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SCHOOL DIVISION LEGAL STATUS

The Constitution of the Commonwealth provides that the General Assembly establish a system of free public elementary and secondary schools for all children of school age throughout the state, and seek to ensure that an educational program of high quality is established and continually maintained. The General Assembly requires that such an educational system be maintained and administered by the Board of Education, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, division superintendents and school boards. The Board of Education divides the Commonwealth into school divisions of such geographical area and school-age population as will promote the realization of the standards of quality, and will periodically review the adequacy of existing school divisions for this purpose. The supervision of schools in each school division is vested in a school board selected in accordance with the applicable provisions of the Code of Virginia.

Adopted: October 15, 1992
 Revised: November 6, 1997
 Revised: August 16, 2001
 Revised: May 6, 2004
 Revised: June 20, 2013

Legal Refs.: Constitution of Virginia, article VIII, §§ 1, 5, 7.

Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 22.1-2, 22.1-28, 22.1-71.

Cross Ref.: BB School Board Legal Status
 BBAA Board Member Authority

NONDISCRIMINATION

The Amherst County School Board is committed to nondiscrimination with regard to sex, gender, race, color, national origin, disability, religion, ancestry, age, marital status, genetic information or any other characteristic protected by law. This commitment will prevail in all of its policies and practices concerning staff, students, educational programs and services, and individuals and entities with whom the Board does business.

Adopted: October 15, 1992
Revised: April 7, 1994
Revised: November 6, 1997
Revised: June 1, 2000
Revised: May 6, 2004
Revised : August 8, 2013

Legal Refs.: 20 U.S.C. §§ 1681-1688.
29 U.S.C. § 794.
42 U.S.C. §§ 2000d-2000d-7, 2000e-2000e-17, 2000ff-1.

34 C.F.R. 106.9.

Constitution of Virginia, article I, section 11.

Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 2.2-3900, 2.2-3901, 2.2-3902.

Cross Refs.: GB/JB Equal Employment Opportunity/Nondiscrimination
GBA/JFHA Prohibition Against Harassment and Retaliation

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

Amherst County School Board is committed to providing equal opportunity for every student to achieve maximum intellectual, social, emotional and physical growth and to ensuring that each student be equipped to communicate effectively with other people, to be competent both in the work place and in higher education and to feel confident of the ability to make creative and constructive decisions in his/her life.

Amherst County School Board:

- provides the necessary trained and dedicated leadership, qualified personnel, equipment and materials to assure an appropriate education for every student;
- treats all members of the school community equitably with the highest degree of respect;
- allocates and uses assets fairly and efficiently

Adopted: October 15, 1992
Revised: April 7, 1994
Revised: August 18, 1994
Revised: November 6, 1997
Revised: June 1, 2000
Revised: August 22, 2002
Revised: May 29, 2003
Revised: May 6, 2004
Revised: August 8, 2013

Legal Refs.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, § 22.1-78

Cross Refs.: AC Nondiscrimination
GA Personnel Policies Goals
GB/JB Equal Employment Opportunity/Nondiscrimination
GBA/JFHA Prohibition Against Harassment and Retaliation
IGBC Parental Involvement

SCHOOL DIVISION GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

A. Generally

The school division is committed to excellence in education, equality of educational opportunity, and the recognition of each student's individuality. Inasmuch as students differ in their rate of physical, mental, emotional and social growth and vary in their needs and abilities, learning opportunities are provided that are consistent with personal development and potential. Programs shall emphasize diagnostic and prescriptive instruction, allowing an individual approach to each student's learning style and educational needs.

The educational program introduces each student to a variety of interest and subject areas that offer exposure to the range of opportunities available in later years. These experiences produce the basis for further education and future employment. As students demonstrate increased maturity, they may assume more responsibility for the decisions regarding their education.

The school environment should be responsive and conducive to learning. The physical environment facilitates and enhances the learning experiences available to each student. A responsive environment includes competent, dedicated teachers using a variety of techniques and a classroom atmosphere where students can function and develop according to their abilities. Safety, physical comfort, and appearance also are vital environmental components.

B. Standards of Quality and Objectives

The School Board accepts the overall goals of public education as expressed by the Standards of Quality legislated by the Virginia General Assembly and implemented by State Board of Education regulations.

The School Board will report its compliance with the Standards of Quality to the Board of Education annually. The report of compliance will be submitted to the Board of Education by the chairman of the board and the division superintendent.

C. Standards of Quality--Programs and Services

The School Board commits itself to providing programs and services as stated in the Standards of Quality to the extent funding thereof is provided by the General Assembly.

Adopted: October 15, 1992
 Revised: April 7, 1994
 Revised: November 6, 1997
 Revised: May 6, 2004
 Revised: August 18, 2005
 Revised: April 10, 2014

Legal Ref.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 22.1-253.13:1, 22.1-253.13:8.

