

POLICY TYPE: INTRODUCTION

POLICY TITLE: BOARD BELIEFS

Educational perspectives and philosophies vary among school systems. This policy does not directly govern East Allen County Schools; rather, the Board of School Trustees expresses its beliefs, values and philosophies here. They are put into action by the other Board policies, which do govern EACS, on the basis of these Board beliefs.

1. Purpose

We believe that East Allen County Schools exists to serve the children and families of the District, and the society at large, by providing an excellent educational service. This service should help parents to raise children who will be equipped with knowledge, skills, and problem-solving abilities; who will be morally and ethically sound; who will be prepared to move on into the world of work and higher educational opportunities; who will have confidence in their skills and abilities, both as members of groups and as individuals; and who will be equipped with knowledge and understanding of the histories, languages, and cultures of their own and other lands as they take up the responsibilities of citizenship today and into the future.

While recognizing the importance of preparing students for careers and further education, we believe that students should also be prepared, through a broad and well-rounded education, to live thoughtfully and contemplatively, to think independently, and to enjoy fully the cultural opportunities available in their communities. We believe that the educational preparation of all students be addressed in a manner that maximizes the individual student's potential.

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2. Importance of Students

We believe that each student is a unique creation of God, in His image. Therefore, any prejudice, preferential treatment, or discrimination against or among individuals, based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, place of birth, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic protected by law is repugnant to the Board, and we consider that any limitation of the educational opportunities available to any individual student based on these characteristics is completely unacceptable.

We desire that all students of diverse backgrounds learn to respect and appreciate each other by attending school together.

3. Importance of Parents

We believe that the active involvement of parents is vitally important to the education of their children. We believe that such involvement requires effective two-way communication and a commitment that extends beyond occasional attendance at school functions and activities. To the extent financially feasible to the District, parents shall be given some options to choose their child's school.

4. Importance of Teachers, Staff and Administrators

Excellence in teaching is vital to the learning success of students. We desire and intend to recognize and encourage teachers, staff and administrators who continually strive for excellence in their profession. We intend that teachers, staff and administrators be provided with a discipline system and learning climate that allows them the opportunity to fully utilize their professional expertise. We intend that teachers, staff and administrators be provided the necessary tools to maximize their educational effectiveness.

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5. Importance of Communities

We believe that public schools are an integral part of the communities they serve and that communities are a critical part of the public schools they finance and support. We believe that all reasonable means should be employed to keep the District's communities informed on matters of importance regarding District policies, finances, programs, personnel, and operations. We also intend that the District work with and within the communities it serves. In that regard, we desire that the District identify and utilize district/community partnerships that:

- A. Provide supplemental financial support to the District's education mission; and/or,
- B. Provide supplemental educational/vocational opportunities for the District's students.

6. Academic Assessments and Grades

We believe that the use of assessments are for diagnostic, formative information as well as for measurement and reporting. Grades serve the purpose of summarizing student work over a period of time to both students and parents.

7. Extracurricular and Co-Curricular Activities

We recognize co-curricular activities (directly related to curriculum) and extracurricular activities (not directly related to curriculum) as educational opportunities, supplementing and reinforcing the formal learning process.

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8. Innovation in Instruction and Assessment

We recognize that from time to time, as research in educational methods progresses, changes in instructional and assessment strategies should be made. We believe, however, that because of the limited time each student spends with us, and because of the crucial importance to each student of an effective education, that each proposed innovation should be considered with caution, conservatism, thoroughness, and skepticism.

For these reasons, we consider that those who propose the implementation of innovative methods should thoroughly research previous experience elsewhere, both successful and unsuccessful, which has been reported in the literature; that a workable plan and timetable for objectively evaluating the success or failure of the innovation should also be proposed; and that a worst-case analysis of the consequences (to students) of failure should be performed.

We expect the District's academic leadership, based on appropriate research, review, and assessment to:

1. Identify what education processes should be implemented;
2. Identify what educational processes should be avoided; and,
3. Identify what existing educational processes should be discontinued.