This manual contains the official policies of the Palmer School Committee (reproduced on white paper); the major regulations intended to implement policy (yellow paper); and certain reference or "exhibit" documents that relate to policies and/or regulations (green paper).

Policy development in a modern, forward-looking school system is a dynamic, ongoing process. New problems, issues, and needs give rise to the continuing need to develop new policies or to revise existing ones. This is why the committee employs the loose-leaf format for this manual. It is easy to keep up to date.

Each person holding a copy of this manual should make a diligent effort to keep it up to date as new policies, regulations, and exhibits are distributed by the central office.

How to Use this Manual

The school department operates according to policies established by the school committee. The committee then appraises the effects of its policies and makes revisions as necessary.

In the interests of harmony, efficiency, uniformity of interpretation, coordination of effort, and in fairness to all concerned, the committee makes this manual available to all who are affected by its policies.

Please Note: All copies of this manual are the property of the Palmer Public Schools.
How the Manual is organized

The manual is organized in accordance with the classification system developed by the National School Boards Association. This system provides an efficient means of coding, filing, and finding policies and other documents. There are 12 major classifications each assigned an alphabetical code:

A -- FOUNDATIONS AND BASIC COMMITMENTS
B -- SCHOOL BOARD GOVERNANCE AND OPERATIONS
C -- GENERAL SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION
D -- FISCAL MANAGEMENT
E -- SUPPORT SERVICES
F -- FACILITIES DEVELOPMENT
G -- PERSONNEL
H -- NEGOTIATIONS
I -- INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM
J -- STUDENTS
K -- SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS
L -- EDUCATION AGENCY RELATIONS

Sub classification under each heading is based on logical sequence and alphabetical sub coding. For an example of the sub coding system, examine the white pages immediately following the tab for Section AD--Foundations and Basic Commitments.

The white pages that follow the tab for each major section present the classification system, section by section, and serve as the tables of contents for each section or "chapter" of this manual.

How to Find a Policy

There are two ways to find a policy (or regulation) in this policy manual:

1. Consider where the policy statement (or regulation) would be filed among the 12 major classifications. Turn to the Table of Contents for that section and glance down the listing until you find the term that most closely fits the topic you are seeking. Use the code letters given for that term to locate the policy you need. The pages are arranged in alphabetical order by code within the section. All pages are coded in their upper right hand corner.

2. Turn to the Code Finder Index at the end of the manual. The code finder is an alphabetical index of all terms used in education. Look up your topic as in any index, find the code, and use the code to locate the correct page in the manual.

What if you can't find the term you are seeking? The code finder index lists more than 1,800 terms, but no index of useful size could include every possibility. If the term you are seeking is not included, look up a synonym or a more general or specific term appropriate to the topic.
What if you can find the term and code, but there is no policy or regulation? This probably means that the school system has no written policy or important regulations in that particular area. All terms used in the classification system appear in the sectional tables of contents and Code Finder Index to accommodate the coding, insertion, and finding of policies or regulations that may be issued later. But there is one other possibility. A brief statement related to the policy you are seeking may be incorporated in a "superior" policy, which covers the area generally. This "superior" policy will be coded under a more general term. To find it, read up the classification system. For example, a policy statement, which relates to all meetings of the school committee, might be filed under "School Board Meetings" (BD) rather than "Regular Board Meetings" (BDA). (Please note: In the classification system and Code Finder Index, read "School Committee" for "School Board".)

Using the Signs and Symbols

Various signs and symbols are used in connection with the classification system. They are for your use in locating and/or in examining policies. Included are the following:

Also: Certain policies bear two codes in the upper right hand corner. The second is in parentheses and is preceded by 'Also'. This means that the identical policy (or regulation) is filed under both codes.

-R This symbol following a code indicates that the statement is a regulation, not a committee policy. The statement appears on a yellow, rather than a white, sheet.

-E Exhibit. This symbol following a code indicates that the statement is a reference document such as a calendar, application form, etc., rather than a policy. Such statements are printed on green paper.

DATES: Where possible, the original date of adoption/issuance appears immediately following each policy or regulation. In other instances, an approximate adoption or re-approval date is used.

LEGAL REFERENCE: Pertinent legal references are given to inform the reader where in state law s/he may find the statutes that relate to a specific policy. Unless otherwise noted, all references direct the reader to the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (cited as M.G.L., Chapter and section).

CONTRACT REFERENCE: Agreements reached through negotiations with recognized staff organizations have the full force of committee policy. References to negotiated agreements are provided, as appropriate, to direct the reader to statements in these agreements.

CROSS REFERENCE: Certain policies and regulations relate to others. Cross-references are provided following many statements to help the reader find all of the related information needed.
About Policies and Regulations

Generally, the role of a School Committee is to set policy and the role of the administration is to implement it through regulations. Written policies are the chief means by which a School Committee governs the schools, and regulations are one of the means by which the committee's policies are implemented. The following definitions provide a distinction between these two types of statements:

**POLICIES** are principles adopted by the School Committee to chart a course of action. They are broad enough to indicate a line of action to be taken by the administration in meeting a number of day-to-day problems while being narrow enough to give the administration clear guidance.

**REGULATIONS** are detailed directions usually developed by the administration to put policy into practice.

These definitions are serviceable some of the time. They reflect sound theory of governance and administration. But policies and regulations are obviously closely related. They can and do merge, making it difficult to ascertain where one begins and the other ends. For example:

* State and federal governments require school committees to make or officially approve detailed regulations, and procedures in certain areas.

* A School Committee signs contracts and agreements that may contain and interweave policies, regulations, and procedural detail.

* The public staff, or school committee members may demand that the School Committee itself, not the administration, establish specific regulations and procedures in certain sensitive areas.

It is the intermingling of policy and regulation in law, in contracts, and in adopted statements of the School Committee that can cause confusion. Sometimes they are not easily separated. Therefore, the separation of policies and regulations in this manual follows several "rules of thumb" in addition to basic theory:

1. When the school system's practice in a particular area is established by law, any informational statement covering the practice is presented as "policy" and is printed on a white page. (A law may, of course, be quoted or referred to in a regulation.)

2. When a school system's practice in a particular area has been established through a negotiated agreement, any statement pertaining to that practice is presented as "policy".

3. Where the School Committee has interwoven regulations with policy and where separation would interfere with their meaning, the entire statement is presented as a policy.

4. Where the School Committee has adopted rules and by-laws concerning its own organizational and operating procedures, these statements appear as policy. As long as the administration operates within the guidelines of policy adopted by the committee, it may issue regulations without prior committee approval, unless law requires committee action, or unless the committee has specifically asked that certain types of regulations be submitted for committee approval. The School Committee is to be informed of all school system regulations issued by the administration. All such regulations are subject to committee review.
Is the Manual Complete?

No. The manual contains all of the current written policies of the school committee to date. But, the need for putting additional policies in writing, for adopting new or revising existing ones, becomes apparent.

Additionally, state laws; and regulations change. No matter how well conceived and well developed, a policy manual can never be 100% complete and 100% up-to-date. Policy development is a continuing process. From time to time, new policies, regulations, and reference documents will be developed, coded under the classification system, and issued for insertion in the manual.

Should the need arise, supplemental sub codes may be added to the classification system to accommodate topics not covered by existing codes. For example, IGA is the code for BASIC INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM. The Code Finder Index lists various programs from IGAA, CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION to IGAJ, DRIVER EDUCATION.

Order of Precedence

School committee policies and regulations, as well as negotiated agreements with staff bargaining units, must be read and interpreted in the light of the Massachusetts General Laws and State regulations. Wherever inconsistencies of interpretation arise, the law and state regulations prevail. A conflict between a local policy or regulation and a negotiated agreement must be interpreted in line with the contract for members of the particular bargaining unit.

Terminology

The masculine, feminine and neuter genders as used in this manual import one another, and the singular shall include the plural whenever applicable.

*****

It is the hope of the Palmer School Committee is that this collection of policies and regulations will make greater harmony and efficiency possible in all areas of school operations. This will enable the committee to devote more time to its primary duty--the development of long-range policies and planning for the future of the school system.

Palmer Public Schools

Adoption Date:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AA</td>
<td>SCHOOL DISTRICT LEGAL STATUS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AB</td>
<td>THE PEOPLE AND THEIR SCHOOL DISTRICT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC</td>
<td>NONDISCRIMINATION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACA</td>
<td>NONDISCRIMINATION ON THE BASIS OF SEX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACAB</td>
<td>SEXUAL HARASSMENT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACAB-R-1</td>
<td>SEXUAL HARASSMENT PROCEDURE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACAB-R-2</td>
<td>SEXUAL HARASSMENT – ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACAB-E-1</td>
<td>ADMINISTRATIVE FOLLOW-UP FORM FOR SEXUAL HARASSMENT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACAB-E-2</td>
<td>SEXUAL HARASSMENT COMPLAINT FORM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACE</td>
<td>NONDISCRIMINATION ON THE BASIS OF HANDICAP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AD</td>
<td>MISSION STATEMENT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADA</td>
<td>SCHOOL DISTRICT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADB</td>
<td>DRUGS/ALCOHOL PROHIBITION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADC</td>
<td>SMOKING ON SCHOOL PREMISES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADDA</td>
<td>C.O.R.I. REQUIREMENTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADDA-E-1</td>
<td>C.O.R.I. REQUIREMENTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADDA-E-2</td>
<td>C.O.R.I. REQUEST FORM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AE</td>
<td>COMMITMENT TO ACCOMPLISHMENT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SECTION B

BOARD GOVERNANCE AND OPERATIONS

BA  SCHOOL COMMITTEE OPERATIONAL GOALS
BAA EVALUATION OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES
BBA SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER AUTHORITY
BBAB AWARDING OF DIPLOMAS
BCA SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER ETHICS
BDA SCHOOL COMMITTEE ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING
BDB SCHOOL COMMITTEE OFFICERS
BDD SCHOOL COMMITTEE-SUPERINTENDENT RELATIONSHIP
BDF ADVISORY COMMITTEES TO THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE
BDFA SCHOOL COUNCILS
BDFA-E-1 SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN
BDFA-E-2 SUBMISSION AND APPROVAL OF THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN
BDFA-E-3 CONDUCT OF SCHOOL COUNCIL BUSINESS
BDFB STUDENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE
BE SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS
BEC EXECUTIVE SESSIONS
BEDA NOTIFICATION OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Section</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BEDB</td>
<td>AGENDA FORMAT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BEDD</td>
<td>RULES OF ORDER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BEDH</td>
<td>PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BEDK</td>
<td>NEWSPAPERS AND OTHER NEWS MEDIA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BEE</td>
<td>SPECIAL PROCEDURES FOR CONDUCTING HEARINGS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BGB</td>
<td>POLICY ADOPTION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BGC</td>
<td>POLICY REVISION AND REVIEW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BGD</td>
<td>SCHOOL COMMITTEE REVIEW OF REGULATIONS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BGE</td>
<td>POLICY DISSEMINATION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BGF</td>
<td>SUSPENSION OF POLICIES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BHA</td>
<td>SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPORTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BHC</td>
<td>SCHOOL COMMITTEE-STAFF COMMUNICATIONS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BHE</td>
<td>USE OF ELECTRONIC MESSAGING BY SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIA</td>
<td>NEW SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER ORIENTATION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BID</td>
<td>SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER COMPENSATION AND EXPENSES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA</td>
<td>Administration Goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CB/CBB</td>
<td>Recruitment and Selection of Superintendent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBD</td>
<td>Superintendent's Contract</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBI</td>
<td>Evaluation of the Superintendent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCA</td>
<td>Organizational Chart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCB</td>
<td>Line and Staff Relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CE</td>
<td>Administrative Councils, Cabinets, and Committees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CH</td>
<td>Policy Implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHA</td>
<td>Development of Regulations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHB</td>
<td>School Committee Review of Regulations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHC</td>
<td>Regulations Dissemination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHCA</td>
<td>Approval of Handbooks and Directives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHCA-E</td>
<td>Approval of Handbooks and Directives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHD</td>
<td>Administration in Policy Absence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CL</td>
<td>Administrative Reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CM</td>
<td>School District Annual Report</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SECTION D
FISCAL MANAGEMENT

DA  FISCAL MANAGEMENT GOALS
DB  ANNUAL BUDGET
DBC  BUDGET DEADLINES AND SCHEDULES
DBD  BUDGET PLANNING
DBG  BUDGET ADOPTION PROCEDURES
DBI  BUDGET OPERATION AND CONTROL
DBJ  BUDGET TRANSFER AUTHORITY
DD  FUNDING PROPOSALS AND APPLICATIONS
DGA  AUTHORIZED SIGNATURES
DH  BONDED EMPLOYEES AND OFFICERS
DI  FISCAL ACCOUNTING AND REPORTING
DIE  AUDITS
DJ  PURCHASING
DJA  PURCHASING AUTHORITY
DJE  BIDDING REQUIREMENTS
DK  PAYMENT PROCEDURES
DKC  EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENTS
DN  CARE OF SCHOOL PROPERTY
DN-R-1  CARE OF SCHOOL PROPERTY GUIDELINES
DN-E-1  SUMMARY OF DISPOSAL OF OBSOLETE/WORN SCHOOL PROPERTY
SECTION E
SUPPORT SERVICES

EB  SCHOOL SAFETY
EB-R  SCHOOL SAFETY
EBAB  PEST MANAGEMENT POLICY
EBB  FIRST AID
EBBA  SAFETY OF WALKERS AND CYCLISTS
EBC  EMERGENCY/DISASTER RESPONSE PLANS
EBC-R-1  FIRE PREVENTION AND FIRE DRILLS
EBC-R-2  BOMB THREAT PROCEDURES
EBCD  EMERGENCY CLOSINGS
EC  FUEL EFFICIENT VEHICLES
EC-R-1  FUEL EFFICIENT VEHICLES (FEV) PROCEDURES
ECA  BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS SECURITY
ECAC  VANDALISM
ECAC-R  RESTITUTION FOR DAMAGES TO SCHOOL PROPERTY
ECAC-E-1  RESTITUTION FOR DAMAGES TO SCHOOL PROPERTY (NOTIFICATION OF DAMAGE TO SCHOOL PROPERTY)
ECAC-E-2  RESTITUTION FOR DAMAGES TO SCHOOL PROPERTY (AGREEMENT/WAIVER OF CLAIMS)
ECB  FUEL EFFICIENT BUILDINGS
EDC  AUTHORIZED USE OF SCHOOL-OWNED MATERIALS
EEA  STUDENT TRANSPORTATION SERVICES
EEAE  SCHOOL BUS SAFETY PROGRAM
EEAEA  BUS DRIVER EXAMINATION AND TRAINING
EEAEC  STUDENT CONDUCT ON SCHOOL BUSES
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EEAG</td>
<td>STUDENT TRANSPORTATION IN PRIVATE VEHICLES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EEBA</td>
<td>SCHOOL-OWNED VEHICLES DRUG &amp; ALCOHOL TESTING POLICY FOR ALL VAN (7D) DRIVERS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFC</td>
<td>FREE AND REDUCED PRICE FOOD SERVICES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFD</td>
<td>FOOD SERVICES ACCOUNTS POLICY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FA</td>
<td>FACILITIES DEVELOPMENT GOALS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FA-E</td>
<td>FACILITIES DEVELOPMENT GOALS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FB</td>
<td>FACILITIES PLANNING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FCB</td>
<td>RETIREMENT OF FACILITIES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FF</td>
<td>NAMING NEW FACILITIES</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SECTION G
PERSONNEL

GA PERSONNEL POLICIES GOALS
GBA EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY
GBD SCHOOL COMMITTEE-STAFF COMMUNICATIONS
GBEA STAFF ETHICS/CONFLICT OF INTEREST
GBEB STAFF CONDUCT
GBEBC GIFTS TO AND SOLICITATIONS BY STAFF
GBEC DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE POLICY
GBED TOBACCO USE ON SCHOOL PROPERTY BY STAFF MEMBERS
GBEF STUDENT/STAFF RELATIONSHIPS
GBGB STAFF PERSONAL SECURITY AND SAFETY
GBI STAFF PARTICIPATION IN POLITICAL ACTIVITIES
GBJ PERSONNEL RECORDS
GBK STAFF COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES
GCA PROFESSIONAL STAFF POSITIONS
GCBA PROFESSIONAL STAFF SALARY SCHEDULES
GCBB EMPLOYMENT OF PRINCIPALS
GCF PROFESSIONAL STAFF HIRING
GCG PART-TIME AND SUBSTITUTE PROFESSIONAL STAFF EMPLOYMENT
GCIA PHILOSOPHY OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GCK</td>
<td>PROFESSIONAL STAFF ASSIGNMENTS AND TRANSFERS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCMF</td>
<td>MAINTENANCE OF DISCIPLINE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCO</td>
<td>EVALUATION OF PROFESSIONAL STAFF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCO-R-1</td>
<td>EVALUATION OF PROFESSIONAL STAFF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCO-R-2</td>
<td>EVALUATION OF PROFESSIONAL STAFF TEACHERS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCO-R-3</td>
<td>EVALUATION OF TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCQD</td>
<td>RESIGNATION OF PROFESSIONAL STAFF MEMBERS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCQE</td>
<td>RETIREMENT OF PROFESSIONAL STAFF MEMBERS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCQF</td>
<td>SUSPENSION AND DISMISSAL OF PROFESSIONAL STAFF MEMBERS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCRD</td>
<td>TUTORING FOR PAY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDA</td>
<td>SUPPORT STAFF POSITIONS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDB</td>
<td>SUPPORT STAFF CONTRACTS AND COMPENSATION PLANS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDBC</td>
<td>SUPPORT STAFF SUPPLEMENTARY PAY PLANS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDBD</td>
<td>SUPPORT STAFF FRINGE BENEFITS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDC</td>
<td>SUPPORT STAFF LEAVES AND ABSENCES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDCC</td>
<td>SUPPORT STAFF FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDCC-E</td>
<td>FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDD</td>
<td>DOMESTIC VIOLENCE LEAVE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDJ</td>
<td>SUPPORT STAFF ASSIGNMENTS AND TRANSFERS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SECTION H
NEGOTIATIONS

H  NEGOTIATIONS

HA  NEGOTIATIONS GOALS

HB  NEGOTIATIONS LEGAL STATUS

HF  SCHOOL COMMITTEE NEGOTIATIONS AGENTS
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IA</td>
<td>INSTRUCTIONAL PHILOSOPHY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IB</td>
<td>ACADEMIC FREEDOM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IC/ICA</td>
<td>SCHOOL YEAR/SCHOOL CALENDAR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ID</td>
<td>SCHOOL DAY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IE</td>
<td>ORGANIZATION OF INSTRUCTION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IGA</td>
<td>CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IGB</td>
<td>SUPPORT SERVICES PROGRAMS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IGBH</td>
<td>ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IGD</td>
<td>CURRICULUM ADOPTION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IHA</td>
<td>BASIC INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IHA-E</td>
<td>BASIC INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IHA-E</td>
<td>BASIC INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IHA</td>
<td>PHYSICAL EDUCATION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IHA-I</td>
<td>OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IHAM</td>
<td>HEALTH EDUCATION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IHAM-1</td>
<td>PARENTAL NOTIFICATION RELATIVE TO SEX EDUCATION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IHAM-R</td>
<td>HEALTH EDUCATION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IHAMA</td>
<td>TEACHING ABOUT DRUGS, ALCOHOL, AND TOBACCO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IHB</td>
<td>SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS AND ACCOMMODATIONS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IHBD</td>
<td>COMPENSATORY EDUCATION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IHBE</td>
<td>BILINGUAL INSTRUCTION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IHBEA</td>
<td>ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
IJOA-E-2 FIELD TRIP NOTIFICATION FOR SCHOOL NURSE
IJOA-E-3 DISCLOSURE BY APPOINTED PUBLIC EMPLOYEE OF FREE OR DISCOUNTED TRAVEL OR ADMISSION
IJOA-E-4 STATEMENT BY APPOINTING AUTHORITY
IJOAA EXTENDED TRIPS/OUT-OF-STATE TRIPS
IJOB COMMUNITY RESOURCE PERSONS/SPEAKERS
IJOC SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS
IK ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT
IK-E MARKING SYSTEM
IKAB PROGRESS REPORTS TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS
IKAB STUDENT PROGRESS REPORTS TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS
IKB HOMEWORK
IKE PROMOTION AND RETENTION OF STUDENTS
IKE-R STUDENT RETENTION
IKF REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATION
IKFA EARLY ENTRANCE TO COLLEGE OR POSTSECONDARY TRAINING
IL EVALUATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS
IMA TEACHING ACTIVITIES/PRESENTATIONS
IMB TEACHING ABOUT CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES/CONTROVERSIAL SPEAKERS
IMD SCHOOL CEREMONIES AND OBSERVANCES
IMDB DISPLAY AND PLEDGE TO THE FLAG
IMDC MOMENT OF SILENCE
SECTION J
STUDENTS

JA STUDENT POLICIES GOALS
JA-E STUDENT POLICIES GOALS
JB EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES
JE ATTENDANCE
JEB ENTRANCE AGE
JF SCHOOL ADMISSIONS
JF-E-1 SCHOOL ADMISSIONS
JF-E-2 SCHOOL ADMISSIONS
JFAB TUITION STUDENTS
JFABD POLICY ON ADMISSION OF HOMELESS STUDENTS
JFBB SCHOOL CHOICE
JH STUDENT ABSENCES AND EXCUSES
JHD EXCLUSION AND EXEMPTIONS FROM SCHOOL ATTENDANCE
JI STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES
JIB STUDENT INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION-MAKING
JIC STUDENT CONDUCT
JICA STUDENT DRESS CODE
JICB CARE OF SCHOOL PROPERTY
JICC  STUDENT CONDUCT ON SCHOOL BUSES
JICE  STUDENT PUBLICATIONS
JICE-R STUDENT PUBLICATIONS - REGULATIONS
JICF  GANG ACTIVITY
JICFA  PROHIBITION OF HAZING
JICFA-E HAZING
JICFB  BULLYING PREVENTION
JICH  ALCOHOL USE BY STUDENTS
JICHA  BREATHALYZER TESTING
JICHA-R BREATHALYZER TESTING - REGULATIONS
JICI  WEAPONS IN SCHOOL
JIE  PREGNANT STUDENTS
JIH  SEARCHES AND INTERROGATIONS
JII  STUDENT COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES
JJ  CO-CURRICULAR AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES
JJ-E  CO-CURRICULAR AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES
JJA  STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS
JJD-E  PARTICIPATION FEES FOR SCHOOL ACTIVITIES – REQUEST FOR WAIVER
JJE  STUDENT FUND-RAISING ACTIVITIES
JJF  STUDENT ACTIVITY ACCOUNTS
JJG  CONTESTS FOR STUDENTS
interscholastic athletics

athletic concussion policy

athletic concussion regulations

student discipline

physical restraint of students

student welfare

student insurance program

student health services and requirements

physical examinations of students

wellness policy

wellness policy - regulations

inoculations of students

communicable diseases

aids (acquired immune deficiency syndrome) resolution

aids school attendance policy

pediculosis capitis (head lice)

administering medicines to students

managing life-threatening food allergies in the educational environment

automated external defibrillator (aed) policy

palmer school district naloxone (narcan) policy

guidance program
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JLD-E</td>
<td>GUIDANCE PROGRAM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JP</td>
<td>STUDENT GIFTS AND SOLICITATIONS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JQ</td>
<td>STUDENT FEES, FINES, AND CHARGES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JQ-E</td>
<td>PARTICIPATION FEES FOR SCHOOL ACTIVITIES – REQUEST FOR WAIVER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JRA</td>
<td>STUDENT RECORDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JRD</td>
<td>STUDENT PHOTOGRAPHS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SECTION K
COMMUNITY RELATIONS

KA SCHOOL/COMMUNITY RELATIONS GOALS
KA-1 SCHOOL/COMMUNITY RELATIONS GOALS
KBA SCHOOL/PARENT RELATIONS GOALS
KBBA NON-CUSTODIAL PARENTS’ RIGHTS
KBBA-E SAMPLE NOTICE TO CUSTODIAL PARENTS
KBBA-R SAMPLE AFFADAVIT FOR NON-CUSTODIAL PARENTS REQUESTING STUDENT RECORDS
KCB COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION-MAKING
KCD PUBLIC GIFTS TO THE SCHOOLS
KDB PUBLIC'S RIGHT TO KNOW
KDD NEWS MEDIA RELATIONS/NEWS RELEASES
KDDA SCHOOL DISTRICT NEWSLETTERS
KDDB PHOTOGRAPH/VIDEO RELEASE
KDDB-E PHOTOGRAPH/VIDEO RELEASE OPT-OUT
KE PUBLIC COMPLAINTS
KE-E PUBLIC COMPLAINTS
KEB PUBLIC COMPLAINTS ABOUT SCHOOL PERSONNEL
KEB-R PUBLIC COMPLAINTS ABOUT SCHOOL PERSONNEL
KEC PUBLIC COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE CURRICULUM OR INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS
KECA-E CITIZEN’S REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF MATERIAL
KF COMMUNITY USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES

KF-R-1 PROCEDURES/REGULATIONS – COMMUNITY USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES

KF-R-2 RULES FOR UTILIZATION OF FACILITIES

KF-R-3 FEE SCHEDULE FOR USE OF FACILITIES

KF-E-1 APPLICATION FOR USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES/GROUNDS

KF-E-2 PERMIT FOR USE OF SCHOOL PROPERTY

KHA PUBLIC SOLICITATIONS IN THE SCHOOLS

KHB ADVERTISING POLICY

KHB-R ADVERTISING POLICY GUIDELINES

KHB-E ADVERTISING CONTRACT

KI VISITORS TO THE SCHOOLS

KIA IDENTIFICATION SYSTEM FOR VISITORS TO THE SCHOOLS

KLG RELATIONS WITH POLICE AUTHORITIES

KLJ RELATIONS WITH PLANNING AUTHORITIES

KLK RELATIONS WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENTAL AUTHORITIES
SECTION L

EDUCATION AGENCY RELATIONS

LA  EDUCATION AGENCY RELATIONS GOALS

LB  RELATIONS WITH OTHER SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL DISTRICTS

LBC RELATIONS WITH NONPUBLIC SCHOOLS

LDA  STUDENT TEACHING AND INTERNSHIPS
SCHOOL DISTRICT LEGAL STATUS

The legal basis for public education in the district is vested in the will of the people as expressed in the Constitution of Massachusetts and state statutes pertaining to education.

Under the General Laws of Massachusetts,

"... Every town shall maintain... a sufficient number of schools for the instruction of all children who may legally attend a public school therein."

The public educational system of Palmer structurally is a department of the town operated under laws pertaining to education and under regulations of the Massachusetts Board of Education. The area served by the Palmer Public Schools is coterminous with the Town of Palmer.

Established by law

LEGAL REFS.: Constitution of Massachusetts, Part II, Chapter V, Section II M.G.L. 71:1

CROSS REF.: BB, School Committee Legal Status

Historical Note: Massachusetts has the oldest public school system in the nation. Dating back to 1647, the laws of the Massachusetts Bay Colony required towns to provide for a program of public education.
THE PEOPLE AND THEIR SCHOOL DISTRICT

The Palmer School Committee has the dual responsibility for implementing statutory requirements pertaining to public education and local citizens' expectations for the education of the community's youth. It also has an obligation to determine and assess citizens' desires. When citizens elect delegates to represent them in the conduct of public education, their representatives have the authority to exercise their best judgment in determining policies, making decisions, and approving procedures for carrying out the responsibility.

The School Committee therefore affirms and declares its intent to:

1. Maintain two-way communications with citizens of the community. The public will be kept informed of the progress and problems of the school system, and citizens will be urged to bring their aspirations and feelings about their public schools to the attention of this body, which they have chosen to represent them in the management of public education.

2. Establish policies and make decisions on the basis of declared educational philosophy and goals. All decisions made by this Committee will be made with priority given to the purposes set forth, most crucial of which is the optimal learning of the children enrolled in our schools.

3. Act as a truly representative body for members of the community in matters involving public education. The Committee recognizes that ultimate responsibility for public education rests with the state, but individual School Committees have been assigned specific authority through state law. The Committee will not relinquish any of this authority since it believes that decision-making control over the children's learning should be in the hands of local citizens as much as possible.
Nondiscrimination

Public schools have the responsibility to overcome, insofar as possible, any barriers that prevent children from achieving their potential. The public school system will do its part. This commitment to the community is affirmed by the following statements that the School Committee intends to:

1. Promote the rights and responsibilities of all individuals as set forth in the State and Federal Constitutions, pertinent legislation, and applicable judicial interpretations.
2. Encourage positive experiences in human values for children, youth and adults, all of whom have differing personal and family characteristics and who come from various socioeconomic, racial and ethnic groups.
3. Work toward a more integrated society and to enlist the support of individuals as well as groups and agencies, both private and governmental, in such an effort.
4. Use all appropriate communication and action techniques to air and reduce the grievances of individuals and groups.
5. Carefully consider, in all the decisions made within the school system, the potential benefits or adverse consequences that those decisions might have on the human relations aspects of all segments of society.
6. Initiate a process of reviewing policies and practices of the school system in order to achieve to the greatest extent possible the objectives of this statement.

The Committee’s policy of nondiscrimination will extend to students, staff, the general public, and individuals with whom it does business; no person shall be excluded from or discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town or in obtaining the advantages, privileges, and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, homelessness, sexual orientation or disability. If someone has a complaint or feels that they have been discriminated against because of their race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, homelessness, sexual orientation or disability, their complaint should be registered with the Title IX compliance officer.

LEGAL REFS.: Title VI, Civil Rights Act of 1964
Title VII, Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended by the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972
Executive Order 11246, as amended by E.O. 11375
Equal Pay Act, as amended by the Education Amendments of 1972
Title IX, Education Amendments of 1972
CROSS REFS.: ACA- ACE, Subcategories for Nondiscrimination
GBA, Equal Employment Opportunity
JB, Equal Educational Opportunities
JICFB, Bullying

NOTE: This category is for a general policy covering all types of nondiscrimination and relating to students, staff, and others. Federal and state laws apply.

If a policy relates to staff only, to students only, or a particular form of non-discrimination, it is better filed elsewhere. Appropriate codes for such statements are indicated by the cross-references.

Regulations pertaining to all forms of nondiscrimination – or a procedure all persons can resort to for redress of grievances related to nondiscrimination – would follow under code AC-R.

Law in most instances requires official School Committee approval of regulations in this area.

Revised and approved on 10/23/13.

Revised and approved on 3/27/19.
Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex

The Palmer School Committee, in accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, declares that the school system does not and will not discriminate on the basis of sex in the educational programs and activities of the public schools. This policy will extend not only to students with regard to educational opportunities, but also to employees with regard to employment opportunities.

The School Committee will continue to ensure fair and equitable educational and employment opportunities, without regard to sex, to all of its students and employees.

The Committee will designate an individual to act as the school system’s Title IX compliance officer. All students and employees will be notified of the name and office address and telephone number of the compliance officer.

The Committee’s policy of nondiscrimination will extend to students, staff, the general public, and individuals with whom it does business; no person shall be excluded from or discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town or in obtaining the advantages, privileges, and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, homelessness, sexual orientation or disability. If someone has a complaint or feels that they have been discriminated against because of their race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, homelessness, sexual orientation or disability, their complaint should be registered with the Title IX compliance officer.

LEGAL REFS.: Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972
45 CFR, Part 86, (Federal Register, 6/4/75)
M.G.L. 76:5; 76:16 (Chapter 622 of the Acts of 1971)
BSE 603 CMR 26:00

CROSS REF.: AC, Nondiscrimination

Revised and approved on 10/23/13.

Revised and approved on 3/27/19.

Palmer Public Schools
SEXUAL HARASSMENT

All persons associated with the Palmer Public Schools including, but not necessarily limited to, the Committee, the administration, staff, and students, are expected to conduct themselves at all times so as to provide an atmosphere free from sexual harassment. Any person who engages in sexual harassment while acting, as a member of the school community, will be in violation of this policy. Further, any retaliation against an individual who has complained about sexual harassment or retaliation against individuals for cooperating in an investigation of a sexual harassment complaint is similarly unlawful and will not be tolerated.

Because the Palmer School Committee takes allegations of sexual harassment seriously, we will respond promptly to complaints of sexual harassment and where it is determined that such inappropriate conduct has occurred, we will act promptly to eliminate the conduct and impose such corrective action as is necessary, including disciplinary action where appropriate.

Please note that while this policy sets forth our goals of promoting a workplace and school environment that is free of sexual harassment, the policy is not designed or intended to limit our authority to discipline or take remedial action for workplace or school conduct which we deem unacceptable, regardless of whether that conduct satisfies the definition of sexual harassment.

**Definition of Sexual Harassment:** Unwelcome sexual advances; requests for sexual favors; or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature may constitute sexual harassment where:

1. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of a person’s employment or educational development.
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment or education decisions affecting such individual.
3. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual’s work or educational performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or educational environment.

**The Grievance Officers:**

David Stetkiewicz, Principal
Converse Middle School
24 Converse Street
Palmer, MA 01069
413-283-8109

Jacqueline Haley, Principal
Old Mill Pond Elementary School
4107 Main Street
Palmer, MA 01069
413-283-8109

The Committee will annually appoint a sexual harassment grievance officer who will be vested with the authority and responsibility of processing all sexual harassment complaints in accordance with the procedure set out below:

**Complaint Procedure:**

1. Any member of the school community who believes that he/she has been subjected to sexual harassment will report the incident (s) to the grievance officer. All complaints shall be investigated promptly and resolved as soon as possible.
2. The grievance officer will attempt to resolve the problem in an informal manner through the following process:
   
a. The grievance officer will confer with the charging party in order to obtain a clear understanding of that party’s statement of the facts, and may interview any witnesses.
   
b. The grievance officer will then attempt to meet with the charged party in order to obtain his/her response to the complaint.
   
c. The grievance officer will hold as many meetings with the parties as is necessary to establish the facts.
   
d. On the basis of the grievance officer’s perception of the situation he/she may:
      - Attempt to resolve the matter informally through reconciliation.
      - Report the incident and transfer the record to the Superintendent or his/her designee, and so notify the parties by certified mail.
   
3. After reviewing the record made by the grievance officer, the Superintendent or designee [Name, Office, Address, Phone Number] may attempt to gather any more evidence necessary to decide the case, and thereafter impose any sanctions deemed appropriate, including a recommendation to the committee for termination or expulsion. At this stage of the proceedings the parties may present witnesses and other evidence, and may also be represented. The parties, to the extent permissible by law, shall be informed of the disposition of the complaint. All matters involving sexual harassment complaints will remain confidential to the extent possible. If it is determined that inappropriate conduct has occurred, we will act promptly to eliminate the offending conduct.

4. The grievance officer, upon request, will provide the charging party with government agencies that handle sexual harassment matters.

LEGAL REFS.: Title VII, Section 703, Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended 45 Federal Regulation 74676 issued by EEO Commission Education Amendments of 1972, 20 U.S.C. 1681 et seq. (Title IX) Board of Education 603 CMR 26:00

CROSS REF: AC, Nondiscrimination JICFB, Bullying
SEXUAL HARASSMENT PROCEDURE

The Palmer Public Schools' grievance procedures shall be fair and equitable. Such procedures shall provide for:

1. Notice of the procedure to students, parents/guardians, and employees;
2. Application of the procedures to complaints alleging harassment by students;
3. Adequate and reliable investigation of complaints by an impartial investigator, including the opportunity to present witnesses;
4. Designated time frames for the major stages of the process;
5. Notice to the parties of the disposition of the complaint;
6. Steps to prevent the recurrence of any harassment and to correct its effect on the complainant and others.

The following complaint procedure applies to all Palmer Public Schools' students and employees, including administrators, teachers and support staff.

1. **STEP I**

   a. The individual alleging sexual harassment will report the incident to the building administrator or supervisor. If the person involved in the incident would, normally be the person that would be reported to, and that person is the alleged harasser, the person may skip reporting to this person and review the claim with the next appropriate reporting level. If, for example, the alleged harasser is the Superintendent or a School Committee member other than the Chairperson, the person may review the claim with the Chairperson of the School Committee. If the alleged harasser is the Chairperson of the School Committee, the person may review the claim with the other four members of the School Committee. If said allegations are made to another person, the matter must be immediately directed to the building administrator or supervisor.

   b. The building administrator will discuss the matter separately with the complainant and alleged harasser, informally, in an attempt to resolve the matter.

   c. If the complaint is resolved satisfactorily, the administrator will complete a Harassment Follow-up Form and forward it and documentation of the incidents to the Title IX coordinator.

   d. If the complaint cannot be informally resolved, the building administrator will conduct an investigation and recommend an appropriate resolution.

   e. If a satisfactory resolution cannot be achieved within ten (10) school days of receipt of the complaint, the administrator will refer the complaint to a Compliance Coordinator for initiation of Step II.

   f. If the building administrator or supervisor is alleged to be involved in the complaint, the complainant shall have the right to initiate the complaint at Step II.
2. STEP II

a. The complainant will complete and sign a Harassment Complaint Form which documents the incident(s).

b. The Compliance Committee, which is composed of a Compliance Coordinator, a representative of the complainant, and a non-administrative representative of the building involved, shall fully investigate the complaint, and issue appropriate findings and recommendations.

c. If the complaint is resolved satisfactorily, the Compliance Committee will complete a Harassment Follow-up Form and forward it with documentation of the complaint and investigation to the Title IX Coordinator.

d. Failure to achieve a satisfactory resolution of the complaint within ten (10) school days of its receipt at this step, shall result in its movement to Step III.

e. If the person involved in the incident would normally be the person that would be reported to, and that person is the alleged harasser, the person may skip reporting to this person and review the claim with the next appropriate reporting level. If, for example, the alleged harasser is the Superintendent or a School Committee member other than the Chairperson, the person may review the claim with the Chairperson of the School Committee. If the alleged harasser is the Chairperson of the School Committee, the person may review the claim with the other four members of the School Committee.

3. STEP III

a. The Superintendent shall review the complaint, findings, and recommendations and conduct necessary interviews to take appropriate action within twenty (20) school days of receiving the complaint at Step III.

b. If the complaint is resolved satisfactorily, the Superintendent will forward all documentation of the complaint, and completed Harassment Follow-up Form to the Title IX Coordinator.

c. Failure to achieve a satisfactory resolution of the complaint within twenty (20) school days of its receipt at Step III will result in movement of the complaint to Step IV.

d. If the person involved in the incident would normally be the person that would be reported to, and that person is the alleged harasser, the person may skip reporting to this person and review the claim with the next appropriate reporting level. If, for example, the alleged harasser is the Superintendent or a School Committee member other than the Chairperson, the person may review the claim with the Chairperson of the School Committee. If the alleged harasser is the Chairperson of the School Committee, the person may review the claim with the other four members of the School Committee.
4. NON-EMPLOYEE SEXUAL HARASSMENT COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

This procedure applies to complaints filed against non-school personnel, sponsored, or supported by the Palmer Public Schools, including visitors, vendors, contractors, and individuals in programs

a. All allegations will be directed to the building administrator or supervisor.
b. The building administrator or supervisor will investigate the complaint promptly.
c. Appropriate action will be taken to protect the complainant.
d. Non-school personnel found to have engaged in sexual harassment will be subject to disciplinary sanctions up to and including exclusion from school buildings and/or activities, and termination of contracts.

5. DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY

a. The Superintendent is responsible for seeing that all school employees adhere to the provisions of this policy.
b. Administrators are responsible for the implementation and enforcement of this policy in their building/department.
c. Every school employee shall be asked to review a copy of this policy, sign a document that s/he had done so, and is expected to comply with all provisions.
d. School employees should report alleged violations of this policy in accordance with the guidelines and procedures which accompany this policy.
e. All school employees and agents are responsible for reporting alleged violations of sexual harassment in accordance with this policy.
f. A copy of this policy is to be included in all employee handbooks.
g. To the extent possible, all contractors, vendors, and other agents of the school will be informed about the sexual harassment policy.
h. Building principals and administrators will post the Sexual Harassment Policy in areas frequented by professional and support staff
i. Building principals and administrators will provide Sexual Harassment training for all employees at a yearly staff meeting.

6. REPORTS:

The Title IX, Chapter 622 Coordinator will maintain the confidential harassment complaint files and notify principals/administrators of repeated offenders.
7. FORMS:

Attachment #1 Administrative Guidelines and Procedures (ACAB-R-2)
Attachment #2 Administrative Follow-up Form (ACAB-E-1)
Attachment #3 Employee Harassment Form (ACAB-E-2)

LEGAL REFS.: Title VII, Civil Rights Act of 1964
Title IX, Educational Amendments of 1972
M.G.L 76; 17.16; 119:51A
Chapter 622 of the Acts of 1971
I. RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Each employee of the Palmer Public Schools is responsible for the following:

1. Ensuring that his/her behavior, language, or conduct complies with the Palmer Public Schools Sexual Harassment Policy.
2. Taking immediate and appropriate action to stop such harassment and to prevent its recurrence upon observing, overhearing or otherwise becoming aware of such conduct.
3. Immediately reporting sexual harassment which s/he observes or has reason to believe occurred to the building principal and/or Title IX Coordinator.
4. Cooperating in the investigation of alleged sexual harassment by providing any necessary information.
5. Actively participating in efforts to prevent sexual harassment in the Palmer Public Schools. Participation includes:

   a. Creating a positive school climate of respect and decency by clearly communicating behaviors that are accepted and valued within the school.
   b. Modeling behaviors and attitudes which resonate decency and respect. The interaction of staff with each other and with students communicates a strong message of what is acceptable behavior in school.
   c. Assisting students in understanding the impact of their behaviors. It is important that staff intervene and challenge inappropriate conduct. While communicating that the behavior is unacceptable, the impact of the behavior should be stressed.

B. Each student in the Palmer Public Schools is responsible for:

1. Ensuring that his/her behavior, language, and conduct comply with the Sexual Harassment Policy;
2. Cooperating in the investigation of alleged sexual harassment by providing any necessary information; and
3. Actively participating in the efforts to prevent sexual harassment in the schools.

C. Administrators and supervisors have the following responsibilities:

1. Distribute the Sexual Harassment Policy to all staff, students and other parties accessing the building;
2. Communicate the policy, including sanctions for harassment to all employees and students. Issue and discuss the Sexual Harassment Policy with all new employees and at least annually at a staff meeting;

Palmer Public Schools
3. Train all staff members on how to prevent and respond to sexual harassment in the building;
4. Take all complaints or suspicion of sexual harassment seriously and immediately conduct a thorough investigation;
5. Take prompt and appropriate action, including disciplinary, to eliminate harassment and prevent it from recurring;
6. Continually monitor behavior throughout the building;
7. Post the Sexual Harassment Policy in visible places as a reminder to all employees;
8. Refer any questions or concerns to the Title IX Coordinator;
9. Model appropriate behavior and set the tone as to what behavior will be tolerated.

II. INVESTIGATIONS

A. Take all complaints, claims, or suspicions of sexual harassment seriously.
B. Keep an open mind. Act in a neutral and professional manner. Determinations should not be based upon appearance, position, or reputation of the people involved.
C. Investigate promptly. Attempt to begin within 24 hours and end within 10 days, if at all possible.
D. Be thorough. Interview every individual involved, including all relevant witnesses.
E. Document all parts of the investigation. Create a separate confidential file accessible only to investigators.
F. Preserve privacy and avoid defamation. Ask parties not to discuss the investigation except with designated personnel. Restrict all comments to a "need-to-know" basis. Emphasize but do not assure complete confidentiality to all involved.
G. Inform everyone about the Palmer Public Schools' non-retaliation policy.
H. Safeguard documents. Keep pertinent records and documents safe and restrict access to those who have legitimate need to see the information.
I. All complaints involving students will be communicated to the parent/guardian of the Student involved. A written report will be kept of such communication.
J. Sexual harassment complaints may involve allegations of child abuse and/or sexual battery. These actions are considered felonies and must be reported to the appropriate authorities whenever there is reason to believe such conduct occurred. A written record will be kept of such notification and appropriate action will be taken immediately.

III. TAKING COMPLAINTS

A. Listen carefully and impartially.
B. Put aside your personal biases and emotional responses.
C. Assure the individual that you take his/her complaint seriously.
D. Protect privacy.
E. Document everything.
IV. RIGHTS OF THE ACCUSED

A. Be advised of the allegations.
B. Have a complete and timely investigation conducted based on all relevant facts.
C. Participate in the investigation -- protection of rights are guaranteed by relevant policies, procedures, and laws, including the right to appropriate union representation at all stages of the complaint procedure.
D. Be free from invasion of privacy including improper search of lockers, desks, computer files, personal property, etc.
E. Be protected against the communication of investigation results in an inaccurate way.
F. Be protected from public disclosure of private facts.

V. RESOLUTION

A. No Harassment Is Found
   1. Take a neutral approach.
   2. Discuss the conclusion with the individuals involved and emphasize that it was based on the evidence presented.
   3. Review the Palmer Public Schools Sexual Harassment Policy with the individuals involved.
   4. Discuss the issues of retaliation and reprisal with the individuals.

VI. RIGHT TO ALTERNATIVE COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

Complainants must be advised that using the Palmer Public Schools complaint procedure does not prohibit their filing a formal complaint within established time frames with the government agencies listed below.

Massachusetts Commission against Discrimination (MCAD)
One Ashburton Place, Room 601
Boston, MA 02108-1518
(617) 727-3990- 6 months

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)
One Congress St., 10th Floor, Room 1001
Boston, MA 02114
(617) 565-3200- 180 days

Office for Civil Rights
J. W. McCormack Post Office Courthouse, Rm. 222
Post Office Square
Boston, MA 02109 (617) 223-9662- 180 days
VII. TRAINING AND DISSEMINATION

A. Copies of the Sexual Harassment Policy and its Administrative Guidelines and Procedures will be available for all Palmer Public Schools employees, School Councils, Parent Teacher Organizations, Student Councils, and other school related affiliations.

B. The policy will be included in school handbooks.

C. Specialized training and resource materials will be available to all school employees.

D. Administrators will provide Sexual Harassment Training for all their employees.

E. The Title IX Coordinator will work with school administrators to provide strategies to implement and enforce all aspects of the Sexual Harassment Policy and its Administrative Guidelines and Procedures in their buildings or departments.
ADMINISTRATIVE FOLLOW-UP FORM FOR SEXUAL HARASSMENT

1. Date(s) of investigation: ________________________________

2. What action was taken: ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

3. Date(s) of follow-up conferences: ________________________________

4. Result(s) of conferences: _______________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

5. Date of final report: ________________________________________________

6. Date final resolution explained to the complainant: ____________________________

Signature of Administrator: __________________________ Date: ________________
SEXUAL HARASSMENT COMPLAINT FORM

Name: _______________________________  Date: ________________________

School: _______________________________  Department: _________________

Job Title: _______________________________

1. Who was responsible for the harassment? ____________________________________________

2. Describe the harassment: _________________________________________________________

3. Date, time and place the harassment occurred: _______________________________________

4. Were there others involved in the harassment? _______________________________________

5. If so, who were they? Describe their involvement. ___________________________________

6. List any witnesses to the harassment: ______________________________________________

7. What was your reaction to the harassment? _________________________________________

8. Describe any subsequent incidents. ________________________________________________

Signature of Complainant: __________________________
Title II of the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1992 requires that no qualified individual with a disability shall, because the district's facilities are inaccessible to or unusable by individuals with disabilities, be excluded from participation in, or be denied the benefits of the services, programs, and activities of the district or be subject to discrimination. Nor shall the district exclude or otherwise deny services, programs, or activities to an individual because of the known disability of a person with whom the individual is known to have a relationship or association.

Definition
A "qualified individual with a disability" is an individual with a disability who, with or without reasonable modification to rules, policies, or practices, the removal of architectural, communication, or transportation barriers, or the provision of auxiliary aids and services, meets the essential eligibility requirements for the receipt of services or the participation in programs or activities provided by the district.

Reasonable Modification
The district shall make reasonable modification in policies, practices, or procedures when the modifications are necessary to avoid discrimination on the basis of disability, unless the district can demonstrate that making the modifications would fundamentally alter the nature of the service, program, or activity.

Communications
The district shall take the appropriate steps to ensure that communications with applicants, participants, and members of the public with disabilities are as effective as communications with others. To this end, the district shall furnish appropriate auxiliary aids and services where necessary to afford an individual with a disability an equal opportunity to participate in, and enjoy benefits of, a service, program, or activity conducted by the district. In determining what type of auxiliary aid or service is necessary, the district shall give primary consideration to the requests of the individuals with disabilities.

Auxiliary Aids and Services
"Auxiliary aids and services" includes (1) qualified interpreters, note takers, transcription services, written materials, assisted listening systems, and other effective methods for making aurally delivered materials available to individuals with hearing impairments; (2) qualified readers, taped texts, audio recordings, Braille materials, large print materials, or other effective methods for making visually delivered materials available to individuals with visual impairments; (3) acquisition or modification of equipment or devices and (4) other similar services and actions.

Limits of Required Modification
The district is not required to take any action that it can demonstrate would result in a fundamental alteration in the nature of a service, program, or activity or in undue financial and administrative burdens. Any decision that, in compliance with its responsibility to provide effective communication for individuals with disabilities, would fundamentally alter the service, program, or activity or unduly burden the district shall be made by the School Committee after considering all resources available for use in funding and operating the program, service, or activity. The decision shall be accompanied by a written statement of the reasons for reaching that conclusion.
Notice
The district shall make available to applicants, participants, beneficiaries, and other interested persons information regarding the provisions of Title II of the American With Disabilities Act (ADA) and its applicability to the services, programs, or activities of the district. The information shall be made available in such a manner as the School Committee and Superintendent find necessary to apprise such persons of the projections against discrimination assured them by the ADA.

Compliance Coordinator
The district shall designate at least one employee to coordinate its efforts to comply with and carry out its responsibilities under Title II of ADA, including any investigation of any complaint communicated to it alleging its noncompliance or alleging any actions that would be prohibited under ADA. The district shall make available to all interested individuals the name, office address, and telephone number of the employee(s) so designated and shall adopt and publish procedures for the prompt and equitable resolution of complaints alleging any action that would be prohibited under the ADA. The school system receives federal financial assistance and must comply with the above requirements. Additionally, the School Committee is of the general view that:

1. Discrimination against a qualified handicapped person solely on the basis of handicap is unfair; and

2. To the extent possible, qualified handicapped persons should be in the mainstream of life in school community. Accordingly, employees of the school system will comply with the above requirements of the law and policy statements of this Committee to ensure nondiscrimination on the basis of handicap.

LEGAL REFS.: Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504
Education For All Handicapped Children Act of 1975
M.G.L. 71B:1 et seq. (Chapter 766 of the Acts of 1972)
Title II, Americans with Disabilities Act of 1992
Board of Education Chapter 766 Regulations, adopted 10/74, as amended through 3/28/78

CROSS REFS.: AC, Nondiscrimination
IGB, Support Services Programs

NOTE: Due to federal and state laws, many School Committees are adopting policies and extensive regulations pertaining to Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Handicap. At times, policy, regulations, and specific plans for action are combined in one long statement resented as policy. Other school systems present policy and regulatory statements separately.
MISSION STATEMENT

1. The mission of the Palmer Public Schools is to ensure the opportunity for all of the children of the Town of Palmer to participate in the benefits afforded by a well-planned, coordinated educational program and designed to serve their needs by:
   a. Providing a safe, secure, and positive environment which fosters the growth of self esteem through accomplishments in learning.
   b. Assessing their educational requirements, recognizing the validity of varied learning styles, and providing appropriate programming for each student.
   c. Preparing our students to adapt to an environment of continual change.
   d. Promoting in our students a lifelong commitment to intellectual, physical, social, and emotional growth.
   e. Encouraging our students to have a deep understanding of the principles of fair play and the rights of all responsible individuals within a democratic society.

2. To make the most of the educational opportunity afforded the student by the community, the student will demonstrate:
   a. The self-motivation and the self-discipline necessary for the pursuit of excellence.
   b. His/her understanding of how to learn and applying that knowledge-to the enhancement of his/her life and the lives of others.

CROSS REF.: IA, Instructional Goals
SCHOOL DISTRICT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goal of this school system is to accept responsibility for the development of each child into an adult who can stand confidently, participate fully, learn continually, and contribute meaningfully to society.

Five objects that contribute to the achievement of this goal, listed without priority in arrangement, define desirable outcomes to be incorporated into plans for the school system.

1. To ensure that each student develops proficiency in basic academic skills

2. To ensure that each student develops the capacity to recognize and cope with the problems of an unknown future

3. To ensure the development of meaningful, interpersonal relationships among students, staff and community

4. To ensure maximum efficiency in the allocation of material resources

5. To ensure maximum efficiency in the allocation of human resources

CROSS REF.: BA, School Committee Operational Goals
              IA, Instructional Goals
DRUGS/ ALCOHOL PROHIBITION

Being under the influence of controlled substances (including alcohol and/or non-prescribed drugs) or the possession of drugs or paraphernalia or alcohol at school, on school grounds, or at school sponsored activities is strictly prohibited.

Principals will issue specific regulations to enforce this policy.

LEGAL REFS.: M. G.L. 71:2A and 37H.
SMOKING/TOBACCO USE ON SCHOOL PREMISES

Use of any tobacco product including, but not limited to, cigarettes, e-cigarettes, chewing tobacco, cigars or pipes, within school buildings, school facilities, school grounds, school busses, at school sponsored events and sporting events or in personal vehicles on school property is strictly prohibited. This policy applies to all students, school staff, school personnel, volunteers and any visitors.

A student determined to be in violation of this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action pursuant to the student discipline code.

A staff member determined to be in violation of this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action.

Signs shall be posted in all school buildings informing the general public of the District policy and requirements of state law.

LEGAL REF: M.G.L. 71:37H

Revised and approved on 3/24/2016.

Palmer Public Schools
CORI REQUIREMENTS

Where Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) checks are part of a general background check for employment, volunteer work or licensing purposes, the following practices and procedures will generally be followed.

I. CORI checks will only be conducted as authorized by CHSB. All applicants will be notified that a CORI check will be conducted. If requested, the applicant will be provided with a copy of the CORI policy.

II. An informed review of a criminal record requires adequate training. Accordingly, all personnel authorized to review CORI in the decision-making process will be thoroughly familiar with the educational materials made available by CHSB.

III. Unless otherwise provided by law, a criminal record will not automatically disqualify an applicant. Rather, determinations of suitability based on CORI checks will be made consistent with this policy and any applicable law or regulations.

IV. If a criminal record is received from CHSB, the authorized individual will closely compare the record provided by CHSB with the information on the CORI request form and any other identifying information provided by the applicant, to ensure the record relates to the applicant.

V. If the Palmer Public Schools are inclined to make an adverse decision based on the results of the CORI check, the applicant will be notified immediately. The applicant shall be provided with a copy of the criminal record and the organization's CORI policy, advised of the part(s) of the record that make the individual unsuitable for the position or license, and given an opportunity to dispute the accuracy and relevance of the CORI record.

VI. Applicants challenging the accuracy of the policy shall be provided a copy of CHSB’s Information Concerning the Process in Correcting a Criminal Record. If the CORI record provided does not exactly match the identification information provided by the applicant, Palmer Public Schools will make a determination based on a comparison of the CORI record and documents provided by the applicant. The Palmer Public Schools may contact CHSB and request a detailed search consistent with CHSB policy.

VII. If the Palmer Public Schools reasonably believe the record belongs to the applicant and is accurate, based on the information as provided in section IV on this policy, then the determination of suitability for the position or license will be made. Unless otherwise provided by law, factors considered in determining suitability may include, but not be limited to the following:

(a) Relevance of the crime to the position sought;
(b) The nature of the work to be performed;
(c) Time since the conviction;
(d) Age of the candidate at the time of the offense;
(e) Seriousness and specific circumstances of the offense;
(f) The number of offenses;
(g) Whether the applicant has pending charges;
(h) Any relevant evidence of rehabilitation or lack thereof;
(i) Any other relevant information, including information submitted by the candidate or requested by the hiring authority

VIII. The Superintendent or designee shall notify the local police departments annually that the District wishes to be notified regarding registered sex offenders. If an applicant for employment is selected to be hired, administration is directed to seek Sex Offender Registry Information (SORI) regarding said applicant from the local police department or by mailing the appropriate form to the Sex Offender Registry Board (SORB), as well as, from the National Sex Offender Registry. The selection shall be contingent upon an acceptable SORI report. The Superintendent will develop appropriate procedures to evaluate any information received, and determine the appropriate course of action, if necessary.

IX. The Palmer Public Schools will notify the applicant of the decision and the basis of the decision in a timely manner.

LEGAL REF: MGL 71:38R, 151B, 276, 100A, St.2002, c.385

CROSS REF: IJOC, School Volunteers

Revised and approved by the School Committee on 11/10/10.
C.O.R.I. REQUIREMENTS

Employers may ask the following series of questions:

1. Have you been convicted of a felony? Yes or no?

2. Have you been convicted of a misdemeanor within the past five years (other than a first conviction for any of the following misdemeanors: drunkenness, simple assault, speeding, minor traffic violations, affray or disturbance of the peace)? Yes or no?

3. Have you completed a period of incarceration within the past five years for any misdemeanor (other than a first conviction for any of the following misdemeanors: drunkenness, simple assault, speeding, minor traffic violations, affray or disturbance of the peace)? Yes or no?

4. If the answer to question number 3 above is “yes” please state whether you were convicted more than five years ago for any offense (other than a first conviction for any of the following misdemeanors: drunkenness, simple assault, speeding, minor traffic violations, affray or disturbance of the peace)? Yes or no?

Some employers are authorized to request, receive, view and/or hold criminal offender record information pursuant to state or federal law.

Any inquiry into the criminal record of an applicant must also contain language pursuant to M.G.L. c. 276, § 100A.

It is unlawful for an employer to make any inquiry of an applicant or employee regarding:

1. An arrest, detention or disposition regarding any violation of law in which no conviction resulted.

2. First convictions for the misdemeanors of drunkenness, simple assault, speeding, minor traffic violations, affrays or disturbance of the peace. For the purposes of 804 CMR 3.02 minor traffic violations include any moving traffic violation other than reckless driving, driving to endanger and motor vehicle homicide.

3. Any conviction of a misdemeanor where the date of the conviction or the completion of any period of incarceration resulting therefrom, which ever date is later, occurred five or more years prior to the date of such inquiry, unless such person has been convicted of any offense within five years immediately preceding the date of the inquiry.

No person shall be held under any provision of any law to be guilty of perjury or of otherwise giving false statement by reason of his failure to recite or acknowledge such information as he has a right to withhold by 804 CMR 3.02.

Palmer Public Schools
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CORI REQUEST FORM

Palmer Public Schools has been certified by the Criminal History Systems Board for access to all criminal case data including conviction, non-conviction and pending. As an applicant/employee for the position of ____________________________, I understand that a criminal record check will be conducted for conviction, non-conviction and pending criminal case information only and that it will not necessarily disqualify me. The information below is correct to the best of my knowledge.

---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

APPLICANT/EMPLOYEE INFORMATION (PLEASE PRINT)

LAST NAME ____________________________ FIRST NAME ____________________________ MIDDLE NAME ____________________________

MAIDEN NAME OR ALIAS (IF APPLICABLE) ____________________________ PLACE OF BIRTH ____________________________

DATE OF BIRTH ____________ SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER ____________ MOTHER’S MAIDEN NAME ____________________________

(Requested but not required)

FORMER ADDRESSES: ____________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

SEX: _______ HEIGHT: _____ ft. _____ in. WEIGHT: _______ EYE COLOR: _______

STATE DRIVER’S LICENSE NUMBER: ____________________________

***THE ABOVE INFORMATION WAS VERIFIED BY REVIEWING THE FOLLOWING FORM OF GOVERNMENT ISSUED PHOTOGRAPHIC IDENTIFICATION: ____________________________

REQUESTED BY: ____________________________

SIGNATURE OF CORI AUTHORIZED EMPLOYEE
Guidelines for Implementation:

1. **Categories:** As a precaution to prevent any possible unmonitored access to children by individuals who may seek to victimize them, all full and part-time employees in all capacities (administrators, faculty support staff, coaches, substitutes); all transportation providers; all volunteers; and all contractors/subcontractors not working under the direct supervision of our CORIed staff, will be required to submit to a CORI background check.

2. **Standards:** There will be no exceptions to the categories of individuals who will be required to submit to a CORI background check.

3. **Process:** The following process will be followed in terms of notification and obtaining of signatures for permission to obtain CORI information:
   - Collective Bargaining Units - Notification requesting impact bargaining will be given; meetings will be held to share information regarding the new policy and its implementation.
   - Employees - Individual CORI permission forms with original signatures will be obtained from each employee through the personnel office. Personnel forms will be adjusted to indicate that the obtaining of CORI information regarding an individual is a condition of employment.
   - Volunteers - Building principals will be responsible for enforcing the CORI requirement for all school volunteers, including chaperones for field experiences. Notification of parents regarding this requirement will be made through school newsletters and will be included in student handbooks.

4. **Consequences for Noncompliance:** Refusal of any individual within the categories so named to authorize a CORI check will result in termination of employment or dismissal from voluntary service.

5. **Organization:** The obtaining of CORI information will be done through the personnel office. Such background checks will be made no less than every three years. Only authorized personnel (Superintendent, business manager, designated CORI clerk) may obtain this information.

6. **Access:** Only the authorized central office personnel may have access to CORI files, however, an individual may review his/her own file. The Superintendent will be responsible for reviewing each CORI.

7. **Process/standard for Review:** Based on the CORI record, the Superintendent will determine an individual's eligibility for employment or service. Considerations would include factors such as the nature of the crime and the date it occurred. The determination of the Superintendent shall be final and shall not be subject to grievance or appeal.

8. **CORI Challenges:** If an individual challenges the information contained in the background check, the burden of proof will rest with the individual. The Superintendent will not reconsider any decision made regarding that individual until proof of misinformation is made.

9. **Confidentiality:** All CORI information will be kept in a separate, secure file in the personnel office. Unauthorized dissemination of CORI information is prohibited.

10. **Special Education Providers:** The Director of Special Education will require assurance by all special education program and transportation providers contracted by this school district that current CORI standards are being met.

*Palmer Public Schools*
INFORMATION CONCERNING THE PROCESS IN CORRECTING A CRIMINAL RECORD

1. If you have undergone a background check by an agency that has received a criminal record from the CHSB, you may ask the agency to provide you with a copy of the criminal record. You may also request a copy of your adult criminal record from the Criminal History Systems Board, 200 Arlington Street, Suite 2200, Chelsea, MA 02150 by calling (617) 660-4640 or go to www.mass.gov/chsb/cori/cori_forms.html#pers.

2. The CHSB charges $25.00 fee to provide an individual with a copy of his/her criminal record. You may complete an affidavit of indigency and request that the CHSB waive the fee.

3. Upon receipt, review the record. If you need assistance in interpreting the entries or dispositions, please review the disposition code and “how to read a BOP” on the CHSB’s website www.mass.gov/chsb/cori/cori_bop.html. The CHSB does not offer “walk-in” service but you may call our Legal Division at (617) 660-4760 for assistance or the CARI Unit of the Office of the Commissioner of Probation at (617) 727-5300.

4. If you believe that a case is opened on your record that should be marked closed, you may contact the Office of the Commissioner of Probation CARI Unit at (617) 727-5300 for assistance, or you may go to the Probation Department at the court where the charges were brought and request that the case(s) be updated.

5. If you believe that a disposition is incorrect, contact the Chief Probation Officer at the court where the charges were brought or the CARI Unit at the Office of the Commissioner of Probation and report that the court incorrectly entered a disposition on your criminal record.

6. If you believe that someone has stolen or improperly used your identity and were arraigned on criminal charges under your name, you may contact the Office of the Commissioner of Probation CARI Unit or the Chief Probation Officer in the court where the charges were brought. For a listing of courthouses and telephone numbers please see www.mass.gov/chsb/cori/cori_codes_court.html.

7. In some situations of identity theft, you may need to contact the CHSB to arrange to have a fingerprint analysis conducted.

8. If there is a warrant currently outstanding against you, you need to appear at the court and ask that the warrant be recalled. You cannot do this over the telephone.

9. If you believe that an employer, volunteer agency, housing agency or municipality has been provided with a criminal record that does not pertain to you, the agency should contact the CORI Unit for assistance at (617) 660-4640.
COMMITMENT TO ACCOMPLISHMENT

The Palmer School Committee accepts ultimate responsibility for all facets of school operations. Because it is accountable to residents of the district, the School Committee will maintain a program of accountability consisting of the following elements:

- Clear statements of expectations and purpose as these relate to operations, programs, departments, and positions.

- Provisions for the staff, resources, and support necessary to achieve stated expectations and purposes, subject to financial support by residents of the district.

- Evaluation of operations and instructional and staff development programs to determine how well expectations and purposes are being met.

- Specific performance objectives to enable individuals to direct their own efforts to the goals and objectives of the district.

- Evaluation of the efforts of employees in line with stated objectives, with the first purpose of evaluation being to help each individual make a maximum contribution to the goals of the district.

Every effort will be made by the School Committee, Superintendent, and staff to fulfill the responsibilities inherent in the concept of accountability.
The School Committee is responsible to the people for whose benefit the school system has been established. The Committee's current decisions will influence the course of education in our schools for years to come. The Committee and each of its members must look to the future and to the needs of all people more than the average citizen finds necessary. This requires a comprehensive perspective and long-range planning in addition to attention to immediate problems.

The School Committee's primary responsibility is to establish those purposes, programs, and procedures that will best produce the educational achievement needed by our students. The Committee is charged with accomplishing this while also being responsible for wise management of resources available to the school system. The Committee must fulfill these responsibilities by functioning primarily as a legislative body to formulate and adopt policy, by selecting an executive officer to implement policy, and by evaluating the results. It must carry out its functions openly, while seeking the comments of public, students, and staff in its decision-making processes.

In accordance with these principles, the technique will involve:

1. Periodically setting performance objectives for the School Committee itself and evaluating their accomplishment.
2. Setting objectives for performance for each position and function in the system.
3. Allowing the people responsible for carrying out objectives to have a role in setting them.
4. Establish practical and simple goals.
5. Conducting a concrete and periodic review of performance against these goals.

CROSS REF.: ADA, School District Goals and Objectives
EVALUATION OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

The School Committee will periodically establish realistic objectives related to Committee procedures and relationships. At the end of a specified length of time, the Committee will measure its performance against the stated objectives.

The following areas of School Committee operations and relationships are representative of those in which objectives may be set and progress appraised:

1. Communication with the public
2. School Committee - Superintendent relationships
3. School Committee member development and performance
4. Policy development
5. Educational leadership
6. Fiscal management
7. School Committee meetings
8. Performance of subcommittees of the School Committee
9. Interagency and governmental relationships

When the Committee has completed its self-evaluation, the members will discuss the results in detail and formulate a new series of objectives. At the same time, the Committee will set an approximate date on which the next evaluation will be conducted.

Implied in the concept of evaluation is an assumption that individuals and committees are capable of improvement. The School Committee believes that its performance will be improved if evaluation is carried out systematically in accordance with good planning, conscientious follow-through, and careful assessment of results.
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER AUTHORITY

Authority

Because all powers of the School Committee derived from state laws are granted in terms of action as a group, members of the School Committee have authority only when acting as a Committee legally in session.

The School Committee will not be bound in any way by any statement or action on the part of an individual member except when such statement or action is a result of specific instructions of the Committee.

No member of the Committee, by virtue of his office, will exercise any administrative responsibility with respect to the schools or command the services of any school employee.

