the school program must be available to each student and teacher. These will be furnished by the School Committee subject to budgetary constraints. The task of selecting instructional materials for programs will be delegated to the professional staff of the school system. Because instructional programs and materials are of great importance, only those that meet the following criteria will be approved by the Committee:

1. They must present balanced views of international, national, and local issues and problems of the past, present and future.
2. They must provide materials that stimulate growth in factual knowledge, literary appreciation, aesthetic and ethical values.
3. They must help students develop abilities in critical reading and thinking.
4. They must help develop and foster an appreciation of cultural diversity and development in the United States and throughout the world.
5. They must provide for all students an effective basic education that does not discriminate on the basis of race, age, color, religion, national origin, sex, disabilities or sexual orientation.
6. They must allow sufficient flexibility for meeting the special needs of individual students and groups of students.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:48; 71:49; 71:50

CROSS REF.: KEC, Complaints about the Curriculum or Instructional Materials



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POLICY 4.25: TEXTBOOK SELECTION AND ADOPTION

Responsibility for the review and selection of textbooks to be purchased shall rest with the professional staff. A review committee shall be established to determine which textbooks best meet the curriculum needs and guidelines of the district. This review committee will include administrators, teachers who will use the texts and other staff members as desirable.

The principles which apply generally to the section of instructional materials and library materials shall also apply to textbooks. Additionally, basic textbooks and textbook support materials shall be chosen to achieve the following:

1. To advance the educational objectives of the school system and the particular objectives of the course and program.
2. To contribute toward continuity, integration and articulation of the curriculum.
3. To establish a general framework for a particular course or program.

Because the instructional purposes of textbooks are of such importance, particular care shall be taken in their selection as to content.

Although many points are to be considered, the Pembroke School Committee directs the staff to be mindful of the following considerations:

1. The needs of all learners must be provided for in the material.
2. Attention shall be given to gender roles, stereotyping, or bias in materials.
3. The textbook and textbook support materials should lead the student and teacher beyond the textbook into a variety of other materials and educational experiences.
4. Textbooks should present and encourage the examination of varied points view.
5. Because textbooks are used for many years, attention should be paid to Format, durability, physical characteristics and price.

Textbooks older than 10 years and/or no longer needed may be disposed of, with the approval of the School Committee by (1) sale; (2) giving them to students so requesting; or (3) discarding.

A fee will be charged which reflects the value of a textbook lost or mutilated by a student. A waiver or reduction of this fee may be made by the Principal on the basis of economic hardship.

LEGAL REFS.: 71:48; 30B:7; 71:50
603 CMR 26:05



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POLICY 4.26: SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS SELECTION AND ADOPTION

The School Committee recognizes that knowledge is changing and expanding and that it may be necessary to use various types of supplementary materials in addition to the basic and fundamental textbooks to deliver effective and appropriate instruction to students. In addition, the School Committee also recognizes that a textbook driven instructional program, as the sole source of information in a classroom, is not desirable and teachers are encouraged to make use of multiple sources of information where appropriate and available.

The School Committee further believes that teachers and administrators should have the primary role in selection and recommendation of supplementary materials. Teachers are encouraged to use a wide range of learning aids, provided the expense incurred in purchasing these aids remains within the limits of the budget.

For the purpose of this policy, supplementary materials shall be defined as any instructional materials other than textbooks including but not limited to books, periodicals, newspapers, pictures, diagrams, maps, charts slides, filmstrips films record audiotapes and suitable technological applications which relate directly to the adopted curriculum.

LEGAL REF.: 603 CMR 26:05



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POLICY 4.27: PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND ATHLETIC EQUIPMENT

Equipment for the secondary schools' athletic and physical education program shall be selected by the Director of Athletics in collaboration with the teaching and coaching staff, subject to the approval of the Superintendent of Schools. At the elementary level equipment shall be selected by the principal in consultation with the physical education teacher at each school and will be ordered by the principal.

Equipment for the physical education and athletic program may be loaned to students. Students shall be held responsible for the loss of such equipment or for damage beyond normal wear. The Director of Athletics shall maintain an inventory of physical education and athletic equipment and a record of loans, and shall hold students accountable for missing or damaged equipment.



