

Santa Barbara School Districts

Administrative Regulation

AR 6142.11

Instruction

PROCEDURE FOR EXEMPTION FROM FAMILY HEALTH EDUCATION COURSE

Education Code Sections 51240, 51550, 51820 and 60650 authorize exemptions from instruction on the basis of personal belief and establish other requirements. These three Education Codes are summarized in the following paragraphs:

Education Code Section 51240

“Whenever any part of the instruction in health, family life education, and sex education conflicts with the religious training and beliefs of the parent or guardian of any pupil, the pupil, on written request of the parent or guardian, shall be excused from the part of the training which conflicts with such religious training and beliefs...”

Education Code Section 51550

“No governing board of a public elementary or secondary school may require pupils to attend any class in which human reproduction organs and their functions and processes are described, illustrated or discussed, whether such class be part of a course designated “sex education” or “family life education” or by some similar term, or part of any other course which pupils are required to attend...”

Education Code Section 51820

“The governing board of any district maintaining elementary or secondary schools may offer units of instruction in venereal disease education in such schools with the assistance and guidance of the State Department of Education. The grade level at which such instruction shall be given shall be determined by the governing board of the school district”.

“Nothing in this section shall be construed as prohibiting or limiting any right provided for in section 51240.”

In order to comply with the foregoing Education Code Sections, the procedure on the following pages will be adhered to by the administrative staff and teachers conducting instruction relating to these sections.

Exemption from Family Health Education Course

The Family Health Education Course is required of all high school students as specified in Administrative Regulation 6143.2. Parents wishing to exempt their children from this requirement for the reasons specified in Education Code 51240 may do so by contacting the principal of the high school attended by their child. When such an exemption is requested, the parent will make known to the principal their interest in such exemption. The principal, or designee, will confer with the parent regarding any matter of interest relative to the instruction in the course. If the parent, after reviewing the information presented by the principal or designee, believes the instruction in the course conflicts with their religious training or beliefs, the parent will advise the principal in writing. The principal, upon receipt of such a written request will notify the parent, in writing, and send a copy of the request and the letter of exemption to the Superintendent of Schools and place a copy of the request and the letter of exemption in the permanent file of the student.

Should the principal determine that a request for exemption is not appropriate, the principal will submit the reasons, in writing, to the Superintendent of Schools. The Superintendent will confer with the principal and advise the parent of the status of the request. Any parent denied exemption may request a hearing before the School Board.

Partial Exemption for Family Health Education Course

Parents who wish exemption from a part of the required Family Health Education Course may request such an exemption. To facilitate exemption from instruction identified in Education Code 51550 or 51820, instruction in these topics will be scheduled for the final portion of the course. Instruction in these areas will generally be limited to two weeks. Students requesting partial exemption will secure exemption from the principal according to the procedure set forth in the previous paragraph.

Exemption by Examination

Those students who wish to exempt themselves from the high school Family Health Education Course for academic reasons, may do so by taking an examination. Administrative Regulation 5143.2 provides that any student may challenge any required course except English and Physical Education by examination.

For the Family Health Education course, students will be notified of an examination date when they register for the second semester of the 9th grade year. Students will be given two opportunities to exempt themselves from the course by examination between the time of registration for the second semester of the 9th grade year and the time of registration for the fall semester of the 10th grade year. Students who do not avail themselves of these opportunities will be scheduled for the course one semester of the 10th grade year and will have no additional opportunities for exemption by examination.

When students are given notice of the time, place and date of the examination, they will be given access to materials to prepare themselves for the examination. The information available to the students and the time to prepare should allow the average student with

diligent effort to prepare adequately for the examination. The examination process and the notification of results should be completed before the time students select courses for the fall semester.

Upon passing such an examination, a student may choose to have the requested course waived and entered on his/her transcript.

Legal Reference:

EDUCATION CODE

51240, 51550, 51820

Regulation: SANTA BARBARA ELEMENTARY/HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICTS

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