

Subject: Kindergarten

School Approval Standard:
Multiple sections of Ed 306

This is the eighteenth in a series of Technical Advisories issued by the Department to clarify the new School Approval Standards.

Actual Text - Section 193-E:2-a

DUTY OF DISTRICTS

193-E:2-a Substantive Educational Content of an Adequate Education.

- I. Beginning in the school year 2008-2009, the specific criteria and substantive educational program that deliver the opportunity for an adequate education shall be defined and identified as the school approval standards in the following areas:
 - (a) English/language arts and reading.
 - (b) Mathematics.
 - (c) Science.
 - (d) Social studies.
 - (e) Arts education.
 - (f) World languages.
 - (g) Health education.
 - (h) Physical education.
 - (i) Technology education, and information and communication technologies.
- II. The standards shall cover **kindergarten** through twelfth grade and shall clearly set forth the opportunities to acquire the communication, analytical and research skills and competencies, as well as the substantive knowledge expected to be possessed by students at the various grade levels, including the credit requirement necessary to earn a high school diploma.
- III. Public schools and public academies shall adhere to the standards identified in paragraph I.
- IV. The school approval standards for the areas identified in paragraph I shall constitute the opportunity for the delivery of an adequate education. The general court shall periodically, but not less frequently than every 10 years, review, revise, and update, as necessary, the standards identified in paragraph I and shall ensure that the high quality of the standards is maintained. Changes made by the board of education to the school approval standards through rulemaking after the effective date of this section shall not be included within the standards that constitute the opportunity for the delivery of an adequate education without prior adoption by the general court. The board of education shall provide written notice to the speaker of the house of representatives, the president of the senate, and the chairs of the house and senate education committees of any changes to the school approval standards adopted pursuant to RSA 541-A.

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- V. The general court requires the state board of education and the department of education to institute procedures for maintaining, updating, improving, and refining curriculum frameworks for each area of education identified in paragraph I. The curriculum frameworks shall present educational goals, broad pedagogical approaches and strategies for assisting students in the development of the skills, competencies, and knowledge called for by the academic standards for each area of education identified in paragraph I. The curriculum frameworks shall serve as a guide and reference to what New Hampshire students should know and be able to do in each area of education. The frameworks do not establish a statewide curriculum. It is the responsibility of local teachers, administrators, and school boards to identify and implement approaches best suited for the students in their communities to acquire the skills and knowledge included in the frameworks, to determine the scope, organization, and sequence of course offerings, and to choose the methods of instruction, the activities, and the materials to be used.
- VI. In this section, "school approval standards" shall mean the applicable criteria that public schools and public academies shall meet in order to be an approved school, as adopted by the state board of education through administrative rules.

Source. 2007, 270:2, eff. June 29, 2007.

193:1 DUTY OF PARENT; COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE BY PUPIL

[Paragraph I effective until June 30, 2009; see also paragraph I set out below.]

- I. **A parent of any child at least 6 years of age** and under 16 years of age shall cause such child to attend the public school to which the child is assigned in the child's resident district. Such child shall attend full time when such school is in session unless:
- (a) The child is attending a public school outside the district to which the child is assigned or an approved private school for the same time;
 - (b) The child is receiving home education pursuant to RSA 193-A.

II. Department Comments

The duty of a district and the duty of a parent are different regarding kindergarten. Districts must provide the opportunity for public kindergarten (Section 193-E:2-a). The Department recommends that all children start kindergarten at the age of 5 (districts have local guidelines for birth date eligibility). Parents must "cause the child to attend the public school to which the child is assigned in the child's resident district at six years of age." See RSA 193:1 above.

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The purpose of this advisory is to address the requirements for public school kindergarten programs which are found in the Minimum Standards for Public School Approval, Part Ed 306 of the NH Code of Administrative Rules. The Minimum Standards for Public School Approval include specified and implied requirements for kindergarten. Given that Ed 306.18 (c)(3)(d) states, "Kindergarten sessions shall be at least 2.5 hours in duration;" the minimum of 12 and one-half hours of instructional time per week may be all that is available to teach the skills, competencies, and knowledge required for kindergarten. This kindergarten curriculum is the foundation for the following 12 years of school. To accomplish the defined standards, integration of the expectations and standards is essential. For example, as children speak, read, and write, the topic can be from science or social studies, or yet another curriculum area. In addition, it is important to incorporate the Health Education Guidelines that include Physical Activity, as do the Physical Education Curriculum Guidelines. Intentional planning makes the broad kindergarten curriculum prescribed in the Minimum Standards for Public School Approval possible. The discussion below is divided into two sections, administration and curriculum.

STATE REQUIREMENTS FOR ADMINISTRATION OF KINDERGARTEN PROGRAMS

The basic requirements of Ed 306.01 through Ed 306.24 apply to kindergarten programs. Most kindergarten programs are housed in elementary schools which include some combination of grades K-8. Most of the basic administrative requirements for kindergarten are met as part of the administration of the entire school. A few districts operate schools that house only kindergarten. In those cases, the kindergarten school will need to meet the requirements of the minimum standards for an elementary school unless otherwise stated in the rules or in this advisory.

Ed 306.04 Policy Development

Districts should review policies to ensure that they are written to be inclusive of kindergarten.

Ed 306.07 School Facilities

Kindergarten classrooms should provide at least 50 sf/pupil with a minimum size of 1000 sf including storage and a separate toilet room as stated in Ed 321.10(g). Age appropriate playground apparatus should be provided for kindergarten pupils.

Ed 306.08 Instructional Resources

Age appropriate materials should be provided in library/media centers for kindergarten pupils. Kindergarten instruction should include introduction to the library/media center. Kindergarten programs housed in kindergarten only facilities are not required to have a separate library/media center, but should ensure that kindergarten students have some exposure to a library/media center.

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Ed 306.12 School Health Services

Health services must be provided to kindergarten pupils at the same level that they are provided to other students. Schools with kindergarten only pupils must provide health services as required by state and federal laws.

Ed 306.14 Basic Instructional Standards

Subsections (a), (b), (c), (d), (e) and (h) apply to kindergarten. An instructional program that meets district policies is required for kindergarten. This may be accomplished as part of the program for an entire elementary school.

Ed 306.15 Provision of Staff and Staff Qualifications

Kindergarten must be under the supervision of a certified school principal. Stand alone kindergarten schools may share a principal with another school. The same applies to guidance counselors. There must be a certified guidance counselor who provides services to kindergarten pupils. In calculating the need for an assistant principal and the student load for guidance counselors, each kindergarten student shall be counted as one-half a student in schools with half-day kindergarten programs and as a whole student in schools with full day programs.

Kindergarten classroom teachers must be certified in early childhood education or elementary education in accordance with Ed 507.11. Stand alone kindergarten schools are not required to have a certified library media specialist. Reading specialists are encouraged, but not required for kindergarten.

Ed 306.17 Class Size

Kindergarten classes may not exceed 25 students. Twenty (20) or fewer students are recommended.

Ed 306.18 School Year

Kindergarten classes are required to be scheduled for a minimum of 2.5 hours per day for at least 180 days. If a school has been approved for a calendar of less than 180 days of instruction, the daily kindergarten instructional time must be extended to provide at least 450 hours of instruction per year. When weather or other emergency necessitates late opening or early release of students and canceling of morning or afternoon kindergarten sessions, it shall not be necessary to reschedule the lost kindergarten time.

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Ed 306.24 Assessment

Kindergarten students do not take the state assessment tests, but assessment of kindergarten students is required. Each school district must develop and implement an assessment program and methods of assessment that include kindergarten.

STATE REQUIREMENTS FOR KINDERGARTEN CURRICULUM SUBSTANTIVE EDUCATIONAL CONTENT

An adequate education as defined by RSA 193-E:2-a is based on the Minimum Standards for Public School Approval, Ed 306 that cover kindergarten through grade 12. School districts that include elementary schools must have curriculum for the development of the skills, competencies and knowledge in the 10 subjects identified as required in the Minimum Standards for Public School Approval. Each curriculum must begin with kindergarten. The required subject areas are listed below:

- Ed 306.31 Arts Education Program
- Ed 306.35 Career Education Program
- Ed 306.37 English/Language Arts and Reading Program
- Ed 306.40 Health Education Program
- Ed 306.41 Physical Education Program
- Ed 306.42 Information and Communication Technologies Program
- Ed 306.43 Mathematics Program
- Ed 306.45 Science Education Program
- Ed 306.46 Social Studies Program
- Ed 306.47 Technology Education Program

Additionally, Ed 306.39 requires each district to develop a comprehensive guidance and counseling program for grades K-12.

Ed 306.48 World Languages Program is optional.

The New Hampshire Department of Education, with contribution from educators across the state, developed and identified curriculum frameworks that set forth the communication, analytical and research skills and competencies, as well as the substantive knowledge expected to be possessed by students at the various grade levels. These are defined as Grade Level Expectations (GLEs), Grade Span Expectations (GSEs), proficiency standards, student

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competencies, student performance outcomes, content descriptors, or student performance outcomes. The GLE's contain kindergarten expectations. These documents are available on the Department of Education website, www.ed.state.nh.us. RSA 193-E:1 gives school districts the flexibility to implement various approaches to help students meet these expectations.

Ed 306.31 Arts Education Program

The K-12 Curriculum Framework for the Arts begins with proficiency standards for student learning at the end of grade four. The framework provides a balanced, comprehensive, and sequential guide for instruction in the four arts disciplines: Dance, Theatre, Music, and Visual Arts. It is a foundation for local development of assessment instruments. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and State Consortium for Assessment and Student Standards/Arts (SCASS) models may also be used as a reference for designing performance assessments, keeping in mind that curriculum, instruction, and assessment work together to promote strong educational programs.

Ed 306.37 English/Language Arts and Reading Program

GLEs begin with kindergarten in both Reading and Written and Oral Communication. The statewide assessment tests are first given at the beginning of third grade, thus testing learning from kindergarten through second grade.

Ed 306.39 Guidance and Counseling Program

Each district is required to develop, and have on file, a comprehensive K-12 developmental school guidance and counseling policy and implementation plan which shall include a guidance curriculum that provides all K-12 students the knowledge and skills appropriate to their developmental level through a collaborative model of delivery involving the school counselor, classroom teachers, and other appropriate education professionals, and include prevention and pre-referral activities; and be based on the ASCA National Model: A Foundation for School Counseling Program, published by the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) in 2003. The district policy shall identify measures of success for student competencies in each of the three areas of academic, individual/social, and career learning, based on planned and periodic assessment of the comprehensive developmental school guidance and counseling program.

Ed 306.40 Health Education Program

The New Hampshire Health Education Elementary Guidelines were developed by the New Hampshire Department of Education in 2003. The document lists content descriptors for elementary schools without specific grade levels along with the skill assessment links for many topics. It includes performance assessment and rubrics.

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Ed 306.41 Physical Education Program

The New Hampshire K-12 Physical Education Curriculum Guidelines with Student Performance Indicators lists the performance indicators starting with a K–2 range, leaving the district to decide the progression that will best build to the indicators at the end of second grade.

Ed 306.43 Mathematics Program

GLEs begin with kindergarten in Number and Operations, Geometry and Measurement, Functions and Algebra, Data, Statistics, and Probability. A K-2 range is given for Problem Solving, Reasoning, and Proof; and Communication, Connections, and Representations, leaving the district to decide the progression that will best build to the competency at the end of second grade. The statewide NECAP tests are first given at the beginning of third grade, thus testing learning through second grade.

Ed 306.45 Science Education Program

The GSEs begin with K-2 leaving the district to decide the progression that will best build to the competency at the end of second grade. The statewide science test is given in the spring of fourth grade.

Ed 306.46 Social Studies Program

The GSEs begin with K-2 leaving the district to decide the progression that will best build to the competency at the end of second grade. At this time, there is no statewide test in social studies.

Ed 306.47 Technology Education Program

The Technology Education Curriculum Guide lists student performance outcomes for K-2, leaving the district to decide the progression that will best build to the outcomes at the end of second grade.

An experienced kindergarten teacher commented that most of the content areas listed are already being integrated into the curriculum in a meaning-based, connected manner. The July 2008 Young Children Vol. 63 No. 4 includes a section titled “Creative and Thoughtful Strategies for Implementing Learning Standards.” An announcement of an online discussion about the challenges of incorporating standards into engaging learning experiences is on page 20. www.journal.naeyc.org/btj/200807.

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“...knowledge gaps in kindergarten can affect learning in high school.”
Ellen Galinsky, Families and Work Institute, 2006
Young Children, November 2007

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