SCHOOL DIVISION GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Section 22.1-253.13:1. Standard 1, Paragraphs C and D

Paragraph C. Local school boards shall develop and implement a program of instruction for grades K through 12 which emphasizes reading, writing, speaking, mathematical concepts and computations, and scientific concepts and processes; essential skills and concepts of citizenship, including knowledge of history, economics, government, foreign languages, international cultures, health, and geography necessary for responsible participation in American society and in the international community; fine arts and practical arts; knowledge and skills needed to qualify for further education and employment or, in the case of some handicapped children, to qualify for appropriate training; and development of the ability to apply such skills and knowledge in preparation for eventual employment and lifelong learning.

Local school boards shall also develop and implement programs of prevention, intervention, or remediation for students who are educationally at risk including, but not limited to, those whose scores are in the bottom national quartile on Virginia State Assessment Program Tests, or who do not pass the literacy test prescribed by the Board of Education. Division superintendents may require such students to take special programs of prevention, intervention, or remediation which may include attendance in public summer school sessions. Based on the number of students attending and the Commonwealth's share of the per pupil costs, additional state funds shall be provided for summer remediation programs as set forth in the appropriation act.

Paragraph D. Local school boards shall also implement the following:

1. Programs in grades K through 3 which emphasize developmentally appropriate learning to enhance success.
2. Programs designed to reduce the number of students who drop out of school. As provided in the appropriation act, state funding, in addition to basic aid, shall be allocated to support programs grounded in sound educational policy to reduce the number of students who drop out of school.
3. Career education programs for all students that promote student awareness and knowledge of careers, and emphasize the consequences of leaving school without marketable skills. School boards may include career exploration opportunities in the middle school grades.
4. Competency-based vocational education programs, which integrate academic outcomes, career guidance and job-seeking skills for all secondary students including those identified as handicapped that reflect employment opportunities, labor market needs, applied basic skills, job-seeking skills, and career guidance. Career guidance shall include employment counseling designed to furnish information on available employment opportunities to all students, including those identified as handicapped, and placement services for students exiting school. Each school board shall develop and implement a plan to ensure compliance with the provisions of this subsection.

5. Academic and vocational preparation for students who plan to continue their education beyond secondary school or who plan to enter employment.
6. Early identification of handicapped students and enrollment of such students in appropriate instructional programs consistent with state and federal law.
7. Early identification of gifted students and enrollment of such students in appropriately differentiated instructional programs.
8. Educational alternatives for students whose needs are not met in programs prescribed elsewhere in these standards. Such students shall be counted in average daily membership (ADM) in accordance with the regulations of the Board of Education.
9. Adult education programs for individuals functioning below the high school completion level. Such programs may be conducted by the school board as the primary agency or through a collaborative arrangement between the school board and other agencies.
10. A plan to make achievements for students who are educationally at risk a division-wide priority which shall include procedures for measuring the progress of such students.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Amherst County School Board will adopt a divisionwide comprehensive, unified, long-range plan based on data collection, an analysis of the data, and how the data will be utilized to improve classroom instruction and student achievement. The plan will be developed with staff and community involvement and will include, or be consistent with, all other divisionwide plans required by state and federal laws and regulations. The School Board shall review the plan biennially and adopt any necessary revisions. Prior to the adoption of the plan or revisions thereto, the School Board will post the plan or revisions on the division's Internet website if practicable and make a hard copy of the plan or revisions available for public inspection and copying and will conduct at least one public hearing to solicit public comment on the plan or revisions.

The divisionwide comprehensive plan will include

- (i) the objectives of the school division, including strategies for first improving student achievement, particularly the achievement of educationally at risk students, then maintaining high levels of student achievement;
- (ii) an assessment of the extent to which these objectives are being achieved;
- (iii) a forecast of enrollment changes;
- (iv) a plan for projecting and managing enrollment changes including consideration of the consolidation of schools to provide for a more comprehensive and effective delivery of instructional services to students and economies in school operations;
- (v) an evaluation of the appropriateness of establishing regional programs and services in cooperation with neighboring school divisions;
- (vi) a plan for implementing such regional programs and services when appropriate;
- (vii) a technology plan designed to integrate educational technology into the instructional programs of the school division, including the division's career and technical education programs, consistent with or as part of the comprehensive technology plan for Virginia adopted by the Board of Education;
- (viii) an assessment of the needs of the school division and evidence of community participation, including parental participation, in the development of the plan;
- (ix) any corrective action plan required pursuant to Va. Code § 22.1-253.13:3; and
- (x) a plan for parent and family involvement to include building successful school and parent partnerships that will be developed with staff and community involvement, including participation by parents.

The School Board will present a report to the public by November 1 of each odd-numbered year on the extent to which the objectives of the divisionwide comprehensive plan have been met during the previous two school years.

Each school will prepare a comprehensive, unified, long-range plan, which shall be given consideration by the School Board in the development of the divisionwide comprehensive plan.

