AGENDA

1. Call to Order

2. Homeschooling Policy – discussion and possible action

3. Wellness Policy – review and discussion

4. Adjournment
Connecticut State Department of Education  
Bureau of Standards, Curriculum and Instruction  
165 Capitol Avenue - Hartford, Connecticut 06106

MEMORANDUM

TO: Individuals Inquiring about Homeschooling in Connecticut

SUBJECT: Information Concerning Educating Children at Home

Thank you for inquiring about educating your child(ren) at home. The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) provides guidance to school districts, which is contained in the enclosed circular letters. Such guidance is based upon state statutes pertaining to the duties of parents and boards of education. Enclosed, please find an information packet regarding Connecticut’s Procedures for Educating Children at Home. It includes:

1. **Procedures Concerning Requests from Parents to Educate their Child at Home** (Circular Letter: C-14, July 15, 1994) with attachments:
   - Updated **Selections from the Connecticut General Statutes Regarding School Attendance** revised January 1, 2011; and
   - Sample form: **Notice of Intent – Instruction of Student at Home**

   (Note: The above guidance does not reflect the change in mandatory attendance to ages five to eighteen, as discussed below.)

2. **Duties of Boards of Education and Parents to Cause Children to Attend Public School** (Circular Letter: C-4, August 10, 1998) with attachment:
   - Sample form: **Acknowledgement of Option to Exempt Attendance of Child Five or Six Years of Age from school**

3. **Connecticut’s General Educational Development (GED) Testing Program:** Homeschooling and GED Alignment – Policies and Procedures for Parents/Guardians

If you intend to educate your child at home, contact the local Superintendent of Schools to find out your local Board of Education’s policy on home instruction. Obtain an **Option to Exempt or Notice of Intent** form (discussed below) from the Superintendent of Schools. Depending upon the Board’s policy, both forms may be similar to the samples included in this packet.

Pursuant to state statutes, all children five to eighteen years of age must be enrolled in a public school or the parents must demonstrate that their children are receiving equivalent instruction elsewhere. A parent who wishes to educate his/her child at home must file the **Notice of Intent** form for each year that they intend to educate the child at home. In addition to the yearly notices, many school districts require a “portfolio review” at the end of the school year to ensure that each child is receiving instruction in the courses required by statute. There are two exceptions to the mandatory attendance requirement:

1. A parent who is not intending to send a child five or six years of age to school must appear personally at the school district office and sign the **Option to Exempt Attendance** form. This exemption is valid for only one school year. Therefore, this process must be followed for each year that the child will not be attending school.
2. When a child reaches the age of seventeen, such child may withdraw from school with written parental consent. The parent must appear in person at the school to sign the withdrawal form.

Two CSDE Web sites are listed below - one with Web pages for the state's curricular frameworks and the second for general GED information. Other Web sites are listed with information that might assist you, including two homeschooling resources in the state. Please note, however, that CSDE does not endorse any home instruction organization or product.

- CSDE GED Information: http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/ged
- CT Education Network: http://www.ct.gov/cen/site/default.asp - This link has information about electronic resources that could be used in homeschooling.
- CT Virtual Learning Center (CTVLC): http://www.ctvirtuallearning.org/.
- Connecticut Home Education Association: www.cthomeschoolnetwork.org (or call Info-line at 1-800 203-1234 or simply dial 211 within Connecticut and ask for information on contacting the Connecticut Homeschooling Network). This organization may provide you with links to Connecticut homeschooling families and resources, or others who may be available to speak with you about homeschooling. There is also a resource section on this site that lists a few choices for home school curriculums and programs. Note: CSDE does not endorse any home instruction organization or product. As Connecticut's homeschooling statutes state, parents/guardians have the right to home school as long as they can provide evidence that the curriculum used is equivalent to that which is taught in the public schools.
- Additional curriculum resources: http://www.ct-cheer.com/curriculum.htm - This link includes a listing of resources, such as education Web sites focused on curriculum areas in science, social studies, math, and English.
CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT

Series: 1994-95
Circular Letter: C-14

TO: Superintendents of Schools

FROM: Vincent L. Ferrandino, Commissioner of Education

DATE: July 15, 1994

SUBJECT: Revised Procedures Concerning Requests from Parents to Educate Their Child at Home

I. Introduction

On November 7, 1990, The State Board of Education adopted the following policy on home instruction.

The State Board of Education acknowledges the right of parents to instruct their children at home as an alternative to public school attendance; and advises local and regional boards of education, where such child would otherwise be attending public school, to acknowledge home instruction when the parent or person having control of a child ages 7 to 16 is able to show that the child is receiving equivalent instruction in the studies taught in the public schools.

The intent of these procedures is twofold: First, to provide local boards of education with suggestions concerning procedures to be utilized when parents wish to educate their child at home; and second, to assist parents in making requests to educate their child at home. The suggested procedures outline a series of steps in a process that should be conducted in an atmosphere of respect and cooperation by parents and local boards of education.

II. Statutory Authority

Section 10-184 of the Connecticut General Statutes (attached) describes the duties of parents for educating their children. It requires that parents or persons having control of children from seven years of age to sixteen years of age shall cause such children "...to attend a public day school regularly...." However, Section 10-184 allows the parent or person having control of such child to educate the child in other than the public schools if they are "...able to show that the child is elsewhere receiving equivalent instruction in the studies taught in the public schools."

The duties of local boards of education are described in Section 10-220 of the Connecticut General Statutes (attached). As part of their identified duties, local boards of education are required to "...cause each child seven years of age and over and under sixteen living in the school district to attend school in accordance with the provisions of Section 10-184...."
However, if parents wish to educate their child in their home, they must show equivalency as described in Section 10-184 and local boards of education must determine whether or not such a child is receiving equivalent instruction as required by Section 10-220.

The following procedures have been developed in order to assist parents and local boards of education to work together in such a way as to assure children receive the education to which they are entitled by law. We would deem compliance with these suggested procedures as satisfying the requirements of Sections 10-184 and 10-220 of the General Statutes.

