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INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Amherst County School Board develops and implements a program of instruction for grades kindergarten through 12 that is aligned to the Standards of Learning established by the Board of Education and that meets or exceeds the requirements of the Board of Education. The program of instruction emphasizes reading, writing, speaking, mathematical concepts and computations, proficiency in the use of computers and related technology, computer science and computational thinking, including computer coding, and scientific concepts and processes; essential skills and concepts of citizenship, including knowledge of Virginia history and world and United States history, economics, government, foreign languages, international cultures, health and physical education, environmental issues and geography necessary for responsible participation in American society and in the international community; fine arts, which may include, but need not be limited to, music and art, and practical arts; knowledge and skills needed to qualify for further education, gainful employment, or training in a career or technical field; and development of the ability to apply such skills and knowledge in preparation for eventual employment and lifelong learning and to achieve economic self-sufficiency.

The School Board also implements:

1. programs in grades kindergarten through three that emphasize developmentally appropriate learning to enhance success
2. programs based on prevention, intervention, or remediation designed to increase the number of students who earn a high school diploma and to prevent students from dropping out of school; such programs shall include components that are research-based
3. career and technical education programs incorporated into the kindergarten through grade 12 curricula
4. educational objectives in middle and high school that emphasize economic education and financial literacy pursuant to Va. Code § 22.1-200.03
5. early identification of students with disabilities and enrollment of such students in appropriate instructional programs consistent with state and federal law
6. early identification of gifted students and enrollment of such students in appropriately differentiated instructional programs
7. educational alternatives for students whose needs are not met in programs prescribed elsewhere in the Standards of Learning
8. adult education programs for individuals functioning below the high school completion level

9. a plan to make achievements for students who are educationally at risk a divisionwide priority that shall include procedures for measuring the progress of such students

10. an agreement for postsecondary degree attainment with a community college in Virginia specifying the options for students to complete an associate's degree or a one-year Uniform Certificate of General Studies from a community college concurrent with a high school diploma; such agreement shall specify the credit available for dual enrollment courses and Advanced Placement courses with qualifying exam scores of three or higher

11. a plan to notify students and their parents of the availability of dual enrollment and Advanced Placement classes; career and technical education programs, including internships, externships, apprenticeships, credentialing programs, certification programs, licensure programs, and other work-based learning experiences; the International Baccalaureate Program, and Academic Year Governor's School Programs; the qualifications for enrolling in such classes, programs and experiences; and the availability of financial assistance to low-income and needy students to take the Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate examinations; this plan shall include notification to students and parents of the agreement with a community college in Virginia to enable students to complete an associate's degree or a one-year Uniform Certificate of General Studies concurrent with a high school diploma

12. identification of students with limited English proficiency and enrollment of such students in appropriate instructional programs, which programs may include dual language programs whereby such students receive instruction in English and in a second language

13. early identification, diagnosis, and assistance for students with reading and mathematics problems and provision of instructional strategies and reading and mathematics practices that benefit the development of reading and mathematics skills for all students

14. incorporation of art, music, and physical education as a part of the instructional program at the elementary school level

15. a program of physical activity available to all students in grades kindergarten through five consisting of at least 20 minutes per day or an average of 100 minutes per week during the regular school year and available to all students in grades six through 12 with a goal of at least 150 minutes per week on average during the regular school year; such program may include any combination of (i) physical education classes, (ii) extracurricular athletics, (iii) recess, or (iv) other programs and physical activities deemed appropriate by the School Board

16. a program of student services for grades kindergarten through grade 12 that shall be designed to aid students in their educational, social, and career development

17. the collection and analysis of data and the use of the results to evaluate and make decisions about the instructional program

18. a program of instruction in each government course in the school division on all information and concepts in the civics portion of the U.S. Naturalization test

Adopted: April 7, 1994
Revised: November 3, 1994
Revised: October 3, 1996
Revised: June 4, 1998
Revised: August 24, 2000
Revised: June 20, 2013
Revised: September 8, 2016
Revised: September 14, 2017
Revised: July 12, 2018

Legal Refs.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 22.1-78, 22.1-253.13:1.

Cross Refs.:	IGAD	Career and Technical Education
	IGBI	Advanced Placement Classes and Special Programs
	JHCF	Student Wellness

MIDDLE SCHOOL INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES

- A. Transition (From elementary school to middle school and middle school to high school)
1. All students will use student planners.
 2. All students will receive interim progress reports every 4.5 weeks in a 9-week grading period.
 3. Teachers will create and use SOL-based assessment tools for all grades levels.
 4. The middle school counselors will schedule all rising 6th grade students and the high school counselors will schedule 8th grade students.
 5. A division-wide, K-12 transition committee will be formed based on the “Priority Schools/Challenge of Change” school-wide teams.
- B. Promotion Requirements
1. A student who passes all four SOL core content courses – English, math, science, and history – will be promoted.
 2. A student who fails one or more of the four SOL core content courses must participate in SOL remediation.
 3. A student who fails two or more of the four SOL core content courses will NOT be promoted.
 4. Other factors will be considered in the promotion or retention of students in grades six, seven, and eight which include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - a. Standards of Learning test results
 - b. Grades
 - c. Academic progress
 - d. Attendance
 - e. Age
 - f. Previous academic record
 - g. Previous retentions
 - h. Other factors specific to the student

Note: Students who are not promoted will be referred to a school-level promotion/retention committee to determine placement for the following year.

C. Grouping of students

All middle school teams will be heterogeneously grouped. When appropriate, skill grouping may be used for English, mathematics, science and social studies. Teachers will make grouping decisions on the basis of individual student needs. Regrouping is enhanced by the flexibility of the team concept and the implementation of differentiated instruction.

D. SOL Remediation/Enrichment During the Instructional Day

A Standards of Learning Remediation/Enrichment program will be implemented at each middle school during the instructional day. Principals and faculty from both middle schools will work together to effectively determine appropriate times during the day for remediation.

E. Foreign Language courses at the middle school level will be evaluated each school year and will be offered based on student interest and enrollment.

F. As previously approved by the members of the Amherst County School Board, beginning with the 2003-04 school year, US History II will be taught at the sixth grade level, Civics and Economics at the seventh grade level, and World History I (a course that carries a high school standard credit, and may carry a verified credit) will now be taught at the eighth grade level.

G. The following considerations have already been implemented for the 2002-03 school year and were results of the collaborative effort put forth by the ACPS Middle School Instructional Program Committee

1. Standard computerized grading system

- a. Teachers will use the IntegratePro grade book software to record students' grades and progress.
- b. Professional development and training in the use of IntegratePro will be provided for all high school and middle school teachers, counselors, and administrators.

2. Standard computerized report card system

- a. A computerized report card system was implemented during the 2002-03 academic school year and will continue to be used by all teachers for reporting student progress.
- b. Report cards have been revised to reflect the work of the Amherst County Public Schools Grading Committee and its revised grading regulations.

Adopted: May 6, 2004

NOTIFICATION OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES

I. Annual Notice

At the beginning of each school year, each school within the Amherst County School Division provides to its students' parents or guardians information on the availability of and source for receiving:

- the learning objectives developed in accordance with the Standards of Accreditation to be achieved at their child's grade level, or, in high school, a copy of the syllabus for each of their child's courses;
- the Standards of Learning (SOLs) applicable to the child's grade or course requirements and the approximate date and potential impact of the child's next SOL testing;
- an annual notice to students in all grade levels of all requirements for Board of Education-approved diplomas; and
- the board's policies on promotion, retention and remediation.

The superintendent certifies to the Department of Education that the notice required by this policy has been given.

II. Notice of Credits Needed for Graduation and of the Right to a Free Public Education

- A. The School Board notifies the parent of rising eleventh and twelfth grade students of
 - (i) the requirements for graduation pursuant to the standards for accreditation and
 - (ii) the requirements that have yet to be completed by the individual student.
- B. The School Board will notify the parent of students with disabilities who have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) and who fail to meet the graduation requirements of the student's right to a free and appropriate education to age 21, inclusive, pursuant to Va. Code § 22.1-213 et seq.

The School Board will notify the parent of students who fail to graduate or who fail to achieve graduation requirements as provided in the standards of accreditation and who have not reached 20 years of age on or before August 1st of the school year of the right to a free public education. If the student who does not graduate or complete such requirements is a student for whom English is a second language, the School Board will notify the parent of the student's opportunity for a free public education in accordance with Va. Code § 22.1-5.

Adopted: May 3, 2001
Revised: August 16, 2001
Revised: August 21, 2003
Revised: August 12, 2004
Revised: May 18, 2006
Revised: September 13, 2012
Revised: September 8, 2016

Legal Refs.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, § 22.1-253.13:4.

8 VAC 20-131-270.

Cross Refs.: IGBC Parental Involvement
IKF Standards of Learning Tests and Graduation Requirements

ACADEMIC FREEDOM

The School Board seeks to educate young people in the democratic tradition, to foster a recognition of individual freedom and social responsibility, and to inspire meaningful awareness of and respect for the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

Freedom of individual conscience, association, and expression will be encouraged and fairness in procedures will be observed both to safeguard the legitimate interests of the schools and to exhibit by appropriate examples the basic objectives of a democratic society as set forth in the Constitutions of the United States and the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Students may express their beliefs about religion in homework, artwork, and other written and oral assignments free from discrimination based on the religious content of their submissions. Such home and classroom work shall be evaluated by ordinary academic standards for substance and relevance and against other legitimate pedagogical concerns identified by the school.

Adopted: April 7, 1994
Revised: November 3, 1994
Revised: October 3, 1996
Revised: August 28, 2008

Legal Ref.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 22.1-78, 22.1-203.3.

Cross Ref.: IKB Homework
INDC Religion in the Schools

SCHOOL YEAR/SCHOOL DAY

School Year

The length of the school year is at least 180 teaching days or 990 teaching hours. Days on which a school or schools or all the schools in the division are closed due to severe weather or other emergencies are made up as provided below if necessary to meet these requirements.

Students are provided a minimum of 680 hours of instructional time in elementary school, except for students in half-day kindergarten, in the four academic disciplines of English, mathematics, science, and history and social science and a minimum of 375 hours of instructional time in half-day kindergarten in the four academic disciplines of English, mathematics, science, and history and social science.

Unstructured recreational time that is intended to develop teamwork, social skills, and overall physical fitness may be included in the calculation of total instructional time or teaching hours for elementary school, provided that such unstructured recreational time does not exceed 15 percent of total instructional time or teaching hours.

Make Up Days

If severe weather conditions or other emergency situations result in the closing of a school or schools or all the schools in the school division for

- five or fewer days, all missed days are made up by adding teaching days to the school calendar or extending the length of the school day;
- six days or more, the first five days plus one day for each two days missed in excess of the first five are made up by adding teaching days to the school calendar or extending the length of the school day.

If severe weather conditions or other emergency situations result in the closing of any school in the school division and such school has been unable to meet the 180 teaching day requirement, the school division may make up the missed teaching days by providing its students with instructional hours equivalent to such missed teaching days to meet the minimum 990 teaching hour requirement.

The Board of Education may waive the requirement that the school division provide additional teaching days or teaching hours to compensate for school closings resulting from a declared state of emergency or severe weather conditions or other emergency situations under certain circumstances. If the School Board desires a waiver, it will submit a request to the Board of Education. The request will include evidence of efforts that have been made by the school division to reschedule as many days as possible and certification by the superintendent and chairman of the School Board that every reasonable effort for making up lost teaching days or teaching hours was exhausted before requesting a waiver. If the waiver is denied, the school division will make up the missed instructional time.

School Calendar

The first day of school is after Labor Day unless the Board of Education waives this requirement based on the School Board's certifying that it meets one of the good cause requirements in the Va. Code § 22.1-79.1.B.

The School Board establishes the division's calendar and teaching contracts in accordance with applicable regulations of the Board of Education to include contingencies for making up teaching days and teaching hours missed for emergency situations.

An advisory committee composed of teachers, parents and school administration may be utilized to recommend a proposed calendar to the superintendent. The recommendation of this committee is advisory.

School Day

The standard school day for students in grades 1 through 12 averages at least 5-1/2 instructional hours excluding breaks for meals and recess. The standard school day for kindergarten is a minimum of three instructional hours.

All students in grades 1 through 12 maintain a full day schedule of classes (5-1/2 hours) unless a waiver is granted in accordance with policies defined by the School Board.

Each elementary school provides students with a daily recess during the regular school year, as determined appropriate by the school.

The secondary school class schedule contains a minimum of 140 clock hours for each unit of credit. When credit is awarded in less than whole units, the increment awarded is no greater than the fractional part of the 140 hours of instruction provided.

The time for opening and closing schools is established by the School Board upon recommendation of the superintendent, provided that the daily program for students in grades 1 through 12 averages at least 5 ½ hours, not including meal intermissions. If the required program length is maintained, the School Board may approve occasional shortened days for staff development, conferences, planning and other activities designed to improve the instructional program, provided that no more than one day in each five-day week may be shortened to no less than four hours. The daily program for kindergarten is at least three hours, not including meal intermissions.

When exceptions in the length of the daily program are necessary for special education, alternative education, double shifts and scheduling or other unusual situations, the Board requests approval by the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the exceptions by August 1 preceding the school year for which they are requested.

The length of the work day for employees is determined by the School Board. It is of sufficient length to allow for the daily program for students and additional time as may be

necessary for such activities as planning, preparation, meetings, workshops, conferences, meal intermissions or other contractual obligations.

Certification

The superintendent and School Board chair certify the total number of teaching days and teaching hours each year as part of the annual report to the Board of Education.

Adopted: April 7, 1994
Revised: November 3, 1994
Revised: October 3, 1996
Revised: June 18, 1998
Revised: May 3, 2001
Revised: August 22, 2002
Revised: August 21, 2003
Revised: September 21, 2006
Revised: September 9, 2010
Revised: April 23, 2015
Revised: August 27, 2015
Revised: July 12, 2018

Legal Refs.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended §§ 22.1-26, 22.1-79.1, 22.1-98.

Acts 2018, c. 785.

8 VAC 20-131-150.

8 VAC 20-131-200.

8 VAC 20-490-30.

Cross Ref.: BCF Advisory Committees to the School Board
GAA Staff Time Schedules
IKF The Virginia Assessment Program and Graduation Requirements
IKFD Alternative Paths to Attaining Standard Units of Credit

MOMENT OF SILENCE

The Amherst County School Board recognizes that a moment of silence before each school day prepares students and staff for their respective work or school days. Therefore, each teacher shall observe a moment of silence at the beginning of the first class of each school day.

The teacher responsible for each class shall make sure that each student: (1) remains seated and silent and (2) does not disrupt or distract other students during the moment of silence. The moment may be used for any lawful silent activity, including personal reflection, prayer and meditation. Teachers shall not influence, in any way, students to pray or meditate or not to pray or meditate during the moment of silence.

Adopted: August 24, 2000

Revised: June 20, 2013

Legal Ref.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, § 22.1-203.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance, as established in 4 U.S.C. § 4, may be recited daily in each classroom of the Amherst County school division.

During the recitation of the Pledge, students shall stand and recite the Pledge while facing the flag with their right hands over their hearts or in an appropriate salute if in uniform.

No student shall be compelled to recite the Pledge if he, his parent or legal guardian objects on religious, philosophical, or other grounds to his participating in this exercise. Students who are exempt from reciting the Pledge shall quietly stand or sit at their desks while others recite the Pledge and shall make no display that disrupts or distracts those who are reciting the Pledge.

Appropriate accommodations shall be made for students who are unable to comply with the procedures described herein due to disability.

Adopted: September 20, 2001

Revised: July 19, 2012

Legal Refs: 4 U.S.C. § 4.

Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, § 22.1-202.

Cross Refs.: JFC Student Conduct
JFC-R Standards of Student Conduct

NATIONAL MOTTO

The statement “‘In God We Trust,’ the National Motto, enacted by Congress in 1956” shall be posted in a conspicuous place in each school for all students to read.

Adopted: August 22, 2002

Legal Ref: Acts 2002, c. 891.

File: IEC

BILL OF RIGHTS OF THE
CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES

The Bill of Rights of the Constitution of the United States shall be posted in a conspicuous place in each school for all students to read.

Adopted: August 21, 2003

Legal Ref: Acts 2003, c. 902.

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND ADOPTION

The curriculum is a coherent and comprehensive plan for teaching and learning built upon a framework that promotes continuity and the cumulative acquisition and application of skills. The curriculum shall state clearly and specifically what students are expected to know and be able to do by grade level and course. Amherst County School Board curricula shall meet or exceed the requirements of the Code of Virginia and regulations of the Virginia Board of Education and, at a minimum, shall be aligned to the Standards of Learning.

Adopted: April 7, 1994
Revised: November 3, 1994
Revised: October 3, 1996
Revised: August 22, 2002
Revised: August 28, 2008
Revised: June 20, 2013

Legal Refs.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 22.1-78, 22.1-253.13:1.

Cross Ref.: AF Comprehensive Plan

Pilot Programs

It is the instructional practice of the Amherst County Public Schools to search out and encourage the development of new programs, innovations, and technologies that can assist the students of the school division in reaching the highest academic and success goals possible. The School Board encourages the development of such Pilot Programs, and charges the Superintendent/ or Designee, with the approval of such programs at his discretion, and to develop procedures and regulations specific to each Pilot Program.

Adopted: February 17, 2014

**Amherst County Public Schools
Amherst, Virginia**

Pilot Program Request for Approval Form

Sponsoring Staff Member's Name: _____

School/ Site : _____ Grade Level to be Affected: _____

I. Briefly describe the Project:

II. How will the Project be implemented?

III. Indicate the time frame (duration) of Project:

IV. Resources to be used with anticipated costs for duration of Project:

V. Names of other staff members involved with the Project:

VI. How will the Project be assessed for success/ failure:

VII. Briefly “recap” the Project experience (Describe how the project was conducted, issues related to implementation, new direction, continuation, etc.)

Sponsoring Staff Member Signature: _____

Immediate Supervisor: _____

Superintendent/ Assistant Superintendent: _____

CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

The Amherst County School Board provides career and technical educational programs incorporated into the kindergarten through twelfth grade curricula that include

- knowledge of careers and all types of employment opportunities including, but not limited to, apprenticeships, entrepreneurship and small business ownership, the military, and the teaching profession, and emphasize the advantages of completing school with marketable skills;
- career exploration opportunities in the middle school grades; and
- competency-based career and technical education programs which integrate academic outcomes, career guidance and job-seeking skills for all secondary students based on labor market needs and student interest. Career guidance includes counseling about available employment opportunities and placement services for students exiting school; and
- annual notice on its website to enrolled high school students and their parents of (i) the availability of the postsecondary education and employment data published by the State Council of Higher Education on its website and (ii) the opportunity for such students to obtain a nationally recognized career readiness certificate at a local public high school, comprehensive community college or workforce center.

The School Board develops and implements a plan to ensure compliance with this Policy. This plan is developed with the input of area business and industry representatives and local community colleges and is submitted to the Superintendent of Public Instruction in accordance with the timelines established by federal law.

The School Board may establish High School to Work Partnerships or delegate the authority to establish Partnerships to the division's career and technical education administrator or the administrator's designee, in collaboration with the guidance counselor office of each high school in the school division, and educates high school students about opportunities available through such Partnerships.

Adopted: April 7, 1994
Revised: November 3, 1994
Revised: June 18, 1998
Revised: August 16, 2001
Revised: August 22, 2002
Revised: August 12, 2004
Revised: August 2, 2007
Revised: September 13, 2012
Revised: September 14, 2017
Revised: July 12, 2018

Legal Refs.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 22.1-227.1, 22.1-253.13:1.

Cross Ref.: IJ Guidance and Counseling Program

HEALTH EDUCATION/PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Each school organizes and maintains a physical and health education program in accordance with Board of Education regulations and State Board of Health guidelines.

Such health instruction

- incorporates standards that recognize the multiple dimensions of health by including mental health and the relationship of physical and mental health so as to enhance student understanding, attitudes, and behavior that promote health, well-being and human dignity, and
- may include an age-appropriate program of instruction on the safe use of and risks of abuse of prescription drugs that is consistent with curriculum guidelines develop by the Board of Education and approved by the Board of Health.

The Amherst County school division's goal is that a program of physical activity will be available to all students in grades kindergarten through five consisting of at least 20 minutes per day or an average of 100 minutes per week during the regular school year and available to all students in grades six through 12 for at least 150 minutes per week on average during the regular school year. Such program may include any combination of physical education classes, extracurricular athletics, recess or other programs and activities.

Adopted: April 7, 1994
Revised: August 17, 1995
Revised: October 3, 1996
Revised: August 22, 2002
Revised: August 28, 2008
Revised: September 9, 2010
Revised: April 23, 2015
Revised: July 12, 2018

Legal Refs.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 22.1-207, 22.1-253.13:1.

8 VAC 20-320-10.

Cross Refs.:	IC/ID	School Year/School Day
	IGAG	Teaching About Drugs, Alcohol, and Tobacco
	JHCA	Physical Examinations of Students
	JHCF	Student Wellness
	JO	Student Records

TEACHING ABOUT DRUGS, ALCOHOL AND TOBACCO

Each student shall receive instruction related to alcohol and drug abuse and smoking and health. The health education program will include instruction in drug and substance abuse prevention. It will encourage and support organizations and activities that will develop a positive peer influence concerning substance abuse and create a climate whereby students may seek and receive counseling about substance abuse and related problems without fear of reprisal.

Each student shall receive instruction concerning the public safety hazards and dangers of alcohol abuse, underage drinking, and drunk driving.

Adopted: April 7, 1994
Revised: October 3, 1996
Revised: August 16, 2001
Revised: September 9, 2010
Revised: October 9, 2014

Legal Refs.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 22.1-79.5, 22.1-206.

FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION (FLE)

Generally

The Amherst County School Board provides Family Life Education (FLE) based on the FLE Standards of Learning (SOL) objectives developed by the Department of Education. The SOL objectives related to dating violence and the characteristics of abusive relations are taught at least once in middle school and at least twice in high school. The high school FLE curriculum incorporates age-appropriate elements of effective and evidence-based programs on the prevention of dating violence, domestic abuse, sexual harassment, including sexual harassment using electronic means, and sexual violence and may include instruction that increases student awareness of the fact that consent is required before sexual activity and age-appropriate elements of effective and evidence-based programs on the law and meaning of consent. The FLE curriculum offered in any school incorporates age-appropriate elements of effective and evidence-based programs on the importance of the personal privacy and personal boundaries of other individuals and tools for a student to use to ensure that he respects the personal privacy and personal boundaries of other individuals.

The FLE curriculum may incorporate age-appropriate elements of effective and evidence-based programs on the prevention, recognition, and awareness of child abduction, child abuse, child sexual exploitation and child sexual abuse.

Community Involvement Team

Under procedures approved by the School Board, a community involvement team is established. The team includes but is not limited to school administrators, teachers, parents, clergy, medical professionals, mental health professionals and others in the community.

Staff Training

Teachers in the FLE program participate in the training program sponsored by the Department of Education.

Separate Sessions

A plan for teaching sensitive conduct in gender-separated classes is announced publicly.

"Opt-out" Procedures

An "opt-out" procedure is provided to ensure communication with the parent or guardian for permission for students to be excused from all or part of the program.

Annual Review

The FLE curriculum is reviewed annually. Such review allows for community input.

Right of Parental Review

A parent or guardian has the right to review the family life curricula, including all supplemental materials used in the program.

The School Board develops and distributes to the parents or guardians of students participating in the FLE program a summary designed to assist them in understanding the program implemented in its school division and to encourage parental guidance and involvement in the instruction of the students. Such information reflects the curricula of the program as taught in the classroom. The following statement is included on the summary: "Parents and guardians have the right to review the family life education program offered by their school division, including written and audio-visual educational materials used in the program. Parents and guardians also have the right to excuse their child from all or part of family life education instruction."

Adopted: April 7, 1994
Revised: October 3, 1996
Revised: August 22, 2002
Revised: August 13, 2009
Revised: August 11, 2011
Revised: August 27, 2015
Revised: September 8, 2016
Revised: September 14, 2017
Revised: July 12, 2018

Legal Refs.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 22.1-207.1:1, 22.1-207.2.

8 VAC 20-131-170.

Virginia Department of Education, Family Life Education: Board of Education Guidelines and Standards of Learning for Virginia Public Schools (revised September 2016)

Cross Refs.: BCF Advisory Committees to the School Board
 IIA Instructional Materials
 INB Teaching About Controversial Issues
 KLB Public Complaints About Learning Resources

CHARACTER EDUCATION

The Amherst County School Board provides, within its existing program or as a separate program, a character education program in its schools. The character education program may occur during the regular school year, during the summer in a youth development academy offered by the school division, or both. The purpose of the program is to foster civic virtues and personal character traits so as to improve the learning environment, promote student achievement, reduce disciplinary problems and develop civic-minded students of high character. The program shall be cooperatively developed with students, parents and the community. Specific character traits emphasized may include trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship.

Character education shall be interwoven into the school procedures and environment so as to instruct primarily by example, illustration and participation, in such a way as to complement the Standards of Learning. Classroom instruction may also be used to supplement the program. The program shall also address the inappropriateness of bullying, as defined in Va. Code § 22.1-276.01.

The character education program

- specifies those character traits to be taught, selecting from those which are common to diverse social, cultural and religious groups;
- is implemented at the elementary and secondary levels;
- provides for relevant professional development and adequate resources; and
- includes a method for program evaluation.

Character education is intended to educate students regarding those core civic values and virtues which are efficacious to civilized society and are common to the diverse social, cultural, and religious groups of the Commonwealth. It shall not include indoctrination in any particular religious or political belief. Consistent with this purpose, Virginia's civic values, which are the principles articulated in the Bill of Rights (Article I) of the Constitution of Virginia and the ideals reflected in the seal of the Commonwealth, as described in Va. Code § 1-500, may be taught as representative of such civic values.

Adopted: August 19, 1999
Revised: August 24, 2000
Revised: August 21, 2003
Revised: August 18, 2005
Revised: May 18, 2006
Revised: September 13, 2012
Revised: September 8, 2016

Legal Refs.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, § 22.1-208.01.

Cross Refs.:	IKF	Standards of Learning Tests and Graduation Requirements
	INB	Teaching About Controversial Issues
	INDC	Religion in the Schools

DRIVER EDUCATION

The Amherst County School Board offers a program of driver education in the high schools in the safe operation of motor vehicles.¹ The program includes instruction concerning alcohol and drug abuse, aggressive driving, motorcycle awareness, distracted driving, organ and tissue donor awareness, fuel-efficient driving practices and traffic stops, including law-enforcement procedures for traffic stops, appropriate actions to be taken by drivers during traffic stops and appropriate interactions with law-enforcement officers who initiate traffic stops.²

The School Board establishes fees, that do not exceed the limit established by the Department of Education, for the behind-the-wheel portion of the program. The School Board may waive the fee or surcharge in whole or in part for those students it determines cannot pay the fee or surcharge.

Any student who participates in a driver education program must meet the academic requirements established by the Board of Education. No student is permitted to operate a motor vehicle without a learner's permit or a license. Necessary certification of students' academic standing and compliance with compulsory attendance laws is provided by the administration to the Department of Motor Vehicles upon request, in accordance with state law.

Driver education instructors possess valid driver's licenses and maintain satisfactory driving records. Any teacher of behind-the-wheel instruction who receives six or more demerit points in a 12-month period will be suspended from teaching driver education for 24 months³.

At the beginning of each school year and thereafter as necessary, the superintendent reports to the Department of Motor Vehicles the name and driver's license number of all persons providing instruction in driver education for the school division.

¹ School boards are not required to offer driver education programs. A division that does not offer such a program should not adopt this policy. Boards that do offer driver education may offer classroom training or behind-the-wheel instruction or both. Divisions that do not offer behind-the-wheel should not adopt the second paragraph of this policy and should remove Policy JN as a Cross Reference to this policy.

² In addition, in Planning District 8, for any student completing a driver education program beginning in academic year 2010 - 2011, the program must include an additional minimum 90-minute parent/student driver education component as part of the in-classroom portion of the driver education curriculum, requiring the participation of the student's parent or guardian and emphasizing parental responsibilities regarding juvenile driver behavior, juvenile driving restrictions pursuant to the Code of Virginia, and the dangers of driving while intoxicated and underage consumption of alcohol. Such instruction shall be developed by the Department of Education in cooperation with the Virginia Alcohol Safety Action Program, the Department of Health, and the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, as appropriate. Such program shall require a minimum number of miles driven during the behind-the-wheel driver training. School boards in Planning District 8 must make this component available to all students and their parents or guardians who are in compliance with Va. Code § 22.1-254.

