DUDLEY-CHARLTON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

POLICY
Observations of Special Education Programs   **KI**

The Dudley-Charlton Regional School District staff regularly collaborates with parents/guardians to provide timely response to requests received for observation of their children's current or proposed special education programs. Observations may be conducted by the parent/guardian or his/her designated private evaluator or educational consultant. The Dudley-Charlton Regional School District will provide an opportunity for observation of sufficient duration and extent to enable evaluation of the child's performance in his/her current program or to evaluate a proposed program's ability to enable the child to make effective progress.

1.   Parents'/guardians' request to observe their child's current program or a potential placement must be made verbally or in writing to the building principal. Parents/guardians are asked to provide the following information: child's name, the observer's name and contact information, and purpose of the observation (including any particular part of the school day the observer wishes to see).

2.   In order to assist in timely scheduling, the building principal or designee will contact the identified observer directly. Staff will generally be able to offer a time within a week of the request for an observation of an hour or less. However, if more extensive observation is required, scheduling may take longer. For urgent cases, efforts will be made to schedule the observation as soon as possible. The district does not generally schedule observations for certain portions of the year such as during MCAS testing or during the first few weeks of school. In addition, because it may not be possible to accommodate all requests during the last few weeks of school, parents are urged to submit any observation request they may have as early as practicable in the school year. In addition, school staff retains its right and obligation to restrict program observation where necessary to protect the safety of a child or the integrity of program.

3.   The number, frequency, and duration of observation periods will be determined on an individual student basis in accordance with law and regulation. The start and end time of observation periods and a schedule of observation periods will be stated in advance. In order to minimize classroom or student disruption, the length of individual observation periods may be limited.

4.   The principal or designee will work with the classroom teacher and the observer to setup the specifics of the observation (including, but not limited to, scheduling and placement of the observer in the classroom). A school staff member will

accompany the observer during the observation period and take notes as to what is observed, paying particular attention to note anything that is non-typical during the observation period. Given the ongoing responsibility of teachers or therapists to serve all students, they will generally not be available for conversation/ conferencing during or immediately before/after the observation period.

5.   If the observer is not the parent/guardian, the parent/guardian must submit written consent for the individual to observe.

6.   The number of observers at any one time may be limited.

7.   The observer will be informed that he/she is there to evaluate the appropriateness of a specific educational program to meet the needs of an individual child. He/she is not there to evaluate a teacher's ability to perform his or her contractual job duties.

8.   The observer will be instructed regarding the disclosure of confidential or personally identifiable information relating to other children. Staff must be mindful of removing materials which may be part of students' records from plain view. In the event that removal is not possible the observer may be asked to sign a non-disclosure agreement.

LEGAL REF.:   **MGL Ch. 363**
Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Technical Assistance Advisory SPED 2009-2 dated January 9, 2009

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