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Purpose

Committed to the task of providing quality education for the children of Springfield School District ("District") and recognizing the need for constant evaluation and improvement of the school curriculum, the Board of School Directors ("Board") encourages and supports innovation. Innovation as applied within the context of this policy is simply a term to describe the introduction of new programs and major adjustments to existing programs. It is applied throughout this policy to broad changes in curriculum, and is not to be construed to apply to the numerous ideas and techniques which teachers constantly bring to their classrooms. The District administration constantly considers such new ideas from teachers, students, citizens, and external experts, and provides frequent opportunities for their discussion. However, major changes in curriculum demand a more systematic approach if they are to be effectively implemented.

In the District, this systematic approach is entitled, "Design for Curriculum Innovation." It is designed to encourage innovative programs, while at the same time establishing procedures that will require thorough study of existing and alternative programs by those responsible, and also provide complete information for all who are concerned and interested. This design for curriculum innovation consists of four (4) basic processes. These processes are utilized at various points within the six (6) stages of the District's Curriculum Development Process. The process is outlined in the administrative guidelines for this policy.

Process: Assessment

An assessment of needs is the first phase of problem-solving and fundamental to all responsible decision-making. The Board encourages the use of basic and applied research, projected studies, and the coordination of research activities.

Process: Development

The Board supports the employment of the research findings and the recommendations of the Directors of Teaching and Learning, the quality of learning, and curriculum committees in their work for improvement of instruction, and encourages the schools to participate in experimental activities.

Process: Implementation

The Board supports a collaborative process to design a comprehensive plan for the implementation of any curriculum innovation. The plan includes a comprehensive staff development component to prepare and support the implementation of the innovation.

Process: Evaluation

The Board encourages thorough evaluation of the various practices of the District to determine their effectiveness in the improvement of the instructional process, and quality of learning. The Board believes that careful evaluation is necessary to assure proper accountability which involves financial efficiency as well as effective instructional procedures.

In summation, the Board believes that change in existing public school curricula is a necessary process of a free society in a rapidly changing environment. The Board, therefore, encourages innovation, but through a design that establishes a cooperative systematic approach to curriculum change in order to keep the educational offerings at a productive level and equal to the demands of a dynamic society.

SUPERSEDES: Policy No. 6140, Design for Curriculum Innovation

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