**III. Suggested Procedures for Home Instruction**

In determining whether the education provided a child is equivalent to the instruction provided in the local schools, it is recommended that the local board of education observe the following procedures:

A. Parents must file with the superintendent of schools in the town in which they reside a notice of intent form that provides basic information about the program to be provided to their child. A notice of intent will be effective for up to one school year (see attached).

B. Filing must occur within ten days of the start of the home instruction program.

C. The school district will receive the notice of intent, check it for completeness and keep it as part of the district's permanent records. A complete form will be one that provides basic program information including name of teacher, subjects to be taught and days of instruction, and the teacher's methods of assessment.

D. A parent, by filing a notice of intent, acknowledges full responsibility for the education of their child in accordance with the requirements of state law. Receipt of a notice of intent in no way constitutes approval by a school district of the content or effectiveness of a program of home instruction.

E. If a parent fails to file a notice of intent or files an incomplete form, then a certified letter shall be sent to the parent requesting compliance within ten days.

F. An annual portfolio review will be held with the parents and school officials to determine if instruction in the required courses has been given.

G. Any continued refusal by the parent to comply with the reasonable request of the school district for completion and filing of the notice of intent or to participate in an annual portfolio review may cause the child to be considered truant.

H. A school district should not accept nor require a notice of intent [or option to exempt] for any child younger than seven years or sixteen years or older.

I. The school district shall record the number of students instructed at home on the appropriate form issued by the State Department of Education.
Selections from the Connecticut General Statutes
Regarding School Attendance
(Revised to January 1, 2011)

Sec. 10-184. Duties of parents. School attendance age requirements. All parents and those who have the care of children shall bring them up in some lawful and honest employment and instruct them or cause them to be instructed in reading, writing, spelling, English grammar, geography, arithmetic and United States history and in citizenship, including a study of the town, state and federal governments. Subject to the provisions of this section and section 10-15c, each parent or other person having control of a child five years of age and over and under eighteen years of age shall cause such child to attend a public school regularly during the hours and terms the public school in the district in which such child resides is in session, unless such child is a high school graduate or the parent or person having control of such child is able to show that the child is elsewhere receiving equivalent instruction in the studies taught in the public schools. For the school year commencing July 1, 2011, and each school year thereafter, the parent or person having control of a child seventeen years of age may consent, as provided in this section, to such child’s withdrawal from school. Such parent or person shall personally appear at the school district office and sign a withdrawal form. Such withdrawal form shall include an attestation from a guidance counselor or school administrator of the school that such school district has provided such parent or person with information on the educational options available in the school system and in the community. The parent or person having control of a child five years of age shall have the option of not sending the child to school until the child is six years of age and the parent or person having control of a child six years of age shall have the option of not sending the child to school until the child is seven years of age. The parent or person shall exercise such option by personally appearing at the school district office and signing an option form. The school district shall provide the parent or person with information on the educational opportunities available in the school system.

Sec. 10-184a. Refusal of certain parents to consent to use of special education programs or services. The provisions of sections 10-76a to 10-76h, inclusive, shall not be construed to require any local, regional or state board of education to provide special education programs or services for any child whose parent or guardian has chosen to educate such child in a home or private school in accordance with the provisions of section 10-184 and who refuses to consent to such programs or services.

Sec. 10-184b. Waiver provisions not applicable to equivalent instruction authority of parents. Notwithstanding any provision of the general statutes or public or special act granting the Commissioner of Education the authority to waive provisions of the general statutes, the Commissioner of Education shall not limit the authority of parents or guardians to provide for equivalent instruction pursuant to section 10-184.

Sec. 10-220. Duties of boards of education. (a) Each local or regional board of education shall maintain good public elementary and secondary schools, implement the educational interests of the state as defined in section 10-4a and provide such other educational activities as in its judgment will best serve the interests of the school district; provided any board of education may secure such opportunities in another school district in accordance with provisions of the general statutes and shall give all the children of the school district as nearly equal advantages as may be practicable; shall provide an appropriate learning environment for its students which includes (1) adequate
instructional books, supplies, materials, equipment, staffing, facilities and technology, (2) equitable allocation of resources among its schools, (3) proper maintenance of facilities, and (4) a safe school setting; shall have charge of the schools of its respective school district; shall make a continuing study of the need for school facilities and of a long-term school building program and from time to time make recommendations based on such study to the town; shall adopt and implement an indoor air quality program that provides for ongoing maintenance and facility reviews necessary for the maintenance and improvement of the indoor air quality of its facilities; shall adopt and implement a green cleaning program, pursuant to section 10-231g, that provides for the procurement and use of environmentally preferable cleaning products in school buildings and facilities; shall report biennially to the Commissioner of Education on the condition of its facilities and the action taken to implement its long-term school building program, indoor air quality program and green cleaning program, which report the Commissioner of Education shall use to prepare a biennial report that said commissioner shall submit in accordance with section 11-4a to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education; shall advise the Commissioner of Education of the relationship between any individual school building project pursuant to chapter 173 and such long-term school building program; shall have the care, maintenance and operation of buildings, lands, apparatus and other property used for school purposes and at all times shall insure all such buildings and all capital equipment contained therein against loss in an amount not less than eighty per cent of replacement cost; shall determine the number, age and qualifications of the pupils to be admitted into each school; shall develop and implement a written plan for minority staff recruitment for purposes of subdivision (3) of section 10-4a; shall employ and dismiss the teachers of the schools of such district subject to the provisions of sections 10-151 and 10-158a; shall designate the schools which shall be attended by the various children within the school district; shall make such provisions as will enable each child of school age residing in the district to attend some public day school for the period required by law and provide for the transportation of children wherever transportation is reasonable and desirable, and for such purpose may make contracts covering periods of not more than five years; may place in an alternative school program or other suitable educational program a pupil enrolling in school who is nineteen years of age or older and cannot acquire a sufficient number of credits for graduation by age twenty-one; may arrange with the board of education of an adjacent town for the instruction therein of such children as can attend school in such adjacent town more conveniently; shall cause each child five years of age and over and under eighteen years of age who is not a high school graduate and is living in the school district to attend school in accordance with the provisions of section 10-184, and shall perform all acts required of it by the town or necessary to carry into effect the powers and duties imposed by law.
NOTICE OF INTENT: INSTRUCTION OF STUDENT AT HOME
(For District Use Only)

