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DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL SERVICES

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Informational Letter #  
Policy Code:

To: Superintendents of Schools  
From: Eve M. Bither, Commissioner

Date:

Subject: Advisory Allowing Students to Refuse to do Dissection  
and Provisions for Alternatives to Dissection.

As you are aware, based on recent legislative debate and consideration, the issue of allowing students to refuse to do dissection and providing alternative instruction to dissection has reached a high level of awareness and discussion.

Therefore, to accommodate students who request not to do dissection, I am issuing the following advisory for local school administrative unit action:

1. That school administrative units should recognize that students who show a legitimate conscientious, ethical reason not to do dissection should not be required to do so and should be offered an alternative assignment to dissection.
2. That school administrative units should establish a local policy which:
  - a) allows students to refuse to do dissection;
  - b) states that alternative assignments to dissection which meet student needs while at the same time preserve the integrity of the biology program will be provided to students on request;
  - c) makes known that students have an alternative to dissection through such means as course description materials, posters or school announcements; and

- d) establishes a procedure whereby students may request, and the school may review and approve/disapprove, an alternative.

I hope this advisory is useful to you, either in reinforcing practices which already exist in your school administrative unit or in assisting you in revising or establishing formal practices relative to the issue of student option to dissection.

Please share this information with appropriate staff as you determine fit, and contact me if you have questions or require further information.

EMB:lm