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POLICY 4.28: SPECIAL INTEREST MATERIALS SELECTION AND ADOPTION

Organizations, institutions, and individuals at times develop materials that are offered to schools free or inexpensively. As a general rule, sponsored materials present a particular point of view, and extreme care must be exercised in evaluating and using them.

The responsibility for using sponsored materials rests with the building administrator. In any questionable instance, the Superintendent should be informed and shall decide whether its use in the best interests of the students. Sponsored materials must meet the same basic selection criteria as any other learning material, as well as the following special criteria.

1. Any expression of a point of view should be clearly identified.
2. Any advertising that appears on or with any material should be in good taste and unobtrusive.
- 3, The source of all material should be clearly identifiable.

LEGAL REF.: 603 CMR 26:05



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POLICY 4.29: SCHOOL AND DISTRICT WEB PAGES

The Pembroke School Committee realizes the limitless potential for information and communication provided by the World Wide Web. The availability of this communication vehicle for students and staff to access and contribute to the world of information related to curriculum, instruction, school, District and school community related activities. Therefore the Pembroke Schools will use the Internet as a source of information, method of communication, and vehicle for resource collection. In order to take advantage of the opportunities the Internet provides, the Committee authorizes the creation of school and District web sites on the Internet.

Only those web sites maintained in accordance with Committee policy and established procedures shall be recognized as official representations of the District or individual schools. All information on the School or District web site must accurately reflect the mission, goals, policies, programs and activities of the school and District.

The websites must have a purpose that falls within at least one of the following three categories:

1. Support of the curriculum and instructional program
2. Public information intended to communicate information about the schools to students, staff, parents, community and the world at large.
3. District technology support to respond to instructional and administrative technology needs for students and staff.

The Superintendent shall designate an individual(s) to be responsible to maintain the official District website, building websites, and to monitor all District web activity. The Superintendent is ultimately responsible for the accuracy and appropriateness of the content of the district web pages.

Websites developed under contract for the Pembroke Schools or within the scope of employment by Pembroke School employees are the property of the Pembroke School District. Concern about the content of any sites created by students or staff should be directed to the building Principal or the Superintendent's office when related to the District web site.



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POLICY 4.30: GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES FOR WEBSITES

Unlike the Internet, schools and the District can control the type of information placed on websites. Documents created for the web and linked to District web sites shall meet the criteria for use as public information or an instructional resource. The following considerations should be examined when determining the information to include on a school or District web site: copyright/trademark issues; privacy issues, and applicability to the curriculum or communication goals of the district

- a. All web pages and published work shall be dated.
- b. No advertisements of for-profit organizations shall be present on Pembroke Public Schools' web pages.
- c. No student shall publish, modify, or delete web page content on a school sponsored web site. All web page modifications must be completed by the supervising teacher/ webmaster/administrator.
- d. The administration has the right to remove any content found to be questionable.
- e. The author is responsible to research all hyperlinks "directly" linked from their web page. It is understood that hyperlinks beyond the Pembroke Public Schools website are out of control of the author and should be viewed with discretion.
- f. In order to publish student photographs/classroom work, permission must be granted in writing by the student and a parent/guardian.
- g. Web site authors shall NOT use digital photographs of individual students. Images of students in a group setting are recommended (2+ students).
 - ii. Students published photographs shall NOT be referenced with their name.
 - iii. Students published work shall include First Name and Last Initial Only.
 - iv. High School students in grades 9-12 may obtain parental permission to have their full names published to provide recognition for their outstanding work. This permission is based on a per document/assignment basis. Please note: With this permission the student photograph policy will still be in effect.
 - v. Under no conditions will a student's home address, e-mail address, or phone number be listed.
- h. If replies to a student published work are appropriate, the sponsoring teacher's address should be the email address displayed.

Links to other web sides should be carefully selected based on the above issues.

Content Standards



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All subject matter on web sites should relate to curriculum, instruction, school-authorized activities, general information supporting student safety, growth and learning, or public information of interest to others. Therefore, neither staff nor students may publish on the District server personal sites or sites for individuals or organizations not directly affiliated with the District. Staff of student work may be pushed on as it relates to a class project, course, or other school-related activity. Parent groups, partnerships, and municipal or educational cooperatives are considered affiliates of the District. No confidential information is to be published on or linked to a web site.

Quality Standards

All web site work must be free of spelling and grammatical errors. Documents may not contain objectionable material or link directly to objectionable materials. Objectionable material is addressed in more detail in the School Committee policy for instructional material selection and reconsideration. Authors and publishers are reminded that the web site represents the school district and provides access to it. Thoughtful consideration should go into decisions regarding purpose, usefulness and appearance of each item on the web site.

NOTE: Written student and parent consent must be secured for publication of any student work.



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POLICY 4.31: USE OF COMMUNITY RESOURCE PERSONS AND SPEAKERS

The School Committee encourages the enrichment of curriculum and widening of educational horizons by inviting persons from outside the school with special knowledge, talents or career information to meet with students. Such experiences afford students the opportunity to benefit from community viewpoints.

Care should be taken in selecting these speakers so that they are individuals who respect diversity in thinking and varying views and who are not attempting to inappropriately influence points of view. The time given by the resource person and the limitations imposed by the necessity to schedule the regular program of study should be considered when planning for such visits.

All requests for community resource persons/speakers must have prior approval of the building administration.



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POLICY 4.32: SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS AND VISITORS

It is the policy of the School Committee to encourage volunteer efforts in the school. Parents, business representatives, senior citizens, and other community volunteers are recognized as important sources of support and expertise which enhance the instructional program and establish vital communication links with the community.

The volunteer program will be coordinated in cooperation with building administrators. In accordance with the law and School Committee Policy, all volunteers working in the school or with students who may have direct and unmonitored contact with children, will complete a satisfactory CORI check prior to beginning as a volunteer in the school.

All visitors and volunteers are required to sign in at the school office when they arrive in the building and sign out when they leave the school. All volunteers or visitors are required to wear an identification badge while in the school which can be gotten at the sign-in station in the school.

Visitors and volunteers assisting in a school are expected to respect and maintain the privacy of the students and staff in that school. Failure to do so may result in termination of this privileged opportunity.



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POLICY 4.33: STUDENT ACADEMIC PROGRESS

The philosophy of the School Committee concerning academic achievement, as well as children's social growth and development, is based on the premise that children have diverse capabilities and individual patterns of growth and learning.

Therefore, the Committee feels it is important that teachers have as much and as accurate knowledge of each student as possible in order to assess his/her needs, his/her growth, and make instructional plans for him/her. A sharing of information among parent, teacher, and student is essential.

The Committee supports staff efforts to find better ways to measure and report student progress. It will require that:

1. Parents be informed regularly, and at least three times a year as a minimum, of the progress their children are making in school.
2. Parents will be alerted and conferred with as soon as possible when a child's performance or attitude becomes unsatisfactory or shows marked or sudden deterioration.
3. Insofar as possible, distinctions will be made between a student's attitude and his/her academic performance.
4. At comparable levels, the school system will strive for consistency in grading and reporting except as this is inappropriate for certain classes or certain students.
5. When no grades are given but the student is evaluated informally in terms of their own progress, the school staff will also provide a realistic appraisal of the student's standing in relation to their peers.
6. When grades are given, the school staff will take particular care to explain the meaning of marks and symbols to parents.



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POLICY 4.34: STUDENT PROGRESS REPORTS

The School Committee recognizes the school's obligation to give periodic reports of a student's progress and grades. The Committee further recognizes that these reports are a vital form of communication between the schools and parents.

The Committee also believes that all progress reports must be based upon full information, accurately and honestly reported with the proper maintenance of confidentiality.

A report depicting the student's progress will be issued periodically following an evaluation by the appropriate teacher, teachers, or other professional personnel. In addition to the periodic reports, parents will be notified when a student's performance requires special notification.

Grading and promotion will be based on improvement, achievement, capability of the student, and the professional judgment of the teacher and Principal.

Major changes in the reporting system shall be preceded by a cooperative study and evaluation by teachers, principals, parents, and the Superintendent or designee, who will submit the proposal to the School Committee for consideration and approval.



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POLICY 4.37: PROMOTION AND RETENTION

Promotion or retention decisions shall be made in the best interests of the student after a careful evaluation by the Principal, classroom teacher, and other specialists on all factors relating to the advantages and disadvantages of alternatives. Although parental input is taken into account when considering promotion or non-promotion, the school principal, with the recommendation of the classroom teacher, has the final authority for making the decision on grade placement.

Academic concerns and possible interventions to address a child's deficiencies in meeting grade level expectations should be discussed early in the school year. Students will be considered for retention based on the following criteria. The school will consider the student's academic achievement and needs.

- A child in kindergarten who has not met grade level standards in English/language arts and/or who has been recommended by the teacher for retention.
- A child in grade 1 who has not met grade level standards in English/language arts and mathematics and who has not demonstrated continuous progress.
- A child in grade 2 who has not met grade level standards in English/language arts and mathematics and who has scored a year or more below in these areas on standardized tests.
- A child in grade 3 or 4 who has not met grade level standards in English/language arts and mathematics and who has scored at the warning level on state tests:
- Other factors may be considered.

MIDDLE LEVEL

Students who fail any of the four major academic subjects, (English Language Arts, mathematics, history/social studies and science), students who have not met grade level standards, and/or whose attendance does not meet state guidelines may be considered for retention. At risk students will be reviewed by a retention review committee which may be composed of a school administrator, teachers, counselor, student and his/her parents or guardians.

File: IKE

HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL

Specific requirements for grade level promotion as well as a detailed list of the requirements for receiving a diploma for graduation from the Pembroke Public Schools is contained within the Program of Studies booklet. The contents are reviewed and approved by the Pembroke School Committee annually. In addition, all state requirements must be met to be eligible for a diploma. Students must satisfy all Pembroke High School graduation requirements to participate in the graduation ceremony. Students must pass the English Language Arts and Mathematics sections of the MCAS test and satisfy all Pembroke High School graduation requirements to receive a diploma.

File: IL



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POLICY 4.38: EVALUATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS

The School Committee considers comprehensive and objective evaluation of the effectiveness of the curriculum to be of primary importance. The Superintendent will provide for the translation of the stated instructional goals into objectives and for appraisal of their implementation in order to:

1. Determine educational needs and provide information for planning.
2. Indicate instructional strengths and weaknesses.
3. To check on the suitability of programs in terms of community requirements.
4. Show the relationship between achievement and the system's stated goals.
5. Provide data for public information.

Elements of this evaluation process may include:

1. Testing programs such as nationally standardized general achievement tests, nationally standardized tests in specific subject areas, and tests administered by other agencies.
2. Study of school achievement records.
3. Study of students' high school and drop-out records.
4. Use of outside services, participation in regional research studies, contracted evaluation services; evaluation services at cost to the school system must be approved in advance by the School Committee.
5. Teacher and parent evaluation of student behavior.
6. State Department of Education specialists and services.
7. Evaluation by the regional accrediting association.
8. Evaluation by other agencies.

An evaluation of the curriculum and its effectiveness will be made periodically and reported to the Committee by the Superintendent.

File: ILBA



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POLICY 4.39 : DISTRICT PROGRAM ASSESSMENTS

A district program of testing for assessment/evaluation shall be coordinated throughout the school district by the appropriate administrator who shall be responsible for scheduling, disseminating, and collecting tests and for reporting and interpreting all group test results. Measurements of educational achievement shall be prepared so that data is consistent for comparison purposes within the school district from year to year and with other school districts to the extent required by rules of the State Board of Education.

File: IMA



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POLICY 4.40: TEACHING ACTIVITIES/PRESENTATIONS

It is the desire of the School Committee that the best available strategies for bringing about learning be utilized in the District's schools. The instructional staff shall be expected to keep abreast of new and promising instructional ideas and practices developed in schools throughout the nation and to apply those which have potential for improving the learning program in the District's schools.

An educational climate shall be established which shall be conducive to rational thought, inquiry, and respect for the dignity of the individual. This educational climate will assist students in learning how to think rather than what to think and shall provide students the opportunity to identify, express, and defend their opinions without penalty or fear of reprisal or ridicule. Nothing in this policy shall limit a parent/guardian's right to file a complaint to challenge the use of teaching activity or presentation.

File: IMB



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**POLICY 4.41: TEACHING ABOUT CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES/CONTROVERSIAL
SPEAKERS**

An important goal of the schools is to help prepare students for intelligent and conscientious participation as citizens in our democratic society. One step toward meeting this goal is to introduce students to reasoned and dispassionate approaches to the analysis of contemporary social and political issues. To insure that these issues can be examined in an atmosphere as free from emotion and prejudice as the times permit, the School Committee establishes the following guidelines for discussion of controversial issues in the schools.

Teacher-Planned Classroom Discussions

1. Controversial issues selected by teachers for classroom discussion must relate directly to the objectives and content of courses approved by the School Committee for inclusion in the curriculum.
2. The teachers' right to introduce controversial issues in classroom presentations does not include the right of advocacy. Teachers must refrain from using their positions to express partisan points of view.
3. The approach to discussion of these issues in the classroom must be objective and scholarly with minimum emphasis on opinion and maximum emphasis on intelligent analysis.
4. Teachers must ensure that the reasoned arguments of all sides of an issue are given equal presentation and emphasis in classroom discussions.
5. Teachers may invite visitors from outside the schools to give presentations on controversial issues when the visitors offer qualifications and resources not available in the schools. All visitors are to be guided by the standards of language usage that prevail in the classrooms and by the standards of scholarly inquiry set forth above. Whenever possible, teachers who invite visitors to present one side of an issue will also invite visitors to present the other side(s).
6. In all cases teachers must obtain from the appropriate Principal permission to invite visitors for classroom presentations. Permission must be requested at least 48 hours before the scheduled time of presentation.

File: IMB

Student-Initiated Forums on Controversial Issues

Student groups may request permission to conduct forums on controversial issues in the schools.

The Principal may grant such requests under the following conditions:

1. Preparation for presentation of a forum will not cause any student or teacher to miss class and will not cause the cancellation of any class.
2. Adequate advance planning must be conducted for each forum. A request to hold a forum must be received by the Principal at least three weeks before the scheduled date of presentation. For each request the Principal will appoint, after consultation with the requesting student group, an adult advisory group consisting of at least two parents and two faculty members.
3. The standards for approach to discussion, style of presentation, and use of visitors as defined above will apply to student-initiated forums.

Requests from Groups or Individuals outside the Schools

No permission will be granted non-school groups or individuals to make presentations on controversial issues in the schools during school hours. Requests for after-school or evening use



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will be processed in accordance with the Committee's policy on community use of school facilities. No permission will be granted outsiders for distribution of literature on controversial issues to students in general or to class groups. The Superintendent may grant an outside group or individual permission to post one notice of a public meeting for discussion of issues if the language of that notice conforms to the standards that prevail in the community. The Principal will determine the appropriate bulletin board for such notices.

File: IMD



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POLICY 4.42: SCHOOL CEREMONIES AND OBSERVANCES

The United States Constitution and the Constitution of the State of Massachusetts and related court rulings clearly establish the concept of "church and state separation" and the "preclusion of sectarian instruction in public schools."

In order to help staff members abide by the spirit and letter of the law, and to avoid compromising any student's religious or conscientious beliefs or freedoms, the following guidelines have been established: The observance of religious holidays is not the responsibility of the public schools.

While it is recognized that many activities are initiated with the approach of major holidays in order to capitalize on the readiness and interest that is generated at these times, it should be understood that such occasions frequently have religious underpinnings. Care should be taken to relate only to secular aspects of these holidays.

Music programs given at times close to religious holidays should not use religious aspect of these holidays as the underlying motive or theme. Although religious music is appropriate in the schools to the extent that it is sung or presented for musical rather than religious content, its use should not violate the secular nature of the school. Pageants, plays, recitals, and other literary or dramatic activities should not be used to convey religious messages. While the holidays represent a valid source of ideas for meaningful school art experiences, teachers should avoid assigning or encouraging art work that promotes religious aspects of such holidays. If, however, individual students choose to use a religious personage, event, or symbol as the vehicle for an artistic expression, they should be allowed to take this action.

The above statements should not be interpreted to preclude the factual and objective teaching about religions, religious holidays, and religious differences. Such instruction will be permitted in the schools since insights in this area can enhance the mutual understanding needed by all the people in a pluralistic society.

LEGAL REF.: 603 CMR 26:05