

STUDENTS AND INSTRUCTION	5000
<u>INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM</u>	5200
FIELD TRIPS	5215

“The School Committee recognizes that firsthand learning experiences provided by field trips are an effective and worthwhile means of learning. It is the desire of the School Committee, therefore, to encourage field trips as part of and directly related to the total school program and curriculum. In keeping with the district wide curriculum, the School Committee envisions there will be general parity of experience across the district in this regard.

The School Committee also is aware that the cost of field trips can be a concern for families. Accordingly, it is the policy of the School Committee that for field trips that are attended by a majority of the students in a class, no student will be denied an opportunity to participate because of the financial inability of his/her family to pay the field trip fee. Moreover, it is the desire of the School Committee to encourage the administration to keep in mind the effect of the cost of field trips on families, and to consider the educational value of field trips in relation to their costs, as part of the field trip planning process.

Specific guidelines and appropriate administrative procedures shall be developed by the Superintendent to screen, evaluate and approve trips and to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken for the safety of the participants. The guidelines and procedures shall require, among other things, that all field trips have the prior approval of the Principal, and that all field trips involving late night or overnight travel, travel out of state or overnight stays have the prior approval of the Superintendent and the School Committee. Such approvals should be obtained before students engage in any fundraising activity in connection with field trips. Additionally, the guidelines and procedures shall be designed to ensure (1) that all trips contribute substantially to the educational program; (2) that all students have parental permission to attend field trips; and (3) that all trips are properly supervised and include precautions to protect the safety of students. The guidelines and procedures also must include plans to provide (1) reasonable accommodations for eligible students with disabilities to allow them to participate in field trips, (2) a means for fundraising and/or subsidizing the field trip cost for families deemed financially unable to pay, and (3) meaningful educational activities during the period of the field trip for students who do not participate and

instead remain in school. Said guidelines and procedures shall be subject to the review and approval of the School Committee.

Overnight accommodations should be made in advance with safety and security in mind and, whenever possible, travel between the hours of midnight and 6:00 a.m. should be avoided. Trip itineraries should leave enough time for drivers to rest in conformity with federal hours-of-service requirements and common sense. Trip schedulers should take into account the likelihood of delays due to weather, traffic and other unanticipated factors. Whenever possible, overnight trips should be scheduled on weekends or during school vacation periods to minimize lost classroom time, and day trips should be limited to regular school hours.

The Superintendent is authorized to cancel any field trip, up to the time of departure, whenever, in the Superintendent's judgment, a change in circumstances, whether man-made or natural, warrants cancellation of the trip in the interests of the safety of students and other participants. In such event, the school district will make an effort to obtain a refund of monies paid by students and parents; however, such refund is not guaranteed.

Unless students travel by means of walking or public transportation, school buses or common carriers licensed to do business in Massachusetts and licensed for passenger transport by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration should be used for transportation to and from field trips. The use of privately owned vehicles or privately leased vans to transport students to and from field trips is strictly prohibited, except in the case of a bona fide emergency, as determined by the Principal or, in the absence of the Principal, the Field Trip Leader. Staff and parents who utilize their own vehicles risk being legally liable if students are injured while riding in their vehicles.

A separate Parent Permission and Waiver Form must be obtained and filed in the Principal's office for each field trip. The Parental Permission and Waiver Form should be sent home in the language of the home, if that language is not English.

The school district, the School Committee and the City of Melrose shall not be financially liable for any costs incurred as the result of a chaperone's decision to send a student participant home earlier than the scheduled return date, due to the student's unacceptable behavior on a field trip. Students and their parents/guardians shall be responsible for any damage done by students to hotels, rental properties and real or personal property."

Proposed Draft for MSC Meeting August 10, 2010 - K Thorp

Last year the Melrose School Committee reviewed the Field Trip policy. At that time, there were no explicit administrative district procedures in place for field trips, and so the School Committee added language to the policy requiring those procedures and giving an outline of what they should contain. Over the past year, the district has developed procedures, which will be brought before the School Committee for approval. This draft removes the more procedural language as this will now be covered rightfully in the procedures.

In addition, it has been noted that the language of the policy that expresses the committee's desire to help families who are unable to afford field trips, inadvertently covered more than just the normal single day field trips that were intended. This area has been corrected in this draft as well.

STUDENTS AND INSTRUCTION 5000

INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM 5200

FIELD TRIPS 5215

The School Committee recognizes that firsthand learning experiences provided by field trips are an effective and worthwhile means of learning. It is the desire of the School Committee, therefore, to encourage field trips as part of and directly related to the total school program and curriculum. In keeping with the district wide curriculum, the School Committee envisions there will be general parity of experience across the district in this regard.

The School Committee also is aware that the cost of field trips can be a concern for families. Accordingly, it is the policy of the School Committee that for single day field trips that are attended by a majority of the students in a class, no student will be denied an opportunity to participate because of the financial inability of his/her family to pay the field trip fee. Moreover, it is the desire of the School Committee to encourage the administration to keep in mind the effect of the cost of field trips on families, and to consider the educational value of field trips in relation to their costs, as well as possible lower-cost alternatives, as part of the field trip planning process.

Specific guidelines and appropriate administrative procedures shall be developed by the Superintendent to screen, evaluate and approve trips and to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken for the safety of the participants. The guidelines and procedures shall require, among other things, that all field trips have the prior approval of the Department Chair (for secondary field trips) and Principal (for all levels), and that all field trips involving late night or overnight travel, travel out of state or overnight stays also have the prior approval of the Superintendent and the School Committee. Such approvals should be obtained before ~~students engage in any fundraising activity in connection with field trips~~ trip arrangements, payments and fund raising. Additionally, the guidelines and procedures shall be designed to ensure (1) that all trips contribute substantially to the educational program; (2) that all students have parental permission to attend field trips;

and (3) that all trips are properly supervised and include precautions to protect the safety of students. The guidelines and procedures also must include plans to provide (1) reasonable accommodations for eligible students with disabilities to allow them to participate in field trips, (2) a means for ~~fundraising and/or~~ subsidizing the ~~field trip~~ cost of **single day field trips** for families deemed financially unable to pay, and (3) meaningful educational activities during the period of the field trip for students who do not participate and instead remain in school. Said guidelines and procedures shall be subject to the review and approval of the School Committee.

~~Overnight accommodations should be made in advance with safety and security in mind and, whenever possible, travel between the hours of midnight and 6:00 a.m. should be avoided. Trip itineraries should leave enough time for drivers to rest in conformity with federal hours of service requirements and common sense. Trip schedulers should take into account the likelihood of delays due to weather, traffic and other unanticipated factors. Whenever possible, overnight trips should be scheduled on weekends or during school vacation periods to minimize lost classroom time, and day trips should be limited to regular school hours.~~

The **School Committee or the Superintendent** is **are** authorized to cancel any field trip, up to the time of departure, whenever, in the Superintendent's **their** judgment, a change in circumstances, whether man-made or natural, warrants cancellation of the trip in the interests of the safety of students and other participants. In such event, the school district will make an effort to obtain a refund of monies paid by students and parents; however, such refund is not guaranteed.

~~Unless students travel by means of walking or public transportation, school buses or common carriers licensed to do business in Massachusetts and licensed for passenger transport by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration should be used for transportation to and from field trips. The use of privately owned vehicles or privately leased vans to transport students to and from field trips is strictly prohibited, except in the case of a bona fide emergency, as determined by the Principal or, in the absence of the Principal, the Field Trip Leader. Staff and parents who utilize their own vehicles risk being legally liable if students are injured while riding in their vehicles.~~

~~A separate Parent Permission and Waiver Form must be obtained and filed in the Principal's office for each field trip. The Parental Permission and Waiver **All field trip information and forms** should be sent home in the language of the home, if that language is not English.~~

The school district, the School Committee and the City of Melrose shall not be financially liable for any costs incurred as the result of a chaperone's decision to send a student participant home earlier than the scheduled return date, due to the student's unacceptable behavior on a field trip. Students and their parents/guardians shall be responsible for any damage done by students to ~~hotels, rental properties and~~ **all** real or personal property.

**STUDENTS AND INSTRUCTION 5000
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The Melrose School Committee recognizes that field trips, international excursions, class trips, and co-curricular trips can provide students with an effective and worthwhile means of learning and growing. The School Committee encourages those activities that reinforce classroom instruction and promote healthy social development.

Field trips designed to stimulate student interest and inquiry and provide opportunities for social growth and development are considered appropriate extensions of the classroom. Teachers and principals are encouraged to promote field trips as an integral part of the instructional program of the Melrose Public Schools. Reasonable accommodations will be provided for students with disabilities to allow them to participate in field trips. To the extent that they provide the most effective means for accomplishing general curriculum objectives of the Melrose Public Schools, field trips may be authorized by the building principal and approved by the Superintendent.

Field Trips

Field trips are intended to stimulate student interest and inquiry, providing them with insights, information, or knowledge that enhances regular classroom instruction. To be educationally beneficial, field trips require thoughtful selection, careful advanced planning and preparation of the class, and relevant follow-up activities. Moreover, field trips must not interfere with the overall academic program of the school due to repeated teacher and/or student absences.

A. DEFINITIONS

The following definitions apply for the purpose of this policy:

1. **Academic field trips** include all off-campus trips that are organized as part of the class curriculum. There must be pre-and post- trip instructional activities and/or assessment. Participation for all members of the class is optimal but voluntary. Provisions for comparable instructional experiences during the school day must be made for students who choose not to attend the academic field trip.
2. **Extracurricular field trips** are those off-campus trips that are organized by a school-sponsored club, group, or athletic team. Participation is optional and voluntary. The School Committee is mindful, however, of the financial burden such travel may place on some families and the potential for disparate educational opportunities for students. Away games or matches that are part of the athletic program are considered extra-curricular field trips under this definition.
3. When an **academic field trip** or an **extra-curricular field trip** is planned to occur between midnight and 6 a.m. or to require a student to stay overnight away from home, the procedures for planning and approving overnight trips apply. It is understood that overnight trips may include travel within Massachusetts, in other states, and internationally.

B. GENERAL CONDITIONS FOR APPROVAL: Domestic and International

Only field trips meeting the following conditions are permitted. The sponsoring faculty member shall ensure that:

1. Trips are appropriate for the age group involved in the activity.
2. Trips are reasonable in terms of time, distance, and cost.
3. Trips are not scheduled during the last full week (plus any partial week) of school of the school year. In general, extracurricular international/domestic field trips should occur during non-school time.
4. Trips are not scheduled during the MCAS examination periods for students taking the MCAS exams. If unique and special circumstances present an academic opportunity, the principal and superintendent will consider and evaluate each request with care.
5. Trips are planned with careful consideration of student safety which includes, without limitation, an appropriate number of adult chaperones as specified in Section D of this policy and all chaperones have approved Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) checks on file with the Superintendent.
6. While there must be adequate supervision, the Principal must also minimize the number of teachers missing classes due to chaperoning.
7. Provisions for medical emergencies, including attending medical personnel, if necessary.
8. When school bus transportation is required, the school district's regular transportation contractor is to be utilized, if available. If the school district's regular transportation carrier is not available, only contractors licensed for passenger transportation by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) or the Department of Defense's approved list of motor carriers may be used. Carriers with an FMCSA or Department of Defense safety rating of "conditional" or "unsatisfactory" cannot be used. FMCSA carrier ratings are available online at <http://www.safer.fmcsa.gov> or by calling 703.280.4001 and providing the carrier's D.O.T. identification number. Department of Defense carrier ratings are available online at <http://www.mtmc.army.mil/content/504/approvedlist.pdf>.
9. Any contract with a private carrier must prohibit the use of subcontractors unless approved by the Superintendent or designee. The Superintendent or designee shall not approve use of any subcontractor unless the subcontractor meets the criteria referenced above in paragraph (6) of this section.
10. No student is denied the opportunity to participate in an academic field trip because of the inability to pay.
11. Costs associated with an optional/voluntary extracurricular field trip will be the responsibility of the individual student/family. Where appropriate, there may be fund raising to help defray costs. All fundraising must be done in compliance and accordance with Melrose Public School policies.
12. Should an emergency situation occur, the sponsoring faculty member is responsible for

notifying the Principal by telephone as soon as possible.

13. Helmets are required for bicycle and ski/snowboard trips.

14. Trip cancellation insurance must be made available for all multiple-day, out-of-state trips, and international travel.

C. AUTHORITY TO APPROVE/DISAPPROVE: Domestic and International

1. All school-sponsored day field trips must receive prior recommendation of the department chairperson (high school only) and the approval of the principal.

2. All school-sponsored day out-of-state field trips must receive prior recommendation of the department chairperson (high school only) and the approval of the principal, superintendent, and school committee.

3. All school-sponsored overnight field trips (in- or out-of-state) must receive prior recommendation of the department chairperson (high school only) and the approval of the principal, superintendent, and school committee.

4. All school-sponsored international field trips must prior recommendation of the department chairperson (high school only) and the approval of the principal, superintendent, and school committee.

5. Pursuant to MGL, Chapter 71, Section 47, the School Committee is responsible for approving out-of-state and/or overnight academic and extracurricular field trips.

6. Where practical, the Melrose School Committee requires that final approval be sought no less than thirty (30) days prior to the scheduled trip dates.

7. The approval process shall be completed prior to engaging students in fundraising activities or other preparations for the trip.

8. The School Committee reserves the right (a) to cancel trips up to departure and (b) to recall trips in progress, if they believe there are national and/or international conditions that pose potential danger to students or any other reason deemed appropriate by the School Committee.

9. The Superintendent will alert the School Committee to final deadlines regarding required commitment of funds if there are national/international events/situations which might make the School Committee cancel or recall a trip due to safety concerns or other reasons.

Elementary (PreK–5) Field Trips

Normally, only single-day field trips are permitted at the elementary level. Both single-day, out-of-state field trips, and multi-day field trips, such as the fifth-grade trip to E-camp, require the Superintendent's approval followed by School Committee approval. Please note that field trip procedures have been standardized for all elementary schools.

Middle School (5–8) Field Trips

Normally, only single-day field trips are permitted at the middle-school level. Field trips complying with the conditions set forth by the Melrose School Committee policy may be authorized by the middle school principal or assistant principal, followed by notification and approval of the Superintendent or designee. Both single-day, out-of-state field trips, and multi-day field trips require the Superintendent's approval followed by School Committee approval.

High School (9–12) Field Trips

Normally, only single-day field trips are permitted at the high-school level. Field trips complying with the conditions set forth by the Melrose School Committee policy may be authorized by the high school principal or assistant principals, followed by notification and approval of the Superintendent or designee. Both single-day, out-of-state field trips, and multi-day field trips require the Superintendent's approval followed by School Committee approval. The Superintendent may authorize multi-day, domestic (out-of-state), or international trips that relate to a specific course or area of study, followed by notification and approval of the School Committee. The Superintendent reserves the right to cancel any trip as warranted for safety reasons.

Field trip requests must specify:

- The academic subject
- Grade of students attending
- Title of the field trip/lesson
- Purpose of the trip
- Learning Objectives
- Expected student outcome
- Instructional procedure and activity
- Learning reinforcements

Teachers must also be cognizant of the educational needs of those students not participating in a field trip and must provide a comparable educational experience for those students. Teachers will provide a lesson plan for those students remaining in school that clearly addresses the following:

- Learning objectives of the lesson plan(s) for students
- Expected student outcome
- Activities students will complete in school during the field trip
- Follow-up activities students will complete at the conclusion of the field trip, along with classmates who did not participate

D. APPROVAL DOCUMENTATION: Domestic and International

Approval for all trips must be received prior to making any financial contractual arrangements. All field trips must be approved in writing by the appropriate authority as specified in this policy. The initial documentation to request a field trip must include:

1. Proposed dates and itinerary.

2. Description of the process that will be used to determine student eligibility.
3. Estimated number of students expected and percentage of eligible students participating.
4. Cost per student (if applicable).
5. Mode of transportation and schedule.
6. Ratio of chaperones/teachers to students
(Recommended ratio – HS 1:10; MS 1:10 min.; Elementary 1:10 min.; International 1:6)
7. Description of arrangements for meals and lodging (if applicable). Accommodations will include enough rooms so that no chaperones are rooming with students.
8. Description of security features for transportation and accommodations.
9. Means of financing.
10. Draft copy of any contract and refund policies associated with the trip.
11. Draft copy of the letters to be sent to parents and guardians referencing the specifics of the trip including all of the above and any rules specific to the trip which are in addition to the Melrose Public Schools student conduct policies, student handbook rules or regulations, and the MA Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) rules and regulations. For international field trips, the sponsoring faculty member will provide parents a copy of the State Department Travel Advisory and Homeland Security Alert Status for all countries to be visited.
12. In the case of academic field trips, there must be a description of the educational alternative and mapping of that alternative for students not attending the trip, if applicable.
13. Satisfactory Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) check of all chaperones is required and must be on file in the Superintendent's Office.
14. International trips must include a printout of the State Department Travel Advisory and Homeland Security Alert Status for all countries to be visited.
- Additional information may be requested from the appropriate authority prior to making a decision.
- Should external circumstances change after the initial trip approval detailed modifications to the relevant approval documentation (see above) will be required.

E. FUNDRAISING AND SCHOLARSHIPS

1. Fundraising events and activities may be planned to offset the costs for academic and extracurricular field trips. Any such fundraising shall take place in accordance with the Melrose Public School policies on fundraising.
2. Where an individual fee is charge for an academic field trip which is part of the approved curriculum, the principal may provide a partial or full scholarship to a student if, due to financial hardship, such scholarship is necessary to allow a student's participation. However, no student is guaranteed a partial or full scholarship for the purpose of attending an optional and/or voluntary extracurricular field trip.

F. DISCIPLINE OF STUDENTS AND FIELD TRIPS – Domestic and International

1. All Melrose Policies on Student Behavior, Student Handbook rules and regulations, MA Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) rules and regulations, and trip rules as specified in Section C.13 regarding student conduct will apply and be in effect at all times for academic and extracurricular field trips.
2. If a student violates any Melrose student conduct policies, student handbook rules, or regulations, MA Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) rules and regulations, trip rules as specified in Section D-11, or otherwise misbehaves while on a field trip, the student will be immediately suspended from the field trip and sent back to school or home, as appropriate, by the faculty sponsor at the parent's/guardian's expense. In addition to being sent home, the individual will be subject to the consequences for the action/infraction upon his/her return to school as defined by the aforementioned student conduct policies, student handbook rules and regulations, and MA Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) rules and regulations.
3. Melrose Policies on Student Behavior, Student Handbook rules and regulations, MA Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) rules and regulations, and trip rules as specified in Section D-11 regarding student conduct will be given to chaperones. Chaperones shall agree to implement and enforce them; failure to do so will result in not being able to chaperone future school-sponsored trips.

G. ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATIONS on FIELD TRIPS: Domestic and International

In accordance with the Melrose Policy on Administration of Medications, the administration of medications while on a day field trip is discouraged if medically feasible. However, in the event that it is medically necessary for a student to be administered medication while on a field trip the procedures promulgated in the Policy on Administration of Medications will apply. Parents/legal guardians will receive a copy of the Melrose Policy, Administration of Medications in advance of the field trip as part of the trip materials. Student (if appropriate) and parents/guardians must sign an Emergency Treatment and Medications Consent.

H. TRANSPORTATION, LODGING, AND SCHEDULING: Domestic and International

1. The use of private vans and automobile for trips planned to include late night or overnight (midnight and 6:00 a.m.) student travel is not permitted. Such trips will use commercial vans or motor coaches and employ professional licensed drivers.
2. When school bus transportation is required, the school district's regular transportation contractor is to be utilized, if available. If the school district's regular transportation carrier is not available, only contractors licensed for passenger transportation by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) or the Department of Defense's approved list of motor carriers may be used. Carriers with an FMCSA or Department of Defense safety rating of "conditional" or "unsatisfactory" cannot be used. FMCSA carrier ratings are available online at <http://www.safer.fmcsa.gov> or by calling 703.280.4001 and providing the carrier's D.O.T. identification number. Department of Defense carrier ratings are available online at <http://www.mtmc.army.mil/content/504/approvedlist.pdf>.

3. Any contract with a private carrier must prohibit the use of subcontractors unless approved by the Superintendent or designee. The Superintendent or designee shall not approve use of any subcontractor unless the subcontractor meets the criteria referenced above in paragraph (6) of this section.

4. Overnight accommodations at all hotels, motels, or other lodging, with established rules and regulations to ensure student well-being should be made in advance with student safety and security in mind. Accommodations will include enough rooms so that no chaperones are rooming with students.

5. Whenever possible, the trip schedulers should avoid planning student travel between the hours of midnight and 6 a.m., due to the increased risk of vehicular accidents during this time period.

6. Trip itineraries must leave enough time for drivers to rest in conformity with federal hour-of-service requirements and common sense. If a planned trip exceeds ten (10) consecutive hours of driving, a second driver must be utilized or the driver must be off duty for eight (8) consecutive hours before driving again.

I. PERMISSION, CONSENT and RELEASE FORMS: Domestic and International

Any student going on a school sponsored field trip must submit a properly completed and signed "Permission to Participate, Emergency Treatment and Medications Consent and Release Form" prior to engaging students in fundraising activities or other preparations for the trip. This form must be signed by the student (if appropriate) and the student's parent or legal guardian prior to a student taking part in any school-sponsored field trip.

For athletic teams or other extracurricular school groups that routinely travel as part of their activities, the student (if appropriate) and the student's parents/guardians may submit one consent/release form to cover all events for the season.

The permission, consent, and release forms will include a section in which the student (if appropriate) and parents/legal guardians will be required to affirm and record that they have read the "Permission to Participate, Trip Emergency and Medications Consent and Release Form" and they understand the contents of the forms. The release form will include any and all claims related to or arising out of the field trip as well as those claims related to or arising out of cancellation of the trip by the School Committee as described in Section I-1. Since student safety is a primary consideration, the ultimate responsibility is a family choice. By signing the permission, consent and release forms, the student (if appropriate) and parents/legal guardians affirm that he/she/they have decided to allow the child to participate in the school-sponsored academic or extracurricular field trip with full knowledge that

1. The School Committee reserves the right to cancel a trip up to the departure date or to recall a trip in progress if national and/or international conditions so warrant or if security and safety concerns over which the Melrose had no control render it appropriate to cancel the trip. The Melrose School Committee will take the following criteria into consideration when making its decision: (a) U.S. Department of State Travel Advisory; (b) Homeland Security Advisory (alert status); and/or (c) Declaration of War or armed conflict. Additionally, the critical judgment of the School Committee, with input from the Superintendent, Principal, and Faculty Sponsor, will be taken into consideration.

2. In such event, that a trip must be cancelled, school officials will make a reasonable effort to obtain a refund of monies paid by students and parents. However, such refunds are not guaranteed. The student and parents understand that he/she/they may lose any and/or all of the funds he/she/they have expended for the voluntary trip.

3. The Superintendent will alert the School Committee to final deadlines regarding required commitment of funds if there are national/international events/conditions/situations that might make the School Committee cancel or recall a trip due to safety concerns or other reasons.

4. The School Committee, and its officers, agents, and employees shall be forever held harmless for remuneration of any and/or all costs associated with this voluntary trip.

J. INTERNATIONAL FIELD TRIPS

The District will sponsor international field trips. All school-sponsored international field trips must receive prior recommendation of the department chairperson (high school only) and approval by the principal, superintendent, and school committee in accordance with the specifics (A-JI set forth in this policy).

The School Committee reserves the right to cancel a trip up to the departure date or to recall a trip in progress if national and/or international conditions so warrant or if security and safety concerns over which the Melrose had no control render it appropriate to cancel the trip. The Melrose School Committee will take the following criteria into consideration: (a) U.S. Department of State Travel Advisory; (b) Homeland Security Advisory (alert status); (c) Declaration of War or armed conflict. Additionally, the critical judgment of the School Committee, with input from the Superintendent, Principal, and Faculty Sponsor, will be taken into consideration.

The Superintendent will alert the School Committee to final deadlines regarding required commitment of funds if there are national/international events/situations that might make the School Committee cancel or recall a trip due to safety concerns or other reasons.

Student (if appropriate) and parents/legal guardians will be required to affirm that they have read the Consent and Release Form and understand that the School Committee reserves the right to cancel or recall a school-sponsored field trip. The student and parent/guardian will sign to acknowledge and affirm that he/she may lose any and/or all of the funds expended for the trip.

The School Committee recognizes the educational benefits of travel to other countries by students studying the language and culture of those countries, and it encourages staff members to organize international excursions to augment classroom instruction in those subjects. The Committee is mindful, however, of the financial burden such travel may place on some families and the potential for disparate educational opportunities for students. The Committee also wishes to minimize any disruption or interference with instruction for the remaining students when large numbers of students are absent from classes. Consequently, the Committee directs the school administration to weight the benefits and consequences of foreign travel when planning for international excursions.

In general, international excursions should occur during non-school time, be limited to students in grade 9 or above taking an advanced course in the language (third year or higher) or discipline (e.g., AP Social Studies), and normally only one such trip per student per academic year.

Exceptions to these restrictions are to be brought to the Committee's attention whenever foreign travel is proposed. Prior School Committee approval is required for all international excursions and travel.

International excursions are to occur on weekends or school vacations only. For the purpose of travel, the Melrose Public Schools will approve one travel day as an excused absence on either end of said weekend or vacation, but not both, unless specifically approved. Exceptions are granted to programs in which students are attending school in a foreign country (e.g., the GAAP program), where all absences will be excused.

K. NON-SCHOOL SPONSORED TRIPS

Teachers and other school staff sometimes privately conduct educational tours or trips involving the participation of Melrose School District students. The Melrose School Committee neither sanctions nor prohibits such activities, nor assumes any responsibility for them. Teachers and other school staff are prohibited from soliciting students for privately run trips through the school district.

In information regarding non-school sponsored field trips teachers and other school staff are expected to clearly state that such trips are not school-sponsored and that the Melrose School Committee and the Melrose School District do not sanction the trip or assume any responsibility.

The School Committee will only review for approval school-sanctioned trips that include a field trip request and required documentation as defined by Section D, Items 1-13. The School Committee will not review or approve trips that are privately organized and run without school sanctioning.

Legal References:

Massachusetts Department of Education Regulations 603 CMR 27.00

Massachusetts Department of Education Time on Learning Regulations

Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 71§ 37M and N

Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 71§38R

Additional Resources:

US Department of State Advisory

<http://travel.state.gov>

Homeland Security Advisory

<http://www.dhs.gov/dhspublic>

Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) Carrier Ratings

<http://www.fmcsa.gov>

United Motorcoach Association – Student Motorcoach Travel Safety Guide

<http://www.uma.org/consumerhelp/studentguide.asp>

Department of Defense's approved list of motor carriers

<http://www.mtmc.army.mil/content/504/approvedlist.pdf>

Proposed Amendments to Field Trip Policy
J.D. LaRock
July 23, 2010

Note: In addition to the substantive changes in bold, I've made a few non-substantive wording and formatting changes throughout the document.

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The School Committee recognizes that firsthand learning experiences provided by field trips are an effective and worthwhile means of learning. It is the desire of the School Committee to encourage field trips that are directly related to school programs and curricula. In keeping with the district-wide curriculum, the School Committee envisions there will be general parity of experience across the district in this regard.

The School Committee also is aware that the cost of field trips can be a concern for families. Accordingly, the School Committee encourages district personnel to carefully consider cost factors when planning field trips and, wherever possible, seek out lower-cost field trip options that maintain educational quality and student safety. No student shall be denied the opportunity to participate in a one-day field trip for financial reasons, provided that the trip is attended by the majority of students in a class.

The school district and individual schools shall make every reasonable effort to facilitate the inclusion of students who may not be able to participate in multi-day or out-of-state field trips for financial reasons. Such steps may include, but are not limited to:

- (1) Student fundraising efforts;**
- (2) PTO or school-sponsored fundraisers; and**
- (3) In the case of domestic field trips, offering partial or full scholarships to students, provided funds are available.**

Specific guidelines and appropriate administrative procedures shall be developed by the Superintendent to screen, evaluate and approve trips and to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken for the safety of the participants. The guidelines and procedures shall require, among other things, that all field trips have the prior approval of the Principal, and that all field trips involving late night or overnight travel, travel out of state or overnight stays have the prior approval of the Superintendent and the School Committee. Such approvals should be obtained before students engage in any fundraising activity in connection with field trips.

Additionally, the guidelines and procedures shall be designed to ensure that:

- (1) all trips contribute substantially to the educational program;
- (2) all students have parental permission to attend field trips;
- (3) all trips are properly supervised and include precautions to protect the safety of students; **and**

(4) any financial interest offered to a district employee in connection with a field trip, such as free airfare or accommodations, is properly disclosed.

The guidelines and procedures also must include plans to provide:

- (1) reasonable accommodations for eligible students with disabilities to allow them to participate in field trips;
- (2) a means for fundraising and/or subsidizing the field trip cost for families deemed financially unable to pay; and
- (3) meaningful educational activities during the period of the field trip for students who do not participate and instead remain in school.

These guidelines and procedures shall be subject to the review and approval of the School Committee.

Overnight accommodations should be made in advance with safety and security in mind and, whenever possible, travel between the hours of midnight and 6:00 a.m. should be avoided. Trip itineraries should leave enough time for drivers to rest in conformity with federal hours-of-service requirements and common sense. Trip schedulers should take into account the likelihood of delays due to weather, traffic and other unanticipated factors. Whenever possible, overnight trips should be scheduled on weekends or during school vacation periods to minimize lost classroom time, and day trips should be limited to regular school hours.

The Superintendent is authorized to cancel any field trip, up to the time of departure, whenever, in the Superintendent's judgment, a change in circumstances, whether manmade or natural, warrants cancellation of the trip in the interest of the safety of students and other participants. In such circumstances, the school district will make an effort to obtain a refund of money paid by students and parents. However, such refunds are not guaranteed.

Unless students travel by means of walking or public transportation, school buses or common carriers licensed to do business in Massachusetts and licensed for passenger transport by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration should be used for transportation to and from field trips. The use of privately owned vehicles or privately leased vans to transport students to and from field trips is strictly prohibited, except in the case of an emergency, as determined by the Principal or, in the absence of the Principal, the field trip leader. Staff and parents who utilize their own vehicles risk liability if students are injured while riding in their vehicles.

A separate Parent Permission and Waiver Form must be obtained and filed in the Principal's office for each field trip. The Parental Permission and Waiver Form should be sent home in the language of the student's parent or guardian if that language is not English.

The school district, the School Committee and the City of Melrose shall not be financially liable for any costs incurred as the result of a chaperone's decision to send a student participant home earlier than the scheduled return date due to the student's unacceptable behavior on a field trip. Students and their parents/guardians shall be responsible for any damage done by students to hotels, rental properties and real or personal property.

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