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## ACADEMIC FREEDOM

A major goal of education in a free society is to develop persons who can think critically, understand their culture, live compassionately with others, make sound decisions and live with the consequences of their judgment. Public education in a pluralistic society must strive to present, as objectively as possible, varied events, activities and perceptions reflected in history, literature and every other source of mankind's thought and expression. Because points of view differ and biases exist, students must have access to materials which express this diversity of perspective.

It is the responsibility of the teacher to make certain that such access to materials presenting all sides of an issue is available; however, teachers must take into account the relative maturity of their students and the need for guidance and help in studying issues and arriving at balanced views. All instruction will conform to adopted courses of study.

The principle of academic freedom presupposes intellectual honesty on the part of the person who exercises it and that he/she can and will discriminate among facts relating to an issue. In expressing a personal opinion, a teacher will make it known to students that the view is his/her own and will not attempt to bring students to a commitment to that personal viewpoint.

[Adoption date: January 7, 2003]

## SCHOOL CALENDAR

The Board recognizes that the preparation of a calendar for the operation of the ESC is necessary for orderly educational planning and for efficient operation.

Annually, the Superintendent prepares a tentative office calendar for Board consideration no later than June 1.

[Adoption date: January 7, 2003]

LEGAL REFS.: ORC 3313.48 et seq.; 3313.62; 3313.63  
3317.01

## CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

The ESC Board recognizes the importance of continuing evaluation and improvement of the instructional program. The county superintendent is responsible for recommending to the county board a course of study for each program offered. It is expected that he/she will consult with appropriate staff members and advisory committee members in formulating his/her recommendation.

Curriculum committees usually representative of specific content areas and/or levels, assisted by county officer personnel, serve to synthesize the efforts local groups have given to the study and evaluation.

From those syntheses, textbook adoptions, course syllabi and county-wide manuals or guides are developed for submission to the county board and the State Department of Education for approval.

All curriculum areas come under study once within a given five-year cycle as do textbook adoptions.

Therefore, the ESC office shall, in cooperation with local school districts, develop and supervise a program of continuous curricular improvement for all levels of instruction and see that the courses of study, the curriculum and the textbooks used in the local schools conform to all state standards.

The ESC office shall be responsible for seeking out and developing federal and state-funded programs that show promise of improving the educational program within the county.

[Adoption date: January 7, 2003]

## CURRICULUM DESIGN

No course of study shall be taught in the public school of this ESC unless it has been adopted by the Governing Board and approved by the State Board of Education. The Board shall determine which units of the instructional program constitute courses of study and are thereby subject to the adoption procedures of the Board.

The ESC Superintendent or local superintendents are responsible for the preparation of courses of study, and shall develop a plan for such preparation which includes:

1. the participation of appropriate staff members;
2. continuing research in instructional methods, materials and activities;
3. systematic review of all courses of study to ensure their continuing usefulness in achieving goals set by the Board and
4. a system of administrative review to ensure that the courses of study are being followed by local staff members.

Whenever new courses of study are developed or existing courses of study revised, copies of these additions or changes must be made available to the ESC Board for adoption. The Superintendent's recommendation shall include the following information about the proposed course of study:

1. its applicability to students and an enumeration of those groups of students to be affected by it;
2. its description and content, including the instructional method where such method departs significantly from the traditional and is an integral part of the course of study and
3. the evaluative methods and standards by which it will be monitored and measured.

Copies of all current courses of study shall be kept on file in the office of the ESC Superintendent.

[Adoption date: January 7, 2003]

## TEACHING ABOUT RELIGION

The Board believes that an understanding of religions and the contributions that religion has made to the advancement of civilization is essential to the thorough education of young people and to their appreciation of a pluralistic society. To that end, the courses of study may include, as appropriate to the various ages and attainments of the students, instruction about the religions of the world.

[Adoption date: January 7, 2003]

LEGAL REF.: ORC 3313.601

## PROGRAMS FOR DISABLED STUDENTS

The Board is committed to providing support services to assist local school districts in the identification, evaluation and placement in appropriate educational programs. Due process requirements, procedural safeguards and confidential treatment of information will be adhered to as provided for in Ohio Department of Education Standards.

The individual plan determined for each student is developed in accordance with the student's individual needs. The plan provides for frequent re-evaluation of the student's needs, progress and effectiveness of the program being offered.

Each disabled student is considered individually relative to his/her participation in the competency-based educational program, the state's proficiency testing program and achievement and ability testing programs.

[Adoption date: January 7, 2003]

LEGAL REFS.: Education for All Handicapped Children Act; 20 USC 1401 et seq.  
Rehabilitation Act; 29 USC 706(8), 794, 794a  
504 Regulations 34 C.F.R. Part 104  
Americans with Disabilities Act; USC 12112 et seq.  
State Department of Education, Special Education Policies and Procedures,  
Free Appropriate Public Education-101  
ORC 3313.50  
3323.01 et seq.  
3325.01 et seq.  
OAC 3301-51  
3301-55-01

CROSS REFS.: ACB, Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability  
JB, Equal Educational Opportunities  
KBA, Public's Right to Know

## PROGRAMS FOR DISABLED STUDENTS

### Special Education

The Governing Board of the Fairfield County Educational Service Center, as an expression of its commitment to provide a free appropriate public education for children with disabilities in accordance with State and Federal laws, rules, and regulations, does hereby resolve to implement the following policies:

1. Child Identification

It shall be the practice of this ESC that it will cooperate with the school district of residence in ongoing efforts to identify, locate and evaluate children below 22 years of age who reside within the ESC and have a confirmed or suspected disability in accordance with all federal regulations and state standards.

2. Procedural Safeguards

It shall be the practice of this ESC that it will cooperate with the school district of residence to ensure that the child with a disability and his/her parent shall be provided with safeguards, as required by law, throughout the identification, evaluation and placement process, and the provision of a free appropriate public education to the child.

3. Multifactor Evaluation

It shall be the practice of this ESC that it will cooperate with the school district of residence in the provision of a multifactor evaluation for children with disabilities to ensure that children are assessed in their native language or other mode of communication; tests are used for their validated purposes; children are evaluated in all areas related to their suspected disability; testing is conducted by a multidisciplinary team; testing materials and procedures are not racially or culturally biased; tests are administered by trained personnel qualified in accordance with all federal regulations and state standards; tests are administered in conformance with the instructions provided by the producer and, medical evaluation, when required as part of a multifactor evaluation, shall be provided at no cost to the parent by a licensed physician designated by the superintendent of the school district of residence or his/her designee, when other no-cost resources are not available.

4. Individualized Education Program

It shall be the practice of this ESC that it will cooperate with the school district of residence in the development of an individualized education program (IEP) for each child with a disability who needs special education. The IEP shall be designed to meet the unique needs of the child and shall be developed in a planning conference. Parents

of the child shall be strongly encouraged to participate in the planning conference. The IEP shall be reviewed and revised as often as necessary, but at least annually.

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5. Surrogate Parent

It shall be the practice of this ESC that whenever the parent(s) or guardian(s) of a child with a disability is (are) not known or cannot be located, or when the child is a ward of the state, the child's rights shall be protected through the assignment of an individual (who shall not be an employee of the state education agency, local educational agency, or intermediate educational unit involved in the education of the child) who will serve as the child's surrogate parent.

6. Testing Programs

It shall be the practice of this ESC that students with disabilities shall participate in local and statewide testing programs or be provided an alternate assessment. The determination shall be made at the IEP conference.

Be it further resolved that the Superintendent shall administer the local implementation of these state procedures, in accordance with State and Federal laws, rules and regulations, which will ensure fulfillment of the policies contained herein.

(Approval date: January 7, 2003)



## PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATION

The Board believes that parental involvement is an important part of the educational program. Current research indicates that a home-school partnership and greater involvement on the part of parents in the education of their children generally results in higher achievement scores, improved student behavior and reduced absenteeism. All parents are encouraged to take an active role in the education of their children.

The Board directs the administration to develop the necessary regulations to ensure that this policy is followed and that parental involvement is encouraged. The regulations:

1. encourage strong home-school partnerships;
2. provide for consistent and effective communication between the parents and school officials;
3. offer parents ways to assist and encourage their children to do their best;
4. offer ways parents can support classroom learning activities and
5. provide opportunities for parents in the parental involvement program.

[Adoption date: January 7, 2003]

LEGAL REF.: ORC 3313.472

## HOME INSTRUCTION

The Superintendent may excuse from compulsory school attendance, for not more than one school year at a time, any school-age child who is being instructed at home in accordance with the State Board of Education rules in the Ohio Administrative Code.

The child being instructed at home must be instructed by an individual with one of the following qualifications:

1. a high school diploma;
2. a certificate of high school equivalence;
3. standardized test scores that demonstrate high school equivalence or
4. other credentials found appropriate by the Superintendent.

Lacking the above, the home teacher must work under the direction of a person holding a baccalaureate degree.

Any request to be excused must be made in writing by the parent(s) and must contain the information required by the Ohio Administrative Code.

The Superintendent shall approve the home instruction request, unless he/she determines that the information required by the Ohio Administrative Code has not been provided or unless he/she has substantial evidence that the minimum educational requirements of the Ohio Administrative Code have not been met, despite the fact that the required information has been provided by the parent(s).

If the Superintendent intends to deny the request for home instruction, he/she notifies the parent(s) within 14 calendar days and informs the parent(s) of the reasons for the intent to deny the request and of the parent(s)' right to a due process hearing before the Superintendent.

Upon substantial evidence of cessation of home instruction in accordance with the Ohio Administrative Code, the Superintendent notifies the parent(s) of the intent to revoke the excuse and of the parent(s)' right to a due process hearing before the Superintendent.

[Adoption date: January 7, 2003]

LEGAL REFS.: ORC 3321.04  
3331.08  
OAC 3301-34-01-3301-34-06



## PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

The preschool program is guided by curriculum, written policies and regulations of the ESC which are consistent with applicable statutory requirements contained in the revised code and rules adopted by the State Board of Education. Resources appropriate for children enrolled in the program include, but are not limited to:

1. staff;
2. cumulative records;
3. health and safety;
4. admission;
5. attendance and discipline;
6. selection and use of developmentally appropriate materials, equipment and resources that meet the intellectual, physical, social and emotional needs of the preschool child;
7. management of communicable diseases and
8. transportation and field trips.

[Adoption date: January 7, 2003]

LEGAL REFS.: OAC 3301-37-01; 3301-37-02; 3301-37-11  
3313.646

CROSS REFS.: EB, Safety Program  
EBC, Emergency Plans  
JHCCA, HIV/AIDS (Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune  
Deficiency Syndrome) (Also GBEA)  
JO, Student Records

## TEXTBOOK SELECTION AND ADOPTION

It is the legal responsibility of the Board to approve all textbooks used as part of the educational program of this ESC. No such textbook will be approved that is not on a list duly filed in the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

For purposes of this policy, "textbooks" shall be defined as those books which are issued to each student in the class and any record, film, tape, video discs, computer software or the like which constitutes the basis of an instructional program.

The Board shall, at a regular meeting, select the textbooks to be used in the schools of this ESC between the months of February through August 31. Substitution, alteration or revision of any textbook within four years of its selection and adoption shall require a four-fifths vote of the members elected to the Board. The Board shall consider for approval only those textbooks which have been selected and recommended for their consideration by the Superintendent.

The Superintendent shall develop a plan for the recommendation of textbooks according to the following guidelines.

1. Certified staff members at all appropriate levels shall participate in the selection process.
2. Textbooks shall be relevant to the courses of study adopted by the Board.
3. The staff shall continually research new sources of textbooks and explore the innovative use of all possible books.

In considering the approval of any proposed textbook, the Board will weigh its suitability for the maturity level and educational accomplishment of the students who will be using the book and its freedom from bias.

A list of all approved textbooks shall be maintained by the Superintendent and made available for the use of local district boards, for the use of the certified staff and for the information of members of the Board.

[Adoption date: January 7, 2003]

LEGAL REFS.: ORC 3329.01; 3329.05; 3329.06; 3329.07; 3329.08  
OAC 3301-35-03

## SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS SELECTION AND ADOPTION

In order to serve the curriculum needs and certified staff development of the local school districts of this ESC, the Board will support a program of audiovisual services.

The program of audiovisual services may include:

1. a film collection;
2. a video cassette collection;
3. a laser disc collection;
4. an audio tape collection;
5. computer software (public domain or multi-license);
6. audiovisual equipment; and
7. audiovisual equipment repair.

The Superintendent shall make the audiovisual services available at a fee schedule set periodically by the Board. Using districts are responsible for the material and equipment used and may be charged for any loss or damage caused beyond normal wear and handling.

### Loaning of Audiovisual Equipment Owned by the Fairfield ESC

Any departmental division under the jurisdiction of the Fairfield County Commissioners may borrow the audiovisual equipment owned by the Board, providing the equipment is not in use or to be used by any member of the Board or staff.

Any nonprofit organization using the facilities of the Professional Building may borrow the Board-owned audiovisual equipment, providing the borrowing party agrees to sign an agreement form before they receive the equipment. Such agreement shall state the date or dates of borrowing, the identification of the piece or pieces of equipment to be borrowed, the name of the person and agency doing the borrowing and a statement to the effect that the borrower will, after inspection by the ESC A.V. Technician, pay for all damage (beyond reasonable wear) and for any missing equipment or parts. Such agreement must be signed by the borrowing agency's representative and a member of the ESC staff.

[Adoption date: January 7, 2003]

LEGAL REFS.: ORC 3329.06; 3329.07; 3329.08  
OAC 3301-35-03

CROSS REF.: IIAA, Textbook Selection and Adoption

## EVALUATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS

The Board directs the Superintendent to develop and implement a systematic short-range and long-range plan for the continuing qualitative assessment of the progress of the ESC educational programs and the statewide goals established by the Board. To this end, the Superintendent recommends such tests and methods as may be indicated by best professional judgment.

The Board cooperates with the Superintendent of Public Instruction in such statewide assessment programs as are conducted pursuant to law and rule of the State Board of Education and shall utilize the data gained thereby toward the improvement of the schools of this ESC.

No test results shall be used to make comparisons among the schools of the ESC nor to compare the achievements or educational programs of one local district with any other district in this county.

[Adoption date: January 7, 2003]

LEGAL REFS.: ORC 3301.13  
3313.60  
3323.02  
OAC 3301-35-02(B); 3301-35-03(K); 3301-35-07

## PATRIOTIC EXERCISES

The Board believes one's appreciation of country is promoted by the ceremonies and observances held in the schools and that the United States flag is a symbol of our democratic heritage, ideals and freedom.

The Board believes that reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance helps to reinforce these principles.

The Board recognizes that beliefs of some persons prohibit participation in the pledge, the salute to the flag or other opening exercises; therefore, such persons are excused from participation.

[Adoption date: January 7, 2003]

LEGAL REFS.: U.S. Const. amend. I, Establishment Cl.; Speech Cl.  
ORC 5.23  
3313.602; 3313.63; 3313.80