

**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES
Wilmette Public Schools**

ACTION ITEM

Date: November 13, 2017

To: Raymond Lechner, Ph. D.

From: Heather Glowacki, Ed. D., Administrator for Human Resources

Subject: *First Reading of Revised Board of Education Policies 2:230 Public Participation at Board of Education Meetings and Petitions to the Board; 6:70 Religious Holidays; 6:80 Controversial Issues; 6:100 Resources for Teachers: Animals; 6:110 Truant's Alternative and Optional Education Programs; 6:120 Special Education; and 6:140 Education of Homeless Children*

PROPOSED ACTION BY THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Motion to approve as first reading of revised Board of Education Policies 2:230 *Public Participation at Board of Education Meetings and Petitions to the Board*; 6:70 *Religious Holidays*; 6:80 *Controversial Issues*; 6:100 *Resources for Teachers: Animals*; 6:110 *Truant's Alternative and Optional Education Programs*; 6:120 *Special Education*; and 6:140 *Education of Homeless Children*.

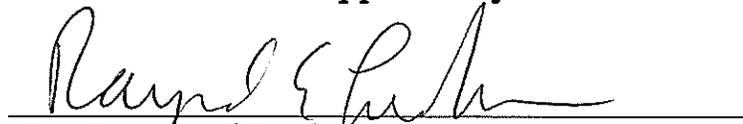
BACKGROUND

The policies presented in this first reading reflect recommended changes based on current legal requirements and District practices.

It is recommended that Policy 6:70 *Religious Holidays* be renamed *Teaching about Religions*; Policy 6:80 *Controversial Issues* be renamed *Teaching About Controversial Issues*; Policy 6:100 *Resources for Teachers: Animals* be renamed *Using Animals in the Educational Program*; and Policy 6:110 *Truant's Alternative and Optional Education Programs* be renamed *Programs for Students At Risk of Academic Failure and/or Dropping Out of School*.

HG/hg

Recommended for approval by the Board of Education



**Dr. Raymond Lechner,
Superintendent**

Board of Education

Public Participation at Board of Education Meetings and Petitions to the Board

At each regular and special open meeting, members of the public and District employees may comment to or ask questions of the School Board, subject to reasonable constraints.

The individuals appearing before the Board of Education are expected to follow these guidelines:

1. Address the Board only at the appropriate time as indicated on the agenda and when recognized by the Board President.
2. Identify oneself by stating name and address community of residence as well as general topic. Comments shall be limited to ~~five~~ three minutes for the initial comment by each speaker. After a speaker makes an initial comment, he or she may speak for up to one additional minute during subsequent public comment periods. Each speaker will be limited to a total of 4 minutes during any one Board of Education meeting. ~~at each opportunity for public comment.~~
- ~~3. Observe the Board President's decision to shorten public comment to conserve time and give the maximum number of individuals an opportunity to speak. The President may limit public comment to 15 minutes for each subject under discussion.~~
4. Observe the Board President's decision to determine procedural matters regarding public participation not otherwise covered in Board policy.
5. Questions are directed to the Board of Education as a whole and may not be directed toward any individual member of the Board or administrative staff. Questions posed to the Board of Education will be taken under advisement and answered later.
6. The Board will not entertain charges or complaints against individual employees by persons during a Board meeting. Rather, a charge or complaint against an employee must be in writing and signed by the person who makes it, and the Board will refer any such charge or complaint to the Superintendent for appropriate review taking into consideration the procedural due process rights of the individual in question.
7. Conduct oneself with respect and civility toward others and otherwise abide by Board policy, 8:30, *Conduct on School Property*.

Petitions or written correspondence to the Board of Education shall be presented to the Board in the next regular Board packet.

Adopted: March 20, 2006

Revised: July 18, 2011; April 25, 2016;

Instruction

Religious Holidays-Teaching About Religions

The Board of Education has the responsibility to educate its students to provide educational skills and to enable them to participate in a democratic society that is multi-racial, multi-religious, and ethnically diversified. ~~This education, of necessity, involves the understanding of holidays of religious significance.~~

The Board of Education is prohibited by the Illinois Constitution of the State of Illinois, and ~~that of the United States~~ Constitution from promoting, endorsing, or establishing religion, advocating a belief or dogma, conducting or sponsoring religious practices permitting religious worship in its schools, or infringing upon the constitutional rights of its students. However, the Board of Education may provide instruction about religion as par of a secular education.

The School District's curriculum may include the study of religions as they relate to geography, history, culture, holidays and the development of various ethnic groups. The study of religions shall give neither preferential nor derogatory treatment to any single religion, religious belief, or to religion in general. The study of religions shall be treated as an academic subject with no emphasis on the advancement or practice of religion.

~~Therefore, the Board of Education directs t~~ The Superintendent may of Schools to promulgate administrative procedures regulations in accordance with this policy. of religious neutrality and cultural awareness.

Adopted: November 10, 1997

Revised:

Instruction

Teaching About Controversial Issues

Controversial issues may be studied in School District 39. ~~Sooner or later pupils must meet and face issues involving controversy.~~ The District schools can help prepare students ~~pupils~~ to face such issues with desirable attitudes, skills and procedures by selecting some of these issues for study to give students ~~pupils~~ practice in dealing with them.

1. Definition

Controversial issues are ~~here~~ defined as issues on which conflicting views are held by political groups or factions, by management and labor, by urban and rural and by other large segments of our society. Controversial issues are important proposals or policies concerning which our citizens hold different points of view. Controversial issues arise from the conflicts in the cherished interests, beliefs or affiliations of large groups of our citizens.

2. Controversial Issues in the Curriculum

The curriculum may include the study of important unsolved problems which involve controversial issues. These are appropriately studied insofar as the maturity of the pupils, the judgment of the teacher and the means available permit. Only through the study of such issues (political, economic or social) do pupils develop certain abilities needed for effective citizenship in our democracy.

Free discussion of controversial issues is the heart of the democratic process. Freedom of speech and free access to information are among our most cherished traditions. As pupils become mature enough to study the significant controversial issues facing our citizens, it is the responsibility of the schools to encourage dispassionate, unprejudiced and objective studies of controversial issues in an atmosphere free from bias and prejudice. It is the right of pupils to have free access to all relevant and appropriate material and to form and express their own opinion on controversial issues without jeopardizing their positions with teachers or schools.

The fundamental objectives of studying controversial issues are:

- A. To improve ability to discriminate between fact and opinion;
- B. ‡ To develop skill in critical thinking;
- C. ‡ To learn how to identify propaganda techniques;
- D. ‡ To develop a willingness to hear and understand other people's views, to reflect upon them and to judge them; and,
- E. ‡ To develop an awareness of the rights of others to their own opinions.

The Superintendent shall ensure that all school-sponsored presentations and discussions of controversial or sensitive topics in the instructional program, including those made by guest speakers, are:

- Age-appropriate. Proper decorum, considering the students' ages, should be followed;

- Consistent with the curriculum and serve an educational purpose;
- Informative and present a balanced view;
- Respectful of the rights and opinions of everyone. Emotional criticisms and hurtful sarcasm should be avoided; and
- Not tolerant of profanity or slander. Disruptive conduct is prohibited and may subject a student to discipline.

The District specifically reserves its right to stop any school-sponsored activity that it determines violates this policy, is harmful to the District or the students, or violates state or federal law.

Adopted: November 10, 1997

Revised:

Instruction

Using Animals in the Educational Program

Resources for Teachers: Animals

Animals may be brought into school facilities for educational purposes so long as their use is consistent with practices and procedures that ensure the health and safety of students, are consistent with School Code and any implementing Illinois State Board of Education regulations, and follow generally accepted guidance on the use of animals in elementary educational programs (e.g. Using animals for educational purposes is an acceptable practice under strict guidelines to assure the health and safety of children, and under the provisions of *The Illinois School Code*, and following Principles and Guidelines for the Use of Animals in Precollege Education, prepared by the National Academy of Sciences), best practices of the National Association of Biology Teachers (NABT). In conformance with the School Code and NABT, no experiment upon any living vertebrate animal for the purpose of demonstration in any study shall be made in any of our schools. Biological school supply companies will be the primary supplier of living and non living animal and plant specimens that are used for instructional and observation purposes. These organisms come with specific instructions for care, handling, and proper disposal. These instructions comply with environmental protocols and should be strictly followed by classroom teachers.

Animals may be brought into school facilities for educational purposes according to procedures developed by the Superintendent assuring: (1) the animal is properly housed, humanely cared for, and properly handled, and (2) students will not be exposed to a dangerous animal or unhealthy environment.

Animal Experiments

Experiments on living animals are prohibited; however, behavior studies that do not impair an animal's health or safety are permissible.

Animal Dissection

The dissection of dead animals or parts of dead animals shall be allowed in the classroom only when the dissection exercise contributes to or is a part of an illustration of pertinent study materials. All dissection of animals shall be confined to the classroom and must comply with the School Code.

Students who object to performing, participating in, or observing the dissection of animals will be excused from classroom attendance without penalty during times when such activities are taking place. No student will be penalized or disciplined for refusing to perform, participate

in, or observe a dissection. The Superintendent or designee shall inform students of: (1) their right to refrain from performing, participating in, or observing dissection, and (2) which courses contain a dissection unit and which of those courses offers an alternative project.

Adopted: November 10, 1997

Revised: October 28, 2013₂

Instruction

Programs for Students At Risk of Academic Failure and/or Dropping Out of School

Truant's Alternative and Optional Education Programs

The Superintendent or designee shall develop, maintain, and supervise a program for students at risk of academic failure or dropping out of school. The program shall include education and support services addressing individual learning styles and social needs, and may include without limitation one or more of the following:

~~Supportive services may be offered to a student who is experiencing an attendance problem, including:~~

- parent-teacher conferences;
- counseling services by social workers;
- counseling services by psychologists;
- psychological testing;
- alternative educational programs;
- alternative school placement;
- community agency services; and
- remediation program

Adopted: June 8, 1998

Revised:

Instruction

Special Education

The District shall provide a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment and necessary related services to all children with disabilities residing within the District, as required under the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act ("IDEA") and implementing provision of ¶The School Code, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ("Section 504"), and the Americans With Disabilities Act ("ADA"). The term "children with disabilities," as used in this policy, means children between ages 3 and 21 (inclusive) for whom it is determined, through definitions and procedures described in the Illinois State Board of Education's Special Education rules, that special education services are needed.

It is the intent of the District to ensure that students who are disabled within the definition of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 are identified, evaluated, and provided with appropriate educational services. Students may be disabled within the meaning of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act even though they do not require services pursuant to the IDEA.

For students eligible for services under IDEA, the District shall follow procedures for identification, evaluation, placement, and delivery of services to children with disabilities provided in the Illinois State Board of Education's *Special Education* rules. For those students who are not eligible for services under IDEA, but, because of disability as defined by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, need or are believed to need special instruction or related services, the District shall establish and implement a system of procedural safeguards. The safeguards shall cover students' identification, evaluation, and educational placement. This system shall include notice, an opportunity for the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) to examine relevant records, an impartial hearing with opportunity for participation by the student's parent(s)/guardian(s), representation by counsel, and a review procedure.

If necessary, students may also be placed in nonpublic special education programs or education facilities.

Adopted: June 8, 1998

Revised: January 20, 2009;

Instruction

Education of Homeless Children

Each child of a homeless individual and each homeless youth has equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, as provided to other children and youths, including a public pre-school education. A "homeless child" is defined as provided in the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and the Illinois Education for Homeless Children Act. ~~State law~~. The Superintendent or designee shall act as or appoint a Liaison for Homeless Children to coordinate this policy's implementation.

A homeless child may attend the District school that the child attended when permanently housed or in which the child was last enrolled. A homeless child living in any District school's attendance area may attend that school.

The Superintendent or designee shall review and revise rules or procedures that may act as barriers to the enrollment of homeless children and youths. In reviewing and revising such procedures, consideration shall be given to issues concerning transportation, immunization, residency, birth certificates, school records and other documentation, and guardianship. Transportation shall be provided in accordance with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and ~~State~~ Illinois law. The Superintendent or designee shall give special attention to ensuring the enrollment and attendance of homeless children and youths who are not currently attending school.

If a child is denied enrollment or transportation under this policy, the Liaison for Homeless Children shall immediately refer the child or his or her parent/guardian to the ombudsperson appointed by the Regional Superintendent and provide the child or his or her parent/guardian with a written explanation for the denial. Whenever a child and his or her parent/guardian who initially share the housing of another person due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar hardship continue to share the housing, the Liaison for Homeless Children shall, after the passage of 18 months and annually thereafter, conduct a review as to whether such hardship continues to exist in accordance with ~~State~~ Illinois law.

Adopted: March 20, 2006

Revised: