

TEACHING ABOUT RELIGION

The school district is required to keep the practice of religion out of the school curriculum. The board recognizes the key role religion has played in the history of the world and authorizes the study of religious history and traditions as part of the curriculum. Preferential or derogatory treatment of a single religion shall not take place.

It shall be the responsibility of the superintendent to ensure the study of religion in the schools in keeping with the following guidelines:

- the proposed activity must have a secular purpose;
- the primary objective of the activity must not be one that advances or inhibits religion; and
- the activity must not foster excessive governmental entanglement with religion.

Legal Reference: U.S. Const. amend. I.
Lee v. Weisman, 112 S.Ct. 2649 (1992).
Lemon v. Kurtzman, 403 U.S. 602 (1971).
Graham v. Central Community School District of Decatur County, 608 F.Supp. 531 (S.D. Iowa 1985).
Iowa Code §§ 279.8; 280.6 (2005).

Cross Reference: 603 Instructional Curriculum
604.5 Religious-Based Exclusion from a School Program
606.4 School Ceremonies and Observances

Approved February 2010

Reviewed January 2010

Revised _____

TEACHING ABOUT RELIGION REGULATION - RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS

The historical and contemporary significance of religious holidays may be included in the education program provided that the instruction is presented in an unbiased and objective manner. The selection of holidays to be studied shall take into account major celebrations of several world religions, not just those of a single religion. Holiday-related activities shall be educationally sound and sensitive to religious differences and shall be selected carefully to avoid the excessive or unproductive use of school time. Teachers shall be especially careful in planning activities that are to take place immediately preceding or on a religious holiday.

Music, art, literature and drama having religious themes (including traditional carols, seasonal songs and classical music) shall be permitted if presented in an objective manner without sectarian indoctrination. The emphasis on religious themes shall be only as extensive as necessary for a balanced and comprehensive study or presentation. Religious content included in student performances shall be selected on the basis of its independent educational merit and shall seek to give exposure to a variety of religious customs, beliefs and forms of expression. Holiday programs, parties or performances shall not become religious celebrations or be used as a forum for religious worship, such as the devotional reading of sacred writings or the recitations of prayers.

The use of religious symbols (e.g. a cross, menorah, crescent, Star of David, lotus blossom, nativity scene or other symbol that is part of a religious ceremony) shall be permitted as a teaching aid, but only when such symbols are used temporarily and objectively to give information about a heritage associated with a particular religion. The Christmas tree, Santa Claus, Easter eggs, Easter bunnies and Halloween decorations are secular, seasonal symbols and as such can be displayed in a seasonal context.

Expressions of belief or nonbelief initiated by individual students shall be permitted in composition, art forms, music, speech and debate. However, teachers may not require projects or activities which are indoctrina or force students to contradict their personal religious beliefs or nonbeliefs.

Approved February 2010

Reviewed January 2010

Revised _____

ACADEMIC FREEDOM

The board believes students should have an opportunity to reach their own decisions and beliefs about conflicting points of view. Academic freedom is the opportunity of licensed employees and students to study, investigate, present, interpret, and discuss facts and ideas relevant to the subject matter of the classroom and appropriate to and in good taste with the maturity and intellectual and emotional capacities of the students.

It shall be the responsibility of the teacher to refrain from advocating partisan causes, sectarian religious views, or biased positions in the classroom or through teaching methods. Teachers are not discouraged from expressing personal opinions as long as students are aware it is a personal opinion and students are allowed to reach their own conclusions independently.

It shall be the responsibility of the principal to ensure academic freedom is allowed but not abused in the classroom.

Legal Reference: Iowa Code §§ 279.8; 280.3, .6 (2005).

Cross Reference: 502 Student Rights and Responsibilities
603 Instructional Curriculum
904.5 Distribution of Materials

Approved February 2010

Reviewed January 2010

Revised _____

TEACHING CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

A "controversial issue" is a topic of significant academic inquiry about which substantial groups of citizens of this community, this state or this nation hold sincere, conflicting points of view.

It is the belief of the board that controversial issues should be fairly presented in a spirit of honest academic freedom so that students may recognize the validity of other points of view but can also learn to formulate their own opinions based upon dispassionate, objective, unbiased study and discussion of the facts related to the controversy.

It shall be the responsibility of the instructor to present full and fair opportunity and means for students to study, consider and discuss all sides of controversial issues including, but not limited to, political philosophies.

It shall be the responsibility of the instructor to protect the right of the student to study pertinent controversial issues within the limits of good taste and to allow the student to express personal opinions without jeopardizing the student's relationship with the teacher.

It shall be the responsibility of the teacher to refrain from advocating partisan causes, sectarian religious views, or selfish propaganda of any kind through any classroom or school device; however, an instructor shall not be prohibited from expressing a personal opinion as long as students are encouraged to reach their own decisions independently.

The board encourages full discussion of controversial issues in a spirit of academic freedom that shows students that they have the right to disagree with the opinions of others but that they also have the responsibility to base the disagreement on facts and to respect the right of others to hold conflicting opinions.

Approved February 2010

Reviewed January 2010

Revised _____

GLOBAL EDUCATION

Because of our growing interdependence with other nations in the world, global education shall be incorporated into the education program for grades kindergarten through twelve so that students have the opportunity to acquire a perspective on world issues, problems, and prospects for an awareness of the relationship between an individual's self-interest and the concerns of people elsewhere in the world.

Legal Reference: Iowa Code §§ 256.11, .11A (2005).
281 I.A.C. 12.5(11).

Cross Reference: 602 Curriculum Development
603 Instructional Curriculum

Approved February 2010

Reviewed January 2010

Revised _____

CITIZENSHIP

Being a citizen of the United States, of Iowa and of the school district community entitles students to special privileges and protections as well as requiring the students to assume civic, economic and social responsibilities and to participate in their country, state and school district community in a manner that entitles them to keep these rights and privileges.

As part of the education program, students shall have an opportunity to learn about their rights, privileges, and responsibilities as citizens of this country, state and school district community. As part of this learning opportunity students shall be instructed in the elements of good citizenship and the role quality citizens play in their country, state and school district community.

Legal Reference: Iowa Code §§ 256.11, .11A (2005).
281 I.A.C. 12.3(6).

Cross Reference: 101 Educational Philosophy of the School District
502 Student Rights and Responsibilities
503 Student Discipline

Approved February 2010

Reviewed January 2010

Revised _____

COMPETENT PRIVATE INSTRUCTION

In the event a child of compulsory attendance age, over age six and under age sixteen, does not attend public school or an accredited nonpublic school the child must receive competent private instruction.

A parent choosing competent private instruction for a student must notify the school district prior to the first day of school on forms provided by the school district. The forms are available in the central administration office. One copy of the completed forms will be kept by the school district and another copy will be forwarded to the area education agency.

The superintendent will determine whether the completed form is in compliance with the law. Specifically, the superintendent will determine whether the individual providing the instruction is either the student's parent, guardian, legal custodian or an Iowa licensed practitioner; whether the licensed practitioner's license is appropriate for the age and grade level of the student; that the student is being instructed a minimum of one hundred and forty-eight days per year; that immunization evidence is provided for students placed under competent private instruction for the first time and that the report is timely filed.

The school district shall report noncompliance with the reporting, immunization, attendance, instructor qualifications, and assessment requirements of the compulsory attendance law to the county attorney of the county of residence of the student's parent, guardian or custodian.

Students receiving competent private instruction are eligible to request open enrollment to another school district. Prior to the request for open enrollment, the student shall request dual enrollment in the resident district. The receiving district shall not bill the resident district unless the receiving district complies with the reporting requirements. If the parent, guardian or custodian fails to comply with the compulsory attendance requirements, the receiving district shall notify the resident district. The resident district shall then report the noncompliance to the county attorney of the county of residence of the parent, guardian or custodian.

Students receiving competent private instruction from a parent, guardian or legal custodian must be evaluated annually by May 1 unless such person is properly licensed. The parent, guardian or legal custodian may choose either a standardized test approved by the Iowa Department of Education or a portfolio evaluation. If the parent, guardian or legal custodian chooses standardized testing and the student is dual enrolled, the school district shall pay for the cost of the standardized test and the administration of the standardized test. If the student is not dual enrolled, the parent, guardian or legal custodian shall reimburse the school district for the cost of the standardized test and the administration of the standardized test. If a parent, guardian or legal custodian of a student receiving competent private instruction chooses portfolio assessment as the means of annual assessment, the portfolio evaluator must be approved by the superintendent. Portfolio evaluators must hold a valid Iowa practitioner's license or teacher certificate appropriate to the ages and grade levels of the children whose portfolios are being assessed. No annual evaluation is required for students receiving competent private instruction from an appropriately licensed or certified Iowa practitioner.

Approved February 2010

Reviewed January 2010

Revised _____

COMPETENT PRIVATE INSTRUCTION

Upon the request of a parent, guardian or legal custodian of a student receiving competent private instruction or upon referral of a licensed practitioner who provides instruction or instructional supervision of a student under competent private instruction, the school district shall refer a student who may require special education to the area education agency, Division of Special Education, for evaluation.

Students in competent private instruction must make adequate progress. Adequate progress includes scoring at the thirtieth percentile on a standardized test or a report by the portfolio evaluator indicating adequate progress. Students who fail to make adequate progress under competent private instruction provided by the student's parent, guardian or legal custodian shall attend an accredited public or nonpublic school beginning the next school year. The parent, guardian or legal custodian of a student who fails to make adequate progress may apply to the director of the Department of Education for approval of continued competent private instruction under a remediation plan.

The remediation plan shall be for no more than one year. Before the beginning of the school year, the student may be re-tested and if the student achieves adequate progress the student may remain in competent private instruction.

Legal Reference: Iowa Code §§ 256.11; 279.10, .11; 299.1-.6, .11, .15, .24, 299A (2005).
281 I.A.C. 31.

Cross Reference: 501 Student Attendance
502 Student Rights and Responsibilities
504 Student Activities
507.1 Student Health and Immunization Certificates
604.7 Dual Enrollment

Approved February 2010

Reviewed January 2010

Revised _____

COMPETENT PRIVATE INSTRUCTION REPORT

Directions: Complete one form in duplicate (carbon or photostatic copy) for each child for whom the compulsory education law is being met in other than regular enrollment in a public school or accredited nonpublic school. NO REPORT IS NECESSARY if the child is not of compulsory attendance age (6-16 with birth date prior to September 15) or if the child is enrolled in a home school assistance program in a public or a state accredited nonpublic school. Reporter should retain a copy of this report for personal records.

Return to school district secretary by _____ (school start date) or within 14 calendar days of removing the child from public or accredited nonpublic school.

A. MANDATORY INFORMATION. (This information is required by Iowa Code §299.4).

1. Name and birth date of child under private instruction. (Use one form for each child.)

child's name

birth date

2. Name and address of person filing report:

name

address

city/state/zip

circle one:

parent

guardian

custodian

3. School year and resident school district:

(e.g., 20__- 20__)

resident school district

4. Number of days of instruction for the school year ____ (min. 148)

5. Name and address of person providing instruction to the child, and relationship to child.

instructor

address

city/state/zip

relationship to child

(parent, guardian, custodian
or licensed teacher)

6. Will instruction be provided or supervised by a person with a valid Iowa teacher's license/certificate appropriate for the age and grade level of the child?

_____ yes

_____ no

COMPETENT PRIVATE INSTRUCTION REPORT

If yes, print folder number of teacher: _____
 folder no.

Name of Iowa licensed teacher: _____

Note: if properly licensed teacher provides or supervises instruction in accordance with 281 I.A.C. 31 of the rules of the Iowa Department of Education, no annual assessment is required. Otherwise a baseline test the first year and annual assessments thereafter are required of all students over 7 years of age who are in private instruction.

7. List subjects covered in instruction and approximate amount of time spent on each. Use extra sheet if necessary.

Circle one: daily weekly monthly quarterly by semesters annually

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

8. Identify texts used including title and author or publisher and grade level series. Use extra sheet if necessary.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

9. If the child is being placed under private instruction for the first time, or for all children for whom no evidence was provided in a previous school year, attach evidence of the child's immunizations as required by Iowa law. Evidence includes a doctor's statement, a copy of a public health record, or the name and address of last school attended, or any other formal evidence of the dates and types of inoculations.

_____ attached _____ previously provided to:

_____ (tell where, when and to whom evidence was provided)

Please attach lesson plans for the period of instruction for the academic school year as required by Iowa Code §299.4.

- B. OPTIONAL INFORMATION (Note: Although not required by law for reporting purposes under Iowa Code §299.4, failure to respond may result in loss of some privileges or available options to parents, guardians or custodians.)

10. a. Indicate whether or not you desire dual enrollment in the public school for the child under competent private instruction.

_____ yes _____ no

COMPETENT PRIVATE INSTRUCTION REPORT

b. Indicate whether dual enrollment is desired for:
academics _____ extra curricular activities _____ both _____

11. If the child is dual enrolled in the public school, please specify in which grade level you wish to include the child for the purposes of academic or extracurricular activities.

grade level

12. If the child is dual enrolled, of which activities do you wish to be notified (e.g., field trips, vocal or instrumental music opportunities, physical education class, drama, art, music, science lab, driver's ed, track, volleyball, academic decathlon, mock trial, etc.)?

13. Is the child currently identified as a child requiring special education: _____ yes _____ no
(If "yes," approval of the AEA Director of Special Education is required before the child can be placed under competent private instruction.)

signature of AEA special education director or designee

14. If the answer to question 6 is no, please indicate the desired method of assessment:
_____ Standardized testing _____ Portfolio evaluation

A baseline test is required the first year of home schooling regardless of which type of assessment is chosen if the child is under the annual assessment requirement.

15. Please indicate which test you desire to use for Baseline (B) or Annual Assessment (AA) purposes:

- | | | |
|-------|-------|---|
| B | AA | |
| _____ | _____ | California Achievement Test (CAT) |
| _____ | _____ | Metropolitan Achievement Test (MAT) |
| _____ | _____ | Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills (CTBS) |
| _____ | _____ | Stanford Achievement Test |
| _____ | _____ | Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) grades K-9 only |
| _____ | _____ | Stanford Achievement Test (Abbrev.) |
| _____ | _____ | Iowa Tests of Educational Development (ITED) grades 9-12 only |

Grade level of test desired _____

_____ Fall Norms _____ Winter norms _____ Spring norms

COMPETENT PRIVATE INSTRUCTION REPORT

16. If your answer to question 14 is portfolio evaluation, please provide name of portfolio evaluator, if known, and folder number.

portfolio evaluator

folder number

_____ Please provide me with a list of trained portfolio evaluators.

17. Do you wish to have the school district or Area Education Agency notify you of the dates it will be conducting testing sessions, so your child can take a baseline or annual assessment test at the same time?

_____ Yes

_____ No

18. If you answered yes to questions 10 or 17, please provide the name, address, and telephone number of the person who desires to be notified.

name

address

telephone number

city/state/zip

It is the responsibility of the test administrator to submit the results of the child's baseline test, and if standardized testing form of assessment is chosen, the annual standardized test results to the parent, guardian, or custodian of the child; to the district of residence; and to the Iowa Department of Education annually by June 30. If portfolio assessment is chosen, the responsibility of the portfolio evaluator is to provide a narrative report assessing the child's progress to the child's parent, guardian, or legal custodian; to the district of residence; and to the Iowa Department of Education by June 30 annually. All reports to the Department should be sent to: Iowa Department of Education, Attn: Student Assessment Results, Grimes State Office Bldg., Des Moines, IA 50319-0146.

INDIVIDUALIZED INSTRUCTION

The board's primary responsibility in the management of the school district is the operation and delivery of the regular education program. Generally, students attending the school district shall receive the regular education program offered by the district. Only in exceptional circumstances will the board approve students receiving individualized instruction at the expense of the school district.

Recommendations from the superintendent for individualized instruction shall state the need for the instruction, the objectives and goals sought for the instruction, the employee requirements for the instruction, the implementation procedures for the instruction and the evaluation procedures and processes that will be used to assess the value of the instruction.

It shall be the responsibility of the superintendent to develop administrative regulations for individualized instruction.

Legal Reference: Iowa Code §§ 256.11; 279.8, .10, .11; 280.3, .14; 299.1-.6, .11, .15, .24; 299A (2005).

Cross Reference: 501.11 Pregnant Students
604.1 Competent Private Instruction

Approved March 2010

Reviewed February 2010

Revised _____

