

EXEMPTION FROM REQUIRED INSTRUCTION

The curriculum of the school district is designed to reflect the learning expectations for all learners in all content areas of the system of Learning Results, as well as other statutory and regulatory requirements and content areas specified by the Board.

The CRCS Board acknowledges that from time to time individual learners may be exposed to some ideas and materials with which they or their parent(s)/legal guardian disagree. Learners and their parent(s)/legal guardian cannot be required to adopt ideas with which they disagree, but such disagreement alone is not a sufficient basis to exempt a learner from the prescribed curriculum. Exemptions from the required curriculum should be minimized because they can detract from the overall instruction provided to the class as a whole and the educational objectives sought to be achieved by the curriculum.

The CRCS Board recognizes; however, that there could be topics in the curriculum that may be objectionable to individual learners and/or parent(s)/legal guardian based on their particular sincerely held religious, moral, or philosophical beliefs. Exemption from instruction which infringes on such beliefs may be requested by the parent(s)/legal guardian.

Requests for exemption from instruction must be made in writing to the building Principal and are subject to the approval of the Principal. The Principal shall notify the Executive Director as soon as practicable of any request for exemption from instruction and of his/her decision. If the Principal denies an exemption request, the parent(s)/legal guardian may appeal to the Executive Director.

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

- A. The alignment of the curriculum with the system of Learning Results;
- B. Whether the course or content area is required by state law or Board policy;
- C. The educational importance of the material or instruction from which exemption is requested;
- D. Evidence regarding the sincerity of the belief on which the request is based;
- E. Whether the school has a legal obligation to accommodate the exemption request;
- F. The effect of exemption or accommodation on the validity of the local assessment system; and

G. Other factors that bear upon the particular request.

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

When the Principal determines that the curriculum that has been aligned with the system of Learning Results conflicts with sincerely held religious beliefs of a learner or his/her parent or legal guardian, reasonable accommodation in the curriculum shall be made for the learner, within the scope of existing resources. Alternative instruction may be provided by the school or through approved independent study. Any alternative instruction shall be approved in advance by the Principal in consultation with appropriate instructional staff and shall meet the standards and objectives of the part of the curriculum that is being replaced. When requests for exemption from required curriculum are made for religious reasons, a parent/guardian who is dissatisfied with the Principal's decision may appeal to the Executive Director. If the accommodation in the curriculum that is requested is so great that the validity of the local assessment system is compromised, the Executive Director will determine how to address the situation, subject to the approval of the Commissioner.

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

Legal Reference:

Cross Reference:

20-A MRSA § 6209

LD 1536, Chap. 51 Resolves

Ch.. 127 § 3.07 (Me. Dept. of Ed. Rules (Me. Dept. of Ed. Rules) Ch. 131 (Me. Dept. of Ed. Rules)

ADF – School District Commitment to Learning Results

IJJ – Instructional and Library Material Selection

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