

## **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 and Assessment Function

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

Revised: January 18, 1996

Reviewed: May 2009

LEGAL REFS.: 603 CMR 26:00

## **ACADEMIC FREEDOM**

The Somerville School Committee seeks to educate students in the democratic tradition, to foster recognition of individual freedom and 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.

Adopted: June 1, 2009

LEGAL REF.: Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts

## **SCHOOL YEAR/SCHOOL CALENDAR**

The school calendar for the ensuing year will be prepared by the Superintendent and submitted to the Somerville School Committee for approval by February 1 of each year. The number of days or instructional hours scheduled for the school year will be determined in accordance with the following standards set by the Massachusetts Board of Education:

1. Elementary school will operate for a minimum of 180 days. Schools 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.
2. Secondary schools will operate for a minimum of 180 days. Schools 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.

Adopted:

Revised: May 24, 1996

Revised: February 2009

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 4:7; 15:1G; 71:1; 71:4; 71:4A; 71:73; 136:12

Board of Education Regulations for School Year and School Day, effective 9/1/75

Board of Education, Student Learning Time Regulations  
603 CMR 27.00, Adopted 12/20/94

## **SCHOOL DAY**

The length of the school day at various levels, as well as the specific opening and closing times of schools, will be recommended by the Superintendent and set by the Somerville 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 Somerville School Committee approval.

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

Adopted: June 1, 2009

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 15:1G; 71:1; 71:59

Board of Education Regulations for School Year and Day, effective 9/1/75

## **EVENING SCHOOLS**

### **1. Admission Requirements**

Evening schools are open to adults and students over 16 at the discretion of the evening school principal.

### **2. Duties of Principals**

The principal shall be responsible for the management of the school. He/she shall keep a record of the name, age, residence, and occupation of each pupil and an accurate record of attendance. He/she shall have charge of and be responsible for all books and supplies furnished for his/her school, recommend courses to the superintendent, and be responsible for the proper and efficient functioning of the evening school program.

### **3. Length of Contract**

The Evening School Principal shall be appointed annually.

### **4. Absence Limit**

Any student who is absent more than five times during a term shall not receive academic credit. Eighty percent attendance is mandatory. All students must attend twenty of the twenty-five evenings per term in order to receive credit toward a diploma.

### **5. Suspension**

Any student who is absent more than two times during a term shall not receive academic credit. Eight percent attendance is mandatory. All students must attend a minimum of 24 hours per term in order to receive credit toward a diploma, with the prior approval of the Somerville High School Headmaster.

### **6. Diploma**

Certificates of attainment and diplomas of graduation shall be given to evening school students as the Somerville School Committee may determine.

Adopted: June 1, 2009

## **CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT**

Constant adaptation and development of the curriculum is necessary if the District is to meet the needs of the students in its schools. To be successful, curriculum development must be a collaborative enterprise involving staff and administrators utilizing their professional expertise, and gathering input from parents and community.

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.

Adopted:

Revised: January 18, 1996

Reviewed: May 2009

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

## **STUDENT TEACHER ASSISTANCE TEAMS (STAT)**

Each elementary school has developed Student Teacher Assistance Teams (STAT). Somerville High School has a Student Improvement Team (SIT). At each school, the team is chaired by the principal or designee.

Where appropriate, each school's team will have at least one representative from regular education, special education, English language education, reading services, and health services serving on the team. The final composition of the team will be determined by the principal and other appropriate administrators with final determination the responsibility of the principal.

The Student Teacher Assistance Team will meet at least once a month to give staff the opportunity to discuss the profile and/or performance of individual students without current Individual Education Plans (IEPs). The purpose of the STAT/SIT is to determine alternative strategies to improve learning with a follow-up meeting within four weeks to assess the progress of the child.

Approved: April 24, 1995

Revised: June 1, 2009

Amended: December 2014

## **ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMS**

It is the philosophy of the District to provide 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.

### 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.

### Development

Any project shall have been discussed with the Administration and must receive its endorsement prior to development.

Alternative programs shall observe all policies and regulations that govern all of the schools and programs of the District unless specifically waived by the board.

Proposals for alternative programs must include a design for evaluating the effectiveness in achieving the purposes of the program and determining the extent to which it is successful in achieving the philosophy and objectives of the District. Alternative programs will be reviewed and evaluated annually for the first three years with a recommendation to the Somerville School Committee as to continuation of the programs.

### Approval

Alternative Programs shall be approved by the Somerville School Committee prior to implementation.

Adopted:

Revised: January 18, 1996

Reviewed: May 2009



## **CURRICULUM ADOPTION**

The Somerville 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 Superintendent will have authority to approve new programs and courses of study after they have been thoroughly studied and found to support educational goals. The Somerville School Committee itself will consider, and officially adopt, new programs and courses when they constitute an extensive alteration in instructional content or approach.

The Somerville School Committee wishes to be informed of all new courses and substantive revisions in curriculum. It will receive reports on changes under consideration. 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.

Adopted:

Revised: January 18, 1996

Reviewed: May 2009

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

## **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 Fundamental Skills**

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 solving numerical problems.

The first claim of the community's resources will be made for the realization of these priorities. School dollars, school talent, school 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, in all neighborhoods, and from all homes.

Adopted:

Revised: January 18, 1996

Reviewed: May 2009

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

## **BASIC INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM**

### Curricula

- (1) The curricula of all public school systems shall present in fair perspective the culture, history, activities, and contributions of persons and groups of different races, nationalities, sexes, and colors.
- (2) All school books, instructional and educational materials shall be reviewed for sex-role and minority group 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 shall in the aggregate, include characterizations and situations which depict individuals of both sexes and of minority groups in a broad variety of positive rolls.
- (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.

Revised: January 18, 1996

Revised: June 1, 2009

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

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

The Somerville School Committee will attempt to provide every student with an opportunity for wholesome and enriched educational experiences. It is the Somerville School 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 everyday 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.

Adopted:

Revised: January 18, 1996

Reviewed: May 2009

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

## **OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION**

The Somerville School Committee recognizes that students in kindergarten through grade 12 should:

1. Be afforded the opportunity to be informed about School to Work opportunities.
2. Be aware of the many vocations available to them.
3. Develop a respect for the dignity of work.
4. Be allowed the opportunity to develop an understanding regarding the technical, consumer, occupational, recreational and cultural aspects of industry and technology; they should also be afforded the opportunity to develop skills related to such aspects through creative problem solving experiences.

Adopted:

Revised: January 18, 1996

Reviewed: May 2009

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:37K; 71:38A through 71:38F; 74:1 et seq.  
Board of Education Chapter 74 Regulations, adopted 6/28/77, effective  
9/1/77

## **HEALTH EDUCATION**

Good health depends upon continuous life-long attention to scientific advances and the acquisition of new knowledge.

The Somerville 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 Somerville School Committee is committed to a sound, comprehensive health education program as an integral part of each student's general education. Health education will be taught in grades K through 12.

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 Somerville School Committee will continue to stress the need for curricular, personnel, and financial commitments that are necessary to assure the high quality of the system's health education program.

Adopted:

Revised: January 18, 1996

Reviewed: May 2009

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

**HEALTH EDUCATION  
(Exemption Procedure)**

At the beginning of each school year, all parents/guardians of students enrolled in our schools will be provided in writing with an outline of the curriculum offered in grades K-8 that primarily involve human sexual education or human sexuality issues. Parents /guardians of students 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.

Each such notice to parents/guardians will include a brief description of the curriculum health topics covered by this policy and will inform parents/guardians 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 school principal requesting an exemption. Any student who is exempted by request of the parent/guardian may be given an alternative assignment.
2. inspect and review program instruction materials for these curricula, which will be made reasonably accessible to parent/guardians and others to the extent practicable. Parents/guardians may arrange with the principal to review the material at the school and may also review them at other locations that may be determined by the Superintendent of schools/designee.

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 the issue. The Superintendent or designee will review the issue and give the parent/guardian a timely written decision, preferably within two weeks 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 four weeks of the request.

Adopted: June 1, 2009

MGL Chapter 71, Section 32A

## **DRUG, ALCOHOL, AND TOBACCO EDUCATION**

In accordance with state and federal law, the District provides 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 tobacco, illicit drugs or alcohol.

The objectives of this program, as stated below, are rooted in the Somerville 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.

- 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 facts and to develop the courage 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 used in this program shall be recommended by the Superintendent and approved by the Somerville School Committee.

Adopted:

Revised: January 18, 1996

Revised: June 1, 2009

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



**SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS AND ACCOMMODATIONS  
(PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS)**

The goals of this school system's special education program are to allow each child to grow and achieve at his/her own level, to gain independence and self-reliance, and to return to the mainstream of school society as soon as possible.

The requirements of Chapter 71B and the Massachusetts General Laws (known as Chapter 766 of the Acts of 1972) and state regulations will be followed in the identification of children with special needs, in referrals for their evaluation, in prescribing for them suitable programs and in assessing their educational progress. In keeping with state requirements, all children with special needs between the ages of three through 21 who have not attained a high school diploma or its equivalent will be eligible for special education.

The Somerville School Committee believes that most children with special needs can be educated in the regular school program if they are given special instruction, accommodations and the support they need. These children should also be given the opportunity to participate in the school system's non-academic and extracurricular activities.

The Somerville School Committee recognizes that the needs of certain children are so great that special programs, special classes or special schools may be necessary. When appropriate programs, services, or facilities are not available within the public schools, the Somerville School Committee will provide these children with access to schools where such instruction and accommodations are available.

It is the desire of the Somerville School Committee that the schools work closely with parents/guardians in designing and providing programs and services to children with special needs. Parents/guardians will be informed, and conferred with, whenever a child is referred for evaluation. In event of any disagreement concerning diagnosis, program plan, special placement, or evaluation, the parents/guardians will be accorded the right of due process.

The Somerville School Committee will secure properly trained personnel to work with the children with special needs. Since the financial commitment necessary to meet the needs of all of these children is extensive, the Somerville School Committee will make every effort to obtain financial assistance from all sources.

Adopted:

Revised: July 29, 1996

Reviewed: May 2009

LEGAL REFS.: The Individuals with Disabilities Ed. Act (PL 94-142 adopted 1/1/91)  
Rehabilitation Act of 1973  
M.G.L. 71B:1 et seq. (Chapter 766 of the Acts of 1972)  
Board of Education Chapter 766 Regulations, adopted 10/74, as amended  
through 7/1/81  
603 CMR 28:00 inclusive

## **PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

In keeping with the intention of the state of Massachusetts to offer educational opportunities to all students that 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.

Adopted: June 1, 2009

SOURCE: MASC

**COMPENSATORY EDUCATION  
(Title I)**

Services funded by Title I Funds will be provided consistent with Title I, Federal and State Guidelines. By adoption of this policy, the School Committee ensures equivalence in the provision of curriculum materials and supplies.

SOURCE: MASC

Adopted: February 23, 2009

## **ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS**

The District shall provide suitable research-based language instructional programs for all identified English language learners in grades Kindergarten through 12 in accordance with the requirements of state and federal statutes and Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education regulations and guidance.

The District shall identify students whose dominant language may not be English through home language surveys that identify a primary home language is other than English (PHLOTE), observations, intake assessments, and recommendations of parents, teachers and other persons. Identified students shall be assessed annually to determine their level of proficiency in the English language.

The District shall certify to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education each year those students whose dominant language is not English, including specification of the number of non-English languages identified as dominant languages and the number and percent of students who speak each non-English language as their dominant language.

The District shall provide additional information as required by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to comply with the No Child Left Behind Act.

SOURCE: MASC 2006

LEGAL REFS.: 20 U.S.C. 3001 et seq. (language instruction for limited English proficient and immigrant students contained in No Child Left Behind Act of 2001)  
42 U.S.C. 2000d (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964)  
603 CMR 14.00

Approved: December 18, 2006

Revised: June 1, 2009

## **HOMEBOUND INSTRUCTION**

Upon receipt of a physician's written order verifying that any student enrolled in a public school or placed by the public school in a private setting must remain at home or in a hospital on a day or overnight basis, or any combination of both, for medical reasons and for a period of not less than fourteen school days in any school year, the principal shall arrange for provision of educational services in the home or hospital. Such services shall be provided with sufficient frequency to allow the student to continue his or her educational program, as long as such services do not interfere with the medical needs of the student. The principal shall coordinate such services with the Administrator for Special Education for eligible students. Such educational services shall not be considered special education unless the student has been determined eligible for such services, and the services include services on the student's IEP.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 603 CMR 28.03(3)(c)

SOURCE: MASC

Adopted: June 1, 2009

## **HOME SCHOOLING**

The Massachusetts General Law requires the School Committee to determine that a Home Schooling program meet with the minimum standards established for public schools in the Commonwealth prior to approving such a program.

When a parent or guardian of a student below the age of 16 wants to establish a home-based educational program for his/her child, the following procedures shall be followed in accordance with the law:

Prior to removing the child from public school:

The parent/guardian must submit written notification of establishment of the home-based program to the appropriate administrator 14 days before the program is established, and resubmit notification on an annual basis as long as the child or children are being educated in a home-based environment.

The parent/guardian must certify in writing, on a form provided by the District, the name, age, place of residence, and number of hours of attendance of each child in the program.

The Superintendent shall give the notice to produce records required by law if there is probable cause to believe the program is not in compliance with the law. Factors to be considered by the Superintendent or School Committee in deciding whether or not to approve a home education proposal may be:

1. The proposed curriculum and the number of hours of instruction in each of the proposed subjects.
2. The competency of the parents to teach the children.
3. The textbooks, workbooks and other instructional aids to be used by the children and the lesson plans and teaching manuals to be used by the parents.
4. Periodic standardized testing of the children to ensure educational progress and the attainment of minimum standards.

A student being educated in a home-based program within the District may have access to public school activities of either a curricular or extracurricular nature upon approval of the Superintendent.

A student, with the approval of the School Committee, may be awarded a high school diploma if he or she has satisfied the Department of Education's competency requirements and has met the District's educational standards for graduation.

**SOURCE: MASC**

**LEGAL REFS.:** M.G.L. 69:1D; 76:1, Care and Protection of Charles  
Care and Protections of Charles - MASS. Supreme Judicial Court 399  
Mass. 324 (1987)

Adopted: June 1, 2009

## HOME SCHOOLING

1. Requirements for approval of home instruction will include:
  - a. The parent or legal guardian must request permission to hold home instruction on an annual basis.
  - b. A home instruction application form will be provided to the parents or legal guardian. This form must be completed and returned to the Superintendent/designee before approval may be granted.
  - c. The Committee delegates the approval of home instruction to the Superintendent/designee. Any approval or rejection of an application by the Superintendent is subject to review by the Committee.
2. Parents or a legal guardian in charge of home instruction should make provision for regular testing or use of other indicators of student progress such as standardized achievement tests. The home instruction summary must include home testing results for each required subject for each child.
3. Auditing functions of the Committee for the home instruction will include:
  - a. The Committee at any time may request a review by the Superintendent of the attendance rolls, records of test scores or other achievement indicators in each required subject for any child in home instruction.
  - b. The Committee may request at any time that the Superintendent review the instructional materials and methods used by the person(s) responsible for the home instruction.
4. Within one week of the ending date of the home instruction, as indicated on the home instruction application form, the School District will mail the parents or legal guardian a home instruction summary form. The completed form should be returned to the School District within 30 days. This summary form must be returned to the School District office before annual approval of home instruction can be made for any succeeding years.
5. If deficiencies in a home education situation are not corrected or the proper annual application or summary is not completed by the parents or legal guardian, an appropriate referral will be made.

SOURCE: MASC

Adopted: June 1, 2009

## **ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL PROGRAMS**

Some students have great difficulty coping with the conventional school program and as a result will drop out of school. Some students require more support and direct supervision than is reasonably available in conventional school settings. And, some students, along with a highly structured academic experience, require a special focus on life skills and an appropriate vocational involvement.

The Somerville 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 vocational experience to aid these young people either to reenter the regular school system, move into another educational setting, or prepare them for successful employment.

SOURCE: MASC

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 and Magnet Educational Programs, adopted 2/25/75

Adopted: June 1, 2009



## **MAGNET SCHOOLS**

The Somerville School Committee is committed to ensuring an educational program of consistently high quality in each of the District's schools. In order to meet unique educational needs, better serve the needs of the school community, and/or assist in maximizing the use of existing facilities, the School Committee may establish magnet school programs in specific schools. Such programs shall operate under the direct supervision of the school Principal.

Magnet school programs shall be subject to the periodic review of the School Committee, and the School Committee may direct expansion or discontinuance based on factors such as program effectiveness, changing needs, and availability of funds.

SOURCE: MASC

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L 71:37I; 71:37J  
Board of Education Regulation 603 CMR 24:00

Adopted: June 1, 2009

## **SUMMER SCHOOLS**

1. A summer program for remediation and enrichment may be conducted at Somerville High School and at the elementary level. It will be open to all students.
2. The Superintendent of Schools/Designee is responsible for the staff, supplies and materials for summer school programs. Staffing may include a Director, Assistant Director, teachers and any other support personnel or licensed personnel required.
3. Summer school staff is appointed annually.
4. Preference for hiring will be given to teachers possessing a current Massachusetts teacher's license in the appropriate discipline.
5. Summer school generally will be held for six (6) weeks, Monday through Thursday, for two (2) hours per course, per day.
6. Other summer programs, at the discretion of the Superintendent/Designee, will be offered consistent with the Somerville Public Schools budget and grant funded programs. The Superintendent of Schools/Designee is responsible for these programs.
7. Students at all instructional levels may attend approved summer schools for remedial, enrichment, or make-up purposes. Credits may be granted high school students in line with regulations of the School District.

## **SUMMER SCHOOL – HIGH SCHOOL**

Students who fail to pass a full-year course may make up that course at Somerville High School's summer session, provided that they have the permission of the teacher. Should a teacher deny permission to make up a course at Somerville High School's summer session, a student may appeal the decision to the headmaster. In such case(s), the headmaster may, after reviewing the particular circumstances of the appeal, grant permission for the student to make up the course. If extenuating circumstances prohibit a student from attending Somerville High School's summer session, the student must obtain the written permission of the headmaster before enrolling in another summer school for credit. A student may receive credit for two courses taken during the summer school session, provided that the student failed the courses previously and did not withdraw from the courses before their completion. If a student has failed more than one major subject, the student must attempt to make up a required course, with English taking precedence.

The headmaster reserves the right to adjust the policy to meet the needs of the individual student.

Adopted:

Approved: December 18, 2006

Revised: June 1, 2009

## **HOME SCHOOL AND VIRTUAL SCHOOL STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

Somerville Public Schools is committed to creating equitable systems of learning and well-being that will serve all Somerville children and prepare them for success. The district recognizes that closing achievement gaps requires expanding access to out of school time learning opportunities. The district welcomes participation in school-based extracurricular activities for Somerville-based home school or virtual school students if space is available and there is no financial impact to the district.

“Extracurricular activities,” for the purpose of this policy, are school-sponsored activities for which participants are supervised by staff supervising the activities, including those teams, both athletic and academic, that participate in interscholastic competition. Participation of students in such school programs shall be limited to home school or virtual students whose home instruction programs are in compliance with applicable Massachusetts law and Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education regulations.

Students receiving home-school or virtual instruction are eligible to try out for and/or participate in extracurricular activities sponsored by Somerville Public Schools upon availability and approval of the Assistant Superintendent or his/her designee provided the student applies in writing and the following requirements are satisfied.

- The student agrees to abide by equivalent rules of participation as are applicable to regularly enrolled students participating in the activity and provides evidence that the rules of participation are being met.
- The student complies with the same physical examination, immunization, insurance, age, and semester eligibility requirements as regularly enrolled students participating in the activity. All required documentation must be made available upon request by the School District.
- The student meets equivalent academic standards as those established for regularly enrolled students participating in the activity and provides evidence that the academic standards are being met.
- The student abides by the same transportation policy as regularly enrolled students participating in the activity.

The School District has reasonable discretion to grant or withhold approval based on factors including: whether the activity is already filled with enrolled students, additional costs that would be caused by the student’s participation, the student’s behavioral and academic record, safety, and any other factors that involve the best interests of the District. The decision of the District shall not be subject to appeal or reconsideration unless it is in violation of the law or a School Committee policy.

Adopted: December 16, 2019

## **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 School 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, physical disabilities or sexual preference.
6. They must allow sufficient flexibility for meeting the special needs of individual students and groups of students.

{ Adoption date }

Revised: January 18, 1996

Reviewed: May 2009

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

## **TEXTBOOK SELECTION AND ADOPTION**

Responsibility for the review and selection of textbooks to be purchased shall rest with the principal of each school. The principal is encouraged through the School Committee to establish a review committee to assist in the process to determine the textbooks that best meet the curriculum guidelines of the District. The committee should include teachers who will use the texts and other staff members as found desirable. Students and parents will be encouraged to serve.

Principles that apply generally to the selection of instructional materials and library materials shall apply to textbooks. Additionally, basic textbooks and textbook support materials shall be chosen:

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

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

Although many points must be examined, the School Committee directs the staff to be mindful of the following considerations:

- The needs of all learners must be provided for.
- Attention should be given to gender roles depicted in the materials.
- The textbook and textbook-support materials should lead the student and teacher beyond the textbook into a wide variety of other materials and educational experiences.
- If the textbook deals with problems and issues of our times, it should present and encourage examination of varied points of view.
- Because textbooks are selected for several years' use, special attention also shall be given their physical characteristics, durability, format and price.

{ Adoption date }

Revised: January 18, 1996

Reviewed: May 2009

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

## **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 textbooks.

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, records, audiotapes, computer programs, web content and suitable technological applications which relate directly to the adopted curriculum.

The School Committee believes that teachers and administrators should have a large role in selection and recommendation of supplementary materials. Teachers are encouraged to use a wide range of learning aids, provided the cost is within the budget.

{ Adoption date }

Revised: January 18, 1996

Revised: June 1, 2009

LEGAL REF.: 603 CMR 26:05

## **LIBRARY MATERIALS SELECTION AND ADOPTION**

The Somerville School Committee endorses the School Library Bill of Rights as adopted by the American Library Association, which asserts that the responsibility of the school library is to:

1. Provide materials that will enrich and support the curriculum, taking into consideration the varied interests, abilities and maturity levels of the students served.
2. Provide materials that will stimulate growth in factual knowledge, literary appreciation, aesthetic values and ethical standards.
3. Provide a background of information that will enable students to make intelligent judgments in their daily lives.
4. Provide materials on opposing sides of controversial issues so that young citizens may develop under guidance the practice of critical reading and thinking.
5. Provide materials representative of the many religious, ethnic, and cultural groups and their contributions to our American heritage.
6. Place principle above personal opinion and reason above prejudice in the selection of materials of the highest quality in order to assure a comprehensive collection appropriate for the users of the library.

Library Media Specialists consult a variety of professional tools and reviewing media in selecting materials, including, but not limited to *Booklist*, *School Library Journal*, *The Bulletin for the Center for Children's Books*, *Voices of Youth Advocates*, and *Horn Book*. Standard Bibliographies such as The American Library Association's *Best Books for Children*, *Best Books for Young Adults* and *Quick Picks for Reluctant Readers* may also be used.

Initial purchase suggestions for library materials may come from many sources – teachers, coordinators, administrators. Students and parents/guardian will also be encouraged to make suggestions. The librarian will recommend materials to be included in the school library. Final approval and authority for distribution of funds will rest with the building principal subject to the approval of the Superintendent with input from the Supervisor of Library Services.

Gifts of library books will be accepted in keeping with the above policy on selection.

Complaints about library materials will be processed consistent with the Somerville Public Schools Policy IJL-RA – Library Materials Selection and Adoption Reconsideration of Materials.

Revised: April 14, 2008

Date Approved by School Committee: June 9, 2008

Reviewed: May 2009

## **LIBRARY MATERIALS WEEDING AND REMOVAL**

The continuous review of Library Media Center materials is necessary as a means of maintaining a useful and attractive collection. As new materials are selected and added, some older materials are withdrawn. The responsibility for determining which materials shall be withdrawn shall rest with the professional staff.

Library Media Specialists will inventory collections at least every two years. Thought and care will be exercised in weeding in order to keep the collection current and useful to the school community. Worn, damaged or missing items basic to the collection will be replaced periodically.

Among the other reasons for removing an item shall be the following:

- Curricular changes have rendered as superfluous materials (or multiple copies of materials) formerly used, but no longer in demand.
- Materials contain information which is no longer accurate or current.
- Materials intended for recreational reading have become dated or unattractive and are no longer in demand. Some books which are deemed standards or classics shall be retained even though they rarely circulate.
- Materials have worn out, been damaged or physically deteriorated, and have lost utility, and/or appeal.
- Materials have been superseded by newer items which present the same information but in superior format.

Removal Process:

- All materials deselected from the Library Media Centers are to be recycled.
- Before materials are recycled, the Library Media Specialist will
  - Remove book pocket and Mylar book jacket
  - Stamp "WITHDRAWN" on each item
  - Obliterate local markings
  - Remove paper and/or barcodes
  - Keep a record of deselected books

Revised: April 14, 2008

Date Approved by School Committee: June 9, 2008

Reviewed: May 2009



## **LIBRARY MATERIALS SELECTION AND ADOPTION RECONSIDERATION OF MATERIALS**

Although libraries strive to create exemplary collections, occasionally the need arises to reconsider materials in library collections. The procedure to express concern is outlined below. This procedure provides for a hearing with appropriate action while upholding the guidelines of this document. No materials shall be removed from the library before the formal process of review is completed.

### **Procedures**

1. Any concerns from anyone about library resources shall be directed to the school's Library Media Specialist.
2. While no questioned materials shall be removed from the school library shelf pending the reconsideration process, access to questioned materials may be denied to the child (or children) of the parent(s) or guardian(s) requesting reconsideration, if a written request is made by the parent(s) or guardians(s) and submitted to the Library Media Specialist.
3. Upon receiving the concern, the Library Media Specialist will notify the Building Principal and the Supervisor of Library Media Services. The Library Media Specialist shall contact the complainant to discuss and attempt to resolve the issue informally by explaining the philosophy and goals of the Somerville Public Schools, as well as the materials selection criteria and process. If the issue is resolved at this level, then the building principal and the Supervisor of Library Media Services shall be notified.
4. If the issue is not resolved informally, the complainant shall be supplied with a packet of materials consisting of:
  - *Letter of acknowledgement from the Library Media Specialist*
  - *The Statement of Concern about Library Resources*
  - *The Somerville Public Schools' Materials Selection Policy*
5. The *Statement of Concern about Library Resources* shall be completed and returned before further consideration of the matter. The *Statement of Concern about Library Resources* must be received by the Library Media Specialist within two weeks of the date indicated on the letter of acknowledgement, or the matter shall be considered closed.
6. Upon receipt of the completed form on or before the designated date, the following process will be implemented:
  - The Library Media Specialist will notify the Supervisor of Library Media Services and the Building Principal. The Supervisor of Library Media Services will then notify the Superintendent.
  - The Supervisor of Library Media Services will chair a Committee to Reconsider Library Materials, which will convene within two weeks of receipt of the *Statement of Concern about Library Resources*. This committee will make a recommendation to the Superintendent of Schools.

7. The Committee to Reconsider Library Materials shall consist of:
  - A. Supervisor of Library Media Services – Chair of the Committee to Reconsider Library Materials
  - B. Principal or Assistant Principal from the school where the material under reconsideration is housed
  - C. Library Media Specialist from a school other than the school where the material under reconsideration is housed
  - D. One representative from the parent association of the school where the material under reconsideration is housed
  - E. One teacher from the involved school where the material under reconsideration is housed
8. The process of the Committee to Reconsider Library Materials shall include the following steps:
  - Review the *Instructions to Reconsideration Committee*
  - Review submitted *Statement of Concern about Library Resources* from the complainant
  - Hold a discussion at the Committee to Reconsider Library Materials meeting with complainant who will have an opportunity to present their concerns, if the complainant chooses to do so
  - Review a written statement of the Library Media Specialist from the schools where the material under reconsideration is housed
9. The Committee to Reconsider Library Materials shall prepare a formal written report to be presented to the Superintendent of Schools. In its report, the committee shall explain the selection philosophy, note the specific criteria used for selection of the material under reconsideration, summarize its deliberations, and make its recommendation.
10. The Superintendent of Schools shall review and adopt the findings of the Committee to Reconsider Library Materials unless he/she finds clear and convincing evidence that the Committee's findings were inappropriate or arbitrary.
11. If the complainant is not satisfied with the decision of the Committee to Reconsider Library Materials and/or the decision of the Superintendent of Schools, an appeal may be filed with the Superintendent of Schools/Secretary of the School Committee. The appeal will be presented to the Education Programs and Instruction Subcommittee of the Somerville Public Schools. The Education Programs and Instruction Subcommittee will render a decision within four weeks of the appeal. The Secretary of the School Committee will be responsible for providing the complainant with a written decision.

12. The Education Programs and Instruction Subcommittee shall review and adopt the findings of the Committee to Reconsider Library Materials and the Superintendent of Schools, unless the Committee finds clear and convincing evidence that the Committee's findings and/or Superintendent's decision were inappropriate or arbitrary.

13. If the complainant is not satisfied with the decision of the Education Programs and Instruction Subcommittee, an appeal may be filed with the Superintendent of Schools/Secretary of the School Committee. The appeal will be presented to the Somerville School Committee. The Somerville School Committee will render a decision within four weeks of the appeal. The Secretary of the School Committee will be responsible for providing the complainant with a written decision.

14. The Somerville School Committee shall review and adopt the findings of the Education Programs and Instruction Subcommittee, unless the Somerville School Committee finds clear and convincing evidence that the Subcommittee's findings decision were inappropriate or arbitrary. The Somerville School Committee's decision shall be final, binding, and conclusive.

Revised: April 14, 2008

Date Approved by School Committee: June 9, 2008

Reviewed: May 2009

LETTER REGARDING STATEMENT OF CONCERN ABOUT LIBRARY  
RESOURCES



## Somerville Public Schools

Supervisor, Library Media Services

(617) 625-6600 Ext. 6671

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

We appreciate your concern over the use of

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Title)

\_\_\_\_\_  
By (Author of Producer's Name)

at the \_\_\_\_\_

(School's Name)

In the Somerville Public Schools.

We have developed procedures for selecting materials, but realize that not everyone will agree with every selection made. To help you understand the selection process, we are sending a copy of the

***Somerville Public Schools Library Materials Selection and Adoption Policy.***

It is our hope that upon review of our selection guidelines and criteria, you will view the objected to material in a favorable light.

Also enclosed are the established procedures for handling objections, and a ***Statement of Concern about Library Resources.*** If you are still concerned after having reviewed this material, please complete the ***Statement of Concern about Library Resources*** form and return it to the school library teacher. You may be assured of prompt attention to your request.

This form must be returned within two weeks from the date of this letter.

If I have not heard from you within the specified time period, I will assume you no longer wish to file a formal complaint. Thank you for your interest in the Somerville Public Schools.

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_

Revised: April 14, 2008

Date Approved by School Committee: June 9, 2008

Reviewed: May 2009

## STATEMENT OF CONCERN ABOUT LIBRARY RESOURCES

The Superintendent of Schools has authorized the use of this form. The person who has a concern about material in the library's collection may fill it out and return it to the Library Media Specialist who will implement the process as stated in the Somerville Public Schools policy on Reconsideration of Materials, File: IJL-RA. The person who has a concern about material in the library's collection may attend the meeting of the Committee to Reconsider Library Materials to explain their concerns to committee members. Attendance by the complainant at the meeting of the Committee to Review Library Materials is optional.

The *Statement of Concern About Library Resources* shall be completed and returned before further consideration of the matter. The *Statement of Concern About Library Resources* must be received by the Library Media Specialist within two weeks of the date indicated on the letter of acknowledgement, or the matter shall be considered closed.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone#: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

1. Resource on which you are commenting:

\_\_\_\_\_ Book

\_\_\_\_\_ Audio-visual Resource

\_\_\_\_\_ Magazine

\_\_\_\_\_ Content of Library Program

\_\_\_\_\_ Newspaper

\_\_\_\_\_ Other

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Author/Producer: \_\_\_\_\_

2. What brought this title to your attention?

3. Have you examined the entire resource?

4. Please comment on the resource as a whole as well as being specific on those matters which concern you. (Use other side if needed.)

5. What resource(s) do you suggest to provide additional attention on this topic?

Revised: April 14, 2008

Date Approved by School Committee: June 9, 2008

Reviewed: May 2009

## **INSTRUCTIONS TO RECONSIDERATION COMMITTEE**

When the Committee to Reconsider Library Materials convenes, the committee shall:

- Use the principles of the freedom to learn and to read, and base the decision on these broad principles rather than on defense of individual materials. Freedom of inquiry is vital to education in a democracy.
- Review submitted *Statement of Concern About Library Resources (File IJL-RA-E2)* from the complainant.
- Review written statement of the Library Media Specialist from the school where the material is housed in defense of the material.
- Read, view or listen to the challenged material in its entirety.
- Review the Somerville Public Schools Library Materials Selection and Adoption Policy (File IJL)
- Determine the extent to which the material adheres to the selection policy.
- Study thoroughly all material referred to the Committee to Reconsider Library Materials and read available reviews. The general acceptance of the materials should be checked by consulting standard evaluation aids and local holdings in other schools. Passages or parts should not be pulled out of context. The values and faults should be weighed against each other and the opinions based on the materials as a whole.
- Prepare a report for the Superintendent of Schools, presenting both majority and minority opinions, if there is a minority opinion.

Revised: April 14, 2008

Date Approved by School Committee: June 9, 2008

Reviewed: May 2009

## **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 certified staff member who recommends their use. In any questionable instance, the Principal should be informed and shall decide whether their use is 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:

Any expression of a point of view should be clearly identified.

Any advertising that appears on or with any material should be in good taste and unobtrusive.

The source of all material should be clearly identified.

{ Adoption date }

Revised: January 18, 1996

Reviewed: May 2009

LEGAL REF.: 603 CMR 26:05

## **SOMERVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS NETWORK ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY FOR STAFF**

This **Network Acceptable Use Policy for Staff** (hereinafter referred to as the “Policy”) shall serve as a statement on the appropriate use of the various technology resources available to all authorized staff of the Somerville Public Schools (hereinafter referred to as “SPS”) including but not limited to computers, the Network, electronic mail system (e-mail), websites, Internet access, telephones, facsimile machines, printers and other peripherals, software, cellular and hand held devices.

For purposes of the Policy, “staff” refers to SPS employees, volunteers, substitutes, student teachers, interns, contractors, and any other person who is provided with email, Network or internet access by the SPS. This Policy may be updated from time to time and amended by the School Committee, upon the recommendation of the Network Administrator and the Superintendent.

### **PURPOSE**

The SPS recognizes the important role of technology as an invaluable resource to assist staff to successfully perform the duties associated with their role in the SPS. Staff are reminded that the use of technology resources is subject to the same management oversight as other employee activities. The Network is the property of the SPS and may be used only for educational and administrative purposes that are approved by the SPS.

### **USER RESPONSIBILITIES**

Staff members are required to read, understand and follow this **Policy** before accessing the SPS Network and must acknowledge, by electronic or written form, that the employee has read and will comply with the **Policy**. Staff will be held responsible for ensuring that their activities adhere to the **Policy** and to generally-accepted educational and professional standards as outlined in other applicable SPS policies. Staff with questions regarding the application or meaning of this **Policy** are encouraged to communicate with the Network Administrator or the Director of Operations to obtain clarification.

Responsible use of the SPS technology resources by staff includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Not interfering with the normal and proper operation of SPS computers, Network, e-mail system, website sections, or Internet access;
- Not adversely affecting the ability of others to use equipment or services unless specifically authorized;
- Not conducting oneself in ways that are harmful or deliberately offensive to others;
- Not using the technology resources for illegal purposes;
- Not changing files that do not belong to the user unless specifically authorized;
- Not storing or transferring unnecessarily large files;



- Not creating, transferring or otherwise using or accessing any text, image, movie, sound recording or electronic or digital file that contains pornography, profanity, obscenity or language that offends or tends to degrade others, especially that deemed “harmful to minors”;
- Not attempting to install any software on computers;
- Not downloading software from the Internet;
- Not sharing personal passwords or personal information;
- Not leaving personal files open or leaving computer sessions unattended;
- Using the technology resources only when authorized to do so as outlined in this **Policy**;
- Changing passwords regularly or whenever current passwords may be known to others;
- Notifying the Network Administrator if you learn that others are utilizing District technology resources for unlawful or suspicious activities.

### **ACCEPTABLE USE**

Use of the Network is a privilege and not a right and any use of the Network must be consistent with and directly related to the educational objectives and business purposes of the Somerville Public Schools. Violation of any of the terms of this **Policy** may result in the suspension or termination of Network privileges and / or disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment. Violations of any provision of this **Policy** that constitute a criminal offense may also result in criminal prosecution.

### **The following actions violate the Policy:**

- Use of the Network for personal or recreational purposes or activities.
- Sending e-mail to groups (e.g., “list serves”) that are not job-related without permission;
- Accessing discussion groups or “chat rooms” that are not job-related;
- Use of the Network to buy, sell or advertise any goods or services;
- Use of the Network for gambling purposes;
- Use of the Network for purposes associated with political campaigning, including but not limited to attempts to influence ballot questions or to promote or oppose a candidate for public office;
- Use of the Network to transmit profane, obscene, vulgar, sexually explicit, threatening, defamatory, abusive, discriminatory, harassing, criminal or otherwise objectionable messages or materials. (Employees are also prohibited from visiting Internet sites that post such materials and downloading or displaying such materials.)
- Use of the Network for any illegal purpose or in support of illegal activities or in a manner that violates any federal or state law or statute, or an activity prohibited by any Policy of the SPS including but not limited to the use or dissemination of copyrighted materials;
- Revealing one’s own password, using another person’s password or pretending to be someone else when using the Network;

- Accessing, reading, altering, deleting or copying another user's messages or data without express written approval;
- Using technology resources for employee union business;
- Using technology resources for promoting, supporting or celebrating religion or religious institutions;
- Using profanity, vulgarities, obscenity or other language which tends to be offensive or tends to degrade others;
- Attempting to log-on to the Network as the system administrator;
- Using encryption or security measures to avoid monitoring or review in the ordinary course of business or routine maintenance by the system administrator;
- Using harassing, racial, sexist or discriminatory remarks and other antisocial behaviors;
- Wasting limited resources, including paper;
- Using invasive software such as “viruses”, “worms” and other detrimental activities;
- Sending “chain” type letters and unsolicited bulk mails (Spamming);
- Sending hate mail, anonymous messages or threatening messages;
- Attempting to harm, modify or destroy data of another user.
- Attempting to gain unauthorized access to the Network, including but not limited to the use of personal hardware, and attempts to override the domain policies of the Network.
- Involvement in any activity prohibited by law or school District policy.

Use of the District’s technology resources for any altruistic or charitable purpose must be approved in advance by the District.

**If staff are not clear as to whether a specific use of the SPS Network or other technology resources is appropriate or acceptable they should seek clarification from the Network Administrator or the Director of Operations.**

## **CYBER-BULLYING**

Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Bill S2404, Section 5, defines Cyber-bullying as:

*“...bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but shall not be limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photo electronic or photo optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages or facsimile communications. Cyber-bullying shall also include (i) the*

*creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or (ii) the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions*

*enumerated in clauses (i) to (v), inclusive, of the definition of bullying. Cyber-bullying shall also include the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated in clauses ( i ) to (v), inclusive, of the definition of bullying.”*

In accordance with the SPS zero-tolerance **Bullying Prevention Plan**, Cyber-bullying is prohibited on school grounds, property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at school-sponsored or school-related activities, functions or programs (whether on or off school grounds), at bus stops, on school busses or other vehicles owned or operated by the SPS or their contractors, or through the use of technology or electronic devices owned, leased or used by the District, regardless of whether the Cyber-bullying occurs on or off the Network.

### **MONITORED USE**

All communications that are created, transmitted or retrieved via the SPS Network are the property of the Somerville Public Schools and should not be considered to be confidential. The SPS maintains data backup resources that store all electronic communications - including those that are deleted by the user. The SPS reserves the right to access and monitor all messages and information on the system, as it deems necessary and appropriate to identify abuse by users of the Network to ensure the proper use of resources, to conduct routine maintenance and to enforce the terms of this Policy.

As necessary, any and all electronic communications may be disclosed to law enforcement officials in response to proper requests or to other third parties in the context of proper requests in the course of litigation, without the prior consent of the sender or receiver. All users of the SPS Network are considered to have consented to such monitoring and disclosure.

Users are reminded that e-mail messages are public records, subject to disclosure under G.L. c. 66, §10. Additionally, electronic documents are subject to disclosure in litigation. Users of the SPS Network are to avoid sending documents or information containing confidential or sensitive material, such as student record and personnel information, via the Network, due to concerns relating to the security of such documents or information. Employees should not discuss litigation in e-mail messages, because such messages are not privileged and are subject to discovery in litigation against the SPS.

### **LIABILITY**

The Somerville Public Schools assumes no responsibility or liability for:

- Any unauthorized charges or fees incurred as a result of use of the system/Network, including but not limited to telephone charges, long distance charges, per minute surcharges and/or equipment or line charges;
- Any financial obligations arising out of the unauthorized use of the Network for the purchase of products or services;
- Any user data, information, or materials stored on the Network;
- Any cost, liability or damages caused by user violation of this Policy, or any other inappropriate use of electronic resources of the SPS;

- The SPS makes no guarantee, implied or otherwise, regarding the reliability of the data connection, and shall not be liable for any loss or corruption of data resulting while using the system/Network.

Revised: November 27, 2007

Date Approved by School Committee: December 17, 2007

Reviewed: May 2009

Amended: June 2011

**Acceptable Use of Personal Electronic Devices  
(Use of cameras/video/audio/recording devices)**

No individual may use any type of camera, video, audio or computer recording device in any manner that interferes with or is disruptive of the educational process, invades the privacy of any individual, or violates the academic integrity of any school activity.

Students may not possess or use any cameras or video or audio equipment on school property or at a school-sponsored event, except under the following conditions:

- A student may possess and use the camera or video or audio equipment at the direction of and with direct supervision by a classroom teacher as part of classroom, school activities, or field trips.
- A student may possess and use a camera or video or audio equipment if that student receives prior written permission from the school principal for a specific purpose. At no time will permission be granted for socializing or other non-essential purposes, or if the use will violate another individual's privacy.
- A student may possess and use a camera or video or audio equipment while attending and not participating in an event held on school grounds after school hours and open to the general public, as long as the possession and use are neither disruptive or in any way unlawful. This privilege may be revoked on a case-by-case basis at any time for any reason by the principal or school administrator, or by their designee.

Cell phones with camera and/or video functions may not be used to take or transmit any image or video at any time, even if the use of the cell phone is otherwise permitted.

For the privacy and safety of all, the use or appearance of use (showing the device in such a way that could lead an individual to believe they are being photographed or recorded) of any electronic device is not permitted in any locker room or bathroom in the Somerville Public Schools or in any locker room or bathroom at any school sponsored event.

Photographing or recording is prohibited in the Somerville Public Schools unless authorized for educational or school purposes.

Adopted by School Committee: August 25, 2014

## **SOCIAL NETWORKING POLICY OF THE SOMERVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

### **1. Network Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) still in force**

This policy is adopted in addition to, and not as a substitute for, the Somerville Public Schools Network Acceptable Use Policy, which governs use of the Somerville Public Schools technology resources.

### **2. Overview**

The Somerville Public Schools has instituted this “Social Networking Policy,” and announces its expectations for staff members’ use of social networks such as Facebook, Linked-in, Twitter, etc.; personal email accounts, text message features of cell phones, use of blogs, and other electronic technologically based communication systems.

All online, electronic or computerized means of communication are subject to this policy. Given the rapid pace of technological change it is not possible to identify all proprietary or commonly named or identified means of such communications.

In addition to never posting and exchanging inappropriate information on Social Networking platforms, staff should always refrain from inappropriate communication with members of the community (including, but not limited to, students, parents, and co-workers) through any verbal, written, or electronic communications method (including, but not limited to, text messaging and email). The Somerville Public Schools recognizes the proliferation and, in some instances, usefulness, of online conversation between staff and students and/or their parents or guardians. However, due to the nature of social networking sites, there exists a risk, without care and planning, that the lines between one’s professional life and personal life will be blurred. Staff should always be mindful of how they present themselves to the world, online and otherwise. Should a staff member “friend” a student on a social network, subscribe to a student’s “social network” account, regularly engage in email “chat” with a student, exchange text messages with students or engage in other electronic communication, the school district is concerned, and the educator should be concerned, that such activities may undermine the educator’s authority to maintain discipline, encourage inappropriate behaviors and/or compromise the educator’s ability to remain truly objective with his or her students.

In addition, any online communication using one’s own personal resources, as opposed to Somerville Public Schools resources, compromises the staff member’s, as well as the school district’s ability to retain public records in accordance with the requirements of the Commonwealth’s public records laws. The law requires public employees who send, receive or maintain records in their capacity as public employees, to retain, disclose and dispose of such records in compliance with strict provisions of the public records law.

All emails using the Somerville Public Schools email service are considered public records.

This law applies whether or not the record is in the form of a paper document or an electronic communication. When staff members communicate through school-based resources, such as staff email or school sponsored web pages, such records are retained and archived through the

Somerville Public Schools information technology department. If, however, a staff member communicates outside of these resources, such information is not retained. The burden falls on the staff member to comply with public records laws when using personal email or social network accounts to communicate with students and/or parents and guardians.

### **3. Expectations of Staff**

- No matter what medium of communication a staff member selects, he/she should adhere to appropriate professional boundaries. A staff member is a role model, not a student's or parent/guardian's friend, and as such, should always act in accordance with this understanding.
- Before endeavoring to establish any social networking account, staff members should familiarize themselves with the features of any account they choose to use. For example, Social network requires account holders to take specific steps to "privatize" the information they place online. Staff must educate themselves to those features of the any social networking site selected. Staff will be responsible should any information intended to be "private" becomes "public" due to ignorance of the features of the social network chosen for use or failure to properly use such features. All communications, of any nature, should be crafted with the expectation that the communication could be "public".
- Staff must also know that any information shared privately with a recipient could be re-distributed by such recipient, without the knowledge or consent of the staff member. The same principles applied in face-to-face communication should be applied to online conversation: use discretion, and do not place trust in individuals who have not proven themselves trustworthy. In essence, nothing posted online is ever truly "private". The distributor of all content is responsible for the content and the appropriateness of all materials.
- If a Somerville Public Schools employee receives inappropriate content from a student or a minor arising from their employment, the employee must inform their supervisor or law enforcement authorities as soon as practicable. The content must NOT be forwarded or deleted without authorization of the supervisor/designee or authorities.
- The Somerville School Committee expects staff to keep the line between professional life and personal life clearly drawn at all times. There is no reason why this cannot be done, even in light of the proliferation of social networking sites. All that is required is some forethought before using social networking for both professional and personal reasons, to be sure that these lines never become blurred. For example, if the district does not maintain a web portal for staff to communicate outside of school hours as necessary with students and families, and a staff member wishes to establish a social network or personal email account for communicating with students, the staff member should establish a social network identity and email identity that is separate from his/her "personal" social network identity or personal email account. Staff should only use an educational social network account or educational email account to communicate with students and/or

parents and guardians on matters directly related to education. The “friends” associated with such educational social network account should only be members of the educational community, such as administrators, staff, students and parents of such students. It is strongly recommended that staff members reject friend requests from individuals who do not fit into any of these categories.

- At all times, and in the use of any form of communication, staff members will always adhere to student privacy rights and the rights of employees to have their personnel and medical information kept confidential. Information that is protected by law from disclosure to third parties will not be communicated online in a way that unreasonably exposes such information to retrieval by those third parties. For example, through an educational social network account, a staff member may not post confidential student information on the “wall”, the “information” section, or through any part of the social network account that would be accessible to other of the staff member’s social network “friends” associated with that account. If a staff member wishes to communicate privately with a student through the educational social network account, such communication shall be conveyed only through the private email/message feature of the social network, so that only the student may view the message and respond to it.
- Staff members are encouraged to communicate with students and parents on educational matters only, and only through Somerville Public Schools resources, such as school-provided email or web portal accounts. Use of a personal email account or social networking account to discuss school business with students and parents is discouraged. It should be noted that, just because a staff member uses his/her personal email as opposed to a school email account, this does not shield such email from the provisions of the public records law or from discovery litigation. It only prevents the archiving of such messages through the school district’s automatic email archiving system. We again remind staff members that information sent or received by them, even through personal email or social network accounts, which are related to their capacity as a school employee, are still subject to public records retention, exemption and disclosure requirements.
- If a staff member conveys school related messages to students and parents on his/her private account, he/she should save such email or any communication conveyed through a social networking site, or print and save a paper copy of such email or other online communication, and file it, and regard its privacy, as he/she would any other document concerning that student. The staff member should forward copies of any such emails or online communications to his or her school based email account so that it can be properly retained and archived in compliance with the requirements of the public records law. Any document created or received by a public employee in his or her capacity as such is subject to retention, and perhaps disclosure, under the public records law.
- This policy is not intended to infringe upon a staff member’s right to speak publicly on matters of public concern, or to communicate with fellow members of their union on workplace issues, so long as such communication adheres to appropriate time, place and manner restrictions and does not interfere with the performance of job duties. However, when staff members speak via social networking sites or tools on matters concerning



work, the staff member is speaking as an employee and not as a citizen, restrictions may be placed upon staff's freedom of expression. Those restrictions are intended to preserve student confidentiality, maintain staff's status as an educator who should command and receive the respect of students, be able to maintain order and discipline in the classroom, and remain objective with respect to students.

- Staff members are discouraged from using home telephones, personal cell phones, personal email accounts and personal social network accounts to communicate with students. Communication with students, even if Somerville Public Schools resources for such communications are not used, are within the jurisdiction of the school district to monitor as they arise out of the staff member's position as an employee. Any conduct, whether online or not, that reflects poorly upon the Somerville Public Schools or consists of inappropriate behavior on the part of a staff member, may expose an employee to discipline up to and including discharge. Even if staff are not using a school telephone, computer, classroom or the like to engage in contact with a student that such contact is not outside of the Somerville Public Schools authority to take appropriate disciplinary action. If the behavior is inappropriate, undermines the staff member's authority to instruct or maintain control and discipline with students, compromises objectivity, or harms students, the Somerville Public Schools reserves the right to impose discipline for such behavior. A staff member may also face individual liability for inappropriate online communication with students and/or parents and guardians, as well as exposing the District to vicarious liability in certain instances.

At the same time, the Somerville School Committee recognizes that, in limited cases, use of cell phone text messages or cell phone calls or emails outside of regular school hours may be reasonably necessary. For example, in connection with school sponsored events for which staff members serve as duly appointed advisors, they may need to convey messages in a timely manner to students and may not have access to school based email accounts, school provided telephones or school based web pages. In such limited circumstance, the District anticipates that employees will make reasonable use of their cell phones or smart phones to convey time sensitive information on scheduling issues and the like. When Somerville Public Schools staff members communicate with students in connection with school sponsored events, a copy of the communication must be sent to the staff member's immediate supervisor.

- Staff members are not to distribute pictures of students, staff members or school activities without the expressed permission of the individual(s) who are shown in the pictures.
- If a staff member is communicating as an employee of the Somerville Public Schools in online communications, the staff member must be aware that readers will assume he/she "speaks for the school district." Therefore, all online communications, when actually acting on behalf of the District, or creating the appearance of doing so, must be professional at all times and reflect positively on the school district.
- During the use of any social networking site, staff may not, without express permission from the Superintendent of Schools/designee, use the school's logo, likeness or any school photographs or other property that belongs to the Somerville Public Schools.

SOURCE: Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents

Approved and adopted by Somerville School Committee: October 6, 2014

## FIELD TRIPS

The School Committee recognizes that firsthand learning experiences provided by field trips are an effective and worthwhile means of learning. It is the desire of the School Committee to encourage field trips as part of the total school program and curriculum.

Specific guidelines and appropriate administrative procedures shall be developed to screen, approve, and evaluate trips and to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken for the safety of the participants. Said guidelines and procedures should be developed by the Administration and reviewed and approved by the School Committee.

These guidelines and appropriate administrative procedures shall ensure that all field trips have the approval of the Principal and that all overnight and out of state field trips have the prior approval of by the School Committee.

Field trips can bring the school and the community closer together, which can result in experiences that enrich the curriculum for students and also bring about better public relations. The School Committee encourages field trips as an integral part of the instructional programs in the schools.

The Superintendent will establish procedures and protocols to assure that:

1. All students have parental/guardian permission for trips.
2. All trips are properly supervised.
3. All safety precautions are observed.
4. All trips contribute substantially to the educational program.

The Superintendent is responsible for the production, distribution and updating of a field trip handbook which contains the procedures and protocols for all field trips.

All out-of-state or overnight trips and excursions must have advance approval of the School Committee with **forms being submitted at least six weeks in advance of the trip**. Fundraising activities for such trips will be subject to approval by the appropriate Administrator.

## LATE NIGHT & OVERNIGHT SCHOOL SPONSORED STUDENT TRAVEL

### 1. Overview of the Law on Late Night & Overnight School Sponsored Student Travel

Chapter 346 of the Acts of 2002, An Act Relative to Safety of School Sponsored Travel, was enacted on October 9, 2002. The purpose of the policy below, adopted by the Board of Education, is to assist school committees in adopting their own policies concerning planned late night or overnight student travel as required by section 37N of chapter 71 of the General Laws. Chapter 346 of the Acts of 2002 mandates that each school committee shall establish its initial policy under section 37N of chapter 71 of the General Laws not later than January 7, 2005.

Section 37N. Each school committee shall establish a policy concerning student travel sponsored by a school that is planned to occur between the hours of midnight and 6:00 a.m., or that will include an overnight stay away from a student's home. The policy shall

address, but not be limited to, such issues as safety of transportation and accommodations, cost, including expectations for fundraising by students, time away from school, appropriateness of the trip for the grade level and the trip approval process. In adopting its policy, the school committee shall consider the policy drafted by the board of education under section 1B of chapter 69.

2. How to Implement the Law on Late Night & Overnight School Sponsored Student Travel

Many districts already have policies in place regarding field trips and other off-site activities that can form the basis for the policy mandated under section 37N. These existing policies should be reviewed, and amended, if needed, after consideration of the policy below. The points enumerated in the Board's policy are not mandatory; school committees should take into account local needs and preferences in adopting their own policies on trips planned to include late night and overnight travel.

School committee members are strongly encouraged to consult with legal counsel as they revise their existing policies and develop new ones.

3. Policy (adopted by the Somerville School Committee, December 4, 2003)

A. Trip Approval Process

1. School committees should require advance approval for trips planned to include late night or overnight travel.
2. The approval process should be completed prior to engaging students in fundraising activities or other preparations for the trip.
3. Overnight trips should offer significant educational benefits to students that clearly justify the time and expense of the trip. Such trips should be appropriate for the grade level.
4. Teachers and other school staff should be prohibited from soliciting privately run trips through the school system. The trip approval process should apply only to school-sanctioned trips; school committees should not approve trips that are privately organized and run without school sanctioning.
5. Policies and procedures for trip approval should take into account all logistical details involving transportation, accommodations, fundraising required of students, and the educational value of the trip in relation to its costs.

***B. Transportation***

1. The use of private vehicles for trips planned to include late night or overnight student travel is prohibited. Such trips should generally use commercial motor coaches or school owned vehicles driven by school employees.
2. Trips planned to include late night or overnight student travel should involve pre-trip checks of companies, drivers, and vehicles.
3. The contract with the carrier should prohibit the use of a subcontractor unless sufficient notice is given to the district to allow verification of the subcontractor's qualifications.

### ***C. Trip Scheduling***

1. Whenever possible, overnight trips should be scheduled on weekends or during school vacations to minimize lost classroom time. Non-academic field trips are considered “optional school programs” and do not count toward meeting structured learning time requirements under 603 CMR 27.00. However, academic field trips may be considered structured learning time (see the Department’s Student Learning Time Regulations Guide). School districts may consider travel for field trips as included in students’ schedules, but the Department recommends that schools consider scheduling additional structured learning time when significant travel time is anticipated (i.e., time outside the hours of the regular school day).
2. If substantially all members of a class are participating in a trip, the school should provide appropriate substitute activities for any students not participating.

### ***D. Fundraising***

1. The amount of time to be devoted to fundraising should be reasonable and commensurate with students’ obligations for homework, after-school activities, and jobs.
2. Group fundraising activities are preferred. Students should not be assigned individual fundraising targets.
3. If students are charged individual fees for participation, the district should make every effort to provide scholarships where needed.

Approved: December 4, 2003

Reviewed: May 2009

Amended: August 25, 2014

## **COMMUNITY RESOURCE PERSONS/ SPEAKERS**

Community resources are those individuals or groups who are invited into the schools to present supplementary information and ideas to the classroom course of study. These 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 influence points of view inappropriately.

Adoption date: January 1996

Revised: June 1, 2009

## **VOLUNTEERS**

The Somerville School Committee and the Somerville Public Schools recognize the importance of volunteer assistance as a helpful community resource in the education of its youth. It shall be the policy of the Committee to encourage the recruitment of community members, students, parents, organizations and businesses to participate in partnership with the schools on a voluntary basis. All schools and personnel are expected to utilize volunteer assistance to the extent profitable in implementing the curricula, programs, projects and operation of the Somerville Schools.

Adoption date: October 5, 1981

Revised: June 1, 2009

## **ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT**

The philosophy of the School Committee concerning academic achievement and 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 School 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 and growth, and make instructional plans for him/her. Sharing of information among parent/guardian, teacher, and student is essential.

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

1. Parents/guardians be informed regularly, and at least four times a year, of the progress their children are making in school in grades 1-12; 3 times a year in Kindergarten.
2. Parents/guardians 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 his/her own progress, the school staff will also provide a realistic appraisal of the student's standing in relation to his/her peers.
6. When grades are given, the school staff will take particular care to explain the meaning of marks and symbols to parents.

Adoption date: January 1996

Reviewed: May 2009

## **STUDENT PROGRESS REPORTS TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS**

The School Committee recognizes the school's obligation to give periodic reports of a student's progress and grades. The School Committee further recognizes that these reports are a vital form of communication between the schools and parents/guardians. The School 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/guardians 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 assistant superintendent, who will submit the proposal to the School Committee for consideration and approval.

Adoption date: January 1996

Reviewed: May 2009



## HOMework

The term “homework” refers to an assignment to be prepared outside of class.

### Suggested Homework Assignments

Grades 1-3	30-45 minutes five times a week
Grades 4-6	60 minutes five times a week
Grades 7-8	90 minutes five times a week
Grades 9-12	2 hours five times a week

The purposes of homework are to improve the learning processes, to aid in the mastery of skills, and to create and stimulate interest on the part of the student.

Homework is a leaning activity which should increase in complexity with the maturity of the student. With increased maturity, learning should become an independent activity. This should be established through consistent assignments which encourage students to investigate for themselves and to work independently as well as with others.

Homework assignments should be consistent in terms of the amount given each day and the time required for each assignment so that a pattern of meaningful homework can be established by the teacher and/or the student.

The information for any homework assignment should be clear and specific so that the student can complete the assignment.

Homework assignments should take into consideration individual differences of students such as health, ability, conditions at home, and educational resources at home. Homework should not require the use of reference materials not readily available in most homes, school libraries, or the public library, and should require the use of those materials only when the student has had instruction in the use of them.

There are many other learning activities in the life of a student besides homework. Such things as participating in school activities, pursuing cultural interests, participating in family living, and exploring personal interests should be considered by teachers when planning consistent assignments. Homework is not to be used as a form of punishment under any circumstances.

Adoption date: January 1996

Reviewed: May 2009

***The homework policy passed February 2019 is in abeyance due to a demand to bargain given STA concerns over the process and change in working conditions. A new review process is underway, but for now, this is the current homework policy for the district.***

## **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

All students are expected to complete their work with honesty and integrity. Cheating and plagiarism are not permitted within the Somerville Public Schools. Cheating is the act of obtaining or attempting to obtain credit for academic work by using dishonest means or allowing someone else to represent their work as their own.

Cheating includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Looking on another's test or quiz or letting another student look on a test or quiz
- Copying homework or allowing someone to copy homework
- Reporting to another student what is on a test or quiz, including giving questions or answers
- Use of hidden reference sheets during a test
- Deliberately ignoring test instructions
- Obtaining copies of a test or test questions illegally

In a broad sense, plagiarism is the act of obtaining or attempting to obtain credit for academic work by representing the work of another as one's own without the necessary and appropriate acknowledgment.

Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Incorporating the ideas, words, sentences, paragraphs, or parts thereof, without appropriate acknowledgement and representing the product as one's own work
- Copying of notes, magazines, encyclopedias, etc. or downloading from the internet without proper acknowledgement

The teacher and/or school administrator will deal with allegations of cheating or plagiarism. Students who have cheated or plagiarized may at least receive a zero for the entire assignment and may not qualify for make up of the assignment. The teacher or school administrator will also inform the parent/guardian and a proper and accurate record of the offense will be maintained. The school reserves the right to assign additional penalties based on the severity of the offense. These penalties may result in a failing grade for the quarter in which the incident occurs.

{ Adoption date }

Revised: November 27, 2007

Date Approved by School Committee: December 17, 2007

Reviewed: May 2009

## **PROMOTION AND RETENTION OF STUDENTS K – 8**

The Somerville School Committee is dedicated to the best total and continuous development of each student enrolled. The professional staff is expected to place students at the grade level best suited to them academically, socially, and emotionally.

In evaluating student achievement, each teacher will make use of all available information, including results of teacher-made tests and other measures of skill and content mastery, standardized test results, and teacher observation of student performance. The Principal will direct and aid teachers in their evaluations and review grade assignments in order to ensure uniformity of evaluation standards.

Students will normally progress annually from grade to grade. Exceptions may be made when, in the judgment of the professional staff, such exceptions are in the best educational interest of the students involved. Exceptions will only be made after prior notification and explanation to each student's parents/guardians, but the final decision will rest with the building Principal.

Approved: November 17, 1997

Revised: March 6, 2006

Amended: April 2010

## **PROMOTIONS GRADES 9-12**

Promotion is dependent upon the accumulation of course credits. A course yields as many credits as the number of periods it meets in a week – except:

### **CREDITS NEEDED TO BE PROMOTED**

To sophomore class	25 credits
To junior class	50 credits
To senior class	70 credits
Full-Year courses (2 semesters):	5 credits/class
Half-Year courses (1 semester):	2.5 credits/class

**ALL STUDENTS** in grades 9-12 must carry a full-time program equaling 990 hours of instruction each year.

Adopted: January 1998

Reviewed: May 2009

Amended: April 2014

## **GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS**

In order to graduate from Somerville High School, a student must have earned at least 105 credits. Course requirements are the following:

### **GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS:**

- Successful completion of **105** credits, with at least **20** credits earned in senior year
- Enrollment in high school for four years beyond eighth grade
- English 1, 2, 3 and 4 or appropriate ELL courses

NOTE: Students may not take more than two major English courses in one year with the exception of senior year. A student who has failed a major English course must either pass the failed English course in the subsequent summer school session or enroll in an e2020 course during the summer or repeat the failed English course in the succeeding academic year. Placement in English courses should be sequential. An exception to the sequential rule can be made for seniors.

- Mathematics, 15 credits

NOTE: Beginning with the Class of 2017, all students will be required to pass 20 credits of math including a sequence of Algebra 1/Geometry/Algebra 2 or the equivalent (with the approval of the Department Head)

- Science, 15 credits
- Social Studies, 15 credits, including U.S. History

NOTE: Students are required to take US 1, US 2, and World History; students must pass at least one year of US History to graduate.

- World Language, 10 credits, starting with the Class of 2018

NOTE: Beginning with the Class of 2018, students will be required to pass two years of the same World Language. Students enrolled in the Career and Technical Education program of studies may opt out of a language and still fulfill the high school graduation requirement. Consideration of the World Language requirement for Special Education students will be included as part of the I. E. P. Team decision. English Language Learners' proficiencies in their native language will satisfy the graduation requirement.

- Physical Education, 5 credits
- Health, 5 credits

NOTE: All students are required to take a minimum of one Physical Education or Health Education course each year. All students are required to take and pass Health Education 1 and Health Education 2 along with two semester courses in Physical Education.

Suggested Physical Education/Health Education Course

Sequence: Grade 9 – Health Education 1

Grade 10 – Physical Education

Grade 11 – Health Education 2

Grade 12 – Physical Education

- One Fine Arts course, (Music, Visual Arts, Drama), either a 2.5 or a 5 credit course must be attempted.
- MCAS prep courses may be counted in meeting requirements.

**COURSE/GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS FOR CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION STUDENTS:**

A student must be enrolled in a vocational program for four years, beginning with “Exploratory Skills”, to be eligible for the modification of math and science requirements. Students electing a vocational program for career-entry positions must also accumulate minimum credit requirements according to the following:

- English 1, 2, 3 and 4 or appropriate ELL courses

NOTE: Students may not take more than two major English courses in one year with the exception of senior year. A student who has failed a major English course must either pass the failed English course in the subsequent summer school session or enroll in an e2020 course during the summer or repeat the failed English course in the succeeding academic year. Placement in English courses should be sequential. An exception to the sequential rule can be made for seniors.

- Mathematics, 10 credits

NOTE: Beginning with the Class of 2017, Students in Career & Technical Education will be required to take four-years of math. Freshmen, sophomores and juniors will take math courses offered in the math department, at minimum up to and including Algebra 2. If a student completes Algebra 2 with a passing grade, he/she will be eligible to earn a fourth year of math credit from the embedded academic portion in his/her career area.

- Science, 10 credits
- Social Studies, 15 credits, including U.S. History

NOTE: Students are required to take US 1, US 2, and World History; students must pass at least one year of US History to graduate.

- Physical Education, 5 credits
- Health, 5 credits

NOTE: All students are required to take a minimum of one Physical Education or Health Education course each year. All students are required to take and pass Health Education 1 and Health Education 2 along with two semester courses in physical education.

- One Fine Arts course (Music, Visual Arts, Drama) either a 2.5 or a 5 credit course must be attempted.

Adoption date: January 1998

Amended: April 2014

## **GRADUATION EXERCISE**

The High School graduation exercises shall be under the direction of the High School Principal and the Superintendent.

High School students who satisfactorily complete the prescribed course of study and fulfill other state and federal requirements as certified by the Principal and Superintendent shall be awarded a diploma of graduation by the Somerville School Committee. High School students who satisfactorily complete the prescribed course of study as certified by the Principal and Superintendent without fulfilling other state and federal requirements shall be awarded a certificate of completion and/or certificate of attainment by the Somerville School Committee.

Students who have fulfilled all the graduation requirements to receive a diploma or certificate of completion or certificate of attainment will be allowed to participate in graduation exercises. Students who dress or behave in an inappropriate manner will be excluded from graduation exercises.

{ Adoption date }

Revised: September 22, 2004

Date Approved by School Committee: May 21, 2007

**HEADMASTER'S RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A WEIGHTED GRADE POINT AVERAGE**

1. Somerville High School calculates Grade Point Average (GPA) based on a weighted scale using the Grade Values in the chart below. Students wishing to calculate an unweighted GPA should use the CP values only.
2. GPA is available in student X2 accounts upon completion of four consecutive quarters at Somerville High.
3. All courses, with the exception of courses designated Pass/Fail in the Program of Studies, will be used to compute GPA.
4. All Special Education courses will be designated as CPS courses for the purpose of computing GPA.
5. All courses NOT designated in the Program of Studies as "Advanced Placement" or "Honors" or "CPS" will be considered "CP" courses for the purpose of computing GPA.
6. All "Independent Study" courses will be assigned "Honors" or "CP" or "CPS" Grade Values for the purpose of computing GPA.
7. Students who transfer into Somerville High School during their high school career will have their GPA computed after the completion of two semesters (one full school year) within Somerville High School. Courses completed prior to their entrance into Somerville High School will NOT be used in the computation.

<b>GRADE VALUES</b>				
<b>Grade</b>	<b>AP</b>	<b>Honors</b>	<b>CP</b>	<b>CPS</b>
A+	5.333	4.833	4.333	4.333
A	5.000	4.500	4.000	4.000
A-	4.667	4.167	3.667	3.667
B+	4.333	3.833	3.333	3.333
B	4.000	3.500	3.000	3.000
B-	3.667	3.167	2.667	2.667
C+	3.333	2.833	2.333	2.333
C	3.000	2.500	2.000	2.000
C-	2.667	2.167	1.667	1.667
D+	2.333	1.833	1.333	1.333
D	2.000	1.500	1.000	1.000
D-	1.667	1.167	0.667	0.667
F	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000

On the following page is an illustration of a student's GPA calculated for three full years at Somerville High School.



Year Course		Final	Credits	Value	Points
2011 English 1 Honors		B-	5.000	3.167	15.835
2011 US History 1 Honors		B-	5.000	3.167	15.835
2011 Algebra 2 Honors		A-	5.000	4.167	20.835
2011 Biology 1 Honors		A	5.000	4.500	22.500
2011 French 1 Honors		A-	5.000	4.167	20.835
2011 Health Education 1		B-	2.500	2.667	6.668
2011 Personal Finance		A	2.500	4.000	10.000
2011 Lifetime Physical Education		C	2.500	2.000	5.000
2011 Studio Art		A-	2.500	3.667	9.168
YTD – Credits 35.0	Cumulative – Credits 35.0				
YTD – GPA Credits 35.0	Cumulative – GPA Credits 35.00				
YTD – GPA Points 126.75	Cumulative – GPA Points 126.675				
YTD – GPA 3.6193	Cumulative – GPA 3.6193				

Year Course		Final	Credits	Value	Points
2011 English 1 Honors		B-	5.000	3.167	15.835
2011 US History 1 Honors		B-	5.000	3.167	15.835
2011 Algebra 2 Honors		A-	5.000	4.167	20.835
2011 Biology 1 Honors		A	5.000	4.500	22.500
2011 French 1 Honors		A-	5.000	4.167	20.835
2011 Health Education 1		B-	2.500	2.667	6.668
2011 Personal Finance		A	2.500	4.000	10.000
2011 Lifetime Physical Education		C	2.500	2.000	5.000
2011 Studio Art		A-	2.500	3.667	9.168
YTD – Credits 35.0	Cumulative – Credits 35.0				
YTD – GPA Credits 35.0	Cumulative – GPA Credits 35.00				
YTD – GPA Points 126.75	Cumulative – GPA Points 126.675				
YTD – GPA 3.6193	Cumulative – GPA 3.6193				

Year Course		Final	Credits	Value	Points
2012 English 2		B	5.000	3.000	15.000
2012 US History 2		A	5.000	4.000	20.000
2012 Geometry Honors		A	5.000	4.500	22.500
2012 Chemistry 1 Honors		B+	5.000	3.833	19.165
2012 French 2 Honors		A-	5.000	4.167	20.835
2012 Health Education 2		A	2.500	4.000	10.000
2012 Fitness Education		A	2.500	4.000	10.000
2012 Facing History & Ourselves		A-	5.000	3.667	18.335
YTD – Credits 35.0	Cumulative – Credits 70.0				
YTD – GPA Credits 35.0	Cumulative – GPA Credits 70.00				
YTD – GPA Points 138.835	Cumulative – GPA Points 262.510				
YTD – GPA 3.8810	Cumulative – GPA 3.7501				

Year Course		Final	Credits	Value	Points
2013 English 3		C+	5.000	2.333	11.665
2013 World History Themes		B+	5.000	3.333	16.665
2012 Precalculus Honors		A	5.000	4.500	22.500
2013 AP Biology		A-	10.000	4.667	46.670
2013 French 3 Honors		B	5.000	3.500	17.500
2013 AP Psychology		A-	5.000	4.667	23.335
YTD – Credits 35.0	Cumulative – Credits 105.0				
YTD – GPA Credits 35.0	Cumulative – GPA Credits 105.0				
YTD – GPA Points 138.835	Cumulative – GPA Points 400.845				
YTD – GPA 3.9524	Cumulative – GPA 3.8176				

Approved: April 2003

Reviewed: May 2009

Amended: April 2014

## **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 translate the stated instructional goals into objectives in order to:

1. Determine educational needs and provide information for planning.
2. Indicate instructional strengths and weaknesses.
3. 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/guardian evaluation of student behavior.
6. Provision of 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 School Committee by the Superintendent.

Revised: January 18, 1996

Reviewed: May 2009

## **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.

{ Adoption date }

Revised: January 18, 1996

Reviewed: May 2009

**DISTRICT PROGRAM ASSESSMENTS INTEGRATED  
LEARNING OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT PLAN Roles and  
Responsibilities**

**DISTRICT**

- Identify general Integrated Learning Outcomes
- Provide parameters, standards, prototypes
- Provide staff development training and technical assistance
- Encourage the use of multiple indicators
- Monitor accountability
- Report District progress using a qualitative and quantitative format
- Educate the District community about the Integrated Learning Outcomes and their measurement
- Review the process and recommend change
- Facilitate articulation between levels

**SCHOOL**

- Define or make clear what the general Massachusetts Public Schools Integrated Learning Outcomes mean at the school site
- Educate the school community about the Integrated Learning Outcomes and their assessments
- Assess the Integrated Learning Outcomes by developing instruments and procedures or select from the District's "offerings" or other sources
- Bring about the internalization of the Integrated Learning Outcomes by the school community
- Report individual student progress
- Report school progress
- Provide opportunities for parents to be involved in ILO assessment
- Collect a variety of evidence, both qualitative and quantitative, regarding the Integrated Learning Outcomes
- Provide meaningful articulation between levels utilizing assessment information
- Review assessment progress and recommend appropriate changes

**CURRICULUM EVALUATION PROCESS STEERING COMMITTEE**

- Develop District assessment reporting format
- Monitor assessment process
- Encourage accountability
- Encourage the use of multiple assessment indicators
- Develop and maintain a curriculum review process that emphasizes the Integrated Learning Outcomes and incorporates an honors subject area expertise and knowledge
- Review the assessment process and recommend changes

SOURCE: MASC

Adoption date: January 1996

## **TEACHING ACTIVITIES/PRESENTATIONS**

It is the desire of the Somerville 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.

SOURCE: MASC

Adoption date: January 1996

Reviewed: May 2009

## **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 teacher's right to introduce controversial issues in classroom presentations does not include the right of advocacy.
3. The approach to discussion of these issues in the classroom must be scholarly and emphasize the data and 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.

### 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

Such requests will be at the discretion of the principal/headmaster.

SOURCE: MASC

Adopted: January 1996

Revised: June 1, 2009

## **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.

SOURCE: MASC

{Adoption date}

Revised: January 18, 1996

Reviewed: May 2009

LEGAL REF.: 603 CMR 26:05

### **Service and Therapy Animals**

The Somerville School Committee does not permit discrimination against individuals with disabilities, including those who require the assistance of a service animal. The District will comply with Massachusetts and federal law concerning the rights of persons with guide or assistance dogs and will permit such animals on school premises and on school transportation. In addition, the District will allow therapy dogs to be present on school premises and on school transportation, where such the need for such animal is specified in a student's Individualized Education Plan or Section 504 Plan, or where the animal's presence has been approved by the Superintendent.

In connection with permitting a service or therapy animal to be present on school premises and on school transportation, the animal's owner or the student and the student's parents or guardians will be required to submit proof of an animal's safety and health including, but not limited to, current rabies vaccination for the animal to the Superintendent or designee School Principal.

For purposes of this policy, *a service animal includes any dog that has been individually trained to do the work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability. The regulations further state that a public entity shall make reasonable modifications in policies, practices, or procedures to permit the use of a miniature horse by an individual with a disability if the horse has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of the individual with the disability.* (Refer to Americans with Disabilities Act and Massachusetts General Law c. 272, § 98A for detailed information on the categories of service animals.)

Service animals perform some of the functions and tasks that individuals with disabilities cannot perform themselves. Service animals are not pets. There are several kinds of service animals that assist individuals with disabilities. Examples include, but are not limited to, animals that:

- assist individuals who are blind or have severe sight impairments as “seeing eye dogs” or “guide dogs;”
- alert individuals with hearing impairments to sounds;
- pull wheelchairs or carry and pick-up items for individuals with mobility impairments; and
- assist individuals with mobility impairments with balance.

For purposes of this policy, a therapy dog includes a dog that has received obedience training, has been tested for obedience and temperament and is registered as a therapy dog. A therapy dog provides affection and comfort, often fostering a sense of well-being, calm and confidence in children. Such an animal is not considered to be a service animal, within the meaning of the non-discrimination laws.

The District shall not assume or take custody or control of, or responsibility for, any service or therapy animal or the care or feeding thereof. The owner or person having custody and

control of the dog shall be liable for any damage to persons, premises, property, or facilities caused by the animal, including, but not limited to, clean up, stain removal, etc.

Service and therapy animals are not permitted to run free or roam in a building, and must be in a guiding harness or on a leash and under the control of the individual at all times. If, in the opinion of the School Principal or authorized designee, any animal is not in the control of its handler, or if it is not housebroken, the animal may be excluded from the school or program. The animal also may be excluded if it presents a direct and immediate threat to others in the school. In such circumstances, the individual or, in the case of a minor the parent or guardian of the student having custody and control of the dog will be required to remove the animal from District premises immediately.

If any student or staff member assigned to the classroom in which a service or therapy animal is permitted suffers an allergic reaction to the animal, the person having custody and control of the animal will be required to remove the animal to a different location designated by the Principal or designee and an alternative plan will be developed with appropriate District staff. Such plan could include the reassignment of the person having custody and control of the animal to a different classroom. This will also apply if an individual on school transportation suffers an allergic reaction. In this case, an alternate plan will be developed in coordination with appropriate school, District, and transportation staff including the involvement of the parent/guardian of the student.

When any individual needs to be accompanied by a service animal at a school or another Somerville Public Schools facility or brings a therapy animal in a school or another Somerville Public Schools facility on a regular basis, the individual, or in the case of a minor, a parent or guardian, as well as the animal's owner and any individual who will have custody and control of the animal, will be required to sign a document stating that they have read and understand this policy.

The Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee shall be responsible for developing procedures to accommodate the presence of a service or therapy animal in District facilities and on school transportation.

Date Approved: June 13, 2011

Amended: January 23, 2017