³ Each school board can determine what a satisfactory driving record is for driver education instructors. Boards are free to include requirements which are more or less stringent than those included here.

Adopted: April 7, 1994
Revised: November 3, 1994
Revised: October 3, 1996
Revised: June 18, 1998
Revised: August 19, 1999
Revised: August 24, 2000
Revised: August 22, 2002
Revised: August 2, 2007
Revised: August 13, 2009
Revised: September 9, 2010
Revised: August 11, 2011
Revised: April 23, 2015
Revised: August 27, 2015
Revised: September 14, 2017

Legal Refs.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 22.1-205, 46.2-334, 46.2-340.

8 VAC 20-340-10.

8 VAC 20-720-80.

Cross Ref.: JED Student Absences/Excuses/Dismissals
JFC-R Standards of Student Conduct
JN Student Fees, Fines, and Charges

ALTERNATIVES TO ANIMAL DISSECTION

The Amherst County School Board provides one or more alternatives to animal dissection for students enrolled in biological sciences classes that incorporate dissection exercises. These alternatives may include computer programs, Internet simulations, plastic models, videotapes, digital videodiscs, and charts. The alternative techniques require a comparable amount of time and effort as do the dissection exercises and provide comparable depth and scope of learning. The alternative techniques provide the students, through means other than dissection, with knowledge similar to that expected to be gained by other students in the course who perform, participate in, or observe the dissection. Testing procedures that do not require the use of dissected specimens are provided for those students who choose an alternative technique.

A student's objection to participating in an animal dissection should be substantiated by a signed note from his or her parent or guardian.

Adopted: May 5, 2005

Legal Ref.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, § 22.1-200.01.

Guidelines for Alternatives to Dissection (Attachment to Virginia Department of Education Superintendent's Memo #161 (August 6, 2004)).

PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Generally

The Amherst County School Board provides a free, appropriate public education for all children and youth with disabilities, ages 2 through 21, inclusive, who are residents of Amherst County or who are not residents of Amherst County but are residents of Virginia and who are enrolled in a full-time virtual school program provided by the Board. To the maximum extent appropriate, students with disabilities are educated with children who are not disabled.

An Individualized Education Program (IEP) is developed and maintained for each child with a disability served by the Amherst County School Board. The program is developed in a meeting of the child's IEP team, which includes the child's teachers, parent(s), the student (when appropriate), a school division representative qualified to provide or supervise the provision of special education services, an individual who can interpret the instructional implications of evaluation results and other individuals at the discretion of the parents or school division in accordance with State and federal law and regulations. This IEP is reviewed at least annually.

The IEP includes areas specified by state and federal statutes and regulations.

Explanation of Procedural Safeguards

A copy of the procedural safeguards available to the parent(s) of a child with a disability is given to the parent(s). The procedural safeguards notice includes a full explanation of all the procedural safeguards available.

Child Find

The Amherst County School Board maintains an active and continuing child find program designed to identify, locate and evaluate those children residing in the division who are birth to 21 inclusive who are in need of special education and related services

The School Board provides all applicable procedural safeguards including written notice to the parents of the scheduled screening and, if the child fails the screening, the results of the screening, confidentiality and maintenance of the student's scholastic record.

Adopted: April 7, 1994
Revised: November 3, 1994
Revised: March 16, 1995
Revised: October 3, 1996
Revised: August 22, 2002
Revised: August 11, 2011
Revised: October 9, 2014

Legal Refs.: 20 U.S.C. § 1400 et seq.

29 U.S.C. § 701 et seq.

42 U.S.C. § 12101 et seq.

Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 22.1-213, 22.1-215.

8 VAC 20-81-50.

8 VAC 20-81-80.

8 VAC 20-81-100.

8 VAC 20-81-110.

8 VAC 20-81-130.

8 VAC 20-81-170.

PROGRAMS FOR GIFTED STUDENTS

The Amherst County School Board shall approve a comprehensive plan for the education of gifted students that includes the components identified in Board of Education regulations. The plan for the education of gifted students shall be accessible through the division's website and the division will ensure that printed copies of the plan are available to citizens who do not have online access.

The school division has uniform procedures for screening, referring, identifying, and serving students in kindergarten through twelfth grade who are gifted in general intellectual or specific academic aptitude.

The school division will provide written notification to and seek written consent from parents and legal guardians to conduct any required assessment to determine a referred student's eligibility for the division's gifted education program, and provide services for an identified gifted student in the division's gifted education program.

The School Board may establish a local advisory committee composed of parents, school personnel, and other community members appointed by the School Board. The committee will reflect the ethnic and geographical composition of the school division. If established, the committee will annually review the division's plan for the education of gifted students, including revisions, and determine the extent to which the plan for the previous year was implemented. The findings of the annual program effectiveness and the recommendations of the committee will be submitted annually in writing to the division superintendent and the School Board.

Adopted: April 7, 1994
Revised: October 3, 1996
Revised: June 18, 1998
Revised: August 19, 1999
Revised: August 22, 2002
Revised: August 12, 2004
Revised: August 28, 2008
Revised: August 11, 2011
Revised: September 13, 2012

Legal Refs.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 22.1-18.1, 22.1-253.13:1.D.6.
8 VAC 20-40-40.
8 VAC 20-40-55.
8 VAC 20-40-60.

Cross Refs.: BCF Advisory Committees to the School Board
IKEB Acceleration

ATTENDANCE AT CENTRAL VIRGINIA GOVERNOR'S SCHOOL
FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

The Amherst County School Board supports the Central Virginia Governor's School for Science and Technology and encourages students with interest in the areas of science and technology to apply for admission. The division superintendent will develop a selection process which shall include a review by professional staff members which may include teachers, counselors and administrators. Characteristics of students who should be considered for participation in the Governor's School are as follows:

1. Strong academic preparation with special emphasis in the areas of science and mathematics
2. Test scores which reflect ability and achievement in the areas of science, mathematics, and language
3. Academic achievement as reflected by grades and those areas supported with student success in the sciences, including math, science, and language arts
4. Strong interest in continuing their education and careers in science and technology
5. Demonstrated commitment to participation and contribution to the science process
6. Need for alternative education program offered in the Governor's School.

The selection process shall include provisions that any interested eleventh grade student may apply for the Governor's School.

Adopted: April 7, 1994

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

Regulations of the Virginia Board of Education, Revised 1993,
VR 270-01-0002

ATTENDANCE AT CENTRAL VIRGINIA GOVERNOR'S SCHOOL
FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

The selection process for Amherst County High School students who wish to attend the Central Virginia Governor's School for Science and Technology are as follows:

1. All interested tenth grade Amherst County High School students will be given an opportunity to apply for admission to the Central Virginia Governor's School for Science and Technology.
2. Students interested in applying for admission to the Governor's School for Science and Technology must complete the application form and submit other required information by the designated time.
3. A selection committee made up of professional staff members which may include teachers, counselors, and administrators will review the applications and based on criteria developed by the staff at the Central Virginia Governor's School for Science and Technology will recommend students for admission. In addition, a minimum of two alternates will be selected for admission. Alternates will be given the opportunity to attend if any of the students selected for attendance declines the offer to attend the Governor's School, or if additional students from Amherst County are allowed to attend.
4. The selection committee will inform the principal of Amherst County High School of its recommendations.
5. With the approval of the Superintendent, the principal of Amherst County High School will inform those students who have been selected for attendance at the Governor's School and he will inform the Director of the Governor's School of the students who will be attending.
6. Time lines for applying and selecting students for attendance at the Central Virginia Governor's School for Science and Technology will be developed annually.

Adopted: April 7, 1994
Revised: November 3, 2016

PARENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Generally

The Amherst County School Board recognizes that the education of each student is a responsibility shared by the school and the student's family. The Amherst County School Board endorses the parent and family engagement goals of Title I (20 U.S.C. § 6318) and encourages the regular participation by parents and family members of all children including those eligible for Title I and English learner programs in all aspects of those programs.

In keeping with these beliefs, the Amherst County School Board cultivates and supports active parent and family engagement in student learning. The Amherst County School Board:

- provides activities that educate parents regarding the intellectual and developmental needs of their children. These activities promote cooperation between the division and other agencies or school/community groups (such as parent-teacher groups, the Head Start program, the Reading First program, Early Reading First program, Even Start program, and Parents as Teachers program) to furnish learning opportunities and disseminate information regarding parenting skills and child/adolescent development
- implements strategies to involve parents in the educational process, including:
 - keeping families informed of opportunities for involvement and encouraging participation in various programs
 - providing access to educational resources for parents and families to use with their children
 - keeping families informed of the objectives of division educational programs as well as of their child's participation and progress with these programs
- enables families to participate in the education of their children through a variety of roles. For example, family members may
 - provide input into division policies
 - volunteer time within the classroom and school program
- provides professional development opportunities for teachers and staff to enhance their understanding of effective parent involvement strategies
- performs regular evaluations of parent involvement at each school and in the division
- provides access, upon request, to any instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum
- if practicable, provides information in a language understandable to parents

In addition, for parents of students eligible for English learner programs, the School Board informs such parents of how they can be active participants in assisting their children

- to learn English;
- to achieve at high levels in core academic subjects; and

- to meet the same challenging academic content and student academic achievement standards as all children are expected to meet.

Parental Involvement in Title I Plan

The Amherst County School Board encourages parents of children eligible to participate in Title I, Part A, programs to participate in the development of the Board's Title I plan. Parents may participate in a variety of methods as provided by the school division and individual schools, including a Title I parent advisory committee.

Parental Involvement in School Review and Improvement

The Amherst County School Division encourages parents of children eligible to participate in Title I, Part A, and English learner programs to participate in the process of school review and, if applicable, the development of support and improvement plans under 20 U.S.C. § 6311(d)(1) and (2). Parents may participate in a variety of methods as provided at individual schools.

Division Responsibilities

The Amherst County School Division, and each school which receives Title I, Part A, funds:

- provides assistance to parents of children served by the school or division, as applicable, in understanding topics such as Virginia's challenging academic standards, state and local academic assessments and how to monitor a child's progress and work with educators to improve the achievement of their children
- provides materials and training to help parents work with their children to improve their children's achievement, such as literacy training and using technology (including education about the harms of copyright piracy), as appropriate, to foster parental involvement
- educates teachers, specialized instructional support personnel, principals, and other school leaders, and other staff, with the assistance of parents, in the value and utility of contributions of parents and in how to reach out to, communicate with, and work with parents as equal partners, implement and coordinate parent programs and build ties between parents and the school
- to the extent feasible and appropriate, coordinates and integrates parental involvement programs and activities with other federal, state and local programs, including public preschool and conduct other activities, such as parent resource centers, that encourage and support parents in more fully participating in the education of their children

- ensures that information related to school and parent programs, meetings and other activities is sent to the parents of participating children in a format and, to the extent practicable, in a language the parents can understand
- provides such other reasonable support for parental involvement activities as parents may request

The Amherst County School Division, and each school which receives Title I, Part A, funds, **MAY:**

- involve parents in the development of training for teachers, principals, and other educators to improve the effectiveness of such training
- provide necessary literacy training from Title I funds if the division has exhausted all other reasonably available sources of funding for such training
- pay reasonable and necessary expenses associated with local parental involvement activities, including transportation and child care costs, to enable parents to participate in school-related meetings and training sessions
- train parents to enhance the involvement of other parents
- arrange school meetings at a variety of times, or conduct in-home conferences between teachers or other educators who work directly with participating children and parents who are unable to attend such conferences at school in order to maximize parental involvement and participation
- adopt and implement model approaches to improving parental involvement
- establish a division-wide parent advisory council to provide advice on all matters related to parental involvement in programs supported by Title I
- develop appropriate roles for community-based organizations and businesses in parental involvement activities

School Parent and Family Engagement Policies

Each school served under Title I, Part A, jointly develops with and distributes to parents and family members of participating children a written parent and family engagement policy, agreed on by such parents, that describes the means for carrying out the following:

- convening an annual meeting, at a convenient time, to which all parents of participating children are invited and encouraged to attend, to inform parents of their school's participation in Title I, Part A, and to explain the requirements of Title I, Part A, and the rights of parents to be involved
- offering a flexible number of meetings, such as meetings in the morning or evening. Schools may provide, with funds provided under this part, transportation, child care, or home visits, as such services relate to parental involvement

- involving parents, in an organized, ongoing, and timely way, in the planning, review, and improvement of Title I, Part A, programs including the planning, review, and improvement of the school parent and family engagement policy and the joint development of the school wide program plan under 20 U.S.C. § 6314(b), except that if a school has in place a process for involving parents in the joint planning and design of the school's programs, the school may use that process, if such process includes an adequate representation of parents of participating children
- providing parents of participating children:
 - timely information about Title I, Part A, programs;
 - a description and explanation of the curriculum in use at the school, the forms of academic assessment used to measure student progress, and the achievement levels of the challenging state academic standards; and
 - if requested by parents, opportunities for regular meetings to formulate suggestions and to participate, as appropriate, in decisions relating to the education of their children, and responding to any such suggestions as soon as practicably possible
- if the school wide program plan under 20 U.S.C. § 6314(b) is not satisfactory to the parents of participating children, submitting any parent comments on the plan when the school makes the plan available to the School Board

Parent and Family Involvement in Allocation of Funding

Parents and family members of children receiving services under Title I, Part A, are involved in the decisions regarding how funds provided under Title I, Part A, are allotted for parental involvement activities.

Policy Review

The School Board conducts, with the meaningful involvement of parents and family members, an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of this policy in improving the academic quality of all schools served under Title I, Part A, including identifying

- barriers to greater participation by parents (with particular attention to parents who are economically disadvantaged, are disabled, have limited English proficiency, have limited literacy or are of any racial or ethnic minority background;
- the needs of parents and family members to assist with the learning of their children, including engaging with school personnel and teachers; and
- strategies to support successful school and family interactions.

Adopted: August 21, 2003
Revised: June 20, 2013
Revised: September 14, 2017

Legal Refs.: 20 U.S.C. §§ 6312, 6318.

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

Cross Refs.: AD Educational Philosophy
BCF Advisory Committees to the School Board
IAA Notification of Learning Objectives
IKA Parental Assistance with Instruction

REMEDIAL AND SUMMER INSTRUCTION PROGRAM

Generally

The School Board develops and implements programs of prevention, intervention, or remediation for students who are educationally at risk, including but not limited to those who fail to achieve a passing score on any Standards of Learning assessment in grades three through eight, or who fail an end-of-course test required for the award of a verified unit of credit. Such programs shall include components that are research based.

Any student who achieves a passing score on one or more, but not all, of the Standards of Learning assessments for the relevant grade level in grades three through eight may be required to attend a remediation program.

Any student who fails to achieve a passing score on all of the Standards of Learning assessments for the relevant grade level in grades three through eight or who fails an end-of-course test required for the award of a verified unit of credit is required to attend a remediation program or to participate in another form of remediation. The superintendent requires such students to take special programs of prevention, intervention, or remediation, which may include attendance in public summer school programs.

Remediation programs include, when applicable, a procedure for early identification of students who are at risk of failing the Standards of Learning assessments in grades three through eight or who fail an end-of-course test required for the award of a verified unit of credit. Such programs may also include summer school for all elementary and middle school grades and for all high school academic courses, as defined by regulations promulgated by the Board of Education, or other forms of remediation. Summer school remediation programs or other forms of remediation are chosen by the superintendent to be appropriate to the academic needs of the student.

Students who are required to attend such summer school programs or to participate in another form of remediation are not charged tuition.

The requirement for remediation may, however, be satisfied by the student's attendance in a program of prevention, intervention or remediation which has been selected by his parent, in consultation with the superintendent or superintendent's designee, and is either (i) conducted by an accredited private school or (ii) a special program which has been determined to be comparable to the required public school remediation program by the superintendent. The costs of such private school remediation program or other special remediation program are borne by the student's parent.

Targeted mathematics remediation and intervention are provided to students in grades six through eight who show computational deficiencies as demonstrated by their individual performance on any diagnostic test or grade-level Standards of Learning mathematics test that measures non-calculator computational skills.

The School Board annually evaluates and modifies, as appropriate, the remediation plan based on an analysis of the percentage of students meeting their remediation goals and consideration of the pass rate on the Standards of Learning assessments.

Summer School

The courses offered and the quality of instruction in the summer school program shall be comparable to that offered during the regular school term. Students must meet the requirements for SOL testing if appropriate.

Summer school instruction at any level which is provided as part of a state-funded remedial program is designed to improve specific identified student deficiencies.

Compulsory Attendance

When a student is required to participate in a remediation program pursuant to this policy, the superintendent may seek immediate compliance with the compulsory school attendance laws if a reasonable effort to seek the student's attendance, including direct notification of the parents of such student of the attendance requirement and failure of the parents to secure the student's attendance, have failed and the superintendent determines that remediation of the student's poor academic performance, passage of the Standards of Learning Assessment in grades three through eight, or promotion is related directly to the student's attendance in the remediation program.

Adopted: April 7, 1994
Revised: October 3, 1996
Revised: August 21, 1997
Revised: June 18, 1998
Revised: August 24, 2000
Revised: August 22, 2002
Revised: August 21, 2003
Revised: August 12, 2004
Revised: September 21, 2006
Revised: August 2, 2007
Revised: August 11, 2011
Revised: September 13, 2012
Revised: July 25, 2013
Revised: April 12, 2018

Legal Ref.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 22.1-253.13:1, 22.1-253.13:3, 22.1-254,
22.1-254.01.

8 VAC 20-131-120.

8 VAC 20-630-40.

Cross Refs.: BCF Advisory Committees To The School Board
IKG Remediation Recovery Program

ENGLISH LEARNERS

Generally

The Amherst County School Board provides programs to improve the education of English learners by assisting the children to learn English and meet Virginia's challenging academic content and student academic achievement standards.

Assessments

The School Board annually assesses the English proficiency of all English learners.

Notification

The School Board, not later than 30 days after the beginning of the school year, informs a parent or the parents of an English learner identified for participation in, or participating in, a program for English learners, of

- the reasons for the identification of their child as an English learner and in need of placement in a language instruction education program;
- the child's level of English proficiency, how that level was assessed and the status of the child's academic achievement;
- the method of instruction used in the program in which their child is, or will be, participating, and the methods of instruction used in other available programs, including how such programs differ in content, instruction goals, and use of English and a native language in instruction;
- how the program in which their child is, or will be, participating will meet the educational strengths and needs of the child;
- how such program will specifically help their child learn English, and meet age appropriate academic achievement standards for grade promotion and graduation;
- the specific exit requirements for such program, the expected rate of transition from such program into classrooms that are not tailored for English learners, and the expected rate of graduation from high school (including four-year adjusted cohort graduation rates and extended-year adjusted cohort graduation rates for such program);
- in the case of a child with a disability, how such program meets the objectives of the individualized education program of the child; and
- information pertaining to parental rights that includes written guidance
 - detailing the right that parents have to have their child immediately removed from such program upon their request and the options that parents have to decline to enroll their child in such program or to choose another program or method of instruction, if available, and

- assisting parents in selecting among various programs and methods of instruction, if more than one program or method is offered by the school division.

For a child who has not been identified as an English learner prior to the beginning of the school year but is identified as an English learner during the school year, the School Board provides the notice detailed above within 2 weeks of the child being placed in the program.

The information described above is provided to parents in an understandable and uniform format and, to the extent practicable, in a language that the parent can understand.

The School Board accepts and provides programs for students for whom English is a second language who entered school in Virginia for the first time after reaching their 12th birthday, and who have not reached age 22 on or before August 1 of the school year. No tuition is charged such students, if state funding is provided for such programs.

Adopted: April 7, 1994
Revised: October 3, 1996
Revised: August 19, 1999
Revised: June 17, 2004
Revised: August 11, 2011
Revised: September 14, 2017

Legal Ref.: 20 U.S.C. §§ 6311, 6312, 6825.

Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, § 22.1-5.

Cross Ref.: IGBC Parent and Family Engagement

OFF-SITE INSTRUCTION AND VIRTUAL COURSES

Homebound Instruction

The School Board maintains a program of homebound instruction for students who are confined at home or in a health care facility for periods that would prevent normal school attendance based upon certification of need by a licensed physician, physician assistant, nurse practitioner, or clinical psychologist.

Credit for the work is awarded when it is done under the supervision of a licensed teacher qualified in the relevant subject areas and employed by the School Board, and there is evidence that the instructional time requirements or alternative means of awarding credit adopted by the School Board have been met.

Virtual Courses

Students may enroll in and receive a standard and verified unit of credit for supervised virtual courses with prior approval of the principal. The superintendent is responsible for developing regulations governing this method of delivery of instruction that include the provisions of 8 VAC 20-131-110 and the administration of required Standards of Learning tests prescribed by 8 VAC 20-131-30. For courses offered for possible high school credit, standard units of credit are awarded for successful completion of such courses when the course is equivalent to that offered in the regular school program and the work is done under the supervision of a licensed teacher qualified in the relevant subject areas. A verified unit of credit may be earned when the student has successfully completed the requirements specified in 8 VAC 20-131-110.