(SAMPLE FORM ONLY: OBTAIN DISTRICT FORM FROM LOCAL SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE)

Name of Student: ___________________________ Date of Birth: __________

Address: ___________________________ Telephone #: __________________

Name of Teacher: ___________________________

Address: ___________________________

Telephone #: __________________ FAX: __________________

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<th>THE SUBJECTS TO BE TAUGHT ARE:</th>
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<th>NO</th>
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<td>U.S. History</td>
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<td>Citizenship (including a study of Town, State and Federal Governments)</td>
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<td>(RECOMMENDED)</td>
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<td>Science</td>
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<tr>
<td>(OTHER)</td>
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Total number of days scheduled for instruction: ___________________________

Teacher’s methods of assessment of Student Progress:
____________________________
____________________________
____________________________
NOTICE OF INTENT:
INSTRUCTION OF STUDENT AT HOME
PAGE 2

An annual Portfolio Review of student's work will be held on or about: _______________.

Date

I acknowledge and accept full responsibility for the education of my child in accordance with the requirements of State Law.

_____________________________  _________________________
Parents                          Date

I only acknowledge receipt of this Form and render no opinion as to the appropriateness of the planned program.

_____________________________  _________________________
Superintendent                  Date
CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT

Series 1998-1999  
Circular Letter: C-4

To: Superintendents of Schools  
From: Theodore S. Sergi Commissioner of Education  
Date: August 10, 1998  
Subject: Duties of Boards of Education and Parents to Cause Children to Attend Public School

Public Act 98-243, An Act Concerning Early Reading Success, contains a little noticed provision which changes your obligations concerning compulsory school attendance. This provision lowers the compulsory education age from age seven to age five. It also permits parents to withhold their child from a formal education program at age five for one year and then again at age six for one year. At age seven, the child must be enrolled in an education program as described in Section 10-184 of the Connecticut General Statutes and no additional delays are permitted.

The ‘opt-out’ process described in the statute imposes three conditions:

- The parent or person having control of the child must personally appear at the school district office;
- The school district shall provide the parent or person with information on the educational opportunities available in the school system; and
- The parent or person having control of the child must sign an option form exempting their child from attendance at the public school.

The purpose of this legislation is not to interfere with the rights of parents who choose to educate their child in a private school or teach them at home. It is directed at those few parents who do not provide a regular educational experience for their child. It is hoped that if the parent is fully apprised of the importance of providing this experience at an early age and understands the nature of the public school offerings, that they will quickly choose to enroll their child in school before reaching the age of seven.

Attached to this letter is a sample form developed by the State Department of Education, which any school district may use to document compliance with the requirements of this law. It contains all of the information, which is required by statute and serves as an appropriate record of compliance with the statute. This form or a comparable form developed by a school system should be made a part of the student’s record.

If you have any questions about the new law or the sample form, please contact Attorney Ronald C. Harris, Office of Legal and Governmental Affairs, at (860) 713-6516.

TSS:rhw  
Attachment
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF OPTION TO EXEMPT ATTENDANCE
OF CHILD FIVE OR SIX YEARS OF AGE FROM SCHOOL

Pursuant to Section 10-184 of the Connecticut General Statutes, I ________________________________,
(Name of Parent, Guardian or Other)
of ____________________________________________,
Address
the parent, guardian or other person charged with the care of the following minor child

__________________________________________ of ____________________________________________, who was
Name of Child Address
born on ____________________________ do hereby choose not to send my child to public School
Date
during the ____________________________.
School Year

Furthermore, before signing this form, a representative of the ____________________________,
Name of District
school district met with me and provided me with information concerning the educational
opportunities and school accommodations available in the school system.

ACKNOWLEDGED BY:

__________________________________________
Signature of Parent, Guardian or Other

__________________________________________
Date
CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
GENERAL EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (GED)
HOME-SCHOOLING ATTESTATION

I confirm that (NAME) ________________________________ has been home-
schooled under my direction in the town(s) of ________________________________ since
(Date) ________________________________, and I agree the general educational development
(GED) test would in his/her best interest at this time.

(Signature of parent or guardian) ________________________________ Date

Signature of GED Examinee ________________________________ Date

Name and address of GED Examinee:
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Please present this attestation form to the GED registrar at the registration site where you are
applying to take the GED Test. You will not be able to register for the GED Test without this
completed form.

Copies of this form are available only through Connecticut State Department of Education
and are not valid without signature.

Maureen R. Wagner, Acting GED Administrator
Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE)
General Educational Development (GED)
25 Industrial Park Road
Middletown, CT 06457

Signature ________________________________ Date

9
Notice of Intent
Instruction of Student at Home
(For District Use Only)

School: ________________________________________

Student Number: ____________________________

Student Name: ________________________________ Date of Birth: ______________

Address: ______________________________________

______________________________________________

Number: ( ) ________ - __________

Name of Teacher: ________________________________

Address: ______________________________________

______________________________________________

Number: ( ) ________ - __________

The subjects to be taught are:

Reading  Yes  No
Writing  
Spelling
English Grammar
Geography
Arithmetic
Science
U.S. History
(Including a study of towns, state, and federal governments)
Citizenship
Other:

______________________________________________

______________________________________________

Total number of days scheduled for instruction: ___________

Approximate hours per day scheduled for instruction: ___________

Teacher's methods of assessment of student progress:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
An Annual Portfolio Review will be held on or about:  

(Date)

Annual Portfolio Review Completed on:

(Date)

I ACKNOWLEDGE AND ACCEPT FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE EDUCATION OF MY CHILD IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF STATE LAW.

Signature________________________________ Parent  

(Date)

Thank you for completing this form. Please return this form to the school named on the first page of the form.

---

For office use only. Please do not write below this line.

I ONLY ACKNOWLEDGE RECEIPT OF THIS FORM AND RENDER NO OPINION AS TO THE ADEQUACY OF THE PLANNED PROGRAM.

Superintendent  

(Date)

Faxed: (Circle)  

Yes  No
Increase Noted in Number of Home-Schooled Students: The estimated number of home-schooled children represents 3.4 percent of the U.S. student population between the ages of 5 and 17. The increase was fastest between 1999 and 2007, then slowed between 2007 and 2012, according to the estimates from the National Center for Education Statistics. The figures show that most home-schoolers were white and living above the poverty line in 2012.

Approximately 1.8 million U.S. children were home-schooled in 2012, more than double the number that were home-schooled in 1999, when the federal government began gathering data on national home-schooled trends, according to recently released estimates from the National Center for Education Statistics.

The figures show that most home-schoolers were white and living above the poverty line in 2012. An estimated 4 in 10 home-schoolers had parents who graduated from college, while about 1 in 10 had parents whose formal education ended before they graduated from high school.

About one-third live in rural areas, while slightly more than one-third live in the suburbs and slightly less than one-third live in cities.

Researchers conducted the home-schooling survey of a nationally representative sample of students via telephone from 1999 to 2007. In 2012, they instead asked questions via mail, introducing some methodological changes that make it more difficult to compare results over time.

It’s particularly difficult to tell whether parents’ reasons for home-schooling have changed. In 2007, for example, 36 percent of parents said that providing “religious or moral instruction” was the most important reason for home-schooling. It was the top-ranked “most important” reason for home-schooling that year.

In 2012, that share appeared to fall: Seventeen percent named religious instruction as most important and 5 percent said moral instruction was most important. However, the question was asked differently, with religious and moral instruction as two separate reasons instead of one combined reason, and so it was not immediately clear whether the numbers represented a real change in parents’ motivations.
The share of parents who said their most important reason was concern about the environment at other schools, such as safety, drugs and peer pressure, rose from 21 percent in 2007 to 25 percent in 2012. That change was not considered statistically significant.


Policy Implications: Policy #6172.3, “Home-Schooling,” pertains to this issue. This is considered a recommended “good practice” policy for inclusion in a district’s policy manual. Several versions of this sample policy are available.

The policy is a recognition that parents/guardians have an alternate to public school instruction. C.G.S. 10-184 states that a parent meets his/her duty regarding the education of their child if “the parent or person having control of such child is able to show that the child is elsewhere receiving equivalent instruction in the studies taught in the public schools.” Therefore, parents/guardians may choose to exercise their right to educate their children at home.

The Connecticut statute does not explicitly permit home schooling. However, the State Board of Education (SBE) adopted a policy in 1990 stating that it was permitted. The SBE policy established guidelines for local school districts for receiving and reviewing requests regarding the education of children at home. The local district must be notified that the parent/guardian wants to homeschool their child, thereby taking the responsibility for their child’s education. However, because the guidelines do not have the force of law, some parents refuse to cooperate with local school officials who want to exercise oversight over the home instructional program through such activities as an annual portfolio review.

ESSA Update – Armed Forces Recruiter Access to Students: The Every Child Succeeds Act (ESSA), section 8025, requires districts that receive ESEA funds, such as Title I funds for remedial assistance, to provide, upon request, military recruiters or an institution of higher education or to prospective employers of these students, access to the (1) name, (2) address and (3) telephone listing of each secondary school student unless the parent of such student has submitted a written request to the local school district that the information not be released without prior written parental consent.

The ESSA does not require disclosure of what might be considered directory information under FERPA beyond the three items listed above. The ESSA also requires that districts notify parents of their option to withhold consent to any disclosure.

Connecticut, through C.G.S. 10-221b, has provided that boards of education must adopt policies that provide for the same on-campus recruiting opportunities and access to directory information as are provided to nonmilitary recruiters or commercial concerns. “Directory information” is defined as information that would not normally be considered private; but boards of education, through policy language, must decide for themselves which precise categories of information to designate as “directory information.” The federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) provides that student information must be kept confidential. FERPA permits, but does not require, school districts to designate certain information as directory information.
That which a board has specified as directory information, either in its student records policy or in a separate policy pertaining to directory information, may be disclosed without parental or student consent (18 years of age or older) provided that the board has annually notified parents and such students they may object to disclosure of directory information, and upon objection, such information may not be disclosed.

The “Every Child Succeeds Act” of 2015 mirrors the Connecticut law requiring equal access for military recruiters, with an important difference. Under FERPA, the decision regarding the release of directory information was left up to the board of education and such information had to be disclosed to military recruiters only if the board of education decided to release directory information to others. This new federal legislation requires boards of education to provide military recruiters with directory information limited to students’ names, addresses and telephone listings, unless parents specifically object, in writing.

The local school district is prohibited by ESSA from withholding the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of students from military recruiters by implementing an opt-out process or any other process that is contrary to the written consent request process provided for in the law. ESSA requires the information to be given upon the request of military recruiters unless the parent makes a written request that the information not be released. Upon receiving such request, the district may not release such information without the parent’s prior written consent.

In addition, the board of education cannot adopt a policy generally prohibiting access by military recruiters to the student information.

Districts are also required to notify the parents of the enrolled students of the option to make the written request described above concerning the opt-out process. If no written opt out is provided, the District must release the student’s name, address and telephone listing to military recruiters.

When a student has attained 18 years of age, the permission or consent required of and the right accorded to the student’s parents shall only be required of and accorded to the student. Therefore, schools should notify students of their rights under this law (ESSA) when they turn 18 years old. This will apply mostly to seniors. It is recommended that the required notice be provided to both senior students and their parents at the beginning of their senior year.

**Policy Implications:** Federal legislation requires that districts provide military recruiters the same access to high school students that is generally provided to post-secondary educational institutions or prospective employers. Parental consent for accessing students is not required. In response to the requirements of the National Defense Authorization Act and the Every Student Succeeds Act, CBE amended policy #5145.14 “On-Campus Recruitment,” policy #5145.15 “Directory Information” and the form used to deny permission. They are available upon request.

