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June 7, 2016

TO THE HONORABLE MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE:

Approval of Revisions to Gang Activity/Secret Societies Policy

Recommendation: That the School Committee approve the revisions to the Gang Activity/Secret Societies Policy as detailed in the attached document.

This is a first reading of the revisions to this policy.

Description: These revisions to the Gang Activity/Secret Societies Policy are being presented to align the policy with the expanded list of protected categories in federal and state laws.

Supporting Data: Redline of Gang Activity/Secret Societies Policy.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeffrey M. Young, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

## **GANG ACTIVITY/SECRET SOCIETIES**

The goal of the School Committee is to keep district schools and students free from the threats or harmful influence of any gang. For purposes of this policy, gang is defined as any group, secret society, organization or association that advocates drug use, violence, intimidation and/or bullying or harassment and discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, gender, religion, national origin, ethnicity, ancestry, gender identity or expression, or sexual orientation, physical appearance, pregnant or parenting status, disability, genetic information, socioeconomic status, homelessness or disruptive or illegal behavior or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one (1) or more of these characteristics. The principal/head of upper school or his/her designee shall maintain supervision of school premises to deter intimidation of students and conformation between members of different gangs.

The Superintendent shall establish open lines of communication with local law enforcement agencies so as to share information and provide mutual support in this effort within appropriate legal guidelines.

The Superintendent shall provide in-service training to help staff members identify gangs and gang symbols, recognize early manifestations of disruptive activities, and respond appropriately. Staff members shall be informed about conflict management techniques and alerted to intervention measures and community resources which may help students.

### Symbols

The School Committee finds that gang symbols are inherently disruptive to the educational process, and therefore prohibits the presence of any insignia, apparel, jewelry, accessory, notebook or other school supply, or manner of grooming which by virtue of its color, arrangement, trademark, or any other attribute denotes membership in gangs. The School Committee further prohibits any demonstration of gang membership through the use of hand gestures, graffiti, or printed materials. This policy shall be applied by the principal/head of upper school or his/her designee as the need for it arises at individual school sites. A student may be suspended or expelled for failure to comply with the provisions of this policy.

### Prevention Education

The School Committee realizes that students may become involved in gangs without understanding the consequences of such membership. Early intervention is a key component of efforts to break the cycle of such memberships. Therefore, gang violence prevention information shall be made available in the elementary, middle, and high schools as appropriate.

### Secret Societies

Fraternities, sororities and/or secret societies shall not receive school district or building recognition in any manner.

A student may be suspended or expelled for failure to comply with the provisions of this policy.

*Adopted: September 16, 2014*