The School Committee will function as a body and all policy decisions and other matters, as required by law, will be settled by an official vote of the Committee sitting in formal session.

Duties

The duties and obligations of the individual Committee member may be enumerated as follows:

1. To become familiar with the General Laws of the Commonwealth relating to education and School Committee operations, regulations of the Massachusetts Board of Education, policies and procedures of this School Committee and school department.

2. To keep abreast of new laws and the latest trends in education.

3. To have a general knowledge of the goals, objectives, and programs of the town's public schools.

4. To work effectively with other Committee members without trying either to dominate the Committee or neglect his share of the work.

5. To respect the privileged communication that exists in executive sessions by maintaining strict confidentiality on matters discussed in these sessions, except that which becomes part of the public record, once it has been approved for release.

6. To vote and act in Committee impartially for the good of the students.

7. To accept the will of the majority vote in all cases, and to remember that he is one of a team and must abide by, and carry out, all Committee decisions once they are made.

8. To represent the Committee and the schools to the public in a way that promotes interest and support.
9. To refer questions and complaints to the proper school authorities.

10. To comply with the accepted code of ethics for School Committee members.
AWARDING OF DIPLOMAS

The Chairperson of the School Committee will hand diplomas to graduating seniors during high school graduation. In addition, present or past members of the School Committee, with the permission of the sitting chair, may hand the diploma to their child or grandchild.

*Adopted and approved by the School Committee on 12/15/10.*
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER ETHICS
(Massachusetts Association of School Committees Code of Ethics)

Preamble

The acceptance of a code of ethics implies the understanding of the basic organization of School Committees under the Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The oath of office of a School Committee member binds the individual member to adherence to those state laws which apply to School Committees, since School Committees are agencies of the state.

This code of ethics delineates three areas of responsibility of School Committee members in addition to that implied above:

1. Community responsibility
2. Responsibility to school administration
3. Relationships to fellow Committee members

A School Committee member in his/her relations with his/her community should:

1. Realize that his/her primary responsibility is to the children.
2. Recognize that his/her basic function is to be policy making and not administrative.
3. Remember that he/she is one of a team and must abide by, and carry out, all Committee decisions once they are made.
4. Be well informed concerning the duties of a Committee member on both a local and state level.
5. Remember that he/she represents the entire community at all times.
6. Accept the office as a Committee member as means of unselfish service with no intent to "play politics," in any sense of the word, or to benefit personally from his/her Committee activities.

A School Committee member in his/her relations with his/her school administration should:

1. Endeavor to establish sound, clearly defined policies which will direct and support the administration.
2. Recognize and support the administrative chain of command and refuse to act on complaints as an individual outside the administration.
3. Give the chief administrator full responsibility for discharging his/her professional duties and hold him/her responsible for acceptable results.
4. Refer all complaints to the administrative staff for solution and only discuss them at Committee meetings if such solutions fail.

A School Committee in his/her relations with his/her fellow Committee members should:

1. Recognize that action at official meetings is binding and that he/she alone cannot bind the Committee outside of such meetings.
2. Realize that he/she should not make statements or promises of how he/she will vote on matters that will come before the Committee.
3. Uphold the intent of executive sessions and respect the privileged communications that exists in executive sessions.
4. Not withhold pertinent information on school matters or personnel problems, either from members of his/her own Committee or from members of other Committees who may be seeking help or information on school problems

5. Make decisions only after all facts on a question have been presented and discussed.
SCHOOL COMMITTEE ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

For the purpose of organizing, the School Committee, at its first regular meeting following the District’s annual elections, will elect from its membership a chairperson, a vice-chairperson, and a secretary, all of whom will hold their respective offices for a term of one year or until a successor is elected.

A majority of the members of the School Committee will constitute a quorum. The election will proceed as follows:

1. Nominations for the office of chairperson will be made from the floor. The chairperson will be elected by a majority roll-call vote of the members present and voting. If no nominee receives a majority vote, the election will be declared null and void and nominations will be reopened.

2. Upon election, the new chairperson will preside, calling for the election of a vice-chairperson and secretary, in order. The procedure used for their election will be the same as that for electing the chairperson.

Any vacancy among the officers occurring between organizational meetings will be filled by a member elected by the School Committee. The election will be conducted as described above.

Following election of officers at its organizational meeting, the School Committee may proceed into such regular or special business as scheduled on the agenda.
Duties of the Chairperson

The chairperson of the School Committee has the same powers as any other member of the Committee to vote upon all measures coming before it, to offer resolutions and to discuss questions. He/she will perform those duties that are consistent with his/her office and those required by law, state regulations, and this Committee. In carrying out these responsibilities, the chairperson will:

1. Sign the instruments, acts, and orders necessary to carry out state requirements and the will of the Committee.
2. Consult with the Superintendent in the planning of the Committee's agendas.
3. Confer with the Superintendent on crucial matters that may occur between Committee meetings.
4. Appoint subcommittees, subject to Committee approval.
5. Call special meetings of the Committee as found necessary.
6. Be public spokesperson for the Committee at all times except as this responsibility is specifically delegated to others.
7. Be responsible for the orderly conduct of all Committee meetings.

As presiding officer at all meetings of the Committee, the chairperson will:

1. Call the meeting to order at the appointed time.
2. Announce the business to come before the Committee in its proper order.
3. Enforce the Committee's policies relating to the order of business and the conduct of meetings.
4. Recognize persons who desire to speak, and protect the speaker who has the floor from disturbance or interference.
5. Explain what the effect of a motion would be if this is not clear to members.
6. Restrict discussion to the question when a motion is before the Committee.
7. Answer all parliamentary inquiries.
8. Put motions to a vote, stating definitely and clearly the vote and result thereof.
Duties of the Vice-Chairperson

The vice-chairperson of the Committee will act in the absence of the chairperson as presiding officer of the Committee and will perform such other duties as may be delegated or assigned to him/her.

Secretary

The secretary will keep or cause to be kept an accurate journal of all Committee meetings; will comply with state law and Committee policy regarding notification of meetings; and will render such reports as may be required by the state or the town.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:36

Note: The treasurer of the town serves as treasurer of the School Committee.
SCHOOL COMMITTEE-SUPERINTENDENT RELATIONSHIP

The Committee will leave to the Superintendent all matters of decision and administration that come within his scope as executive officer or as professional leader of the school system. While the Committee reserves to itself the ultimate decision of all matters concerning general policy or expenditures of funds, it will normally proceed in these areas after receiving recommendations from its executive officer. Further:

1. The Superintendent will have the privilege of asking guidance from the Committee with respect to matters of operation whenever appropriate. If it is necessary to make exceptions to an established policy, he will submit the matter to the Committee for advice and direction.

2. The Superintendent will assist the Committee in reaching sound judgments and establishing policies, and will place before the Committee all relevant facts, information, and reports necessary to keep the Committee adequately informed of situations or business at hand.
ADVISORY COMMITTEES TO THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

The following general policies will govern the appointment and functioning of advisory committees to the School Committee other than the student advisory committee, which is governed by the terms of the Massachusetts General Laws.

1. Advisory committees may be created by the School Committee to serve as task forces for special purposes or to provide continuing consultation in a particular area of activity. However, there will be no standing overall advisory committee to the School Committee.

2. If an advisory committee is required by state or federal law, its composition and appointment will meet all the guidelines established for that particular type of committee.

3. The composition of task forces and any other advisory committees will be broadly representative and take into consideration the specific tasks assigned to the committee. Members of the professional staff may be appointed to the committee as members or consultants, as found desirable.

4. Appointments to such committees will be made by the Committee; appointment of staff members to such committees will be made by the School Committee upon recommendation of the Superintendent.

5. Tenure of committee members will be one year only unless the member is reappointed.

6. Each committee will be clearly instructed as to:
   a. The length of time each member is being asked to serve.
   b. The assignment the School Committee wishes the committee to fulfill and the extent and limitations of its responsibilities.
   c. The resources the School Committee will provide.
   d. The approximate dates on which the School Committee wishes to receive major reports.
   e. School Committee policies governing citizens, committees and the relationship of these committees to the School Committee as a whole, individual School Committee members, the Superintendent, and other members of the professional staff.
   f. Responsibilities for the release of information to the press.

7. Recommendations of committees will be based upon research and fact.

8. The School Committee possesses certain legal powers and prerogatives that cannot be delegated or surrendered to others. Therefore, all recommendations of an advisory committee must be submitted to the School Committee.

The Committee will have the sole power to dissolve any of its advisory committees and will reserve the right to exercise this power at any time during the life of any committee.

CROSS REF.: JIB, Student Involvement in Decision-making
            KCB, Community Involvement in Decision-making

*Palmer Public Schools*
SCHOOL COUNCILS

I. PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT:

The School Committee recognizes that teachers, parents/guardians and community members can become more committed to improving the schools and more supportive of the Palmer Public Schools when they enjoy the opportunity to serve or be represented on a school council that has a role in shaping the policies and programs of the school, and that site-based decision-making places the school at the center of planning, goal setting, and budgeting for school improvement. The Education Reform Act of 1993 and the Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 71, Section 59C requires that each school establish a School Council. Therefore, the School Committee establishes the following policy:

II. POLICY STATEMENT:

It is the policy of the School Committee that each school principal organize a school council composed of him/herself (to act as a co-chair), teachers, parents/guardians, community members and, at the secondary level, students.

III. EXCEPTIONS TO POLICY: None

IV. AMPLIFYING INSTRUCTIONS AND GUIDELINES:

(See "Massachusetts School Council Handbook - June 2001")

V. DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY:

A. The Superintendent is directly responsible for communicating this policy to all appropriate parties and enforcing its provisions.
B. The School Principal will be responsible for defining the composition and overseeing the formation of the council pursuant to a representative process approved by the Superintendent and the School Committee.
C. Each school principal is responsible for communicating this policy to all students and staff under his/her jurisdiction and ensuring that all procedures are followed.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:59C
Education Reform Act of 1993
Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Department of Education Report on School Councils, October 1994: www.doe.mass.edu/schoolcouncils
SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The Principal, in conjunction with the school council, shall be responsible for preparing a written school improvement plan annually. This plan shall be written with the advice of the school council and submitted for approval to the Superintendent and the School Committee. The plan should be drafted with the following in mind:

1. The educational goals for the school consistent with the goals and standards, including student performance standards, as adopted by the Massachusetts Board of Education and by the School Committee.
2. An assessment of the needs of the school in light of the proposed educational goals.
3. The means to address student performance.
4. Professional development for the school's professional staff.
5. The enhancement of parental involvement in the life of the school, safety, and discipline.
6. The development of means for meeting the diverse learning needs of every child.
7. Any further subjects as the Principal, in consultation with the school council, shall consider appropriate, except that:
   (a) The council shall have no authority over matters that are subject to Chapter 150E, the collective bargaining law, and
   (b) The council may not expand the scope of its authority beyond that established in law or expressly granted by School Committee policy.
SUBMISSION AND APPROVAL OF THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The written school improvement plan shall be submitted by the Principal to the Superintendent and the School Committee for review and approval by June 1st of each year.

Because the implementation of the plan is dependent on School Committee approval, it is important that the school council be aware of certain expectations of the School Committee regarding the school improvement plan. The school improvement plan should:

1. Focus on improvement of student learning.
2. Specify expected student outcomes and measurable/observable results.
3. Align with the Mission of the school district and any goals and policies of the school district.
4. Be consistent with state and federal law, school district policy, established curriculum and negotiated agreements.
5. Clearly identify actions to be taken on how changes will be implemented.
6. Include a plan on how to solicit community support for the changes being developed.
7. Indicate anticipated costs and available funding sources.
8. Delineate the method of evaluating and reporting progress and results.

If the school improvement plan is not approved by the Superintendent and School Committee, it shall be returned to the Principal with specific comments as to the reason(s). The Principal shall revise the plan in cooperation with the school council, and resubmit it for approval. If the school improvement plan is not reviewed by the School Committee within 30 days of its receipt by the Committee, the plan shall be deemed to have been approved.
CONDUCT OF SCHOOL COUNCIL BUSINESS

The Principal shall, by law, serve as co-chair of the council. The second co-chair will be elected annually by the council members at its first meeting of the school year subsequent to the elections of new council members. The co-chairs will be responsible for the preparation of the agenda for the council meetings.

The school council shall meet at least once monthly during the school year. Meetings will be held outside of school hours. At its first meeting of the school year, the council will set its calendar of regular meetings for the year. Where circumstances warrant, the council may choose to call additional meetings.

Consensus shall be used by school councils as the primary method to resolve issues and to formulate recommendations. Votes by majority may be taken at the discretion of the Principal and Roberts Rules of Order shall prevail if there are questions of procedure.

All meetings of the school council shall conform to the Open Meeting Law, Sections 23 A, B, and C, which stipulate that all meetings be open to the public, that meetings be posted at least 48 hours in advance, and that minutes of the meeting shall be maintained as required. The scope of the school council does not require, and therefore does not qualify for, executive session.

The Superintendent shall receive agendas and minutes of all school council meetings. The Superintendent shall provide copies of these materials to members of the School Committee for information.
STUDENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

1. Each year the students of the high school will elect a five-member student advisory committee to meet bi-monthly with the School Committee.
   
a. The student council will establish the procedures of the election and the election will be held under its auspices.

b. Every student in attendance at the high school is eligible to vote in this election.

c. Once elected, the student advisory committee will meet with the Superintendent and the Chairperson of the School Committee to establish the manner in which the meetings of the student advisory committee and the School Committee shall take place.

d. The members of each student advisory committee shall, by majority vote prior to the first day of June in each year, elect from their number a Chairperson who shall serve for a term of one year. Said Chairperson shall be an ex-officio nonvoting member of the School Committee.

2. Student Member of the School Committee
   
a. The student member will not have the right to attend executive sessions unless such right is expressly granted by the School Committee.

b. The student member shall be subject to all School Committee rules and regulations and shall serve without compensation.
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The School Committee will transact all business at official meetings of the Committee. These may be either regular or special meetings, defined as follows:

1. **Regular meeting**: the usual official legal action meeting, held regularly

2. **Special meeting**: an official legal action meeting called between scheduled regular meetings to consider specific topics.

Every meeting of the School Committee, regular or special, will be open to the public unless an executive session is held in accordance with state law.

CROSS REF.: BEC, Executive Sessions
BEDA, Notification of School Committee Meetings
EXECUTIVE SESSIONS

All meetings of the School Committee are open to attendance by the public and media representatives. However, the Committee has the right to convene in a closed executive session when it meets the following procedural conditions imposed by state law:

1. The Committee will first convene in an open session for which due notice has been given.

2. The Chairperson (or, in his/her absence, the presiding member) will state the purpose for the executive session by stating all subjects that may be revealed without compromising the purpose for which the executive session was called.

3. A majority of the members must vote to enter the executive session, with the vote taken by roll call and recorded in the official minutes.

4. The Chairperson or presiding member will state before entering the executive session whether the Committee will reconvene in open session after the executive session.

The law puts specific limitations on the purposes for which executive sessions may be convened. The Committee may enter executive sessions only to deliberate:

1. The reputation, character, physical condition or mental health, rather than the professional competence, of a single individual, or the discipline or dismissal, including the hearing of charges against, a member of the committee, a school department employee or student, or other individual. The individual has certain rights enumerated in the law including requiring the Committee to hold an open session should the individual so request.

2. Strategy with respect to non-union negotiations or to conduct collective bargaining sessions with non-union personnel.

3. Strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation, if an open meeting might have a detrimental effect. Collective bargaining may also be conducted.

4. The deployment of security personnel or devices.

5. Allegations of criminal misconduct or to discuss the filing of criminal complaints.

6. Transactions of real estate, if an open meeting might be detrimental to the negotiating position of the Committee or another party.

7. To comply with the provisions of any general or specific law of federal grant-in-aid requirements.

8. To consider and interview applicants for employment by a preliminary screening committee (The only position that the School Committee would be involved in that might qualify would be for the position of Superintendent.) This exemption only applies if it can be determined that an open meeting will have a detrimental affect in obtaining qualified applicants. This shall not apply to applicants who have passed a prior preliminary screening.
9. To meet or confer with a mediator with respect to any litigation or public business.

10. To discuss trade secrets or confidential competitively-sensitive or other proprietary information conducted by a governmental body as an energy supplier.

(In the first case, an open meeting will be held if the individual involved so requests.)

Accurate records of the proceedings conducted in executive session will be kept and may remain secret only so long as their publication would defeat the purpose of the session.

The School Committee Chair and the Superintendent will review executive session minutes for possible declassification on, at least, a quarterly basis and, if necessary, will consult with legal counsel. The School Committee Chair will bring minutes recommended for declassification to the School Committee for a vote either as part of a consent agenda or for individual action. In either case, there shall be an announcement of the declassification of minutes.

When a specific set of executive session minutes, not yet declassified, is requested by a member of the public, the School Committee shall render a decision on declassification at its next meeting or within 30 days after the request, whichever occurs first.

All votes taken in executive session will be recorded roll call votes, and will become part of the minutes of executive sessions.

Established by law and Committee policy

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 30A:21; 30A:22
CROSS REFS.: BE, School Committee Meetings
KEB, Public Complaints about School Personnel

Revised and approved on 11/21/13.
NOTIFICATION OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS

As required by law, a minimum of 48 hours' advance notice will be given for any meeting of the School Committee, including all subcommittee meetings. The only exception permitted is in case of emergency, which the law defines as "a sudden, generally unexpected occurrence or set of circumstances demanding immediate action."

Notification of the dates, times, and places of regular meetings will be accomplished by periodic publication of the schedule for the ensuing months. Notification of a change in a regular meeting time or place and notification of a special meeting will be filed with the town clerk at least 48 hours in advance, as required by law.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 39:23A; 39:23B
CROSS REF.: BE, School Committee Meetings
AGENDA FORMAT

The Superintendent, conferring with the Chairperson of the School Committee, will arrange the order of items on meetings agendas so that the Committee can accomplish its business as expeditiously as possible. The particular order may vary from meeting to meeting in keeping with the business at hand.

The Committee will follow the order of business established by the agenda except as it votes to rearrange the order for the convenience of visitors, individuals appearing before the Committee, or to expedite Committee business.

Any School Committee member, staff member, or citizen may suggest items of business. The inclusion of such items, however, will be at the discretion of the Chairperson of the Committee. A staff member who wishes to have a topic scheduled on the agenda should submit the request through the Superintendent.

The agenda will also provide for time when any citizen who wishes may speak briefly before the School Committee.

The agenda, together with supporting materials, will be distributed to School Committee members three days prior to the meeting to permit adequate time to prepare for the meeting.

Agendas will be posted and made available to the press.
Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised will govern the proceedings of the Committee, except when those rules are in conflict with the Committee's approved policies and regulations.

In accordance with Robert's Rules, the Committee may suspend parliamentary rules of order by a two-thirds vote.
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS

All regular and special meetings of the School Committee shall be open to the public. Executive sessions will be held only as prescribed by the Statutes of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The School Committee desires citizens of the District to attend its meetings so that they may become better acquainted with the operations and the programs of our local public schools. In addition, the Committee would like the opportunity to hear the wishes and ideas of the public.

In order that all citizens who wish to be heard before the Committee have a chance and to ensure the ability of the Committee to conduct the District's business in an orderly manner, the following rules and procedures are adopted:

1. At the start of each regularly scheduled School Committee meeting, individuals or group representatives will be invited to address the Committee. The Chairperson shall determine the length of the public participation segment.

2. Speakers will be allowed three (3) minutes to present their material. The presiding Chairperson may permit extension of this time limit.

3. Topics for discussion must be limited to those items listed on the School Committee meeting agenda for that evening.

4. Improper conduct and remarks will not be allowed. Defamatory or abusive remarks are always out of order. If a speaker persists in improper conduct or remarks, the Chairperson may terminate that individual’s privilege of address.

5. All remarks will be addressed through the Chairperson of the meeting.

6. Speakers may offer such objective criticisms of the school operations and programs as concern them, but in public session the Committee will not hear personal complaints of school personnel nor against any member of the school community. Under most circumstances, administrative channels are the proper means for disposition of legitimate complaints involving staff members.

7. Written comments longer than three (3) minutes may be presented to the Committee before or after the meeting for the Committee members’ review and consideration at an appropriate time.
SPECIAL PROCEDURES FOR CONDUCTING HEARINGS

In conducting all public hearings required by law, and others as it deems advisable, the School Committee will:

1. Give due and public notice in line with statutory requirements and seek to publicize the meeting in all local media.

2. Make available printed information on the topic of the hearing.

3. Give all persons an equal opportunity to be heard in accordance with the Committee's policy.

The Chair of the Committee will preside at the hearing.

The public will be informed at the beginning of the hearing the particular procedure that will be followed in regard to questions, remarks, rebuttals, and any time limitations or other rules that must be followed to give everyone an opportunity to be heard.

In conformance with customary hearing procedures, statements and supporting information will be presented first by the Committee, or by others for the Committee; to comment, citizens must be recognized by the chair, and all remarks must be addressed to the chair and be germane to the topic. To assure that all who wish get a chance to speak, the chair will recognize persons who have not commented previously during the hearing before recognizing persons who wish to remark a second time.
POLICY ADOPTION

Adoption of new policies or changing existing policies is solely the responsibility of the School Committee. Policies will be adopted and/or amended only by the affirmative vote of a majority of the members of the School Committee when such action has been scheduled on the agenda of a regular or special meeting.

To permit time for study of all policies or amendments to policies and to provide an opportunity for interested parties to react, proposed policies or amendments will be presented as an agenda item to the Committee in the following sequence:

1. Information item
2. Discussion item -- first reading of proposed policy or policies; response from Superintendent; report from any advisory Committee assigned responsibility in the area; Committee discussion and directions for any redrafting
3. Action item -- discussion, adoption or rejection.

Amendments to the policy at the action stage will not require repetition of the sequence, unless the Committee so directs.

The School Committee may dispense with the above sequence to meet emergency conditions.

Policies will be effective upon the date set by the School Committee. This date will ensure that affected persons have an opportunity to become familiar with the requirements of the new policy prior to its implementation.
POLICY REVISION AND REVIEW

In an effort to keep its written policies up to date so that they can be used consistently as a basis for School Committee action and administrative decision, the Committee will review its policies on a regular basis.

The Committee will evaluate how the policies have been executed by the school staff and will weigh the results. It will rely on the school staff, students, and the community for providing evidence of the effect of the policies it has adopted.

The Superintendent is given the continuing commission of calling to the Committee's attention all policies that are out of date or for other reason appear to need revision.

The School Committee directs the Superintendent to periodically recall all policy and regulations manuals for administrative updating and Committee review.
SCHOOL COMMITTEE REVIEW OF REGULATIONS

It is expected that the Superintendent and administrative staff will need to issue regulations implementing policies of the School Committee. Many of these will be routine from year to year; others will arise in special circumstances; some will be drawn up under specific directions from the Committee.

The Committee may review the regulations developed by the Superintendent for the school system whenever they appear inconsistent with policy, goals, or objectives of the district, but it will revise or veto such regulations only when, in the Committee's judgment, they are inconsistent with policies adopted by the Committee.

The Committee will not officially approve regulations except as required by state law or in cases when strong community attitudes, or possible student or staff reaction, make it necessary or advisable for a regulation to have the Committee's advance approval.

Rules Pertaining to Staff and Student Conduct

Under Massachusetts law, the Superintendent is required to publish "rules and regulations pertaining to the conduct of teachers and students which have been adopted." Codes of discipline, as well as procedures used to develop such codes shall be filed with the Department of Education for information purposes only. Standards of conduct will be included in staff and student handbooks. These handbooks will be reviewed and approved annually by the School Committee.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:37H
POLICY DISSEMINATION

The Superintendent is directed to establish and maintain an orderly plan for preserving and making accessible the policies adopted by the Committee and the regulations needed to put them into effect.

Accessibility is to extend at least to all employees of the school system, to members of the Committee, and, insofar as conveniently possible, to all persons in the community. A policy concerning a particular group or groups in the schools will be distributed to those groups prior to the policy's effective date.

All policy manuals distributed to anyone will remain the property of the Committee and will be considered as "on loan" to anyone, or any organization, in whose possession they might be at any time. They are subject to recall at any time deemed necessary for purposes of updating.

The School Committee's policy manual will be considered a public record and will be available for inspection at the Superintendent's office.
SUSPENSION OF POLICIES

The operation of any section or sections of School Committee policies not established by law or contract may be temporarily suspended by a two-thirds vote of Committee members present at any regular or special meeting. Any action to suspend policy must be reviewed at the next scheduled meeting and will be so noted on the agenda for that meeting.
The School Committee wishes to maintain open channels of communication between itself and the staff. The basic line of communication will, however, be through the Superintendent.

Staff Communications to the School Committee

All communications or reports to the Committee or any of its subcommittees from principals, supervisors, teachers, or other staff members will be submitted through the Superintendent. This procedure does not deny the right of any employee to appeal to the Committee from administrative decisions on important matters, except those matters that are outside of the Committee's legal authority, provided the Superintendent has been notified of the forthcoming appeal and that it is processed in accordance with the Committee's policy on complaints and grievances. Staff members are also reminded that Committee meetings are public meetings. As such, they provide an excellent opportunity to observe firsthand the Committee's deliberations on problems of staff concern.

School Committee Communications to Staff

All official communications, policies, and directives of staff interest and concern will be communicated to staff members through the Superintendent. The Superintendent will develop appropriate methods to keep staff fully informed of the Committee's problems, concerns and actions.

Visits to Schools

Individual School Committee members interested in visiting schools or classrooms will inform the Superintendent of such visits and make arrangements for visitations through the principals of the various schools. Such visits will be regarded as informal expressions of interest in school affairs and not as "inspections" or visits for supervisory or administrative purposes. Official visits by Committee members will be carried on only under Committee authorization.
USE OF ELECTRONIC MESSAGING BY SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

As elected public officials, School Committee members shall exercise caution when communicating between and among themselves via electronic messaging services including but not limited to electronic mail (e-mail), internet web forums, and internet chat rooms.

Under the Open Meeting Law, deliberation by a quorum of members constitutes a meeting. Deliberation is defined as movement toward a decision including but not limited to the sharing of an opinion regarding business over which the Committee has supervision, control, or jurisdiction. A quorum may be arrived at sequentially using electronic messaging without knowledge and intent by the author.

School Committee members should use electronic messaging between and among members only for housekeeping purposes such as requesting or communicating agenda items, meeting times, or meeting dates. Electronic messaging should not be used to discuss Committee matters that require public discussion under the Open Meeting Law.

Under the Public Records Law electronic messages between public officials may be considered public records. Therefore, in order to ensure compliance, the School Committee Chair, in consultation with the Superintendent of Schools, shall annually designate a member of the central office staff who shall be copied on all electronic correspondence between and among members of the School Committee. These copies shall be printed and retained in the central office in the same fashion as any other School Committee records. School Committee members who do not have a computer or access to these messages shall be provided copies on a timely basis.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L 4:7; 39:23A, 23B; 66:10
NEW SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER ORIENTATION

The School Committee Chair and the Superintendent shall assist each new member to understand the policies and procedures of the Committee as soon after election as possible. All new members shall receive copies of all agendas, reports, and other communications received by Committee members. Each new member shall be given the following materials:

A. A copy of the School Committee policy manual
B. A copy of the Open Meeting Law
C. A copy of the Conflict of Interest Regulations
D. A copy of the district's budget
E. Collective bargaining agreements and contracts
F. Student and staff handbooks

Each new member shall also receive any other materials the Chair and/or the Superintendent determines to be necessary. The Massachusetts Association of School Committees, Inc. shall furnish a copy of the latest Massachusetts General Laws relating to education.

The Chair and/or Superintendent shall also clarify policy:

A. arranging visits to schools or administrative offices
B. requesting information regarding school district operations
C. responding to community requests/complaints concerning staff or programs
D. handling confidential information

In districts where members are appointed as well as elected, prior to assuming their official duties (i.e.: cities) they may be invited to attend all meetings of the Committee with the exception of executive sessions.

Whether appointed or elected, new members should be advised that they are also members of the Massachusetts Association of School Committees, Inc. and should be encouraged to utilize the services and resources MASC provide by attending meetings or workshops specifically designed for new Committee members. Their expenses at these meetings or workshops will be reimbursed in accordance with established Committee policy.
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER COMPENSATION AND EXPENSES

The School Committee shall serve without compensation, except that a member of a School Committee of a city, town, regional school district or superintendency union may be compensated for his/her services by a majority vote of the city council in a city having a Plan D or Plan E charter; in a city not having a Plan D or Plan E charter by vote of the city council, subject to the provisions of the charter of such a city; in a town by a majority vote at a town meeting; and in a regional school district or school superintendency by a majority vote of the voting member towns authorized at their respective town meetings, the amount of such compensation, in each case, to be set by the respective cities, towns or groups of towns. No member of a School Committee in any town shall be eligible to the position of teacher, or Superintendent of public schools therein, or in any union school or superintendency union or district in which his/her town participates.

Upon submitting vouchers and supporting bills for expenses incurred in carrying out specific services previously authorized by the Committee, members may be reimbursed from school funds.

Reimbursable expenses may include the cost of attendance at conferences of School Committee associations and other professional meetings or visitations when such attendance and expense payment has had prior School Committee approval.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 40:5; 71:52
ADMINISTRATION GOALS

It is the intent of the School Committee that the district employ qualified personnel to administer the school system efficiently and to require the Superintendent to organize the administration in a manner that will make clear the functions of each position and the relationships among them.

The Superintendent will establish clear lines of communication, both vertically and horizontally, and will form any staff councils or Committees needed to provide for efficient conduct of school business. In order to engage in this process in an orderly and effective fashion, each individual and group will be given particular, clear-cut responsibilities. Channels will be established so that the recommendations and decisions of each group can be heard and reviewed by the chief administrative officer concerned, and, where appropriate, by the Superintendent and School Committee.

The organization and administration of the schools will balance responsibility with commensurate authority, subject to the reserved legal powers of the School Committee. This means that a staff member, when assigned a responsibility or a position, will be given the authority to make the decisions necessary to perform the assigned tasks.

For the schools to operate effectively, each administrative officers will be responsible and accountable for making a plan of development for all staff assigned to his/her area of operation.
RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION OF SUPERINTENDENT

The Committee shall employ a Superintendent of Schools and fix his/her compensation. The Superintendent shall act in accordance with General Laws, Chapter 71, Section 59, and shall perform such other duties consistent with this section as the Committee may determine. He/she shall also prepare such reports as may be required by the State Department of Education and shall submit materials for the Committee’s annual report to the (Mayor) Selectmen in sufficient time for printing in the annual report.

When a vacancy occurs in the office of the Superintendent, the following procedures will be followed:

1. The School Committee will review its policies with reference to desired qualifications and position description as well as level of salary and benefits.

2. The School Committee will take special care to assess the needs of the Palmer Public Schools with reference to change and stability. Change, movement and progress may be in order for the immediate future. On the other hand, the Palmer Public Schools may have need for a period of stability with a slower pace of change. In large measure, a Superintendent sets the tone and pace of educational improvement for the Palmer Public Schools.

3. The School Committee may proceed in one of three ways: appoint a subcommittee to act as a search committee; use the whole committee as a search committee; or secure expert assistance to conduct the search process and submit the names of a limited number of applicants for interview.

4. Those responsible for carrying out the search for a new Superintendent are reminded of the steps involved in the process; preparing a presentable and attractive notice of vacancy; publishing the notice of vacancy within and outside the Town of Palmer; securing applications and credentials of applicants; screening applicants down to a manageable number for interviews and visitations; negotiation of terms; and selection.

5. If at all possible, selection of a new Superintendent should be by unanimous vote of the School Committee. Should this not be possible, selection may be made by a majority vote of the whole School Committee.

Palmer Public Schools
SUPERINTENDENT'S CONTRACT

The Committee, upon the election of a candidate or upon reelection of the incumbent Superintendent will enter into a written contract with the Superintendent, which will meet the requirements of law and will protect the rights of both the Committee and the Superintendent. Under the laws of the Commonwealth, the School Committee may award a contract to a Superintendent of Schools for a period not to exceed six years.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:41; 71:42
EVALUATION OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

Through evaluation of the Superintendent, the School Committee will strive to accomplish the following:

1. Clarify for the Superintendent his/her role in the school system as seen by the School Committee.

2. Clarify for all Committee members the role of the Superintendent in light of his/her job description and the immediate priorities among his/her responsibilities as agreed upon by the Committee and the Superintendent.

3. Develop harmonious working relationships between the School Committee and Superintendent.

4. Provide administrative leadership of excellence for the school system.

The School Committee will periodically develop with the Superintendent a set of performance objectives based on the needs of the school system. The Superintendent's performance will be reviewed in accordance with these specified goals. Additional objectives will be established at intervals agreed upon with the Superintendent.
LINE AND STAFF RELATIONS

The School Committee expects the Superintendent to establish clear understandings on the part of all personnel of the working relationships in the school system.

Personnel will be expected to refer matters requiring administrative action to the administrator to whom they are responsible. The administrator will refer such matters to the next higher administrative authority when necessary.

It is expected that the established lines of authority will serve most purposes. But all personnel will have the right to appeal any decision made by an administrative officer through established grievance procedures.

Additionally, lines of authority do not restrict in any way the cooperative, sensible working together of all staff members at all levels in order to develop the best possible school programs and services. The established lines of authority represent direction of authority and responsibility; when the staff is working together, the lines represent avenues for a two-way flow of ideas to improve the program and operations of the school system.
ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCILS, CABINETS, AND COMMITTEES

The Superintendent may establish such permanent or temporary councils, cabinets, and committees as he/she deems necessary for assuring staff participation in decision making, for implementing policies and regulations and for the improvement of the educational program.

Functioning in an advisory capacity all councils, cabinets, and committees created by the Superintendent may make recommendations for submission to the Committee through the Superintendent. Such groups will exercise no inherent authority. Authority for establishing policy remains with the Committee and authority for implementing policy remains with the Superintendent.

The membership, composition, and responsibilities of administrative councils, cabinets, and committees will be defined by the Superintendent and may be changed at his/her discretion. However, the School Committee wishes to be kept informed of the establishment and dissolution of these groups as well as their membership and their purpose.

Expenses incurred by such groups for consultative services, materials, and any investigative travel will be paid by the school system, but only within budgetary allotments and when approved in advance by the Superintendent.
POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

The Superintendent has responsibility for carrying out, through regulations, the policies established by the School Committee.

The policies developed by the Committee and the regulations developed to implement policy are designed to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the school system. Consequently, it is expected that all School Committee employees and students will carry them out.

Administrators and supervisors are responsible for informing staff members in their schools, departments, or divisions of existing policies and regulations and for seeing that they are implemented in the spirit intended.

Palmer Public Schools
DEVELOPMENT OF REGULATIONS

The Superintendent will be responsible for specifying required actions and designing the detailed arrangements under which the school system will be operated in accordance with School Committee policy. These detailed arrangements will be designed to implement policies, goals, and objectives of the Committee and will be one of the means by which the school system will be governed.

In the development of regulations, the Superintendent may involve at the planning stage those who would be affected by the regulations, including staff members, students, parents/guardian, and the public. He/she must weigh with care the counsel given by representatives of staff, student and community organizations. He/she will inform the Committee of such counsel in presenting pertinent reports of regulations and in presenting regulations for Committee approval.

As long as the Superintendent operates within the guidelines of policy adopted by the Committee, he/she may issue regulations without prior Committee approval unless Committee action is required by law, or the Committee has specifically asked that certain types of regulations be given Committee approval, or the Superintendent recommends Committee approval in light of strong community attitudes or probable staff reactions.
SCHOOL COMMITTEE REVIEW OF REGULATIONS

It is expected that the Superintendent and administrative staff will need to issue regulations implementing policies of the School Committee. Many of these will be routine from year to year; others will arise in special circumstances; some will be drawn up under specific directions from the Committee.

The Committee may review the regulations developed by the Superintendent for the school system whenever they appear inconsistent with policy, goals, or objectives of the district, but it will revise or veto such regulations only when, in the Committee's judgment, they are inconsistent with policies adopted by the Committee.

The Committee will not officially approve regulations except as required by state law or in cases when strong community attitudes, or possible student or staff reaction, make it necessary or advisable for a regulation to have the Committee's advance approval.

Rules Pertaining to Staff and Student Conduct

Under Massachusetts law, the Superintendent is required to publish "rules and regulations pertaining to the conduct of teachers and students which have been adopted." (Codes of discipline, as well as procedures used to develop such codes shall be filed with the Department of Education for information purposes only.) Standards of conduct will be included in staff and student handbooks. These handbooks will be reviewed and approved annually by the School Committee.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:37H

Palmer Public Schools
REGULATIONS DISSEMINATION

It will be the responsibility of the Superintendent to see that the regulations developed to implement Committee policies and administer the school system are appropriately coded and included as regulations in the School Committee's policy manual.

A regulation concerning a particular group or groups in the schools will be distributed to the group(s) prior to the effective date of the regulation.
APPROVAL OF HANDBOOKS AND DIRECTIVES

The law directs that in each school building containing the grades nine to twelve, inclusive, the Principal, in consultation with the school council, shall prepare and distribute to each student a handbook setting forth the rules pertaining to conduct of students. The school council shall review the handbook each spring to consider changes in the disciplinary policy to take effect in September.

It is essential that the contents of all handbooks conform with School Committee policies. It is also important that all handbooks bearing the name of the school system or one of its schools be of a quality that reflects credit on the school department. Therefore, the Committee expects handbooks requiring approval to be approved prior to publication by the Committee and/or the Superintendent.

Committee approval will be necessary for any handbooks that pertain to required standards of conduct for employees or students so that their contents may be accorded the status of Committee-approved policy or regulation. The Superintendent will use his/her judgment as to whether other specific handbooks need Committee approval; however, all handbooks published will be made available to the Committee for informational purposes.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:37H
Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary all student handbooks shall contain the following provisions:

a. Any student who is found on school premises or at school-sponsored or school related events, including athletic games, in possession of a dangerous weapon, or a controlled substance may be subject to expulsion from school by the Principal.

b. Any student who assaults any employee of the school district may be subject to expulsion from school by the Principal.

c. Any student who is charged with a violation of either (a) or (b) above shall be notified in writing of an opportunity for a hearing, provided, however that the student may have representation, along with the opportunity to present evidence and witnesses at said hearing before the Principal. After said hearing the Principal may decide to suspend rather than expel a student.

d. Any student who has been expelled shall have the right to appeal to the Superintendent.

e. When a student is expelled under the provisions listed above and applies for admission to another school for acceptance, the Superintendent of the sending school shall notify the Superintendent of the receiving school of the reasons for the pupil's expulsion.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:37H
ADMINISTRATION IN POLICY ABSENCE

When action must be taken within the school system where the Committee has provided no guides for administrative action, the Superintendent will have the power to act. The Superintendent's decisions, however, will be subject to review by the Committee.
The School Committee will require reports from the Superintendent concerning conditions of efficiency and needs of the schools.

School building administrators will be required to keep such records and make reports as the Superintendent may direct or require.

Upon receipt of the Superintendent's reports, the Committee will take steps to appraise the effectiveness with which the schools are achieving the educational purposes of the school system.

Because statistical information often has a time value, each administrator will give careful consideration to all procedures related to reports, accounting, and general business matters that are required for the administration of the school program and will make accurate and prompt return on scheduled dates of all statistical and other information required.
SCHOOL DISTRICT ANNUAL REPORT

An annual report covering the diversified activities of the school system and the administration's recommendations for their improvement will be prepared by the Superintendent and presented to the School Committee. Upon Committee approval, the report will be made available to the public and used as one means for informing the parents/guardian and citizens, the Commissioner of Education, and others of the programs and conditions of the town's public schools.

Established by law and Committee policy

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 72:4
FISCAL MANAGEMENT GOALS

The quantity and quality of learning programs are directly dependent on the effective, efficient management of allocated funds. It follows that achievement of the school system's purposes can best be achieved through excellent fiscal management.

As trustee of local, state, and federal funds allocated for use in public education, the Committee will fulfill its responsibility to see that these funds are used wisely for achievement of the purposes to which they are allocated.

Because of resource limitations, there is sometimes a temptation to operate so that fiscal concerns overshadow the educational program. Recognizing this, it is essential that the school system take specific action to make sure education remains central and that fiscal matters are ancillary and contribute to the educational program. This concept will be incorporated into Committee operations and into all aspects of school system management and operation.

In the school system's fiscal management, it is the Committee's intent:

1. To engage in thorough advance planning, with staff and community involvement, in order to develop budgets and to guide expenditures so as to achieve the greatest educational returns and the greatest contributions to the educational program in relation to dollars expended.

2. To establish levels of funding that will provide high quality education for the students.

3. To use the best available techniques for budget development and management.

4. To provide timely and appropriate information to all staff with fiscal management responsibilities.

5. To establish maximum efficiency procedures for accounting, reporting, business, purchasing and delivery, payroll, payment of vendors and contractors, and all other areas of fiscal management.
ANNUAL BUDGET

The annual budget is the financial expression of the educational program of the school department, and it mirrors the problems and difficulties that confront the school system.

The budget then is more than just a financial instrument and requires on the part of the Committee, the staff, and the community orderly and cooperative effort to ensure sound fiscal practices for achieving the educational goals and objectives of the school system.

Public school budgeting is regulated and controlled by legislation, state regulations, and local School Committee requirements. The operating budget for the school system will be prepared and presented in line with state policy and will be developed and refined in accordance with these same requirements.

The Superintendent will serve as budget officer but he/she may delegate portions of this responsibility to members of his/her staff as he/she deems appropriate. The three general areas of responsibility for the Superintendent as budget officer will be budget preparation, budget presentation, and budget administration.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:34; 71:37 and 71:38N

Palmer Public Schools
BUDGET DEADLINES AND SCHEDULES

Preparation of the annual budget will be scheduled in stages throughout the school year with attention to certain deadlines established by law and charter.

Whatever dates are assigned to the process, the final date for the submission of the budget to the Town Manager will be arranged cooperatively between the School Committee and the Town Manager.

In reaching its decision on the budget amount that it will submit to the Town Manager, the School Committee will also observe the statutory requirement of holding a public hearing on the proposed budget not less than seven days after the notice for this hearing has been published in a local newspaper.

Established by law and charter

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:38N
BUDGET PLANNING

The major portion of income for the operation of the public schools is derived from local property taxes, and the School Committee will attempt to protect the valid interest of the taxpayers. However, the first priority in the development of an annual budget will be the educational welfare of the children in our schools.

Budget decisions reflect the attitude and philosophy of those charged with the responsibility for educational decision making. Therefore, a sound budget development process must be established to ensure that the annual operating budget accurately reflects this school system's goals and objectives.

In the budget planning process for the school system, the School Committee will strive to:

1. Engage in thorough advance planning, with staff and community involvement, in order to develop budgets and guide expenditures in a manner that will achieve the greatest educational returns and contributions to the educational program in relation to dollars expended.

2. Establish levels of funding that will provide high quality education for all our students.

3. Use the best available techniques for budget development and management.

The Superintendent will have overall responsibility for budget preparation, including the construction of, and adherence to, a budget calendar.
BUDGET ADOPTION PROCEDURES

Authority for adoption of the final school budget lies with the Town Council, the official legislative body of the Town. This body shall vote on the total amount of the appropriations requested by the School Committee.

Established by law and charter

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:34
BUDGET OPERATION AND CONTROL

1. Direct responsibility for the day-by-day implementation and control of the budget of the Palmer Public Schools is placed with the Superintendent.

2. Except for expenditures necessitated in cases of emergency:
   a. Purchase requisitions will not be approved for services, materials or contracts which will cause sums appropriated to specific purposes in the budget to be exceeded.
   b. Funds budgeted for any particular classification or item of expenditure shall not be used for any other purpose or transferred to any other account except by resolution of the School Committee.

3. Should additional revenue materialize during a budget year which was not anticipated at the start of the year (perhaps from a special grant), a plan for spending said funds may be incorporated into the current budget.
BUDGET TRANSFER AUTHORITY

In keeping with the need for periodic reconciliation of the school department's budget, the School Committee will consider requests for transfers of funds as they are recommended by the Superintendent.

The Committee wishes to be kept abreast of the need for these adjustments so that it may act promptly and expedite financial record keeping for the school system.

All funds in the general account not expended by the close of the fiscal year will be returned to the town.
FUNDING PROPOSALS AND APPLICATIONS

The School Committee will encourage the administration to seek and secure all possible sources of state, federal, and other special funds that will enhance the educational opportunities for the children in our schools.

The Superintendent will keep informed of all possible funds available to the school system under the various state and federal programs, and in what manner these funds can best be used in the school system.

The Superintendent will be responsible for seeking out and coordinating the development of proposals for all specially funded projects and for submitting the proposals to the Committee for approval.

The Superintendent is authorized to sign all reports for these projects and will be responsible for the proper expenditure of funds received for such projects.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 44:53A
P.L. 874 Impact Aid
Board of Education 603, CMR 32:00;34:00
AUTHORIZED SIGNATURES

The Chairman or Vice Chairman of the School Committee and the Superintendent will sign payrolls presented for approval.

All bills of the School Committee shall be approved by the Superintendent and signed by at least three (3) members of the School Committee.

The town treasurer, who also serves as the school department treasurer, signs all checks drawn against school department funds. No other signature is valid.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 41:52
BONDED EMPLOYEES AND OFFICERS

Each employee of the school system who is assigned the responsibility of receiving and dispensing school funds will be bonded individually or covered by a blanket bond. The cost of the bond will be paid by the town.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 40:5
FISCAL ACCOUNTING AND REPORTING

The Superintendent will be ultimately responsible for receiving and properly accounting for all funds of the school system.

The accounting system used will conform with state requirements and with good accounting practices, providing for the appropriate separation of accounts, funds, and special monies.

The School Committee will receive periodic financial statements from the Superintendent showing the financial condition of the school department. Such other financial statements as may be determined necessary by either the Committee or the administration will be presented as found desirable.

LEGAL REF.: Board of Education 603 CMR 10:00
AUDITS

An audit of the school department's accounts should be conducted annually. In addition, the Committee may request a private audit of the school system's accounts at its discretion.

The Committee will consider recommendations made by the auditor for maintaining an efficient system for recording and safeguarding the school department's assets.
PURCHASING

The School Committee declares its intention to purchase competitively without prejudice and to seek maximum educational value for every dollar expended.

The acquisition of materials, equipment and services will be centralized in the Superintendent's office of the school system.

The Superintendent will serve as purchasing agent. He/she will develop and administer the purchasing program for the schools in keeping with legal requirements and with the adopted school budget.

School purchases will be made only on official purchase orders approved for issuance by the appropriate unit head and signed by the Superintendent, with such exceptions as may be made by the latter for emergency purchases.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 7:22A; 7:22B; 30B; 71:49A
Purchasing Authority

Authority for the purchase of materials, equipment, supplies, and services is extended to the Superintendent through the detailed listing of such items compiled as part of the budget-making process.

The purchase of items and services on such lists requires no further Committee approval except when by law or Committee policy the purchases or services must be put to bid.

Legal Ref.: M.G.L. 30B

Cross Ref.: DJE, Bidding Requirements
BIDDING REQUIREMENTS

All purchases of materials and equipment and all contracts for construction or maintenance in amounts exceeding $25,000 will be based upon competitive bidding.

An effort will be made to procure multiple bids for all purchases in excess of $25,000. When recommending acceptance of a bid, the Superintendent will inform the School Committee whenever possible of the competitive price a reasonable substitute for the item specified.

When bidding procedures are used, bids will be advertised appropriately. Suppliers will be invited to have their names placed on mailing lists to receive invitations to bid. When specifications are prepared, they will be mailed to all merchants and firms who have indicated an interest in bidding.

All bids will be submitted in sealed envelopes, addressed to the Superintendent and plainly marked with the name of the bid and the time of the bid opening. Bids will be opened in public at the time specified, and all bidders will be invited to be present.

The Committee reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to accept the bid that appears to be in the best interest of the school system. The Committee reserves the right to waive any informality in, or reject, any or all bids or any part of any bid. Any bid maybe withdrawn prior to the scheduled time for the opening of the bids. Any bid received after the time and date specified will not be considered. All bids will remain firm for a period of 30 days after opening.

The bidder to whom an award is made may be required to enter into a written contract with the school system.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 7:22A; 7:22B; 30B
CROSS REF.: DGA, Purchasing Authority
PAYMENT PROCEDURES

All claims for payment from school department funds will be processed in accordance with regulations developed by the Superintendent. Payment will be authorized against invoices properly supported by approved purchase orders, with properly submitted vouchers, or in accordance with salaries and salary schedules approved by the School Committee.

As an operating procedure, the Committee will receive monthly lists of bills for payment from school department funds. The lists will be certified as correct and approved for payment by the School Committee and then forwarded to the town treasurer for processing and subsequent payment. Actual invoices, statements, and vouchers will be available for inspection by the School Committee.

The Superintendent will be responsible for assuring that budget allocations are observed and that total expenditures do not exceed the amount allocated in the budget for all items.

The school building administrators will be responsible for observing budget allocations in their respective schools.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 41:41; 41:52 41:56
EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENTS

Personnel and school department officials who incur expenses in carrying out their authorized duties will be reimbursed by the school department upon submission of a properly completed and approved voucher and any supporting receipts required by the Superintendent.

When official travel by personally-owned vehicle is authorized, mileage payment will generally be made at the rate currently approved by the Committee. However, a monthly travel stipend, in an amount established by the Committee, may be paid to the Superintendent, Business Manager, and others authorized by the Committee who are required to travel regularly within the school system on official business.

To the extent budgeted for such purposes in the school budget, approval of travel requests will be as follows:

1. Travel by School Committee members must have prior approval of the School Committee.

2. Any travel request with estimated expenditures of more than $500.00 must be approved in advance by the Committee. Travel requests for less than $500.00 may be approved by the Superintendent.

3. Each individual request will be judged on the basis of its benefit to the school system.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 40:5; 44:58
DISPOSAL OF SURPLUS PROPERTY

Massachusetts General Laws (MGL) Section 30B (Uniform Procurement Act) governs how schools dispose of tangible surplus equipment, supplies and materials; disposal of real property is governed separately. All purchases made through the general operating budget, capital appropriations, grants, and revolving funds must abide by the rules for disposal of surplus property.

Such property shall be disposed of in the following manner:

1. Value of the property shall be determined by the Superintendent or Business Administrator in consultation with appropriate staff with specific expertise.

2. Surplus declaration shall be presented to the School Committee for surplus declaration, to include determined value and intended method of disposal per Step 4, below.

3. The Town Administrator shall be notified of the nature of the surplus property and the Town shall have right of first refusal to repurpose said property. This may be performed in parallel with Step 2 and conditional upon Committee approval.

4. If the property is approved for disposal in Step 2 and the Town does choose to repurpose it in Step 3, such property shall be disposed of in the following manner:

   A. Value Less Than $5,000: Property may be disposed of properly. Proper disposal shall be at the discretion of the Superintendent or Business Administrator and can include direct disposal, a bid process, yard sale, auction method or other basic arms-length transaction.

   B. Value $5,000 Or Greater: Property must be made available for sale through a public bid process and following MGL 30B requirements. Award shall be made to the highest responsible bidder for the property.

In all cases, all property shall be sold “as is” and purchasers are responsible for removing property not more than 10 days following notice of award of bid. Payment shall be made in the form of cash or a certified check.

Revised and approved on 11/15/2017.

Palmer Public Schools
SAFETY PROGRAM

Accidents are unplanned occurrences that can result in tragic consequences--bodily harm, loss of school time, property damage, legal action, and even fatality. All students, staff, and visitors have a right to attend Palmer Public Schools' campuses that are safe, secure, and peaceful.

All parents/guardians have the right to expect that their children will be reasonably protected from circumstances and emergencies that may arise in the school environment. Therefore, the School Committee establishes the following policy:

It is the policy of the School Committee to organize its resources and personnel to have a safe school environment and to be responsive in the event of an emergency disaster.

The School Committee will take every possible precaution to protect the safety of all students, employees, visitors and others present on school property or at school-sponsored events. In so doing, the Committee will comply with all safety requirements established by governmental authorities.

The practice of safety will also be considered a facet of the instructional program of the schools. Instruction in accident prevention as well as fire prevention; emergency procedures; traffic, bicycle, and pedestrian safety will be provided.

The Superintendent will have overall responsibility for the safety program of the school system. It will be the responsibility of the Superintendent to see that appropriate staff members are kept informed of current state and local requirements relating to fire prevention, civil defense, sanitation, public health, and occupational safety.

Efforts directed toward the prevention of accidents will succeed only to the degree that all staff members recognize that preventing accidents is a daily operational responsibility.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:55C and Acts of 1985c 614 Sec 1
Board of Education 603 CMR 36:00

CROSS REFS.: EEAE, School Bus Safety Program
GBGB, Staff Personal Security and Safety
IHAM, Health Education
JLC, Student Health Services and Requirements

Palmer Public Schools
SCHOOL SAFETY

INSTRUCTIONS AND GUIDELINES:

A. REQUIRED COMPONENTS OF A SAFE SCHOOL

In order that the Palmer Public Schools meet its obligation to provide a safe, orderly and welcoming environment for all those who enter school property, the following needs shall be addressed:

1. Each school building shall develop and update annually a safe schools/emergency disaster plan.
2. Each school shall conduct annual school-safety site assessments.
3. The School Committee expects that all new employees be subject to record screening and background checks as a condition of employment.
4. All students and staff are to be familiar with all types of alarm signals used in an emergency or disaster and are to be assessed on that notice through periodic drills.
5. All plans, procedures, and policies shall have their focus on reasonable preventative measures.
6. There shall be interagency emergency planning.
7. There shall be comprehensive communication of discipline policies and procedures.
8. There shall be predetermined assignment of personnel in emergencies.

B. REQUIRED POSTINGS

The following items should be posted in visible locations throughout each school:

1. Charts or maps of fire alarms and extinguishing equipment
2. Maps of escape routes and fire/disaster relocation sites
3. Accessible telephones or other communication equipment
4. Utility valves and/or cut-offs
5. Basic first aid procedures
6. Telephone numbers and addresses of community service agencies, including the Palmer Police, Fire Department, Red Cross, Wing Memorial Hospital, and the Massachusetts State Police
7. Procedures for ensuring classroom and school safety
8. Posted behavior expectations
9. School codes of conduct distributed to and explained to parents/guardians and students
10. Visitor policy

DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY:

A. The Superintendent is directly responsible for communicating this policy to all appropriate parties and enforcing its provisions.

B. Each school principal is responsible for communicating this policy to all students and staff under his/her jurisdiction.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:37H
The Palmer Public Schools are committed to providing a safe and properly maintained environment for all staff, students and visitors. To achieve this end, the School District will implement integrated pest management procedures for its buildings and grounds.

The integrated pest management procedures shall include implementation of appropriate prevention and control strategies, notification of certain pesticide and herbicide uses, record keeping, education and evaluation.

Integrated pest management procedures will determine when to control pests and what method of control to choose. Strategies for managing pest populations will be influenced by the pest species, location and whether and at what population level its presence poses a threat to people, property or the environment. The full range of action alternatives, including no action, will always be considered.

I. OVERVIEW AND GOALS

A. The Palmer Public Schools shall develop and implement an integrated pest management program.

B. An integrated pest management program is a pest control approach that emphasizes using a balanced combination of tactics (cultural, mechanical, biological, chemical) to reduce pests to a tolerable level while using pesticides and herbicides as a last resort to minimize health, environmental and economic risks.

C. Pesticides and herbicides will be used only as a last resort, based on a review of all other available options.

D. The integrated pest management program shall strive to:
   1. Reduce any potential human health hazard.
   2. Reduce loss or damage to school structures or property.
   3. Minimize the risk of pests from spreading in the community.
   4. Enhance the quality of facility use for school and community.
   5. Minimize health, environmental and economic risks.

II. RESTRICTIONS ON USE OF PESTICIDES AND HERBICIDES

A. When pesticides or herbicides are used, they must be classified as an EPA Category III or IV. Application of any pesticide or herbicide may be performed only by certified applicators.

B. Application of pesticides and herbicides may only be accomplished during a school break or when the building will be clear of students for at least 48 hours.
III. NOTIFICATION OF PESTICIDE AND HERBICIDE USE

A. When pesticides or herbicides are used outdoors, notice of their use will be provided to parent/guardians, staff and students and will also be posted in a common area.

B. When pesticides and herbicides are used in a building, the site will provide a 48-hour pre-notification in the form of posting the product name, purpose, application date, time and method and the Material Safety Data Sheet on all entrance doors. A contact person will also be listed.

C. In the event of an EPA registered pesticide or herbicide application in or around a building site during the school year or summer session, a notice (including the product name, purpose, contact person, and application date, time and method), will be sent home in writing with students in the affected building at least 5 days prior to application.

IV. RECORD-KEEPING

A. The District will keep a record of pesticides and herbicides used, amounts and locations of treatments and will keep any Material Safety Data Sheets, product labels and manufacturer information on ingredients related to the application of the pesticides or herbicides.

B. All records of pesticides and herbicides used and correspondence will be available for public review upon notice and during normal school hours.

V. STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES AND EDUCATION

A. Designated staff (School Nutrition, Buildings and Grounds, etc.) will participate in sanitation and pest exclusion procedure appropriate to their roles. For example: keeping doors closed, repairing cracks, removing food waste within 12 hours, keeping lids on garbage receptacles and keeping vegetation properly out.

B. Ongoing education of all appropriate District staff will be a priority to ensure a safe and clean environment.

FIRST AID

The Palmer Public Schools attempt to provide a safe environment. If an accident or sudden illness occurs, school personnel will administer first aid and, if warranted, call the school physician.

First aid is defined as the immediate and temporary care given in case of an accident or sudden illness, which enables the child to be taken safely home or to a physician. It does not include diagnosis or treatment. Any care beyond first aid will not be given.

At each school, procedures will be developed for the proper handling of an injury to, or sudden illness of, a child or staff member. These will be made known to the staff and will incorporate the following requirements:

1. The school nurse or another trained person will be responsible for administering first aid.

2. When the nature of an illness or an injury appears in any way serious, every effort will be made to contact the parent and/or family physician immediately.

3. No young child who is ill or injured will be sent home alone, nor will any older child unless the illness or injury is minor. A young child who is ill or injured will not be taken home unless it is known that someone is there to receive him/her.

4. In extreme emergencies, the school nurse, school physician or Principal may make arrangements for immediate hospitalization of injured or ill students, contacting parent or guardian in advance if at all possible.

5. The teacher or other staff member to whom a child is responsible at the time an accident occurs will make out a report on an official form providing details about the accident. This will be required for every accident for which first aid is given.

6. All accidents to students and staff members will be reported as soon as possible to the Superintendent and the School Committee.

Revised: January 18, 1996

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:55A; 71:56

CROSS REF.: JLC, Student Health Services and Requirements

Palmer Public Schools
SAFETY OF WALKERS AND CYCLISTS

Parents/guardians are responsible for their children on the way to and from school when the children are not provided public school transportation. The Palmer Public Schools shall provide a safety instruction program for all students in a manner appropriate for age/grade level.
Advance planning for emergencies and disasters is essential to provide for the safety of students and staff; it also strengthens the morale of all concerned to know that plans exist and that students and staff have been trained in carrying out the plans.

The Superintendent will develop and maintain plans that meet the requirements of state and federal law for preparedness in case of any emergencies or disasters.

Building Principals will meet all requirements for conducting emergency drills with students/staff.

By the first week of school each year, each school will establish a school safety team including school administration, faculty and/or staff. The safety team will provide input to the principal or administrator in charge regarding the response to any emergency or building threat. Whenever possible, the safety team should be consulting with police and/or fire departments when determining the proper response to any emergency.

Regulations will be developed and maintained in association with this policy for:

- Fire Prevention and Fire Drills
- Bomb Threat Procedures
- Severe Weather
- Building Intruder(s)

The School Committee believes that threats of any kind or the deliberate act by any student or other person to interrupt the educational process will be thoroughly investigated by authorities. Charges may be filed by Police, Fire and/or School Administrators depending on the outcome of each investigation. In each case the student or other persons involved with any school interruption may be prosecuted and disciplined to the fullest extent provided by law and school regulations.

The School Committee further believes that any student or other person found to the cause of any school interruption may be required to pay a restitution payment for extraordinary expenses incurred by Police, Fire, School operations, transportation and any other related expenses resulting from the school interruption.

CROSS REF.: EBCD, Emergency Closings

Revised and approved on 5/21/15.

Palmer Public Schools
FIRE PREVENTION AND FIRE DRILLS

1. The Palmer Public Schools will cooperate with the fire department in maintaining fire-safe conditions within all school buildings and in regularly conducted fire drills for the protection of students and staff.

2. The Principal of each school, with the assistance of his/her custodial staff, has the responsibility for periodic inspection of every room, corridor, and space in the school. Purposes of these inspections are: to remove any fire hazards, to insure that flammable supplies and materials are properly stored, to check the condition and proper location of all fire extinguishers and alarms, and to insure that there is no obstruction in any corridor or stairway.

3. Fire drills shall be held in all schools at least once a month, during which the children shall pass out of the building as rapidly as is consistent with safety. Instructions for fire drills will be printed in the teachers' and students' handbooks. Instructions with regard to the primary and secondary exit routes will be posted in a prominent place near the door of every room. The fire drill shall include the complete removal of teachers and students from the building in an orderly manner by means of designated fire exits to places of safety on the grounds outside the building. Attendance will then be taken by each teacher. The fire drill all clear signal will not be given until attendance reports are received by the Principal.

4. In the event of a fire, drill procedures should be followed. It is vitally important that teachers and administrators act forcibly and calmly to maintain order and prevent panic.

5. All children who are transported by bus shall have two emergency evacuation drills from the school bus each year. These drills shall be conducted on the school grounds: the first during the first week of school and the second during the month of March. Each drill shall include instruction in the location of fire extinguishers and emergency exits and the actual use of all exits to evacuate the bus.
BOMB THREAT PROCEDURES

In the event that a threat of any nature is discovered (to include but not limited to bomb threat, shooting threat, threat to commit a violent act or suspicious or unattended items) is received, the person who receives or discovers the threat will immediately notify the principal or administrator in charge. The Principal or administrator in charge will immediately call 911 to report the threat and immediately notify the school safety team. If the principal or administrator in charge determines that the threat is imminent, s/he may make an immediate determination to evacuate the school after calling 911 and before the arrival of police and fire.

Upon arrival of police and fire officials, the threat will be carefully evaluated by police/fire/administration/school safety team. Using the bomb threat response guidance, a determination will be made to the threat level and appropriate response will be initiated.

Low Risk Threat

- Low risk threats lack realism and pose a minimum risk to victim and/or public safety
- The probable motive is to cause disruption
- The threat is vague and indirect
- Information on the threat is inconsistent, implausible, or lacks detail
- The threat was discovered instead of delivered
- Threat written on a wall or a note

Low Risk Threat Response

- Low risk threats do not require an immediate evacuation or shelter in place of the school
- Mobilize the building response team to search the area
- Communicate with school personnel about the low level threat
- Limit access to building
- Decide with threat safety team on appropriate action or combination of actions including shelter in place, evacuation or no further action
- Notify parents through connect-ed message in a timely manner of the low level threat

Medium Risk Threats

- A medium risk threat has an increased level of realism and could be carried out, although it may not appear entirely realistic
- The threat is direct and feasible
- Wording in the threat suggests that perpetrator has given some thought to how the act will be carried out
- Threat may include indications of possible place and time
• No strong indication that the perpetrator has taken preparatory steps, although there may be some indirect reference pointing to that possibility
• Indication that the perpetrator has details regarding the availability of components needed to construct a bomb
• Increased specificity of threat (“I’m serious” or, “I really mean it”).

**Medium Risk Threat Response**

• Medium risk threats require an immediate evacuation or shelter in place of the school (lockdown)
• Mobilize the building response team to search the school
• Limit access to building
• Determine if any action (lockdown, evacuation, police presence) is required at any other school in district
• Make a determination with police/fire/safety team to return to building and resume classes or early dismissal
• Notify parents through connect-ed message in a timely manner of the medium risk threat and outcome

**High Risk Threats**

• A high risk threat is specific and realistic and appears to pose an immediate and serious danger
• The threat is direct, specific and realistic and may include names of possible victims, specific time or location of device
• The perpetrator provides his or her identity
• Threat suggests concrete steps have been taken towards carrying out the threat
• Perpetrator makes statements indicating they have practiced with a weapon or have intended victim under surveillance

**High Risk Threat Response**

• High risk threats require an immediate evacuation or shelter in place of the school (lockdown)
• Mobilize the building response team to search the school, including locked and controlled areas such as roof, utility, and cellar
• Limit access to building
• Determine if any action (lockdown, evacuation, police presence) is required at any other school in district
• Make a determination with police/fire/safety team to return to building and resume classes or early dismissal
• Notify parents through connect-ed message in a timely manner of the high risk threat and outcome

*Palmer Public Schools*
Upon All Evacuations

When a determination has been made to evacuate, the building will remain evacuated until such time as the Superintendent or administrator in charge, after consultation with police and fire department personnel, will determine if the building is clear for occupancy. The Superintendent will have been notified and, after consulting with the Principal or administrator in charge, s/he will make a decision relative to early dismissal.

Each incident is unique and all circumstances must be evaluated by the police/fire/school safety team.

Public Safety Response

- Police and fire must respond to the school as part of the threat assessment team
- Notify regional, state or local bomb squad, if needed, based on threat assessment

Discipline

A bomb threat is a violation of MGL c269, s14. Each student charged with a felony due to a building threat will remain on suspension pending the outcome of the charges, as provided by law. In each case, the opportunity to keep their academic standing current will be provided either by a tutor, work assignments or through an online program (when appropriate). If a charge is not brought by Police or if the court reduces the charge, the student will then become eligible to return to school under the MGL chapter 222 Student Discipline Regulations and according to the school handbook.

Parental Responsibility

The Palmer Public Schools reserves the right to invoice parent(s) for the added costs associated with public safety’s response to a building threat provoked by their child.

This policy is based on the bomb threat guidance flier issued by FBI and Department of Homeland Security. Office for Bomb Prevention 2013.

Revised and approved on 1/16/14.

Revised and approved on 5/21/15.

Palmer Public Schools
EMERGENCY CLOSINGS

The Superintendent may close the schools or dismiss them early in the event of hazardous weather or other emergencies that threaten the health or safety of students and personnel. While it may be prudent, under certain circumstances, to excuse all students from attending school, to delay the opening hour or to dismiss students early, the Superintendent has the responsibility to see that as much of the administrative, supervisory and operational activity is continued as maybe possible. Therefore, if conditions affect only a single school, only that school will be closed.

In making the decision to close schools, the Superintendent will consider many factors, including the following principal ones relating to the fundamental concern for the safety and health of the children:

1. Weather conditions, both existing and predicted.
2. Driving, traffic, and parking conditions affecting public and private transportation facilities.
3. Actual occurrence or imminent possibility of any emergency condition that would make the operation of schools difficult or dangerous.
4. Inability of teaching personnel to report for duty, which might result in inadequate supervision of students.

The Superintendent will weigh these factors and take action to close the schools only after consultation with public works and public safety authorities and with school officials from neighboring towns. Students, parents and staff will be informed early in each school year of the procedures that will be used to notify them in case of emergency closings. All school sponsored activities, as well as all after school programs, shall be canceled.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:4; 71:4A
CROSS REF.: EBC, Emergency Plans
FUEL EFFICIENT VEHICLES

In an effort to reduce the Town of Palmer’s fuel consumption and energy costs, the Town Manager adopted a policy to purchase only-fuel-efficient vehicles for municipal use whenever such vehicles are commercially available and practicable to meet this goal. The Town Manager’s policy applies to all departments in the Town of Palmer.

The Town of Palmer will maintain an annual vehicle inventory and create a vehicle replacement plan that meets fuel efficiency ratings based upon the most recently published U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) data on fuel-efficient vehicles. Vehicles will have a combined city/highway MPG rating no less than the following:

- 2-wheel drive car - 29 MPG
- 4-wheel drive car – 24 MPG
- 2-wheel drive, small pick-up truck – 20 MPG
- 4-wheel drive, small pick-up truck – 18 MPG
- 2-wheel drive, standard pick-up truck – 17 MPG
- 4-wheel drive standard pick-up truck – 16 MPG

Exemptions

The following are exempt from the MPG guidelines:

- Heavy-duty vehicles, such as trucks used by DPW, and school buses
- Police cruisers,* though police department administrative vehicles must meet the fuel requirements
- The Town of Palmer will reconsider this exemption when fuel-efficient cruisers become commercially available

Alternative Measures of Compliance

The Town of Palmer will continue to look for and consider additional measures to reduce its fuel consumption and promote fuel and energy conservation to its municipal employees.

The School Committee supports the Town Manager’s policy and will make every effort to comply, to the extent it is able to do so.

*Adopted by the School Committee on 9/15/10.
FUEL EFFICIENT VEHICLES (FEV) PROCEDURES

The School Committee shall comply with the Town of Palmer’s Fuel Efficient Vehicles policy by providing the Town Manager with the following information in a vehicle inventory list, updated on an annual basis:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Make</th>
<th>Model Year</th>
<th>Year Purchased</th>
<th>Drive System</th>
<th>Weight Class</th>
<th>MPG</th>
<th>Annual Miles Driven</th>
<th>Total Fuel Consumption</th>
<th>Vehicle Function</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Note: Departments may use EPA combined MPG estimates or actual combined MPG

Fuel Efficient Vehicle Replacement Plan

The School Committee, as required by the Town of Palmer’s policy, shall develop a plan to replace all non-exempt vehicles with fuel efficient ones as defined above. Said plan shall outline the process by which the School Committee will replace vehicles, set goals for when the existing fleet will be replaced and review said plan on an annual basis. Said replacement policy shall be enforced by the Town Manager.

Definitions

Combined city and highway MPG (EPA combined fuel economy):
Combined fuel economy means the average of the fuel consumed by a vehicle from driving a combination of 43% city and 57% highway miles and is calculated as follows:
\[ \frac{1}{0.43 \text{ city MPG} + 0.57 \text{ highway MPG}} \]

Drive System:
The manner in which mechanical power is directly transmitted from the drive shaft to the wheels. The following codes are used in the drive field:
- AWD = All-wheel Drive: four-wheel drive automatically controlled by the vehicle powertrain system
- AWD = 4-wheel drive: driver selectable four-wheel drive with 2-wheel drive option
- 2WD = 2-wheel drive

Heavy-duty truck:
A vehicle with a manufacturer’s gross vehicle rating (GVWR) of more than 8,500 pounds.

Adopted by the School Committee on 9/15/10.
BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS SECURITY

Public school buildings and grounds are one of the greatest investments of the town. It is deemed in the best interest of the school department and town to protect the investment adequately.

Security should mean not only maintenance of a secure (locked) building, but protection from fire hazards and faulty equipment, and safe practices in the use of electrical, plumbing, and heating equipment. The Committee expects close cooperation with fire and law enforcement departments and with insurance company inspectors.

Access to school buildings and grounds outside of regular school hours will be limited to personnel whose work requires it. An adequate key control system will be established, which will limit access to buildings to authorized personnel and will safeguard against the chance of entrance to buildings by unauthorized persons.

Funds and valuable records will be kept in a safe place and under lock and key.

No one is permitted on school department property unless s/he is there for an approved function to be held on the grounds or in the school.

Signs indicating no trespassing except on authorized business will be posted at all schools.

Protective devices designed to be used as safeguards against illegal entry and vandalism will be installed when appropriate to the individual situation. Employment of watchmen may be approved in situations where special risks are involved.
VANDALISM

The School Committee recognizes that acts of vandalism committed against public and private property are costly and require positive action through educational programs. Consequently, the Committee will support various programs aimed at reducing the amount of vandalism.

Every citizen of the town, staff members, students, and members of the police department are urged by the School Committee to cooperate in reporting any incidents of vandalism to property under control of the school department, and the name(s) of the person or persons believed to be responsible. Each employee will report to the Principal of the school every incident of vandalism known to him/her and, if known, the names of those responsible.

The Superintendent is authorized to sign a criminal complaint and to press the charges against perpetrators of vandalism against school property, and is further authorized to delegate, as he/she sees fit, authority to sign such complaints and to press charges.

Parents and students will be made aware of the legal implications involved. Reimbursement will be sought for all or part of any damages.
VANDALISM

INSTRUCTIONS AND GUIDELINES

A. NOTIFICATION TO INDIVIDUAL CAUSING DAMAGE

The principal, supervisor, director, or Superintendent will send written notification of damage to the parent/guardian, if the person causing damage is a minor, the employee, or visitor advising of the damage, the description of the item(s) damaged, the estimated cost for replacement or repairs, and a due date for the required restitution. Any such notification is to be sent with a copy to the Office of the Business Manager.

1. Restrictions to certain individuals choosing to participate in work restitution in lieu of financial restitution:
   a) Students/Individuals age 13 and under are not eligible to participate.
   b) Students/Individuals ages 14 and 15 are restricted to working no more than 3 hours after school on a school day.
   c) Students/Individuals under the age of 16 cannot work before 7:00 a.m. or after 7:00 p.m. during the school year.
   d) Teenage Students/Individuals are restricted from hazardous occupations.
   e) Employees of the Palmer Public Schools are not eligible to participate in work restitution in lieu of financial restitution.

B. PAYMENT

1. The party responsible for restitution shall reimburse the Palmer Public Schools in full for all damages within sixty (60) calendar days of first notification. If the extent of damage or the amount of restitution is such as to require additional time, an extension may be granted with the approval of the School Committee. In certain situations, the Palmer Public Schools may accept meaningful work ("work restitution") in lieu of financial restitution. Any such work and its duration must be approved by the Superintendent.

2. Restitution will include all replacement or repair costs, and with the School Committee's approval, any additional costs associated with clean-up, inspection, legal, and other costs relating to the damaged property.

C. FAILURE OR INABILITY TO PROVIDE RESTITUTION

In the event the person responsible for damage is unable or unwilling to provide full restitution within a reasonable period of time, the following shall apply:
1. The Principal, supervisor, or director shall turn the matter over to the Superintendent who shall present the matter to legal counsel.

2. If a student who has caused damage fails to provide restitution on or before the date directed by the Superintendent, then that student may be subject to additional discipline, which may include an inability to participate in any extracurricular activity, Pro Merito, or other non-academic event until restitution is provided.

3. If a school employee has caused damage and has failed to provide full restitution, then the failure to provide restitution may be grounds for discipline up to and including discharge from employment.

D. FURTHER DISCIPLINARY/CRIMINAL ACTION

The fact that a person may provide full restitution shall not deter school authorities from taking disciplinary/criminal action against a student, employee, or visitor to the schools.

DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY:

A. The Superintendent is directly responsible for communicating this policy to all appropriate parties and enforcing its provisions.

B. Each school Principal, supervisor, or director is responsible for communicating this policy to all students and staff within his/her area of responsibility.

REPORTS:

Notification of Damage and Agreement/Waiver of Claims (for student work restitution)
RESTITUTION FOR DAMAGES TO SCHOOL PROPERTY

NOTIFICATION OF DAMAGE TO SCHOOL PROPERTY

To be sent to Individual/Employee/Parent/Guardian)

TO: ___________________________ DATE: ___________________________
[Individual/Employee/Parent/Guardian]

ADDRESS: ___________________________

______________________________

This form of notification relates to the damage to property of the Palmer Public Schools by ______________________ on ______________________.  
(individual's name) (date)

It is the policy of the Palmer Public Schools to require full restitution and impose disciplinary action for any damage to Palmer Public Schools' facilities, equipment or other property depending upon the circumstances under which the damage is caused.

The following is a description of the damages incurred for restitution: ___________________________

______________________________

______________________________

______________________________

Estimated Cost of Replacement or Repairs: ___________________________

I understand that the payment for replacement or repairs in connection with the damages described above is to be made to the Palmer Public Schools within sixty (60) days from the date noted above. In lieu of financial payment, work restitution can be arranged and agreed to by executing the enclosed Agreement/Waiver of Claims. Employees of the Palmer Public Schools are not eligible to participate in work restitution in lieu of financial restitution.

______________________________ Signature of
Date Individual/Employee/Parent/Guardian

PLEASE CONTACT ______________________ AT THE PALMER PUBLIC SCHOOLS,
TELEPHONE NO. (413) 283-______ .IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS NOTICE.

cc: Palmer Public Schools, Business Manager
RESTITUTION FOR DAMAGES TO SCHOOL PROPERTY

AGREEMENT/WAIVER OF CLAIMS

TO: [Individual/Student]  DATE: ____________________________

ADDRESS: ____________________________________________

This form of notification relates to the damage to property of the Palmer Public Schools by

______________________________________________________ on ____________________________.

(individual/student's name) (date)

The following is a description of the damages incurred for restitution:

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

Estimated Cost of Replacement or Repairs: ____________________________

I understand that the payment for replacement or repairs in connection with the damages described above is to be made to the Palmer Public Schools within sixty (60) days from the date noted above.

Enclosed is payment for the cost of repairs noted above.

(initials) I request that in lieu of payment, that restitution be made by the assignment of work to the Palmer Public Schools (initials) equal to the cost of damages. I acknowledge that, in restitution for the damages incurred by me, I am volunteering to perform the following work as a community service which should not be construed as employment by the Palmer Public Schools. In addition, I hereby release the Palmer Public Schools and their agents, employees and officials from any liability or claim of any kind arising from my performance of this voluntary service. My release of claims includes, but is not limited to, claims arising from injuries caused by the negligence of persons connected with the Palmer Public Schools.

Description of Volunteer Work to be Performed:

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

Schedule for Which Work is to be Performed: ____________________________

________________________________________

Date ____________________________  Signature of Individual/Student

If Student, Signature of Parent/Guardian

Palmer Public Schools
FUEL EFFICIENT BUILDINGS

The Town of Palmer is committed to taking action to reduce energy use in its municipal buildings by 20% by the end of the fiscal year 2014, as indicated by the May 7, 2010, Siemens Industry comprehensive Preliminary Energy Conservation Report. The School Committee approved a resolution on May 12, 2010, that supports this energy reduction goal. This goal will be achieved through energy efficiency and conservation measures as follows:

Palmer High School
It is estimated that the high school’s energy costs can be reduced by 17%, or $31,792, through the following:
- Classroom lighting controls
- Daylight sensors (due to existing skylights)
- Boiler replacement
- New pool cover
- Energy management system improvements
  - Demand control ventilation
  - Hot water reset
- Demand hot water system upgrade
- Cooking equipment system upgrade
  - Melink Kitchen Hood Controller
- Variable frequency hot water pumps
- Building envelope measures
- Network controller
- Vending miser
- Solar PV installation

Converse Middle School
It is estimated that the middle school’s energy costs can be reduced by 5%, or $5,450, through the following:
- EMS optimization/installation
- Motors and drives
- Building envelope improvements
- Network controllers
- DHW system upgrades
- A Melink Kitchen Hood Controller
- Vending Miser
Old Mill Pond
It is estimated that the middle school’s energy costs can be reduced by 5%, or $5,494, through the following:
- EMS optimization/installation
- Motors and drives
- Building envelope improvements
- Network controllers
- DHW system upgrades
- A Melink Kitchen Hood Controller
- Boiler Replacement
- Vending Miser

Measurement and Verification for Projected Reductions
The Town of Palmer is committed to working with Siemens via a performance contract that is guaranteed to reduce energy consumption, measure and verify savings. Reliance will be on Siemens documented energy use reductions through proven methods, such as a centralized compilation of data and creation of tracking reports; the use of MassEnergy Insight to track energy use; and, a comparison of actual vs. projected reductions.

Adopted by the School Committee on 9/15/10.
AUTHORIZED USE OF SCHOOL-OWNED MATERIALS

The School Committee wishes to be of assistance, whenever possible, to other town departments and community organizations. Therefore, permission to use school equipment may be granted by the Superintendent upon request by responsible parties or organizations.

School equipment may be used by staff members when the use is related to their school employment and by students when the equipment is to be used in connection with their studies or extracurricular activities.

Proper controls will be established by the Superintendent to assure the user's responsibility for, and return of, all school equipment.
STUDENT TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

The major purpose of the school system's transportation services is to aid students in getting to and from school in an efficient, safe, and economical manner. Students will be entitled to transportation to and from school at the expense of the public schools when such transportation conforms to applicable provisions of the Massachusetts General Laws.

The school system will contract for transportation services. Contracts will be awarded on a competitive bid basis by the School Committee. Bus contractors and taxi contractors, who will be held responsible for the safe operation of school buses, will comply with all applicable state laws and regulations, including but not limited to:

1. Specifications for school bus design and equipment
2. Inspection of buses
3. Qualifications and examinations of bus drivers
4. Driving regulations
5. Small vehicle requirements, if applicable
6. Insurance coverage
7. Adherence to local regulations and directives as specified in bid contracts.

The Superintendent, working with the bus contractor and other appropriate administrators, will be responsible for establishing bus schedules, routes, stops, and all other matters relative to the transportation program.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 40:5; 71:7A, B and C; 71:37D; 71:48A; 71:68; 71:71A; 71B:4; 71B:5; 71B:8; 74:8A; 76:1; 76:12Bi; 76:14
SCHOOL BUS SAFETY PROGRAM

The safety and welfare of student riders will be the first consideration in all matters pertaining to transportation. Safety precautions will include the following:

1. Children will be instructed as to the proper procedure for boarding and exiting from a school bus and in proper and safe conduct while aboard.

2. Emergency evacuation drills will be conducted at least twice a year to acquaint student riders with procedures in emergency situations.

3. All vehicles used to transport children will be inspected periodically for conformance with state and federal safety requirements.

4. Classroom instruction on school bus safety will be provided.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 90:7b as amended by Ch. 246 Acts of 1986
M.G.L. 90:1 et seq.; 713:2; 713:7L
Highway Safety Program Standard No. 17

CROSS REF.: EB, Safety Program
BUS DRIVER EXAMINATION AND TRAINING

The School Committee will reserve the right to approve or disapprove persons employed by the bus contractor to drive school transportation vehicles.

1. Courteous and careful drivers will be required.

2. Only persons who are properly licensed by the state of Massachusetts and have completed the driver training program will be permitted to drive school buses.

3. The contractor will furnish the School Committee with a list of names of drivers and their safety records for the last three years.

4. In case of any change of bus drivers, the contractor will notify school officials as soon as possible.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 90:7B; 90:8A; 90:8A ½
Highway Safety Program Standard No. 17
STUDENT CONDUCT ON SCHOOL BUSES

The School Committee and its staff share with students and parents the responsibility for student safety during transportation to and from school. The authority for enforcing School Committee requirements of student conduct on buses will rest with the Principal.

To ensure the safety of all students who ride in buses, it may occasionally be necessary to revoke the privilege of transportation from a student who abuses this privilege. Parents of children whose behavior and misconduct on school buses endangers the health, safety, and welfare of other riders will be notified that their children face the loss of transportation privileges in accordance with regulations approved by the School Committee.
USE OF PRIVATE VEHICLES FOR TRANSPORTATION OF STUDENTS

The School Committee does not encourage the use of private vehicles to transport students to/from school activities. However, in the rare instances when private transportation appears to be the most viable option, special School Committee permission must be requested in advance. Under no circumstances will the School Committee authorize the transporting of students by other students in private vehicles.

If any student does not use the transportation provided by the school district, he/she assumes full responsibility and risk.

Amplifying Instructions and Guidelines:

1. Permission for use of private vehicles must be requested sufficiently in advance of the event to allow School Committee action during a regularly scheduled meeting.

2. The Superintendent will be responsible for making a recommendation to the Committee based on a number of factors, including but not limited to, proof of sufficient insurance coverage, driver’s safe driving report, distance, time of day, weather conditions, and number of students involved.

3. Should private transportation be approved, all drivers will be subject to the district’s CORI policy.
SCHOOL-OWNED VEHICLES
DRUG & ALCOHOL TESTING POLICY FOR ALL VAN (7D) DRIVERS

PURPOSE
The Palmer Public Schools are dedicated to providing safe and dependable transportation services to our students. Our students and our employees are our most valuable resource, and it is our goal to provide a healthy, safe environment free of drugs and alcohol. It is our policy to:

1. Assure that employees are not impaired in their ability to perform assigned duties in a safe, productive and healthy manner;
2. Create a workplace environment free from the adverse effects of drug use and abuse and alcohol misuse;
3. Prohibit the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession or use of controlled substances; and
4. To encourage employees to seek professional assistance any time personal problems, including alcohol or drug dependency, adversely affect their ability to perform their assigned duties.

OVERVIEW AND SCOPE
The objective of the policy is to ensure drivers are drug and alcohol-free in the workplace. Employees are prohibited from engaging in or unlawfully manufacturing, distributing, dispensing, processing, or using controlled substances in the workplace which includes out on the road, in school vehicles and/or on school property. The use of alcoholic beverages or prescription or over the counter medications prior to or during working hours that impair the employee’s ability to safely perform their job is also prohibited.

POLICY
The provisions of this policy apply to all van drivers employed by The Palmer Public Schools including paid part-time employees, full time employees and casual or intermittent fill in drivers. The following specific behaviors are prohibited:

1. Reporting to work or remaining at work while having an alcohol concentration greater than or equal to .05
2. Using alcohol while working
3. Using alcohol within four hours of reporting to work
4. Reporting for work or remaining at work if the employee tests positive for controlled substances
5. Reporting for work or working when using any controlled substance, except when instructed by a licensed medical practitioner who has advised the employee that the substance will not adversely impact the employee’s ability to safely operate a motor vehicle.
6. When required to take a post-accident alcohol test, consuming alcohol within 8 hours following the accident or prior to undergoing a post-accident alcohol test, whichever comes first.
7. Refusing to submit to an alcohol or controlled substances test as required by the policy.
REFUSAL TO SUBMIT TO ALCOHOL AND/OR DRUG TESTING

The following are all examples of a refusal to test and the consequence is termination.

- Verbal refusal to take the test
- Failure to provide enough breath for a breath alcohol test without a medical explanation
- Failure to provide enough urine for a controlled substance test without a medical explanation
- Refusal to go to or remain at the collection site until the process is complete
- Being unavailable to test after an accident for reasons other than obtaining appropriate and timely medical attention
- Arriving 30 minutes late for a scheduled test
- Other behavior that obstructs the testing process

PROHIBITED SUBSTANCES

Illegally Used Controlled Substances or Drugs: Included but not limited to: Marijuana, cocaine, phencyclidine, opiates, and amphetamine. Illegal use includes use of any illegal drug, misuse of legally prescribed drugs and use of illegally obtained prescription drugs.

Legal Drugs: The appropriate use of legally prescribed drugs and non-prescription medications is not prohibited. However, the use of any substance which carries a warning label that indicates that mental functions, motor skills, or judgment may be adversely affected must be discussed by employees with their appropriate health care professional before performing work-related duties. Van drivers are urged strongly to seek and obtain medical advice prior to using prescription or over-the-counter drugs that may adversely affect his/her ability to safely perform their job. The use of legally prescribed drugs that impair functions is prohibited. This includes the use of medical marijuana. The use of medical marijuana is a violation of this policy.

TYPES OF TESTING

Van drivers are required to submit to the following types of controlled substance/breath alcohol testing:

- Pre-employment/Pre-placement (No Alcohol Testing)
- Reasonable Suspicion
- Post-accident

Urine samples will be collected for screening for drugs and testing for alcohol will be performed using a breath testing device. The Palmer Public Schools primary collection site for drug and alcohol testing is Baystate Mary Lane in Ware, MA.

Pre-Employment/Pre-placement Testing

All applicants or transfers for employment as a 7D Van Driver will be required to submit to a post-offer pre-employment drug test. No applicant will commence employment in any position covered by this policy before a negative drug test result is received. A positive drug test indicates the applicant will not be hired and is ineligible to re-apply.
Testing for Reasonable Suspicion
Van drivers may be required to submit to drug or alcohol testing upon determination by management of the existence of reasonable suspicion. Reasonable suspicion testing is triggered by a belief that the actions or appearance or conduct of a van driver while on duty are indicative of the use of a controlled substance or alcohol. A supervisor will base their determination to test on physical, behavioral, speech and performance issues they have observed.

Supervisory personnel are trained in reasonable suspicion awareness to assist them in making the determination to test. When a supervisor determines the need for Reasonable Suspicion testing, he or she will transport the driver to the site for testing. A refusal to submit to testing for reasonable suspicion will immediately disqualify the employee from driving and is considered a positive test.

The employee will be suspended with pay until the result of the reasonable suspicion drug and/or alcohol test is received.

Post-Accident/Incident Testing:
The Palmer Public Schools, in its sole discretion, may request a Van Driver submit to a post-accident test when that driver is involved in an accident or serious safety related incident. A trained supervisor need not be present to witness the accident or safety related incident. An accident is defined as an unplanned, unexpected or unintended event that occurs on while driving or involves equipment or motor vehicles owned by The Palmer Public Schools. It is not necessary for the accident to involve personal injury or property damage to require testing.

Reasonable Cause & Post-accident Testing Protocol
A van driver who sustains a non-motor vehicle work related injury requiring medical care is not automatically required to submit for a post-accident drug or alcohol test unless factors relating to reasonable suspicion exist.

An individual who is subject to a post-accident test must remain available or the Palmer Public Schools may conclude that the employee has refused to submit to testing. The employee must refrain from consuming alcohol for eight hours following the accident or until he/she submits to the recommended drug or alcohol test, whichever comes first. A supervisor may ask an employee to submit to a post-accident alcohol test within 8 hours after the accident. A supervisor may ask an employee to submit to a drug test anytime within 32 hours after an accident. The employee will be suspended with pay until the result of the post-accident drug and/or alcohol test is received. Failure to immediately report any accident is grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Nothing in this section shall be construed to require the delay of necessary medical attention or injured people following an accident or to prohibit a driver from leaving the scene of an accident for the period necessary to obtain assistance in responding to the accident, or to obtain necessary emergency medical care.
TEST RESULTS

Breath Alcohol Results
Level less than .05 is considered to be negative. Level greater than or equal to .05 is a positive test.

Drug test results
Any drug screen result released by the Medical Review Officer that is a positive or a refusal to test.

Negative Dilute
A drug test result that is negative dilute will be accepted as a negative and no re-test is necessary.

ROLE OF THE MEDICAL REVIEW OFFICER
The MRO is a licensed physician with knowledge of substance abuse disorders and has appropriate training to interpret and evaluate a confirmed positive test result with the employee’s medical history and other relevant information. On positive drug tests, the MRO will contact the driver to determine if there is a medical explanation for the result.

Once the test result is verified as positive or negative, the MRO will forward the results directly to the Designated Employer Representative of The Palmer Public Schools.

CONSEQUENCES OF A POSITIVE TEST
A positive alcohol test (greater than or equal to .05), a positive drug test or refusal to test will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

RECORDKEEPING
All test results are confidential and records will be maintained in a secured file with limited access.

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE
Employees seeking help with a drug or alcohol problems are encouraged to reach out to the towns Employee Assistance Program. The following web address will provide you contact information.
http://www.allonehealth.com/MIIAEP/
Palmer Public Schools Drug & Alcohol Testing Policy
Program Participant Agreement

Please contact your immediate supervisor with any questions or concerns regarding this policy.

Signing this form acknowledges that I have received a copy of the Palmer Public Schools Drug and Alcohol Testing Policy, have had the opportunity to discuss the Policy and have questions answered, and I understand all of the provisions in the Policy including when testing may be triggered. I understand that any violation of the policy will be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination. I hereby freely and voluntarily consent to participate in the testing program.

I hereby and herewith release the Palmer Public Schools, its employees, agents and contractors from any and all liability whatsoever arising from this request for testing, from the actual testing procedures, and from decisions made concerning my application for or continuation of employment based on the results of the analysis. I hereby agree to cooperate in all aspects of the testing program. (Any employee hired before 7/1/15 is exempt from the pre-employment drug test.)

I agree to provide The Palmer Public Schools with a copy of my driving record obtained from the Registry of Motor Vehicles at least once every 12 months.

Employee Printed Name: ________________________________

Employee Signature: ________________________________

Date: ____________________________________________

Adopted and approved on 12/13/2017.
FREE AND REDUCED PRICE FOOD SERVICES

The Palmer Public Schools will take part in the National School Lunch Program and other food programs that may become available to assure that all children in the schools receive proper nourishment.

In accordance with guidelines for participation in these programs, and in accordance with the wishes of the Committee, no child who a teacher believes is improperly nourished will be denied a free lunch or other food simply because proper application has not been received from his/her parents or guardian.

As required by state and federal regulations, the School Committee will approve a policy statement pertaining to eligibility for free milk, free meals, and reduced price meals.

LEGAL REFS.: National School Lunch Act, as amended (42 USC 1751-1760)
M.G.L. 15:1G; 15:1L; 69:1C; 71:72
FOOD SERVICES ACCOUNTS POLICY

1. Purpose:
The Palmer Public Schools intends for all children in the schools to receive proper nourishment and further recognizes that this is an essential component for active learning. In accordance with this intent, Palmer Public Schools will take part in the National School Lunch Program and other food programs that may become available.

This policy further establishes consistent meal account procedures through the district. Unpaid meal charges place a financial burden on the food service department which results in a financial strain on the general operating budget. The goals of this policy are:

- To establish a consistent district policy regarding charges and collection of charges.
- To treat all students equitably and with dignity in the serving line regardless of meal account status.
- To support positive interactions between district staff, students, and parent/guardians to the maximum extent possible.
- To encourage parent/guardians to assume the responsibility of meal payments and to promote self-responsibility of the student.

2. Scope of Responsibility:
The Food Service Department: Maintaining charge records and notifying the school district of outstanding balances. Notifying the student's parent/guardians of low or outstanding balances.

The School District: Ensuring that all students have access to a meal each and every day, creating a line of communication between families and the food service department, and supporting the food service department in collection activities.

The Parent/Guardian: Prepayment of anticipated, or payment of charged, meals.

3. Administration:
The administration of the district food services program shall endeavor to provide affordable and nutritious meals to students in a manner that is both fiscally and socially responsible. As such, the following shall govern the use of program charge accounts:

A. All students (paid, free, or reduced), and staff will be allowed to have a negative account balance up to a maximum of twenty dollars ($20.00) which will be known as the account cap.

B. When a child reaches the account cap they will be provided a reimbursable meal that will be charged to the child’s lunch account at the regular lunch rate. Parents/Guardians are responsible for payment of these meals to the food service department.

C. When a staff member reaches the account cap they will not be allowed to make food purchases until such time as their account no longer has a negative balance.

Palmer Public Schools
D. The purchase of additional “a la carte” food items or additional meals will not be allowed for students with a negative account balance.

E. Individuals who are neither students nor staff are expected to pay in advance for any food purchases.

In all cases, the Food Services Director shall have discretion to serve student meals in excess of the above in so much as meals continue to be charged and reported in accordance with district and DESE policies. Such accounts that extend beyond the limits above shall be reported to the School Principal who will work with the School Business Manager as necessary to reach a solution or provide a recommendation to the School Committee.

In no case should a Food Services Account not be charged for meals. The sole discretion to “write off” balances shall lie with the School Committee as recommended by the Principal and School Business Manager in collaboration with the Food Services Director.

4. Bad Debt & Chargeoffs:

Pursuant to OMB Cost Principles for State, Local, and Indian Tribal Governments Regulation 2 Part 225 Item 5*, the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has issued policy related to bad debt. This policy requires that “all school food authorities within the Commonwealth must resolve bad debt at the end of each school year by offsetting bad debt costs incurred by food service operations from sources outside the non-profit school food service account.”

While the school and food service program may continue to pursue these debts, it is incumbent upon the school district to resolve the food services program of its fiscal liability for such at the end of each fiscal year. Regardless of any account resolution, it shall be the practice of the food services program to pursue bad debts in any or all of the following manners:

1. Continued correspondence – letters and calls to parents/guardians.
2. School contingencies – activities and events participation.
3. Collaborative efforts with related organizations such as matriculating districts and regions.
4. Use of collections agencies to recover funds where economically feasible to do so.

As indicated above, only the School Committee shall have the authority to fully write off food services account balances presuming the program liability has been fully resolved using local funds. Otherwise, all account collections efforts shall remain in full force and effect.

*Bad debts, including losses (whether actual or estimated) arising from uncollectable accounts and other claims, related collection costs, and related legal costs, are unallowable.

Adopted by the School Committee on 11/15/2017.
FACILITIES DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The School Committee believes that any educational program is influenced greatly by the environment in which its functions. The development of a quality educational program and school facilities that help to implement the program must go hand in hand.

Therefore, it is the Committee's goal to provide the facilities needed for the number of students in the school system, and to provide the kind of facilities that will best support and accommodate the educational program.

In planning facilities, the Committee recognizes that capital outlay funds are limited, and that priorities must be established to make the best use of the school building dollar. The Committee's first objective will be to develop a plan that eliminates overcrowding and minimizes the need for extended day programs and double sessions. Whenever possible, the cultural as well as educational needs of the community will be considered in planning facility expansions.

Architects retained by the Committee are expected to plan for simplicity of design; sound economics, including low long-range maintenance costs, efficiency in energy needs, low insurance rates; high educational use; and flexibility.

LEGAL REF.: 603 CMR 26:07
FACILITIES DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Facilities

(1) Every new school which is to constructed and every addition to an existing school or program for modernization of an existing school shall be designed or planned so as to ensure that the educational opportunities to be offered within that school following its construction or expansion or reconstruction will be available equally to all students thereof without regard to the race, color, sex, religion or national origin of any such student.

(2) The goal of each school shall be to provide equal numbers of males and females with those facilities and conveniences within a school which are separated for reasons of privacy, e.g. Showers, locker rooms, changing rooms, toilets and lavatories. Any school to be constructed shall make such provision and any plan for the expansion or modernization of an existing school shall include whatever provision is necessary in order to achieve compliance with 603 CMR 26.07.

LEGAL REF.: 603 CMR 26:07
FACILITIES PLANNING

School Building Committee

The School Committee creates a school building committee for specific building projects. These committees act as the administrative authority for the projects, subject to approval of various actions by the School Committee and town.

The school building committee has the following responsibilities:

1. To study and make recommendations to the town with respect to school building needs.
2. To review thoroughly with the Superintendent and the School Committee the educational requirements in relation to school buildings.
3. To review previous studies and initiate needed studies with or without consultative assistance.
4. To employ the services of architects and cost estimators and such other professional assistance as it may deem necessary.

Staff Planning

Arrangements will be made by the Superintendent, working through principals, for the school staff to contribute in the planning of new school buildings. Teachers will be given the opportunity to submit suggestions for possible inclusion in the educational specifications.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:37C and D; 71:68; 71:70
Massachusetts Board of Education Regulations Governing the School Building Assistance Act, Chapter 645 of the Acts of 1948 as amended, FY 79
Board of Education 603 CMR, 38:00 and 603 CMR 26:07
RETIREMENT OF FACILITIES

When a school building becomes inadequate by virtue of age, condition, size of site, lack of need, or other overriding limitations, and cannot reasonably and economically be brought up to the current educational standards, the building should be considered for a comprehensive closing study. The Superintendent will recommend to the School Committee which facilities appear to justify further analysis.

The School Committee may seek both professional advice and the advice of the community in making its recommendations as to the retirement of any school facility. This will permit the public, which originally acquired the property, to benefit from its recycling or retirement.

A closing study will include direct involvement by those neighborhoods considered in the study and will be concerned with all or some of the following factors:

1. Age and current physical condition of the facilities, its operating systems, and program facilities.
2. Adequacy of site, location, access, surrounding development, traffic patterns, and other environmental conditions.
3. Reassignment of children, including alternative plans according to Committee policy.
4. Transportation factors, including numbers of children bussed, time, distance, and safety.
5. Alternative uses of the building.
6. Cost/Savings
   a. Personnel
   b. Plant Operation
   c. Transportation
   d. Capital Investment
   e. Alternative Use
7. Continuity of instructional and community programs.
NAMING NEW FACILITIES

Naming a school is an important matter that deserves thoughtful attention. Personal prejudice or favoritism, political pressure, or temporary popularity should not be an influence in choosing a school name. A name with educational significance or inspiration should be chosen. The Committee also believes that it is appropriate to name schools for physical locations; geographical areas; distinguished local, state, and national leaders whose names will lend dignity and stature to the school; or significant or pertinent events.

The Superintendent will prepare for the approval of the Committee a procedure to follow in recommending names for school buildings to the school building committee. Whenever possible, the wishes of the community, including parents and students, should be considered in naming new facilities.

It is expected that an orderly, announced procedure will lessen the community or factional pressures that so quickly build up when the selection is delayed or seems uncertain. A prompt decision will reduce disappointments and advance community solidarity. Much confusion in accounts, files, and records can be avoided if a new school can be identified by name before the planning starts.
PERSONNEL POLICIES GOALS

The District's specific personnel goals are:

1. To develop and implement those strategies and procedures for personnel recruitment, screening, and selection that will result in the employment and retention of individuals with the highest capabilities, strongest commitment to quality education, and greatest probability of effectively implementing the system's learning program.

2. To develop a general staff assignment strategy that will contribute to the learning program; and to use it as the primary basis for determining staff assignments.

3. To provide positive programs of staff development that contribute both to improvement of the learning program and to each staff member's career development aspirations.

4. To provide for a genuine team approach to education.

5. To develop and use for personnel evaluation positive processes that contribute to the improvement of both staff capabilities and the learning program.

LEGAL REF.: 603 CMR 26:08 paragraph 3,7,8,9
EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

The School Committee subscribes to the fullest extent to the principle of the dignity of all people and of their labors and will take action to ensure that any individual within the District who is responsible for hiring and/or personnel supervision understands that applicants are employed, assigned, and promoted without regard to their race, creed, color, age, sex, gender identity, national origin, disability or sexual orientation. Every available opportunity will be taken in order to assure that each applicant for a position is selected on the basis of qualifications, merit and ability.

LEGAL REF.: BESE Regulations 603 CMR 26:00
CROSS REF: AC, Nondiscrimination

Revised and approved on 1/16/14.
The School Committee wishes to maintain open channels of communication between itself and the staff. The basic line of communication will, however, be through the Superintendent.

**Staff Communications to the School Committee**

All communications or reports to the Committee or any of its subcommittees from principals, supervisors, teachers, or other staff members will be submitted through the Superintendent. This procedure does not deny the right of any employee to appeal to the Committee from administrative decisions on important matters, except those matters that are outside the Committee's legal authority, provided that the Superintendent has been notified of the forthcoming appeal and that it is processed in accordance with the Committee's policy on complaints and grievances. Staff members are also reminded that Committee meetings are public meetings. As such, they provide an excellent opportunity to observe first hand the Committee's deliberations on problems of staff concern.

**School Committee Communications to Staff**

All official communications, policies, and directives of staff interest and concern will be communicated to staff members through the Superintendent. The Superintendent will develop appropriate methods to keep staff fully informed of the Committee's problems, concerns and actions.

**Visits to Schools**

Individual School Committee members interested in visiting schools or classrooms will inform the Superintendent of such visits and make arrangements for visitations through the principals of the various schools. Such visits will be regarded as informal expressions of interest in school affairs and not as "inspections" or visits for supervisory or administrative purposes. Official visits by Committee members will be carried on only under Committee authorization.
The School Committee expects members of its professional staff to be familiar with the code of ethics that applies to their profession and to adhere to it in their relationships with students, parents, coworkers, and officials of the school system.

No employee of the Committee will engage in or have a financial interest in, directly or indirectly, any activity that conflicts or raises a reasonable question of conflict with his/her duties and responsibilities in the school system. Nor will any staff member engage in any type of private business during school time or on school property.

Employees will not engage in work of any type where information concerning customer, client, or employer originates from any information available to them through school sources.

Moreover, as there should be no conflict of interest in the supervision and evaluation of employees, at no time may any administrator responsible for the supervision and/or evaluation of an employee be directly related to him/her.

In order to avoid the appearance of any possible conflict, it is the policy of the School Committee that all members of the School Committee be notified when any employee is hired who is related to any member of the School Committee or who is related to any administrator of the school district.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:52; 268A:1 et seq.
STAFF CONDUCT

All staff members have a responsibility to familiarize themselves with and abide by the laws of the State as these affect their work, the policies of the School Committee, and the regulations designed to implement them.

In the area of personal conduct, the Committee expects that teachers and others will conduct themselves in a manner that not only reflects credit to the school system but also sets forth a model worthy of emulation by students.

All staff members will be expected to carry out their assigned responsibilities with conscientious concern.

Essential to the success of ongoing school operations and the instructional program are the following specific responsibilities, which will be required of all personnel:

1. Regular attendance, punctuality, professional attire and proper decorum are expected daily at work.
2. Support and enforcement of policies of the Committee and their implementing regulations and school rules in regard to students.
3. Diligence in submitting required reports promptly at the times specified.
4. Care and protection of school property.
5. Concern for and attention to their own and the school system's legal responsibility for the safety and welfare of students, including the need to ensure that students are under supervision at all times.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:37H; 264:11; 264:14
Gifts

The acceptance of personal gifts by school personnel from school suppliers, from parents and/or students can be subject to misinterpretation and a source of embarrassment to the school system and all persons involved. When families, students, or others wish to express personal appreciation to a teacher or other staff member, the School Committee urges them to find modes of expression that do not involve personal gifts.

In keeping with this policy, no employee of the School Committee will accept a personal gift from a business concern supplying, or with an interest in supplying, goods, materials, equipment, or services to the school system. This restriction does not relate to the acceptance of gifts for the school system, nor to the acceptance of small and clearly identifiable advertising and promotional materials.

Solicitations

In spirit, the School Committee supports the many worthwhile charitable drives that take place in the community and is gratified when school employees give them their support. However, the solicitation of funds from staff members through the use of school personnel and school time must be held at a minimum. Therefore, no solicitations of funds for charitable purposes will be made among staff members except with specific School Committee approval. Whenever such solicitations are made, no pressure will be exerted to obtain contributions even though the drive is one that the School Committee has specifically approved.

The solicitation of funds for the United Fund will be permitted on an annual basis.

CROSS REFS.: JP, Student Gifts and Solicitations
KHA, Public Solicitations in the Schools
DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE POLICY

The school district will provide a drug-free workplace and certifies that it will:

1. Notify all employees in writing that the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession, or use of a controlled substance is prohibited in the district's workplace and specify the actions that will be taken against employees for violation of such prohibitions.

2. Establish a drug-free awareness program to inform employees about the dangers of drug abuse in the workplace; the district's policy of maintaining a drug-free workplace; and available drug counseling, rehabilitation, and employee assistance programs; and the penalty that may be imposed on employees for drug abuse violations occurring in the workplace.

3. Make it a requirement that each employee whose employment is funded by a federal grant be given a copy of the statement as required.

4. Notify the employee in the required statement that as a condition of employment under the grant, the employee will abide by the terms of the statement, and will notify the district of any criminal drug statute conviction for a violation occurring in the workplace no later than five days after such conviction.

5. Notify the federal agency within ten days after receiving notice from an employee or otherwise receiving notice of such conviction.

6. Take one of the following actions within 30 days of receiving notice with respect to any employee who is so convicted; take appropriate personnel action against such an employee, up to and including termination; or require such employee to participate satisfactorily in a drug abuse assistance or rehabilitation program approved for such purposes by a federal, state or local health law enforcement, or other appropriate agency.

7. Make a good faith effort to continue to maintain a drug-free workplace through implementation of all the provisions of this policy.

LEGAL REFS.: The Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988
CROSS REFS.: JICH, Drug and Alcohol Use by Students

Palmer Public Schools
TOBACCO USE ON SCHOOL PROPERTY BY STAFF MEMBERS

Smoking or the use of tobacco within school buildings, the school facilities or on school property or buses, by any individual, including school personnel is prohibited.

Staff members who violate this policy will be referred to their immediate supervisor.

LEGAL REF.:  M.G.L. 71:37H
STUDENT/STAFF RELATIONSHIPS

The Palmer Public Schools strictly prohibits student-staff personal relationships which exceed the scope of the normal professional student-staff relationship internal or external to the school environment. All staff of the Palmer Public Schools are to conduct themselves in a professional manner with students at all times. The Palmer Public Schools prohibits sexual harassment (see Sexual Harassment Policy) as well as consensual student-staff sexual and/or other relationships which exceed the scope of the professional student-staff relationship. If a staff member exceeds the normal professional student-staff relationship, the Palmer Public Schools will take disciplinary action up to and including termination from employment.

Adopted by the School Committee on 12/21/06.

Palmer Public Schools
STAFF PERSONAL SECURITY AND SAFETY

Through its overall safety program and various policies pertaining to school personnel, the Committee will seek to assure the safety of employees during their working hours and assist them in the maintenance of good health.

The Superintendent may require an employee to submit to a physical examination by a physician appointed by the school system whenever that employee's health appears to be a hazard to children or others in the school system or when a doctor's certificate is needed to verify need for sick leave.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:54; 71:55B; 71:55C

CROSS REFS.: EB, Safety Program
              GDBD, Support Staff Fringe Benefits
              JLC, Student Health Services and Requirements
The School Committee recognizes that employees of the school system have the same fundamental civic responsibilities and privileges as other citizens. Among these are campaigning for an elective public office and holding an elective or appointive office.

In connection with any campaigning, an employee will not: use school system facilities, equipment or supplies; discuss his/her campaign with school personnel or students during the working day; use any time during the working day for campaigning purposes. Under no circumstances, will students be pressured into campaigning for any staff member.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:44

Palmer Public Schools
PERSONNEL RECORDS

Information about staff members is required for the daily administration of the school system, for implementing salary and other personnel policies, for budget and financial planning, for responding to appropriate inquiries about employees, and for meeting the School Committee's education reporting requirements. To meet these needs, the Superintendent will implement a comprehensive and efficient system of personnel records maintenance and control under the following guidelines:

1. A personnel folder for each present and former employee will be accurately maintained in the central administrative office. In addition to the application for employment and references, the folders will contain records and information relative to compensation, payroll deductions, evaluations, and any other pertinent information.

2. The Superintendent will be the official custodian for personnel files and will have overall responsibility for maintaining and preserving the confidentiality of the files within the provisions of the law.

3. Personnel records are considered confidential under the law and will not be open to public inspection. Access to personnel files will be limited to persons authorized by the Superintendent to use the files for the reasons cited above.

4. Each employee will have the right, upon written request, to review the contents of his/her own personnel file.

5. Employees may make written objections to any information contained in the file. Any written objection must be signed by the staff member and will become part of the employee's personnel file. Further, no negative comment will be placed in a staff member's file unless it is signed by the person making the comment and the staff member is informed of the comment and afforded the opportunity to include his/her written response in the file.

6. Lists of school system employees' names and home addresses will be released only to governmental agencies as required for official reports or by the laws.


CONTRACT REF.: All Agreements

CROSS REF.: KDB, Public’s Right to Know
STAFF COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES

The School Committee will encourage the administration to develop effective means of resolving differences that may arise among employees and between employees and administrators; reduce potential areas of grievances; and establish and maintain recognized channels of communication between the staff, administration, and School Committee.

It is the Committee's desire that grievance procedures provide for prompt and equitable adjustment of differences at the lowest possible administrative level, and that each employee be assured opportunity for an orderly presentation and review of complaints and concerns.

Channels established will provide for the following:

1. That teachers and other school employees may appeal a ruling of a Principal or other administrator to the Superintendent.

2. That all school employees may appeal a ruling of the Superintendent to the Committee, except in those areas where the law has specifically assigned authority to the Principal and/or the Superintendent and Committee action would be in conflict with that law.

3. That all hearings of complaints before the Superintendent or Committee be conducted in the presence of the administrator who made the ruling that is the subject of the grievance.

The process established for the resolution of grievances in contracts negotiated with recognized employee bargaining units will apply only to "grievances" as defined in the particular contract.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 150E:5; 150E:8

CONTRACT REFS.: All Contract Agreements
PROFESSIONAL STAFF POSITIONS

All professional staff positions in the school system, including coaches, will be created initially by the School Committee. It is the Committee's intent to activate a sufficient number of positions to accomplish the school system's goals and objectives and to provide for the equitable staffing of each school building. Although such positions may remain temporarily unfilled, only the Committee may abolish a position it has created.

Each time a new position is established by the Committee, the Superintendent will present for the Committee's approval a job description for the position, which specifies the job holder's qualifications and the job's performance responsibilities. The Superintendent will maintain a comprehensive set of job descriptions for all positions.
PROFESSIONAL STAFF SALARY SCHEDULES

Teachers

The School Committee will adopt a salary schedule for regular teaching personnel as part of the contract negotiated with the teachers' bargaining unit. The schedule will be designed to recognize and reward training and experience and encourage additional study for professional advancement.

Administrators/Principals

Salaries will be reviewed on a regular basis in accordance with contracts. The School Committee, with the advice of the Superintendent, will establish levels of compensation for each position based on the circumstances, dynamics, and requirements of each position. Consideration may be given to individuals for exceptional performance. It is the responsibility of the Superintendent to present evidence to the School Committee to support the recommendations.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:40; 71:43

CONTRACT REF.: Teachers' Agreement
EMPLOYMENT OF PRINCIPALS

Principals shall be employed by the Palmer Public Schools under individual contracts of employment. Said contracts shall be submitted to the School Committee for their approval of all terms concerning compensation/benefits, prior to the presentation of a contract of employment to the Principal. The compensation/benefit levels, above referenced, may be exceeded only with the approval of the School Committee.

Contracts issued to principals may be up to three years in length, and may be reissued by the Superintendent at levels of compensation/benefits, determined by the School Committee, provided that the Superintendent may employ a Principal under the terms and conditions of the previous contract of employment.

As a condition of employment, each Principal must maintain current certification, adhere to the policies and goals of the School Committee and the directives of the Superintendent, and annually before April 1 must submit, with the school council, the educational goals and school improvement plan for the school building(s) under his/her direction.
PROFESSIONAL STAFF HIRING

Through its employment policies, the District will strive to attract, secure, and hold the highest qualified personnel for all professional positions. The selection process will be based upon awareness to candidates who will devote themselves to the education and welfare of the children attending the schools.

It is the responsibility of the Superintendent, and of persons to whom he or she delegates this responsibility, to determine the personnel needs of the school system and to locate suitable candidates. No position may be created without the approval of the School Committee. The District's goal is to employ and retain personnel who are motivated, will strive always to do their best, and are committed to providing the best educational environment for the children.

It will be the duty of the Superintendent to see that persons considered for employment in the schools meet all certification requirements and the requirements of the Committee for the type of position for which the nomination is made.

The following guidelines will be used in the selection of personnel:

1. There will be no discrimination in the hiring process due to age, sex, gender identity, creed, race, color, national origin, disability, sexual orientation or place of residence.

2. The quality of instruction is enhanced by a staff with a wide variation in background, educational preparation, and previous experience.

3. The administrator responsible for the hiring of a staff member (in the case of District-wide positions, for the position of Principals, it is the Superintendent; for building-based personnel, it is the Principal) is directed to establish a representative screening committee. The administrator has the final say in determining who will be hired but it is expected that the screening committee’s input will be a factor in the decision. For those positions where the hiring authority rests with the School Committee a representative screening committee may be established by the School Committee or the School Committee may direct the Superintendent to establish a screening committee to assist the Superintendent in making his recommendation to the School Committee.

Massachusetts Board of Education Requirements for Certification of Teachers, Principals, Supervisors, Directors, Superintendents and Assistant Superintendents in the Public Schools of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, revised 1994
BESE Regulations 603 CMR 7:00, 26.00, and 44:00

NOTE: School Committees may determine the size and composition of the screening committee.

Revised and approved on 3/2/06.

Revised and approved on 1/16/14.

Palmer Public Schools
PART-TIME AND SUBSTITUTE PROFESSIONAL STAFF EMPLOYMENT

Part-Time Teachers

Teachers may be employed on a part-time basis. The salary of part time teachers will bear the same ratio to the first step of the salary schedule that the teacher would earn if employed full-time as the hours worked bear to the hours the teacher would work if employed full-time (for example, a teacher employed for half the number of hours would receive half the salary of a full-time teacher).

Substitute Teachers

Each building Principal will have the authority to employ as many substitute teachers as may be necessary to take the place of teachers who are temporarily absent. Periodically he/she will submit to the Superintendent a list of qualified substitutes for approval.

The school system will employ as substitute teachers, to the extent possible, persons who meet the requirements for teacher appointments and will assign teachers substitute teaching positions on the basis of their areas of competence. When the supply of potential substitutes in a particular subject area is too limited to meet school department needs, there will be active recruitment for substitutes in those areas. All substitute teachers will be expected to provide educational services, rather than to assume merely a student-supervisory role. They will be provided with as much support as possible by building administrators and teachers.

The School Committee will set the daily rate of pay for substitute teachers, including extended-term substitutes. The latter will be granted such additional benefits as approved by the School Committee.
PHILOSOPHY OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Recognizing the ongoing need for currency and continual learning, all staff members will be provided with and encouraged to participate in suitable opportunities for the development of increased knowledge and skills beyond those they may attain through the performance of their assigned duties and/or with assistance from supervisors.

Opportunities for professional growth may be include, but not be limited to the following.

1. Planned in-service programs and workshops offered within the school system from time to time; these may include participation by outside consultants.

2. Membership on curriculum development committees.

3. Released time for visits to other classrooms and schools and/or for attendance at conferences, workshops, and other professional meetings.

4. College courses or seminars.

The Superintendent will have authority to approve or deny released time for conferences and visitations, and reimbursements for expenses, provided such activities are within budget allocations for the purpose.
PROFESSIONAL STAFF ASSIGNMENTS AND TRANSFERS

The basic consideration in the assignment of professional staff members will be the needs of the students and the instructional program.

Therefore, the assignment and transfer of professional staff members will be accomplished by the Superintendent on the basis of the employee's qualifications, the needs of the school system, and the employees' expressed desires.

Care will be exercised by the Superintendent to assure that all schools are staffed with effective teachers.

Within an individual school, the building administrator will have the authority to assign classes and courses, provided this is done with full regard for the teacher's area of certification and the policies delineated above.

CONTRACT REF.: Teachers' Agreement
MAINTENANCE OF DISCIPLINE

1. Teachers are expected to enforce all rules and regulations of the school whenever and wherever possible. Any problems that cannot be handled are to be referred to the building administrator.

2. While it is the responsibility of each teacher to demand respect and excellent discipline, it is also his/her responsibility to demonstrate the same qualities. No teacher should verbally or physically abuse any student. No teacher should attempt to control discipline by means of grades. (See Policy JKA - Ban on Corporal Punishment.)

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:37G
EVALUATION OF PROFESSIONAL STAFF

In order to assure a high quality of teacher and administrator performance and to advance the instructional programs of the schools, a formal, ongoing process for teacher and administrator evaluation will be established. Regular reports will be made to the Superintendent concerning the outcomes of these evaluations.

The evaluation process will include but will not be limited to the following:

1. The development and periodic review of techniques and procedures for making evaluations.
2. Interpretation of the information gained in the evaluative process in terms of the objectives of the instructional program.
3. The application of the information gained to the planning of staff development and in-service training activities, which are designed to improve instruction and increase teacher competence.
4. Methods may include self-evaluation, supervisor initiated observations, and teacher initiated observations.

CONTRACT REF.: Teachers' Agreement

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 69:1B; 71:38; 71:38Q; 150E; 152B
603 CMR 35:00
EVALUATION OF PROFESSIONAL STAFF

M.G.L. 71:38 reads in part:

Performance standards for teachers and other school district employees shall be established by the School Committee upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, provided that where teachers are represented for collective bargaining purposes, all teachers performance standards shall be determined as follows:

The School Committee and the collective bargaining representative shall undertake for a reasonable period of time to agree on teacher performance standards.

Prior to said reasonable period of time, the school district shall seek a public hearing to comment on such standards.

In the absence of an agreement, after such reasonable time teacher performance standards shall be determined by binding interest arbitration.

Either the school district or the teachers' collective bargaining representative may file a petition seeking arbitration with the commissioner of education.

The performance standards developed either by mutual agreement or as a result of arbitration will be incorporated in the collective bargaining agreement and may be used in decisions to dismiss, demote or remove a teacher or administrator pursuant to M.G.L. 71:42; 71:42A and 71:63.
EVALUATION OF PROFESSIONAL STAFF TEACHERS

To bring a desirable degree of consistency and uniformity to the evaluation process, the following procedures will be observed:

1. Evaluations may be initiated by the Superintendent, the Assistant Superintendents, principals, assistant principals, and department heads or coordinators. These personnel will have the privilege of observing a teacher at any time.

2. The evaluation instruments will be the Teacher Evaluation Criteria booklet and the Evaluation Work sheet. Each staff member will be provided with a copy of these materials. The work sheet will be used by the evaluator who will provide the teacher with a copy.

3. Teachers will be evaluated through classroom observation during a school year.

4. Conferences will be arranged by the evaluator following each classroom observation. The work sheets will be reviewed and discussed at this time. Teachers may file written comments with the summary of each conference.

5. It is the teacher's responsibility to request assistance; the evaluator's responsibility to give assistance. A program designed to bring about needed improvement should be developed by the teacher and the evaluator.

6. The evaluation process will be subject to periodic revision.

The substance of the teacher's evaluation will be based on the basic function of the teacher as it is understood by the School Committee. Specifically, the teacher must institute and direct learning activities compatible with the philosophy of the school system. These learning activities should lead to the acquisition of knowledge and promote the maximum development of desirable behavior, skills, habits, attitudes, appreciation, beliefs, and standards. Therefore, teachers will be appraised in terms of the following characteristics, qualities, and demonstrated skills:

1. Extent and currency of knowledge and understanding of subject matter, the learning process, and general education.

2. Development and use of effective techniques for motivation and instruction.

3. Daily preparations as evidenced in thorough planning and preparation.

4. Quality of student-teacher relationships.

5. Classroom management.

6. Professional appearance and manner.
7. Personal development.

8. Effective guidance procedures and use of professional support personnel.

9. Quality of teacher-home-community relationships.

10. Loyalty to, and conscientious support of, all personnel, the objectives of the School Committee, and the philosophical principles of the school system.

LEGAL REFS.: Collective Bargaining Agreement

EVALUATION OF TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS

Authority, Scope and Purpose:

The specific purposes of evaluation under M.G.L. c. 71, s.38 and 603 CMR 35:00 are:

(A) to provide information for the continuous improvement of performance through an exchange of information between the person being evaluated and the evaluator, and

(B) to provide a record of facts and assessments for personnel decisions.

The purpose of 603 CMR 35:00 is to ensure that every school committee has a system to enhance the professionalism and accountability of teachers and administrators which will enable them to assist all students to perform at high levels. 603 CMR 35:00, together with the Principles of Effective Teaching and Principles of Effective Administrative Leadership adopted by the Board of Education, set out what Massachusetts teachers and administrators are expected to know and be able to do. 603 CMR 35:00 requires that school committees establish a rigorous and comprehensive evaluation process for teachers and administrators, consistent with these principles, to assure effective teaching and administrative leadership in the Commonwealth’s public schools.

Definitions

Administrator: shall mean any person employed in a school district in a position requiring a certificate as described in 603 CMR 7.10 (34) through (38) or who has been approved as an administrator in the area of vocational education as provided in 603 CMR 4.00 et seq.

Evaluation: shall mean the ongoing process of defining goals and identifying, gathering and using information as part of a process to improve professional performance (the “formative evaluation”) and to assess total job effectiveness and make personnel decisions (the “summative evaluation”).

Evaluator: shall mean any person designated by a Superintendent, consistent with the procedures set out in 603 CMR 35.06, who has responsibility for evaluation.

Performance Standards: shall mean the performance standards locally developed pursuant to M.G.L. c.71 s.38, 603 CMR 35:00, and the Principles of Effective Teaching and Principles of Effective Administrative Leadership adopted by the Board of Education.

School Committee: shall mean the school committee in all cities, towns and regional school districts, local and district trustees for vocational education, educational collaborative boards and boards of trustees for the county agricultural schools.

Superintendent: shall mean the person employed by the School Committee pursuant to M.G.L. c. 71, s.59, or s.59A. The Superintendent is responsible for the implementation of 603 CMR 35:00 S/he shall be evaluated by the School Committee pursuant to 603 CMR 35.00 and such other standards that may be established by the School Committee.
Teacher: shall mean any person employed in a school district in a position requiring a certificate as described in 603 CMR 7.10 (I) through (33), and 603 CMR 7.10 (39) through (42) or who has been approved as an instructor in the area of vocational education as provided in 603 CMR 4.00 et seq.

Principles of Evaluation

1. The performance standards shall be measurable.

2. The performance standards shall reflect and allow for significant differences in assignments and responsibilities. These differences shall be described in evaluation reports.

3. The performance standards shall be shared with the person being evaluated in advance of the evaluation process.

4. The purpose of evaluation shall be stated clearly, in writing, to the person being evaluated.

5. The evaluation process shall be free of racial, sexual, religious and other discrimination and biases as defined in state and federal laws.

6. The person being evaluated shall be allowed to gather and provide additional information on his/her performance. Such information must be provided in a timely manner and must be considered by the evaluator.

7. The person being evaluated shall have an opportunity to respond in writing to the evaluation reports.

Performance Standards for Teachers and Administrators

1. School committees shall establish performance standards for teachers upon the recommendation of the Superintendent and in accordance with the process described in M.G.L. c. 71 &38, including conducting a public hearing and engaging in collective bargaining and, if necessary, binding interest arbitration. All performance standards established for teachers shall be consistent with and meet the Principles of Effective Teaching adopted by the Board of Education.

2. School committees shall establish performance standards for the evaluation of all administrators upon the recommendation of the Superintendent. Performance standards for those administrators who are subject to collective bargaining shall be developed in accordance with M.G.L. c. 150E. All performance standards established for administrators shall be consistent with and meet the Principles of Effective Administrative Leadership adopted by the Board of Education.
(3) School committees are encouraged to establish programs and standards which provide for a rigorous and comprehensive evaluation process for teachers and administrators. The evaluation process may include the extent to which students assigned to teachers and administrators satisfy student academic standards or individual education plans, and the successful implementation of professional development plans, as provided in M.G.L. c. 69 s.1B and c.71, s.38.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 69:1B; 71:38
603 CMR 35.00
RESIGNATION OF PROFESSIONAL STAFF MEMBERS

Professional staff members may discontinue their service in the school system during the school year by submitting a written notice of intent to resign to the appropriate hiring authority.

Such written notice of intent to resign will be given to the Superintendent. The staff member will be notified in writing of the Superintendent’s action on the resignation.

When a resignation is accepted by the Superintendent the employee may be expected to continue in service at his or her assigned duties for a period of 30 days after submission of the resignation.
RETIREMENT OF PROFESSIONAL STAFF MEMBERS

Annually, the Superintendent will inform the Committee of the professional staff members who have indicated their intentions to retire at the end of the current school year. No further School Committee action is necessary unless approval is needed for the payment of or participation in continued local benefits.

LEGAL REF.: Age Discrimination in Employment Law, P.L. 95-256

CONTRACT REF.: Teachers Contract
SUSPENSION AND DISMISSAL OF PROFESSIONAL STAFF MEMBERS

The Superintendent will strive to assist personnel to perform their duties efficiently. However, the Superintendent may dismiss any employee in accordance with state law. Further, the Committee recognizes the constitutional rights of the district's employees and assures them the protection of due process of law. To guarantee such rights, a system of constitutionally and legally sound procedures will be followed in each case of suspension or dismissal of an employee.

When the Superintendent or a Principal determines that sufficient cause exists that a professional employee be suspended or dismissed from service in the school system, he or she will:

1. Be certain that each such case is supported by defensible records.

2. Determine if the individual is to be suspended immediately with the understanding that the suspension will be subject to restoration of salary and position if an appeal is decided in favor of the individual.

3. Follow the procedures for dismissal or suspension that are contained in applicable laws as well as those included in the current agreement with the teachers' bargaining unit.

4. Provide the individual involved with a written statement that will:
   a. Indicate whether the action the Superintendent is taking is dismissal or suspension.
   b. State the reason for the suspension or dismissal.
   c. Guarantee that all procedures will be in accord with due process of law.
   d. Inform employees who have a right to request a hearing under appropriate laws that they may be represented at such a hearing by counsel of their choice.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:42; 71:42D

Palmer Public Schools
TUTORING FOR PAY

Definition: "Tutoring" means giving private instruction or help to an individual or group for which the teacher receives remuneration other than through the School Committee.

During the school year, if tutoring seems advisable, the Principal may give the parents a list of persons who are willing to tutor. This list may include teachers, but not the student's teacher of the subject in which he or she is to be tutored.

Tutoring for pay is not to be done in the school building.

This policy does not apply to cases of home or hospital tutoring.
SUPPORT STAFF POSITIONS

Education is a cooperative enterprise in which all employees of the school system must participate intelligently and effectively for the benefit of the children. This school system will employ support staff members in positions that function to support the education program.

All support staff positions will be established initially by the Committee. In each case, the Superintendent will submit for the Committee's consideration and action a job description or job specifications for the position.

Although positions may remain temporarily unfilled, or the number of persons holding the same type of position reduced in event of de-staffing requirements, only the Committee may abolish a position it has created.
SUPPORT STAFF CONTRACTS AND COMPENSATION PLANS

In establishing salaries and salary schedules for support staff personnel, the School Committee will take into account the responsibilities of the position, the qualifications needed, past experience of the individual, and years of service in the school department.

Compensation plans will be reviewed annually for all categories of staff. Such review, where applicable, will be carried out in connection with negotiations with representatives of recognized bargaining units. The master agreements with these units will be considered appendices to this manual and will have the full force of School Committee policy.

The rates of pay for personnel not covered by collective bargaining agreements will be set by the School Committee.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:38
CROSS REF.: GDB subcodes (all relate to compensation)
CONTRACT REFS.: All Contracts
SUPPORT STAFF SUPPLEMENTARY PAY PLANS

Support staff employees will be paid overtime wages for work performed in excess of 40 hours in a work week.

In counting hours for the purpose of allowing overtime work and pay, supervisors will consider sick leave, vacation time, and holidays as time worked.

Every effort must be made to minimize overtime by scheduling duties during the regular work day. Overtime will be authorized only by the Superintendent and only to cover emergency situations. All such work will be assigned on a fair and equitable basis.

CROSS REF.: GDB, Support Staff Contracts
SUPPORT STAFF FRINGE BENEFITS

Benefits in addition to basic salary are recognized by the School Committee as an integral part of the total compensation plan for staff members. The benefits extended regular full-time support staff members will be designed to promote their economic security and will include a comprehensive health insurance program.

Certain fringe benefits are established through negotiations with employee bargaining units. Because the Committee wishes to be fair with all its employees, benefits granted to employees who are not members of a bargaining unit will be generally equal to those granted employees in similar positions that are covered by a negotiated agreement.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:37B; 71:48B
CROSS REFS.: GDB, Support Staff Contracts and Compensation Plans
GBGB, Staff Personal Security and Safety
CONTRACT REF.: All support staff contracts
SUPPORT STAFF LEAVES AND ABSENCES

Leaves and absences accorded to their support staff will be for the purposes of helping them maintain their physical health, take care of family and other personal emergencies, and discharge important and necessary obligations.

All requests for long-term leaves of absence will be submitted by the Superintendent, along with his/her recommendation, to the School Committee for its action.

Support staff employees will be granted leaves in accordance with the terms of the agreements with recognized bargaining units.

Leave benefits granted to employees who are not members of a recognized bargaining unit will be comparable to those granted employees in similar positions that are covered by master agreements with employee organizations.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 149:105D; 71:41A

CONTRACT REFS.: All support staff contracts
SUPPORT STAFF FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE

The School System shall comply with the mandatory provisions of the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993. The Superintendent shall issue, and from time to time amend, regulations setting forth the rights and procedures granted by the Act, and shall ensure compliance with those regulations either personally or by delegation, or by some combination of personal oversight and delegation.

LEGAL REFS.: P.L. 103-3, "Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993."
FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE

A. Leave without Pay

1. Employees may take leave without pay when they have exhausted their leave benefits and need additional leave to cover personal illness, the illness of a spouse, child, or parent, or the birth or adoption of a child.

2. The employee's immediate supervisor may authorize leave without pay for up to two (2) days per year. Only the Director may approve leave without pay beyond two (2) days per year. An employee requesting leave without pay for more than two (2) days must put the request in writing.

3. An employee is not entitled to leave without pay unless
   a. that employee has been employed for at least twelve (12) months by the School Committee and
   b. that employee has worked at least 1250 hours in the previous 12 month period.

4. Extent of leave:
   a. An eligible employee may take up to twelve weeks of leave total during a twelve month period, including any paid leave used. The employee must exhaust all available paid vacation leave and personal leave before being entitled to take leave without pay.
   b. In any case where both husband and wife work for the School Committee, parental leave or family medical leave to care for a sick parent is limited to twelve work weeks total for the husband and wife. Except as otherwise provided, the husband and wife may divide the twelve workweeks leave in any way they may agree to.

5. Definitions:
   a. "Child" means a son or daughter, whether biological adopted, or foster child, or a stepchild, legal ward or child to whom the employee stands in loco parentis, if the child is either under the age of eighteen (18) years or is incapable of self-care because of a mental or physical disability.
   b. "Director" means the Director of Finance and Personnel or the designee of the Superintendent.
   c. "Health care provider" means a doctor of medicine or osteopathy who is authorized to practice medicine or surgery by the state where the doctor practices, or any person determined by the Secretary of Labor to be capable of providing health care services.
d. "Intermittent Leave" means leave taken in whole day periods but less than a whole workweek.

e. "Parent" means a biological parent of an employee or an individual who stood in loco parentis to an employee when the employee was a child.

f. "Reduced leave schedule" means a leave schedule that reduces the usual number of hours per workweek, or hours per workday, of an employee. Except for teachers, no employee exempt from the overtime rules of the Fair Labor and Standards Act may take leave on a reduced leave schedule without the permission of the Director.

g. "Serious health condition" means an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition which involves—

   (1) inpatient care in a hospital, hospice, or residential medical care facility, or

   (2) continuing treatment by a health care provider.

h. "Spouse" means a husband or wife.

i. "Twelve Month Period" means the school system's fiscal year.

B. Types of Leave without Pay

1. Personal Medical Leave without Pay: The Director may grant a medical leave of absence without pay to an employee who, because of a serious health condition, is unable to perform the functions of his or her job.

   a. An employee must exhaust all available sick leave, including leave from the sick leave bank, before taking leave without pay.

   b. Licensure:

      (1) The Director may require a licensure from the employee's health care provider, stating—

         i. the date on which the health condition began,

         ii. the probable duration of the condition,

         iii. the appropriate medical facts within the health care provider's knowledge regarding the condition,

         iv. a statement that the employee is unable to perform the functions of his/her job.
(2) If the Director has reason to doubt the validity of the licensure provided by the employee's health care provider, he or she may require, at the School Committee's expense, a second opinion. The employee must obtain the opinion of the Director's designated health care provider concerning the information in b., above. The health care provider giving the second opinion may not be a person regularly employed by the School Committee.

(3) If the second opinion conflicts with the first, the Director may require, at the School Committee's expense, a third opinion. The health care provider shall provide a report concerning the information in b., above. The provider shall be final and binding on the School Committee and the employee.

(4) The Director may require an employee on medical leave without pay to provide relicensures at reasonable intervals.

c. If the necessity for leave is foreseeable based on planned medical treatment, the employee—

(1) shall make a reasonable effort to schedule the treatment so as not to disrupt unduly the operations of the School System, subject to the approval of the employee's health care provider.

(2) shall give the employee's supervisor at least 30 days' notice, before the date the leave is to begin, of the employee's intention to take personal medical leave without pay, except that if the date of treatment requires the leave to begin in less than thirty days, the employee shall provide such notice as practicable.

d. Failure to provide notice as mandated by c. above shall result in the denial of leave until the required notice period has passed.

e. The employee may take intermittent leave or take leave on a reduced leave schedule when medically necessary.

f. Before the employee may resume work, the employee must present his or her supervisor with written licensure from the employee's health care provider that the employee is able to resume work.

2. Family Medical Leave without Pay: The Director may grant a medical leave of absence without pay to an employee who needs the time off to care for the employee's spouse, child or parent, if the spouse, child or parent has a serious health condition.

a. Licensure:

(1) The Director may require a licensure from the health care provider for the spouse, child, or parent, as the case may be, stating—
i. the date on which the health condition began,

ii. the probable duration of the condition,

iii. the appropriate medical facts within the health care provider's knowledge regarding the condition,

iv. a statement that the employee is needed to care for the spouse, child, or parents, as the case may be, and an estimate of the amount of time that such employee is needed to care for the spouse, child, or parent.

(2) If the Director has reason to doubt the validity of the licensure provided by the employee's health care provider, he or she may require, at the School Committees expense, a second opinion. The employee must obtain the opinion of the Director’s designated health care provider concerning the information in b., above. The health care provider giving the second opinion may not be a person regularly employed by the School Committee.

(3) If the second opinion conflicts with the first, the Director may require, at the School Committees expense, a third opinion. The health care provider shall provide a report concerning information in b., above. The provider shall be final and binding on the School Committee and the employee.

(4) The Director may require an employee on medical leave without pay to provide relicensure at reasonable intervals.

b. If the necessity for leave is foreseeable based on planned medical treatment, the employee—

(1) Shall make a reasonable effort to schedule the treatments to as not to disrupt unduly the operations of the School System, subject to the approval of the health care provider for the spouse, child, or parent of the employee, as the case may be, and

(2) Shall give the employee's supervisor at least 30 days notice, before the date the leave is to begin, of the employee's intention to take family medical leave without pay, except that if the date of the treatment requires the leave to begin in less than thirty days, the employee shall provide such notice as practicable.

c. Failure to provide notice as mandated by b. above shall result in the denial of leave until the required notice period has passed.

d. The employee may take intermittent leave or take leave on a reduced leave schedule when medically necessary.
3. Parental Leave without Pay: An employee may take parental leave without pay within one year of the birth of the child in order to care for that child. An employee may take parental leave without pay within one year of the placement of a child with the employee for adoption or foster care.

a. When the need for parental leave without pay is foreseeable based on expected birth or placement, the employee shall give his or her supervisor at least 30 days' notice before the date the leave is to begin. If the date of the birth or replacement requires leave to begin in less than thirty days, the employee shall provide such notice as is practicable.

b. Failure to provide notice as mandated by a. above shall result in the denial of leave until the required notice period has passed.

c. An employee taking parental leave without pay may not take intermittent leave or work on a reduced leave schedule without the express consent of the Director in writing.

C. Special Rules

1. Rules Applicable to Instructors in Periods Near the Conclusion of the Academic Term: The following rules apply to any employee who takes leave without pay under this policy and who is employed principally in an instructional capacity.

a. If leave without pay begins more than five weeks before the end of an academic term, the Principal may require the employee to continue taking leave until the end of that academic term, if—

   (1) the leave is of at least three weeks duration, and

   (2) the return to work would occur during the three-week period before the end of the academic term.

b. If Parental or Family Medical leave without pay begins within five weeks before the end of an academic term, the Principal may require the employee to continue taking leave until the end of that term, if—

   (1) the leave is of more than two weeks duration, and

   (2) the return to work would occur during the two-week period before the end of the academic term.

c. If Parental or Family Medical leave without pay begins within three weeks before the end of an academic term the Principal may require the employees to continue taking leave until the end of that term, if the leave is for more than five working days.
d. If the School System requires a teacher to extend leave under these rules, the extended leave is counted against the teacher's FMLA allotment. If the teacher's FMLA allotment expires during the extension the additional time is nevertheless deemed FMLA leave.

2. Intermittent Leave and Reduced Leave Schedules:
   a. If the intermittent leave or reduced leave schedule is foreseeable based on planned medical treatment, the Director may require the employee to transfer temporarily to an available alternate position—
      (1) which is offered by the Director,
      (2) for which the employee is qualified,
      (3) which has equivalent pay and benefits, and
      (4) which better accommodates recurring periods of leave than the regular employment position of the employee.
   b. If a teacher does not give the School Committee the required 30 days notice for intermittent leave or a reduced leave schedule which is foreseeable, he or she must delay the taking of leave until the notice provision is met.
   c. If a teacher takes intermittent leave or a reduced leave schedule which is for more than 20% of the normal working days over the period of the leave, that teacher must instead take the entire period as FMLA leave.

3. Benefits during Leave:
   a. While the employee is on leave, the School System shall maintain coverage of that employee under its group health plan at the level and under the conditions which would have been provided if the employee had continued in employment instead of being on leave.
   b. If the employee normally had a monthly payment to that plan, the employee must make that monthly payment. If the employee fails to make such payments, the School System shall, if possible, continue the benefits at the reduced rate permitted for the School System's payment alone. If such a reduced rate is not possible, then the employee shall be excluded from the group health plan.

4. Employment and Benefits upon Return to Work:
   a. Any employee who takes leave under this Policy for the intended purpose of the leave shall be entitled, on return from leave—
(1) to be restored to his or her former job, or

(2) to be placed in an equivalent position with equivalent benefits, pay, and other terms and conditions of employment.

b. The taking of leave under this policy shall not result in the loss of any employment benefit accrued before the date on which the leave began.

c. No employee shall accrue seniority or employment benefits during any period of leave, nor shall the employee be entitled to any right, benefit, or position of employment other than those to which the employee would have been entitled if the employee had not taken the leave. This policy does not change the legal requirement that probationary teachers teach at least 160 contractual teaching days during the school year in order to count the year toward the three years of service needed to attain continuing contract status.

d. The Director may deny restoration to salaried employees who are among the highest paid 10 percent of the School System's employees, if

(1) such denial is necessary to prevent substantial and grievous economic injury to the operations of the School System,

(2) the Director notifies the employee of the intent of the School System to deny restoration on the basis of economic injury at the time the Director determines that such injury would occur, and

(3) if the leave has begun, the employee does not return to work after receiving the notice of intent not to restore him or her.

5. Failure to Return from Leave: The School System may recover the premium which it paid for maintaining coverage of the employee under its group health plan during the employee's unpaid leave under this policy if—

a. the employee fails to return from unpaid leave under this policy after the period of leave to which the employee is entitled has expired; and

b. the employee fails to return to work for a reason other than—

(1) the continuance, recurrence, or onset of a serious health condition which would entitle the employee to personal or family medical leave without pay, or

(2) other circumstances beyond the control of the employee.

6. Prohibited Acts:
a. No employee of the School System shall interfere with, restrain, or deny the exercise of or the attempt to exercise any right provided under this title.

b. No employee of the School System shall discriminate against any individual for opposing any practice contrary to this policy.

c. No employee of the School System shall discriminate against any individual for

   (1) filing any charge, instituting or causing to be instituted any proceeding, under or related to this policy,

   (2) giving, or being about to give, any information in connection with any inquiry or proceeding relating to any right provided under this policy, or

   (3) testifying, or being about to testify, in any inquiry or proceeding relating to any right provided under this policy.

LEGAL REFS.: P.L. 103-3 "Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993"
29 U.S.C. S 2601 et seq.
Department of Labor Regulations, 29 C.P.R. Part 825
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE LEAVE

I. Administrative Policy

It is the administrative Policy of the Palmer Public Schools to implement and administer the provisions of an Act Relative to Domestic Violence. This law is intended to reduce domestic violence, and to provide victims and family members of victims of domestic violence protected work leave for qualifying reasons associated with domestic violence.

II. Definitions

Eligible Employees: All employees who are employed by and Employer of fifty (50) or more employees and have exhausted all vacation, personal, or sick leave.

Qualifying Events: “Domestic Violence” against an Eligible Employee or “Family Member” (unless the employee is the perpetrator of violence against the family member) for qualifying reasons.

Domestic Violence: Abuse against an employee or the employee’s family member by a current or former spouse of the employee or the employee’s family member, a person with whom the employee or the employee’s family member shares a child in common, a person who is cohabitating with or has cohabitated with the employee or the employee’s family member, a person who is related by blood or marriage to the employee, or a person with whom the employee or employee’s family member has or had a dating or engagement relationship.

Family Member: Persons who are married to one another, persons in a substantive dating or engagement relationship and who reside together, persons having a child in common regardless of whether they have ever married or resided together, a parent, step-parent, child, step-child, sibling, grandparent or grandchild, or persons in a guardianship relationship.

Length of Leave: The leave entitlement under An Act Relative to Domestic Leave is up to fifteen (15) unpaid days of Domestic Violence Leave in a twelve (12) month period to employees who qualify to seek or obtain medical attention, counseling, victim services or legal assistance, secure housing, obtain a protective order from a court, appear in court or before a grand jury, meet with a district attorney or other law enforcement official, attend child custody proceedings or address other issues directly related to the abusive behavior against the employee or family member of the employee.

III. Procedure

Notice Requirement: An employee submitting for Domestic Violence Leave is required to inform the employer prior to taking such leave, unless there is an imminent danger to the health or safety of an employee or the employee’s family member. However, in the case of imminent danger, the employee shall notify the employer within three (3) workdays that the leave was taken.
IV. **Effect of Benefits**

A. An employee granted a leave under this policy will continue to be covered under the employer’s group health insurance plans and life insurance plans under the same conditions as coverage would have been provided if he/she had been continuously employed during the leave period.

B. If the employee fails to return from domestic violence leave, the employer may seek reimbursement from the employee for the portion of the premiums it paid on behalf of that employee (also known as the employer contribution) during the employee’s leave.

C. An employee shall be in unpaid leave status for the duration of the leave.

V. **Job Protection**

A. If the employee returns to work within the time permitted, a maximum of fifteen (15) days in a twelve (12) month period, he/she will be reinstated to his/her former position or an equivalent position with equivalent pay, benefits, status and authority.

B. The employee’s restoration rights are the same as they would have been had the employee not been on leave. Thus, the employee will be subject to any pay or benefit reductions or other adverse actions, including layoff, which he/she would have experienced if he or she had not taken leave under this policy.

C. If the employee fails to return after qualifying leave under this section, the employee may be terminated, unless reinstated to his/her same or similar position, in accordance with applicable laws, other leave-related policies, and/or appropriate bargaining unit contract language.
EMPLOYEE NOTICE
AN ACT RELATIVE TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Employers of Fifty (50) or More Employees Must Provide Domestic Violence Leave

Any Employer of fifty (50) or more employees is required to provide up to fifteen (15) days of Domestic Violence Leave in a twelve (12) month period to employees who qualify. “Employees” are defined as any “individuals who perform services for and under the control and direction of an employer for wages or other remuneration”. There is no distinction between part-time and full-time employees in the calculation of the total number of employees. The employer maintains sole discretion as to whether any Domestic Violence Leave is paid or unpaid.

Employee Eligibility Requirements

Notification

An employee submitting for Domestic Violence Leave is required to inform the employer prior to taking such leave, unless there is an imminent danger to the health or safety of an employee or the employee’s family member. However, in the case of imminent danger, the employee shall notify the employer within three (3) workdays that the leave was taken.

Of note, the Act states that, if an unscheduled absence occurs, an employer is not to take “negative action” against the employee within thirty (30) days from the unauthorized absence, or the last day of consecutive absences, if proper documentation is provided (See Documentation Substantiating Domestic Violence Leave). Discipline may be delayed for unexcused absences as a result of this provision.

Exhaustion of Vacation, Personal and Sick Leave

There is no minimum time period an employee must be working for the employer prior to eligibility for Domestic Violence Leave. However, an employee seeking Domestic Violence Leave must exhaust all annual or vacation leave, personal leave and sick leave prior to requesting or taking leave, unless the employer waives this requirement.

Domestic Violence Against Employee or Family Member

The provisions of the Act apply if the employee or a family member is a victim of domestic violence (unless the employee is the perpetrator of violence against the family member).

“Domestic violence” is defined as abuse against an employee or the employee’s family member by a current or former spouse of the employee or the employee’s family member, a person with whom the employee or the employee’s family member shares a child in common, a person who is cohabitating with or has cohabited with the employee or the employee’s family member, a person who is related by blood or marriage to the employee, or a person with whom the employee or employee’s family member has or had a dating or engagement relationship.
“Family Member” is defined as persons who are married to one another, persons in a substantive dating or engagement relationship and who reside together, persons having a child in common regardless of whether they have ever married or resided together, a parent, step-parent, child, step-child, sibling, grandparent or grandchild, or persons in a guardianship relationship.

**Permitted Reasons for Employee Domestic Violence Leave**

Domestic Violence Leave may be used for any of the following reasons:

- to seek or obtain medical attention, counseling;
- victim services or legal assistance;
- secure housing;
- obtain a protective order from a court;
- appear in court or before a grand jury;
- meet with a district attorney or other law enforcement official;
- attend child custody proceedings or address other issues directly related to the abusive behavior against the employee or family member of the employee.

**Employer Request for Documentation Substantiating Eligibility**

An employer may require an employee to provide documentation evidencing that the employee or employee’s family member has been a victim of abusive behavior and that the leave taken is consistent with the reasons listed above, but cannot require an employee to show evidence of an arrest, conviction or other law enforcement documentation for such abusive behavior. The employee must provide the documentation within a reasonable time period after the employer request, which may be in the form of one of the following documents:

- A protective order, order of equitable relief or other documentation issued by a court of competent jurisdiction as a result of abusive behavior against the employee or employee’s family member.
- A document under the letterhead of the court, provider or public agency which the employee attended for the purposes of acquiring assistance as it relates to the abusive behavior against the employee or the employee’s family member.
- A police report or statement of a victim or witness provided to police, including a police incident report, documenting the abusive behavior complained of by the employee or the employee’s family member.
- Documentation that the perpetrator of the abusive behavior against the employee or family member of the employee has admitted to sufficient facts to support a finding of guilt of abusive behavior or has been convicted of, or has been adjudicated a juvenile delinquent by reason of, any offense constituting abusive behavior and which is related to the abusive behavior that necessitated the leave.
- Medical documentation of treatment as a result of the abusive behavior complained of by the employee or employee’s family member.
- A sworn statement, signed under the penalties of perjury, provided by a counselor, social worker, health care worker, member of the clergy, shelter worker, legal advocate or other professional

*Palmer Public Schools*
who has assisted the employee or the employee’s family member in addressing the effects of the abusive behavior.

- A sworn statement, signed under the penalties of perjury, from the employee attesting that the employee has been the victim of abusive behavior or is the family member of a victim of abusive behavior.

Any of the above-described documentation may be kept in the employee’s employment record only as long as required for the employer to make a determination as to whether the employee is eligible. This information shall be kept confidential and should not be disclosed, unless the employee requests or consents in writing to the release, the release is ordered by a court, the release of information is necessary to protect the safety of the employee or other employees, or the release of information is required by law enforcement in the course of an investigation, or is otherwise required by law.

Adopted by the School Committee on 11/20/2014.
SUPPORT STAFF ASSIGNMENTS AND TRANSFERS

The Superintendent will make District-wide assignments and transfers of support staff members for the efficient operation of the school department as necessary.

The preferences of employees will be taken into consideration in making assignments and transfers; however, the best interests of students and the school system must be given priority.

Within an individual school, the Principal may assign support staff members to tasks appropriate to their positions and qualifications.

CONTRACT REFS.: All Support Staff Agreements
NEGOTIATIONS

NOTE: This section is for filing policies relating to the process of negotiations, not for filing personnel "policies" that have been negotiated. (Most of the latter would go in the Personnel Section if you determine to include items from negotiated agreements in your policy manual.)

In compiling a policy manual, you need to make a decision at the start as to how you will handle the various statements in agreements with staff units that relate to the bargaining process and to employee compensation, benefits, and other conditions of work determined through the process.

It is recommended that:

1. You use references to pertinent portions of agreements as appropriate to the various categories in the classification system; otherwise, use agreement excerpts verbatim as appropriate to the various categories.

2. Whichever method you choose, be consistent in the treatment of negotiated "policies" throughout your manual and give the same treatment to agreements with all staff units with which you negotiate.

Many examples of the use of contract references appear in the Personnel section of this reference manual.
NEGOTIATIONS GOALS

The Palmer School Committee recognizes that education is a public trust; it therefore is dedicated to providing the best possible educational opportunities for the young people of this community. In negotiations, this objective may be best attained if there is a climate of mutual trust and understanding between the negotiating parties.

The School Committee believes that the best interests of public education will be served by establishing procedures that provide an orderly method for the School Committee and representatives of the staff to discuss matters of common concern.

It is further recognized that nothing in negotiations will compromise the School Committee's legal responsibilities nor will any employee's statutory rights and privileges be impaired.
NEGOTIATIONS LEGAL STATUS

All negotiations between the School Committee and recognized employee groups are conducted subject to Chapter 150E of the Massachusetts General Laws. The legal status of negotiations is defined in part by Section 2 of that chapter, as follows:

Employees shall have the right of self-organization and the right to form, join, or assist any employee organization for the purpose of bargaining collectively through representatives of their own choosing on questions of wages, hours, and other terms and conditions of employment, and to engage in lawful, concerted activities for the purpose of collective bargaining or other mutual aid or protection, free from interference, restraint, or coercion. An employee shall have the right to refrain from any or all of such activities, except to the extent of making such payment of service fees to an exclusive representative as provided in section twelve.

Basic to all employer/employee negotiations is the concept of "bargaining in good faith." It is the legal responsibility of both the School Committee and employee organizations to bargain in good faith as they conduct negotiations. However, such obligation does not compel either party to agree to a proposal or make a concession.

Established by law

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 150E:1 et seq.
SCHOOL COMMITTEE NEGOTIATING AGENTS

The School Committee is responsible for negotiations with recognized employee bargaining units. However, because of the expertise and time required for negotiations, the Committee may hire a negotiator to bargain in good faith with recognized bargaining units to help assure that mutually satisfactory agreements on wages, hours, and other terms and conditions of employment will be developed.

The School Committee will appoint the negotiator and the fee or salary for his/her services will be established in accordance with the law at the time of appointment.

The duties of the negotiator will be as follows:

1. To negotiate in good faith with recognized bargaining units to arrive at a mutually satisfactory agreement on wages, hours, and working conditions of employees represented by the units.
   a. The negotiator may recommend members of the administration to serve on the negotiation team. They will not be members of any unit that negotiates with the Committee, and their participation in negotiations must be recommended by the Superintendent and approved by the Committee.
   b. He/she will direct accumulation of necessary data needed for negotiations, such as comparative information.
   c. He/she will follow guidelines set forth by the Committee as to acceptable agreements and will report on the progress of negotiations.
   d. He/she will make recommendations to the Committee as to acceptable agreements.

2. The negotiator will interpret the signed negotiated contracts to administrators and may be called upon to offer advice on various aspects of contract administration during the terms of the contracts with employee organizations.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:37E
INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

The primary function of a school program is the instruction of students. All staff activities and efforts shall be directed toward providing a high quality, effective, and ever-improving instructional program.

There are primarily three functions involved in carrying out the instructional program:

- Operating Function
- Coordinating and Developing Function
- Evaluating and Assessment Function

The operating function involves classroom instruction and building program management. The coordinating and developing function includes monitoring activities (curriculum development), in-service education, and special services. The evaluation and assessment function involves data collection and synthesis and establishing future direction.

LEGAL REFS.: 603 CMR 26:00
CROSS REF.: AD, Mission Statement
            ADA, School District Goals and Objectives
ACADEMIC FREEDOM

The School Committee seeks to educate students in the democratic tradition, to foster recognition of individual freedom and social responsibility, to inspire meaningful awareness of and respect for the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

Fairness in procedures will be observed both to safeguard the legitimate interests of the schools and to exhibit by appropriate example the basic objectives of a democratic society as set forth in the Constitutions of the United States and the State.

LEGAL REF.: Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts
SCHOOL YEAR/SCHOOL CALENDAR

The school calendar for the ensuing year will be prepared by the Superintendent and submitted to the School Committee for approval by May 1st of each year. The number of days or instructional hours scheduled for the school year will be determined in accordance with the following standards set by the Massachusetts Board of Education:

1. Elementary school will operate for a minimum of 180 days. Schools shall ensure that every elementary school student is scheduled to receive a minimum of 900 hours per school year of structured learning time, as defined in 603 CMR 27.02. Time which a student spends at school breakfast and lunch, passing between classes, in homeroom, at recess, in non-directed study periods, receiving school services, and participating in optional school programs shall not count toward meeting the minimum structured learning time requirement for that student.

2. Secondary schools will operate for a minimum of 180 days. Schools shall ensure that every secondary school student is scheduled to receive a minimum of 990 hours per school year of structured learning time, as defined in 603 CMR 27.02. Time which a student spends at school breakfast and lunch, passing between classes, in homeroom, at recess, in non-directed study periods, receiving school services, and participating in optional school programs shall not count toward meeting the minimum structured learning time requirement for that student.

For the information of staff, students, and parents, the calendar will set forth the days schools will be in session; holidays and vacation periods; in service days; and parent conferences.

Board of Education Regulations for School Year and School Day, effective 9/1/75
Board of Education, Student Learning Time Regulations
603 CMR 27.00, Adopted 12/20/94
SCHOOL DAY

The length of the school day is established in the collective bargaining agreements with the various school unions. The specific opening and closing times of the schools will be recommended by the Superintendent and set by the Committee.

The Superintendent is authorized to make minor changes in opening and closing times to simplify transportation scheduling; however, major changes in schedules will be subject to Committee approval.

Parents and guardians will be informed of the opening and closing times set by the Committee. To help insure the safety of all children, parents will also be notified that students will not be admitted into the school building until 10 minutes prior to the start of the official day unless bus schedules require earlier admittance.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 15:1G; 71:1; 71:59
Board of Education Regulations for School Year and Day, effective 9/1/75
ORGANIZATION OF INSTRUCTION

The District offers a diversified educational program compatible with the needs of the community and state standards.

The organizational plan is designed to facilitate the philosophy of educating every student, each to his/her fullest potential.

The structure will consist of three levels -- Primary/Elementary, Middle and Secondary levels.

The Primary/Elementary level includes kindergarten through grade four. The Middle level consists of grades five, six and seven. The Secondary level consists of grades eight, nine, ten, eleven, and twelve.

Special education services are integrated across each grade level in all schools.

The organization is designed to meet the standards established within the Curriculum Frameworks as required by the State Department of Education and to serve the needs of all students.
CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Constant adaptation and development of the curriculum is necessary if the District is to meet the needs of the students in its schools. To be successful, curriculum development must be a collaborative enterprise involving staff and administrators utilizing their professional expertise, and gathering input from parents and community.

The Committee expects its faculty and administration to regularly evaluate the education program and to recommend modifications of practice and changes in curriculum content as well as the addition or deletion of courses to the instructional program.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 69:1E
603 CMR 26:05

Palmer Public Schools
To support the classroom activities and other instructional needs of the District, various educational services as listed shall be provided. The Support Services staff will work in cooperation with building staff and the administration of the District in (1) the coordination and the supervision of the curriculum implementation of the instructional program, and (2) support services programs.

Curricular Supervision and Coordination

Coordinating personnel for specific curricular areas shall be assigned by the administration. These coordinators shall assist in the organization, supervision, and coordination of subject material and activities in the schools.

Support Services

The Administration shall be responsible for all programs for educationally handicapped and gifted students' psychological services, speech correction, homebound and hospital teaching and such other programs as may be assigned to the Learning Support Services.

CROSS REF.: ACE, Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Handicap
It is the philosophy of the District to provide programs for all its students. Where additional programs and/or environments could facilitate meeting the needs of students and the philosophy and objectives of the District, alternative programs may be established.

Definition

Alternative programs are defined as provisions within the public education system which offer major choices among diverse educational environments based on student needs, talents and interests; occupy a significant proportion of an individual student's time; and meet the District's philosophy and objectives.

Development

Any project shall have been discussed with the Administration and must receive its endorsement prior to development.

Alternative programs shall observe all policies and regulations that govern all of the schools and programs of the District unless specifically waived by the board.

Proposals for alternative programs must include a design for evaluating the effectiveness in achieving the purposes of the program and determining the extent to which it is successful in achieving the philosophy and objectives of the District. Alternative programs will be reviewed and evaluated annually for the first three years with a recommendation to the Committee as to continuation of the programs.

Approval

Prior to implementation, the Committee shall approve alternative programs.
CURRICULUM ADOPTION

The School Committee will rely on its professional staff to design and implement instructional programs and courses of study that will forward the educational goals of the school system.

The Superintendent will have authority to approve new programs and courses of study after they have been thoroughly studied and found to support educational goals. The Committee itself will consider, and officially adopt, new programs and courses when they constitute an extensive alteration in instructional content or approach.

The Committee wishes to be informed of all new courses and substantive revisions in curriculum. It will receive reports on changes under consideration. Its acceptance of these reports, including a listing of the high school program of studies, will constitute its adoption of the curriculum for official purposes.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:1; 69:1E
State law requires that schools:

. . . shall give instruction and training in orthography, reading, writing, the English language and grammar, geography, arithmetic, drawing, music, the history and Constitution of the United States, the duties of citizenship, health education, physical education and good behavior. . .

The law further states that American history and civics, including the Constitution of the United States, the Declaration of Independence, the Bill of Rights, local history and government will be taught as required subjects in the public schools.

Physical education is compulsory for all students, except that no student will be required to take part in physical education exercises if a physician certifies in writing that such exercises would be injurious to the student.

The Fundamental Skills

The business of the schools is to equip all children with the skills, tools, and attitudes that will lay the basis for learning now and in the future. This means giving highest priority to developing skills in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and solving numerical problems.

The first claim of the community's resources will be made for the realization of these priorities. School dollars, school talent, school time, and whatever innovation in program is required must be concentrated on these top-ranking goals. No student should be bypassed or left out of the school's efforts to teach the fundamental skills. Schooling for basic literacy must reach all students, in all neighborhoods, and from all homes.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:1, 2, 3; 71:13
603 CMR 26:05
BASIC INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

Curricula

(1) The curricula of all public school systems shall present in fair perspective the culture, history, activities, and contributions of persons and groups of different races, nationalities, sexes, and colors.

(2) All school books, instructional and educational materials shall be reviewed for sex-role and minority group stereotyping. Appropriate activities, discussions and/or supplementary materials shall be used to counteract the stereotypes depicted in such materials.

(3) School books, instructional and educational materials purchased after the date of 603 CMR 26.00 shall in the aggregate, include characterizations and situations which depict individuals of both sexes and of minority groups in a broad variety of positive roles.

(4) Each school shall provide equal opportunity for physical education for all students. Goals, objectives and skill development standards, where used, shall neither be designated on the basis of sex nor designed to have an adverse impact on members of either sex.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:1, 2, 3; 71:13
603 CMR 26:05
PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The School Committee will attempt to provide every student with an opportunity for wholesome and enriched educational experiences. It is the Committee's belief that the following basic aims and objectives of the physical education program will contribute to this goal:

1. To aid the development of the entire student so that a well trained mind may function properly in a healthy body.

2. To encourage student participation in vigorous physical activity while in school, and to teach the skills of those activities so that they will have a carry-over value for later activities in every day life.

3. To increase appreciation of physical fitness and its importance in regard to good health.

4. To impress upon students the importance of integrating one's mind, body and attitude in preparing to face the obligations of a complex society.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:1; 71:3
Board of Education Regulations Pertaining to Physical Education, adopted 4/25/78, effective 9/1/78
603 CMR 26:05
OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION

The School Committee recognizes that students in kindergarten through grade 12 should:

1. Be afforded the opportunity to be informed about the world of work.
2. Be aware of the many vocations available to them.
3. Develop a respect for the dignity of work.
4. Be allowed the opportunity to develop an understanding regarding the technical, consumer, occupational, recreational and cultural aspects of industry and technology; they should also be afforded the opportunity to develop skills related to such aspects through creative problem solving experiences.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:37K; 71:38A through 71:38F; 74:1 et seq.
Board of Education Chapter 74 Regulations, adopted 6/28/77, effective 9/1/77
HEALTH EDUCATION

Good health depends upon continuous life-long attention to scientific advances and the acquisition of new knowledge.

The School Committee believes that the greatest opportunity for effective health education lies within the public schools because of their potential to reach children at the age when positive, lifelong health habits are best engendered and because the schools are equipped to provide qualified personnel to conduct health education programs.

The health education program will emphasize a contemporary approach to the presentation of health information, skills, and the knowledge necessary for students to understand and appreciate the functioning and proper care of the human body. Students also will be presented with information regarding complex social, physical and mental health problems, which they might encounter in society. In an effort to help students make intelligent choices on alternative behavior of serious personal consequence, health education will examine the potential health hazards of social, physical and mental problems existing in the larger school-community environment.

In order to promote a relevant, dynamic approach to the instruction of health education, the School Committee will continue to stress the need for curricular, personnel, and financial commitments that are necessary to assure the high quality of the system's health education program.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:1
CROSS REF.: EB, Safety Program
PARENTAL NOTIFICATION RELATIVE TO SEX EDUCATION

In accordance with General Laws Chapter 71, Section 32A, the Palmer School Committee has adopted this policy on the rights of parents and guardians of our students in relation to curriculum that primarily involves human sexual education or human sexuality issues.

At the beginning of each school year, all parents/guardians of students in our schools will be notified in writing of the courses and curriculum we offer that primarily involve human sexual or human sexuality issues. The Superintendent of Schools will determine the administrator(s) responsible for sending the notice(s). Parents/guardians of students who enroll in school after the start of the school year will be given the written notice at the time of enrollment. If planned curricula change during the school year, to the extent practicable, parents/guardians will be notified of this fact in a timely manner before implementation.

Each such notice to parents/guardians will include a brief description of the curriculum covered by this policy, and will inform parents/guardians that they may:

1. Exempt their child from any portion of the curriculum that primarily involves human sexual education or human sexual issues, without penalty to the student, by sending a letter to the school Principal requesting an exemption. Any student who is exempted by request of the parent/guardian under this policy may be given an alternative assignment.

2. Inspect and review program instruction materials for these curricula, which will be made reasonably accessible to parents/guardians and others to the extent practicable. Parents/guardians may arrange with the Principal to review the materials at the school and may also review them at other locations that may be determined by the Superintendent of Schools.

A parent/guardian who is dissatisfied with a decision of the Principal concerning notice, access to instructional materials, or exemption for the student under this policy may send a written request to the Superintendent for review of the issue. The Superintendent or designee will review the issue and give the parent/guardian a timely written decision, preferably within two weeks of the request. A parent/guardian who is dissatisfied with the Superintendent’s decision may send a written request to the School Committee for review of the issue. The School Committee will review the issue and give the parent/guardian a timely written decision, preferably within four weeks of the request. A parent/guardian who is still dissatisfied after this process may send a written request to the Commissioner of Education for review of the issue in the dispute.

The Superintendent of Schools will distribute a copy of this policy to each Principal by September 1 of each year.

REF.: Department of Education
HEALTH EDUCATION
(Exemption Procedure)

Exemption will be granted from a specific portion of health education curriculum on the grounds that the material taught is contrary to the religious beliefs and/or teachings of the student or the student's parent/guardian.

A request for exemption must be submitted in writing to the Principal in advance of instruction in that portion of the curriculum for which the exemption is requested. The request must state the particular conflict involved.

The Principal will confer with the teacher to determine the length of time a student will be exempt. The teacher will develop an alternative activity for which the student will receive credit.

The Principal will inform the parent/guardian of disposition of the request within a reasonable number of school days of receipt of the request.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:1
TEACHING ABOUT DRUGS, ALCOHOL, AND TOBACCO

In accordance with state and federal law, the Palmer Public Schools shall provide age-appropriate, developmentally appropriate, evidence-based drug, alcohol and tobacco education and prevention programs in grades K-12.

The drug, alcohol, and tobacco education program shall address the legal, social, and health consequences of drug, alcohol and tobacco use. It shall include special instruction as to the effects upon the human system; the emotional, psychological and social dangers of such use with emphasis on nonuse by school age children. The program also shall include information about effective techniques and skill development for delaying and abstaining from using, as well as skills for addressing peer pressure to use drugs, alcohol or tobacco.

The objectives of this program, as stated below, are rooted in the Committee’s belief that prevention requires education, and that the most important aspects of the policies and guidelines of the District should be the education of each individual on healthy decision-making.

- To create an awareness of the total drug problem—prevention, education, treatment, rehabilitation, and law enforcement on the local, state, national and international levels;
- To prevent, delay, and/or reduce drug, alcohol and tobacco use among children and youth;
- To relate the use of drugs, alcohol and tobacco to legal, social and health practices;
- To develop the student’s ability to make intelligent choices based on facts and to teach students self-management skills, social skills, negotiation skills, and refusal skills that will help them to make healthy decisions and avoid drug, alcohol and tobacco use; and
- To develop an interest in preventing drug, alcohol and tobacco use within the community.

The curriculum, instructional materials and outcomes used in this program shall be recommended by the Superintendent and approved by the School Committee.

Prior to the beginning of their athletic season, students will be presented educational materials on the dangers of opiate use and misuse along with the head injury safety program.

The Palmer Public Schools District will administer, to a minimum of two different grade levels, a verbal screening tool to students for substance use disorders.

Parents will be notified of the screening beginning each year and may opt out by written notification to the District. Trained professionals will conduct screenings during school hours. All information is confidential and cannot be subject to discover or subpoena in any civil, criminal, legislative or administrative proceeding. No record of any pupil statements will be kept.
This policy shall be posted on the Palmer Public Schools District website and notice shall be provided to all students and parents in accordance with state law. Additionally, the District shall file a copy of this policy with DESE in accordance with law in a manner requested by DESE.

SOURCE: MASC March 2016
LEGAL REFS: M.G.L. 71: 1; 71:96
CROSS REF: JICH, Alcohol Use by Students

Revised 3/22/2017
SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS AND ACCOMMODATIONS
(PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS)

The goals of this school system's special education program are to allow each child to grow and achieve at his own level, to gain independence and self-reliance, and to return to the mainstream of school society as soon as possible.

The requirements of Chapter 71B and the Massachusetts General Laws (known as Chapter 766 of the Acts of 1972) and state regulations will be followed in the identification of children with special needs, in referrals for their evaluation, in prescribing for them suitable programs and in assessing their educational progress. In keeping with state requirements, all children with special needs between the ages of three through 21 who have not attained a high school diploma or its equivalent will be eligible for special education.

The School Committee believes that most children with special needs can be educated in the regular school program if they are given special instruction, accommodations and the support they need. These children should also be given the opportunity to participate in the school system's non-academic and extracurricular activities.

The Committee recognizes that the needs of certain children are so great that special programs, special classes or special schools may be necessary. When appropriate programs, services, or facilities are not available within the public schools, the Committee will provide these children with access to schools where such instruction and accommodations are available.

It is the desire of the Committee that the schools work closely with parents in designing and providing programs and services to children with special needs. Parents will be informed, and conferred with, whenever a child is referred for evaluation. In event of any disagreement concerning diagnosis, program plan, special placement, or evaluation, the parents will be accorded the right of due process.

The Committee will secure properly trained personnel to work with the children with special needs. Since the financial commitment necessary to meet the needs of all of these children is extensive, the Committee will make every effort to obtain financial assistance from all sources.

LEGAL REFS.: The Individuals with Disabilities Ed. Act (PL 94-142 adopted 1/1/91)
Rehabilitation Act of 1973
M.G.L. 71B:1 et seq. (Chapter 766 of the Acts of 1972)
Board of Education Chapter 766 Regulations, adopted 10/74, as amended through 7/1/81
603 CMR 28:00 inclusive
Title 1 funds shall be used to provide educational services that are in addition to the regular services provided for District students. By adoption of this policy, the School Committee ensures equivalence in the provision of curriculum materials and supplies.
BILINGUAL INSTRUCTION

As required by law, the School Committee will annually, prior to March 1, determine the number of school-age children of limited English-speaking ability residing in the District. Whenever there are more than 20 such children of one language group (excluding children in parochial schools) the School Committee will provide a program in transitional bilingual education.

Any child whose primary language is other than English and who has difficulty performing ordinary class work in English may participate in these classes. The classes will consist of students of approximately the same age and level of educational attainment. Classes may also be offered in preschool and summer school programs.

Within 10 days after a student's enrollment in the transitional bilingual educational program, the student's parents or guardian will be provided with, in both English and their native language, the following information:

1. A clear statement of the purpose, method, and content of the transitional bilingual education program.

2. A statement of parental rights, which include:

   a. Visits to the transitional bilingual classes
   b. Conferences with school personnel
   c. Right to withdraw the student at any time upon written notification to the school authorities

The offering of this program makes it necessary to provide sufficient numbers of bilingual teachers and aides to implement it. The School Committee will make every effort to recruit and develop a highly qualified and motivated staff to carry out this program.

Nothing in this policy shall be in direct conflict with Massachusetts regulations 603 CMR 14.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71A:1 et seq.
Board of Education Regulations for use in Administering Programs in Transitional Bilingual Education
603 CMR 14
ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

The District shall provide suitable research-based language instructional programs for all identified English language learners in grades Kindergarten through 12 in accordance with the requirements of state and federal statutes and Massachusetts Department of Education regulations and guidance.

The District shall identify students whose dominant language may not be English through home language surveys that identify a primary home language is other than English (PHLOTE), observations, intake assessments, and recommendations of parents, teachers and other persons. Identified students shall be assessed annually to determine their level of proficiency in the English language.

The District shall certify to the Massachusetts Department of Education each year those students whose dominant language is not English, including specification of the number of non-English languages identified as dominant languages and the number and percent of students who speak each non-English language as their dominant language.

The District shall provide additional information as required by the Massachusetts Department of Education to comply with the No Child Left Behind Act.

SOURCE:  MASC 2006

LEGAL REF.:  20 U.S.C. 3001 et seq. (language instruction for limited English proficient and immigrant students contained in No Child Left Behind Act of 2001)
42 U.S.C. 2000d (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964)
603 CMR 14.00

Revised and accepted on 6/15/06.
HOMEBOUND INSTRUCTION

The schools may furnish homebound instruction to those students who are unable to attend classes for at least four consecutive weeks due to a physical injury, medical situation, or a severe emotional problem. The instruction is designed to provide maintenance in the basic academic courses so that when a student returns to school he/she will not be at a disadvantage because of the illness or the hospitalization.

To qualify for the program the student needs a written statement from a medical doctor requesting the homebound instruction, stating the reasons why, and estimating the time the student will be out of school. This statement needs to be sent to the Principal.

Homebound instruction is offered in basic elementary subjects and in secondary subjects which do not require laboratories and special equipment, subject in all cases to the availability of qualified teachers. Certified teachers are assigned to homebound instruction by the Principal with the approval of the Superintendent.
HOME SCHOOLING

The Massachusetts General Law requires the School Committee to determine that a Home Schooling program meet with the minimum standards established for public schools in the Commonwealth prior to approving such a program.

When a parent or guardian of a student below the age of 16 wants to establish a home-based educational program for his/her child, the following procedures shall be followed in accordance with the law:

Prior to removing the child from public school:

The parent/guardian must submit written notification of establishment of the home-based program to the appropriate administrator 14 days before the program is established, and resubmit notification on an annual basis as long as the child or children are being educated in a home-based environment.

The parent/guardian must certify in writing, on a form provided by the District, the name, age, place of residence, and number of hours of attendance of each child in the program.

The Superintendent shall give the notice to produce records required by law if there is probable cause to believe the program is not in compliance with the law. Factors to be considered by the Superintendent or School Committee in deciding whether or not to approve a home education proposal may be:

1. The proposed curriculum and the number of hours of instruction in each of the proposed subjects.
2. The competency of the parents to teach the children,
3. The textbooks, workbooks and other instructional aids to be used by the children and the lesson plans and teaching manuals to be used by the parents.
4. Periodic standardized testing of the children to ensure educational progress and the attainment of minimum standards.

A student being educated in a home-based program within the District may have access to public school activities of either a curricular or extracurricular nature upon approval of the Superintendent.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 69:1D; 76:1, Care and Protection of Charles Care and Protections of Charles - MASS. Supreme Judicial Court 399 Mass. 324 (1987)

Revised and approved on 11/20/2014.
HOME SCHOOLING

1. Requirements for approval of home instruction will include:
   a. The parent or legal guardian must request permission to hold home instruction on an annual basis.
   b. A home instruction application form will be provided to the parents or legal guardian. This form must be completed and returned to the Superintendent before approval may be granted.
   c. The Committee delegates the approval of home instruction to the Superintendent. Any approval or rejection of an application by the Superintendent is subject to review by the Committee.

2. Children in home instruction may, at the discretion of parents or guardian, attend the public schools on a part-time basis. It may be an advantage for a home-taught child to attend specialized classes in the public school.

3. Parents or a legal guardian in charge of home instruction should make provision for regular testing or use of other indicators of student progress such as standardized achievement tests. As an alternative to home testing and at the request of those in charge of the home instruction, the School District will make provision for inclusion of home-taught children in the annual achievement test battery, which is usually administered in February or March of each school year. The home instruction summary form must include either a summary of home testing results for each required subject for each child or the results of the achievement test that is administered through the School District.

4. Auditing functions of the Committee for the home instruction will include:
   a. The Committee at any time may request a review by the Superintendent of the attendance rolls, records of test scores or other achievement indicators in each required subject for any child in home instruction.
   b. The Committee may request at any time that the Superintendent review the instructional materials and methods used by the person(s) responsible for the home instruction.
   c. The Superintendent will prepare for the Committee an annual summary of the children included in home instruction. This report will also summarize, in general, the appropriateness or possible deficiencies of home education situations.

5. Within one week of the ending date of the home instruction, as indicated on the home instruction application form, the School District will mail the parents or legal guardian a home instruction summary form. The completed form should be returned to the School District within 30 days. This summary form must be returned to the School District office before annual approval of home instruction can be made for any succeeding years.
6. The Committee will act in a responsible, cooperative manner to ensure that all children in the School District receive competent, adequate instruction. This concern includes children in home education. If the Committee determines that a home instruction situation is inadequate, a conference between the parents or legal guardian and the Superintendent will be scheduled to find mutually acceptable ways to correct any deficiency.

7. If deficiencies in a home education situation are not corrected or the proper annual application or summary is not completed by the parents or legal guardian, an appropriate referral will be made.
NOTICE OF INTENT TO PURSUE A PROGRAM OF HOME EDUCATION

ACADEMIC YEAR

Directions:
1. Please read the School Committee Policy on Home Instruction.
2. Complete this form; attach any supportive documents; and forward it to the Superintendent at least 14 days prior to the planned start of a home education program.

1. Parent/Guardian Name(s) and Address

Telephone: Day: ____________________________
Evening: ____________________________

2. Name(s) of Student(s) who will be taught at above designated home and current comparable public school grade level:

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<th>Name</th>
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</table>

3. Teachers: Attach a statement providing the academic background, life experience and/or qualifications of those who will be instructing the child(ren), as they relate to the instructional program described in Section 5.

4. Subjects to be taught: Attach a description of each subject to be taught, including the scope, major goals and objectives for the child, the major materials and methods to be used in each area.

5. Scheduling of instruction: Attach a description of the schedule you plan for instruction during the period for which approval is requested. Include the number of hours and days planned.

6. Testing: If this program is renewed from previous year, attach a summary of home testing results for each required subject.

The following signature confirms the intent to provide a minimum of 900-990 hours of instruction for the child(ren) listed above.

Signature of Parent/Guardian ____________________________ Date Submitted ____________________________

Enclosures: School Addresses and Telephone numbers to contact for information about ongoing opportunities for participation within the schools.
HOME SCHOOLING

In March 1987, the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court decided the case entitled Care and Protection of Charles, 399 Mass. 324 (1987). The decision sets forth the legal standards for approval of home education programs for children of compulsory school age in Massachusetts. This advisory opinion, prepared by Rhoda E. Schneider, General Counsel of the Department of Education, is intended to inform public school officials and other interested parties of the standards set forth in the decision. It supersedes the department's January 4, 1980 Advisory Opinion on Home Education, although the approval guidelines established by the court are very similar to those in the 1980 advisory.

There are four main components to the decision, which may be summarized as follows:

I. **The School Committee may enforce the compulsory school attendance law through a care and protection proceeding.**

The court held that the Canton School Committee had authority to file a petition for care and protection (pursuant to General Laws Chapter 119, Section 24) with respect to three school-age children whose parents had not enrolled them in public school or an approved private school, and who had not been granted permission to educate them at home. The court noted that the compulsory school attendance law (General Laws Chapter 76, Section I) states that "the School Committee of each town shall provide for and enforce the school attendance of all children (ages 6-16) actually residing therein in accordance herewith," and concluded that one appropriate way for the School Committee to do so is a petition to find the children in need of care and protection with respect to their educational care.

II. **The compulsory school attendance law provides adequate standards to determine a child's need for educational care and to withstand constitutional challenge.**

The court held that General Laws Chapter 76, Section 1, the compulsory school attendance law, provides the standards by which a judge may determine that a child is in need of educational care, and is neither void for vagueness nor an unlawful delegation of legislative authority. In pertinent part, the statute provides:

Every child between the minimum and maximum ages established for school attendance by the board of education (6-16) . . . shall . . . attend a public day school . . . or some other day school approved by the School Committee . . . unless the child attends school in another town . . . but such attendance shall not be required of a child . . who is being otherwise instructed in a manner approved in advance by the Superintendent or the School Committee. (Emphasis added.)

The court concluded that this grant of authority to the Superintendent or School Committee to approve an alternative manner of instruction for a child (specifically, home instruction) is not unconstitutionally vague, because the school officials may draw approval criteria from three sources. First, the legislatures established a general framework for public education, by mandating the subjects that must be taught in public schools and qualifications public school teachers must meet. (See General Laws Chapter 71, Sections 1, 2, 3 and 38G.) Second, the court stated that proposed home education programs are subject to the same standard of approval as private schools under General Laws Chapter 76, Section 1:
“For the purposes of this section, school committees shall approve a private school when satisfied that the instruction in all the studies required by law equals in thoroughness and efficiency, and in the progress made therein, that in the public schools in the same town; but shall not withhold such approval on account of religious teaching….”

Third, the court set forth specific procedures and approval guidelines for home education programs, which are discussed in section IV of this advisory. In light of all these factors, the court concluded that the law provides reasonable standards for reviewing and approving home education programs, and therefore meets constitutional requirements.

III. Parents have a basic right to direct their children's education, but that right is subject to reasonable regulation to promote the state's substantial interest in the education of its citizens.

Several United States Supreme Court decisions, cited by the court, have affirmed substantial state interest in the education of its citizenry, with which parents' basic right to direct children's education must be reconciled. The court agreed with the parents: "the state interest in this regard lies in ensuring that the children residing within the state receive an education, not that the educational process be dictated in its minutest detail." However, the court concluded that the approval process required under General Laws Chapter 76, Section 1 "is necessary to promote effectively the state's substantial interest," and that the School Committee may use that statutory approval process to impose on home education programs "certain reasonable educational requirements similar to those required for public and private schools."

IV. Guidelines for approval of home education plans.

Having concluded that the approval process under General Laws Chapter 76, Section 1 is constitutionally permissible the court set forth guidelines for parents and school officials to follow in considering home education plans. They may be summarized as follows:

A. Procedures.

1. Parents must obtain approval prior to removing the children from the public school and beginning the home education program.

2. The Superintendent or School Committee must provide the parents with an opportunity to explain their proposed plan and present witnesses on their behalf. A hearing during a School Committee meeting is sufficient to meet this requirement.

3. In obtaining approval from the Superintendent or School Committee, the parents must demonstrate that the home education proposal meets the requirements of General Laws Chapter 76, Section 1, in that the instruction will equal "in thoroughness and efficiency, and in the progress made therein, that in the public schools in the same town."
4. If the home education plan is rejected, the Superintendent or School Committee must detail the reasons for the decision, and allow the parents to revise their proposal to remedy its inadequacies. If they begin the home education program without the necessary approval, the School Committee may initiate a truancy proceeding or a care and protection petition, in which it would have to show that the instruction in the home does not meet the statutory standard for thoroughness, efficiency and educational progress.

B. Approval factors.

The court listed the following factors that may be considered by the Superintendent or School Committee in deciding whether or not to approve a home education proposal:

1. **The proposed curriculum and the number of hours of instruction in each of the proposed subjects.**

   General Laws Chapter 71, Section 1, 2 and 3 list the subjects of instruction that must be taught in the public schools. Section 1 allows the School Committee also to require such other subjects, as it may deem expedient. In addition, the Superintendent or School Committee "may properly consider the length of the proposed home school year and the hours of instruction in each subject," noting that state law requires public schools to operate for a minimum of 180 days.

2. **The competency of the parents to teach the children.**

   General Laws Chapter 71, Section 1 provides that teachers shall be "of competent ability and good morals." The court noted that parents providing education at home need not be certified, nor must they have college or advanced academic degrees. However, "the Superintendent or School Committee may properly inquire as to the academic credentials or other qualifications of the parent or parents who will be instructing the children."

3. **The textbooks, workbooks and other instructional aids to be used by the children and the lesson plans and teaching manuals to be used by the parents.**

   The Superintendent or School Committee need access to this material "to determine the type of subjects to be taught and the grade level of instruction for comparison purposes with the curriculum of the public schools," but they "may not use this access to dictate the manner in which the subjects will be taught."

4. **Periodic standardized testing of the children to ensure educational progress and the attainment of minimum standards.**

   The Superintendent or School Committee may properly require such testing, and in consultation with the parents may decide where the testing will occur and the type of testing instrument to be used. The court noted that "where practical, a neutral party should administer the test" and that the school authorities and parents may agree to other means of measuring the children's progress, such as periodic progress reports or dated work samples. In addition, it suggested that on-site visits by public school representatives may be included, although "with appropriate testing procedures or progress reports, there may be no need for periodic on-site visits or observations of the learning environment by school authority personnel."
V. Conclusion.

The Supreme Judicial Court's decision provides both a legal framework and useful guidance for public school officials and parents with respect to proposals to educate a school-age child at home. We recommend that Superintendents and School Committees review their procedures and approval criteria for home education plans, to assure that they are consistent with the court's decision. As long as the school officials making the decision to approve or disapprove a home education program do so reasonably and in good faith, using the standards and procedures discussed above, it is likely that a court will uphold their educational judgments.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 69:1D; 76:1
SUMMER COURSE REGULATIONS

The school system will conduct summer sessions as a supplement to the instruction offered during the school year, when funding for such programs is available.

1. A student who has failed a course during the year may take advantage of summer school participation to earn the credit needed for promotion, advancement in a sequential program, or graduation. Grades earned during the school year may not be changed but acknowledgement of credit earned during the summer will be entered along with the summer school grade into the student's transcript. Approval for a student to take a summer school course must be granted by the Principal.

2. Only those subjects studied during the regular school year may be taken for credit during the summer.

3. In the case of a failure in English, a student will be allowed to attend summer school only upon approval by the English teacher, the Department Chairperson, the Guidance Counselor, and the Principal. A student may make up only one English failure by attending summer school. All other failures will be rectified by repeating the entire year of the course. There will be no exceptions to this unless unusual circumstances warrant an appeal through the customary channels.

4. In no case shall a member of the faculty tutor in a summer program a pupil who has failed the subject s/he has taught during the regular school year.
INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

The School Committee believes that materials appropriate to the needs of the school program must be available to each student and teacher. These will be furnished by the School Committee subject to budgetary constraints.

The task of selecting instructional materials for programs will be delegated to the professional staff of the school system. Because instructional programs and materials are of great importance, only those that meet the following criteria will be approved by the Committee:

1. They must present balanced views of international, national, and local issues and problems of the past, present and future.

2. They must provide materials that stimulate growth in factual knowledge, literary appreciation, aesthetic and ethical values.

3. They must help students develop abilities in critical reading and thinking.

4. They must help develop and foster an appreciation of cultural diversity and development in the United States and throughout the world.

5. They must provide for all students an effective basic education that does not discriminate on the basis of race, age, color, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity, physical disabilities or sexual preference.

6. They must allow sufficient flexibility for meeting the special needs of individual students and groups of students.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:48; 71:49; 71:50
BSESE Regulations 603 CMR 26:00

CROSS REF.: KEC, Public Complaints about the Curriculum or Instructional Materials

Revised and approved on 1/16/14.
RECONSIDERATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES

Material that is challenged usually belongs to one of the three basic categories: religion, ideology, or profanity/obscenity. Board policies regarding these areas shall be as follows:

Religion -- Factual, unbiased material on religions has a place in school libraries.

Ideologies -- Libraries should, with no thought toward swaying reader judgment, make available a balanced collection of primary and factual material, on the level of their students on various ideologies or philosophies which exert or have exerted a strong force, either favorably or unfavorably, in government, current events, politics, education and other phases of life.

Profanity/obscenity -- Materials shall be subjected to a test of literary merit and reality in context using the criteria established.

When a problem concerning instructional resources in a school arises, the disposition of the problem will be made in a reasonable period of time using District adopted procedures.

In accordance with the statement of philosophy, no questioned materials shall be removed from the school pending a final decision. Pending the outcome of the request for reconsideration, however, access to questioned materials can be denied to the students of the parents making the complaint, if they so desire.

If the decision of the School Committee is that the questioned instructional resource be retained, the District will not convene a Review Committee relative to the same complaint for a period of three years. If a substantially different point of view is advanced, it will be investigated. (The period of three years does not apply in this instance).

After the School Committee has adopted new materials or approved certain methods, that decision will not be reconsidered for a period of three years beginning with the end of the school year when the adoption is made.
TEXTBOOK SELECTION AND ADOPTION

Responsibility for the review and selection of textbooks to be purchased shall rest with the Principal of each school. The Principal is encouraged through the School Committee to establish a review committee to assist in the process to determine the textbooks that best meet the curriculum guidelines of the District. The review committee should include teachers who will use the texts and other staff members as found desirable. Students and parents will be encouraged to serve.

Principles that apply generally to the selection of instructional materials and library materials shall apply to textbooks. Additionally, basic textbooks and textbook support materials shall be chosen:

- To advance the educational objectives of the school system and particular objectives of the course program;
- To contribute toward continuity, integration, and articulation of the curriculum; and
- To establish a general framework for the particular course or program.

Because the instructional purposes of textbooks, as stated above, are of such importance, particular care shall be taken in their selection as to content.

Although many points must be examined, the School Committee directs the staff to be mindful of the following considerations:

- The needs of all learners must be provided for.
- Attention should be given to gender roles depicted in the materials.
- The textbook and textbook support materials should lead the student and teacher beyond the textbook into a wide variety of other materials and educational experiences.
- If the textbook deals with problems and issues of our times, it should present and encourage examination of varied points of view.
- Because textbooks are selected for several years’ use, special attention also shall be given their physical characteristics, durability, format and price.

LEGAL REFS.: 71:48; 30B:7; 71:50
603 CMR 26:05

CROSS REF.: KEC, Public Complaints about the Curriculum or Instructional Materials

Palmer Public Schools
SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS SELECTION AND ADOPTION

The School Committee recognizes that knowledge is changing and expanding and that it may be necessary to use various types of supplementary materials in addition to the basic and fundamental textbooks.

For the purpose of this policy, supplementary materials shall be defined as any instructional materials other than textbooks including, but not limited to, books, periodicals, newspapers, pictures, diagrams, maps, charts, slides, filmstrips, films, records, audiotapes, and suitable technological applications which relate directly to the adopted curriculum.

The School Committee believes that teachers and administrators should have a large role in selection and recommendation of supplementary materials. Teachers are encouraged to use a wide range of learning aids, provided the expense incurred in purchasing these aids remains within the limits of the budget.

LEGAL REF.: 603 CMR 26:05
LIBRARY RESOURCES

The primary objective of the library/media center is to implement its resources to enrich and to support the educational program of the school.

Definition of Library Resources

Library resources are those materials, both print and non-print, found in school libraries which support curricular and personal information needs. Print items include books, magazines, newspapers, pamphlets, microfiche or microfilm. Non-print items include films, disc records, filmstrips, slides, prints, audiotapes, videotapes, compact discs, and computer software.

Criteria for Selection of Library Resources

The criteria for selection of library resources in the District are:

- Needs of the individual student
  - Based on knowledge of students
  - Based on requests of parents and students

- Needs of the individual school
  - Based on knowledge of the curriculum of the school
  - Based on requests from the professional staff

- Provision of a wide range of materials on many levels of difficulty with a diversity of appeal and the presentation of different points of view.

- Provision of materials of high artistic quality.

- Provision of materials with superior format.

- Reputable, unbiased, professionally prepared selection aids are consulted as guides.

In accordance with the District's policy of providing instructional materials on opposing sides of controversial issues, it should be noted that neither the media centers nor the District serve as advocates for the ideas expressed in any materials, nor does the presence of any material indicate automatic endorsement of the ideas expressed therein.

Re-evaluation (Weeding) of Library Resources

The continuous review of library/media center materials is necessary as a means of maintaining a useful and active collection. The responsibility for determining which materials are to be withdrawn rests with the professional staff. Continuing evaluation is closely related to the goals and responsibilities of library/media centers and is a valuable tool of collection development.

Palmer Public Schools
The Committee supports the right of students, employees, and community members to have reasonable access to various information formats and believes it is incumbent upon users to utilize this privilege in an appropriate and responsible manner.

SAFETY PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES

The Superintendent or designee shall develop and implement appropriate procedures to provide guidance for access to electronic media. Guidelines shall address teacher supervision of student computer use, ethical use of electronic media (including, but not limited to, the Internet, e-mail, and other District technological resources), and issues of privacy versus administrative review of electronic files and communications. In addition, guidelines shall prohibit utilization of networks for prohibited or illegal activities, the intentional spreading of embedded messages, or the use of other programs with the potential of damaging or destroying programs or data.

Internet safety measures shall be implemented that effectively address the following:

- Controlling access by minors to inappropriate matter on the Internet and World Wide Web;
- Safety and security of minors when they are using electronic mail, chat rooms, and other forms of director electronic communications;
- Preventing unauthorized access, including “hacking” and other unlawful activities by minors online;
- Unauthorized disclosure, use and dissemination of personal information regarding minors; and
- Restricting minors’ access to materials harmful to them.

The District shall provide reasonable public notice of, and at least one (1) public hearing or meeting to address and communicate its Internet safety measures.

PERMISSION/AGREEMENT FORM

A written parental request shall be required prior to the student being granted independent access to electronic media involving District technological resources. The required permission/agreement form, which shall specify acceptable uses, rules of online behavior, access privileges, and penalties for policy/procedural violations, must be signed by the parent or legal guardian of minor students (those under 18 years of age) and also by the student. This document shall be kept on file as a legal, binding document. In order to modify or rescind the agreement, the student's parent/guardian (or the student who is at least 18 years old) must provide the Superintendent with a written request.

EMPLOYEE USE

Employees shall use electronic mail only for purposes directly related to work-related activities.
Anyone accessing the Internet in the Palmer Public Schools shall not use the Internet to download files, which can jeopardizes the health of the network by introducing a computer virus and using large amounts of disk space, without the prior consent of the Superintendent or designee. This includes, but not limited to, screensavers, games, and other programs such as “Weatherbug”, Instant Messenger, or programs that constitute continual bandwidth usage. Deep Freeze security program will be installed on student accessible computers. Anti-Executable software will be installed on administrative computers to prevent the installation of unlicensed, shareware, and freeware programs that can pose a security risk and inhibit productivity. All software installed will be licensed. No software and or equipment will be purchased by any means for use within the district topology without the consent of the Superintendent or designee to make certain it is properly licensed and compatible with the Palmer School District technology infrastructure. Equipment and or software considered for donation must have approval by the Superintendent or designee prior to accepting equipment and or software for use in the school district.

Employees shall not use a code, access a file, or retrieve any stored communication unless they have been given authorization to do so. (Authorization is not required each time the electronic media is accessed in performance of one’s duties.) Each employee is responsible for the security of his/her own password.

COMMUNITY USE

On recommendation of the Superintendent or designee, the Committee shall determine when and which computer equipment, software, and information access systems will be available to the community. Upon request to the Principal or designee, community members may have access to the Internet and other electronic information sources and programs available through the District’s technology system, provided they attend any required training and abide by the rules of usage established by the Superintendent or designee.

DISREGARD OF RULES

Individuals who refuse to sign required acceptable use documents or who violate District rules governing the use of District technology shall be subject to loss or restriction of the privilege of using equipment, software, information access systems, or other computing and telecommunications technologies.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR DAMAGES

The Superintendent or designee will make certain that equipment checked out to individuals will be checked to be fully functional prior to equipment being checked out. The Superintendent or designee will make certain that the equipment will be checked for to be fully functional upon return of the equipment. Each school’s library media center will store a data-base of equipment checked out to individuals and the check out / check in of equipment will be through the library media centers.

Individuals shall reimburse the Palmer Public School Committee for repair or replacement of District property lost, stolen, damaged, or vandalized while under their care.
RESPONDING TO CONCERNS

School officials shall apply the same criterion of educational suitability used to review other educational resources when questions arise concerning access to specific databases or other electronic media.

AUDIT OF USE

Users with network access shall not utilize District resources to establish electronic mail accounts through third-party providers or any other nonstandard electronic mail system.

The Superintendent or designee shall establish a process to determine whether the District’s education technology is being used for purposes prohibited by law or for accessing sexually explicit materials. The process shall include, but not be limited to:

1. Utilizing technology that blocks or filters Internet access for both minors and adults to certain visual depictions that are obscene, child pornography, or, with respect to computers with Internet access by minors, harmful to minors;

2. Maintaining and securing a usage log; and

3. Monitoring online activities of minors.

LEGAL REFS: 47 USC § 254

CROSS REFS: IJNDB, ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY – TECHNOLOGY
ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY – TECHNOLOGY

Purpose

The Palmer Public Schools shall provide access for employees and students to the system/network, including access to external networks, for limited educational purposes. Educational purposes shall be defined as classroom activities, career and professional development, and high quality self-discovery activities of an educational nature. The purpose of the system/network is to assist in preparing students for success in life and work by providing access to a wide range of information and the ability to communicate with others. The system/network will be used to increase communication (staff, parent, and student), enhance productivity, and assist staff in upgrading existing skills and acquiring new skills through a broader exchange of information. The system/network will also be utilized to provide information to the community, including parents, governmental agencies, and businesses.

Availability

The Superintendent or designee shall implement, monitor, and evaluate the District’s system/network for instructional and administrative purposes.

Access to the system/network, including external networks, shall be made available to employees and students for instructional and administrative purposes and in accordance with administrative regulations and procedures.

Access to the system/network is a privilege, not a right. All users shall be required to acknowledge receipt and understanding of all administrative regulations and procedures governing use of the system and shall agree in writing to comply with such regulations and procedures. Noncompliance with applicable regulations and procedures may result in suspension or termination of user privileges and other disciplinary actions consistent with the policies of the Palmer Public Schools. Violations of law may result in criminal prosecution as well as disciplinary action by the Palmer Public Schools.

Acceptable Use

The Superintendent or designee shall develop and implement administrative regulations, procedures, and user agreements, consistent with the purposes and mission of the Palmer Public Schools as well as with law and policy governing copyright.

Monitored Use

Electronic mail transmissions and other use of electronic resources by students and employees shall not be considered confidential and may be monitored at any time by designated staff to ensure appropriate use for instructional and administrative purposes.
Liability

The Palmer Public Schools shall not be liable for users' inappropriate use of electronic resources or violations of copyright restrictions, users' mistakes or negligence, or costs incurred by users. The Palmer Public Schools shall not be responsible for ensuring the accuracy or usability of any information found on external networks. The Palmer Public School District is committed to providing secure and error-free computing and Internet access and cannot be held responsible for loss of data or damage to personal equipment including but not limited to, 3 ½ diskettes and flash memory external storage devices, due to technical difficulties.

CROSS REF.: IJND, Curriculum and Instruction

Revised and approved on 5/18/06.
USER AGREEMENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN AN ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM

Users Name: 
Grade level: 
School: 

I have read the District’s Acceptable Use Policy and Administrative Procedures and agree to abide by their provisions. I understand that violation of these provisions may result in disciplinary action including but not limited to suspension or revocation of privileges, suspension or expulsion from school, termination of employment, and criminal prosecution.

Signature: _____________________________

Parent/Guardian Sponsor

I have read the District’s Acceptable Use Policy and Administrative Procedures. In consideration for the privilege of using the District’s system/network, and in consideration for having access to the public networks, I hereby release the District, its operators, and institutions with which they are affiliated from any and all claims and damages of any nature arising from my child’s use of, or inability to use, the system/network, including, without limitation, the type of damage identified in the District’s policy and administrative procedures.

___ I give permission for my child to participate in the District’s system/network.

___ I do not give permission for my child to participate in the District’s system/network.

___ I give permission for my child’s name to appear on their student web page should one be developed.

___ I give permission for my child’s photo to appear on their student web page should one be developed.

Signature of parent/guardian: ______________________________

*****************************************************************************

This spaced reserved for system administrator.

Assigned Username: 

Revised and approved on 5/18/06.

Palmer Public Schools
ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY - TECHNOLOGY
Administrative Procedures for Implementation

1. Commercial use of the system/network is prohibited.
2. The District will provide training to users in the proper use of the system/network.
3. The District will provide each user with copies of the Acceptable Use Policy and Procedures.
4. Copyrighted software or data shall not be placed on the District system/network without permission from the holder of the copyright and the Superintendent or designee.
5. Access will be granted to employees with a signed access agreement and permission of their supervisor.
6. Access will be granted to students with a signed access agreement and permission of the building administrator or designee(s).
7. Account names will be recorded on access agreements and kept on file at the building level.
8. Initial passwords provided by the Superintendent or designee should be set to expire on login.
9. Passwords are confidential. All passwords shall be protected by the user and not shared or displayed.
10. Students completing required course work will have first priority for after hours use of equipment.
11. Principals or their designee will be responsible for disseminating and enforcing policies and procedures in the building(s) under their control.
12. Principals or their designee will ensure that all users complete and sign an agreement to abide by policies and procedures regarding use of the system/network. All such agreements are to be maintained at the building level.
13. Principals or their designee will ensure that training is provided to users on appropriate use of electronic resources.
14. The Principals or their designee shall be authorized to monitor or examine all system activities, including electronic mail transmissions, as deemed appropriate to ensure proper use of electronic resources.
15. The Principals or their designee shall be responsible for establishing appropriate retention and backup schedules.
16. The Principals or their designee shall be responsible for establishing disk usage limitations, if needed.
17. Individual users shall, at all times, be responsible for the proper use of accounts issued in their name.
18. The system/network may not be used for illegal purposes, in support of illegal activities, or for any activity prohibited by District policy.
19. System users shall not use another user’s account.
20. System users should purge electronic information according to District retention guidelines.
21. System users may redistribute copyrighted material only with the written permission of the copyright holder or designee. Such permission must be specified in the document or in accordance with applicable copyright laws, District policy, and administrative procedures.
22. The Superintendent or designee may upload/download public domain programs to the system/network. The Superintendent or designee is responsible for determining if a program is in the public domain.
23. Any malicious attempt to harm or destroy equipment, materials, data, or programs is prohibited.
24. Deliberate attempts to degrade or disrupt system performance may be viewed as violations of District policy and/or as criminal activity under applicable state and federal laws. This includes, but is not limited to, the uploading or creation of computer viruses.

Palmer Public Schools
25. Vandalism may result in the cancellation of system privileges and will require restitution for costs associated with hardware, software, and system restoration.
26. Forgery or attempted forgery is prohibited.
27. Attempts to read, delete, copy, or modify the electronic mail of other users or to interfere with the ability of other users to send/receive electronic mail is prohibited.
28. Use appropriate language; swearing, vulgarity, ethnic or racial slurs, and other inflammatory language is prohibited.
29. Pretending to be someone else when sending/receiving message is prohibited.
30. Transmitting or viewing obscene material is prohibited.
31. Revealing personal information (addresses, phone numbers, etc.) is prohibited.
32. The District will cooperate fully with local, state, or federal officials in any investigation concerning or relating to misuse of the District’s system/network.

A user who violates District policy or administrative procedures will be subject to suspension or termination of system/network privileges and will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action and/or prosecution.

Revised and approved on 5/18/06.
The Palmer Public School District realizes the limitless potential for information and communication provided by the World Wide Web. The availability of this communication vehicle provides an opportunity for students and staff to access and contribute to the world of information related to curriculum, instruction, school, District, and school community related activities. Therefore, the Palmer Public School District will use the Internet as an effective, efficient and timely source of information, method of communication and vehicle for resource collection. In order to take advantage of the opportunities the Internet provides, the Committee authorizes the creation of school and/or District Web pages on the Internet.

Only those web pages maintained in accordance with Committee policy and established procedures shall be recognized as official representations of the District or individual schools. All information on a school or District Web page must accurately reflect the mission, goals, policies, program, and activities of the school and District. The Web pages must have a purpose that falls within at least one of three categories:

1. Support of curriculum and instruction – intended to provide links to Internet resources for students, parents and staff in the District.
2. Public information – intended to communicate information about the schools and District to students, staff, parents, community, and the world at large.
3. District technology support – intended to provide and respond to instructional and administrative technology needs of students and staff.

The Superintendent or designee shall designate an individual(s) to be responsible to maintaining the official District web page and monitoring all District Web page activity. A building Principal or designee shall make such designation for an individual school. Schools or departments that wish to publish a Web page must identify an appropriately qualified publisher and/or author.

As with any instructional materials or publication used by or representing the school or District, the building Principal or Superintendent, respectively, are ultimately responsible for accuracy and appropriateness of the information made available at the Web site. Concern about the content of any page(s) created by students or staff should be directed to the building Principal or to the Superintendent’s office when related to the District Web site.

Web sites developed under contract for the Palmer Public School District or within the scope of employment by Palmer Public School District employees are the property of the Palmer Public School District.

Due to the dynamic nature of the World Wide Web, this policy is to be reviewed and updated on an annual basis or more frequently if required.

Revised and approved on 5/18/06.

Palmer Public Schools
WEB SITE GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES FOR APPROVAL

Unlike the Internet itself, schools and the District can control the type of information placed on Web pages. Documents created for the Web and linked to District Web pages shall meet the criteria for use as public information or an instructional resource. The following considerations should be considered when determining the information to include on a school or District Web page: Copyright/trademark issues; applicability to the curriculum or communication goals of the school or District; privacy issues; and related School Committee policies. Links to other Web pages should be carefully selected based on the above issues.

Defined Purpose

A Web page must have a clearly defined purpose that is published on the Web page. Included in the purpose, the target audience must be specified and defined; however, all Web site users are reminded that their audience includes the worldwide community.

Content Standards

All subject matter on Web pages should relate to curriculum, instruction, school-authorized activities, general information supporting student safety, growth, and learning, or public information of interest to others. Therefore, neither staff nor students may publish on the District server personal pages or pages for individuals or organizations not directly affiliated with the District. Staff or student work may be published only as it relates to a class project, course, or other school-related activity. Parent groups, partnerships, and municipal or educational cooperatives are considered affiliates of the District. No confidential information is to be published on or linked to a Web page.

Quality Standards

All Web page work must be free of spelling and grammatical errors. Documents may not contain objectionable material or link directly to objectionable materials. Objectionable material is addressed in more detail in the School Committee policy for instructional material selection and reconsideration. Authors and publishers are reminded that a Web site is a virtual doorway to your school. A site and a school will be judged on its ease for the user, the design, and the content. It is strongly recommended that a school form a building committee of interested individuals including staff, administrators, parents, students, and community members for the development of the Web site. Thoughtful consideration should go into decisions regarding purpose, usefulness, and appearance of each item on the Web site. As much as possible, publishers are encouraged to include student pictures and work. As the District represents itself to the world through this medium, assurances should be provided that students are the focus of the Palmer Public School District. Written student and parent consent must be secured for publication of student work.

Consistence Standards

Each existing school or department Web site shall have a link to the District Web site once the District Web site is online. For consistency, all school District Web sites must contain certain elements:

- At the bottom of the District Web page, there must be an indication of the date of the last update.
- The Palmer Public Schools Web site must display the name and approved logo of the Palmer Public School District.

Palmer Public Schools
• All Web pages must be given names that clearly identify them.
• Links to student e-mail accounts are not allowed.
• Student directory data is prohibited from publication, except for the first name and grade level of a student in relation to a photo or work.
• Web pages may not contain links to other Web pages not yet completed. If additional pages are anticipated, but not yet developed, the text that will provide such a link should be included. However, the actual link to said page(s) may not be made until the final page is actually in place.
• Authors must exhibit care when creating Web pages with extensive background, large graphics, applets, animation, and audio or video clips. Such files require extensive download time, are frustrating for modem users, and slow down file servers.

Revised and approved on 5/18/06.
POLICY ON FACEBOOK AND SOCIAL NETWORKING WEBSITES

The Superintendent and the School Principals will annually orient school employees and volunteers and new school employees and volunteers concerning the importance of maintaining proper decorum in the on-line, digital world as well as in person. In addition, all new school employees and volunteers will be provided with a copy of this policy. School employees and volunteers must conduct themselves in ways that do not distract from or disrupt the educational process. The orientation and reminders will give special emphasis to:

1) improper fraternization with students using Facebook and similar internet sites or social networks, or via cell phone, texting or telephone.
   a. School employees and volunteers may not list current students as “friends” on networking sites.
   b. All contact and messages by coaches with team members shall be sent to the athletic director and the school principal.
   c. School employees and volunteers will not give out their private cell phone or home phone numbers to students without prior written approval by the Superintendent.
   d. Inappropriate contact via internet or phone is prohibited.

2) inappropriateness of posting items with sexual content
3) inappropriateness of posting items exhibiting or advocating use of drugs and/or alcohol
4) inappropriateness of posting items exhibiting drugs, unbecoming conduct and/or illegal behavior
5) examples of inappropriate behavior from other districts, as the behavior to avoid
6) monitoring and penalties for improper use of district computers and technology
7) the possibility of penalties, including dismissal from employment, for failure to exercise good judgment in on-line conduct.

The Superintendent or designees may periodically conduct internet searches to see if school employees or volunteers have posted inappropriate materials on-line. When inappropriate use of computers and websites is discovered, the School Principals and Superintendent will promptly bring that inappropriate use to the attention of the staff member and may consider and apply disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Adopted by the School Committee on 12/15/10.
Revised and approved on 2/9/11.
Revised and approved on 5/18/11.
Revised and approved on 9/21/11.

Palmer Public Schools
FIELD TRIPS

The School Committee recognizes that firsthand learning experiences provided by field trips are a most effective and worthwhile means of learning. It is the desire of the Committee to encourage field trips as part of and directly related to the total school program and curriculum.

The Superintendent will assure that:

1. All students have parental permission for trips.
2. All trips are properly supervised.
3. All safety precautions are observed.
4. All trips contribute substantially to the educational program.

All out of state or extended (overnight) trips and excursions, except those required for student participation in tournament competition or contests, must have advance approval of the School Committee. Fundraising activities for such trips will be subject to approval by the appropriate Administrator.

Amendment: Students who pose a safety threat on a field trip may not be able to attend. Administration will hold a meeting with these families and a determination will be made. Prior offenses for consideration include, but are not limited to, the following:

- False Fire Alarm/Bomb Threat
- Assault
- Battery
- Possession use and/or distribution of drugs, alcohol, tobacco (including vaping paraphernalia)
- Possession of a dangerous weapon
- Chronic school offenses
- Theft or vandalism of school property or the property of others in a school setting
- Disorderly conduct
- Use of social media that creates a school disturbance

Beginning in the 2019-2020 school year, fees will be non-refundable.

Revised and approved on 3/27/19.

Palmer Public Schools
REQUEST FOR FIELD TRIP

(Please Submit in Duplicate)

Grade: ____________________     School: ____________________

Date of Request: _____________     Date of Field Trip: _________________
Time of Field Trip: ________________

No. of Pupils Going: ___________     No. of Chaperones: ________________

Location: ________________________

Purpose of Field Trip: ________________________

Curriculum Relevancy: ________________________

Transportation (if any): ________________________

MEDICAL FORMS (REVERSE SIDE) MUST BE COMPLETED AND SIGNED BY THE SCHOOL NURSE AT TIME OF APPLICATION.

Additional Expenses: ________________________

Box Lunches to be Provided/Number: ________________________

Funding Source: ________________________

______________________________
Teacher's Signature

______________________________
Principal's Signature

______________________________
Superintendent's Signature

Approved _____
Disapproved _____

Palmer Public Schools
FIELD TRIP NOTIFICATION FOR SCHOOL NURSE

To be completed by Teacher

Teacher(s): ________________________________________________________________

School: ____________________________ Date of Notice to Nurse____________________

Date of Field Trip: _________________ Location: _________________________________

Leave School at _________________ Return to School at ____________________________

Students Involved in Field Trip

OMP: List all classrooms by number and letter: ________________________________

CMS: List all teams: ___________________________________________________________

Other Group: (e.g. Band, Chorus, Club, Special Project)
   Attach a list of students eligible to attend. Attached _______

PHS: Group: (e.g. Grade level, Class, Band, Chorus, Club, etc.)
   Attach a list of students eligible to attend. Attached _______

To be completed by Nurse

______ This Field Trip requires a Registered Nurse to accompany students
(Medication/procedure that cannot be delegated to non-licensed personnel, student's condition requires nursing assessment, IEP, 504 Plan, or IHCP requires a registered nurse to accompany)

RN for this Field Trip: ______________________________________________________

______ Students on this field trip require medication that can be delegated to un-licensed personnel.

Medication Delegation to: ___________________________________________________

______ No medical/medication needs on this field trip. RN will not accompany this field trip.

School Nurse  ______________________________________________________________
   Signature
   Date returned to teacher: ______________________________

This form must be attached to the REQUEST FOR FIELD TRIP form and completed in a timely manner.

Comments:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of employee:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title/ Position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency address:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office phone:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**What was offered?**

(-check appropriate response.)

- [ ] Free or discounted travel and lodging expenses, including meals, that serve legitimate public purposes and have a value of $50 or more;  
- [ ] Travel expenses related to a legitimate speaking engagement, covering only the day(s) on which I had participation or presentation responsibilities or the day(s) I had to travel to the location of the speech and return to the Commonwealth; or  
- [ ] Free or discounted admission, having a value of $50 or more.

**Identify the person or organization that made the offer.**

**Address of person or organization.**

**Location of travel or event.**

**Description and purpose of event in which you will participate:**
Provide information in as much detail as possible:

**Itemization and explanation of amounts offered:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lodging</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admission</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please list)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please acknowledge with a check mark:

- ____ I have attached the relevant itinerary.
- ____ I have attached the relevant agenda.

Employee signature: ____________________________

Date: ______/____/____

An appointed public employee should submit the completed form to his or her appointing authority for approval, as provided below.

*Adopted by the School Committee on 6/16/10.*
## STATEMENT BY APPOINTING AUTHORITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Appointing Authority:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title/Position:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency address:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office phone:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For approval to be given, both statements must be checked:

Upon consideration of the facts disclosed by the employee above, I find

- [ ] that the travel expenses or attendance at the event serve a legitimate public purpose; AND
- [ ] that the benefit to the government of the employee’s participation outweighs any non-work related benefit to the employee or the private sponsor, taking into account the extent to which the free or discounted travel or admission may convey an appearance of special benefit for any employee.

Reason that the employee’s travel or attendance will serve a legitimate public purpose:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appointing Authority signature:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"Legitimate public purpose” means the promotion of tourism, economic development and other activities to promote the interests of the Commonwealth, a county or a municipality; attendance at training and educational events designed to improve the efficiencies and effectiveness of public services or to enhance the knowledge and skills of public employees relative to their official duties; business travel necessary to make informed purchasing decisions, selections and inspections; and similar public purposes.

The appointing authority should maintain the disclosure as a public record and give a copy of any signed determination to the employee.

Attach additional pages if necessary.

*Adopted by the School Committee on 6/16/10.*
EXTENDED TRIPS/OUT-OF-STATE TRIPS

I. PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT:

On occasion, extracurricular activity organizations request an extended trip or a trip outside the state or nation. It is important that a clearly defined policy expresses the School Committee interests in organizing such excursions. Therefore, the School Committee establishes the following policy:

II. POLICY STATEMENT:

It is the policy of the School Committee that all extended field trips, or those involving out-of-state travel must be approved by the School Committee prior to making any public announcement of such intended trip.

III. EXCEPTIONS TO POLICY:
None

IV. AMPLIFYING INSTRUCTIONS AND GUIDELINES:

A. DOMESTIC TRIPS

A domestic trip may involve travel within or outside the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. In all cases involving out-of-state travel, permission must be obtained in advance from the School Committee.

B. FOREIGN TRAVEL

1. Overseas travel may be allowed on an alternate year basis of up to ten (10) school days with the prior approval of the principal and School Committee.
2. It is expected that foreign travel will normally occur during school vacation periods.
3. Any expected out-of-state travel will include a communication to the parents/guardians in writing which specifies the anticipated cost of the trip and includes parental/guardian acknowledgement that they will underwrite any cost not assumed by a fundraiser or other source.
4. Out of state field trips or trips that are at a cost to the student are optional and cannot affect the student's grade or credit in that class if the student chooses not to attend.
5. No foreign travel will be permitted in any country which has a safety advisory warning.
6. For all third world nations, the principal or designee shall contact the ambassador regarding the current safety assessment.
C. REQUIRED INFORMATION

Out of state or foreign travel requires that the following information be provided to the School Committee:

1. Date, duration, and destination of the trip
2. Relationship of the requested trip to the educational program and the trip's relationship to specific classroom goals.
3. The means of financing the trip, and if student financed, the estimated cost per student and any options available to students not able to afford the trip
4. Means of transportation
5. Plans for adequate supervision.

D. PRIVATELY SPONSORED TRAVEL

1. The Palmer Public Schools does not sponsor, support, or approve privately sponsored trips and/or excursions. Staff or other individuals sponsoring such trips must do so as private individuals or agencies.
2. Access to students during instructional time for promotion of privately sponsored travel is strictly prohibited.

E. REQUIRED BEHAVIORIAL CONTRACT

Students who travel to foreign nations are expected to serve as good will ambassadors and conduct themselves at all times in an appropriate manner. Advisors and chaperones are expected to meet with the students prior to the excursion and review a specific list of behavioral guidelines that are to be complied with. Students will be expected to sign a behavioral contract and will be subject to disciplinary action for any infractions.

V. DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY:

A. The Superintendent is directly responsible for communicating this policy to all appropriate parties and enforcing its provisions.

B. Each school Principal is responsible for communicating this policy to all students and staff under his/her jurisdiction.
COMMUNITY RESOURCE PERSONS/ SPEAKERS

Human resources are those individuals or groups who are invited into the schools to present supplementary information and ideas to the classroom course of study. These experiences afford students the opportunity to benefit from community viewpoints. Care should be taken in selecting these speakers so that they are individuals who respect diversity in thinking and varying views and who are not attempting to inappropriately influence points of view.
SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS

It is the policy of the School Committee to encourage volunteer efforts in the schools. Parents/guardians, business representatives, senior citizens, and other community volunteers are recognized as important sources of support and expertise to enhance the instructional program and vital communication links with the community. The volunteer program will be coordinated in cooperation with building administrators.

CROSS REF.: ADDA, C.O.R.I. Requirements
ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

The philosophy of the School Committee concerning academic achievement, as well as children's social growth and development, is based on the premise that children have diverse capabilities and individual patterns of growth and learning.

Therefore, the Committee feels it is important that teachers have as much and as accurate knowledge of each student as possible in order to assess his/her needs and growth, and make instructional plans for him/her. A sharing of information among parent, teacher, and student is essential.

The Committee supports staff efforts to find better ways to measure and report student progress. It will require that:

1. Parents/guardians be informed regularly, and at least four times a year, of the progress their children are making in school.

2. Parents/guardians will be alerted and conferred with as soon as possible when a child's performance or attitude becomes unsatisfactory or shows marked or sudden deterioration.

3. Insofar as possible, distinctions will be made between a student's attitude and his academic performance.

4. At comparable levels, the school system will strive for consistency in grading and reporting except as this is inappropriate for certain classes or certain students.

5. When no grades are given but the student is evaluated informally in terms of his/her own progress, the school staff will also provide a realistic appraisal of the student's standing in relation to his/her peers.

6. When grades are given, the school staff will take particular care to explain the meaning of marks and symbols to parents.
MARKING SYSTEM

1. The marking system is based on individual achievement. To keep parents/guardians informed of a student's progress, a five-week report will be mailed to parents/guardians of students who are failing a subject at the mid-point of the quarter.

2. Report cards are issued every quarter. This quarterly or ten-week scholastic achievement mark reflects the teacher's overall evaluation of the student's achievement in class, as well as the quality of his/her independent projects. This mark is kept on file as part of the student's permanent record. The marking scale is as follows:

   A+  97-100   B+  87-89   C+  77-79   D  65-69
   A  93-96    B  83-86    C  73-76
   A-  90-92   B-  80-82   C-  70-72   F  Below 65

3. Conduct and effort marks are recorded separately as subscripts by each teacher on a three-point scale. The purpose of these ratings is to bring to the attention of the student and his/her parents/guardians the importance of his/her conduct and effort as it affects class performance. The following scale is used to evaluate conduct and effort:

   Conduct 1 - Good  2 - Fair  3 - Poor
   Effort  1 – Good  2 – Fair  3 – Poor

4. A student receiving a grade of "F" fails the subject, and if a high school student, receives no credit, and if a required course, must take it over. A high school student (including 8th graders in certain courses) receiving a "D" in a sequential course will receive credit for the course but is not eligible to go on to the next course in the sequence.
STUDENT PROGRESS REPORTS TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS

The School Committee recognizes the school's obligation to give periodic reports of a student's progress and grades. The School Committee further recognizes that these reports are a vital form of communication between the schools and parents. The School Committee also believes that all progress reports must be based upon full information, accurately and honestly reported with the proper maintenance of confidentiality.

A report depicting the student's progress will be issued periodically following an evaluation by the appropriate teacher, teachers, or other professional personnel.

In addition to the periodic reports, parents will be notified when a student's performance requires special notification.

Grading will be based on improvement, achievement, capability of the student, and the professional judgment of the teacher and Principal.
HOMEWORK

The term "homework" refers to an assignment to be prepared during a period of supervised study in class or outside of class.

The purposes of homework are to improve the learning processes, to aid in the mastery of skills, and to create and stimulate interest on the part of the student.

Homework is a learning activity which should increase in complexity with the maturity of the student. With increased maturity, learning should become an independent activity. This should be established through consistent assignments which encourage students to investigate for themselves and to work independently as well as with others.

Homework assignments should be consistent in terms of the amount given each day and the time required for each assignment so that a pattern of meaningful homework can be established by the teacher and/or the student.

The information for any homework assignment should be clear and specific so that the student can complete the assignment.

Homework assignments should take into consideration individual differences of students such as health, ability, conditions at home, and educational resources at home. Homework should not require the use of reference materials not readily available in most homes, school libraries, or the public library, and should require the use of those materials only when the student has had instruction in the use of them.

There are many other learning activities in the life of a student besides homework. Such things as participating in school activities, pursuing cultural interests, participating in family living, and exploring personal interests should be considered by teachers when planning consistent assignments. Homework is not to be used as a form of punishment under any circumstances.
PROMOTION AND RETENTION OF STUDENTS

The School Committee is dedicated to the best total and continuous development of each student enrolled. The professional staff is expected to place students at the grade level best suited to them academically, socially, and emotionally.

In evaluating student achievement, each teacher will make use of all available information, including results of teacher-made tests and other measures of skill and content mastery, standardized test results, and teacher observation of student performance. The Principal will direct and aid teachers in their evaluations and review grade assignments in order to ensure uniformity of evaluation standards.

Students will normally progress annually from grade to grade. Exceptions may be made when, in the judgment of the professional staff, such exceptions are in the best educational interest of the students involved. Student retention will be authorized only if compelling evidence suggests that the interests of the student would best be served by another year at grade level.
I. INTRODUCTION:

Since 1911, over 900 research studies have been conducted to examine the effects of student grade level retention. Nearly all conclude that the consequences are negative. Holmes and Matthews (1984) concluded that those who continue to retain pupils at grade level do so despite cumulative research showing that the potential negative effects consistently outweigh the positive outcomes.¹ Smith and Shepard (1987) found that "Children who repeat a grade are consistently worse off than comparable children who are promoted with their age mates. Contrary to popular belief, the average negative effect of retention on achievement is even greater than the negative effect for emotional adjustment and self-concept."² Hammock (1987) found that "Holding children back a year or more in elementary school increases the probability of dropping out."³ Bucko (1986) found that the majority of retained children show no consistent benefits from retention and score lower than promoted students in areas of academic achievement, personal adjustment, self-concept, attitude toward school, and attendance.⁴ Therefore, the School Committee establishes the following policy:

II. POLICY STATEMENT:

It is the policy of the School Committee that student retention will be authorized only if compelling evidence suggests that the interests of the student would best be served by another year at grade level.

III. EXCEPTIONS TO POLICY:

None

IV. AMPLIFYING INSTRUCTIONS AND GUIDELINES:

A. While no criterion is meant to be inclusive, the following is intended to serve as a guideline for consideration of retention.

Kindergarten -Grade 4:

1. If a student is to be retained, research indicates kindergarten and first grade are the levels that seem to produce the most positive effect. If students are retained, to the extent possible, they should be placed in classrooms where the teachers provide them with supplemental instruction other than the identical curriculum received the prior year;

2. The failure of two major subjects in grades 1-4 may constitute a necessity of repeating a grade, except that in the lower elementary grades 1-3, a failure in reading alone could be a logical reason for having a pupil repeat a grade;
3. It is within the principal's province to promote a retained student any time during the repeating year, provided that his/her progress warrants such promotion; the Principal may also move a student back to a previous grade if the lack of progress warrants such an action. In both cases, most decisions of this nature will be made by November;

4. The marking scale used in the Old Mill Pond School is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>(97-100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>(93-96)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>(90-92)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>(87-89)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>(83-86)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>(80-82)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>(77-79)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>(73-76)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>(70-72)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>(65-69)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>(Below 65)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. No student shall be retained solely based upon an assessment of that youngster's ability to succeed on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS).

Grades 5-7:

The failure of two major subjects (Social Studies, Science, Math, English/Language Arts (5-6-7), Reading (5-6) will result in retention.

Grades 8-9:

In order to enter the 9th grade, 8th Grade students must pass English, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies.

1. Failure in one or two of the above subjects requires a successful completion of the subject(s) in Summer School.
   Failure of more than two subjects requires repeating the 8th Grade.

2. A student may be promoted to the next grade if the following conditions exist:

   i. S/he was retained in the same grade the previous year;
   ii. If 14 years of age prior to September 1 of the next school year, s/he may be placed in 8th grade;
   iii. If 15 years of age prior to September 1 of the next school year, s/he may be placed in the 9th grade;
   iv. It is the recommendation of the Pupil Progression Team, or Principal and Guidance Department.

B. When retention appears to be the only alternative, the following student if variables should be considered:

   - Physical disability;
   - Physical size;
   - Academic potential;
- Psycho-social maturity;
- Neurological maturity (Piaget);
- Self-concept;
- Level of independence;
- Grade placement;
- Chronological age;
- Previous retentions;
- Nature of problem(s);
- Gender;
- Chronic absenteeism;
- Basic skill competence;
- Peer pressure;
- Child's attitude toward retention;
- Frequency and duration of suspension and expulsion.

C. Family factors that are to be considered include:

- Frequency of geographic relocations;
- Foreign language spoken at home;
- Family attitude toward retention;
- Siblings (number, attitude toward child, etc.).

D. School factors to consider include:

- Teacher attitudes;
- The availability of other program options.

E. Retention evaluations shall seek the greatest possible input from parties who are knowledgeable about the student. A Pupil Progression Team shall be called which may include the following staff members or others as the Principal deems necessary or pertinent:

- Principal;
- Teacher(s) of the Student;
- Guidance Counselor;
- Social Worker;
- Parent/Guardian of the Student

F. The aforementioned Pupil Progression Team shall have at their disposal the complete cumulative folder and the results of Light's Retention Scale if the student attends the elementary school.
G. Should the Pupil Retention Team concur that retention is in the best interests of the student, the Principal shall schedule a meeting with the Superintendent to review the case. The Superintendent shall discuss the case with the Principal and notify the parents/guardians in writing of the decision.

H. Since the Palmer Public Schools establishes the standards for student performance, if a retention decision is made, the parent/guardian has no other level of appeal other than the Massachusetts Department of Education.

V. REPORTS:

The School Committee wishes to receive an annual report in July of the number of students retained in each building.

REFS:  
REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATION

1. In order to graduate, a student at Palmer High School is required to complete satisfactorily those subjects listed under the heading "Graduation Requirements" in the Palmer High School Program of Studies.

2. Physical education is compulsory for every student and must be passed every year for graduation to occur. No pupil shall be required to take part in physical education exercises if a licensed physician certifies in writing that in his/her opinion such physical education exercises would be injurious to the pupil. Physical education is given 1/4 credit per year.

3. Any senior who has not fulfilled all graduation requirements will not be allowed to participate in the graduation ceremony.

Nothing in this policy shall be in direct conflict with Massachusetts regulations 603 CMR 14.

LEGAL REF.: 603 CMR 14
EARLY ENTRANCE TO COLLEGE OR POSTSECONDARY TRAINING

Any students who are regularly enrolled may be authorized to be dually enrolled to take courses for college credits while completing high school requirements for graduation according to the following guidelines:

1) The student must request permission, in writing, from the high school Principal.

2) All students must have written permission from their parents/guardians in order to be considered for dual enrollment.

3) The college, university or postsecondary courses, to be accepted for high school credit, must be essentially similar in content to the senior level that would have been taken at Palmer High School

4) The candidate must have clearly stated educational goals and must be able to demonstrate/explain the advantage of beginning college, university or postsecondary training prior to normal high school graduation.

5) Classes approved for dual enrollment will not be considered as part of a student’s GPA.

6) Participation is subject to the approval of the institution of higher education at which the student wishes to enroll and must meet the pertinent requirements at the respective public college, university or postsecondary institution.

7) Concurrently-enrolled students who elect to withdraw from a college course prior to completion of that course must wait until a new semester begins at the high school before adding additional high school courses to their schedules.

8) Students and their parents/guardians will be responsible for all tuitions, fees, transportation, textbooks and instructional materials required by the college, university or postsecondary institution.

9) Students’ eligibility to participate in high school or collegiate athletics will be determined by MIAA regulations, NCAA regulations, Community College Conference regulations, and/or any other governing regulations that are applicable to the specific situation.

10) Dual enrollment students need to notify their high school Guidance Department in writing or via email of withdrawals from the higher institution’s program as well as any changes in the number of credits for which they were originally approved. Failure to do so may result in the denial of approval of high school credits. The Guidance Department will notify the building principal in writing by the close of the day.

Revised and approved by the School Committee on 5/15/08.

Revised and approved on 3/4/14.

Palmer Public Schools
EVALUATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS

The School Committee considers comprehensive and objective evaluation of the effectiveness of the curriculum to be of primary importance. The Superintendent will provide for the translation of the stated instructional goals into objectives and for appraisal of their implementation in order to:

1. Determine educational needs and provide information for planning.
2. Indicate instructional strengths and weaknesses.
3. Check on the suitability of programs in terms of community requirements.
4. Show the relationship between achievement and the system's stated goals.
5. Provide data for public information.

Elements of this evaluation process may include:

1. Testing programs such as nationally standardized general achievement tests, nationally standardized tests in specific subject areas, and tests administered by other agencies.
2. Study of school achievement records.
3. Study of students' high school and drop-out records.
4. Use of outside services, participation in regional research studies, contracted evaluation services; evaluation services at cost to the school system must be approved in advance by the School Committee.
5. Teacher and parent evaluation of student behavior.
6. State Department of Education specialists and services.
7. Evaluation by the regional accrediting association.
8. Evaluation by other agencies.

An evaluation of the curriculum and its effectiveness will be made periodically and reported to the Committee by the Superintendent.
It is the desire of the School Committee that the best available strategies for bringing about learning be utilized in the District's schools. The instructional staff shall be expected to keep abreast of new and promising instructional ideas and practices developed in schools throughout the nation and to apply those which have potential for improving the learning program in the District's schools.

An educational climate shall be established which shall be conducive to rational thought, inquiry, and respect for the dignity of the individual. This educational climate will assist students in learning how to think rather than what to think and shall provide students the opportunity to identify, express, and defend their opinions without penalty or fear of reprisal or ridicule.

Nothing in this policy shall limit a parent/guardian's right to file a complaint to challenge the use of teaching activity or presentation.
TEACHING ABOUT CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES/CONTROVERSIAL SPEAKERS

An important goal of the schools is to help prepare students for intelligent and conscientious participation as citizens in our democratic society. One step toward meeting this goal is to introduce students to reasoned and dispassionate approaches to the analysis of contemporary social and political issues. To insure that these issues can be examined in an atmosphere as free from emotion and prejudice as the times permit, the School Committee establishes the following guidelines for discussion of controversial issues in the schools.

Teacher-Planned Classroom Discussions

1. Controversial issues selected by teachers for classroom discussion must relate directly to the objectives and content of courses approved by the School Committee for inclusion in the curriculum.

2. The teachers' right to introduce controversial issues in classroom presentations does not include the right of advocacy. Teachers must refrain from using their positions to express partisan points of view.

3. The approach to discussion of these issues in the classroom must be objective and scholarly with minimum emphasis on opinion and maximum emphasis on intelligent analysis.

4. Teachers must ensure that the reasoned arguments of all sides of an issue are given equal presentation and emphasis in classroom discussions.

5. Teachers may invite visitors from outside the schools to give presentations on controversial issues when the visitors offer qualifications and resources not available in the schools. All visitors are to be guided by the standards of language usage that prevail in the classrooms and by the standards of scholarly inquiry set forth above. Whenever possible, teachers who invite visitors to present one side of an issue will also invite visitors to present the other side(s).

6. In all cases teachers must obtain from the appropriate Principal permission to invite visitors for classroom presentations. Permission must be requested at least 48 hours before the scheduled time of presentation.

Student-Initiated Forums on Controversial Issues

Student groups may request permission to conduct forums on controversial issues in the schools. The Principal may grant such requests under the following conditions:

1. Preparation for presentation of a forum will not cause any student or teacher to miss class and will not cause the cancellation of any class.
2. Adequate advance planning must be conducted for each forum. A request to hold a forum must be received by the Principal at least three weeks before the scheduled date of presentation. For each request the Principal will appoint, after consultation with the requesting student group, an adult advisory group consisting of at least two parents and two faculty members.

3. The standards for approach to discussion, style of presentation, and use of visitors as defined above will apply to student-initiated forums.

Requests from Groups or Individuals Outside the Schools

No permission will be granted non-school groups or individuals to make presentations on controversial issues in the schools during school hours. Requests for after-school or evening use will be processed in accordance with the Committee's policy on community use of school facilities.

No permission will be granted outsiders for distribution of literature on controversial issues to students in general or to class groups.

A Principal may grant an outside group or individual permission to post one notice of a public meeting for discussion of issues if the language of that notice conforms to the standards that prevail in the community. The Principal will determine the appropriate bulletin board for such notices.
SCHOOL CEREMONIES AND OBSERVANCES

The United States Constitution and the Constitution of the State of Massachusetts and related court rulings clearly establish the concept of "church and state separation" and the "preclusion of sectarian instruction in public schools."

In order to help staff members abide by the spirit and letter of the law, and to avoid compromising any student's religious or conscientious beliefs or freedoms, the following guidelines have been established:

The observance of religious holidays is not the responsibility of the public schools.

While it is recognized that many activities are initiated with the approach of major holidays in order to capitalize on the readiness and interest that is generated at these times, it should be understood that such occasions frequently have religious underpinnings. Care should be taken to relate only to secular aspects of these holidays.

Music programs given at times close to religious holidays should not use religious aspect of these holidays as the underlying motive or theme. Although religious music is appropriate in the schools to the extent that it is sung or presented for musical rather than religious content, its use should not violate the secular nature of the school. Pageants, plays, recitals, and other literary or dramatic activities should not be used to convey religious messages. While the holidays represent a valid source of ideas for meaningful school art experiences, teachers should avoid assigning or encouraging art work that promotes religious aspects of such holidays. If, however, individual students choose to use a religious personage, event, or symbol as the vehicle for an artistic expression, they should be allowed to take this action.

The above statements should not be interpreted to preclude the factual and objective teaching about religions, religious holidays, and religious differences. Such instruction will be permitted in the schools since insights in this area can enhance the mutual understanding needed by all the people in a pluralistic society.

LEGAL REF.: 603 CMR 26:05

Palmer Public Schools
DISPLAY AND PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 71, Section 69, requires that the United States flag be displayed and that the pledge of allegiance be recited each morning. (See Reference)

Federal and state law also requires or allows for the flag to be flown at half-staff on the death of a National or state leader.

The school building flag will be flown at half-staff on the burial day of any deceased member of the school department who is presently employed or retired and School Committee members currently serving on the School Committee.
MOMENT OF SILENCE

The morning exercises in all schools may include a moment of silence, not to exceed one minute in length, for personal thoughts.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L.71:1A
STUDENT POLICIES GOALS

The student is the focal point of all operations of our school system. This top priority is shared with no one.

Consequently, the School Committee can expect to spend much of its time in study, deliberation, and policy formulation on matters directly related to students.

The Committee and staff will work together to establish an environment conducive to the very best learning achievements for each student through meeting the following goals regarding students:

1. To individualize the learning program in order to provide appropriately for each student according to his/her specific background, capabilities, learning styles, interests, and aspirations.
2. To protect and observe the legal rights of students.
3. To enhance the self-image of each student by helping him/her feel respected and worthy through a learning environment that provides positive encouragement through frequent success.
4. To provide an environment of reality in which students can learn personal and civic responsibility for their actions through meaningful experiences as school citizens.
5. To deal with students in matters of discipline in a just and constructive manner.
6. To provide in every way possible for the safety, health, and welfare of students.
7. To promote faithful attendance and good work.

LEGAL REF.: 603 CMR 26:00
Active Efforts

(1) The School Committee of each school district shall establish policies, promote regulations and procedures, and implement monitoring and evaluation practices that support and promote affirmative action and stimulate necessary changes to ensure that all obstacles to equal access to school programs for all persons are removed, regardless of race, sex, color, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, religion or limited English-speaking ability, no matter how subtle or unintended. Such policies shall include a requirement for an annual evaluation of all aspect of the K through 12 school program to insure that all students regardless of race, color, sex, religion, disability, sexual orientation or national origin are given an opportunity to develop skills, competence, and experience, and to receive appropriate guidance so that they may be able to participate in all programs offered by the school including athletics and other extracurricular activities. Special attention shall be given to schools and programs in which students of either sex or of racial or national origin groups present in the community are markedly under-represented.

(2) If participation in any school sponsored program or activity has previously been limited to students based on race, color, sex, national origin, disability, sexual orientation or religion, then the School Committee shall make active efforts to insure that equal access to all school sponsored programs or activities be provided within the system.

(3) It shall be the responsibility of the School Committee and the Superintendent to provide necessary information and in-service training for all school personnel in order to:

(a) Advance means of achieving educational goals in a manner free from discrimination on account of race, color, sex, religion, disability, sexual orientation or national origin.

(b) Enhance consciousness of the kinds of discriminatory and prejudicial practices and behavior, which may occur in the public schools.

(4) The Superintendent, as an agent of the School Committee, shall promote and direct effective procedures for the full implementation of 603 CMR 26.00, and shall make recommendations to the Committee for the necessary policies, program changes, and budget resource allocations needed to achieve adherence to 603 CMR 26.00.

(5) At the beginning of the school year, the Superintendent of each school system shall be responsible for sending to the parents of all school age children, in their primary language, a notice of the existence of S. 1971 c.622 and its implications. Such notice shall include the information that all courses of study, extracurricular activities and services offered by the school are available without regard to race, color, sex, religion, disability, sexual orientation or national origin. This notice may be included with other communications sent to parents by the school system. Upon request, the Department of Education shall provide a translation in requested languages to assist Superintendents in complying with this section. The Superintendent shall inform the community of the existence of the law and of its implications through newspaper releases or radio or television announcements.
(6) The Superintendent shall ensure that all students are annually informed in a manner certain to reach them of the existence of St. 1971, c.622 and its implications. Students shall be informed that all courses of study, extracurricular activities, services, and facilities offered by the school are available without regard to race, color, sex, religion, disability, sexual orientation or national origin.

(7) The Superintendent of each school system shall make certain that employers who recruit new employees in and through the schools of that district, do not discriminate on account of race, color, sex, religion, disability, sexual orientation or national origin in their hiring and recruitment practices within the schools. Before any employer is allowed to recruit at or through any school, they shall be required to sign a statement that they do not discriminate in hiring or employment practices on account of race, color, sex, religion, disability, sexual orientation or national origin.

(8) Since adults serve as role models for students, school authorities shall utilize adults in a variety of jobs, and as members of policy-making committees, to the extent consistent with their contractual obligations, without regard to race, color, sex, religion, disability, sexual orientation or national origin.

(9) Adults serving on athletic regulatory boards shall fairly represent the interests of both male and female students.

(10) Any contributions to a school for activities and monetary awards within or sponsored by the school or for scholarships administered by the school made after the effective date of 603 CMR 26.00 by any person, group or organization shall be free from any restrictions based upon race, color, sex, religion, disability, sexual orientation or national origin.

(11) The opportunity to receive guidance and counseling in a student’s primary language should be made available to students from homes where English is not the primary language spoken.

LEGAL REF.: 603 CMR 26:00
EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

In recognition of the diversified characteristics and needs of our students and with the keen desire to be responsive to them, the School Committee will make every effort to protect the dignity of the students as individuals. It also will offer careful consideration and sympathetic understanding of their personal feelings, particularly with reference to their race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation or physical and intellectual differences.

To accomplish this, the Committee and its staff will make every effort to comply with the letter and the spirit of the Massachusetts equal educational opportunities law, which prohibits discrimination in public school admissions and programs. The law reads as follows:

No child shall be excluded from or discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town, or in obtaining the advantages, privileges and course of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin or sexual orientation.

This will mean that every student will be given equal opportunity in school admission, admissions to courses, course content, guidance, and extracurricular and athletic activities.

All implementing provisions issued by the Board of Education and Secondary Education in compliance with this law will be followed.

LEGAL REFS.: 
- Title VI, Civil Rights Act of 1964
- Title VII, Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended by the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972
- Executive Order 11246, as amended by E.O. 11375
- Title IX, Education Amendments of 1972
- M.G.L. 76:5; 76:16 (Chapter 622 of the Acts of 1971)
- BESE Regulations 603 CMR 26:00
- BESE Regulations 603 CMR 28:00

CROSS REF.: AC, Nondiscrimination

Revised and approved on 1/16/14.

Palmer Public Schools
STUDENT-TO-STUDENT HARASSMENT

Harassment of students by other students will not be tolerated in the Palmer Public Schools. This policy is in effect while students are on school grounds, School District property or property within the jurisdiction of the School District, school buses, or attending or engaging in school activities.

Harassment prohibited by the District includes, but is not limited to, harassment on the basis of race, sex, gender identity, creed, color, national origin, sexual orientation, religion, marital status or disability. Students whose behavior is found to be in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including suspension or expulsion.

Harassment means conduct of a verbal or physical nature that is designed to embarrass, distress, agitate, disturb or trouble students when:

- Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of a student’s education or of a student’s participation in school programs or activities;
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by a student is used as the basis for decisions affecting the student, or;
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with a student’s performance or creating an intimidating or hostile learning environment.

Harassment as described above may include, but is not limited to:

- Verbal, physical or written (including texting, blogging, or other technological methods) harassment or abuse;
- Repeated remarks of a demeaning nature;
- Implied or explicit threats concerning one’s grades, achievements, or other school matter.
- Demeaning jokes, stories, or activities directed at the student.

The District will promptly and reasonably investigate allegations of harassment. The Principal of each building will be responsible for handling all complaints by students alleging harassment.

Retaliation against a student, because a student has filed a harassment complaint or assisted or participated in a harassment investigation or proceeding, is also prohibited. A student who is found to have retaliated against another in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including suspension and expulsion.

The Superintendent will develop administrative guidelines and procedures for the implementation of this policy.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 151B:3A
Title VII, Section 703, Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended
BESE 603 CMR 26:00

REFS.: “Words that Hurt,” American School Board Journal, September 1999
National Education Policy Network, NSBA

Revised and approved on 1/16/14.

Palmer Public Schools
ATTENDANCE

It is the belief of the School Committee that regular school attendance is necessary for student success. In addition, Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 76, Sections 1-5 mandate school attendance. Therefore, the following policies mandate student attendance and set penalties for not complying.

1. At Palmer High School, a student must be in course attendance for at least ninety-five percent (95%) of class sessions in order to receive academic credit toward graduation. Under this policy no more than nine (9) days of nonattendance are allowed for a full year course and four and one half (4 1/2) days for a semester course.
   
   a. Courses which meet less than five (5) times a week, such as physical education, also fall under the 95% guidelines and would allow fewer absences due to the reduced number of class sessions.
   
   b. Students who are tardy for more than one-half a class will be considered absent from that class for the day.
   
   d. Teachers and the Principal will keep parents/guardians apprised of students in jeopardy of failing due to nonattendance.
   
   e. An accurate record of attendance will be kept by every teacher in every class every day.
   
   f. The administration will not collect absentee notes whenever a student is absent. Any student who is absent more than nine (9) days in a full-year course, and four and a half days in a semester course and is in danger of losing academic credit due to absences, may follow the appeals procedure.

2. Palmer High School students may appeal the denial of credit because of nonattendance to an appeals committee made up of three teachers, the Principal and the Assistant Principal

   a. Absences may be appealed for the following reasons provided the attendance expectations for the balance of the course are satisfied:

      1) Extended illness documented by a physician's statement
      2) Death in the immediate family
      3) Court appearances
      4) School sponsored activities
      5) Other unusual circumstances which the School Committee deems valid

   b. The decision of the appeals committee is final, subject only to an appeal to the Superintendent and, if requested, to the School Committee.
3. Students at Converse Middle School and Old Mill Pond School must be present in school ninety-five percent (95%) of the time for promotion. This means that the student may not miss more than nine (9) days of school in order to remain in good standing. The following procedures will be followed:

   a. The school will send a letter to the parent/guardian after four (4) days of absence to warn that a problem might exist.

   b. A letter will also be sent to the parent/guardian after the student accrues six (6) absences out of the nine (9) allowed.

   c. If a student is absent more than nine (9) days, a conference will be held consisting of the parents/guardians, student, teacher(s), Principal and other concerned parties to determine whether failure, repetition of the grade or other alternative is warranted.

   d. Reasons which would be considered as to why excess absences should be excused include chronic or long-term disabling illness, injury or some major family catastrophe.

4. No student at any grade level may participate in any extracurricular activity unless s/he has been in attendance at school for at least one-half day on the day of the activity.

5. The rules of the Department of Public Health shall govern the return of a pupil to school after s/he has been absent from sickness or quarantine or exposure to contagious disease, in accordance with the Massachusetts General Laws.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 76:1-5
603 CMR 30.5

Revised and approved by the School Committee on 2/26/09.

Palmer Public Schools
The entrance age for kindergarten is five years before September 1. The entrance age for grade 1 is six years before September 1.

Parents are reminded that their children entering kindergarten or grade 1 must present a certificate of birth on the opening day if they did not do so at the time of registration.

Massachusetts law requires that each child be immunized against diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, measles, mumps, rubella, and polio. Children will not be admitted unless a program of immunizations is started. In addition, proof of lead testing is required for kindergarten and grade 1.

Immunization updates are required as follows: second MMR prior to grade 7 and TD booster every 10 years.

Parents are urged to have a physical and dental examination of their child prior to school entrance. School physical examinations are provided in grades 4 and 7.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 76:15
SCHOOL ADMISSIONS

All children of school age who reside in the town will be entitled to attend the public schools, as will certain children who do not reside in the town but who are admitted under School Committee policies relating to nonresident students or by specific action of the School Committee.

Advance registration for prospective kindergarten students will take place in April. Every student seeking admission to school for the first time must present a birth certificate or equivalent proof of age acceptable to the Principal and proof of vaccination and immunizations as required by the state and the School Committee. Proof of residency of legal guardianship may also be required by the school administration.

SOURCE: MASC

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 15:1G; 76:1; 76:5; 76:15; 76:15A
603 CMR 26:01; 26:02; 26:03

CROSS REFS.: JFBB, School Choice
JLCA, Physical Examination of Students
JLCB, Inoculations of Students
SCHOOL ADMISSIONS

Purpose and Construction of 603 CMR 26.00

(1) 603 CMR 26.00 is promulgated to insure the right of access to the public schools of the Commonwealth and the equal enjoyment of the opportunities, advantages, privileges and courses of study at such schools without regard to race, color, sex, religion, disability, sexual orientation or national origin. 603 CMR 26.00 shall be liberally construed for these purposes.

(2) The obligation to comply with 603 CMR 26.00 is not obviated or alleviated by any local law or rule or regulation of any organization, club, athletic or other league or association which would limit the eligibility or participation of any student on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, disability, sexual orientation or national origin.

School Admissions

(1) All public schools in the Commonwealth shall admit students without regard to race, color, sex, religion, disability, sexual orientation or national origin. This includes, but is not limited to regional vocational-technical schools, elementary, secondary, trade, and selective academic high schools.

(2) No school shall discourage in any express or implied manner, applicants for admission because of race, color, sex, religion, disability, sexual orientation or national origin. Written materials used by a school to recruit students shall not contain references suggesting the predominant sex of the students presently enrolled or the anticipated sex of the students to be recruited. Pictorial representation, in the agreed, in such material shall depict students of both sexes and of minority groups. Reference to only one sex in the name of schools, programs or activities shall not be retained.

(3) The national citizenship of any applicant shall not be a criterion for admission to any public school nor shall national citizenship be a factor in the assignment or availability of courses of study or extracurricular activities.

(4) Any standards used as part of the admissions process to any public school, including but not limited to testing, the use of recommendations, and interviewing (as referred to in 603 CMR 26.02 (1)) shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, disability, sexual orientation or national origin. Limited English-speaking ability (as defined by M.G.L.c.71A) shall not be used as a deterrent to or limitation on admissions.

(5) If admission to any school, including but not limited to selective academic high schools, regional vocational-technical schools and trade schools, is dependent upon the participation or completion of courses or programs which were previously limited to students of one sex or if close scrutiny reveals that access mechanisms or other administrative arrangements have limited the opportunities of any racial, ethnic or religious group of students to participate in such programs, then such criteria must be abolished.
(6) Nothing in 603 CMR 26.00 shall be construed as to control the interpretation of or interfere with the implementation of St. 1965, c. 641, as amended by St, 1974, c. 636, providing for the elimination of racial imbalance in public schools, all rules and regulations promulgated in respect thereto and all court and administrative decisions construing or relating thereto.

(7) *In cases of Joint Custody or Shared Custody, a legal court order may be requested as proof by school administration. The Massachusetts court system has defined parental custody in these cases as having a minimum of 50% of the child to reside and attend school in a community. This means that a child must reside (sleep) at the community residence three school days a week in order to attend school in that community school system. Weekends are not included in the calculation for attending school.*

(8) *Additional residency policies may apply.*

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 15:1G; 76:1; 76:5; 76:15; 76:15A
603 CMR 26:01; 26:02; 26:03; MA GC
SCHOOL ADMISSIONS

Admission to Course of Study

(1) Each and every course of study offered by a public school shall be open and available to students regardless of race, color, sex, religion, disability, sexual orientation or national origin. Nothing herein shall be construed to prohibit the use of prerequisite requirements that have been demonstrated to be essential to success in a given program. However, if participation in a course or program is dependent upon completion of a prerequisite which was previously limited to students of one sex, or if close scrutiny reveals that access mechanisms or other administrative arrangements have limited the opportunities of any class of students to participate in such prerequisites, then all members of the previously excluded group shall be given the opportunity to acquire the prerequisites or be allowed to enter the program without such prerequisites. If it cannot be shown that a prerequisite is essential for success in a given program, the prerequisite shall be abolished.

(2) The determination of what courses or units of study are to be required of any student shall also be made without regard to the race, color, sex, national origin, disability, sexual orientation or religion of that student.

(3) The scheduling of students into courses or units of study shall not be done on the basis of sex, color, race, religion, disability, sexual orientation or national origin.

(4) Each student, regardless of race, color, sex, national origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation or limited English-speaking ability, shall have equal rights of access to courses of study and other opportunities available through the school system of the city or town in which he/she resides, along with appropriate bilingual instruction and programs or other curriculum offerings of a supportive nature such as appropriate remedial programs.

(5) Nothing in 603 CMR 26.03 shall be construed to prevent particular segments of a program of instruction from being offered separately to each sex when necessary in order to respect personal privacy.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 15:1G; 76:1; 76:5; 76:15; 76:15A
603 CMR 26:01; 26:02; 26:03
Tuition Students

The School Committee will consider each request for the tuitioning-in of students and/or a situation involving a non-resident (if Palmer is not the legal residence of the parent/guardian, or if the student is living in Palmer for the express purpose of attending school) on an individual basis. This policy may be preempted by an annual vote of the School Committee not to participate in School Choice. The following guidelines will be used as an aid in making those decisions and in governing the conditions pertaining to tuition students:

1. The School Committee will accept tuitioned-in students at the request of other school systems, with the full per-pupil cost to be charged to that system.

2. The School Committee will agree to accept or send students on a tuition-free basis with communities bordering Palmer on a mutually agreed basis when the reason for such student placement has to do with geographic location or handicapped access.

3. Requests for non-resident tuition students by other than other school districts will be considered on the basis of availability of service, need, potential difficulties, etc.

4. A student who becomes a non-resident after the April vacation break may be allowed to complete the school year without tuition charges provided the Palmer Public Schools incurs no additional cost for that student.

5. Senior students who have completed their three previous years of high school in Palmer and whose parents/guardians move out of Palmer may complete their senior year at Palmer High School provided the student remains resident in Palmer.

6. Tuition will be charged at the per pupil cost for the appropriate program. Any additional costs due to special services will be charged back to the persons/agencies paying the tuition.

7. No transportation will be provided for students residing outside the town limits. Transportation will be provided in town, with any added expense passed on to the person/agency responsible for the tuition.

8. Any arrangement for the acceptance of a student under the above guidelines may be terminated at the School Committee's discretion should the student become a problem to the Palmer Public Schools due to continual discipline problems, use of drugs or alcohol, or other serious rule infractions.

9. Notwithstanding all of the above, the School Committee may accept or reject non-resident students and modify tuition charges when it determines it is in the best interest of the town and/or the Palmer Public Schools to do so.

Legal Refs.: M.G.L. 76:1; 76:12B
POLICY ON ADMISSION OF HOMELESS STUDENTS

In accordance with current federal law and state advisories, it shall be the policy of the Palmer Public Schools to provide equal access to education to any homeless student(s) in the district.

The district shall take reasonable steps to ensure that homeless students are not segregated or stigmatized and that decisions are made in the best interests of the student.

Under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act [Section 725(2)], homeless children and youth will be defined as follows:

*Individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence or have a primary nighttime residence in a supervised, publicly or privately operated shelter for temporary accommodations (including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing for the mentally ill), an institution providing temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalize4, or a public or private place not designated for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.*

Further, in keeping with federal requirements, homeless students will have the following rights:

- Access the same free and appropriate public education, including a public preschool education, as provided to all other children
- Remain in the school he/she attended before becoming homeless.
- Receive transportation to the school they attended before your family became homeless or the school they last attended if you or a guardian requests such transportation.
- Enroll in school without giving a permanent address. Schools cannot require proof of residency that might prevent or delay school enrollment.
- Enroll and attend classes while the school arranges for the transfer of school and immunization records or any other documents required for enrollment.
- Enroll and attend classes in the school of your choice even while the school and you seek to resolve disputes over enrolling your child.
- Receive the same special programs and services, if needed, as provided to all other children.
The Superintendent shall designate at least one staff member in the district to serve as the Homeless Liaison to fulfill the duties set forth in federal and state law and to coordinate with other school districts and with local social service agencies and/or other programs providing services to homeless youth as needed.

LEGAL REF: McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act [NCLB Act of 2001 (P.L. 107-1 10)]
SCHOOL CHOICE

It is the policy of this School District to admit non-resident students under the terms and conditions of the Interdistrict School Choice Law (M.G.L. 76:12B) and under the following local conditions:

1. That by May 1 of every school year, the administration will determine the number of spaces in each school available to choice students.

2. That by June 1 of every school year, if consideration is being given to withdraw from the provisions of the choice law, a public meeting will be held to review this decision.

3. That resident students be given priority placement in any classes or programs within the District.

4. That the selection of non-resident students for admission be in the form of a random drawing when the number of requests exceeds the number of available spaces. There will be two drawings for this purpose. The first will take place during the last week of the current school year but no later than July 1st. The second will be conducted during the week immediately preceding the opening of the next school year and will be based on the possibility of unexpected additional openings.

5. Any student who is accepted for admission under the provisions of this policy is entitled to remain in the District until graduation from high school except if there is a lack of funding of the program.

6. The School Committee affirms its position that it shall not discriminate in the admission of any child on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity, age, sexual orientation, ancestry, athletic performance, physical handicap, special need, academic performance or proficiency in the English language.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:6; 71:6A; 76:6; 76:12; 76:12B
BESE Regulations 603 CMR 26.00

Revised and approved on 1/16/14.
STUDENT ABSENCES AND EXCUSES

Regular and punctual school attendance is essential for success in school. The Committee does recognize that parents of children attending our schools have special rights as well as responsibilities, one of which is to ensure that their children attend school regularly, in accordance with state law.

Therefore, students may be excused temporarily from school attendance for the following reasons:

1. Illness or quarantine.
2. Bereavement or serious illness in family.
3. Weather so inclement as to endanger the health of the child.
4. Observance of major religious holidays.

A child may also be excused for other exceptional reasons with approval of the school administrator.

A student's understanding of the importance of day-to-day schoolwork is an important factor in the shaping of his character. Parents can help their children by refusing to allow them to miss school needlessly.

Accordingly, parents will provide a written explanation for the absence and tardiness of a child. This will be required in advance for types of absences where advance notice is possible.

In instances of chronic or irregular absence reportedly due to illness, the school administration may request a physician's statement certifying such absences to be justifiable.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 76:1; 76:16; 76:20
EXCLUSIONS AND EXEMPTIONS FROM SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Denial of Admission

Denial of admission means the withholding of the privilege of enrolling in a school of the District.

The following shall be the grounds for denial of admission to school or diversion to an appropriate alternative program:

- Graduation from the twelfth grade of any school or receipt of any document evidencing completion of the equivalent of a secondary curriculum;

- Failure to meet the requirements of age by a student who has reached the age of six years at a time after the beginning of the school year, as fixed by the School Committee as provided in Massachusetts General Laws;

- Having been expelled during the same school year from this District or any district in the Commonwealth;

- Not being a resident of the District and the District has opted not to participate in the School Choice Law;

- Failure to comply with the provisions of the Massachusetts School Entry Immunization Law.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:37H; 76:12; 76:12A; 76:12B
603 CMR 26:00
STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The School Committee has the responsibility to afford students the rights that are theirs by virtue of guarantees offered under the federal and state constitutions and statutes. In connection with rights, there are responsibilities that must be assumed by students.

Among these rights and responsibilities are the following:

1. Civil rights—including the rights to equal educational opportunity and freedom from discrimination; the responsibility not to discriminate against others.

2. The right to attend free public schools; the responsibility to attend school regularly and to observe school rules essential for permitting others to learn at school.

3. The right to due process of law with respect to suspension, expulsion, and decisions the student believes injure his rights.

4. The right to free inquiry and expression; responsibility to observe reasonable rules regarding these rights.

5. The right to privacy, which includes privacy with respect to the student's school records.

It is the School Committee's belief that as part of the educational process students should be made aware of their legal rights, and of the legal authority of the School Committee to make and delegate authority to its staff to make, rules regarding the orderly operation of the schools.

Students have the right to know the standards of behavior that are expected of them, and the consequences of misbehavior.

The rights and responsibilities of students, including standards of conduct, will be made available to students and their parents through handbooks distributed annually.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:37H; 71:82 through 71:86
STUDENT INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION-MAKING

As appropriate to the age of students, class or school organizations and school government organizations, such as student councils, may be formed to offer practice in self-government and to serve as channels for the expression of students’ ideas and opinions.

The Committee will take into consideration student opinions in establishing policies that directly affect student programs, activities, privileges and other areas of student sensitivity.

Students will be welcomed at Committee meetings and granted privileges of speaking in line with the privileges extended to the general public.

Student Advisory Committee

As required by state law, the Committee will meet at least once every other month while school is in session with its student advisory committee, which is composed of five students elected by the high school student body. The chair of the student advisory committee shall be an ex-officio nonvoting member of the School Committee without the right to attend executive sessions unless such right is expressly granted by the School Committee.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:38M
CROSS REF.: BDF, Advisory Committees to the School Committee
STUDENT CONDUCT

Good citizenship in schools is based on respect and consideration for the rights of others.

Students will be expected to conduct themselves in a way that the rights and privileges of others are not violated. They will be required to respect constituted authority, to conform to school rules and to those provisions of law that apply to their conduct.

Any of the following actions may subject a student to expulsion by the Principal under the terms of M.G.L. 71:37H:

1. Found on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, in possession of a dangerous weapon or a controlled substance.
2. Who assaults a Principal, Assistant Principal, teacher, teacher's aide or other educational staff member on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related event including athletic games.

School building administrators will not suspend a student, or recommend a student for suspension or expulsion, unless the student has engaged in one of the prohibited actions mentioned below while on school property or taking part in a school activity off school grounds.

Any of the following actions will subject a student to suspension, expulsion, subject to School Committee action, or other disciplinary measures:

1. Intentionally causing or attempting to cause damage to school property; or stealing or attempting to steal school property.
2. Intentionally causing or attempting to cause damage to private property; stealing or attempting to steal private property.
3. Intentionally causing or attempting to cause physical injury to another person except in self-defense.
4. Using or copying the academic work of another and presenting it as his own without proper attribution.
5. Repeatedly and intentionally defying the valid authority of supervisors, teachers, or administrators.

Additional prohibited actions will be printed in a handbook or other publication and made available to students and parents.

LEGAL REF: M.G.L. 71:37H; 71:37H ½
STUDENT DRESS CODE

Any apparel or item with a message or symbol advocating/highlighting violence, weapons, alcohol, tobacco, other drugs, or illegal behavior, or expressing vulgarity such that it causes disruption or disorder, or regarded by administrators as dangerous or adversely impacting the educational process, may not be worn in school or at school events or activities.

Student will not be prevented from attending school or a school function, or otherwise discriminated against, so long as their dress and appearance meet the requirements set forth in the student handbook.

Revised and approved on 11/15/2017.
CARE OF SCHOOL PROPERTY

1. Teachers are responsible for the appearance and care of their rooms and the furniture and fixtures in those rooms.

2. The need for maintenance, repair or replacement of furniture, fixtures or equipment should be reported promptly to the Principal.

3. Teachers have responsibility for insuring that students properly use textbooks and other learning materials, instructional equipment and aids, furniture and the classroom itself.

4. Any abuse by students in the care and use of school property shall be handled appropriately by the teacher and Principal.

5. Textbooks, instructional materials, and equipment that are deemed worn or obsolete may be disposed of or may be donated to any local, national or international charity provided that this service will be at no cost to the district. This process will require approval of the Principal with an annual report to the School Committee.
STUDENT CONDUCT ON SCHOOL BUSES

The School Committee and its staff share with students and parents the responsibility for student safety during transportation to and from school. The authority for enforcing School Committee requirements of student conduct on buses will rest with the Principal.

To ensure the safety of all students who ride in buses, it may occasionally be necessary to revoke the privilege of transportation from a student who abuses this privilege. Parents of children whose behavior and misconduct on school buses endangers the health, safety, and welfare of other riders will be notified that their children face the loss of transportation privileges in accordance with regulations approved by the School Committee.
STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Students will enjoy the constitutional rights of freedom of expression. They will have the right to express their views in speech, writing, or through any other medium or form of expression within limitations comparable to those imposed on all citizens but specifically designed for children and youth in a school setting.

The School Committee will encourage student publications not only because they offer an educational activity through which students gain experience in reporting, writing, editing, and understanding responsible journalism, but also because they provide an opportunity for students to express their views.

All student publications will be expected to comply with the rules for responsible journalism. This means that libelous statements, unfounded charges and accusations, obscenity, defamation of persons, false statements, material advocating racial or religious prejudice, hatred, violence, the breaking of laws and school regulations, or materials designed to disrupt the educational process will not be permitted.

The Superintendent will establish guidelines that are in keeping with the above and provide for the review of the content of all student publications prior to their distribution.

Review of content prior to publication is not censorship but part of the educational process as this concerns student publications. It can be pointed out to students, as it frequently is to journalists, that a publisher (in this case, the school system) enjoys freedom to determine what it will and will not publish.

Distribution of Literature

Students have a right to the distribution of literature on school grounds and in school buildings, except that the Principal may prohibit the distribution in school buildings of a specific issue or publication if it does not comply with rules for responsible journalism. The Principal may require that no literature be distributed unless a copy is submitted to him/her in advance.

The Principal will reasonably regulate the time, place, and manner of distribution of literature.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:82

Palmer Public Schools
STUDENT PUBLICATIONS - REGULATIONS

In recognition of both the First Amendment Rights of district students to freedom of expression and the responsibility of the district to uphold appropriate standards for publications of a public school, all student publications within the Palmer Public Schools will be expected to comply with the rules for responsible journalism and the accepted principles of ethics for the highest journalism standards.

Specifically, students will be encouraged to follow these standards:

- **Responsibility** – Truth and fairness are the guiding principles of reporting.
- **Accuracy** – Reporting should be factual and unbiased.
- **Integrity** – All writings should be impartial, clearly distinguishing fact from opinion. Plagiarism will not be tolerated.
- **Independence** – Any appearance of conflict of interest, favoritism, special interests or impropriety must be avoided.
- **Accountability** – High standards must be followed in obtaining facts and reporting information.
- **Respect** – All publications will reflect a sincere respect for the rights of others and be presented in good taste.

These standards will apply to all types of publications, including but not limited to informational articles, editorials, cartoons, and photographs.

All student publications will be free of libelous statements, defamation of person(s), obscenities, prejudice, and/or the inciting of violence. All school rules and laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts will apply to student publications.

Prior to distribution, the faculty advisor will review the content of all student publications, with a copy submitted in advance to the school principal. Publications will be reviewed solely for compliance with the aforementioned standards of journalism. For any material in question, the school administration will make the final determination in regard to what will/will not be published and distributed.

REF.: APME Statement of Ethical Principles (1994); Writing & Evaluating School News (Harwood & Hudnall, 2000).
GANG ACTIVITY

The goal of the School Committee is to keep District schools and students free from the threats or harmful influence of any gang. For purposes of this policy, gang is defined as any group, organization or association that advocates drug use, violence, ethnic intimidation, or disruptive or illegal behavior. The Principal or his/her designee shall maintain supervision of school premises to deter intimidation of students.

The Superintendent shall establish open lines of communication with local law enforcement agencies so as to share information and provide mutual support in this effort within appropriate legal guidelines.

Symbols

The School Committee finds that gang symbols are inherently disruptive to the educational process, and therefore prohibits the presence of any insignia, apparel, jewelry, accessory, notebook or other school supply, or manner of grooming which by virtue of its color, arrangement, trademark, or any other attribute denotes membership in gangs. The School Committee further prohibits any demonstration of gang membership through the use of hand gestures, graffiti, or printed materials.

Prevention Education

The School Committee realizes that students may become involved in gangs without understanding the consequences of such membership. Early intervention is a key component of efforts to break the cycle of such memberships.

A student may be suspended or expelled for failure to comply with the provisions of this policy.

Palmer Public Schools
PROHIBITION OF HAZING

In accordance with Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 536 of the Acts of 1985, the School Committee hereby deems that no student, employee or school organization under the control of the School Committee shall engage in the activity of hazing a student while on or off school property, or at a school sponsored event regardless of the location. No organization that uses the facilities or grounds under the control of the School Committee shall engage in the activity of hazing any person while on school property.

Any student who observes what appears to them to be the activity of hazing another student or person should report such information to the Principal including the time, date, location, names of identifiable participants and the types of behavior exhibited. Students and employees of the District are obligated by law to report incidents of hazing to the police department.

Any student who is present at a hazing has the obligation to report such an incident. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action by the school against that student and could involve suspension from school for up to three days.

Any student who participates in the hazing of another student or other person may, upon the approval of the Superintendent of Schools and/or his or her designee, be suspended from school for up to ten (10) school days.

Any student determined by the Principal to be the organizer of a hazing activity may be recommended for expulsion from school but will receive no less disciplinary action than that of a participant.

In all cases relating to hazing, students will receive procedural due process.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 269:17, 18, 19

Palmer Public Schools
HAZING

CH. 269, S.17. CRIME OF HAZING; DEFINITION; PENALTY

Whoever is a principal organizer or participant in the crime of hazing as defined herein shall be punished by a fine of not more than three thousand dollars or by imprisonment in a house of correction for not more than one year, or by both such fine and imprisonment.

The term "hazing" as used in this section and in sections eighteen and nineteen, shall mean any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization, whether on public or private property, which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person. Such conduct shall include whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the weather, forced consumption of any food, liquor, beverage, drug or other substance, or any other brutal treatment or forced physical activity which is likely to adversely affect the physical health or safety of any such student or other person, or which subjects such student or other person to extreme mental stress, including extended deprivation of sleep or rest or extended isolation. Notwithstanding any other provisions of this section to be contrary, consent shall not be available as a defense to any prosecution under this action.

CH. 269, S.18. DUTY TO REPORT HAZING

Whoever knows that another person is the victim of hazing as defined in section seventeen and is at the scene of such crime shall, to the extent that such person can do so without danger or peril to himself or others, report such crime to an appropriate law enforcement official as soon as reasonably practicable. Whoever fails to report such crime shall be punished by a fine of not more than one thousand dollars.

CH. 269, S.19. HAZING STATUTES TO BE PROVIDED; STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE AND DISCIPLINE POLICY REQUIRED

Each secondary school and each public and private school or college shall issue to every group or organization under its authority or operating on or in conjunction with its campus or school, and to every member, plebe, pledge or applicant for membership in such group or organization, a copy of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen. An officer of each such group or organization, and each individual receiving a copy of said sections seventeen and eighteen shall sign an acknowledgment stating that such group, organization or individual has received a copy of said sections seventeen and eighteen.

Each secondary school and each public or private school or college shall file, at least annually, a report with the regents of higher education and in the case of secondary schools, the Board of Education, certifying that such institution has complied with the provisions of this section and also certifying that said school has adopted a disciplinary policy with regards to the organizers and participants of hazing. The Board of Regents and, in the case of secondary schools, the Board of Education shall promulgate regulations governing the content and frequency of such reports, and shall forthwith report to the attorney general any such institution which fails to make such a report.

CROSS REF.: JICFB, Bullying
BULLYING PREVENTION

The Palmer Public Schools is committed to providing a safe, positive and productive educational environment where students can achieve the highest academic standards. No student shall be subjected to harassment, intimidation, bullying, or cyber-bullying.

The Palmer Public School District recognizes that certain students may be more vulnerable to become targets of bullying, harassment, or teasing based on actual or perceived characteristics, including race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic status, homelessness, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, pregnant or parenting status, sexual orientation, mental, physical, developmental or sensory, disability, or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics. The Palmer Public School District’s bullying intervention plan will identify specific steps it will take to create a safe, supportive environment for vulnerable populations in the school community, and provide all students with the skills, knowledge, and strategies to prevent or respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing.

“Bullying” is defined as the repeated use of a written, verbal, or electronic communication, or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, by one or more students, driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or by a member of a school staff including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus or paraprofessional, directed at another student or staff member that has the effect of:

- causing physical or emotional harm to the other student or staff member or damage to his or her property;
- placing the other student or staff member in reasonable fear of harm to him or herself or of damage to his or her property;
- creating a hostile environment at school for the bullied student or staff member;
- infringing on the rights of the other student or staff member at school; or
- materially and substantially disrupting the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

“Cyber-bullying” means bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but shall not be limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a:

- wire
- radio
- electromagnetic
- photo-electronic or photo-optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages or facsimile communications.

Cyber-bullying shall also include the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or knowingly impersonates another person as author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying.
Cyber-bullying shall also include the distribution by electronic means of communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying.

Bullying and cyber-bullying may occur in and out of school, during and after school hours, at home and in locations outside of the home. When bullying and cyber-bullying are alleged, the full cooperation and assistance of parents and families are expected.

For the purpose of this policy, whenever the term bullying is used it is to denote either bullying, or cyber-bullying.

Bullying is prohibited:

- On school grounds;
- On property immediately adjacent to school grounds;
- At school-sponsored or school related activities;
- At function or programs whether on or off school grounds;
- At school bus stops;
- On school buses or other vehicles owned, leased or used by the Palmer Public Schools;

Bullying and cyber-bullying are prohibited at a location, activity, function or program that is not school-related or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by the Palmer Public School district if the act or acts in question:

- Create a hostile environment at school for the target;
- Infringe on the rights of the target at school; and/or
- Materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Prevention and Intervention Plan
The Superintendent and/or his/her designee shall oversee the development of a prevention and intervention plan, in consultation with all district stakeholders, which may include teachers, school staff, professional support personnel, school volunteers, administrators, community representatives, local law enforcement agencies, students, parents and guardians, consistent with the requirements of this policy, as well as state and federal laws. The bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be reviewed and updated at least biennially.

The Principal is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the bullying prevention and implementation plan within his or her school. The bullying intervention plan school will recognize that certain students may be more vulnerable to become a target of bullying and harassment based on actual or perceived differentiating characteristics defined in the above priority statement. The Principal is responsible for implementation and oversight of the specific steps included in the District’s bullying intervention plan to support these vulnerable students and to provide all students with the skills, knowledge and strategies needed to prevent or respond to bullying or harassment.
Reporting

Students, who believe that they are a target of bullying, observe an act of bullying, or who have reasonable grounds to believe that these behaviors are taking place, are obligated to report incidents to a member of the school staff. The target shall, however, not be subject to discipline for failing to report bullying.

Palmer Public Schools has a means for anonymous reporting by students of incidents of bullying through the website. No formal disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report, but all reports will be investigated.

Any student who knowingly makes a false accusation of bullying shall be subject to disciplinary action. Parents or guardians, or members of the community are encouraged to report an incident of bullying as soon as possible.

A member of a school staff shall immediately report any instance of bullying the staff member has witnessed or become aware of to the school principal or their designee.

On an annual basis, the District will report bullying incident data to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE).

Investigation Procedures

The Principal or his/her designee, upon receipt of a viable report, shall promptly contact the parents or guardians of a student who has been the alleged target or alleged perpetrator of bullying. The actions being taken to prevent further acts of bullying shall be discussed.

The school principal or designee shall promptly investigate the report of bullying, using a Bullying/Cyber-bullying Report Form which may include interviewing the alleged target, alleged perpetrator, staff members, students and/or witnesses.

Support staff shall assess an alleged target’s needs for protection and create and implement a safety plan that shall restore a sense of safety for that student.

Confidentiality shall be used to protect a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or is witness to or has reliable information about an act of bullying.

If the school Principal or designee determines that bullying has occurred he/she shall take appropriate disciplinary action and if it is believed that criminal charges may be pursued against the perpetrator, the principal shall consult with the school’s resource officer and the Superintendent to determine if criminal charges are warranted. If it is determined that criminal charges are warranted, the local law enforcement agency shall be notified.
The investigation shall be completed within fourteen school days from the date of the report. The parents or guardians shall be contacted upon completion of the investigation and informed of the results, including whether the allegations were found to be factual, whether a violation of this policy was found, and whether disciplinary action has or shall be taken. At a minimum the Principal or his/her designee shall contact the parents or guardians as to the status of the investigation on a weekly basis.

The Principal or designee shall inform that parent or guardian of the target about the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education’s problem resolution system and the process for accessing that system, regardless of the outcome of the bullying determination.

Disciplinary actions for the students who have committed an act of bullying or Retaliation (as defined below) shall be in accordance with the district’s disciplinary policies.

Palmer Public Schools shall document any incident of bullying that is reported per this policy and a file shall be maintained by the Principal or designee of each school. A monthly report shall be provided to the Superintendent.

Confidentiality shall be maintained to the extent consistent with the school’s obligations under law.

**Retaliation**

Retaliation is defined as any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment directed against a student who report bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying. Retaliation shall be prohibited.

**Target Assistance**

The Palmer Public Schools shall provide counseling or referral to appropriate services, including guidance, academic intervention, and protection to students, both targets and perpetrators, affected by bullying, as necessary.

**Training and Assessment**

Annual training shall be provided for school employees and volunteers who have significant contact with students in preventing, identifying, responding to, and reporting incidents of bullying. Age-appropriate, evidence-based instruction on bullying prevention shall be incorporated into the curriculum for all K to 12 students.

The Palmer Public school district’s plan will include provisions for informing parents/guardians about the bullying prevention curriculum as well as ways that parents/guardians can reinforce the curriculum at home. Parents/guardians will also be informed about the dynamics of bullying and online safety and cyber-bullying.
Publication and Notice

Annual written notice of the relevant sections of the bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be provided to students and their parents or guardians, in age appropriate terms.

Annual written notice of the bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be provided to all school staff. All faculty and staff, in Palmer Public Schools, shall be trained annually on the bullying prevention and intervention plan applicable to his/her school.

Relevant sections of the bullying prevention and intervention plan relating to the duties of faculty and staff shall be included in the school employee handbook.

The bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be posted on the District website.

Any parent wishing to file a claim/concern of seeking assistance outside of the district may do so with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Program Resolution System (PRS). That information can be found at: http//www.doe.mass.edu/pqa, emails can be sent to compliance@doe.mass.edu or individuals can call 781-338-3700. Hard copies of this information is also available at the Superintendent’s Office.

REFERENCES: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education’s Model Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

LEGAL REFS: Title VII, Section 703, Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended
Federal Regulation 74676 issued by EEO Commission
Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972
603 CMR 26.00
M.G.L 71:370; 265:43, 43 A; 268:13B; 269: 14A
An Act Relative to Bullying in Schools, Chapter 86 of the Acts of 2014

CROSS REFS: AC, Nondiscrimination
ACAB, Sexual Harassment
JBA, Student-to-Student Harassment
JICFA, Prohibition of Hazing
JK, Student Discipline

Revised 3/22/2017
TOBACCO USE BY STUDENTS

Smoking, chewing, or other use of tobacco products by staff, students, and members of the public shall be banned from all District buildings. All forms of tobacco use shall be prohibited on all District property. In addition, tobacco use by students is banned at all school-sponsored events, even though this use does not take place on school grounds.

LEGAL REF: M.G.L 71:37H
ALCOHOL USE BY STUDENTS

In view of the fact that the use of alcohol can endanger the health and safety of the user, and recognizing the deleterious effect the use of alcoholic beverages can have on the maintenance of general order and discipline, the School Committee prohibits the use of, serving of, or consumption of any alcoholic beverage on school property or at any school function.

Additionally, any student, regardless of age, who has been drinking alcoholic beverages prior to attendance at, or participation in, a school-sponsored activity, may be barred from that activity and subject to disciplinary action.

In order to safeguard the individual and general welfare of all students, the Palmer Public Schools may administer a breathalyzer test as a condition of admission for any school-related activity to any student or his guests. It may also administer such a test at any time throughout the activity to any student at the discretion of the staff member in charge of the activity.

Students who refuse to take a breathalyzer test may be removed from the activity and released to a parent. Refusal to take the test will be viewed as an admission of being under the influence of drugs, alcohol or a controlled substance. The school will impose appropriate disciplinary action.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 272:40A
CROSS REF.: GBEC, Drug Free Workplace Policy
            IHAMA, Teaching About Drugs, Alcohol, and Tobacco
Protocol for Breathalyzer Testing

Students exhibiting signs of having consumed alcohol, including but not limited to glassy eyes, slurred speech, unsteadiness on the feet, or emission of an alcoholic odor may be requested to take a breathalyzer test. If the results are negative, no action will be taken, although subsequent administrations of the breathalyzer test may be given at any time. If a student tests positive for alcohol, s/he will receive one additional opportunity to take the test. Students who test positive for alcohol (.02 reading on the breathalyzer test) or students who refuse to take a breathalyzer test upon reasonable suspicion to suspect they have consumed alcohol, will be subject to all school rules relating to the use and/or possession of alcohol.

Protocol for the Use of the Breathalyzer

**ALCOHOL OBSERVATION CHECKLIST**

Observation of Student

Name: __________________ Date: ________ Time: ______ Event/Location: ______________

*Check all that apply:*

1. **Walking**
   - [ ] normal
   - [ ] stumbling
   - [ ] staggering
   - [ ] falling
   - [ ] unsteady

2. **Speech**
   - [ ] normal
   - [ ] shouting
   - [ ] slurred
   - [ ] incoherent
   - [ ] whispering

3. **Demeanor**
   - [ ] normal
   - [ ] sleepy
   - [ ] crying
   - [ ] fighting
   - [ ] overexcited
   - [ ] agitated

4. **Eyes**
   - [ ] normal
   - [ ] bloodshot
   - [ ] glassy
   - [ ] watery
   - [ ] dilated

5. **Personal Conduct**
   - [ ] normal
   - [ ] profanity
   - [ ] hostile
   - [ ] erratic

6. **Breath**
   - [ ] normal
   - [ ] alcoholic odor
   - [ ] faint alcoholic odor

7. **Other Observations:** ___________________________________________________________

*Palmer Public Schools*
Questions:
Are you feeling ill?  □ Yes  □ No   If yes, please describe______________________________
Are you taking any medication?  □ Yes  □ No
If yes, would care to tell us what it is? ________________________________
Have you consumed alcohol today?  □ Yes  □ No   How did you get here?______________
Disposition/conclusion: _____________________________________________
Next action: ________________________________________________
Contact parents:  □ Yes  □ No   Breathalyzer test results attached:  □ Yes  □ No
Staff member’s name:__________________________   Witness: ____________________________

School Sponsored Event

Each student entering a school-sponsored activity may be required to submit to a breathalyzer test as a condition of admission. This is a passive, non-invasive test where no mouthpiece is needed. Students will be asked to speak or breathe into the microphone-like device.

1. The administration will determine at which school-sponsored events the breathalyzer test procedures will be used. These events will include, but are not limited to, proms, dances, concerts, overnight activities, optional field trips, athletic events, etc.

2. The administration will determine the manner by which the students will be tested: entire group, pre-determined random selection, or based on individualized reasonable suspicion. The trained administrator or trained staff member present at such events has the authority to test and retest any individual suspected of being under the influence of alcohol even if the student has a negative test upon entering the event.

3. Students attending these school sponsored events may be required to take a breathalyzer test administered by a trained member of the staff or administration prior to entering the event.
   a. Any student who tests positive will be given a second test after a waiting period of twenty (20) minutes;
   b. If this test is also positive, the student will be denied entrance to the event, detained by school officials until parents/guardians arrive and an investigation is conducted. The student will be sent home and, subject to disciplinary procedures, will be suspended.
   c. Students who refuse the test will be denied entrance to the event and detained until parents/guardians arrive to remove them. In such cases, subject to disciplinary procedures, the student will be suspended.
d. Whether school officials are testing students randomly or testing the entire group, a student who tests positive or refuses to be tested may be prohibited from participating in future extracurricular activities.

4. A student already in attendance at a school-sponsored event who is suspected of being under the influence will be tested or retested.
   a. If this test is positive, the student will be detained until parents/guardians arrive and, subject to disciplinary procedures, will be suspended.
   b. If a student, already in attendance, who is suspected of using alcohol as described herein refuses the test, that student will be detained and sent home with a parent/guardian and, subject to disciplinary procedures, will be suspended.

5. The Breathalyzer Protocol shall apply to all students and guests, regardless of age.
WEAPONS IN SCHOOL

In keeping with Massachusetts General Laws and in the interest of safety and security of all students, school personnel, and school property, all weapons are prohibited from school grounds, buildings, and activities. The only exception to this policy will be police and military authorities who may carry weapons during the course of their duties.

The term “weapon” includes, but will not be limited to, a firearm, knife, object, or article that can be used or is intended to be used by a person to injure another.

Any student who violates this policy will be subject to discipline as outlined under MG.L. Chapter 71, Section 3711.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L 71:3711
PREGNANT STUDENTS

The school nurse will keep in contact with a pregnant student as dictated by her medical status regarding her pregnancy. In addition, with a signed consent, the school nurse will also maintain regular communication with the student’s physician.

At a point determined by the student, the physician, and/ or student’s parent(s), the student may request home-based tutoring by which her physician write a letter concerning Physician’s Statement for Home or Hospital Placement. Upon receipt of this form, the Director of Special Services/ School Principal will arrange for tutoring. These services will be provided up to delivery, and then for a period after delivery as dictated by the health of the mother and the physician’s statement.

If necessary to provide accommodations for a pregnant or nursing mother to allow for full participation in all educational programs, the 504 Team will meet and determine eligibility. If the team determines that the student is eligible, then a 504 will be written and implemented.

LEGAL REF.:  M.G.L. 71:84

Revised and approved on 3/24/2016.
SEARCHES AND INTERROGATIONS

Searches by Staff

The right of inspection of students' school lockers is inherent in the authority granted school committees and administrators. This authority may be exercised as needed in the interest of safeguarding children, their own and school property.

Nevertheless, exercise of that authority by school officials places unusual demands upon their judgment so as to protect each child's constitutional rights to personal privacy and protection from coercion and to act in the best interest of all students and the schools.

Searches by school officials of students' automobiles or the student will be conducted in a way that protects the students' rights consistent with the responsibility of the school system to provide an atmosphere conducive to the educational process.

Interrogations by Police

The schools have legal custody of students during the school day and during hours of approved extracurricular activities. It is the responsibility of the school administration to make an effort to protect each student's rights with respect to interrogations by law enforcement officials. Therefore:

1. When law enforcement officials find it necessary to question students during the school day or periods of extracurricular activities, the school Principal or his/her designee will be present when possible. An effort will be made to contact the student's parent or guardian so that the responsible individual may be notified of the situation.

2. If custody and/or arrest are involved, the Principal will request that all procedural safeguards, as prescribed by law, be observed by the law enforcement officials.
STUDENT COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES

The School Committee recognizes that there may be conditions in the school system that are in need of improvement and that students should have some means by which their concerns may be effectively expressed, considered, and dealt with fairly. Such means, if well conceived and understood in advance, can do much to maintain harmonious relationships among the schools and the students and community.

The traditional "open door" policy in the public school system will be continued. Students--and their parents and/or guardians--who believe that the students have received unfair treatment in the form of disciplinary action will have the right to appeal. Any applicable provisions of the Massachusetts General Laws or federal law will be followed by school officials in conducting hearings and reviews of student grievances. In general, appeals procedures will begin with the authority imposing the penalty (for example, Principal or teacher) and may ultimately be referred to the Superintendent and on to the School Committee, which possesses the ultimate authority for discipline in the school system.

Every attempt will be made to seek a satisfactory solution to any legitimate grievance in a friendly and informal manner. In order to keep such discussions within a practical size, no more that six student representatives will be permitted to participate with the Principal, staff members, or School Committee members who may be involved.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 76:17
CO-CURRICULAR AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

The School Committee believes that student activities are a vital part of the total educational program and should be used as a means for developing wholesome attitudes and good human relations and knowledge and skills. Therefore, the schools will provide a broad and balanced program of activities geared to the various ages, interests, and needs of students.

The following will serve as guides in the organization of student activities:

1. The schools will observe a complimentary relationship to the home and community, planning activities with due regard for the widespread and rich facilities already available to students.

2. The assistance of parents in planning activity programs will be encouraged.

3. The goal for each student will be a balanced program of appropriate academic studies and activities to be determined by the school, the parents, and the student. This should be a shared responsibility.

4. Guidance will be offered to encourage participation of all students in appropriate activities and to prevent over-emphasis on extracurricular activities at the cost of academic performance.

5. All activities will be supervised; all clubs and groups will have a faculty advisor.

LEGAL REF.:  M.G.L. 71:47
603 CMR 26:06
CO-CURRICULAR AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

(1) Advantages and privileges of public schools include all extracurricular activities made available, sponsored or supervised by any public school. No school shall sponsor or participate in the organization of outside extracurricular activities conducted at such schools which restrict students’ participation on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, disability, sexual orientation or national origin. 603 CMR 26.06(1) does not prohibit School Committees from allowing use of school premises by independent groups with restrictive membership.

(2) No student shall be denied the opportunity in any implied or explicit manner to participate in an extracurricular activity because of the race, color, sex, religion, disability, sexual orientation or national origin of the student except as provided in 603 CMR 26.06(7).

(3) Each school system shall provide a fair distribution of athletic expenditures. Each school within such system shall provide equal opportunity for male and female students to participate in intramural and interscholastic sports. Factors considered in determining equal opportunity shall include budgetary allocations, the proportion of male and female students in the student body, the number and nature of activities offered, levels of competition, equipment (including rate of replacement), supplies, awards, uniforms, facilities, scheduling of games and practice times, travel opportunities and allowances, opportunities to receive equitable coaching and instruction at each level of competition and the availability of services such as medical and insurance coverage, publicity, clerical and administrative staff, scouting services and audio-visual aids.

(4) In developing its athletic program, a school shall be required to demonstrate good faith by taking into account determined student interest.

(5) In order to insure fair distribution of athletic expenditures as defined in 603 CMR 26.06(4), each school shall indicate in the budget that is reviewed by the School Committee the anticipated expenditure for each interscholastic and intramural athletic activity and the anticipated student participation in the activity by number and sex.

(6) A school may establish separate teams for males and females for interscholastic and intramural compensation in a particular sport, provided that the requirements of 603 CMR 26.06(8) are satisfied.

(7) Teams comprised primarily or solely of persons of one sex shall be granted equal instruction, training, coaching, access to available facilities, equipment and opportunities to practice and complete as teams engaged in a similar activity comprised primarily or solely of persons of the opposite sex.

(8) Participation in extracurricular activities shall be actively encouraged by each school for both boys and girls and for racial and ethnic minorities. When offering extracurricular programs, schools shall take into consideration the ethnic traditions of the student body. Criteria not related to skill levels which act to exclude members of one sex or any racial, religious, or ethnic group represented in the school from participation in specific athletic or other extracurricular activities cannot be permitted.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:47
603 CMR 26.06

Palmer Public Schools
STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Student Organizations

Student organizations in the District shall be encouraged when they met the criteria of contributing to student self-esteem and performance and should operate within the framework of state statutes, School Committee policies, and administrative procedures.

Each building Principal shall develop general guidelines for the establishment and operation of student organizations within the particular school. Among other provisions, such guidelines shall require the approval of the Principal prior to the formation of any club or organization in the school and the assignment of at least one faculty or designated adult advisor to each approved student organization. Within such guidelines will be provisions for a periodic review of all student organizations.

The formation of any student organization that may engage in activities of a controversial nature shall require approval by the board.

All student organizations shall be required to open membership to all interested and/or eligible students. Disruptive groups, secret societies, and/or gangs shall not receive recognition in any manner under this policy (see also Policy JICF).

All forms of hazing in initiations shall be prohibited in a student organization. No initiation shall be held for a student organization which will bring criticism to the school system or be degrading to the student.

The faculty or designated adult advisor must attend every meeting of the student organization whether conducted on school premises or at another location.

Student Organizations - High Schools

In addition to the above requirements, all clubs or organizations at the high school level will relate to the subject matter covered by the curriculum. The Principal is responsible for determining that the purpose of a student organization is related to the curriculum. The Principal is authorized to deny requests by unauthorized student organizations desiring to meet or form in a particular school, the Principal shall inform the group of the reasons for the denial. The students and/or group may submit a written request to the appropriate District administrator for review of the Principal's decision.

LEGAL REF.: 603 CMR 26.06
PARTICIPATION FEES FOR SCHOOL ACTIVITIES
REQUEST FOR WAIVER

Middle school students, high school students, parents or guardians wishing to apply for waiver of the Student Activities Fee shall submit this form to the District’s Athletic Director.

(Please print or type)

Student’s Name: ___________________________ Grade Level: ___________________________

Address: ___________________________ Telephone: ___________________________

Parent/Guardian Name: ___________________________

I/We hereby request that my/our child, named above, be excused from the requirement for payment of the Student Activities Fee. I/We understand that determination of eligibility for waiver of the Student Activities Fee rests with the Athletic Director and that I/we may be required to produce evidence of family income level as determined by the Athletic Director to support this request. I/We understand that if I/we should disagree with the decision of the Athletic Director that an appeal may be made to the Superintendent within ten (10) school days of the date of the decision made by the Athletic Director and that the decision of the Superintendent shall be final.

________________________________________
Signature of Parent(s)/Guardian(s)
(Students having reached the age of majority may sign on their own behalf)

Date of Review: ___________________________

Approval Granted ( ) Approval Denied ( )

Date of Notice to Applicant ___________________________

Signature of Athletic Director: ___________________________

If approved, date student activities card issued: ___________________________
STUDENT FUND-RAISING ACTIVITIES

The School Committee recognizes that fund-raising activities for the school demonstrate a community commitment to the District and benefits all students. Participating in school sponsored clubs and activities allow students’ leadership opportunities and group experiences not possible within the formal classroom.

In all circumstances fund-raising activities by pre-approved parent and booster organizations are conducted under the by-laws of those organizations, independent from the Palmer Public Schools. All fundraising for high school sports and athletics must go through the Palmer United Boosters.

The School Committee allows fund-raising by students for school activities, provided student safety is not compromised and there is no expectation that students and families must participate in any fund-raising activities. The faculty sponsor shall ensure proper approval from the Superintendent and/or designee and is responsible for ensuring that a fund-raising driving is planned and carried out in a responsible manner. All monies received shall be properly deposited into appropriate activities accounts and shall be used only to support legitimate activities of the club or group.

Examples of fund-raising include:

1. Sale of tickets to scheduled athletic events and school dramatic and musical performances.
2. Sale of advertising space in school publications
3. A fund-raising activity approved by the Superintendent and/or designee
4. Proposals to raise funds for charitable purposes or for benefit of the school or community, provided such proposals have been individually approved by the building Principal and Superintendent.

No money collections of any kind may be held in the schools without the specific consent of the Superintendent.

CROSS REFS: JP, Student Gifts and Solicitations
KHA, Public Solicitations in the Schools

Revised 3/22/2017
STUDENT ACTIVITY ACCOUNTS

Student funds may be raised to finance the activities of authorized student organizations. Student activity funds are considered a part of the total fiscal operation of the District and are subject to policies established by the School Committee and the Office of the Superintendent. The funds shall be managed in accordance with sound business practices, which include accepted budgetary and accounting practices.

In compliance with Massachusetts General Law Chapter 71, Section 47, the School Committee:

1. Authorizes the Principals to accept money for recognized student activity organizations, which currently exist, or as from time to time may be revised.

2. Authorizes the Town Treasurer to establish and maintain a Student Activity Agency Account(s) which is to be audited as part of the Town’s annual audit. The interest that is earned on such accounts shall be maintained in the Agency Account and distributed annually among the Student Activity Checking Accounts as directed by the regulations established by School Committee policy.

3. Authorizes Student Activity Checking Accounts for use by the Principals with specific maximum balances established for each school by School Committee policy.

4. Directs Principals to provide the Treasurer with a bond in an amount agreeable to the Treasurer.

5. No funds may be left in a senior class account. The graduating senior class may expend funds in its account by September 1st following the graduation. If there is a balance as of September 1st, funds will be transferred to the incoming senior class.

For accounts with limits that exceed $25,000.00, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education recommends that districts consider an audit conducted by an outside accounting firm every two to three years.

*Revised and approved by the School Committee on 6/16/10.*
CONTESTS FOR STUDENTS

The schools may cooperate with community organizations and agencies desiring to sponsor activities in the District when they keep with the purposes and educational aims of the school. Such activities must be integrated into the school program without disruption or loss of instructional time for students and without imposing an unreasonable added workload on school staffs. Involvement in contests shall be approved by the appropriate administrator.
INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETICS

The School Committee encourages all eligible students to participate in interscholastic athletics.

Participation in interscholastic athletics is a privilege that students must earn through responsible behavior and acceptable academic achievement. Participation in interscholastic athletics provides students with individual training and experience in teamwork and leadership skills, and the school should provide such activities within available resources and opportunities, scheduling them to enable and encourage students to take advantage of the activities provided.
POLICY REGARDING VOLUNTEER COACHES

Members of the salaried coaching staff who are appointed by the Superintendent of Schools are fully responsible for all aspects of their respective sport at all levels. Individuals who volunteer their services to assist in the operation of the athletic program are important and valued members of our athletic program. All coaches, salaried and volunteers, must be in compliance with the MIAA coaching requirements within the time limits specified in the MIAA regulations.

Head coaches, who are requesting the services of a volunteer coach, must submit a letter to the Director of Athletics requesting the appointment of the volunteer coach. There will be a limit of one volunteer coach per team. The prospective volunteer must complete an application form which must detail the prospective volunteer background and experiences in the sport in which the volunteer seeks permission to assist along with detailed reasons why the volunteer wishes to assist. The prospective volunteer must also list the names of any students who tryout and/or who make the team with whom the volunteer is related. The application form will not be considered completed until all information has been provided. Information that is found to be either erroneous or omitted on the application is grounds for revocation of the volunteer’s coaching privileges. The completed application must be submitted to and reviewed by the Director of Athletics and the Principal of Palmer High School who will forward it to the Superintendent of Schools. If numbers suggest a second volunteer is warranted, the superintendent may give approval at his/her discretion.

In no instance will the Superintendent approve an application to appoint a volunteer coach until a review of the prospective volunteer’s application and CORI check have been completed. In no instance will the Principal of Palmer High School, the Director of Athletics, nor the Head coach of any sport allow a prospective volunteer to participate in any coaching duties, including contact of any kind with athletes, until the Superintendent has approved the appointment of the individual to be a volunteer coach.

A volunteer coach is limited in what s/he can do regarding direct contact with athletes. Listed below are the minimal guidelines:

1) Volunteer coaches are not empowered to expel, suspend nor punish an athlete.

2) Volunteer coaches cannot ride on athletic buses, be on the field or be in the locker room unless either the Head coach or the assistant coach is present.

3) Volunteer coaches serve as an advisor to appointed coaches and cannot set policy.

4) Volunteer coaches are not entitled to any coaching salary or stipend from the Palmer Public Schools for the sport in which they serve.

5) Volunteer coaches must comply with existing policies of the Palmer School Committee and procedures of the Palmer Public Schools, including a CORI check.

Adopted by the School Committee on 5/15/08.

Palmer Public Schools
ATHLETIC CONCUSSION POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to provide information and standardized procedures for persons involved in the prevention, training management and return to activity decisions regarding students who incur head injuries while involved in extracurricular athletic activities including, but not limited to, interscholastic sports, in order to protect their health and safety as required by Massachusetts law and regulations. The requirements of the law apply to all public middle and high schools, however configured, serving grades six through high school graduation. In addition to any training required by law, the following persons shall complete one of the head injury safety training programs approved by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) as found on its website: coaches; certified athletic trainers; trainers; volunteers; school and team physicians; school nurses; athletic directors; directors responsible for a school marching band; employees or volunteers; and students who participate in an extracurricular activity and their parents.

Upon the adoption of this policy by the School Committee, the Superintendent shall ensure that DPH receives an affirmation on school district letterhead that the district has developed policies and the School Committee has adopted a final policy in accordance with law. This affirmation shall be updated by September 30, 2013 and every two years thereafter upon review or revision of its policies.

The Superintendent shall maintain or cause to be maintained complete and accurate records of the district’s compliance with the requirements of the Concussion Law, and shall maintain the following records for three years or, at a minimum, until the student graduates, unless state or federal law requires a longer retention period:

1. Verifications of completion of annual training and receipt of materials;
2. DPH Pre-participation forms and receipt of materials;
3. DPH Report of Head Injury Forms, or school based equivalents;
4. DPH Medical Clearance and Authorization Forms, or school based equivalents; and
5. Graduated reentry plans for return to full academic and extracurricular athletic activities.

This policy also applies to volunteers who assist with extracurricular athletic activities. Such volunteers shall not be liable for civil damages arising out of any act or omission relating to the requirements of law, unless such volunteer is willfully or intentionally negligent in his act or omission.

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1 Extracurricular Athletic Activity means an organized school sponsored athletic activity generally occurring outside of school instructional hours under the direction of a coach, athletic director or marching band leader including, but not limited to, Alpine and Nordic skiing and snowboarding, baseball, basketball, cheer leading, cross country track, fencing, field hockey, football, golf, gymnastics, horseback riding, ice hockey, lacrosse, marching band, rifle, rugby, soccer, skating, softball, squash, swimming and diving, tennis, track (indoor and outdoor), ultimate frisbee, volleyball, water polo, and wrestling. All interscholastic athletics are deemed to be extracurricular athletic activities.
Most student athletes who sustain a concussion can fully recover as long as their brain has time to heal before sustaining another hit; however, relying only on an athlete’s self-report of symptoms to determine injury recovery is inadequate as many high school athletes are not aware of the signs and symptoms or the severity concussive injuries pose, or they may feel pressure from coaches, parents, and/or teammates to return to play as quickly as possible. One or more of these factors will likely result in under-diagnosing the injury and a premature return to play. Massachusetts General Laws and Department of Public Health regulations make it imperative to accurately assess and treat student athletes when concussions are suspected.

Student athletes who receive concussions may appear to be “fine” on the outside, when in actuality they have a brain injury and are not able to return to play. Incurring a second concussion can prove to be devastating to a student athlete. Research has shown that young concussed athletes who return to play before their brain has healed are highly vulnerable to more prolonged post-concussion syndrome or, in rare cases, a catastrophic neurological injury known as Second Impact Syndrome.

The following protocol will discuss and outline what a concussion is, the mechanism of injury, signs and symptoms, management and return to play requirements, as well as information on Second Impact Syndrome and past concussion syndrome. Lastly, this policy will discuss the importance of education for our athletes, coaches and parents and other persons required by law.

This protocol should be reviewed on a yearly basis with all staff to discuss the procedures to be followed to manage sports-related concussions. This protocol will also be reviewed on a yearly basis by the athletic department as well as by nursing staff. Any changes in this document will be approved by the school committee and given to athletic staff, including coaches and other school personnel in writing. An accurate synopsis of this policy shall be placed in the student and faculty handbooks.

LEGAL REFS: M.G.L. 111:222; 105 CMR 201.000

Adopted by the School Committee on 9/20/12.
ATHLETIC CONCUSSION REGULATIONS

Section I. What is a Concussion?

A concussion is defined as a transient alteration in brain function without structural damage, but with other potentially serious long-term ramifications. In the event of a concussion, the brain sustains damage at a microscopc level in which cells and cell membranes are torn and stretched. The damage to these cells also disrupts the brain at a chemical level, as well as causing restricted blood flow to the damaged areas of the brain, thereby disrupting brain function. A concussion, therefore, is a disruption in how the brain works; it is not a structural injury. Concussions are difficult to diagnose because the damage cannot be seen. A MRI or CT Scan cannot diagnose a concussion, but they can help rule out a more serious brain injury to a student athlete. Because concussions are difficult to detect, student athletes must obtain medical approval before returning to athletics following a concussion.

Section II. Mechanism of Injury:

A concussion is caused by a bump, blow or jolt to the head or body. Any force that causes the brain to bounce around or twist within the skull can cause a concussion. A bump, blow or jolt to the head or body can be caused by either indirect or direct trauma. The two direct mechanisms of injury are coup-type and contrecoup-type. Coup-type injury is when the head is stationary and struck by a moving object such as another player’s helmet, a ball, or sport implement, causing brain injury at the location of impact. Contrecoup-type injury occurs when the head is moving and makes contact with an immovable or slowly moving object as a result of deceleration, causing brain injury away from the sight of impact. Indirect forces are transmitted through the spine and jaw or blows to the thorax that whip the head while the neck muscles are relaxed. Understanding the way in which an injury occurred is vital in understanding and having a watchful eye for athletes who may exhibit symptoms of a concussion so these student athletes can receive the appropriate care.

Section III. Signs and Symptoms:

Signs (what you see):
- Confusion
- Forgets plays
- Unsure about game, score, opponent
- Altered coordination
- Balance problems
- Personality change
- Slow response to questions
- Forgets events prior to injury (retrograde amnesia)
- Forgets events after injury (anterograde amnesia)
- Loss of consciousness (any duration)

Symptoms (reported by athlete):
- Headache
• Fatigue
• Nausea or vomiting
• Double vision/ blurry vision
• Sensitivity to light (photophobia)
• Sensitivity to noise (tinnitus)
• Feels sluggish
• Feels foggy
• Problems concentrating
• Problems remembering
• Trouble with sleeping/ excess sleep
• Dizziness
• Sadness
• Seeing stars
• Vacant stare/ glassy eyed
• Nervousness
• Irritability
• Inappropriate emotions

If any of the above signs or symptoms are observed after a suspected blow to the head, jaw, spine or body, they may be indicative of a concussion and the student athlete must be removed from play immediately and not allowed to return until cleared by an appropriate allied health professional.

Section IV. Management and Referral Guidelines:

1. When an athlete loses consciousness for any reason, the athletic trainer will start the EAP (Emergency Action Plan) by activating EMS; check ABC’s (airway, breathing, circulation); stabilize the cervical spine; and transport the injured athlete to the appropriate hospital via ambulance. If the athletic trainer is not available, the coach should immediately call EMS, check ABCs and not move the athlete until help arrives.

2. Any athlete who is removed from the competition or event and begins to develop signs and symptoms of a worsening brain injury will be transported to the hospital immediately in accordance with the EAP. Worsening signs and symptoms requiring immediate physician referral include:

   A. Amnesia lasting longer than 15 minutes
   B. Deterioration in neurological function
   C. Decreasing level of consciousness
   D. Decrease or irregularity of respiration
   E. Decrease or irregularity in pulse
   F. Increase in blood pressure
   H. Cranial nerve deficits
   I. Any signs or symptoms of associated injuries, spine or skull fracture, or bleeding
J. Mental-status changes: lethargy, difficulty maintaining arousal, confusion, agitation
K. Seizure activity
L. Vomiting/worsening headache
M. Motor deficits subsequent to initial on-field assessment
N. Sensory deficits subsequent to initial on-field assessment
O. Balance deficits subsequent to initial on-field assessment
P. Cranial nerve deficits subsequent to initial on-field assessment
Q. Post-Concussion symptoms worsen
R. Athlete is still symptomatic at the end of the game

3. After a student athlete sustains a concussion, the athletic trainer will use the Standardized Assessment for Concussion (SAC) to assess and document the student athlete’s concussion. The athletic trainer will also report on the student athlete’s signs and symptoms by using the Signs and Symptoms Check-List. On the signs and symptoms checklist, the athletic trainer will also check pulse and blood pressure of each student athlete with a suspected concussion. After the initial evaluation of a concussion, all signs and symptoms will be tracked on the computer using the ImPact Test.

4. Any athlete who is symptomatic but stable is allowed to go home with his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) following the head injury.

   A. If the head injury occurs at practice, parent(s)/guardian(s) will immediately be notified and must come and pick up the student athlete and talk to the certified athletic trainer in person.
   B. If the injury occurs at a game or event the student athlete may go home with the parent/guardian(s) after talking with the certified athletic trainer.
   C. Parent(s)/guardian(s) will receive important information regarding signs and symptoms of deteriorating brain injury/function prompting immediate referral to a local emergency room as well as return to play requirements. Parent(s)/guardian(s), as well as student athletes, must read and sign the Concussion Information and Gradual Return to Play form and bring it back to the certified athletic trainer before starting with the return to play protocol.

V. Gradual Return to Play Protocol:

1. Student athletes, with the consent of their parent(s)/guardian(s), will start taking the ImPact Test (or other approved test identified by the School District). The ImPact Test is a tool that helps manage concussions, determine recovery from injury, and is helpful in providing proper communication between coaches, parents and clinicians. The ImPact Test is a neurocognitive test that helps measure student athletes’ symptoms, as well as test verbal and visual memory, processing speed and reaction time. It is mandatory for all student athletes to take the ImPact Test for a baseline score in accordance with Massachusetts State Law. The law states that all public schools must develop safety protocols on concussions and all public schools must receive information on past concussion history. The ImPact Test appears to be a promising tool in monitoring a student athlete’s prior concussions, as well as any future concussions.
2. Each student athlete will complete a baseline test at the beginning of their sport season. **All student athletes and club cheerleading members will undergo ImPact testing.** Student athletes will be retested every other year. If a student athlete plays more than one sport during the academic year, their test will remain valid. For example, if a soccer student athlete also plays basketball in the winter, the student athlete will not have to take the ImPact Baseline Test again in the winter. If a student athlete posts scores below the norm, the student athlete will be re-tested at another time with either the certified athletic trainer or school nurse. Student athletes cannot begin practice until a valid baseline score is obtained during their designated time to take the test.

A. **At the beginning of every sport season, student athletes are required to complete a concussion history form and return it to the athletic department. This information will be recorded in the student information system for tracking purposes.**

B. **Following any concussion the athletic trainer must notify the athletic director and school nurses.**

C. **Following a concussion the student athlete will take a post-injury test within 24 to 48 hours following the head injury. STUDENT ATHLETES WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO MOVE ON TO FUNCTIONAL/PHYSICAL TESTING UNTIL THEIR IMPACT TEST IS BACK TO THE BASELINE SCORE AND ASYMPTOMATIC.** After a student athlete takes their first postinjury test, the student athlete will not be re-tested again for **5 days.**

D. **If, after the first post-injury ImPact test, the athlete is not back to his/her baseline the parent/guardian(s) will be notified, and the student athlete will be referred to their healthcare provider and must have the Concussion Information and Gradual Return to Play form signed by a physician, physician assistant, licensed neuropsychologist or nurse practitioner stating when the athlete is allowed to return to play.**

E. **Following a post-injury test, the certified athletic trainer will take the Concussion Information and Gradual Return to Play form signed by the parent(s)/guardian(s) and fill in the date of all post-injury tests taken by each student athlete.**

F. **The certified athletic trainer will also document the date on which the athlete is asymptomatic and sign the document agreeing that all the above statements are true and accurate.**

G. **Once the athlete starts on the exertional post-concussion tests, the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified and the athlete will be sent home with all signed documents relating to head injury. At this time the parent/guardian(s) must bring the student athlete to a licensed physician, licensed neuropsychologist, licensed physician assistant, nurse practitioner or other appropriately trained or licensed healthcare professional to be medically cleared for participation in the extracurricular activity.**

H. **Student athletes who continue to exhibit concussion symptoms for a week or more must be evaluated by a physician before returning to play.**

I. **Once a student athlete’s post-injury test is back at the student athlete’s baseline score, the student athlete will go through 5 days of Exertional Post Concussion Tests. The student athlete must be asymptomatic for all functional and physical tests to return to play (RTP). All tests will be administered by a certified athletic trainer.**
Exertional Post Concussion Tests:

A. Test 1: (30% to 40% maximum exertion): Low levels of light physical activity. This will include walking, light stationary bike for about 10 to 15 minutes. Light isometric strengthening (quad sets, UE light hand weights, ham sets, SLR’s, resistive band ankle strengthening) and stretching exercises.

B. Test 2: (40% to 60% maximum exertion): Moderate levels of physical activity. Treadmill jogging, stationary bike, or elliptical for 20 to 25 minutes. Light weight strength exercises (resistive band exercises UE and LE, wall squats, lunges, step up/downs. More active and dynamic stretching.

C. Test 3: (60% to 80% maximum exertion). Non-contact sports specific drills. Running, high intensity stationary bike or elliptical 25 to 30 minutes. Completing regular weight training. Start agility drills (ladder, side shuffle, zig-zags, carioca, box jumps, and hurdles).

D. Test 4: (80% maximum exertion). Limited, controlled sports specific practice and drills.

E. Test 5: Full contact and return to sport with monitoring of symptoms.

Section VI. School Nurse Responsibilities:

1. Assist in testing all student athletes with baseline and post-injury ImPact testing.
2. Participate and complete the CDC training course on concussions. A certificate of completion will be recorded by the nurse leader yearly.
3. Complete symptom assessment when student athlete enters Health Office (HO) with questionable concussion during school hours. Repeat in 15 minutes.
4. Observe students with a concussion for a minimum of 30 minutes.
5. If symptoms are present, notify parent/guardian(s) and instruct parent/guardian(s) that student must be evaluated by an MD.
   (a) If symptoms are not present, the student may return to class.
6. If symptoms appear after a negative assessment, MD referral is necessary.
7. Allow students who are in recovery to rest in HO when needed.
8. Develop plan for students regarding pain management.
9. School nurse will notify teachers and guidance counselors of any students or student athletes who have academic restrictions or modifications related to their concussion.
10. Educate parents and teachers about the effects of concussion and returning to school and activity.
11. If injury occurs during the school day, inform administrator and complete accident/incident form.
12. Enter physical exam dates and concussion dates into the student information system.

Section VII. School Responsibilities:

1. Review and, if necessary, revise, the concussion policy every 2 years.
2. Once the school is informed of the student’s concussion, a contact or “point person” should be identified (e.g. the guidance counselor, athletic director, school nurse, school psychologist or teacher).
3. Point person to work with the student on organizing work assignments, making up work and giving extra time for assignments and tests/quizzes.

Palmer Public Schools
4. Assist teachers in following the recovery stage for student.
5. Convene meeting and develop rehabilitative plan.
6. Decrease workload if symptoms appear.
7. Recognize that the student’s ability to perform complex math equations may be different from the ability to write a composition depending on the location of the concussion in the brain.
8. Educate staff on the signs and symptoms of concussions and the educational impact concussions may have on students.
9. Include concussion information in student handbooks.
10. Develop a plan to communicate and provide language-appropriate educational materials to parents with limited English proficiency.

Section VIII. Athletic Director Responsibilities:

1. Provide parents, athletes, coaches, and volunteers with educational training and concussion materials yearly.
2. Ensure that all educational training programs are completed and recorded.
3. Ensure that all students meet the physical exam requirements consistent with 105 CMR 200.000 prior to participation in any extracurricular athletic activity.
4. Ensure that all students participating in extracurricular athletic activity have completed and submitted their pre-participation forms, which include health history form, concussion history form, and MIAA form.
5. Ensure that athletes are prohibited from engaging in any unreasonably dangerous athletic technique that endangers the health or safety of an athlete, including using a helmet or any other sports equipment as a weapon.
6. Ensure that all head injury forms are completed by parent/guardian(s) or coaches and reviewed by the coach, athletic trainer, school nurse and school physician.
7. Inform parent/guardian(s) that, if all necessary forms are not completed, their child will not participate in athletic extracurricular activities.

Section IX. Parent/Guardian Responsibilities:

1. Complete and return concussion history form to the athletic department.
2. Inform school if student sustains a concussion outside of school hours. Complete new concussion history form following new injury.
3. If student suffers a concussion outside of school, complete head injury form and return it to the school nurse.
4. Complete a training provided by the school on concussions and return certificate of completion to the athletic department.
5. Watch for changes in your child that may indicate that your child does have a concussion or that your child’s concussion may be worsening. Report to a physician:
   A. Loss of consciousness
   B. Headache
   C. Dizziness
D. Lethargy
E. Difficultly concentrating
F. Balance problems
G. Answering questions slowly
H. Difficulty recalling events
I. Repeating questions
J. Irritability
K. Sadness
L. Emotionality
M. Nervousness
N. Difficulty with sleeping

6. Encourage your child to follow concussion protocol.
7. Enforce restrictions on rest, electronics and screen time.
8. Reinforce recovery plan.
9. Request a contact person from the school with whom you may communicate about your child’s progress and academic needs.
10. Observe and monitor your child for any physical or emotional changes.
11. Request to extend make up time for work if necessary.
12. Recognize that your child will be excluded from participation in any extracurricular athletic event if all forms are not completed and on file with the athletic department.

Section X. Student and Student Athlete Responsibilities:

1. Complete Baseline ImPact Test prior to participation in athletics.
2. Return required concussion history form prior to participation in athletics.
3. Participate in all concussion training and education and return certificate of completion to the athletic department prior to participation in athletics.
4. Report all symptoms to athletic trainer and/or school nurse.
5. Follow recovery plan.
6. REST.
7. NO ATHLETICS.
8. BE HONEST!
9. Keep strict limits on screen time and electronics.
10. Don’t carry books or backpacks that are too heavy.
11. Tell your teachers if you are having difficulty with your coursework.
12. See the athletic trainer and/or school nurse for pain management.
13. Return to sports only when cleared by physician and the athletic trainer.
14. Follow Gradual Return to Play Guidelines.
15. Report any symptoms to the athletic trainer and/or school nurse and parent(s)/guardian(s) if any occur after return to play.
16. Return medical clearance form to athletic trainer prior to return to play.
17. Students who do not complete and return all required trainings, testing and forms will not be allowed to participate in sports.
Section XI. Coach & Band Instructor Responsibilities:

1. Participate in Concussion Education Course offered by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) on a yearly basis. Complete certificate of completion and return to the athletic department.
2. Ensure all student athletes have completed ImPact baseline testing before participation.
3. Ensure all student athletes have returned concussion history and health history form prior to participation in athletics.
4. Complete a head injury form if their player suffers a head injury and the athletic trainer is not present at the athletic event. This form must be shared with the athletic trainer and school nurse.
5. Ensure all students have completed a concussion educational training and returned their certificate of completion prior to participation in athletics.
6. Remove from play any student athlete who exhibits signs and symptoms of a concussion.
7. Do not allow student athletes to return to play until cleared by a physician and athletic trainer.
8. Follow Gradual Return to Play Guidelines.
9. Refer any student athlete with returned signs and symptoms back to athletic trainer.
10. Any coach, band instructor, or volunteer coach for extracurricular activities shall not encourage or permit a student participating in the activity to engage in any unreasonably dangerous athletic technique that unnecessarily endangers the health of a student athlete, including using a musical instrument, helmet or any other sports equipment as a weapon.

Section XII. Post Concussion Syndrome:

Post Concussion Syndrome is a poorly understood condition that occurs after a student athlete receives a concussion. Student athletes who receive concussions can have symptoms that last a few days to a few months, and even up to a full year, until their neurocognitive function returns to normal. Therefore, all school personnel must pay attention to and closely observe all student athletes for post concussion syndrome and its symptoms. Student athletes who are still suffering from concussion symptoms are not ready to return to play. The signs and symptoms of post concussion syndrome are:

- Dizziness
- Headache with exertion
- Tinnitus (ringing in the ears)
- Fatigue
- Irritability
- Frustration
- Difficulty in coping with daily stress
- Impaired memory or concentration
- Eating and sleeping disorders
- Behavioral changes
- Alcohol intolerance
- Decreases in academic performance
- Depression
- Visual disturbances
Section XIII. Second Impact Syndrome:

Second impact syndrome is a serious medical emergency and a result of an athlete returning to play and competition too soon following a concussion. Second impact syndrome occurs because of rapid brain swelling and herniation of the brain after a second head injury that occurs before the symptoms of a previous head injury have been resolved. The second impact that a student athlete may receive may only be a minor blow to the head or it may not even involve a hit to the head. A blow to the chest or back may create enough force to snap the athlete’s head and send acceleration/deceleration forces to an already compromised brain. The resulting symptoms occur because of a disruption of the brain’s blood autoregulatory system which leads to swelling of the brain, increasing intracranial pressure and herniation.

After a second impact a student athlete usually does not become unconscious, but appears to be dazed. The student athlete may remain standing and be able to leave the field under his/her own power. Within fifteen seconds to several minutes, the athlete’s condition worsens rapidly, with dilated pupils, loss of eye movement, loss of consciousness leading to coma and respiratory failure. The best way to handle second impact syndrome is to prevent it from occurring altogether. All student athletes who incur a concussion must not return to play until they are asymptomatic and cleared by an appropriate health care professional.

Section XIV. Concussion Education:

It is extremely important to educate coaches, athletes and the community about concussions. On a yearly basis, all coaches must complete the online course called “Concussion In Sports: What You Need to Know”. This course is offered by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS). Student athletes also need to understand the importance of reporting a concussion to their coaches, parents, athletic trainer and other school personnel. Every year student athletes and parents will participate in educational training on concussions and complete a certificate of completion. This training may include:

- CDC Heads-Up Video Training, or
- Training provided by the school district

The school district may also offer seminars, speakers, and discussion panels on the topic of concussions. Seminars offer an opportunity for the certified athletic trainer, athletic director and nurse leader to speak about concussions on the field at practices and games and to discuss the protocol and policy that the district has enacted. Providing education within the community will offer the residents and parents of athletes an opportunity to ask questions and voice their concerns on the topic of brain injury and concussions. When it comes to concussions, everyone needs to be aware of the potential dangers and remember that a concussion is a brain injury. Whenever anyone has a doubt about a student athlete with a concussion, SIT THEM OUT and have them see the appropriate healthcare professional!

Adopted by the School Committee on 9/20/12.
The Massachusetts General Laws require the School Committee to adopt written policies, rules and regulations not inconsistent with law, which may relate to study, discipline, conduct, safety and welfare of all students, or any classification thereof, enrolled in the public schools of the District.

The implementation of the general rules of conduct is the responsibility of the Principal and the professional staff of the building. In order to do this, each school staff in the District shall develop specific rules not inconsistent with the law nor in conflict with School Committee policy. These building rules shall be an extension of the District policies by being more specific as they relate to the individual schools.

The purpose of disciplinary action is to restore acceptable behavior. When disciplinary action is necessary, it shall be administered with fairness and shall relate to the individual needs and the individual circumstances.

Students violating any of the policies on student conduct and control will be subject to disciplinary action. The degree, frequency, and circumstances surrounding each incident shall determine the method used in enforcing these policies. Most of the situations which require disciplinary action can be resolved within the confines of the classroom or as they occur by reasonable but firm reprimand, and/or by teacher conferences with the student and/or parents or guardians.

If a situation should arise in which there is no applicable written policy, the staff member shall be expected to exercise reasonable and professional judgment.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:37H and 37L; 76:16 and 17
Chapter 380 of the Acts of 1993
Chapter 766 Regulations, S. 338.0
PHYSICAL RESTRAINT OF STUDENTS
POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Updated August 21, 2019

In accordance with Federal and State laws and specific state regulations, Section 603 CMR 46.00 all school districts in Massachusetts are mandated to adopt the state’s new restraint regulations and develop policies and procedures regarding restraints.

Maintaining an orderly, safe environment conducive to learning is an expectation of all staff members of the school district. Further, students of the district are protected by law from the unreasonable use of physical restraint.

Physical restraint is defined as the use of bodily force to limit a student’s freedom of movement. A restraint occurs when a student is immobilized or has a reduction in the ability to move their torso, arms, and legs or head freely. Physical restraint shall only be considered an emergency procedure of last resort when a student’s behavior poses a threat of assault, or imminent, serious, physical harm to the student or others and when the student is not responsive to verbal directives or other less intrusive alternatives have failed or been deemed inappropriate to keep a student and all other members of the school community safe.

Physical restraint, including prone restraint where permitted under 603 CMR 46.03, shall be considered an emergency procedure of last resort and shall be prohibited except when a student’s behavior poses a threat of assault or imminent, serious, physical harm to themselves and/or others and the student is not responsive to verbal directives or other lawful and less intrusive behavior interventions are deemed inappropriate.

When an emergency situation arises, and physical restraint is the only option deemed appropriate to prevent a student from injuring himself or herself, another student or school community member, a teacher or employee or agent of the school district may use such reasonable force needed to protect students, other persons, or themselves from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm. The definitions of forms of restraint shall be as defined in 603CMR 46.02. The use of mechanical restraint, medical restraint, and seclusion is prohibited.

Physical restraint is prohibited when it is medically contraindicated for reasons including, but not limited to, asthma, seizures, a cardiac condition, obesity, bronchitis, communication-related disabilities, or risk of vomiting.

In the event that physical restraint is required to protect the safety of the student and school community members, the Palmer Public Schools has enacted the following policy and procedures to ensure the proper use of restraint and to prevent or minimize any harm to the student as a result of the use of restraint. These procedures shall be annually reviewed, provided to school staff, and made available to parents of enrolled students. None of the foregoing paragraphs or the policy/procedures which follow, precludes any teacher, employee or agent of the Palmer Public Schools from using reasonable force to protect students, other persons or themselves from assault or imminent, serious harm.
1. School Level Supports

Old Mill Pond and Palmer High School provide professional development so that staff can receive training that will help them to be more responsive to identifying and preventing student violence, self-injurious behavior and suicide, and including individual behavior crisis planning and de-escalation of potentially dangerous behavior occurring among groups of students or with an individual student. Palmer Public Schools teaches social-emotional competencies within a PBIS Framework, creating a continuous model of prevention-focused supports, regular universal screening and progress monitoring, and evidence-based practices. PBIS implementation at both schools has decreased problem behavior and bullying, increased emotional regulation and school climate, and has created a culture of including social skill development, emotional regulation, and coping strategies to support student needs. Each campus has a crisis team that identifies students who are potentially at-risk, as well as Teacher Assistance Teams (TAT) that meet regularly to identify students who are potentially at-risk and to review student social, emotional, and behavior progress along with academic progress, to plan appropriate interventions and supports for all students, both academic and nonacademic.

Palmer High School uses Restorative Justice Practices, Group Counseling, Peer Tutors, Mediation, Social Skills training (Steps to Respect, Zones of Regulation) and counselors trained in de-escalation. All members of the school crisis team are trained in Safety Care Verbal and Physical De-escalation methods. Anti-Defamation League Student Leadership training, and training for all counseling staff at the Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center (MARC) has also helped to focus interventions on targeted areas of bullying, cyberbullying, digital behaviors, sexting, and digital citizenship.

Old Mill Pond uses Zones of Regulation, CASEL’s identified areas of behavioral and affective competencies, and whole school interventions including PBIS, character education initiatives, anti-bullying interventions, and structured activities. Targeted and Intensive interventions for students with a history of significant emotional/behavioral concerns, including at-risk behavior (harm to self and/or others) and/or any student who requires more intensive support including physical restraint include: safety plans, behavioral intervention plans, the development of FBA’s with support from the District’s School Psychologist and/or Board Certified Behavior Analyst, de-escalation strategies, counseling services, sensory break supports, and a Therapeutic Learning Center for students demonstrating problem behavior or mental health concerns.

- Adjustment Counselors located at both schools
- School Nurse located at both schools
- Guidance Counselors at Palmer High School
- Student Crisis Teams at both schools with established protocols
- Ongoing involvement with outside public and private support agencies
- Social Emotional Curriculum at all Grade Levels
- Staff training in suicide prevention in accordance with DESE guidelines

2. Methods for Engaging Parents

Any parent with concerns about the use of physical restraint at any school within the Palmer Public Schools may request a meeting with the building Principal or Assistant Principal, or the Superintendent.
to discuss concerns. Any individual who believes that a physical restraint of a student may have been unwarranted or conducted inappropriately may also make use of the Grievance Procedure described in Section 10, below.

3. Staff Training

A. All staff/faculty receive training regarding the school’s restraint policy within the first month of each school year, and employees hired after the school year begins will receive training within one month of starting their employment.

B. Required training for all staff will include a review of the following:
   (1) The role of the student, family, and staff in preventing restraint;
   (2) The District’s restraint policy;
   (3) The staff is expected to make every effort to prevent the need for the use of restraint and only use restraint as an emergency procedure of last resort;
   (4) Interventions which may preclude the need for restraint, including de-escalation of problematic behaviors and other alternatives to restraint in emergency circumstances;
   (5) When behavior presents an emergency that requires physical restraint, the types of permitted physical restraints and related safety considerations, including information regarding the increased risk of injury to a student when any restraint is used, in particular a restraint of extended duration;
   (6) Physical escort shall mean a temporary touching or holding without the use of force, of the hand, wrist, arm, shoulder, or back for the purpose of inducing a student who is agitated to walk to a safe location. Physical escort is not physical restraint.
   (7) Administering physical restraint in accordance with known medical or psychological limitations, known or suspected trauma history, and/or behavioral intervention plans applicable to an individual student. School nurses are responsible for providing monthly updated lists to principal and the Director of Special Services of students with known medical and psychological limitations.
   (8) Identification of program staff who have received in-depth training (as set forth below in section C) in the use of physical restraint.

C. Designated staff members shall participate in at least sixteen hours of in-depth training in the use of physical restraint.

   (1) At the beginning of the school year, the principal will identify those staff who will participate in in-depth training and who will then be authorized to serve as school-wide resources to assist in ensuring proper administration of physical restraint.

   In-depth training will include:
4. Proper Administration of Physical Restraint

A. Physical restraint may only be used as a last resort, in the following circumstances:

   The student actions pose a threat of imminent, serious, harm to self and/or others.

B. Physical restraint is **prohibited** in the following circumstances:

   (1) As a means of discipline or punishment; or

   (2) As a response to property destruction, disruption of school order, a student’s refusal to comply with a school rule or staff directive, or verbal threats that do not constitute a threat of imminent, serious, physical harm.

   (3) Mechanical restraint, medication restraint, and seclusion shall be prohibited in public education programs. Prone restraint shall be prohibited in public education programs except on an individual student basis, and only under the following circumstances:

   (4) The student has a documented history of repeatedly causing serious self-injuries and/or injuries to other students or staff;

   (5) All other forms of physical restraints have failed to ensure the safety of the student and/or the safety of others;
(6) There are no medical contraindications as documented by a licensed physician;

(7) There is psychological or behavioral justification for the use of prone restraint and there are no psychological or behavioral contraindications, as documented by a licensed mental health professional;

(8) The program has obtained consent to use prone restraint in an emergency as set out in 603 CMR 46.03(1)(b), and such use has been approved in writing by the principal; and,

(9) The program has documented 603 CMR 46.03(1)(b) 1 - 5 in advance of the use of prone restraint and maintains the documentation.

(10) Physical restraint, including prone restraint where permitted, shall be considered an emergency procedure of last resort and shall be prohibited in public education programs except when a student’s behavior poses a threat of assault, or imminent, serious, physical harm to self or others and the student is not responsive to verbal directives or other lawful and less intrusive behavior interventions, or such interventions are deemed to be inappropriate under the circumstances.

(11) All physical restraints, including prone restraint where permitted, shall be administered in compliance with 603 CMR 46.03 1(c).

(12) As a standard response for any individual student. No written individual behavior plan or Individualized Education Plan (IEP) may include the use of physical restraint as a standard response to any behavior. Physical restraint is an emergency procedure of last resort. 46.03 2(d).

C. Only public education program personnel who have received required training or in-depth training pursuant to this policy shall administer physical restraint on students with, whenever possible, one adult witness who does not participate in the restraint. The training requirements, however, shall not preclude a teacher, employee or agent of the school from using reasonable force to protect students, other persons or themselves from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm.

D. Physical restraint shall be limited to the use of such reasonable force as is necessary to protect a student or others from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm.

E. A person administering physical restraint shall use the safest method available and appropriate to the situation.

F. Physical restraint shall be discontinued when it is determined that the student is no longer an immediate danger to himself or others, or the student indicates that he or she cannot breathe, or if the student is observed to be in severe distress, such as having difficulty breathing, or sustained or prolonged crying or coughing. 46.05(4)

G. Additional safety requirements:
(1) A restrained student shall not be prevented from breathing or speaking. A staff member will continuously monitor the physical status of the student, including skin color, temperature, and respiration, during the restraint. 46.05(5)

(2) If at any time during a physical restraint the student exhibits or demonstrates significant physical distress, including but not limited to difficulty breathing, the student shall be released from the restraint immediately, and school staff shall take steps to seek medical assistance.

(3) If a student is restrained for a period longer than 20 minutes, program staff shall obtain the approval of the Principal. The approval shall be based upon the student’s continued agitation during the restraint justifying the need for continued restraint.

(4) Program staff shall review and consider any known medical or psychological limitations, known or suspected trauma history, and/or behavioral intervention plans regarding the use of physical restraint on an individual student.

H. At an appropriate time after release of a student from physical restraint, a school administrator or other appropriate school staff shall:

(1) review the incident with the student to address the behavior that precipitated the restraint;

(2) review the incident with the staff person(s) who administered the restraint to discuss whether proper restraint procedures were followed; and

(3) consider whether any follow-up is appropriate for students who witnessed the incident;

(4) review the incident and student behavior with the special education coordinator.

5. Reporting requirements:

A. Program staff shall report the use of all physical restraints.

B. The staff member who administered such a restraint shall verbally inform the principal of the restraint as soon as possible, and by written report no later than the next school working day.

(1) The written report shall be provided to the Principal for review of the use of the restraint. If the principal has administered the restraint, the principal shall prepare the report and submit it to an individual or team designated by the superintendent or board of trustees for review.

(2) The principal shall maintain an on-going record of all reported instances of physical restraint, which shall be made available for review by the Department or the student’s parent, upon request.

(3) Copies of all restraint reports will be forwarded to Special Services Office within 48 hours of restraint.
C. The principal shall make reasonable efforts to verbally inform the student’s parent(s)/guardian(s) of such restraint within 24 hours of the event and shall notify the parent by written report sent either within three (3) school working days of the restraint to an email address provided by the parent for communications about the student, or by regular mail postmarked no later than three (3) school working days of the restraint.

NOTE: If the school customarily provides school related information to the parent(s)/guardian(s) in a language other than English, the written restraint report shall be provided in that language.

The written report required by both sections B and C above shall include:

1. Names and job titles of the staff who administered the restraint, and observers, if any;
2. Date of restraint and time restraint began and ended;
3. Name of administrator who was verbally informed following the restraint;
4. Date and time student’s parent(s)/guardian(s) was verbally contacted and informed of the use of physical restraint;
5. Description of the activity the student, other students, and staff in the area were engaged in immediately preceding the use of physical restraint;
6. Student’s behavior/actions that prompted the restraint;
7. Efforts made to prevent escalation of behavior, including the specific de-escalation strategies used; alternatives to restraint that were attempted;
8. Justification for initiating physical restraint;
9. Description of administration of restraint, including:
   a. The hold used and reasons such hold were necessary
   b. The student’s behavior and reactions during the restraint
   c. How the restraint ended and
   d. Documentation of injury to the student and/or staff, if any, during the restraint and any medical care provided
10. Information regarding any further action(s) that the school has taken or may take, including consequences that may be imposed on the student; and
11. Information regarding opportunities for the student’s parent(s)/guardian(s) to discuss with school officials the administration of the restraint, any consequences that may be imposed on the student and other related matters.

D. The District will, within five school working days of the reported restraint, provide to the Department of Education a copy of the written report as described above and a copy of the record of all physical restraints maintained by the program administrator for the thirty-day period prior to the date of the reported.
6. Individual student review. The principal shall conduct a weekly review of restraint data to identify students who have been restrained multiple times during the week. If such students are identified, the principal shall convene one or more review teams, as the principal deems appropriate, to assess each student’s progress and needs. The assessment shall include at least the following:

(a) Review and discussion of the written reports submitted in accordance with 603 CMR 46.06 and any comments provided by the student and parent about such reports and the use of the restraints;

(b) An analysis of the circumstances leading up to each restraint, including factors such as time of day, day of the week, antecedent events, and individuals involved;

(c) Consideration of factors that may have contributed to the escalation of behaviors, consideration of alternatives to restraint, including de-escalation techniques and possible interventions, and such other strategies and decisions as appropriate, with the goal of reducing or eliminating the use of restraint in the future;

(d) An agreement on a written plan of action by the program.

If the principal directly participated in the restraint, a duly qualified individual designated by the Superintendent or School Committee shall lead the review team’s discussion. The principal shall ensure that a record of each individual student review is maintained and made available for review by the Department or the parent, upon request.

7. Administrative review. The principal shall conduct a monthly review of school-wide restraint data. This review shall consider patterns of use of restraints by similarities in the time of day, day of the week, or individuals involved; the number and duration of physical restraints school-wide and for individual students; the duration of restraints; and the number and type of injuries, if any, resulting from the use of restraint. The principal shall determine whether it is necessary or appropriate to modify the school’s restraint prevention and management policy, conduct additional staff training on restraint reduction or prevention strategies, such as training on positive behavioral interventions and supports, or take such other action as necessary or appropriate to reduce or eliminate restraints.

8. Report all restraint-related injuries to the Department. When a physical restraint has resulted in an injury to a student or program staff member, the program shall send a copy of the written report required by the Department postmarked no later than three (3) school working days of the administration of the restraint. The program shall also send the Department a copy of the record of physical restraints maintained by the program for the 30-day period prior to the date of the reported administration of the restraint. The Department shall determine if additional action by the program is warranted and, if so, shall notify the program of any required actions within 30 calendar days of receipt of the required written report(s).

9. Report all physical restraints to the Department. Every program shall collect and annually report data to the Department regarding the use of physical restraints. Such data shall be reported in a manner and form directed by the Department.
10. Grievance Procedures

A. Parents will notify the principal or the designee of any concerns regarding restraint practices and procedure. If a designee receives the complaint or a concern that designee shall notify principal within the school day. The principal shall notify the Superintendent within twenty-four hours of receiving a concern. The Superintendent or School Committee shall at his/her or its discretion order an investigation.

11. Other Interventions:

The District is engaged in promoting and providing best practices when working with students with disabilities. The district will provide training to all district staff in the use of inclusionary time-out as a behavioral support strategy and the use of exclusionary time out in educational settings. The involuntary confinement of a student alone in a room or area from which the student is physically prevented from leaving, defined as Seclusion, is strictly prohibited.

The Palmer Public School District shall develop schoolwide programs to prevent and manage problem behaviors, including programs of primary prevention across the k-12 grade span. The School district shall adopt a positive behavioral intervention and support model, which includes schoolwide expectations, classroom and non-classroom expectations, and individualized, comprehensive and high intensity interventions for students with significant behavioral challenges. A Team-based process for training and developing the Model will include PBIS training and a tiered model of support, with an emphasis on the importance of developing a comprehensive plan.

Further training will occur for all District Staff in classroom management techniques, methods of verbal de-escalation and communication techniques that will diffuse, re-direct, and otherwise de-escalate potentially risky situations which may result in physical aggression. Utilizing research-based positive behavior supports and interventions to lesson and alleviate conflict will be a goal, including an understanding of the stages of behavioral escalation and recovery.

Positive Behavior Support System in all environments in the school, including the buses. At the elementary school and middle school this includes positive behavior incentives such as caught being good tickets, golden tickets, character traits, social skills group and guidance check outs.

The elementary school also has classroom behavior systems, including Art Student of the Day, Golden Sneaker Award in PE, red, green, yellow, light system.

De-escalation techniques include: classroom time out areas, building walks, school Quiet Room and Reflection Room.

*Revised and approved on 1/21/16: Revised and approved on 8/16/17.*

*Revised and approved on 6/19/19.*

*Revised and approved on 8/21/19.*
STUDENT WELFARE

Supervision of Students

School personnel assigned supervision are expected to act as reasonably prudent adults in providing for the safety of the students in their charge.

In keeping with this expected prudence, no teacher or other staff member will leave his/her assigned group unsupervised except when an arrangement has been made to take care of an emergency.

During school hours or while engaging in school-sponsored activities, students will be released only into the custody of parents or other persons authorized in writing by a parent or guardian.

Reporting to Authorities - Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect

Any school official or employee shall report any suspected child abuse or neglect as required by M.G.L. Ch. 119, S 51A.

In accordance with the law, the District shall establish the necessary regulations and procedures to comply with the intent of the Act consistent with the District's responsibility to the students, parents, District personnel, and the community.

Student Safety

Instruction in courses in industrial arts, science, homemaking, art, physical education, health, and safety will include and emphasize accident prevention.

Safety instruction will precede the use of materials and equipment by students in applicable units of work, and instructors will teach and enforce all safety rules set up for the particular courses. These include the wearing of protective eye devices in appropriate activities.

Safety on the Playground and Playing Field

The District shall provide safe play areas. Precautionary measures, which the District requires, shall include:

- A periodic inspection of the school's playground and playing fields by the Principal of the school and others as may be deemed appropriate;
- Instruction of students in the proper use of equipment;
- Supervision of both organized and unorganized activity.

Fire Drills

The District shall cooperate with appropriate fire departments in the conduct of fire drills.
STUDENT INSURANCE PROGRAM

A noncompulsory accident insurance plan totally administered by an insurance company may be made available to students. The District does not assume any responsibility regarding service, claims, or other matters relating to the insurance program.

All students participating in competitive athletics shall be required to be covered by a medical insurance plan.
STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES AND REQUIREMENTS

Activities may include identification of student health needs, health screening tests (including eye and hearing screening tests), communicable disease prevention and control, promotion of the correction of remediable health defects, emergency care of the ill and injured, health counseling, health and safety education, and the maintenance of a healthful school environment.

The District recognizes that parents have the primary responsibility for the health of their students. The school will cooperate with appropriate professional organizations associated with maintaining individual and community health and safety.

The District shall provide the services of a medical consultant who shall render medical and administrative consultative services for personnel responsible for school health and athletics.

Procedures for Emergency at School

School personnel shall give only emergency care to students who become ill or injured on school property, buses, or while under school supervision.

Each year parents shall supply information indicating where the student is to be taken in case of an emergency; the name, address, and phone number of a neighbor to be contacted in case the parent/guardian is not available; and any allergies or diseases the student might have.

The District shall maintain an Emergency Procedures Handbook, which shall be utilized by District personnel for handling emergencies. Emergency procedures shall include the following:

Provision for care beyond First Aid, which would enable care by the family or its physician or the Paramedic Assistance Unit of the Fire Department. In instances when the Paramedic Assistance Unit is required, every effort shall be made to provide the unit with the student’s Emergency Card which lists any allergies or diseases the student might have;

Information relative to not permitting the administration of any form of medicine or drugs to students without written approval of parents. Requests made by parents for such administration of medication shall be reviewed and approved by the Principal or designee;

Provisions for reporting all accidents, cases of injury, or illness to the Principal. Provisions shall be made (in all cases of injury or illness involving possible legal or public relations implications) for reporting such to the appropriate executive director of education immediately;

Prompt reporting by teachers to the Principal or designee any accident or serious illness and such reports will be filed with the Business Office.
Student Illness or Injury

In case of illness or injury, the parent or guardian will be contacted and asked to call for the student or provide the transportation.

Transportation of an ill or injured student is not normally to be provided by the school. If the parent cannot provide transportation and the student is ill or injured, an ambulance may be called. Expense incurred as a result of emergency ambulance use will not be borne by the District.

Transportation of a student by school personnel will be done only in an emergency and by the individual so designated by the school administrator.

LEGAL REF.:  M.G.L. 71:53;54;54A;54B;55;55A;55B;56;57
CROSS REF.:  EB, Safety Program  
              EBB, First Aid  
              GBGB, Staff Personal Security and Safety
PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS OF STUDENTS

Every student will be examined once in each school year for screening in sight or hearing and for other physical problems as provided in the laws. A record of the results will be kept by the school nurse.

Every student will be given a general physical examination four times: upon entering school and upon admittance to the fourth, seventh, and tenth grades. The results of examinations will be a basis for determining what corrective measures or modifications of school activities, if any, should be recommended. A record of all examinations and recommendations will be kept.

Every candidate for a school athletic team will present the signed consent of parent or guardian in order to participate on a squad and will, with the signed consent of parent or guardian, be thoroughly examined to determine physical fitness. The school physician will examine athletes, except when a family wishes to have the examination done by their own doctor at their own expense. A written report stating the fitness of the student to participate signed by the physician will be sent to the school Principal.

The school physician will make a prompt examination of all children referred to him/her by the school nurse. He/she will examine school employees when, in his opinion, the protection of the student’s health may require it. Except in an emergency, the school physician will not prescribe for or treat any student.

Whenever the school nurse finds a child suffering from any disease or medical problem, the situation will be reported to the parent or guardian in writing, or by personal visit if remedial treatment is recommended. A copy of the report will be filed at the school.

The school nurse will make a monthly report to the Superintendent of the number of students examined; the number excluded; and the number recommended for treatment or special adjustment of work. In all cases of exclusion or recommendation, the causes will be included in the report.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:53; 71:54; 71:56; 71:57
CROSS REF.: JF, School Admissions
WELLNESS POLICY

The Palmer Public Schools recognize the important relationship between wellness and academic success inclusive of the entire school community. The intent of this policy is to outline the district's on-going commitment in support and promotion of wellness in the areas of nutrition, physical activity and other school-based activities. Using Section 204 of the Public Law 108-265 – June 30, 2004: Child Nutrition and WIC Education Reauthorization Act of 2004, and recommendations by the Massachusetts Departments of Education and Public Health, the following beliefs guide our efforts:

1. Communication with parents or guardians, staff and students is essential. We will seek opportunities to educate the school community on trends and information related to health and wellness. We encourage community partnerships that assist the district in this effort.

2. Consistent with current federal and state nutrition regulations, the Palmer Public Schools will continue to increase the availability and sale of nutritious selections and discourage the sale and consumption of beverages and foods of low nutritious value during regular school hours.

3. Opportunities for physical fitness, both structured (K-12 physical education curriculum) and activity (recess, movement, extracurricular activities and sports teams/clubs) will be supported and strongly encouraged. Again, the Palmer Public Schools encourage community partnerships that assist the district to support an active, healthy community of learners.

4. Opportunities for staff in-service education to share best practices which incorporate activity and wellness across the curriculum will be offered. Encouraging a healthy lifestyle for school employees further supports the overall objective of a healthy community.

LEGAL REFS.: Public Law 108-265, Section 206 Child Nutrition & WIC Education Reauthorization Act of 2004

Adopted by the School Committee on 9/12/06.
Wellness Policy

Regulations

1.0 Physical Fitness

Physical fitness in the Palmer Public Schools is a valued component of academic achievement. Physical education and physical activity are supported at all levels to the extent possible (e.g. staff, facilities) as described below. National Association of Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) recommendations for physical education are 150 minutes per week for elementary students and 225 minutes per week for middle and high school students.

1.1 Physical Education: Comprehensive, sequential physical education at every level, elementary through high school, is essential to lifelong learning and health for all students. Physical education shall be taught by a certified specialist.

Goals for Physical Education (DOE Health Curriculum Frameworks)

1.1.1 By the end of grade 5, students will:
   1.1.1.1 Apply movement concepts including direction, balance, level (high, low), pathway (straight, curve, zigzag), range (expansive, narrow), and force absorption (rigid, with bent knees) to extend versatility and improve physical performance
   1.1.1.2 Use a variety of manipulative (throwing, catching, striking), locomotor (walking, running, skipping, hopping, galloping, sliding, jumping, leaping), and non-locomotor (twisting, balancing, extending) skills as individuals and in teams
   1.1.1.3 Perform rhythm routines, including dancing, to demonstrate fundamental movement skills
   1.1.1.4 Identify physical and psychological changes that result from participation in a variety of physical activities.
   1.1.1.5 Explain the benefits of physical fitness to good health and increased active lifestyle.
   1.1.1.6 Identify the major behaviors that contribute to wellness (exercise, nutrition, hygiene, rest, and recreation, refraining from using tobacco, alcohol, and other substances).
   1.1.1.7 Demonstrate responsible personal and social conduct used in physical activity settings

Instructional Physical Educational Time to Support Goal Attainment in Grades K -5 (Elementary Level)

- One, 40-minute PE class per week, grades K-4 (Old Mill Pond School)
- Ninety, 45-minute classes per year, grade 5 (Converse Middle School)
1.1.2 By the end of grade 8 students will:
   1.1.2.1 Use combinations of manipulative, locomotor, and non-locomotor skills to develop movement sequences and patterns, both individually and with others
   1.1.2.2 Demonstrate developmentally appropriate basic manipulative and advanced specialized physical skills, including throwing and catching different objects with both accuracy and force, hand and foot dribbling while preventing an opponent from challenging, and accurate striking proficiency
   1.1.2.3 Perform a rhythm routine that combines traveling, rolling, balancing, and weight transfer into smooth flowing sequences with intentional changes in direction, speed, and flow
   1.1.2.4 Apply basic principles of training and appropriate guidelines of exercise to improve immediate and long-term physical fitness.
   1.1.2.5 Participate in activities that promote physical fitness, decrease sedentary lifestyle, and relieve mental and emotional tension.
   1.1.2.6 Explain the personal benefits of making positive health decisions and monitor progress towards personal wellness.
   1.1.2.7 Apply advanced movement concepts and beginning game strategies to guide and improve individual and team performance
   1.1.2.8 Demonstrate strategies for inclusion of all students in physical activity settings related to strength and speed
   1.1.2.9 Describe the purpose and benefits of sports, games, and dance in modern society

Instructional Physical Education Time to Support Goal Attainment in Grades 6-8

- Ninety, 45-minute classes per year, grades 6 and 7 (Converse Middle School)
- Ninety, 45-minute classes per year (one semester), grade 8 (Palmer High School)

1.1.3 By the end of grade 12 students will:
   1.1.3.1 Demonstrate developmentally appropriate competence (basic skills, strategies, and rules) in many and proficiency in a few movement forms and motor skills (team sports, aquatics, individual/dual sports, outdoor pursuits, self-defense, dance, and gymnastics)
   1.1.3.2 Demonstrate activities for warming up and cooling down before and after aerobic exercise
   1.1.3.3 Apply concepts about sequential motor learning and development, biomechanics, exercise physiology, and sports psychology
   1.1.3.4 Demonstrate exercises in strength training, cardiovascular activities, and flexibility training.
1.1.3.5 Identify the components of physical fitness and the factors involved in planning and evaluating fitness programs for individuals at different stages of the life cycle.
1.1.3.6 Conduct a personally developed physical activity program.
1.1.3.7 Identify life-management skills and protective factors that contribute to achieving personal wellness health goals, including researching, evaluating, and implementing strategies to manage personal wellness, monitor progress, and revise plans.
1.1.3.8 Understand how activity participation patterns are likely to change throughout life and identify strategies to deal with those changes, including a plan for life-long wellness
1.1.3.9 Apply safe practices, rules, procedures, and sportsmanship etiquette in physical activity settings, including how to anticipate potentially dangerous consequences and outcomes of participation in physical activity
1.1.3.10 Define the functions of leadership in team sports (increasing motivation, efficiency, and satisfaction)

Instructional Physical Education Time to Support Goal Attainment in Grades 9-12

- 180 classes over four years (two semesters in four years)
- 45-60 minute classes
- Earn ½ credit per semester
- Required to pass 1 credit to graduate

1.2 Physical Activity: Students increase their awareness of the benefits of physical activity and fitness through knowledge about how the body functions. By identifying and experiencing the relationship of exercise to overall health, applying important social skills and safety in physical activity, integrating learning movement with other modes of learning, and practicing strategies to respond to stress, students can enhance their overall health and wellness. (*DOE Curriculum Frameworks*)

1.2.1 Before and after school physical activity opportunities may include:

1.2.1.1 Elementary Level, K-4
1.2.1.2 Middle School Level, 5-7
   - Cougar’s Den, as available

1.2.1.3 High School Level, 8-12
   - Clubs, weight room, and interscholastic athletics

1.2.2 Integration of physical activity into the daily classroom schedule:
1.2.2.1 Activities are strongly encouraged with classroom teacher at all levels by all teachers
1.2.2.2 Recess every day, weather permitting for a minimum of 15 minutes in elementary buildings for grades K-4
1.2.3 The Palmer Public Schools encourages student involvement in community-based recreational youth leagues.

2.0 NUTRITION

Nutrition education and food selections offered in the Palmer Public Schools aim to teach, encourage and support life-long healthy nutritional behaviors. Nutrition education is accomplished primarily through health curriculum frameworks and practiced through opportunities for all students to apply these concepts and skills when selecting school prepared meals and purchasing food items and beverages sold during school hours.

2.1 Goals for Nutrition Education by Grade Level (DOE Health Curriculum Frameworks)

2.1.1 In Grades K through 5 the following key concepts will be taught by either a certified health or physical educator, nurse, and/or classroom teacher:

2.1.1.1 Improving Nutrition
   a) Identify the key nutrients in food that support health body systems (skeletal, circulatory) and recognize that the amount of food needed changes as the body grows.
   b) Explain the USDA Food Guide Pyramid and its three major concepts of balance, variety, and moderation to plan healthy meals and snacks. Recognize hunger and satiety cues and how to make food decisions based upon these cues.
   c) Identify heredity, diet and physical activity as key factors in body shape and size.

2.1.1.2 Safe and Adequate Food Supply
   a) Identify the connection between food served in the home and regional food production.
   b) Describe personal hygiene and safety measures used in preparing foods.

2.1.1.3 Social Influences
   a) Describe how food choices are influenced by availability, individual and family preferences, media, and background, and identify healthy foods within various social groups.

2.1.2 In Grades 6 through 8 the following key concepts will be taught by either a certified health or physical educator, nurse, and/or classroom teacher:

2.1.2.1 Improving Nutrition:
   a) List the functions of key nutrients and describe how the United States Dietary Guidelines relate to health and the prevention of chronic disease throughout the life span.
b) Describe a healthy diet and adequate physical activity during the adolescent growth spurt.

c) Describe the components of a nutrition label and how to use the information from labels to make informed decisions regarding food

d) Analyze personal dietary intake and eating patterns.

2.1.2.2 Safe and Adequate Food Supply

a) Explain factors associated with a safe food supply (food handling, production, food storage, ad preparation techniques).

2.1.2.3 Social influences

a) Identify the behaviors and avenues of support for young people with disordered eating behaviors or eating disorders.

2.1.3 In Grades 9 through 12 the following key concepts will be taught by a certified health or physical educator, nurse, and/or classroom teacher:

2.1.3.1 Improving Nutrition

a) Describe the digestive process and how substances (alcohol, drugs, and chemicals) interfere with metabolism.

b) Explain the relationships among dietary intake (including nutritional supplements), eating behaviors, physical activity, and emotional health.

c) Describe the nutritional needs and outcomes associated with life stages (prenatal through late adulthood).

2.1.3.2 Safe and Adequate Food Supply

a) Identify the effects of food preparation techniques on the nutritional value of food.

b) Identify common food-borne illnesses.

c) Identify and practice resource management skills needed to maintain and improve nutritional health.

2.1.3.2 Social Influences

a) Identify and analyze dietary plans, costs, and long-term outcomes of weight management programs.

b) Identify how social and cultural messages about food and eating influence nutrition choices.
2.2 **Food Offerings:** All foods available in the Palmer Public Schools will comply with the current USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans. This includes food items obtained from vending machines, a la carte (individually purchased food items, competitive foods), fundraisers, student stores and school sponsored functions. To assist school personnel in their efforts to improve the nutrition environment in their schools, the John C. Stalker Institute of Food and Nutrition (JSI) assessed many products and compared them to the Standards. Products that meet the Standards are included on the list of “A-acceptable” products, also known as the A-List. (see attached)

2.2.1 Palmer Public Schools will support current National School Lunch Program regulations requiring schools to meet the Dietary guidelines for Americans, which recommend that no more than 30 percent of an individual’s calories come from fat, and less than 10 percent from saturated fat. Regulations also establish a standard for school meals to provide one-third of the Recommended Daily Allowances of Vitamin A, Vitamin C, calcium, and calories.

2.2.2 Computerized point of sale systems (POS) may be used in school cafeterias. These automated systems assist in eliminating potential social stigmas against students eligible for free and reduced lunch as well as to improve tracking of food selections prepared/sold by Food Services.

2.2.3 The full-meal school breakfast and lunch programs will continue to follow the USDA Requirements for Federal School Meal Programs. At the elementary level menu planning shall continue to use the nutrient based weighted averages.

2.2.4 A la carte offerings to students shall be nutritious and meet federal recommended guidelines. The John C. Stalker “A” List will be used as the primary reference ([www.johnstalkerinstitute.org](http://www.johnstalkerinstitute.org)). All a la carte offerings from this list shall be selected with input from students, parents, and staff.

2.2.5 Foods and beverages sold to students through school vending machines and school stores will be required to meet acceptable nutritional standards and shall consist of the following:

- 2.2.5.1 Bottled water without added sugar, artificial sweeteners or caffeine
- 2.2.5.2 One hundred percent fruit juices or fruit-based drinks composed of no less than fifty percent juice without additional sweeteners
- 2.2.5.3 Non-fat, low-fat, plain or flavored milk or yogurt in servings sizes of 16 ounces or less
- 2.2.5.4 Other non-carbonated drinks
- 2.2.5.5 A minimum of 50% of school snacks will be of high nutritional value using the John C. Stalker “A” List as a guide.

2.2.6 Foods and beverages sold for/at fundraisers shall encourage healthy choices and provide age appropriate selections for elementary, middle and high school students.
2.2.6.1 All fund raising projects that occur on school grounds, where the sale of the product will result in consumption of the product before or during the instructional school day, must follow the Mass Action for Healthy Kids Standards when determining the item sold.
2.2.6.2 All fund-raising products for sale and consumption after the instructional school day are strongly encouraged to follow the Mass Action for Healthy Kids Standards.
2.2.6.3 Organizations operating concessions at school functions will be encouraged to include healthy food choices in their offerings. It is recommended that groups market these healthy options at a reasonable price to encourage selection by students.

2.2.7 Dining areas shall be attractive and have enough space for seating all students.
2.2.8 Students should be provided adequate time to eat meals.
2.2.9 The use of food items as part of a student incentive program is strongly discouraged. If teachers feel the need to utilize food items as an incentive, they are required to adhere to the Mass Action for Healthy Kids Standards.

2.2.10 Classroom Parties/Group Snacks

2.2.10.1 There should be a teacher, one parent or volunteer from each classroom in charge of making sure a variety of foods, including healthy foods, are offered at school/classroom functions.
2.2.10.2 It is strongly recommended that candy not be sent to school for group consumption – for example for field trips, in goody bags for birthdays, Valentine’s Day, etc.
2.2.10.3 It is recommended that only milk, water or 100% juice be available at school/classroom functions.
2.2.10.4 Parents will be provided with a list of healthy snacks to send in for group snacks or parties at the beginning of the school year.
2.2.10.5 It is strongly recommended that birthdays be celebrated with non-food items (for example pencils, stickers, school library book donation, classroom craft). If a parent wants to celebrate a birthday with a food item, they are strongly encouraged to select something from a list of healthy alternatives that will be provided to parents at the beginning of the school year.

2.2.11 Food Allergies – It is recognized by the Palmer Public Schools that food allergies can pose a life-threatening risk to certain students; therefore the following recommendations have been developed:
2.2.11.1 Food sent in to school for the consumption of more than one student cannot contain nut or nut products.
2.2.11.2 The school may prohibit specific foods from entering the classroom or may prohibit home-baked items from celebrations.
2.2.11.3 Special dining accommodations will be provided in the school as needed – for example peanut-free table, dairy-free table etc.
2.2.11.4 With parental permission, a letter will be sent home with classmates to inform families of a specific food allergy and restrictions regarding this allergy.

2.2.11.5 Peanuts, nuts or products with these ingredients will not be used for class projects, arts, crafts, science experiments, cooking or other projects.

3.0 The Palmer Public Schools provide programs that support the physical, social and emotional health and well being of students and staff to build a healthy school environment by:

3.1 Providing a supportive environment that includes nursing, guidance and/or counseling services that encourages students, families and staff to seek assistance as needed for linkage to school or community resources.

3.2 Providing students with the skills to express thoughts and feelings in a responsible manner via a variety of educational and extracurricular opportunities and to give and receive support from others.

3.3 Instructing students to understand and respect the differences in others and, how to build positive interpersonal relationships. Programs such as Second Step, Peace Makers, Life Skills, and the PHS Diversity Club are embraced by the district to develop positive life-long social skills.

3.4 Encouraging students and staff to balance work and recreation, and helping them to become aware of stressors which may interfere with healthy development. Resources shall be available in the nurses, guidance, and counseling offices and through formal programs such as the Employee Assistance Program.

3.5 Collaborating with state, community and area health resources such as the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, local hospitals, and the Palmer Board of Health to promote health and wellness for students, families, staff and the school community.

4.0 Palmer Public Schools strive to provide a safe environment that supports academic success by:

4.1 Providing school buildings and grounds, buses, and equipment that meet required health and safety standards (including environmental air quality) keeping them inviting, clean, safe and in good repair. Sufficient funding to support the school environment will be requested annually by the Superintendent from the Town of Palmer.

4.2 Creating an environment where students, parents/guardians and staff are respected, valued and accepted with high expectations for personal behavior and accomplishments.

4.3 Providing staff training in appropriate safety procedures (e.g. Staff Crisis Manual/Flip Chart, Policies, Crisis Teams, Civil Rights, Harassment, Life Threatening Allergies, Nonviolent Crisis Intervention, Blood Borne Pathogens, Nuclear Emergency).

4.4 Working with staff, students and the Palmer community in conjunction with local law enforcement to maintain a school environment that is free of tobacco, alcohol and other drugs.
RESPONSIBILITIES
Implementation of the Wellness Procedural Guidelines will commence upon approval of the Wellness Policy by the Palmer School Committee. Compliance will be monitored beginning September 2006 at the building level by the Principal and at the district level by the Superintendent of Schools and the School Health Advisory Committee.

Adopted by the School Committee on 9/12/06.

Revised and approved on 8/16/07.
INOCULATIONS OF STUDENTS

Students entering school for the first time, whether at kindergarten or through transfer from another school system, will be required to present a physician's certificate attesting to immunization against diphtheria, whooping cough, poliomyelitis, tetanus, measles, and such other communicable diseases as may be specified from time to time by the Department of Public Health. The only exception to these requirements will be made on receipt of a written statement from a doctor that immunization would not be in the best interests of the child, or by the student's parent or guardian stating that vaccination or immunization is contrary to the religious beliefs of the student or parent.

Established by law

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 76:15
CROSS REF.: JF, School Admissions
COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

The District is required to provide educational services to all school age children who reside within its boundaries. By law, however, admission to school may be denied to any child diagnosed as having a disease whereby attendance could be harmful to the welfare of other students and staff, subject to the District's responsibilities to handicapped children under the law.

The School Committee recognizes that communicable diseases which may afflict students range from common childhood diseases, acute and short-term in nature, to chronic, life-threatening diseases such as Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS).

Management of common communicable diseases shall be in accordance with Massachusetts Department of Health guidelines. A student who exhibits symptoms of a communicable disease may be temporarily excluded from school attendance. The District reserves the right to require a physician's statement authorizing the student's return to school.

The educational placement of a student who is medically diagnosed as having a life-threatening communicable disease shall be determined on an individual basis in accordance with this policy and accompanying administrative procedures. Decisions about the proper educational placement shall be based on the student's behavior, neurological development, and physical condition; the expected type of interaction with others in school setting; and the susceptibility to other diseases and the likelihood of presenting risks to others. A regular review of the placement decision shall be conducted to assess changes in the student's physical condition, or based on new information or research that may warrant a change in a student's placement.

In the event a student with a life-threatening communicable disease qualifies for services as a handicapped child under state and federal law, the procedures for determining the appropriate educational placement in the least restrictive environment shall be used in lieu of the procedures designated above.

Neither this policy nor the placement of a student in any particular program shall preclude the administration from taking any temporary actions including removal of a student from the classroom as deemed necessary to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the student, staff, and others.

In all proceedings related to this policy, the District shall respect the student's right to privacy. Only those persons with a direct need to know shall be informed of the specific nature of the student's condition. The determination of those who need to know shall be made by the Superintendent.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:55
AIDS (ACQUIRED IMMUNE DEFICIENCY SYNDROME) RESOLUTION

Whereas, there is a great deal of concern in the community about the history, symptoms, and transmissibility of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) and AIDS Related Complex (ARC); and

Whereas, misinformation or lack of knowledge regarding the scope of the disease could result in improper decisions about children's attendance at school; and

Whereas, a comprehensive policy on AIDS and ARC has been developed by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, which has been adopted by the Massachusetts Department of Education as policy; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Massachusetts Medical Society strongly recommends at this time that school systems in the Commonwealth appropriately implement an official policy governing school attendance by children and teachers with Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) and AIDS Related Complex (ARC) using the guidelines currently developed by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.
AIDS (ACQUIRED IMMUNE DEFICIENCY SYNDROME)  
SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY*

Epidemiological studies show that AIDS is transmitted via sexual contact or blood to blood contact. To date, there is no recorded transmission of AIDS to family members who are non-sexual contacts. This fact is also observed with medical personnel who directly care for and are exposed to AIDS cases. Since there is no evidence of casual transmission by sitting near, living in the same household, or playing together with an individual with AIDS, the following guidelines are recommended by the Governor's Task Force on AIDS for implementation in school systems throughout the Commonwealth.

1. All children diagnosed as having AIDS or with clinical evidence of infection with the AIDS associated virus, Human Immunodeficiency Virus, (HIV), and receiving medical attention are able to attend regular classes.
   
   A. If a child has cutaneous (skin) eruptions or weeping lesions that cannot be covered, he/she should not be in school.
   
   B. If the child exhibits inappropriate behavior which increases the likelihood of transmission (i.e. biting or frequent incontinence), he/she should not be in school.
   
   C. Children diagnosed with AIDS or with clinical evidence of infection with the AIDS associated virus (HIV), who are too ill to attend school, should have an appropriate alternative education plan.
   
   D. Siblings of children diagnosed as having AIDS or with clinical evidence of infection with the AIDS associated virus (HIV) are able to attend school without any further restrictions.

2. The child's personal physician is the primary manager of the child diagnosed as having AIDS or with clinical evidence of infection with the AIDS associated virus (HIV). Management includes acting as the "gatekeeper" for the child's attendance at school in accordance with the policy outlined above.
   
   A. The child's personal physician, after consultation with the family, is responsible for reporting cases of AIDS to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health's Division of Communicable Disease. The school Superintendent will be notified by the child's personal physician and will provide assistance in identifying those educational or health care agents with an absolute need to know.
   
   B. Only persons with an absolute need to know should have medical knowledge of a particular student. In individual situations, the Superintendent might notify one or more of the following:
      
      . Principal
      . School Nurse
      . Teacher

*NOT INTENDED FOR DAY CARE
C. Notification should be by a process that would maximally assist patient confidentiality. Ideally, this process should be direct person to person contact.

D. If school authorities believe there is evidence of conditions described in #1 in a child diagnosed as having AIDS or with clinical evidence of infection with the AIDS associated virus (HIV), then the school authorities can dismiss the child from the class and request authorization from the child's personal physician so that class attendance is within compliance with the school policy.

E. If school authorities and the child's personal physician are in conflict, then the case should be referred to the Department of Public Health for review by an appointed physician who would determine the permissibility of attendance.

3. Since the child diagnosed as having AIDS or with clinical evidence of infection with the Aids associated virus (HIV) has a somewhat greater risk of encountering infections in the school setting, the child should be excluded from school if there is an out-break of a threatening communicable disease such as chicken pox or measles until he/she is properly treated (possibly with hyperimmune gamma globulin) and/or the outbreak has no longer become a threat to the child.

4. HIV screening is a blood test for detecting the presence of antibody to the HIV virus. Antibodies are substances produced by white blood cells that help fight infection caused by viruses or bacteria. Testing for HIV antibody is not recommended for any purposes other than to assist the child's personal physicians in a highly selected set of clinical decisions. Results of HIV antibody tests are confidential and should not be reported to schools.

5. Blood or any other body fluids including vomit and fecal or urinary incontinence in any child should be treated cautiously. It is recommended that gloves be worn when cleaning up any body fluids.

   A. These spills should be disinfected with bleach (one part bleach to ten parts water), or another disinfectant, by pouring the solution around the perimeter of the spill.

   B. All disposable materials, including gloves, should be discarded into a plastic bag. The mop should be disinfected with the bleach solution described in 5A.

   C. Persons involved in the clean-up should wash their hands afterward.

6. In-service education of appropriate school personnel should ensure that proper medical and current information about AIDS is available.

NOTE: These are the guidelines, revised September 1986, from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

*NOT INTENDED FOR DAY CARE*
Schools are to take the following steps to educate families and deter outbreaks:

1. Up-to-date information, developed by health authorities on head lice and treatment, is to be included in enrollment and beginning-of-year packets for all students.
2. Staff will also be provided educational materials.
3. All preschool, elementary and middle school students should be examined for head lice during routine health and vision screenings.

Schools are to take the following steps upon discovery of a case of head lice:

1. If a student is suspected to have lice and/or nits, the child should be referred immediately to the school nurse.
2. If the student is found to have lice by the school nurse, the parent/guardian or emergency designee will be notified and required to pick the student up immediately.
   a. At the time of dismissal, the nurse will
      i. Notify the teacher that student has been dismissed
      ii. Review treatment options with the parent/guardian or emergency designee, inform them of the head lice policy, and provide them with educational material.
         1. They will also be informed that they, or a designated adult, must bring the child to the school nurse for a re-screening before a return to the classroom.
         2. If lice or nits within ¼” from the scalp are seen the child will be sent home for further care.
3. Children in classrooms where multiple cases have been determined will be checked by the school nurse.
4. When a student has been found to have lice and/or nits has siblings within the district those siblings will be screened by their building school nurse.
5. A child will be allowed two days of excused absence to treat their case of head lice. After such time, absence will be considered unexcused.
6. Any child who returns to school after having an active case of head lice may have a follow-up with the school nurse in 10-15 days.

Head lice are a common problem in schools. Parents have responsibility for assisting in the prevention and management of head lice. It is the responsibility of the Parent/Guardian to notify parents of close contacts about the discovery of head lice. (i.e.: sleepovers, team sports). The school nurse is encouraged to work collaboratively with the family of an infected child to the benefit of everyone in the district.

Adopted by the School Committee on 11/15/2017.

Palmer Public Schools
ADMINISTERING MEDICINES TO STUDENTS

Medication may not be administered to students while at school unless such medicine is given to them by the school nurse acting under specific written request of the parent or guardian and under the written directive of the student's personal physician. When the school nurse is not present, a student who needs medication during the school day may be called to the office at the scheduled hour and reminded by the secretary to take the medicine. This provision only applies when the correct dosage of the medication has been placed in an individual container clearly marked with the student's name, the dosage to be administered, and the time and/or conditions under which the medicine is to be taken. In addition, the student must be able to recognize the medicine that he/she or she is taking. No one but the school nurse, and those others listed in the medical administration plan acting within the above restriction, may give any medication to any student.

The school district shall, through the district nurse leader, register with the Dept. of Public Health and train personnel in the use of Epi-pens.

Following consultation with the school nurse, students who fall into the following exceptions may self-administer medications:

1. Students with asthma or other respiratory diseases may possess and administer prescription inhalers.
2. Students with cystic fibrosis may possess and administer prescription enzyme supplements.
3. Students with diabetes may possess and administer glucose monitoring tests and insulin delivery systems.

SOURCE: MASC

Updated May 2006

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:54B
Dept. of Public Health Regulations: 105 CMR 210.00

NOTE: Regulations that govern the administration of prescription medication in public and private schools specifically detail the procedures that need to be followed. There are provisions for non-medical personnel to be authorized to administer these medications but the requirements of this regulation must be followed in order to receive permission for this exception. It is advisable for the School District to refer to DOPH Regulation 105 CMSR 210.00 before developing the policy JLCD. The regulations also require procedures be published and this should be done by creating the Regulations/Procedure coded JLCD-R.
MANAGING LIFE-THREATENING FOOD ALLERGIES IN THE EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

It is the policy of the school committee to establish guidelines for students within the school district in order to minimize the risk to students with life-threatening food allergies (LTFA). The guidelines established may include building-based medical emergency plans, the implementation of Individual Health Care Plans (IHCP) that include an individualized emergency plan, effective training programs for personnel, students, and consultation with appropriate medical specialists.

The Palmer Public Schools has developed protocols/guidelines for the management of life threatening food allergies. Building-based teams will consult with parents, and where applicable the student, to develop a safe and effective health plan so that the student will be able to access all educational programs. If appropriate, the school-based team may indicate on the IHCP and/or the 504 Plan that the student will carry the EPI-Pen on his/her person. Where this is a recommendation all necessary training procedures and guidelines articulated in the policy will be adhered to.


Adopted by the School Committee on 12/21/06.

Palmer Public Schools
AUTOMATED EXTERNAL DEFIBRILLATOR (AED) POLICY

PURPOSE:
To provide guidance in the management or administration of a school-based AED program.

Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA) is a condition that occurs when electrical impulses of the human heart malfunction causing a disturbance in the heart’s electrical rhythm called ventricular fibrillation (VF). This erratic and ineffective electrical heart rhythm causes complete cessation of the heart’s normal function of pumping blood, resulting in sudden death. The most effective treatment of this condition is the administration of an electrical current to the heart by a defibrillator, delivered within a short time of the onset of VF.

An AED is used to treat victims who experience SCA. It is only to be applied to unconscious victims who are without pulse, signs of circulation, and normal breathing. The AED will analyze the heart rhythm and advise the operator if a shockable rhythm is detected. If a shockable rhythm is detected, the AED will charge to the appropriate energy level and advise the operator to deliver a shock.

PROGRAM COORDINATOR:
School Nurse Leader and School Nurses, supported by Principals.

RESPONSIBILITIES:
- Selection of employees for AED training and distribution of AED-trained employee list, as required.
- Coordination of training for emergency responders.
- Coordinating equipment and accessory maintenance (check AED at least monthly).
- Maintain on file a specifications/technical information sheet for each approved AED model assigned or donated to the school.
- Revision of procedures, as required.
- Monitoring the effectiveness of this system.
- Communication with Medical Director on issues related to medical emergency response program, including post-event reviews.

MEDICAL CONTROL:
The medical advisor of the AED program is the School Physician who has ongoing responsibility for:
- Providing medical direction for use of AEDs.
- Writing a prescription for AEDs.
- Reviewing and approving guidelines for emergency procedures related to use of AEDs and CPR.
- Evaluation of post-event review forms and digital files downloaded from the AED.

Palmer Public Schools
THE AED MAY BE USED BY:

- Employees, including administrators, nurses, athletic/activities director, and athletic trainer.
- Additional staff as identified by the Program Coordinator (e.g., teachers, coaches, field/game managers, office staff, and security staff).
- Any trained volunteer responder who has successfully completed an approved CPR/AED training program within the last two years and has a current, successful course-completion card.

AED-TRAINED EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Activation of internal emergency response system and providing prompt basic life-support including AED and first-aid according to training and experience.
- Understanding and complying with requirements of this policy.
- Following the procedures and guidelines for the AED program.

VOLUNTEER RESPONDER RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Anyone can, at their discretion, provide voluntary assistance to victims of medical emergencies. The extent to which these individuals respond shall be appropriate to their training and experience. These responders are encouraged to contribute to emergency response only to the extent they are comfortable. The emergency medical response of these individuals may include CPR, AED, or medical first-aid.

SCHOOL OFFICE RESPONSIBILITIES:

The school office staff is responsible for:

- Receiving emergency medical call from internal locations.
- Using an established 9-1-1 response team (EMS), if required.
- Deploying AED-trained employees to emergency location.
- Assigning someone to meet responding EMS aid vehicle and directing EMS personnel to site of medical emergency.

APPROVED EQUIPMENT:

Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) that conform to state standards.

- The AED and the first-aid emergency care kit will be brought to all medical emergencies.
- The AED, unless equipped with Infant/Child Reduced Energy Defibrillation Electrode Starter Kit, should be used on any person who is at least eight (8) years of age and displays all of the systems of cardiac arrest. The AED will be placed only after the following systems are confirmed:
  - Victim is unresponsive.
  - Victim is not breathing or is breathing ineffectively.
  - Victim has no signs of circulation, such as pulse and coughing, or movement.
LOCATION OF AEDs:

As funding permits, an AED will be located in each school of the district. During school hours, the AED will be at locations specific to each school that should allow the device to be easily seen by staff and allow staff members to retrieve the device outside of normal school hours.

After school hours, the AED may be moved from its designated location by an authorized AED-trained staff member. A visible sign must be left in the place of the AED, with the phone number of the authorized representative in possession of the AED, clearly indicating they have possession of the AED. Each school’s AED is intended for use on the school grounds, by trained and authorized representatives, and for approved activities.

Adopted by the Palmer School Committee on 3/27/19.
PALMER SCHOOL DISTRICT NALOXONE (NARCAN) POLICY

PURPOSE
The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines and procedures governing the utilizations of the opioid antagonist naloxone administered by members of the Palmer School Department.

POLICY
It is the policy of the Palmer School Department that all of its schools shall provide and maintain on-site in each school facility opioid antagonists. To treat a case of suspected opioid overdose in a school setting, any trained nurse may administer an opioid antagonist, during an emergency, to any student or staff suspected of having an opioid-related drug overdose whether or not there is a previous history of opioid abuse.

No school nurse shall be liable for civil damages which may result from acts of omissions relating to the use of the opioid antagonist which may constitute ordinary negligence; nor shall the school personnel be subject to criminal prosecution which may result from acts or omissions constituting gross negligence or willful or wanton conduct. No school nurse shall be subject to penalty or disciplinary action for refusing to be trained in the administration of an opioid antagonist.

TRAINING
School nurses shall be trained in the use of naloxone by the Massachusetts Department of Health (MA DOH). School departments are encouraged to send other staff to be trained, including coaches, guidance counselors, custodians, teachers, etc.

PROCUREMENT OF NALOXONE
a. The superintendent, principal, certified school nurse leader and school nurses, or designee will be responsible for the procurement of naloxone. The school physician shall prepare standing orders and update annually.

b. The Massachusetts Department of Health (MA DOH) recommends that schools provide intranasal naloxone. At minimum, each school should have the following supplies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>MANUFACTURER</th>
<th>QUANTITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Naloxone HCL 4mg/0.1ml Nasal spray</td>
<td>ADAPT</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nitrile gloves, pair</td>
<td>Various</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mask/barrier device</td>
<td>Various</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step by step instructions</td>
<td>Various</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
 STORAGE  
  a. Naloxone will be clearly marked and stored in an accessible place at the discretion of the school nurse leader and school nurses. The school nurse leader and school nurses will ensure that all other relevant staff are aware of the naloxone storage location.  
  b. Naloxone will be stored in accordance with manufacturer’s instructions to avoid extreme cold, heat, and direct sunlight.  
  c. Inspection of the naloxone shall be conducted regularly.  
     ▪ Check the expiration date found on box.

 USE OF NALOXONE  
 In case of a suspected opioid overdose, the school nurse leader or other trained staff shall follow the protocols outlined in the naloxone training:  
     ▪ Call 911  
     ▪ Administer rescue breathing  
     ▪ Prepare and administer naloxone  
     ▪ Alert the school crisis response team  
     ▪ Continue rescue breathing  
     ▪ Give another dose of naloxone in 3 minutes if no response or minimal breathing or responsiveness  
     ▪ Naloxone wears off in 30-90 minutes, which necessitates definitive medical care  
     ▪ Comfort them; withdrawal can be unpleasant  
     ▪ Encourage survivors to seek treatment

 FOLLOW-UP  
 a. After administration of naloxone, the school nurse leader, or other staff, will follow the Palmer School Department reporting protocols.  
 b. The school nurse leader or other staff will:  
     ▪ Ensure that the overdose victim was transported to the emergency department  
     ▪ Notify appropriate student services  
     ▪ Provide substance abuse prevention resources to the overdose victim and family, as appropriate

 Adopted by the Palmer School Committee on 3/27/19.
GUIDANCE PROGRAM

Guidance is defined as helping individuals understand themselves in the light of their abilities, aptitudes, interests, attitudes, strengths and limitations. This process should assist students in the development of their potential; their decisions relating to personal, educational, and vocational matters, and also in becoming capable of mature self-guidance.

The school system's guidance program will be based on this definition and developed from these broad fundamental principles:

1. Individuals are different from one another in their capabilities, aptitudes, interests, needs, goals, desires and values.

2. Conditions may be improved. Equality of educational opportunity will benefit the individual and society.

3. Guidance is a continuous and developmental process. Every experience of the individual influences his performance in some way.

4. Guidance does not propose to program an individual's course of action but rather tries to assist him in arriving at his own satisfactory solutions.

Guidance services will include: educational guidance; testing programs; occupational, career, and higher education assistance and information; study aids; consultation services; and personal developmental guidance as needed. These services will be available to all students.

While some of the problems of the individual may relate to behavior and consequently entail guidance on behavior, student discipline will not be a regular function of guidance personnel.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:38A through 71:38F; 71:46G 603 CMR 26.04
GUIDANCE PROGRAM

Guidance Counselors and other personnel shall represent to the students a broad spectrum of education and career opportunities. Race, color, sex, national origin, disability, sexual orientation and religion shall not be considered as limiting factors in career determination.

“Career Day” programs and other occupational information shall include representatives of both sexes and of minority group members in a broad variety of occupational roles. Schools shall not permit materials including pictorial representations to be used to recruit students for employment, including training, that contain a preference of individuals of particular race, color, sex, religion, disability, sexual orientation or national origin. Any pictorial representation in such materials, in the aggregate, shall depict members of both sexes and of minority groups.

No material or tests shall be employed for guidance purposes which discriminate and/or limit choices on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, disability, sexual orientation or national origin.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:38A through 71:38F; 71:46G
603 CMR 26.04
STUDENT GIFTS AND SOLICITATIONS

Because of the embarrassment that might result among children, students will be discouraged from giving gifts to classroom teachers and other school personnel. For the same reason, there will be no formal exchange of gifts between students in the classroom.

Solicitation of funds for charitable purposes from students of the school system will be made only as approved by the School Committee.

Any organization desiring to distribute flyers or other materials to students in connection with fund drives may do so only with the approval of the Superintendent.

CROSS REFS.:  GBEBC, Staff Gifts and Solicitations  
JJE, Student Fund-Raising Activities 
KHA, Public Solicitations in the Schools  
KHB, Advertising in the Schools
The Palmer Public Schools recognize, encourage and support a wide range of co-curricular activities at all levels. These co-curricular activities enrich the lives of students; encourage opportunities for creative, athletic and social expression.

To the extent possible, The Palmer Public Schools will financially support these activities through the operating budget. In the event that activity fees are necessary, all students will be encouraged to participate regardless of financial status. No student will be denied access into any program because of inability to pay these supplementary charges.

A school may exact a fee or charge only upon School Committee approval. The schools, however, may:

- Charge students enrolled in certain courses for the cost of materials used in projects that will become the property of the student.
- Charge for lost and damaged books, materials, supplies, and equipment.

Students who are indigent are exempt from paying fees. However, indigent students are not exempt from charges for lost and damaged books, locks, materials, supplies, and equipment.

All student fees and charges, both optional and required, will be listed and described annually in each school’s student handbook or in some other written form and distributed to each student. The notice will advise students that fees are to be paid and of the penalties for their failure to pay them. An example of a permissible penalty would be withholding of the report card until payment is made.

Any fee is non refundable.

Any fee or charge due to any school in the District and not paid at the end of the school year will be carried forward to the next succeeding school year, as such debts are considered to be debts of the student to the District and not to a particular school.

Any exceptions shall be made on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the Superintendent.
PARTICIPATION FEES FOR SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Request for Waiver

High school students, parents or guardians wishing to apply for waiver of the Student Activities Fee shall submit this form to the Superintendent.

(PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE)
Student’s Name: ________________________________ Grade Level: ______________
Address: ______________________________________ Telephone: ______________

Parent/Guardian Name: __________________________

I/We hereby request that my/our child, named above, be excused from the requirement for payment of the Student Activities Fee. I/We understand that determination of eligibility for waiver of the Student Activities Fee rests with the Superintendent and that I/we may be required to produce evidence of family income level to support this request. I/We understand that if I/we should disagree with the decision of the Superintendent that an appeal may be made to the School Committee within ten (10) school days of the date of the decision made by the Superintendent and that the decision of the School Committee shall be final.

________________________________________________________________________
Signature of Parent(s)/Guardian(s)
(Students having reached the age of majority may sign on their own behalf)

________________________________________________________________________
Date of Review: __________________________

Approval Granted (______) Approval Denied (______)

Date of Notice to Applicant: ______________________

Signature of Superintendent: __________________________

If approved, date student activities card issued: ______________________

Palmer Public Schools
STUDENT RECORDS

In order to provide students with appropriate instruction and educational services, it is necessary for the school system to maintain extensive and sometimes personal information about them and their families. It is essential that pertinent information in these records be readily available to appropriate school personnel, be accessible to the student’s parents or legal guardian and/or the student in accordance with law, and yet be guarded as confidential information.

The Superintendent will provide for the proper administration of student records in keeping with state and federal requirements, and shall obtain a copy of the state student records regulations (603 CMR 23.00). The temporary record of each student enrolled on or after June 2002 will be destroyed no later than seven years after the student transfers, graduates or withdraws from the School District. Written notice to the eligible student and his/her parent of the approximate date of destruction of the temporary record and their right to receive the information in whole or in part, shall be made at the time of such transfer, graduation, or withdrawal. The student’s transcript may only be destroyed 60 years following his/her graduation, transfer, or withdrawal from the school system.

The Committee wishes to make clear that all individual student records of the school system are confidential. This extends to giving out individual addresses and telephone numbers.


CROSS REF: KDB, Public’s Right to Know
STUDENT RECORDS

603 CMR 23.00 is promulgated by the Board of Education pursuant to its powers under M.G.L.c.71, s.34D which directs that “the board of education shall adopt regulations relative to the maintenance of student records by the public elementary and secondary schools of the Commonwealth,” and under M.G.L.c.71, s.34F which directs that “the board of education shall adopt regulations relative to the retention, duplication and storage of records under the control of school committees, and except as otherwise required by law may authorize the periodic destruction of any such records at reasonable times.” 603 CMR 23.00 was originally promulgated on February 10, 1975, and was reviewed and amended in June 1995. 603 CMR is in conformity with federal and state statutes regarding maintenance of and access to student records, and is to be construed harmoniously with such statutes.

Application of Rights

603 CMR 23.00 is promulgated to insure parents’ and students’ rights of confidentiality, inspection, amendment, and destruction of students’ records and to assist local school systems in adhering to the law. 603 CMR 23.00 should be liberally construed for these purposes.

(1) These rights shall be the rights of the student upon reaching 14 years of age or upon entering the ninth grade, whichever comes first. If a student is under the age of 14 and has not yet entered the ninth grade, these rights shall belong to the student’s parent.

(2) If a student is from 14 through 17 years or has entered the ninth grade, both the student and his/her parent, or either one acting alone, shall exercise these rights.

(3) If a student is 18 years of age or older, he/she alone shall exercise these rights, subject to the following. The parent may continue to exercise the rights until expressly limited by such student. Such student may limit the rights and provisions of 603 CMR 23.00 which extend to his/her parent, except the right to inspect the student record, by making such request in writing to the school Principal or Superintendent of Schools who shall honor such request and retain a copy of it in the student record. Pursuant to M.G.L. c.71, s.34E, the parent of a student may inspect the student record regardless of the student’s age.

(4) Notwithstanding 603 CMR 23.01(1) and 23.01(2), nothing shall be construed to mean that a school committee cannot extend the provisions of 603 CMR 23.00 to students under the age of 14 or to students who have not yet entered the ninth grade.

Definition of Terms

The various terms as used in 603 CMR 23.00 are defined below:

Access: shall mean inspection or copying of a student record, in whole or in part.
Authorized school personnel: shall consist of three groups:

1. School administrators, teachers, counselors and other professionals who are employed by the School Committee or who are providing services to the student under an agreement between the School Committee and a service provider, and who are working directly with the student in an administrative, teaching, counseling and/or diagnostic capacity. Any such personnel who are not employed directly by the School Committee shall have access only to the student record information that is required for them to perform their duties.

2. Administrative office staff and clerical personnel, including operators of data processing equipment or equipment that produces microfilm/microfiche, who are either employed by the School Committee or are employed under a School Committee service contract, and whose duties require them to have access to student records for purposes of processing information for the student record. Such personnel shall have access only to the student record information that is required for them to perform their duties.

3. The evaluation team that evaluates a student.

Eligible student: shall mean any student who is 14 years of age or older or who has entered 9th grade, unless the School Committee acting pursuant to 603 CMR 23.01(4) extends the rights and provisions of 603 CMR 23.00 to students under the age of 14 or to students who have not yet entered 9th grade.

Evaluation Team: shall mean the team, which evaluates school-age children pursuant to M.G.L.c.71B (St. 1972, c.766) and 603 CMR 28.00.

Parent: shall mean a student’s father or mother, or guardian, or person or agency legally authorized to act on behalf of the child in place of or in conjunction with the father, mother, or guardian. Any parent who by court order does not have physical custody of the student, is considered a non custodial parent for purposes of M.G.L. c. 71, s.34H and 603 CMR 23.00. This includes parents who by court order do not reside with or supervise the student, even for short periods of time.

Release: shall mean the oral or written disclosure, in whole or in part, of information in a student record.

School-age child with special needs: shall have the same definition as that given in M.G.L. c. 71B (St. 1972, c.766) and 603 CMR 28.00.

School committee: shall include a school committee, a board of trustees of a charter school, a board of trustees of a vocational-technical school, a board of directors of an educational collaborative and the governing body of an M.G.L. c.71B (Chapter 766) approved private school.

Student: shall mean any person enrolled or formerly enrolled in a public elementary or secondary school or any person age three or older about whom a school committee maintains information. The term as used in 603 CMR 23.00 shall not include a person about whom a school committee maintains information relative only to the person’s employment by the School Committee.
The student record: shall consist of the transcript and the temporary record, including all information, recording and computer tapes, microfilm, microfiche, or any other materials, regardless of physical form or characteristics concerning a student that is organized on the basis of the student’s name or in a way that such student may be individually identified, and that is kept by the public schools of the Commonwealth. The terms as used in 603 CMR 23.00 shall mean all such information and materials regardless of where they are located, except for the information and materials specifically exempted by 603 CMR 23.04.

The temporary record: shall consist of all the information in the student record which is not contained in the transcript. This information clearly shall be of importance to the educational process. Such information may include standardized test results, class rank (when applicable), extracurricular activities, and evaluations by teachers, counselors, and other school staff.

Third party: shall mean any person or private or public agency, authority, or organization other than the eligible student, his/her parent, or authorized school personnel.

Log of Access: A log shall be kept as part of each student’s record. If parts of the student record are separately located, a separate log shall be kept with each part. The log shall indicate all persons who have obtained access to the student record, stating: the name, position and signature of the person releasing the information; the name, position and, if a third party, the affiliation if any, of the person who is to receive the information; the date of access; the parts of the record to which access was obtained; and the purpose of such access. Unless student record information is to be deleted or released, this log requirement shall not apply to:

(a) Authorized school personnel under 603 CMR 23.02(9)(a) who inspect the student record;

(b) Administrative office staff and clerical personnel under 603 CMR 23.02(9)(b), who add information to or obtain access to the student record; and

(c) School nurses who inspect the student health record.

Access of Third Parties. Except for the provisions of 603 CMR 23.07(4)(a) through 23.07(4)(h), no third party shall have access to information in or from a student record without the specific, informed written consent of the eligible student or the parent. When granting consent, the eligible student or parent shall have the right to designate which parts of the student record shall be released to the third party. A copy of such consent shall be retained by the eligible student or parent and a duplicate placed in the temporary record. Except for the information described in 603 CMR 23.07(4)(a), personally identifiable information from a student record shall only be released to a third party on the condition that he/she will not permit any other third party to have access to such information without the written consent of the eligible student or parent.

(a) A school may release the following directory information: a student’s name, address, telephone listing, date and place of birth, major field of study, dates of attendance, weight and height of members of athletic teams, class, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, degrees, honors and awards, and post-high school plans without the consent of the eligible student or parent; provided that the school gives public notice of the types of information it may release under 603 CMR 23.07 and allows eligible students and parents a reasonable time after such notice to request that this information not be released without the prior consent of the eligible student or parent. Such notice may be included in the routine information letter required under 603 CMR 23.10.

Palmer Public Schools
Access Procedures for Non-Custodial Parents. As required by M.G.L. c.71, s.34H, a non-custodial parent may have access to the student record in accordance with the following provisions.

(a) A non-custodial parent is eligible to obtain access to the student record unless:

1. The parent has been denied legal custody based on a threat to the safety of the student or to the custodial parent, or
2. The parent has been denied visitation or has been ordered to supervised visitation, or
3. The parent’s access to the student or to the custodial parent has been restricted by a temporary or permanent protective order, unless the protective order (or any subsequent order modifying the protective order) specifically allows access to the information contained in the student record.

(b) In order to obtain access, the non-custodial parent must submit a written request for the student record to the high school principal annually. The initial request must include the following:

1. A certified copy of the court order or judgment relative to the custody of the student that either indicates that the requesting parent is eligible to receive access as set forth in 603 CMR 23.07(5)(a), or a certified copy of a court order specifically ordering that the student records be made available to the non-custodial parent, and
2. An affidavit from the non-custodial parent that said court order or judgment remain in effect and that there is no temporary or permanent order restricting access to the custodial parent or any child in the custodial parent’s custody.

(c) The non-custodial parent must submit a written request for a access each year stating that said parent continues to be entitled to unsupervised visitation with the student and is eligible to obtain access as set forth in 603 CMR 23.07(5)(a).

(d) Upon receipt of the request (initial and annual) the school must immediately notify the custodial parent by certified and first class mail, in English and the primary language of the custodial parent, that it will provide the non-custodial parent with access after 21 days, unless the custodial parent provides the principal with documentation that the non-custodial parent is not eligible to obtain access as set forth in 603 CMR 23.07(5)(a).

(e) The school must delete the address and telephone number of the student and custodial parent from student records provided to non-custodial parents. In addition, such records must be marked to indicate that they shall not be used to enroll the student in another school.

(f) Upon receipt of a court order which prohibits the distribution of information pursuant to M.G.L. c.71, s.34H, the school shall notify the non-custodial parent that it shall cease to provide access to the student record to the non-custodial parent.

At least once during every school year, the school shall publish and distribute to students and their parents in their primary language a routine information letter informing them of the following:

(a) The standardized testing programs and research studies to be conducted during the year and other routine information to be collected or solicited from the student during the year.
(b) The general provisions of 603 CMR 23.00 regarding parent and student rights, and that copies of 603 CMR 23.00 are available to them from the school.
LEGAL REFS:  Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, 
P.L. 93-380, Amended 
P.L. 103-382, 1994 
M.G.L. 66:10 71:34 A, B, D, E, H 
Board of Education Student Record Regulations adopted 2/10/75, as amended 
June 2002 
603 CMR: Dept. Of Education 23.00 through 23:12 
Mass Dept. Of Education publication Student Records: Questions, Answers and 
Guidelines, Sept. 1995
STUDENT PHOTOGRAPHS

Individual schools may arrange, in cooperation with the school's parent organization, student council, designated student committee, or a staff committee, to take individual student and/or class group pictures. Awarding of the photographic services shall be conducted through bidding procedures.

Individual and/or class group pictures may be taken at the school facility and during the regular school day hours. The pictures shall be made available for purchase by students and/or parents on a voluntary basis. The building Principal or his/her designee shall have final authority in authorizing the picture-taking program and will be responsible for overseeing the process.

Students may be required to have an individual picture taken for the cumulative file or identification purposes; however, no student shall be pressured or required to purchase photographs.

The purpose of the policy is to:

Enhance the safety of students through visual identification in an emergency situation.

Facilitate the social, educational, and administrative activities conducted in the school.

Provide a service to parents and students.

Allow the profits gained from the picture-taking program to be used by the sponsoring group and authorized by the building Principal.
The School Committee believes that the public schools belong to the people who created them by consent and support them by taxation, and the support of the people must be based on their understanding of and their participation in the aims and efforts of the schools. Therefore, the Committee declares its intent:

1. To keep local citizens regularly and thoroughly informed through all available channels of communication on the policies, programs, problems, and planning of the school system, and to carry out this policy through its own efforts, those of the Superintendent, and such information officers as may be appointed.

2. To solicit the studied counsel of the people through advisory committees selected from the community and appointed to consider problems that vitally affect the future of our children.
SCHOOL/COMMUNITY RELATIONS GOALS

The School Committee believes that the District is an integral part of the community and that community support is necessary for the District's operation and achievement of excellence. The School Committee and District staff members recognize that community support is based on a mutual exchange, a dynamic process in which the District contributes to the community's success and, in turn, benefits from the community's resources.

In order to maintain productive relationships with the community, the District is committed to sustaining:

**Effective, accurate, and meaningful communications** that facilitate dialogue, encourage involvement in District programs, and create community advocacy for its public schools.

**Volunteer programs** that provide mutually enriching experiences for our students, staff, and community volunteers.

**Recognition programs** that publicly honor the contributions of our students, employees, and community partners and express pride in our individual and collective accomplishments.

**Community service efforts** which enable the District's staff and students to express their commitment to the community.

*Palmer Public Schools*
SCHOOL/PARENT RELATIONS GOALS

It is the general goal of the District to foster relationships with parents, which encourage cooperation between the home and school in establishing and achieving common educational goals for students.

While parents are individually responsible for their children, the District provides direct services of education and indirect services of childcare for students during the time when they are within the supervision of school personnel. Consistent with these shared responsibilities and as appropriate to the maturity of the student, members of the school staff will consult with parents regarding student progress and achievement, methods to enhance student development, and matters of correction.

Additionally, parental involvement in the schools is encouraged through regular communication with the school Principal and staff, the parent/teacher organizations, the school volunteer program, and other opportunities for participation in school activities and District programs.
NON-CUSTODIAL PARENTS’ RIGHTS

As required by Massachusetts General Law Chapter 71, Section 34H, a non-custodial parent may have access to the student record in accordance with law and Department of Education Regulations. The School District will follow the law and the regulations developed by the Massachusetts Department of Education to standardize the process by which public schools provide student records to parents who do not have physical custody of their children ("non-custodial parents").

As required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 34H, a non-custodial parent may have access to the student record in accordance with the following provisions.

(a) A non-custodial parent is eligible to obtain access to the student record unless:

1. The parent has been denied legal custody based on a threat to the safety of the student or to the custodial parent, or
2. The parent has been denied visitation or has been ordered to supervised visitation, or
3. The parent’s access to the student or to the custodial parent has been restricted by a temporary or permanent protective order, unless the protective order (or any subsequent order modifying the protective order) specifically allows access to the information contained in the student record.

(b) The school shall place in the student’s record documents indicating that a non-custodial parent’s access to the student’s record is limited or restricted pursuant to 603 CMR 23.07(5)(a).

(c) In order to obtain access, the non-custodial parent must submit a written request for the student record to the school principal.

(d) Upon receipt of the request the school must immediately notify the custodial parent by certified and first class mail, in English and the primary language of the custodial parent, that it will provide the non-custodial parent with access after 21 days, unless the custodial parent provides the principal with documentation that the non-custodial parent is not eligible to obtain access as set forth in 603 CMR 23.07 (5)(a).

(e) The school must delete the electronic and postal address and telephone number of the student and custodial parent from student records provided to non-custodial parents. In addition, such records must be marked to indicate that they shall not be used to enroll the student in another school.
Upon receipt of a court order which prohibits the distribution of information pursuant to G.L. c. 71, §34H, the school shall notify the non-custodial parent that it shall cease to provide access to the student record to the non-custodial parent.

SOURCE: MASC
Updated: May 2006
LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:34D; 71:34F; 71:34H
603 CMR 23.07 (5) Access Procedures for Non-Custodial Parents

Revised and approved on 6/15/06.
SAMPLE NOTICE TO THE CUSTODIAL PARENT
WHEN NON-CUSTODIAL PARENT HAS REQUESTED STUDENT RECORDS
PER GENERAL LAWS CHAPTER 71, SECTION 34H

NOTE: The statute requires schools to send notice to the custodial parent by certified mail and by first class mail, in both the primary language of the custodial parent and in English.

(Date)

(Name and address of custodial parent) By certified and first class mail

Dear (Name of custodial parent):

Pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 71, Section 34H, a law regarding student records access for non-custodial parents, (insert name of non-custodial parent) has requested the student records of (insert name of child). This request was made on (insert date of non-custodial parent’s request).

In compliance with Section 34H (c) and (d), I am providing you with written notice of this request.

The law requires the school to provide the non-custodial parent with the student record information after 21 days, unless before that date you provide me with a copy of either of the following documents.

1) A court order that prohibits the non-custodial parent from having contact with your child; or
2) A court order that prohibits the non-custodial parent from getting access to the student records; or
3) A temporary or permanent order issued to provide protection to you or to any child in your custody from abuse by the requesting parent, unless the protective order (or any subsequent order modifying the protective order) specifically allows access to your child's student records.

Please contact my office if you have any questions. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

(School Principal or Designee)
SAMPLE AFFIDAVIT FOR NON-CUSTODIAL PARENT
REQUESTING STUDENT RECORDS
PER GENERAL LAWS CHAPTER 71, SECTION 34H

I, (Name of non-custodial parent), on oath depose and state as follows:

1. I am the parent of (Name of student).

2. Attached is a certified copy of the court judgment or order relative to the custody of my child, which meets the standards of General Laws Chapter 71; Section 34H.

OR

3. Attached is a certified copy of an order by a probate and family court judge specifically ordering that my child’s student records be made available to me, according to the standards of General Laws Chapter 71; Section 34H.

4. I certify that the judgment or order remains in effect and that there is currently no temporary or permanent protective order restricting my access to (Name of student), the custodial parent or to any child in the custodial parent’s custody.

Signed under the pains and penalties of perjury this ______ day of ____________________.

(Month, Year)

______________________________
Parent’s signature

Palmer Public Schools
COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION-MAKING

The School Committee endorses the concept that community participation in the affairs of the schools is essential if the school system and the community are to maintain mutual confidence and respect and work together to improve the quality of education for students. It therefore intends to exert every effort to identify the desires of the community and to be responsive, through its actions, to those desires.

All citizens will be encouraged to express ideas, concerns, and/or questions about the schools to the school administration, to any appointed advisory bodies, and to the Committee.

CROSS REF.: BDF, Advisory Committees to the School Committee
PUBLIC GIFTS TO THE SCHOOLS

The Superintendent will have authority to accept gifts and offers of equipment for the schools in the name of the Committee when the gift is of educational value. In the case of gifts from industry, business, or special interest groups, no extensive advertising or promotion may be involved in any donation to the schools.

Gifts that would involve changes in school plants or sites will be subject to School Committee approval.

Gifts will automatically become the property of the school system. Any gift of cash, whether or not intended by the donor for a specific purpose, will be handled as a separate account and expended at the discretion of the Committee, as provided by law.

The Committee directs the Superintendent to assure that an appropriate expression of thanks is given all donors.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:37A
PUBLIC'S RIGHT TO KNOW

The School Committee is a public servant, and its meetings and records will be a matter of public information except as such meetings and records pertain to individual personnel and other classified matters.

The School Committee supports the right of the people to know about the programs and services of their schools and will make every effort to disseminate information. All requests for information will be acted on fairly, completely and expeditiously.

The official minutes of the Committee, its written policies and regulations, and its financial records will be open for inspection at the office of the Superintendent by any citizen desiring to examine them during hours when the office is open. No records pertaining to individual students or staff members will be released for inspection by the public or any unauthorized persons by the Superintendent or other persons responsible for the custody of confidential files. The exception to this will be information about an individual employee (or student) that has been authorized in writing for release by the employee (or student, or student's parent).

Each building administrator is authorized to use all means available to keep parents and others in the particular school's community informed about the school's program and activities.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 4:7; 66:10; 39:23B

CROSS REFS.: GBJ, Personnel Records
JRA, Student Records
NEWS MEDIA RELATIONS/NEWS RELEASES

Every effort will be made to assist the press and other communications media to obtain complete and adequate coverage of the programs, problems, planning, and activities of the school system.

All representatives of the media will be given equal access to information about the schools. General releases of interest to the entire community will be made available to all the media simultaneously. There will be no exclusive releases except as media representatives request information on particular programs, plans or problems.

In order that school system publicity is given wide coverage and is coordinated into a common effort and purpose, the following procedures will be followed in giving official information to the news media:

1. The School Committee chairman will be the official spokesman for the Committee, except as this duty is delegated to the Superintendent.

2. News releases that are of a system-wide or a sensitive nature or pertain to established Committee policy are the responsibility of the Superintendent.

3. News releases that are of concern to only one school, or to an organization of one school, are the responsibility of the Principal of that particular school. All statements made to the press by other staff members of the particular school must be cleared with the Principal.

While it is impossible to know how news releases will be treated by the press, every possible effort should be made to obtain coverage of school activities that will create and maintain a dignified and professionally responsible image for the school system.
SCHOOL DISTRICT NEWSLETTERS

The School Committee encourages and supports the publication of periodic newsletters by the Palmer Public Schools to inform prospective employers, labor unions and other citizen groups who have an interest in the instructional programs of the school and the qualifications of the graduates of the school.
CRISIS MANAGEMENT/COMMUNICATIONS

Given that a crisis, an unforeseen emergency or occurrence out of the ordinary, can take place within our school community at any time, the School Committee establishes this policy to guide the district in its response to such situations.

The district, under the direction of the superintendent, will develop an emergency response plan that outlines the procedures to follow in the event of a wide variety of emergencies/crisis situations. These plans will be reviewed and shared with local law enforcement and emergency response departments/agencies as well as school-based administrators on an annual basis. This Emergency Response Plan will serve as the foundation for development, training and implementation of all school-based programs and plans. In the event of an emergency, the superintendent and/or his/her designee shall be the spokesperson for the district.

Given that our schools are expected to meet intellectual, social, emotional, and physical needs of the students, each school shall therefore establish annually a school-based crisis team to work with administration, faculty, students, and parents in responding to crisis situations.
PUBLIC COMPLAINTS

Although no member of the community will be denied the right to bring their complaints to the Committee, they will be referred through the proper administrative channels for solution before investigation or action by the Committee. Exceptions will be made when the complaints concern Committee actions or Committee operations only.

The Committee believes that complaints are best handled and resolved as close to their origin as possible, and that the professional staff should be given every opportunity to consider the issues and attempt to resolve the problem prior to involvement by the Committee. Therefore, the proper channeling of complaints involving instruction, discipline or learning materials will be as follows:

1. Teacher
2. School building administrator
3. Superintendent
4. School Committee

If a complaint, which was presented to the Committee and referred back through the proper channels, is adjusted before it comes back to the School Committee, a report of the disposition of the matter will be made to the Committee and then placed in the official files.

Matters referred to the Superintendent and/or School Committee must be in writing and should be specific in terms of the action desired.

The Committee expects the professional staff to receive complaints courteously and to make a proper reply to the complainant.

LEGAL REFS.: 603 CMR 26:09 and 26.10
PUBLIC COMPLAINTS

Complaint Procedure

(1) A parent, guardian, or other person or group who believes that M.G.L. c. 76, s. 5 or 603 CMR 26.00 has been or is being violated, may request a written statement of the reasons therefore from the responsible School Committee through the Superintendent and may submit a copy of such request to the Bureau of Equal Educational Opportunity of the Department of Education. If such request is made, a copy of such request shall be sent by the School Committee to the Bureau of Equal Educational Opportunity.

(2) The School Committee shall respond promptly, but no later than 30 days, in writing to the complaining party. The School Committee shall also send a copy of its response to the Bureau of Equal Educational Opportunity.

(3) The Bureau of Equal Educational Opportunity shall act as the representative of the Board of Education for the purpose of receiving complaints pursuant to 603 CMR 26.00.

(4) The Bureau of Equal Educational Opportunity shall, pursuant to a complaint received under 603 CMR 26.09 (1) or on its own initiative, conduct reviews to insure compliance with M.G.L. c. 76 s. 5 and 603 CMR 26.00. The School Committee and the specific school(s) involved shall cooperate to the fullest extent with such review.

(5) In the event of non-compliance with M.G.L. c. 76 s. 5 or 603 CMR 26.00 the Board of Education may take such action as it sees fit, including, but not limited to, withholding of funds or referral of the matter to the Office of the Attorney General for appropriate legal action.

Private Right of Enforcement

Nothing in 603 CMR 26.00 shall abridge or in any way limit the right of a parent, guardian, or person affected to seek enforcement of St. 1971, c.622 in any court or administrative agency of competent jurisdiction.

LEGAL REFS.: 603 CMR 26:09 and 26:10
PUBLIC COMPLAINTS ABOUT SCHOOL PERSONNEL

Complaints about school personnel will be investigated fully and fairly. However, before any such complaint is investigated, the complainant must submit his complaint in writing. Anonymous complaints will be disregarded.

Whenever a complaint is made directly to the School Committee as a whole or to a Committee member as an individual, it will be referred to the school administration for study and possible solution.

The Superintendent will develop, for approval by the Committee, procedures that assure prompt and fair attention to complaints against school personnel. The procedures will require that an employee who is the object of a complaint be informed promptly and be afforded the opportunity to present the facts as he/she sees them.

If it appears necessary, the administration, the person who made the complaint, or the employee involved may request an executive session of the Committee for a formal hearing and decision. Statutory restrictions on executive sessions will be observed.

LEGAL REFS.: 603 CMR 26.09 and 26.10
CROSS REF.: BEC, Executive Sessions
PUBLIC COMPLAINTS ABOUT SCHOOL PERSONNEL

The following procedures are established to ensure that a citizen's complaint is given respectful attention and that the integrity of the educational program is upheld. "Complaint" in this regulation will be restricted in meaning to that criticism of particular school employees by a citizen of the School District which includes or implies a demand for action by school authorities. Other comments and suggestions will be referred informally to affected personnel.

1. If a complaint comes first to the person against whom it is directed, he/she will listen courteously and may try to resolve the difficulty by explaining the background and educational purpose involved. If the complaint remains unsatisfied, the employee will refer him/her to the building Principal or other immediate supervisor to have his/her views considered further. Whether the complaint terminates with the individual staff member involved or seems likely to go further, the staff member will immediately inform his/her supervisor of the complaint.

2. If a complaint comes first to the Principal or other supervisor of the person criticized, he/she should listen courteously or acknowledge a letter promptly and politely, but should make no commitments, admissions of guilt, or threats. If the complaint involves a particular employee, the supervisor should suggest a conference between the complainant and the person criticized and should inform that person immediately of the complaint.

If the complainant has already met with the person criticized and remains unsatisfied, the supervisor should invite the complainant to file his complaint in writing and offer to send him the appropriate form regarding a school employee's behavior, character or qualifications.

3. If a complaint comes first to any other school employee, that employee will refer the complainant to the person criticized or his immediate supervisor and immediately inform both.

4. No further action on the complaint should be taken unless the complainant submits the complaint in writing.

5. When a written complaint form is received, the Principal or other supervisor will schedule a conference with himself, the complainant, the person criticized, and if advisable, the department chairman or other personnel that either the supervisor or the person criticized feels could contribute resolution of the problem.

6. If the complainant is not satisfied with the results of the conference above, he/she should then be referred to the Superintendent, who may handle the complaint personally or refer it to other personnel, as he/she may see fit.

7. Should dissatisfaction remain after the above steps have been taken, the matter will be placed on the agenda for the next regularly scheduled Committee meeting. The decision of the Committee will be communicated in writing to all interested persons.

LEGAL REF.: 603 CMR 26.09 and 26.10
PUBLIC COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE CURRICULUM OR INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

The School Committee, though it is ultimately responsible for all curriculum and instructional materials (including library books), recognizes the need and right of students to free access to many different types of books and materials. It also recognizes the right of the professional staff to select books and other materials supportive of the school system's educational philosophy and goals.

Criticism of a book or other materials used in the schools may be expected from time to time. In such instances:

1. If a parent requests that his/her own child not read a given book, the teacher and/or school administrator should resolve the situation, perhaps by arranging for use of alternative material meeting essentially the same instructional purpose. This does not apply, however, to basic program texts and materials that the Committee has adopted.

2. The Committee will not permit any individual or group to exercise censorship over instructional materials and library collections, but recognizes that at times a reevaluation of certain material may be desirable. Should an individual or group ask to have any book or other material withdrawn from school use:
   a. The person who objects to the book or other material will be asked to sign a complaint on a standard form on which he/she will document his criticism.
   b. Following receipt of the formal complaint, the Superintendent will provide for a reevaluation of the material in question, he/she will arrange for the appointment of a review committee from among the faculty to consider the complaint.
   c. The Superintendent will review the complaint and the committee's reevaluation and will render a decision in the matter. Should the decision be unsatisfactory to the complainant, he/she may appeal it to the Committee.

In summary, the Committee assumes final responsibility for all books and instructional materials it makes available to students; it holds its professional staff accountable for their proper selection. It recognizes rights of individual parents with respect to controversial materials used by their own children; it will provide for the reevaluation of materials in library collections upon formal request. On the other hand, students' right to learn and the freedom of teachers to teach will be respected.

LEGAL REFS.:  603 CMR 26.09 and 26.10
CROSS REFS.:  IJ, Instructional Materials
               IJJ, Textbook Selection and Adoption
CITIZEN’S REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF MATERIAL

This form is to be filed in duplicate with the Principal.

Author: ________________________________
Title: ________________________________
Type of Material (book, film, filmstrip, etc.): ________________________________
Publisher/Producer: ________________________________
Request Initiated By: ________________________________
Telephone #: ________________________________
Address: ______________________________________

Complainant represents: Self: _____
Organization (please name): ________________________________
Other group (please identify): ________________________________

To what in the material do you object? (Be specific, cite pages, etc.)

What would you consider are the positive points?

Did you read, view or listen to all of the materials? (If not, what parts?)

What do you believe are the theme and purpose of this item?

Are you aware of the judgment or any evaluations of this material by authoritative sources or literary or media critics? (be specific)

What would you like the school to do about this item?
_____ Not assign it to your child
_____ Not assign it to any child
_____ Make it available only to those who wish to use it
_____ Refer it to the Materials Advisory Committee for reevaluation
_____ Withdraw it from the library media collection
_____ Other: (please specify) ________________________________

In its place, what material would you recommend which conveys as valuable a picture and perspective of our civilization? Use a separate page or the back of this form for this information.

Signature of Complainant ________________________________ Date: ________________
COMMUNITY USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES

It is the School Committee's desire that maximum use of school property be enjoyed by the townspeople. It is the Committee's intent that such use will maintain safe conditions and preserve the property for school program use.

Use of school buildings and other facilities by organizations will be permitted only when a worthy educational, civic, or charitable purpose will be served; or a substantial group of citizens from the community will be benefited.

School facilities will be used according to the regulations and rental fee schedules recommended by the Superintendent and approved by the School Committee.

Permission for the use of facilities must be obtained through the office of the Superintendent of Schools, where applications are available for this purpose.

Eligibility

School facilities will be available for the following:

1. Public school activities
2. Parent-teacher activities
3. Official town public hearings and political activities
4. Meetings and activities sponsored by the School Committee and school personnel
5. Parks and playgrounds activities
6. Local nonprofit and noncommercial organization activities
7. Metropolitan civic, educational, social, and religious organization activities if a substantial portion of the members are residents of the town
8. The activities of other organizations when approved by the School Committee

School and Town Preference

The priority given requests for use of school facilities will be as follows:

1. School activities
2. Town meetings and elections over other community activities
3. Parks and playgrounds

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:71; 71:71B; 272:40A

Palmer Public Schools
PROCEDURES/REGULATIONS
COMMUNITY USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES

The use of school buildings, grounds, equipment, and facilities will be authorized by the Superintendent in conformity with the following regulations, which have been approved by the School Committee.

A. Application:

1. Written requests for use of school property shall be submitted at least fourteen (14) calendar days before the requested date of usage at the Office of the Building Principal or Superintendent.

2. All user/rental fees will be assessed according to the fee schedule approved by the Palmer School Committee. Fees shall be paid to the Town of Palmer in care of the Palmer Public Schools.

3. The application must include the signature, address, and phone number of the person who is to be responsible for the rental or use of the school facility.

4. Long term agreements may be applied for to the School Committee through the Business Manager.

5. School-related groups will be permitted reasonable use of school facilities without charge.

B. Authority:

1. The Building Principal is authorized to approve and schedule the use of school facilities at his/her building by school/non-school organizations when the activity and application is in accordance with the regulations for Community Use/Rental of School Facilities.

2. Unusual circumstances and/or time constraints may necessitate an approval/disapproval by the Superintendent of Schools.

3. Persons or groups outside of the district may use the facilities with the approval of the School Committee.

C. Revocation:

1. The School Committee reserves the right to cancel any permission granted.

2. The School Committee reserves the right to change and/or amend these regulations, or to vote an exception to any or all organizations.

D. Staff Support Requirements:

1. Custodial/Custodial Supervisor:

   The Principal/Custodial Supervisor will determine what support personnel is necessary for the intended use. Support personnel may include custodians, teachers, food service workers and/or police.
a. Minimally one (1) school custodian/assigned staff person shall be responsible for opening and closing the area in use. The intended use shall determine the need for a custodian's continual presence. If a continual presence is necessary, a custodian(s)/staff person(s), in addition to any personnel on his/her regular work schedule, will be assigned.

b. The Principal/Custodial Supervisor is responsible for assignment of custodians in accordance with the capacity requirements of the facility. Any cost for additional custodians/staff shall be added to the rental fee accordingly.

c. The Principal/Custodial Supervisor may determine that no fee for custodial personnel is required for the use of a facility when a custodian is present as part of his/her regular work schedule.

2. Kitchen:

a. Usage fees for kitchen and equipment will be assessed according to the fee schedule approved by the Palmer School Committee.

b. The kitchen and equipment may be used only when under the direct supervision of authorized food service director or his/her designee.

3. Police:

A uniformed policeman shall be on duty at any paid spectator event open to the public. This cost for a policeman shall be borne by the user/renting organization.

4. Supervision:

a. All activities involving students must be under adult supervision approved by the Building Principal. Any group not providing such supervision may not be allowed in the building and/or be denied future use of a school facility. Under no circumstances is the school custodian/assigned staff allowed to serve as a supervisor of students, however, in all cases an assigned school employee will be present.

b. Use of facility is confined only to those areas listed on the form. If not compliable this will result in the loss of the user fee and denial of future use.

c. Groups using any building, or part of any building, are responsible for not exceeding the legal capacity of the area being used.

d. Improper language and conduct, or misuse of property will be sufficient cause for denial of future use of school facilities. The group using the facilities will be responsible for any damages to the building or equipment.

E. General Regulations:

1. Time: Groups receiving permission are restricted to the dates and hours approved and to the building area and facilities specified, unless requested changes are approved by the Superintendent.

2. Liability: Proper liability insurance will be required of all groups given permission to use school facilities.
3. **Vehicle Parking**: ALL vehicles on school property must be parked in the designated, lined parking areas only.

   No vehicles are allowed to be parked temporarily or permanently in any restricted areas, at any time. (Examples: Fire Lane, access roadways surrounding the buildings, roadways on campus.)

   Handicap spaces are clearly designated by signage. Only vehicles meeting those criteria shall be parked in any specially designated area.

   Should any violations of the above occur, vehicles may be towed at the owner's expense.

4. **Permits/Licenses**: The procurement of appropriate license(s) from the Town and/or State, as required, to sponsor and conduct specific types of programs, events or activities is the sole responsibility of the requesting agency or individual.

5. **Damage/Theft**: Any organization or group using school facilities will be financially liable for any damage or theft that may result from the use of said facilities whether such damage or theft is done by individuals or members of the group.

6. **Clean-up & Breakdown**: Any organization or group using the facility will be responsible for the breakdown and clean up of the event.

7. **Other**:
   a. Groups receiving permission are responsible at all times for the observance of fire and safety requirements.
   b. All smoking/tobacco products and all alcoholic beverages are prohibited in school buildings and on school grounds.
   c. No food or drinks are allowed in unauthorized areas of the building.
   d. The Committee will approve and periodically review a fee schedule for the use of school facilities.
   e. In situations where there is no cost factor to the school system, or in situations where a mutual exchange of facilities is possible between the school system and the organization, rates may be modified or eliminated by the School Committee.

These regulations are established as a guide. As all possible situations and eventualities cannot be foreseen or covered, great reliance must be placed upon the sound judgment and common sense of all persons involved in the process of use/rental of School District facilities.
RULES FOR UTILIZATION OF FACILITIES

Permits are issued detailing what area, times, etc., for a function. Renter must show custodian the permit for verification. In no case may a permit be transferred from one group to another.

REQUIRED ANNOUNCEMENTS: Every group shall have a spokesperson who must announce the following:

- That the Palmer Public Schools and grounds are smoke- and alcohol-free and that violators of the policy may be subject to a fine of $100.

- The seating capacity of the space being used for meeting purposes.

- That consumption of food and drinks is not allowed in the auditorium or pool area.

- The exits to be used in case of emergency.

- That applicants who have misused the facilities in any way will not be allowed future use of facilities under any circumstances, and restitution for damages will be sought.

LIMITATIONS OF USE

Groups using school facilities or grounds must conduct activities that are orderly and lawful, not of a nature to incite others to disorder, and not restrictive by reason of race, creed, religion, or color.

The use of alcoholic beverages in school buildings or on school grounds is prohibited. Smoking is prohibited anywhere in school buildings or on school grounds.

Gambling (bingo, raffles, lotteries) is prohibited in school facilities unless some type of authorized license is secured. The sponsoring organization should obtain an opinion from the Palmer Police Department.

No temporary or permanent signs, banners, pennants or the like placed in or on school buildings or on school grounds may be used by any group except those associated with activities supported by the school or school PTO. Temporary identification signs on school grounds may be used only during the actual hours the school is used. At the conclusion of the use of the school or grounds, signs must be removed.

The use of any school equipment is prohibited unless prior approval by the school Principal has been received. If the school rents or furnishes any equipment technically difficult to operate, someone who is connected with the school and who has knowledge of such equipment must operate it.
All use of schools by outside groups shall be automatically canceled when schools close due to inclement weather or other conditions.

No enterprise, function, or activity which promotes any commercial product or results in private profit or commercial gain may be conducted on school property.

If kitchen facilities are required, cafeteria employees must be on duty. Flammable materials cannot be used in places of assembly.

All use of school facilities shall comply with all state and local fire, health, safety, and police regulations, as reiterated by Building Permits posted in each facility.

No organization, agency or individual may rent any facility unless two-thirds of the membership of the organization or agency resides within the boundaries of the Town of Palmer.

COMMUNITY USE OF KITCHENS

I. AMPLIFYING INSTRUCTIONS AND GUIDELINES:

A. KITCHEN ORIENTATION REQUIREMENT
   Any Town of Palmer group or caterer who intends to use the kitchen must first receive an orientation from a member of the School Lunch Staff regarding operation and care of equipment, safety procedures, and clean-up protocols prior to operating such equipment.

B. COFFEE FOR COMMITTEES
   Chairpersons for district-wide committees may arrange coffee for committee members at their regular meetings utilizing the following procedures:

   1. Request at least two days in advance of the time needed the required number of cups, with the coffee, cream, and sugar provided through cafeteria personnel.

   2. The Cafeteria Manager will then bill the School Committee for these funds on a monthly basis, the bills being charged against the Curriculum Development or In-service lines of the budget.

C. AUTHORITY LEVELS
   While it is expected that common courtesies will be the standard, the School Lunch Staff member is empowered by the School Committee to intervene as necessary if s/he feels that School Lunch equipment, facilities, supplies, or other property is being misused.
D. DAMAGE TO SCHOOL EQUIPMENT/FACILITIES
   Any damage done to school equipment or facilities which may occur must be recorded on a form which will be provided to the spokesperson for the community group or caterer and given to the School Lunch Staff member prior to exiting the building.

E. CLEAN UP
   Kitchens must be thoroughly cleaned and left in the same condition they were found. School lunch supplies must be used. Specific cleaners and sanitizers will be available for this purpose.

F. COMPENSATION
   In that the School Lunch Fund is self-sustaining and operates on a non-profit basis, the cost for a School Lunch Staff member's salary for his/her presence shall be borne by the community group or caterer.

II. DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY:

   A. The Superintendent is responsible for communicating all provisions of this policy.

   B. The School Lunch Manager is responsible for enforcing this policy through appropriate correspondence, brochures, discussions, and by demonstration.

III. FORMS:

   Refer to Community Use of School Facilities Forms - Policies KF-E-1 and KF-E-2.
# PALMER PUBLIC SCHOOLS
## USE OF FACILITIES FEE SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>school related organizations and town departments</th>
<th>youth leagues organizations activities</th>
<th>non-profit organizations</th>
<th>for profit organizations</th>
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<td>Non Palmer</td>
<td>Palmer</td>
<td>Non Palmer</td>
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<td>Old Mill Pond</td>
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<td>$25/hr.</td>
<td>$75/hr.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cafetorium</td>
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<td>$12.50/hr.</td>
<td>$31.25/hr.</td>
<td>$75/hr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchen/Dishroom</td>
<td>no fee</td>
<td>$25/hr. and food service employee</td>
<td>$62.50/hr. and food service employee</td>
<td>$150/hr. and food service employee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classrooms</td>
<td>no fee</td>
<td>$6.25/hr.</td>
<td>$12.50/hr.</td>
<td>$30/hr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td>no fee</td>
<td>$12.50/hr.</td>
<td>$18.75/hr.</td>
<td>$45/hr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Lab</td>
<td>** FOR EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTES ONLY $62.50 PER HOUR**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**RELATED FEES:** The Superintendent or her/his designee will determine what support personnel is necessary for the intended use.

Custodians  
Maintenance  
Monitors  
Teachers  
Food Service  
Security  
Police  
Lifeguards  
Media Specialist  
Auditorium Coordinator  
Ambulance Service

Revised and approved on 8/15/2013.
# PALMER PUBLIC SCHOOLS
## USE OF FACILITIES FEE SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>school related organizations and town departments</th>
<th>youth leagues organizations activities</th>
<th>non-profit organizations</th>
<th>for profit organizations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Palmer</td>
<td>Non Palmer</td>
<td>Palmer</td>
<td>Non Palmer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Converse Middle School</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gymnasium</td>
<td>no fee</td>
<td>$15/hr.</td>
<td>$50/hr.</td>
<td>$112.50/hr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locker Rooms</td>
<td>no fee</td>
<td>$31.25/hr.</td>
<td>$37.50/hr.</td>
<td>$75/hr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cafeteria</td>
<td>no fee</td>
<td>$12.50/hr.</td>
<td>$31.25/hr.</td>
<td>$75/hr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchen/Dishroom</td>
<td>no fee</td>
<td>$31.25/hr. and food service employee</td>
<td>$62.50/hr. and food service employee</td>
<td>$150/hr. and food service employee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auditorium</td>
<td>no fee</td>
<td>$31.25/hr. and Aud. Co-ord. fee if required</td>
<td>$31.25/hr. and Aud. Co-ord. fee if required</td>
<td>$75/hr. and Aud. Co-ord. fee if required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classrooms</td>
<td>no fee</td>
<td>$6.25/hr.</td>
<td>$12.50/hr.</td>
<td>$30/hr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td>no fee</td>
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<td>Computer Lab</td>
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**RELATED FEES:** The Superintendent or her/his designee will determine what support personnel is necessary for the intended use.

- Custodians
- Maintenance
- Monitors
- Teachers
- Food Service
- Security
- Police
- Lifeguards
- Media Specialist
- Auditorium Coordinator
- Ambulance Service

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### USE OF FACILITIES FEE SCHEDULE

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Palmer</td>
<td>Non Palmer</td>
<td>Palmer</td>
<td>Non Palmer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palmer High School</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gymnasium</td>
<td>no fee</td>
<td>$25/hr.</td>
<td>$50/hr.</td>
<td>$112.50/hr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locker Rooms</td>
<td>no fee</td>
<td>$37.50/hr.</td>
<td>$62.50/hr.</td>
<td>$112.50/hr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cafeteria</td>
<td>no fee</td>
<td>$12.50/hr.</td>
<td>$31.25/hr.</td>
<td>$75/hr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchen/Dishroom</td>
<td>no fee</td>
<td>$31.25/hr. and food service employee</td>
<td>$62.50/hr. and food service employee</td>
<td>$150/hr. and food service employee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auditorium</td>
<td>no fee</td>
<td>$31.25/hr. and Aud. Co-ord. fee if required</td>
<td>$62.50/hr. and Aud. Co-ord. fee if required</td>
<td>$150/hr. and Aud. Co-ord. fee if required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pool &amp; Locker Rooms</td>
<td>no fee</td>
<td>$125/hr. and lifeguard(s) fee</td>
<td>$125/hr. and lifeguard(s) fee</td>
<td>$225/hr. and lifeguard(s) fee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classrooms</td>
<td>no fee</td>
<td>$6.25/hr.</td>
<td>$12.50/hr.</td>
<td>$30/hr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td>no fee</td>
<td>$12.50/hr.</td>
<td>$31.25/hr.</td>
<td>$75/hr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Lab</td>
<td>** FOR EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTES ONLY $62.50 PER HOUR**</td>
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Custodians
Maintenance
Monitors
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Police
Lifeguards
Media Specialist
Auditorium Coordinator
Ambulance Service

*Revised and approved on 8/15/2013.*
## PALMER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Palmer</td>
<td>Non Palmer</td>
<td>Palmer</td>
<td>Non Palmer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Field Use</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Fields (as is)</td>
<td>no fee</td>
<td>no fee</td>
<td>$31.25/hr.</td>
<td>$75/hr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field Lining</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soccer</td>
<td>no fee</td>
<td>no fee</td>
<td>$62.50</td>
<td>$150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baseball/Softball</td>
<td>no fee</td>
<td>no fee</td>
<td>$50</td>
<td>$120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Football</td>
<td>no fee</td>
<td>no fee</td>
<td>$187.50</td>
<td>$300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field Outdoor Lighting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Softball</td>
<td>no fee</td>
<td>$12.50/hr.</td>
<td>$18.75/hr.</td>
<td>$45/hr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basketball</td>
<td>no fee</td>
<td>$6.25/hr.</td>
<td>$12.50/hr.</td>
<td>$30/hr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennis (per court charge)</td>
<td>no fee</td>
<td>$6.25/hr.</td>
<td>$12.50/hr.</td>
<td>$30/hr.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**RELATED FEES:** The Superintendent or her/his designee will determine what support personnel is necessary for the intended use.

*Revised and approved on 8/15/2013.*
APPLICATION FOR USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES/GROUNDS

Date of application:

Name of organization:

Name of school building or facility desired:

( ) Old Mill Pond School
( ) Converse Middle School
( ) Palmer High School

Size of Group:

Percentage of Palmer residents officially representing or participating in the activity (provide a roster, including residence of each member of the group). Do not include percentages based on spectators, or those individuals not acting in an official/representative capacity of the group:

   _____% Palmer Residents / _______ % Out of Town Residents

Specific description of space desired:

Name of responsible adult supervisor:

Address: Telephone #:

Type of activity planned:

Time requested: From: to:

Equipment desired:

Date(s) required:

Caretaking services required:

Palmer Public Schools
As applicant, and on behalf of the above-named group, I have had the opportunity to read the policy for use of facilities/grounds of the Palmer Public Schools and agree to abide by the conditions stated therein.

Signature: ______________________________ Date: ______________

Costs to User: $

Total costs: $

$100 Required Deposit: ______ to be returned following event, once damages or repairs, if applicable, have been assessed by the Director of Facilities

_______ to be retained in consideration of future applications

Authorization by: ______________________________ Date: ______________
PERMIT FOR USE OF SCHOOL PROPERTY

TO BE ACCOMPANIED BY RULES FOR UTILIZATION OF FACILITIES (POLICY KF-R-2)

Permission is granted to ________________________________
(name of organization)
to use ___________________ on ____________________
(name of school or equipment) (date of use)
between the hours of ___________________ and ___________________

Use of the school building is limited to the following areas:

Refreshments/meals may (may not) be served in the ___________________
(designated area)

_________________________ is authorized to operate the equipment above.
(name of authorized person)

A copy of this permit must be given to the custodian in charge when entering the building. A custodian's report, in writing, will be submitted to the Administrative Assistant in cases where there is no use or improper use of the building.

_________________________________  _______________________________
Administrative Assistant            (Date)

Copies to:  Organization
            Building Principal
            Custodian
            File
PUBLIC GIFTS

Recognizing the benefits accrued through active citizen involvement and support of the public schools, the Palmer School Committee welcomes and appreciates offers of gifts of funds, equipment and other materials for the schools, as well as gifts of facilities, facility construction and/or facility improvements when their construction processes and methods are consistent with the laws and regulations of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The School Committee further acknowledges the value of group or individual donations on behalf of the public schools that, particularly in times of fiscal constraints and competing priorities, may be helpful in maintaining, augmenting, or supporting approved new programs.

The Superintendent shall have the authority to accept gifts on behalf of the school system if they are valued up to $1,000. The Superintendent may, at his discretion, delegate to a principal the authority to accept gifts of up to $100 offered to the principal’s school. Any offers of gifts valued at more than $1,000 shall be voted upon by the School Committee acting on the recommendation of the Superintendent. For non-monetary gifts, such as equipment or supplies, the responsibility for determining and reporting the value of the gift shall remain with the donor. It should be noted that state law prohibits, the acceptance of gifts larger than $50 by individuals in elected or appointed positions in the public sector.

The School Committee will consider the intent of the donor in making the gift and will generally welcome donations that are compatible with the educational, co-curricular and facilities goals of the schools and that fit into established capital, curricular and extracurricular plans and activities of the school system.

The Committee discourages offers of gifts that carry or impose significant and/or continuing operating and maintenance costs unless those costs are included within the scope of the gifts or can be incorporated into the operating budget. The Committee will not accept donations aimed at funding employment or compensation of employees in part or in whole. The Committee also discourages offers of gifts that include or impose contingencies or restrictions when such contingencies or restrictions may be regarded as inconsistent with the objectives and values of the school system. The committee reserves the right to defer consideration of gifts, donations, and proceeds of fundraising efforts related to projects not yet studied, reviewed, or approved and recommended by the school administration. In any event, the School Committee shall retain the right to accept or reject gifts, except as specified in the second paragraph above, if in its judgment it is in the public interest to do so.

Gifts shall, upon acceptance and receipt, become the property of the Palmer Public Schools, and unless otherwise stipulated or earmarked in the terms of acceptance, are subject to allocation and reallocation for approved purposes at the discretion of the Superintendent or his designee. Objects given or purchased with donated funds may, from time to time, be transferred from one school, department, or grade to another as determined in accordance with curricular or extracurricular needs.

Palmer Public Schools
The Superintendent or his designee shall acknowledge in writing the acceptance or rejection of gifts.

Cross Reference:  
- Policy FF  Naming New Facilities  
- Policy GBEBC  Gifts to and Solicitations by Staff  
- Policy JP  Student Gifts and Solicitations

Legal Reference:  
- M.G.L. Chapter 71, Section 37A  
- M.G.L. Chapter 44, Section 53A  
- M.G.L. Chapter 268

Adopted by the School Committee on 12/13/07.
PUBLIC SOLICITATIONS IN THE SCHOOLS

The School Committee will place limits on commercial activities and fund-raising activities in the schools for the following reasons:

1. The school system should provide students, parents, and employees some measure of protection from exploitation by commercial and charitable fund-raising organizations.

2. The school system should not give the public the impression of generally endorsing or sanctioning commercial and fund-raising activities.

3. Commercial and fund-raising activities may disrupt school routine and cause loss of instructional time.

Following these guiding statements, the Superintendent and Principals may permit occasional commercial or fund-raising activities related to the objectives of the schools with the following exceptions:

1. No direct solicitation of students or employees may take place without School Committee permission.

2. No general or class distribution of commercial or fund-raising literature may take place without School Committee permission.

For the purposes of this policy, local PTA and PTO groups and groups representing school system employees will be considered "school groups" and will be governed by the Committee's policy on staff solicitations.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 44:53A

CROSS REFS.: GBEBC, Staff Gifts and Solicitations
               JJE, Student Fund-Raising Activities
               JP, Student Gifts and Solicitations
               KHB, Advertising in the Schools
ADVERTISING POLICY

It is the belief of the Palmer Public Schools that commercial messages and/or advertisements are not public forums of any nature and that all advertising shall be commercial in nature. Furthermore, all advertising may be permitted in any school facility or on school property under ownership and control by the Palmer Public Schools pursuant only to a written contract expressly permitting the same and only under and in compliance with the established policies, practices and guidelines approved by the Palmer School Committee. Such materials must be aesthetically pleasing and enhance the school environment.

The purpose of this policy and its related practices and guidelines is to define the conditions upon which commercial messages and advertisements may be placed in school facilities or upon school property, and to establish definitive guidelines for the acceptance and placement of such messages or advertisements. It is the intent of the Palmer School Committee to preserve its full rights and discretion to restrict access to the school facilities and school property and to reject or refuse placement or require removal of any or all commercial messages or advertisements that do not comply with those guidelines. To the extent that any such messages and advertisements are accepted, it is the intent of the Palmer School Committee to reserve and exercise the right of full editorial control over the placement, content, size, appearance and wording, and to determine and prohibit types of commercial messages or advertisements that are deemed inappropriate for or inconsistent with the usage of school facilities and school property.

All school facilities and school property are intended for and are for the exclusive use of the Palmer Public Schools and its designees for the public purposes associated with education, athletics, community recreation and community activities and entertainment. No school facilities nor school property shall be intended or considered as an open, limited, or other public forum, and no person shall have a right to access and use any school facilities nor school property for any purpose other than the intended and authorized public purpose or service. Placement of commercial messages or advertisements in school facilities or on school property shall require specific authorization by the Palmer School Committee.

CROSS REF.: JP, Student Gifts and Solicitations
               KHA, Public Solicitations in the Schools

Adopted by the School Committee on 9/12/06.

Revised and approved on 11/12/08.
DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY; LIMITATIONS AND RESTRICTIONS

The Palmer school Committee hereby delegates to the Superintendent of Schools the authority and responsibility of negotiating contracts on behalf of the Palmer School Committee for the posting of commercial messages or advertisements in school facilities or on school property, provided, however, that the Superintendent shall have no authority to permit anything that is prohibited by this policy, its related guidelines and ordinances by the Town of Palmer, and that all tentative contracts are subject to the final approval and signature of the Palmer School Committee. Commercial messages or advertisements may be authorized and accepted only under the following conditions:

1. Commercial messages or advertisements shall not be accepted for placement directly upon or within any school facilities or school property except as is specifically designated for the placement thereof.

2. Currently designated facilities for the placement of commercial messages and advertisements are as follows:
   a. gymnasia at the Old Mill Pond Elementary School, Converse Middle School, and Palmer High School
   b. along the fencing at said schools, e.g., along tennis courts and baseball field, Legion Field, etc.
   c. front of ticket booths
   d. front of concession stands
   e. front of press boxes
   f. at such other locations as deemed appropriate by the Palmer School Committee.

3. Examples of commercial messages or advertisements that contain any of the following characteristics, but not limited to, or that in the sole discretion and judgment of the Superintendent of Schools as the authorized representative of the Palmer School Committee or its legal counsel may be prohibited and may not be accepted for placement on school facilities or upon school property, are as follow:
   a. promotion of or reference to the sale or consumption of alcoholic or cereal malt beverages in name, likeness or implication or the promotion of establishments that are licensed for and primarily sell alcoholic or cereal malt beverages, including bars; provided, however, that restaurants or other food service establishments and hotels or other places of lodging may be authorized when the commercial message or advertisement promotes only the food service or lodging (Example: a restaurant or other food service establishment may not use in its advertising text the word bar, pub or tavern or other similar word denoting the sale of alcoholic beverages, even if such word is part of the name of the establishment.);
   b. promotion of or reference to the sale or consumption of tobacco products or depiction of the use of tobacco products in any manner;
   c. commentary, advocacy or promotion of issues, candidates, campaigns or organizations of a social, political, religious, or rhetorical nature;
   d. promotion of or reference to gambling, pari-mutual betting, lotteries, or games of chance whether by name, likeness or implication or promotion of or reference to providing such services or activities of a related or similar nature;
e. depiction in any form of nudity or semi-nudity, profanity, obscenity or lewdness or characterization that suggest, depict or promote any such element, or promotion of or reference to any sexually-oriented products, activities or materials such as massage parlors, escort services or establishments featuring X-rated or pornographic movies, contraceptive products or hygiene products of an intimate personal nature or advertising that is unlawful, or contains explicit messages or graphic representations pertaining to sexual contact or contain offensive levels of sexual overtone, innuendo or double entendre;

f. promotion in any form of or reference to illegal drugs, illegal drug use or illegal drug materials; or characterizations that suggest or depict the promotion or glorification of any such products, activities or materials;

g. promotion of or reference to the use or sale of firearms, explosives or other weapons; or the depiction, suggestion or glorification of violence or acts of a violent nature;

h. use of words, foul or offensive language, representations or descriptive material of any kind having more than one meaning or connotation, one of which would otherwise be prohibited under this Policy;

i. inclusion of materials, depictions, promotions or offerings that are the type prohibited by or by their nature would violate any postal restrictions or regulations or any federal, state or local law, rule or regulation;

j. advertisements that describe or depict criminal activity in any way;

k. inclusion of any claims that in the judgment of the authorized representative of the Palmer School Committee or its legal counsel constitutes false, exaggerated or misleading claims or that contains offensive or otherwise improper comparisons with other products or their makers;

l. and, advertisements by political candidates for public office or advertisements concerning ballot issues.

4. To protect the integrity of the school facilities or the school property under ownership and control of the Palmer Public Schools, and to ensure a proper measure of uniformity, durability and quality, the Palmer School Committee shall establish specifications for the types of permitted advertising surfaces and physical materials, and may reject advertising surfaces and materials that do not conform with those specifications or that are not otherwise deemed to be suitable. The Advertiser is responsible for the procurement, printing and cost of the advertising medium.

5. Prior to any acceptance or placement of commercial messages or advertisements upon any school facilities or the school property under ownership and control by the Palmer Public Schools, the specifications of the same, including all advertising copy or content and all materials by which such advertising shall be displayed, must be submitted to the Palmer School Committee for approval.

6. Any approval for the erection and display of commercial messages or advertising shall be made in writing as part of a written placement agreement, that shall at a minimum contain references to and the advertiser's commitment and agreement to abide by this policy. The term and rate of compensation shall be pursuant to the Palmer School Committee's then current approved advertising terms and rates.
EXEMPTIONS AND EXCEPTIONS

Nothing in this policy shall be interpreted to prohibit nor require authorization for any of the following:

1. Merchant or government identification, logos or trademarks appearing upon property acquired, installed or used in the construction or renovation of any of the facilities.

2. Public service announcement or announcements of events directly related to services of the Palmer Public Schools.

3. Product or vendor identifications in relation to authorizing merchandizing or vending operations conducted upon or about the school facilities or the school property under ownership and control by the Palmer Public Schools.

AMENDMENTS TO POLICY

The Palmer School Committee reserves the right to amend this policy from time to time and no advertising contract entered into under any existing version of this policy shall serve to restrict or prevent the Palmer School Committee from making any such subsequent amendments.

Revised and approved on 11/12/08.
PALMER PUBLIC SCHOOLS
ADVERTISING CONTRACT

Advertiser's Name: ________________________________
Street Address: __________________________________
City/State/Zip: __________________________________
Telephone: ___________________ Cell: ______________ Fax: __________________
Contact Person: ___________________________________

Subject to the terms and conditions contained in the Advertising Policy and Guidelines, the above-
identified Advertiser is hereby leased the use of space at one of the following locations as follows:

- gymnasium at the Old Mill Pond Elementary School
- gymnasium at the Converse Middle School
- gymnasium at the Palmer High School
- along the fencing at the ______________________ (insert school name), e.g., along tennis courts and baseball field, Legion Field, etc.
- front of ticket booths
- front of concession stands
- front of press boxes
- other: _________________________________

The Committee offers pricing for 3’x5’ and 2’x6’ banners as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Tennis courts/ball field fence</th>
<th>Legion Field</th>
<th>Gymnasia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Per Game</td>
<td>$50, $75</td>
<td>$50, $75</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Season</td>
<td>$300, $350</td>
<td>$750, $1,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yearly</td>
<td>$1,200, $1,500</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Prices for other locations, different size banners or for different periods of time are at the discretion of
the School Committee.

The Advertiser holds the Palmer School Committee harmless for any damage caused by acts of nature,
accidents, or acts of vandalism.

Term of Advertising: From ___________________________ To: ___________________________

Cost of Advertising for the above term: $___________ to be paid in full in advance on or by
__________________________________________________________________________.
By signing this Contract, Advertiser acknowledges, understands and agrees to all of the terms and conditions of this Contract and promises to pay the advertising cost by the date as noted above. The individual signing this Contract on behalf of the Advertiser certifies that s/he has the necessary authority to bind the Advertiser. This Contract may not be assigned without the express written consent of the Palmer School Committee. The advertisement(s) must comply with the School Committee's Advertising Policy and Guidelines. If the School Committee deems an advertisement to be in violation of the School Committee's Advertising Policy and Guidelines, the School Committee may require the removal of the advertisement. The Palmer School Committee reserves the right to amend the Advertising Policy and Guidelines from time to time and this advertising contract is subject to any such revisions.

Accepted and Approved:

By: ___________________________ ___________________________ ___________________________
    Advertiser    Chair, Palmer School Committee    Date

    ___________________________ 
    (title)
VISITORS TO THE SCHOOLS

The School Committee encourages parents and guests to visit classrooms to observe and learn about the instructional programs taking place in our schools. Such visits can prove most beneficial in promotion of greater school-home cooperation and community understanding of how we carry out the school system's mission and goals.

Visits by parents to several classrooms in a given grade for the purposes of comparing teaching styles to provide a basis for a request for student assignment to a particular teacher are strongly discouraged because the School District's policy of assigning a student to a particular class is the sole responsibility of the building Principal in consultation with the staff of that school.

The following guidelines to classroom and school visits should be followed:

1. Parental requests for classroom visitations will be welcomed as long as the educational process is not disrupted. To this end we request that such requests be made at least forty-eight hours in advance to allow for proper arrangements to be made.

2. The building Principal has the authority to determine the number, times, and dates of observations by visitors. This will be done in consultation with staff members so as to give adequate notice to the staff members of the impending visits.

3. For security purposes it is requested that all visitors report to the Principal's office upon entering and leaving the building and sign a guest log showing arrival and departure times. Teachers are encouraged to ask visitors if they have registered in the Principal's office.

4. Under ordinary circumstances classroom observations will be strongly discouraged during the first three weeks of school in September and during the month of June.

5. Any student who wishes to have a guest in school MUST ask permission of one of the administrative staff 24 HOURS in advance of the proposed visit. If permission is granted, the guest is expected to follow the standards of behavior expected of all students. Upon arrival the guest must register in the office. Any guest who fails to comply with student regulations will be asked to leave the school building and grounds immediately.
Table of Contents

Raptor FAQs: Pages 3-5

Raptor Procedures: Pages 6-10

Raptor Operating Procedures: Pages 11-16
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the Raptor system?
Raptor is a visitor registration system that enhances school security by reading visitor Drivers’ Licenses or other government issued identification, comparing information to a sex offender database, alerting school administrators and other designated personnel if a match is found, then (assuming no match was made) printing a visitor badge that includes a photo.

How does it work?
All visitors will be required to check-in on entry to each school before proceeding anywhere else in the building. Visitors will be required to provide acceptable identification to be scanned by the Raptor system and compared to a national database that consists of registered sex offenders from all 50 states. If a match is found, school administrators and law enforcement personnel can take appropriate steps to keep the school safe.

Who is a Visitor?
A visitor is anyone who wishes to access building and is not a current student or staff member at the school. Vendors and contractors who will be working on-site during the school day in locations where students are present are considered visitors.

What are Acceptable Forms of Identification?
Acceptable forms of identification, which must contain the visitor’s name, birth date, and a photograph, include:
- U.S. or foreign driver’s licenses;
- U.S. or foreign government IDs;
- Military IDs;
- RMV/DMV issued IDs;
- U.S. or foreign passports;
- Permanent Resident Cards (Green Cards); and/or Re-entry Permits

Why is Palmer Public Schools using the Raptor system?
Safety of our students is our highest priority. Raptor will provide a consistent system to track visitors and volunteers while keeping away people who present a danger to students and staff members. The system quickly prints visitor badges that include a photo, the name of the visitor, time and date.

What other information is obtained from the Drivers’ License or other ID.?
Raptor is only scanning the visitor’s name, date of birth and photo for comparison with a national database of registered sex offenders. Additional visitor data will not be gathered and no data will be shared with any outside company or organization.

Should we scan Palmer Public Schools employees?
Employees of the Palmer Public Schools who do not have an employee badge visible must be scanned and wear the Raptor badge. Substitute teachers should be scanned at all times.
Should volunteers be scanned into the Raptor system?
Volunteers must follow the same procedures as any visitor. Identity must be verified with an acceptable form of identification (i.e. Drivers’ License or Government issued ID.).

Should contractors, subcontractors, and vendors be scanned into the Raptor system?
Contractors, subcontractors, and vendors must be scanned the same as any visitor. If identity cannot be verified through an acceptable form of identification, they are not allowed on school property. Acceptable forms of identification include Drivers’ License, State ID., U.S. Military ID., or Passport.

Do we have the right to require visitors, even parents, to produce identification before entering the building?
Yes. We need to be sure of who is in our buildings, why they are there and particularly if a student is involved (e.g., early pickup) – be able to confirm that an individual has the authority to have access to the student. We can only do this by knowing exactly with whom we are dealing with.

What if the person does not have, or refuses to show identification?
Contact the principal or the ranking administrator immediately. They can both question the individual and explain the process to them. The principal or administrator then, based on their knowledge of the person and situation can make a determination whether to allow entry (and manually entering the information into the system) or refusing access to the facility and/or a student. The principal or administrator should check the individual reported information against the Massachusetts sex offender registry at www.mass.gov/orgs/sex-offender-registry-board. If the individual clears, enter their information into the system manually. The individual should be provided limited supervised access.

What about individuals such as grandparents presenting a passport or Drivers’ License from foreign countries such as Canada or England, who want to attend a students’ classroom function (e.g., special lunch or class skit)?
These visitors should be checked against the student’s enrollment form to see if they have parental permission to have access to the student. The individual may present a permission slip signed by the parent to have access to the student. The parent’s signature should be verified against the signature on the student enrollment form. If the individual is clear to be on premise, they may be manually entered into the system and granted access to the student.

Do I scan police officers, firemen and other uniformed or similar governmental officials into the system?
Law enforcement and other emergency responders should bypass the sign—in process if responding to an emergency call. If not an emergency, law enforcement should be checked in and requested to show credentials. However, do NOT scan their Identification, manually enter them into the Raptor system.
If a Positive Result is returned indicating the person just scanned is a registered sex offender, is there reason to fear?
Many sexual predators/offenders are going to be relatives of one of our students. Normal caution should always be followed and paying attention to the individual’s demeanor body language and verbal cues is, as in any situation, the key to your personal safety. If in doubt, always summon help immediately. Remain calm and ask the individual to take a seat, as school officials must approve the visit. Do not go into detail or give further explanations.

Do we have to give listed sexual offenders and predators access to our school?
Generally speaking, unless the individual is wanted by law enforcement, as long as they have a legitimate reason to be in the building (e.g., visiting a legal dependent) you cannot give a blanket statement of NO. However, such individuals should only be given limited access and should be accompanied at all times by an adult representative of the school. When in doubt, consult with a building administrator.

Will the system produce “false positives”? And, if so, what should I do?
The system, like any computer search system, uses set criteria to lookup, find and match names. Occasionally, names and date-of-births will be similar enough to cause a false hit to occur. There is no need to panic. Carefully examine the picture and other information provided – most times you can quickly verify whether or not the hit actually matches the person in front of you. If in doubt, follow your normal procedures and let the administrator handle the situation.

The school administrator should not announce the reason for their arrival when others are present. Whoever responds should remove the individual from the main office area to an office to conduct a more complete investigation of the person’s background.
Raptor Visitor Management System Procedures

Introduction
Raptor System (commonly called Raptor) is a web-based software application that has been developed with the purpose of aiding education facilities in tracking their visitors, students and staff in their buildings. Raptor not only provides an effective, efficient method for tracking, but also goes beyond conventional applications by utilizing available public databases to help control building security. Raptor is capable of replacing manual paper-based logs, providing student tardy slips and it will allow schools and facilities to produce visitor badges, monitor volunteer hours, and electronically check all visitors against register sexual offender databases. The overall goal is to better control access to the Palmer Public Schools; thus providing enhanced protection for our students and staff.

General Procedures
1) All front office staff will receive training on visitor check-in procedures to ensure that all persons who are not assigned to the building have a visitor’s badge or a Palmer Schools photo ID badge. Any person who does not have a building visitor badge with the current date displayed or a Palmer Schools employee badge should be immediately escorted to the office.
2) Signs will be placed at doors and potential entry points directing visitors to the front office to sign in.
3) When the visitor arrives, they will be greeted and asked for photo identification.
4) The designated staff member will scan the visitor’s identification and issue a badge with the visitor’s destination if there is no alert indicated on the database. The staff member will keep the individual’s identification in plain view, to reduce concerns that anyone might be copying personal information. The identification card will immediately be returned to the visitor when the badge is handed to them. At no time will a visitor’s identification card be kept by the attendant.
5) If the visitor does not have acceptable photo identification available, a building administrator will be called to assess the situation. If he or she determines the visitor is known, the visitor’s information can be manually entered by the building administrator. However, a visitor can be manually entered no more than twice before denied entry.
6) The visitor will return to the office to check-out when they are leaving the building. The visitor will be instructed to return the badge to designated office personnel to be signed out of the system. Once the visitor has been signed out of the system, the badge should be destroyed so it cannot be reused. If a visitor forgets to check out, the attendant will attempt phone contact through contact information on record with the school. If contact is made, the attendant will educate the visitor as to proper check-in and check-out procedures. If contact is not made by the end of the day, the visitor will be checked out automatically and educated the next time he/she checks in.
Visitor Categories

Palmer Schools Employees

- Palmer Public Schools employees who do not have a badge visible for any reason will be required to sign into the Raptor system with their state issued Drivers’ License or government issued ID. They will also be required to return to check out when their visit is completed.

Palmer Schools Substitute Teachers

- All Palmer Public Schools substitute teachers who have not been issued an employee ID badge or do not have an ID badge with them that day will be required to sign into the Raptor system for a temporary ID. Long term substitutes assigned to a specific building will be issued a badge.

Parents/Guardians of Students

- All parents/guardians attempting to gain access to the school for the first time will present a valid Drivers’ License from any state, and official state photo identification card from any state and many countries, or military identification card for scanning. Parents/guardians refusing to produce such ID may be asked to remain at the desk or leave the school as their identity cannot be verified. School principals and site administrators may allow limited access based on their personal understanding of the situation and/or knowledge of the person in question. Such persons, however, should be manually entered into the system by the building administrator and have their names checked against the database.

- School staff members conducting visitor check-in and scan processes will verify scan results and verify the nature of the visit. If the scan is negative and the visit meets school/site criteria, the visitor will be allowed appropriate access after receiving an appropriate visitor’s badge.

- The visitor will be requested to return to the office to check out when their visit is completed to be logged out of the system. Each visitor will be asked to surrender the badge. The badge will be destroyed, so that it cannot be reused.

Law Enforcement/Emergency Responders/Government Officials

- Law enforcement and other first responders should bypass the sign-in process if responding to an emergency.

- If not an emergency, law enforcement should be checked in and requested to show credentials. However, do NOT scan their Drivers’ License, manually enter them into the system.
Vendors/Contractors/Others

- All vendors, contractors, and other visitors not assigned to the particular school will be scanned into the system each time they want access to the school.

- School personnel conducting visitor check-in and scan processes will verify scan results and verify the nature of the visit. If the scan is negative and the visit meets school/site criteria, the visitor will be allowed appropriate access.

- Vendors: If the scan of the database comes back with a positive match, the vendor will be accompanied by a school administrator while the delivery is made. The vendor will be asked to provide contact information for his/her supervisor and asked to leave the school. The accompanying administrator will then follow up with the supervisor and advise him/her that the particular vendor will not be allowed to make deliveries to that or any other school in Palmer Public Schools.

- Contractors: If the person is affiliated with Palmer Public Schools as a contractor, contact an administrator to speak with the person. If the contractor is only going to be at the school for a short time (less than one hour), follow the procedure listed above for vendors.

Match with the Database

The database will show a match if the visitor has the same name and birth year as that of a registered sex offender. In some cases, the match will be the visitor in front of you and at other times it may register a false positive.

To determine if this match is a false positive, please do the following:

- Compare the picture from the identification to the picture from the database.
- If the picture is unclear, check the date of birth, middle name, and other identifying information, such as height and eye color.
- The Raptor system will have a screen for you to view and compare the photo of the visitor with the photo of the person on the sex offender registry.
- If the pictures of the identifying characteristics are clearly not of the same person, press NO on the screen.
- The person will then be issued a badge and general procedures will be followed.
- If there is a false positive, the alert will come up the first time the person visits any other school. Be sure to notify staff in other school operating Raptor of the false positive result.
If it appears that there is a match:

- Compare the ID with the database. If they appear to be the same person, press YES. A screen that reads, “Are you sure?” will appear, press YES again.
- Remain calm and ask the person to take a seat, as school officials must approve the visit. Do not go into detail or give further explanations.
- The visitor may ask for his/her ID back and want to leave – schools should comply with this request.
- A school administrator and/or other designated personnel will automatically be notified by email, text message, or on their cell phone of the problem and will respond. Stand by for further instructions and assistance from the responding administrator.
- If the individual becomes agitated or you fear for your safety, follow your normal emergency procedures for summoning assistance.
- The email notification of the visitor will be sent to the listed school administrator(s) and any other designated personnel.

Special Circumstances

Parents/Legal Guardian Who Are Registered Sex Offenders

In the event an identified parent or legal guardian of a student is listed in the database, he/she can still be granted limited access to the building, while being escorted by school personnel. The school administrator will decide when and where this person can go and who will supervise his/her visit.

- School administrators will privately notify the parent or guardian that they appear to be matched with a person in the Raptor database.
- If the individual indicates that there is a mistake, please encourage them to contact the state governing agency listing the individual as a sex offender to rectify the matter. Staff members may choose to give the parent a printed copy of the alert, if desired.
- The building administrator will send a letter on the guidelines that the parent or guardian must follow when on school property. Administrators may add specific guidelines as appropriate.
- The parent or guardian will not be permitted to interact with students or walk through the school unescorted.
- Parents or guardians who require a teacher conference shall be encouraged to do so when other children are not in class and separated from the student population.
- Failure to follow the established procedures may result in parents or guardians being banned from enter the premises.
**Customized Alerts**
There may be situations where certain visitors can be flagged as posing a danger to students or staff. One of the features of the Raptor System is the ability to program customized alerts, specific to the students and staff at the building site. These alerts seek to help school personnel identify and avoid dangerous situations.

Examples of persons that can be entered into a Private Alert are:
- Non-custodial parents or family members
- Parents or other family members with restraining orders banning contact with a student or staff member
- Parents with very limited visitation of students
- Expelled students
- Persons who have threatened students or staff
- Persons who have committed a crime on or near a school site

Principals have the ability to add private alerts. If a private alert is added, please ensure the following:
1. File a copy of the court order, restraining order, legal document or communication from law enforcement/administrators which support the alert in the student’s file.
2. Notify the office staff and all administrators via email about the nature of the alert.
3. Review the school emergency procedures that address hostile person on campus.

**Volunteers**
The Raptor system will provide an electronic database of volunteer hours and duties performed by a campus.

- Each volunteer will scan their identification into the system on the first visit. On subsequent visits, the volunteer’s name will be located through the quick find screen.
- On the first screen, select volunteer
- Indicate the job and location
- Print the badge
- Volunteer displays the badge at all times
- After volunteer activity is completed, the volunteer returns to the office.
- Volunteer is to check out when the volunteer activity is completed.

**Power/Internet Connection Failure**
In the event there is no power or Internet service, the attendant is to use paper logs. The logs should be entered into the Raptor system once services have been restored.
Operating Procedure

Log onto the Raptor Scanning System

A. The system is to be operated by school district employees only. Parent volunteers or students are not allowed to operate this system. Only staff members approved by the district will be allowed to use Raptor.

B. To Log On
   - Enter User Name
   - Enter Password
     i. Click on Visitor
     ii. Choose a Task

Visitor Sign-In

A. First time visitor with Identification (I.D.) – Place visitor’s Drivers’ License, IA I.D., military or some form of government I.D. face down in the scanner reading left to right – click scan. Give ID a light nudge into the scanner to get started. Check information on ID against what is displayed on screen. Sometimes the spelling of a name is not correct, due to wear or marks on license or a long name will run together. This is easily edited. If incorrect information has already been submitted, you can go to View Visitors, click Edit, make corrections, add notes, etc. then Submit.

B. First time visitor without Identification (I.D.) – It is not necessary to use a Drivers’ License or other forms of Identification to print a badge. However, the information will not be stored for future use in the Quick Find feature and no picture will be displayed. Simply type in necessary information (first & last name, date of birth, and destination), then Submit & Print.

C. Repeat visitors – Use the quick find feature by typing the first few letters of the first or last name and select Find. Be aware that you may have to select the person from a list of names.
   1) When a message appears regarding Secure and Non-secure items, click Yes to properly execute the entry.
   2) Enter the visitor’s destination in the Notes Field then click Submit & Print to print a visitor’s badge.
**Sex Offender Alert**

If a sex offender alert appears on the screen, a picture is displayed for verification purposes. Before clicking **Yes**, CAREFULLY check the following:

- First, middle and last name against the ID provided by the visitor
- The picture on the screen against the ID and the person checking in
- The full address on the screen against the ID provided by the visitor

Some sex offenders have the same name and date of birth as a non-offender. You must verify the identity before confirming a match.

Remember, Raptor screens against sex offender databases in multiple states. Some states do not provide pictures or complete information. If there is a question about the individual’s identification, notify school administration immediately. Do not permit the visitor to enter your building unescorted before identification is confirmed.

A. Match Confirmation
   - Once a match is confirmed, a silent alarm will be sent via email and phone to School & District Administrators to alert them of a possible sex offender at the location.

B. Administrative Notification
   - In a discrete manner, have the visitor wait in the lobby area. Try not to alarm the visitor or others in the area.
   - Do not disclose his or her information to anyone other than your School Administrator, especially other students or visitors who may be attempting to sign in.
   - Notify the School Administrator immediately so that they can come speak to the individual.

C. Administrator’s Response
   - In a private area, the School Administrator should talk to the individual about the information returned from the Raptor system.
**Visitor Sign-Out**

- Click on **View Visitor** – A list of visitors in the building will appear with boxes to the left of their names.
- Select the box next to the name of the visitor you wish to sign out.
- Click **Sign Out** at the top of the column
  The triangle between the box and the name may be selected to display a photo (if entered) of the visitor. This helps to identify in case the visitor does not stop to return the visitor’s badge.

Visitors not signed out can be automatically signed out by designating an automatic sign out time. If the system is shut down prematurely, when back into the system, select **Sign in Visitor**, and you can resume normal operation of the system.

**Volunteer Sign-In**

A. First time volunteer with Identification (I.D.) – Place Drivers’ License, IA I.D., military or some form of government I.D. face down in the scanner reading left to right – click scan. Make sure the I.D. is aligned against the RIGHT side of the scanner. Give ID a slight nudge into the scanner to get started. Check information on ID against what is displayed on screen. Sometimes the spelling of a name is not correct, due to wear or marks on license or a long name will run together. This is easily edited. Add home address; check the items the volunteer wished to be involved with, in the task information. Click the **Submit** button at the bottom of the screen.

B. Previous visitor – if the volunteer has been signed in as a visitor in the system, their information can be accessed by using the Previous Visitor field. Add home address; check the items the volunteer is to be involved with, in the task information. Click the **Submit** button at the bottom of the screen.

C. Repeat volunteers – Use the quick find feature by typing the first few letters of the first or last name and select **Find**. Be aware that you may have to select the person from a list of names.

D. Virtual Volunteers – Volunteers can sign in to Virtual Volunteer from any computer with an Internet connection ([www.v-volunteer.com](http://www.v-volunteer.com)). Volunteers will create an account at the sign in page. Once the Volunteer has created an account, they can sign in with an email address and a password.
**Volunteer Sign-Out**

- Click on **View Volunteer** – A list of volunteers in the building will be displayed with boxes to the left of their names.
- Click the box next to the volunteer’s name you wish to sign out.
- Click **Sign Out** at the top of the column.

**Student Sign-In**

To use the Student features, start by clicking the **Students** button from the main menu in Raptor. Find the student in the system by typing the first few letters of the students first or last name. Click **Find**. The Student information will populate the database fields. Choose the reason for the last check-in by clicking the drop down **Reason** menu. Indicate whether the tardy is excused or unexcused by clicking the **Excused Reason** drop down menu. Click **Submit** to enter the information only, or click **Submit & Print** to print a tardy pass.

**Notes:**
User can be alerted of multiple tardies by entering Tardy alerts in the Preferences under the Student section in the Admin menu. Reasons may be added or deleted with the Reasons Editor, also found under the Admin menu. The late entry button on the right of the screen may be used to enter Students in the event that you are unable to enter them at any time due to things such as equipment issues or Internet connection problems.

**Student Sign-Out**

To sign out Students, click the **Sign Out Student** button from the current screen, or click **Sign-Out Student** from the Main Student Menu.

If the parent/guardian is a first time Visitor, scan their state/government issued ID. If the parent/guardian is already in the system, enter the first few letters of their first or last name using the Quick Find field, and click **Find**. If the list appears, choose the Visitor from the list. Otherwise the Visitor information will automatically populate the Parent/Guardian fields.

Next, in the Student Information section, find the Student in the system by entering the first few letters of the students first or last name in the Quick Find field and click **Find**. Choose the reason for the early check-out by selecting the **Reason** drop down menu.

Choose submit to simply enter the information. Choosing **Submit & Print** will print a bade for the parent/guardian for use while in the building is needed.
Reports

Commonly Used Volunteer Reports

Total Hours by Date Range
The Total Hours by Date Range report provides data on the total number of hours logged by each volunteer during a specified time period. Choose Total Hours by Date Range report from the Reports drop down menu. Choose the date range. Click Submit. A list report is generated and is available for printing.

Top 10 Volunteers
The top 10 Volunteers report provides data on the top 10 Volunteers with the most hours logged during a specified time period.

Choose Top 10 Volunteers report from the Reports drop down menu. Choose the date range. Click Submit. A graphic report with table is generated and is available for printing.

List Report by Criteria
The purpose of the List Report by Criteria is to create a list of information on particular volunteer during a specified period. The query will display the First Name, Last Name, Function, Date/Time Out, and Hours.

Choose List Report by Criteria from the Reports drop down menu. Choose the date range. Find the Volunteer name by entering the first few letter of the first or last name, and click the search icon. A list of Volunteers names will appear in the drop down menu below called “Volunteer.” Click the down arrow on the drop down menu and select the Volunteer.

Report On (Signed In or Signed Out) and sort by. Click Submit.

A list report is generated and may be printed, emailed, or exported as a file.

Student List Reports by Date Range
The purpose of the list Report by Date Range is to create a list of information of all Student’s late check-ins or early check-outs during a specified period. This query will display the First Name and last Name of the Student and Parent/Guardian, Student ID#, Reason, Type (in or out), and Date/Time.

Begin by clicking the Student Tab. Select Reports. Choose Detailed Report by Date Range from the Reports drop down menu. Choose the date range. You may also choose Type (In or Out, or both), and sort orders. Click Submit. A list report is generated and may be printed, emailed, or exported to a file.
Individual Student Reports
The purpose of the Search Students feature is to view information on particular Student’s late arrivals or early dismissals during a specified period. This query will display the First Name, Last Name, Reason, Building Name, Type (in or out), and Date/Time.

Start by clicking the Students button from the main menu in V-soft. Select Search Student.

Select a date range and Type (Signed In or Signed Out). Enter all or part of the individual’s name or ID number. You may also select how to sort the information in the Sort By and Sort Order drop down menus.

Click Submit. A list report is generated.

To Print a Report
A. Select type of report from the Task Page (i.e. Visitors, Student or Volunteer).
B. Open the list of reports by clicking on the arrow by reports.
C. Select List Report by Date Range
D. Choose a start and end date. (For a daily report choose the same date).
E. Click on Submit
   ♦ All reports will be listed for dates requested.
   ♦ You may choose any date range for up to 90 days.
   ♦ A detailed report by date range will show visitors’ pictures.
   ♦ Monthly reports will show a chart along with figures.

System Administration
In the task bar at the top of the page you may select Admin (Administration) which directs to the Section Tools/Management Console page.

Details you can access from Section Tools/Management Console:
Visitors
   Preferences – set up configurations of what the system is to do
   Customize – form layout/required fields
User Accounts
   Create a user – information/permissions
   Search user(s)
Alerts
   Shows a log of past alerts
Global Settings
   When entering someone in the system with an email or phone number to be alerted, place a comma after the last entry.

Adopted by the School Committee on 2/20/2019.

16 | Page
RELATIONS WITH POLICE AUTHORITIES

Cooperation with law enforcement agencies is essential for the protection of students, for maintaining a safe environment in the District schools, and for safeguarding all school property.

Relationships between the schools and officials of law enforcement agencies in investigative matters concerning pupils will take into consideration the respective roles of the schools and law enforcement agencies in assisting and protecting the interests of the community, and ensuring the rights of all concerned.

The School Committee also recognizes the potential enrichment that law enforcement agencies can make in the educational program.

Efforts should be made to develop and maintain a healthy attitude toward law enforcement agencies and personnel to promote better understanding and communication.
RELATIONS WITH PLANNING AUTHORITIES

The School Committee will participate in local and state planning functions that could directly affect District schools and their immediate environment.

The Superintendent or designee will keep the School Committee informed of planning matters bearing directly on the operation of District schools or school-sponsored programs, and will undertake action on behalf of the School Committee to influence matters in the best interests of the students, the schools and the District.
RELATIONS WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENTAL AUTHORITIES

The School Committee and its administrative officers welcome all who seek to serve the residents of the community and will participate with them in the planning and execution of such projects as will be mutually beneficial for students.

It is School Committee policy that administration inform elected and appointed officials of the local and county government of the desire to work cooperatively for improved services.
EDUCATION AGENCY RELATIONS GOALS

The School Committee appreciates the place and importance of an educational system in its greater environment, which includes other organizations and institutions dedicated to education. It believes that much is gained through cooperative endeavors with other agencies.

In order to make a maximum contribution to education, within the school system and to other educational agencies, the Committee establishes these broad goals:

1. To encourage liaison with other educational agencies.
2. To supply educational services to and/or share with other educational agencies.
RELATIONS WITH OTHER SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL DISTRICTS

The School Committee will cooperate with other schools and with local, state, and regional agencies and organizations to:

1. Seek solutions of educational problems of common concern.
2. Offer support services of high quality to our children.
3. Equalize educational opportunities for all children.
4. Acquire federal and state grants.
5. Promote local school system involvement in state and federal decision-making.

This cooperation may extend to research, providing transportation for children to special schools and hospitals, coordination of curriculum, exchange of information and data, construction of facilities that may be efficiently used on a cooperative basis, and the coordination of school calendars and activities.

Before joining any cooperative programs, education collaborative, or participating in any joint educational services with other school systems, the School Committee wants to be sure that in all instances the best interests of our school children will be served. In carrying out this policy the Superintendent will include in reports to the Committee an evaluation of the desirability and feasibility of cooperation with other schools and agencies on matters of mutual interest.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 40:4E; 71:48; 71:71D; 71B:4; 74:4 through 74:7A; 76:1
RELATIONS WITH NONPUBLIC SCHOOLS

Private Schools

In accordance with state law, the School Committee will approve a private school when it is satisfied that the instructional program of the school equals that of the town's public schools in thoroughness, efficiency, and progress made.

The Committee recognizes that many worthwhile contributions are made to this community by parochial and other private schools. Therefore, it will cooperate with these schools in matters of mutual benefit when law does not expressly prohibit this cooperation.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 40:4E; 71:48; 71:71D; 71B:4; 74:4 through 74:7A; 76:1
STUDENT TEACHING AND INTERNSHIPS

The Committee encourages the administration to cooperate with teacher-training institutions in the placement of student teachers in the school system. All initial arrangements with the colleges and universities will be subject to Committee approval.

The Committee authorizes the administration to honor the reasonable rules and training guidelines of the sending institution.

In all arrangements made with colleges and universities, the school system will be given the privilege of interviewing and accepting or rejecting individual candidates for student teaching and internships.

The school administration will devise procedures for evaluating the performance of student teachers that meet requirements of the sending institution and fit with the Committee's policies.