Adopted: April 7, 1994
Revised: November 3, 1994
Revised: October 3, 1996
Revised: June 18, 1998
Revised: May 3, 2001
Revised: August 18, 2005
Revised: September 9, 2010
Revised: August 11, 2011
Revised: July 25, 2013
Revised: September 8, 2016
Revised: July 12, 2018

Legal Ref.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 22.1-253.13:3, 54.1-2952.2, 54.1-2957.02.

8 VAC 20-131-180.

Cross Ref.: IGBGA Online Courses and Virtual School Programs
IKFD Alternative Paths to Attaining Standard Units of Credit

ONLINE COURSES AND VIRTUAL SCHOOL PROGRAMS

The Amherst County School Board may enter into contracts, consistent with the criteria approved by the Board of Education, with approved private or nonprofit organizations to provide multidivision online courses and virtual school programs. Such contracts shall be exempt from the Virginia Public Procurement Act.

Information regarding online courses and programs that are available through the school division will be posted on the division's website. The information will include the types of online courses and programs available to students through the division, when the division will pay course fees and other costs for nonresident students, and the granting of high school credit.

Any student enrolled in any online course or virtual program offered by the school division shall be enrolled in a public school in Virginia as provided in Va. Code § 22.1-3.1. The student's parent or guardian shall give written permission prior to the enrollment of the student in any full-time virtual program offered by the school division.

A student who resides in Amherst County school division will not be charged tuition for enrolling in any online course or virtual program offered by the school division. However, tuition may be charged to students, except children with disabilities who are enrolled in the division's full-time virtual school program, who do not reside within the boundaries of the school division.

Teachers who deliver instruction to students through online courses or virtual school programs must be licensed by the Board of Education and are subject to the requirements of Policy GCDA Effect of Criminal Conviction or Founded Complaint of Child Abuse or Neglect.

The administrator of a virtual school program must hold an advanced degree from a regionally accredited institution of higher education with educational and work experience in administering educational programs.

For purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply.

"Multidivision online provider" means (i) a private or nonprofit organization that enters into a contract with a local school board to provide online courses or programs through that school board to students who reside in Virginia both within and outside the geographical boundaries of that school division; (ii) a private or nonprofit organization that enters into contracts with multiple local school boards to provide online courses or programs to students in kindergarten through grade 12 through those school boards; or (iii) a local school board that provides online courses or programs to students who reside in Virginia but outside the geographical boundaries of that school division. However, "multidivision online provider" shall not include (a) a local school board's online learning program in which fewer than 10 percent of the students enrolled reside outside the geographical boundaries of that school division; (b) multiple local school boards that establish joint online courses or programs in which fewer than 10 percent of the students enrolled reside outside the geographical boundaries of those school

divisions; (c) local school boards that provide online learning courses or programs for their students through an arrangement with a public or private institution of higher education; or (d) local school boards providing online courses or programs through a private or nonprofit organization that has been approved as a multidivision online provider.

"Online course" means a course or grade-level subject instruction that (i) is delivered by a multidivision online provider primarily electronically using the Internet or other computer-based methods and (ii) is taught by a teacher primarily from a remote location, with student access to the teacher given synchronously, asynchronously, or both.

"Virtual school program" means a series of online courses with instructional content that (i) is delivered by a multidivision online provider primarily electronically using the Internet or other computer-based methods; (ii) is taught by a teacher primarily from a remote location, with student access to the teacher given synchronously, asynchronously, or both; (iii) is delivered as a part-time or full-time program; and (iv) has an online component with online lessons and tools for student and data management.

Adopted: September 9, 2010
Revised: September 13, 2012
Revised: October 9, 2014

Legal Ref.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 22.1-212.24, 22.1-212.25, 22.1-212.26, 22.1-212.27, 22.1-215, 22.1-296.1, 22.1-296.2, and 22.1-296.4.

Cross Refs.: DJF Purchasing Procedures
GCDA Effect of Criminal Conviction or Founded Complaint of Child Abuse or Neglect
IGBA Programs for Students with Disabilities

ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL PROGRAMS

The Amherst County School Board will establish alternative educational programs within existing schools or at separate sites as needed. No person of school age meeting the residency requirements of § 22.1-3 may be charged tuition for enrollment in an alternative program offered as a regional or divisionwide initiative by the School Board.

Proposals for alternative school programs shall be developed by the superintendent or his/her designee and will be submitted to the Board for review and endorsement prior to implementation. Proposals shall include

1. a statement of justification for the alternative program explaining how it will meet the special needs or expectations of the target population and the community;
2. a plan which delineates the proposed organizational structure of the program as it relates to staffing and the scope and structure of the total instructional program;
3. a statement of financial impact identifying all costs, including administration, staffing, equipping, supplying, transportation, support services, and maintaining the program;
4. a statement of related impact explaining how the proposed program will affect and interrelate with other programs and populations served in existing programs and facilities;
5. a statement verifying that all aspects of the program are in compliance with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations, and accreditation requirements;
6. if the proposal presents a potential conflict with existing regulations of the State Department of Education, evidence of authorization from the State Department of Education must accompany the proposal; and
7. a plan for evaluation that defines anticipated outcomes and establishes criteria and procedures for evaluating achieved outcomes.

Adopted: April 7, 1994
Revised: October 3, 1996
Revised: August 19, 1999
Revised: July 19, 2012

Legal Refs.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 22.1-5, 22.1-253.13:1.

ADVANCED PLACEMENT CLASSES AND SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Students and their parents are notified of the availability of dual enrollment and advanced placement classes; career and technical education programs, including internships, externships, apprenticeships, credentialing programs, certification programs, licensure programs, and other work-based learning experiences; the International Baccalaureate program and Academic Year Governor's School Programs; the qualifications for enrolling in such classes, programs, and experiences; and the availability of financial assistance to low-income and needy students to take the advanced placement and International Baccalaureate examinations. Students and their parents are also notified of the program with a community college to enable students to complete an associate's degree or a one-year Uniform Certificate of General Studies concurrent with a high school diploma. The superintendent promulgates regulations to implement this policy, which ensure the provision of timely and adequate notice to students and their parents.

Adopted: August 19, 1999
Revised: August 12, 2004
Revised: September 13, 2012
Revised: September 14, 2017
Revised: July 12, 2018

Legal Ref.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, § 22.1-253.13:1.
Cross Ref.: IGAD Career and Technical Education
LEB Advanced/Alternative Courses for Credit

ADVANCED PLACEMENT CLASSES AND SPECIAL PROGRAMS

The Career Path Curriculum Guide has been developed to provide information regarding Advanced Placement and Special Programs as well as all other programs available to high school students. Each student shall receive a copy of the guide prior to registration.

Timelines and procedures shall be provided to students and parents through various written communications, including the school newsletters. Administrators and guidance counselors shall meet individually with students and parents to discuss programs and develop student schedules.

The middle school principal shall schedule meetings to provide information to the students and parents while they are in the middle school. The high school principal shall schedule similar meetings for the same purposes.

Issued: August 19, 1999

STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Generally

Public school facilities are devoted primarily to instructional programs and school-sponsored activities. Curriculum-related student organizations are an extension of the regular school program. Their function is to enhance the participants' educational experience and supplement course materials. The activities of these organizations should bear a clear relationship to the regular curriculum.

Secondary school students may organize and conduct meetings of noncurriculum-related groups. