

<h1>POLICY</h1>	<p style="text-align: right;">4450</p> <p>Adopted: May 16, 2014 Revised: March 5, 2019</p> <p>Instruction</p>
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SUBJECT: USE OF ANIMALS IN INSTRUCTION

The Greater Southern Tier BOCES Board recognizes that the observation of and experimentation with living organisms and animals give students unique perspectives of life processes. Animals and animal materials must be used respectfully and for the purpose of meeting the objectives of the respective course(s) being studied.

Animals on BOCES' Property or at BOCES' Activities

The BOCES, in recognizing the educational uses of animals, requires that permission be obtained from the supervisor, with approval by the appropriate director, before animals are brought into the BOCES, its classrooms or its activities. It is the supervisor's responsibility to ensure that there is an appropriate educational purpose, related to specific curriculum goals for any animal being brought into, or being housed in, a classroom. The supervisor must obtain director-level approval before an animal is brought on BOCES property or to a BOCES activity. Such a request to the supervisor's director must be in writing and specifically include the appropriate educational purpose and curriculum goals connected to the animal's introduction to BOCES property or a BOCES activity. The director's approval must be obtained at least two (2) business days prior to an animal's introduction onto BOCES property or a BOCES activity.

Prior to an animal being brought into the BOCES, its facilities or activities, the supervisor shall ensure that arrangements have been made for the cleaning of cages, enclosures, and/or aquariums, and for the provision of adequate food, water, and other requirements for the proper care of the animal.

Where animals are housed in the BOCES or any of its facilities, it shall be the responsibility of the supervisor or his/her designee to develop a plan of care for those animals in the event of an emergency school closing or in the event the animals remain in the classroom on days when the BOCES is not in session.

Animals brought into the BOCES, its facilities or activities are not to be transported on school buses, except in cases of service animals certified to assist persons with disabilities. Nothing in this policy shall in any way be construed as limiting individuals' with disabilities right to their access to and use of a certified service animal.

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Instruction in Safety and Care/Humane Treatment

When animals are brought into the BOCES, its facilities, classrooms or activities, student safety shall be the priority. Allergies and sensitivities of students to animals will be considered before an animal is brought into the classroom. Where a student is known to be, or indicates that he/she is, allergic or sensitive to animals, arrangements will be made to limit the student's exposure to the animal in order to avoid triggering an allergic reaction.

Students will be instructed whether the animal(s) in question pose a risk for biting or scratching, potentially inducing an allergic reaction, or any other type of risk. Similarly, students will be provided prior instruction in the safe handling of animals, including the need to wash their hands after handling an animal, and the disease risk that animals can represent.

Students in BOCES programs which use live animals as part of their educational program, or in which live animals are used to augment a student's educational experience, will be provided instruction in the humane treatment and protection of animals, the importance of the role animals play in the economy of nature, and the impact that the proliferation of animals can have. The duration of this instruction shall be for a period of time as specified by the BOCES and/or the Education Law. Said instruction may be augmented with work in literature, reading, language, natural studies, or ethnology.

Dissection of Animals

Any student expressing an objection on moral or religious grounds to the performance or witnessing of the dissection of an animal, whether wholly or in part, shall be provided the opportunity to undertake and complete an alternative project approved by the student's teacher, provided, however, that such objection is substantiated in writing by the student's parent or legal guardian. The alternative project will be clearly related and of comparable rigor to the laboratory dissection to which the student objects. Some examples of alternative projects include, but are not limited to, computer simulations or research. Students who perform alternative projects shall not be penalized due to their objection to a laboratory dissection.

Effective July 1, 2014, the BOCES will give reasonable notice to all students enrolled in a course that includes the dissection of an animal, as well as a student's parent(s) and/or legal guardian(s), about their rights to perform an alternate project to dissection. Such notice shall be made available upon request at the BOCES and distributed to parents and students enrolled in a course that includes dissection at least once at the beginning of the school year.

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Cross-references: Education Law §809
Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 USC §§12101 et seq.