

OBSERVATION OF EDUCATION PROGRAMS BY PARENTS AND/OR DESIGNEES FOR EVALUATION PURPOSES

In accordance with Massachusetts special education law¹, Hull Public Schools permits parents and their designees (defined by law as parent designated independent evaluators and educational consultants) to conduct in-school observations of their child's current or proposed special education program.

When a parent or designee wishes to conduct such an observation, the following procedures shall be followed:

1. The Parent shall contact the Building Principal, Assistant Principal, or Team Chairperson to request an observation. The Parent will indicate the name of the person who will conduct the observation and the affiliation of that person to the child and/or Parent.
2. If the request for the observation comes from someone other than the Parent, Hull Public Schools will need to confirm with the Parent the identity of the observer and ensure that the Parent consents to the observation. If the designated observer wishes to examine the student's records, the school district must also obtain written consent from the Parent before allowing the designated observer to access the student's record, in accordance with the Massachusetts student record regulations.
3. Upon notification of the request for the observation, the school district will provide timely access to the student's current or proposed educational program. The school district will contact the parent and/or designee to schedule a mutually convenient time for the observation. Please be advised that there are certain times of the year that the district generally will not schedule observations due to the disruption the observation would cause during these particular time periods. Hull Public Schools does not usually grant observations during MCAS testing periods, the first two weeks of the school year, or the last two weeks of the school year for this reason. If the observation is requested during one of these time periods, the district will work with the observer to find another mutually agreeable time for the observation.
4. Hull Public Schools will also discuss with the Parent and/or designated observer, in advance of the observation, a reasonable length of time for the observation. The observer will be permitted to observe both academic and non-academic activities if requested. Length of observation times will be determined on an individual basis depending on the circumstances of the particular student and/or program(s) to be observed.
5. Hull Public Schools is responsible to ensure the safety of its students at all times. If the observation threatens to compromise 1) the safety of the students in the observed

¹ This policy is drafted in compliance with Massachusetts General Laws, c. 71B, §3 and accompanying guidance from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

program, 2) the integrity of the program during the observation, or 3) if there is the threat of disclosure by the observer of confidential or personally identifiable information he or she may obtain while observing the program, then the school district may impose reasonable limitations and restrictions on the observation. Hull Public Schools personnel will discuss these concerns with the observer prior to the observation, and the school district will make reasonable efforts to work with the observer around these issues to ensure a safe and productive observation. Any limitations or restrictions imposed pursuant to this paragraph will be done on a case by case basis, at the discretion of the Building Principal in consultation with the Director of Student Services.

6. Hull Public Schools may exercise its discretion at any time to reschedule or terminate an observation in the event of a building emergency or a disruption that impacts the physical or emotional well-being of the children in the school or the program being observed.
7. A staff member of Hull Public Schools will accompany the observer during the observation.
8. No part of an observation may be used to evaluate a staff member's performance.
9. Videotaping and photography are prohibited during observations, in an attempt to reduce disruption to the program being observed. Audio-recording is also prohibited without advance authorization from the Building Principal, in consultation with the Director of Student Services. Observers are welcome to take notes during observations.
10. No observation shall be conducted without a signed agreement between the observer and Hull Public Schools, acknowledging the conditions set forth in this policy (see attached form)

First reading: December 12, 2011

Second reading: January 9, 2012

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