**New Teacher Preparation Regulations Issued:** The long-awaited final regulations governing teacher preparation programs were recently released by U.S. Education Secretary John King, putting in place a new system of accountability and data collection to measure how well these programs prepare new teachers. Teacher prep programs will now be held responsible for their graduates’ performance in the classroom, and will provide potential candidates with information to help them select a school before they apply.
The new rules require states to annually rate all teacher prep programs as "effective," "at-risk," or "low-performing," based on indicators such as length of time graduates stay in the teaching profession, the number of graduates hired in high-needs schools, and graduates' effectiveness as teachers (according to classroom observations and students' academic performance). Programs that receive the lowest rating must receive additional state support. In addition, in a move designed to steer candidates toward the top-rated programs, only those programs that achieve an "effective" rating will be eligible for federal TEACH grants (a total of $111 million was awarded to candidates in FY 2016).

The final version of the regulations rejected a controversial proposal to link accountability with the test scores of students taught by program graduates, though states may still choose to make that connection. Instead, the final regulations allow states to use measures "relevant to student outcomes" to determine the effectiveness of a teacher prep program.

Under the new rules, states will create their reporting systems during the current 2016-2017 school year, pilot them in the 2017-2018 school year, and implement them in the 2018-2019 school year. TEACH grant eligibility can be rescinded based on program performance beginning in the 2021-2022 school year.

Source: "CAPITOL Connection," ASCD, October 19, 2016
b. Private schools and home instruction

Parents have an alternative to public school instruction. A parent meets his or her duty regarding the education of children if “the parent or person having control of such child is able to show that the child is elsewhere receiving equivalent instruction in the studies taught in the public schools.” Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-184. Absent special circumstances, enrollment in a private school meets that requirement, whether the school is secular or sectarian. Such schools, however, are required to file student attendance reports with the State Department of Education. Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-188.

In addition, parents may choose to exercise their right to educate their children at home. When parents make this choice, school officials can be uncertain of their own rights and obligations. The statute clearly states that the parent must show that the child is elsewhere receiving education equivalent to that provided in the public schools. Do school districts have the right to judge the quality of the parents’ home instruction? Can school districts require that instruction be provided through certified personnel? Do school officials have the right to visit the home, observe instruction, ask for work samples, conduct pre- and post-instruction testing, and the like? With home-schooling there are more questions than answers.

The Connecticut statute does not explicitly permit home schooling. However, in 1990, the State Board of Education adopted a policy to the effect that home instruction is permitted. See Series 1994-95, Circular Letter C-14, “Revised Procedures Concerning Requests from Parents to Educate Their Children at Home” (July 15, 1994). This policy does not have legal effect, and parents remain obligated under Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-184 to assure that their children receive instruction equivalent to the studies taught in the public schools. Rather, the policy simply establishes guidelines for receiving and reviewing requests to educate children at home. Under these guidelines, the Department suggests that parents who wish to home-school notify school districts that they are taking responsibility for the education of their children. The guidelines also suggest a portfolio review at the end of the school year to determine whether instruction in the required courses has been given. The guidelines even admonish that a failure to provide such notification and/or to participate in a portfolio review may cause the child to be considered truant. Unfortunately, because these guidelines do not have the force of law, some parents refuse as a matter of principle to cooperate with school officials who wish to exercise oversight responsibility over home instructional programs.
**Student Nutrition and Physical Activity (Wellness Policy)**

Norwalk Public Schools promotes healthy schools by supporting physical, social, and emotional wellness, including good nutrition and regular physical activity as a part of the total learning environment. The district supports a healthy environment where children learn and participate in positive dietary and lifestyle practices. By facilitating learning through the support and promotion of good nutrition and physical activity, schools contribute to the basic health status of children. Improved health optimizes student performance potential.

The District shall establish and maintain a Wellness Committee, consisting of representatives from Norwalk Public Schools and the greater Norwalk community. The Committee shall recommend, review and provide oversight of the Wellness Policy, its implementation, and wellness-related issues that affect student health. All members shall participate in the ongoing assessment and revision of the policy to actively promote the health and wellness of all students and advance their readiness to learn.

**District Health and Wellness Committee**
The Committee will convene at least quarterly each school year, and will follow federal and state regulation for School Wellness Advisory Committees. The Committee’s responsibilities are to include:

- Conducting an annual review of district-wide policies to promote student wellness, and recommending district-wide policies or revisions, as needed;
- Creating and implementing a Health and Wellness Action Plan each year including timelines, processes, goals and school-based activities designed to promote student and staff wellness based on the results of the district’s annual assessments;
- Providing guidance for the implementation of district-level policies related to wellness;
- Assisting district officials in the evaluation of the district’s Wellness Policy and schools’ wellness initiatives, including the development and delivery of assessment tools;
- Collecting and sharing information about wellness programs and services;
- Reporting on progress towards committee goals, objectives, policies, monitoring and evaluation of Health and Wellness Policy implementation at least once every three years (triennially).
- Working closely with district officials to ensure that appropriate communication of the Wellness Policy, revisions, and progress reports are provided to the public.

**Membership:** The Committee shall include representative membership from:
- A member of the Superintendent’s Senior Management Team, and/or their designee
- Administrators/NPS staff representing the following areas:
  - Curriculum
  - Health services/Nursing
  - Guidance
  - School Food Services
  - Physical Education
  - Health Education
A liaison from each school will be designated as a point of contact for the Wellness Committee. The liaison can be a member of the School Governance Committee or School Safety Committee, or can be another person designated by the principal who would have knowledge about the implementation of the Policy at that school.

**Goals for Monitoring, Evaluation, and Communications**

**Monitoring and Evaluation**
The Superintendent or designee shall ensure compliance with the established district-wide school wellness policy. In each school, the Principal or designee shall ensure compliance with those policies in his or her school.

School food service staff members, at the school or district level, shall ensure compliance with nutrition policies within school food service areas and shall report on this matter to the Superintendent (or if done at the school level, to the school Principal).

The Superintendent or designee shall provide annual implementation data and/or reports to the Wellness Committee and Board of Education concerning this policy’s implementation, so that the Board can monitor and adjust the policy as needed.

**Policy Review**
The District shall identify a strategy and schedule to help review policy compliance, assess progress and determine areas in need of improvement. The strategy delineates roles, responsibilities, actions and timelines specific to each school; and includes information about who will be responsible to make changes, specific goals and objectives for nutrition standards for all foods and beverages available on the school campus, food and beverage marketing, nutrition promotion and education, physical activity, physical education and other school-based activities to promote student wellness.

The District and individual schools within the District shall, as necessary, revise the school wellness policy and develop work plans to facilitate its implementation.

The district shall share the Wellness Policy and any updates with the public at least annually, and shall share triennial progress reports with the public. The district Wellness Policy and progress reports can be found on the Norwalk Public Schools website.

**NUTRITION EDUCATION**

**Goals for Nutrition Education**
Nutrition education shall be offered as part of a planned, ongoing, systematic, sequential, standards-based, comprehensive school health education program designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health. Nutrition education shall use national or state-developed standards, such as the Connecticut State Department of Education’s Healthy
The district shall develop and implement a comprehensive, developmentally appropriate, curriculum approach to nutrition in all grades. Students shall be able to demonstrate competency through application of knowledge, skill development and practice.

The nutrition education program shall focus on students' eating behaviors, be based on theories and methods proven effective by published research, and be consistent with the state's/district's comprehensive school health education standards/guidelines/curriculum framework. Nutrition themes include but are not limited to:

- My Plate and the Dietary Guidelines for Americans (Healthy Eating Plan)
- Identify and limit foods of low nutrient density
- Healthy heart choices
- Food labels
- Sources and functions of major nutrients
- Multicultural influences
- Guide to a healthy diet
- Serving sizes
- Diet and disease
- Proper food safety and sanitation
- Understanding calories
- Body-size acceptances, healthy weight and dangers of unhealthy weight-control practices
- Healthy snacks

The district nutrition policy reinforces nutrition education to help students practice these themes in a supportive school environment. Nutrition education shall also be included in other classroom content areas such as math, science, language arts, social sciences, family and consumer sciences and elective subjects. Instructional staff is encouraged to integrate nutritional themes into daily lessons when appropriate, to reinforce and support health messages.

The school district shall assess all nutrition education lessons and materials for accuracy, completeness, balance and consistency with the state's/district's educational goals and curriculum standards. Materials developed by food marketing boards or food corporations shall be examined for appropriateness of commercial messages.

**Educational Reinforcement**
School instructional staff members are encouraged to collaborate with agencies and groups conducting nutrition education in the community to send consistent messages to students and their families.

**Nutrition Promotion**
The school district is encouraged to conduct nutrition education activities and promotions that involve parents, students and the community, including but not limited to programs such as Team Nutrition and the Healthier US School Challenge.

**Professional Development for Teachers**
The District shall include appropriate training for teachers and other staff members. Staff members responsible for nutrition education shall be adequately prepared and shall regularly participate in
professional development activities to effectively deliver the nutrition education program as planned. Preparation and professional development activities shall provide basic knowledge of nutrition, combined with the development of skills and adequate time to practice skills in program-specific activities. Training shall include instructional techniques and strategies designed to promote healthy eating behaviors. Staff members providing nutrition education shall not advocate dieting behaviors or any specific eating regimen to students, other staff members or parents.

Food Marketing in Schools
School-based marketing shall be consistent with nutrition education and health promotion. Thus, schools shall limit food and beverage marketing to the promotion of foods and beverages that meet the U.S. Department of Agriculture nutrient standards for meals or the District’s nutrition standards for foods and beverages. Schools shall promote healthy food choices. The promotion of nutrient-dense foods, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains and low-fat dairy products, shall be encouraged.

Education Links with School
Nutrition education may be offered in the school cafeteria and classroom, with coordination between school food service and teachers. The district shall link nutrition education with other coordinated school health initiatives. The nutrition education program may link with school meal programs, other school foods, and nutrition-related community services that occur outside the classroom or that link classroom nutrition education to the larger school community, such as school gardens, cafeteria-based nutrition education and afterschool programs. For example, schools are encouraged to utilize instructional gardens to provide students with experiences in planting, harvesting, preparation, serving, and tasting foods, including ceremonies and celebrations that observe food traditions, integrated with nutrition education and core curriculum, and articulated with state standards.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY
Norwalk Public Schools is committed to a district-wide, strategic effort to increase all students’ physical activity and fitness. The district strives to incorporate physical education and physical activity in schools, improve the quality of physical education and recess, as well as increase the equity of physical activity programs and resources across schools. These goals are addressed in detail in district Policy 6142.61.

SCHOOL FOOD
National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program
Reimbursable meals served in the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) will follow the USDA meal pattern requirements and nutrient standards in accordance with the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. Menu planning, purchasing procedures and production techniques for school meals will be used to decrease fat, saturated fat, trans fat, sodium and sugars, and to increase fiber. The school food service provider will follow minimum standards for school food quality, as outlined in the food service contract.

Menus shall be planned to be appealing and attractive to children and will incorporate the basic menu planning principles of balance, variety, contrast, color and eye appeal. Menus shall be planned with input from students, parents and other school personnel and shall take into account students’ cultural norms and preferences. Schools shall engage students and parents, through surveys, taste-tests and other activities, in selecting foods sold through the school meal programs in order to identify new, healthful and appealing food choices. Meal patterns and nutrition standards of federal regulations will be fulfilled as required.
The district will share information regarding the nutrition content of school meals with students, families and school staff. Nutrition information for a la carte foods and beverages sold in schools will also be available.

With appropriate medical documentation, modified meals shall be prepared for students with food allergies or other special dietary needs. Upon written parental permission and a medical statement by a physician that identifies the student's disability, states why the disability restricts the student's diet, identifies the major life activity affected by the disability, and states the foods to be omitted and the food or choices of foods that must be substituted.

Such food substitutions will be made for students without disabilities on a case-by-case basis when the parent/guardian submits a signed request that includes a medical statement signed by a physician, physical assistant, registered dietician or nurse practitioner. The medical statement must state the medical condition or special dietary need that restricts the student's diet and provide a list of foods that may be substituted in place of the lunch or breakfast menu being served.

The district shall help ensure that all children have breakfast, either at home or at school, in order to meet their nutritional needs and enhance their ability to learn. Schools will:

- to the extent possible, operate and promote the School Breakfast Program;
- to the extent possible, arrange bus schedules and use methods to serve school breakfasts that encourage participation, including serving breakfast in the classroom, "grab-and-go" breakfast, or breakfast during morning break or recess;
- notify parents and students of the availability of the School Breakfast Program (if the school serves breakfast to students); and
- Encourage parents to provide a healthy breakfast for their children through newsletter articles, take-home materials, or other means.

**Cafetería A La Carta Sales**

The school food service program must follow the Connecticut Nutrition Standards when determining the items for a la carte sales. All beverages sold to students in school meals and as a la carte sales must meet the requirements of state statute and USDA requirements for a la carte foods.

At all times when food is available for purchase by students during the school day, nutritious and low-fat foods must also be available for sale at the same time. These foods may include, but shall not be limited to, low-fat dairy products and fresh or dried fruit.

The sale of beverages, as part of school meals and as a la carte sales, shall be limited to the following five categories defined by state statute:

1. Milk, low-fat (1%) unflavored or nonfat which may be flavored or unflavored but contains no artificial sweeteners and no more than 4 grams of sugar per fluid ounce; (federal regulation require non-fat or 1% low fat milk)*
2. Nondairy milks, such as soy, rice, or lactose-free milk, which may be flavored or unflavored but contains no artificial sweeteners, no more than 4 grams of sugar per fluid ounce, no more than 35% of calories from fat per serving, and no more than 10% of calories from saturated fat per serving;*
3. 100% fruit or vegetable juice or combination of such juices, containing no added sugars, sweeteners, or artificial sweeteners;*
4. Beverages that contain only water and fruit or vegetable juice and have no added sugars, sweeteners, or artificial sweeteners; and*
5. Water, which may be flavored but must contain no added sugars, sweeteners, artificial sweeteners, or caffeine.*

**Note:** The Federal Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 requires schools to make free potable water available where meals are served for schools participating in the federal and school lunch program.

**Note:** The beverage requirements of CGS Section 10-221q apply to all public schools, regardless of whether the district certifies for the healthy food option under CGS 10-215f.

(*Consult the CSDE's List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages for allowable products.)

**Lunchroom Climate**
A lunchroom environment that provides students with a relaxed, enjoyable climate shall be developed. It is encouraged that the lunchroom environment be a place where students have:
- adequate space to eat and pleasant surroundings;
- appropriate supervision; and
- convenient access to hand washing facilities before meals.

**Meal Schedules**
Meal periods shall be scheduled at appropriate hours. In compliance with federal regulations, lunch must be scheduled between 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. in all schools. Pursuant to state statute, schools are required to provide all full day students a daily lunch period of not less than 20 minutes. This time period shall not include recess time, and meals shall occur after recess. Activities such as tutoring, clubs or organizational meetings or activities shall not be scheduled during meal times unless students may eat during such activities.

**Qualifications of Food Service Staff**
Qualified nutrition professionals shall administer the school meal programs. As part of the school district's responsibility to operate a food service program, continuing professional development shall be provided for all nutrition professionals in schools. Staff development programs shall include appropriate certification and/or training programs for school food service directors, managers and cafeteria workers, according to their levels of responsibility.

**Training for Food Service Staff**
All food service personnel shall have adequate pre-service training in food service operations and regularly participate in professional development activities that address requirements for Child Nutrition Programs, menu planning and preparation, food safety, strategies for promoting healthy eating behaviors and other appropriate topics.

**Summer Food Service Program**
Schools in which more than 50 percent of students are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals shall sponsor the Summer Food Service Program for at least six weeks between the last day of the academic school year and the first day of the following school year.
Other Foods Offered or Sold
To create a school environment that supports the promotion of healthy food and beverage choices for children, it is important to consider all venues where food and beverages are consumed or sold. The Connecticut Nutrition Standards apply to all food sold or served to students on school premises, including but not limited to, cafeteria a la carte sales, vending machines, school stores, fundraisers, activities and classroom snacks. All beverages sold or served to students at school shall meet the requirements of state statute and federal regulations, whichever are stricter, at all times.

However, beverages not meeting the requirements of state statute and foods not meeting the Connecticut Nutrition Standards may be sold or served at the location of an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend provided they are not sold from a vending machine or school store. The district strongly encourages the sale or distribution of nutrient-dense foods, such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy, lean meats and legumes.

Pursuant to state statute (CGS 10-221p), whenever any group makes foods available for purchase in a school during the school day, low-fat dairy products and fresh or dried fruits must also be available in the school at the same time for purchase by students. "Foods available for purchase" include, but are not limited to, foods sold in cafeterias, vending machines, school stores, fundraisers and any other food sales during the school day. This includes the following:

- If a snack machine with food items is available for use by students during the school day, the school must also have non-fat or low-fat dairy products and fresh or dried fruit available for purchase. When the snack machine is operating outside of cafeteria hours, schools must make alternate provisions to offer non-fat or low-fat dairy products and fresh or dried fruit for sale at the same time.

- School stores that sell food to students must ensure that non-fat or low-fat dairy products and fresh or dried fruit are available for purchase either in the store itself or elsewhere in the school, while the school store is selling food.

Access to Drinking Water
Students and staff will have access to safe, fresh drinking water throughout the school day. Fluoridated or bottled water that does not contain added sugars, sweeteners, artificial sweeteners, or caffeine, should be made available for purchase by students and staff. Schools involved in the reimbursable National School Lunch Program and/or School Breakfast Program are required to make free potable water available where meals are served.

Foods Brought Into School
The district shall encourage families to pack healthy lunches and snacks and to refrain from including beverages that do not meet the requirements of state statute or foods that do not meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards. The district shall develop guidelines to help ensure that food brought from home to be shared with other students is appropriate. Classroom snacks shall feature healthy choices that meet the state requirements for allowable beverages and the Connecticut Nutrition Standards.
Sharing of Foods
Schools shall discourage students from sharing their foods or beverages with one another during meal or snack times, given concerns with allergies and other restrictions on some children's diets.

Fundraising
School fundraising activities shall not involve food or beverages or shall only use foods that meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards and beverages that meet the requirements of state statute and federal regulations. However, food items that do not meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards and beverages not meeting the requirements of state statute and federal regulations can be sold as fundraisers on school premises if they are sold at the location of an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend, provided they are not sold from a vending machine or school store. Schools shall encourage fundraising activities that promote physical activity. The District shall work with the Wellness Committee to make available to students, parents, teachers and school groups a list of ideas for alternate fundraising activities, such as healthy foods and beverages or nonfood fundraisers.

Competition with nutritious meals served by the school food services operations must be minimized. Income from any competitive foods or beverages sold from 30 minutes prior to the start of any state or federally subsidized milk or meal program until 30 minutes after the end of the program must accrue to the food service account.

Concessions
Food items that do not meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards and beverages that do not meet the requirements of state statute and federal regulations can be sold at concessions operated at the location of an event that occurs after the school day or on the weekend, provided they are not sold from a vending machine or school store. Organizations operating concessions at school functions after school or on weekends should include at least some healthy food choices in their offerings. It is recommended that groups market these healthy options at a lower profit margin to encourage selection by students.

Teacher-to-Student Incentives and Punishments
Schools shall not use foods or beverages as rewards for academic performance or good behavior, unless this practice is allowed by a student's individualized education plan (IEP). Alternative rewards shall be developed and promoted. Schools shall not withhold foods or beverages (including food served through school meals) as a punishment.

OTHER

Health Services (reference 6164.1)
School based health services are provided by school nurses (RNs) through the Norwalk Board of Education. School nursing is a specialty nursing practice that advances the well-being, academic success and lifelong achievement and health of our students by enhancing the educational process through identifying, modifying and removing health related barriers to learning. School nurses serve as a liaison among parents, school and the community in health matters.

Nurses also provide emergency care for injury and illness, dispense medications and treatments, identify communicable diseases, act as case manager for students with chronic disease conditions during school hours, promote positive behavioral health, and enact practices and systems to ensure that all students
have access to key resources and services that are developmentally appropriate. School nurses function within the standards and scope of professional nursing while adhering to evidence based practice.

School nurses serve as a resource person to classroom teachers in matters pertaining to health, and actively collaborate with others (PT, OT, Speech, Social workers, psychologists and SPED staff to build student and family capacity for adaptation in school and facilitate self-management and learning.

School Health Services ensures that all students comply with state and local public health regulations and screening mandates. Parents are notified of any problems that necessitate a medical follow-up and may opt out of certain screenings.

The goal of School Health Services is to provide every student the opportunity to access the curriculum in a safe, healthy engaged, supported and challenged environment while making reasonable accommodations when appropriate.

**School-Based Health Centers**
The district recognizes and values the important service provided by the Dr. Robert E. Appleby School Based Health Centers (SBHCs), which provide on-site medical and mental health services to children and adolescents in the district. The district recognizes SBHCs as an important partner and works with SBHC staff to promote health and wellness in the district.

**Staff Wellness**
The District highly values the health and well-being of every staff member and shall plan and implement activities and policies that support personal efforts by staff members to maintain a healthy lifestyle and that encourage staff members to serve as role models.

**Safe and Supportive Schools/Social and Emotional Climate**
Norwalk Public Schools shall create a safe and supportive school environment for all students that is culturally proficient, engaging and inclusive. District and school-based support staff including guidance counselors and social workers shall work with school teams to provide support for students, families and staff including skill-based education to promote social and emotional learning, healthy relationships and access to support services.

**Family Engagement**
Norwalk Public School’s values family partnerships and encourages parents to actively participate in all aspects of school wellness and their child’s wellbeing. Schools are encouraged to use a variety of engagement strategies that may include:

- Sending home nutrition education materials, cafeteria menus, and ideas for physical activity
- Encouraging parents to send healthy snacks/meals to school and to promote their child’s participation in physical education programs and after school activities
- Inviting parents and other family members to periodically eat with their student in the cafeteria
- Inviting families to attend exhibitions of student nutrition projects, physical education activity programs, and/or health fairs
• Offering nutrition education workshops and screening services

• Providing nutrition education and physical education homework activities that students can do with their families (e.g., reading and interpreting food labels, reading nutrition-related newsletters, preparing healthy recipes, planning active family time, etc.)

• Considering cultural preferences in development of nutrition education and physical education programs

• Collaborating agencies and groups conducting nutrition education in the community to send consistent messages to students and their families; and

• Encouraging school staff to cooperate with other agencies and community groups to provide opportunities for student volunteer or paid work related to nutrition, as appropriate.

Community Involvement
The Norwalk Public School District values and promotes community partnerships to enhance the overall health and wellness opportunities provided for students, families and staff. To that end, the Health and Wellness Committee shall continue to grow community participation to expand both the committee’s membership as well as the programs and services afforded all students, families and staff in Norwalk Public Schools.

cf: Physical Activity, Policy 6142.61
    Health Services, Policy 6164.1
    Food Services, Policy 3542.1
    Free and Reduced Price Breakfast and Lunch, Policy 3542.31
    Student-Run Cafes, Policy 3542.35
    Vending Machines, Policy 3542.45

Legal Reference:

Policy Adopted: 9/05/06

NORWALK PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Revised: __________

NORWALK, CONNECTICUT