

EXEMPTION FROM REQUIRED INSTRUCTION

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

The Board acknowledges that from time-to-time individual students may be exposed to some ideas and materials with which they or their parent(s)/legal guardian disagree. Students 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 student 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 Board recognizes, however, that there could be topics in the curriculum which may be objectionable to individual students and/or parent(s)/legal guardian based on their particular 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 Executive Director and are subject to her/his approval. The Executive Director shall notify the Board Chair as soon as practicable of any request for exemption from instruction and of his/her decision. If the Executive Director denies an exemption request, the parent(s)/legal guardian may appeal to the Board.

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

1. The alignment of the curriculum with the system of Learning Results;
2. Whether the course or content area is required by state law or Board policy;
3. The educational importance of the material or instruction from which exemption is requested;
4. Evidence regarding the sincerity of the belief on which the request is based;
5. Whether the school has a legal obligation to accommodate the exemption request;
6. The effect of exemption or accommodation on the validity of the local assessment system; and
7. Other factors that bear upon the particular request.

Exemption from required instruction does not excuse the student from meeting the requirements of the Learning Results or from performing alternative work.

When the Executive Director determines that the curriculum that has been aligned with the system of Learning Results conflicts with the religious beliefs of a student or his/her parent or legal guardian, reasonable accommodation in the curriculum shall be made for the student,

within the scope of existing resources. When requests for exemption are made for religious beliefs, a parent/guardian who is dissatisfied with the Executive Director's decision may appeal to the Fiddlehead Board whose decision shall be final.

When a student is exempted from any portion of the regular curriculum for other than religious reasons (exemption based on philosophical or moral beliefs), the staff will make reasonable efforts, within the scope of existing resources, to accommodate alternative instruction for the student. When requests for exemption are made for philosophical or moral reasons, a parent/guardian who is dissatisfied with the Executive Director's decision may appeal to the Board, whose decision shall be final.

Legal Reference: 20-A MRSA § 6209

LD 1536, Chap. 51 Resolves

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

Ch. 131 (Me. Dept. of Ed. Rules)

Cross Reference: ADF – School District Commitment to Learning Results

IJJ – Instructional and Library Material Selection

IMB – Teaching About Controversial/Sensitive Issues

IMBAA – Alternatives to Biological Dissection

Approved: October 17, 2020