Adopted: October 15, 1992
Revised: August 18, 1994
Revised: November 6, 1997
Revised: May 6, 2004
Revised: August 12, 2004
Revised: August 18, 2005
Revised: August 2, 2007
Revised: April 10, 2014

Legal Ref.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, § 22.1-253.13:6.

EVALUATION OF SCHOOL BOARD OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

The School Board reviews its performance annually to ensure its proper discharge of responsibilities to the community. Evaluation is based on a positive approach, identifying the strengths of the School Board and opportunities for improvement.

The following elements are included in the self-evaluation process:

1. School Board members are involved in the development of an evaluation instrument and procedure.
2. The School Board evaluation instrument is completed by individual Board members on a confidential basis, and submitted to the School Board Chairman, or the Chairman's designee, for compilation.
3. The School Board meets, with all members present, to review and discuss the composite results.
4. Each conclusion is supported by objective evidence.

Based on discussion of the results, the School Board develops both short-and long-range goals and objectives to ensure continued proficiency in its areas of excellence, to strengthen weak areas and to improve the efficiency of the Board.

Adopted: October 15, 1992
Revised: April 7, 1994
Revised: August 18, 1994
Revised: November 6, 1997
Revised: May 6, 2004
Revised: April 10, 2014

Legal Ref.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, § 22.1-78.

Cross Refs.: AE School Division Goals and Objectives
AF Comprehensive Plan
BBA School Board Powers and Duties

EVALUATION OF SCHOOL BOARD OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

Please assign a value from 1 (do not agree) to 10 (fully agree) after each of the following statements.

PART I. PERSONAL VARIABLES

Personal written mission/goal statements of board members harmonize with those of the school board. _____

Board members give evidence of physical, mental, and emotional capacity for their jobs by attending meetings regularly. _____

Board members demonstrate by their voting records and discussions a good concept of their jobs, including long-range vision. _____

In meetings, board members demonstrate the freedom and willingness to discuss difficult and controversial issues. _____

Board members will abandon strongly held positions when presented with reasoned arguments to the contrary. _____

Individual board members refrain from violating confidences of executive sessions to employees, friends, or others _____

Individual board members who find themselves in a conflict of interest position promptly present the matter to the entire board for its advice. _____

Individual members take advantage of board in-service activities and then pass on ideas from the sessions to fellow board members. _____

Individual board members attend social and ceremonial staff events. _____

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PART II. ORGANIZATIONAL VARIABLES

Comprehensive mission and current goals statements for the board are in place.

Comprehensive mission and current goals statements for the school division are in place.

Board meetings are conducted with dignity and with reasonable dispatch.

Board meetings follow a carefully prepared written agenda.

The board refrains from interfering in administrative matters assigned to the Superintendent.

The board and the Superintendent maintain a working atmosphere of mutual respect.

The board creates and maintains a working set of policies and regulations.

The board insists on a financial recording and reporting system that indicates clearly the financial status of the school system.

The board works with the Superintendent to build and keep a quality staff.

The board regularly invites outstanding staff members to be officially recognized and honored.

The board maintains and uses regular channels of communication directly with staff members and associates.

The board, in collaboration with the community, develops a long-range plan for construction / renovation, curriculum, services, and revenue.

The board implements portions of the long-range plan as expeditiously as possible.

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The board annually provides for specific in-service growth—including budgetary provisions—for the board. _____

The board provides courteous support and comfortable facilities for the press at board meetings and at other important events. _____

The board appoints a sufficient number of standing and ad hoc committees to serve as a policy development resource. _____

PART III. OUTSIDE VARIABLES

The board solicits information about and then discusses school division missions, goals, and results achieved in relation to community needs and preferences. _____

The board stays informed on recent laws, court decisions, and administrative regulations affecting the school system. _____

The board welcomes the consideration of and takes action on offers of affiliations with other groups as they might affect the welfare of the schools and community. _____

The board actively tries to influence legislation and legislators for the benefit of local students and citizens. _____

The board works to exemplify the highest standard of conduct in its relations with various religious, ethnic, and racial groups. _____

The board studies local social, economic, and demographic changes for clues on how to best serve the community. _____

PART IV. OTHER PERSONAL EVALUATION BASED ON OVERALL RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS. (First provide a written statement. Then discuss comments with the evaluator.)

The evaluator's overall rating of this response. (Total possible points = 10) _____

(continued)

SUMMARY AND FINAL REPORT

Ratings on PART I, PERSONAL VARIABLES

9 statements, each with 10 possible points (total = 90)

Total points awarded: _____

Ratings on PART II, ORGANIZATIONAL VARIABLES

16 statements, each with 10 possible points (total = 160)

Total points awarded: _____

Ratings on PART III, OUTSIDE VARIABLES

6 statements, each with 10 possible points (total = 60)

Total points awarded: _____

Total points received on PARTS I, II, and III _____ = (_____)

Total possible points _____ = 310

Points received on PART IV, SUBJECTIVE EVALUATION _____ = (_____)

Evaluator's Recommendations for Improvement: