

## **ACCOMMODATION OF SINCERE BELIEFS IN REQUIRED INSTRUCTION**

The curriculum of the EUT is designed to meet statutory requirements and includes other areas of study deemed appropriate by the professional staff and the Principal. The curriculum includes topics and materials that are age and ability appropriate to the students.

The EUT 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(s) disagree. Students and their parent(s)/legal guardian(s) 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. Alteration of 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 EUT recognizes, however, that there could be topics in the curriculum which may be objectionable to individual students and/or parent(s)/legal guardian(s) based on their sincerely held religious, moral, or philosophical beliefs. Exemption from instruction which infringes on such beliefs may be requested by the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) or adult/emancipated student.

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

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

1. Whether the course of instruction is required by state law or regulations, or EUT policy.
2. Whether an accommodation will adversely affect the instruction provided to other students.
3. The educational importance of the material or instruction from which accommodation 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. In the case of curriculum aligned with the System of Learning Results, if there is a conflict with the sincerely held religious beliefs of the student or his/her parent/legal guardian, accommodation in the curriculum shall be made for the student. If the accommodation is so great that the validity of the local assessment system is compromised, the Superintendent will determine how to address this, subject to approval of the Commissioner of Education.
6. Other factors that bear on the request.

When a student is exempted from any portion of the regular curriculum, the staff will make reasonable efforts, within the scope of existing resources, to accommodate alternative instruction for the student. 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

Legal Reference: 20-A M.R.S.A. § 6209

LD 1536, Chap. 51 Resolves

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

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

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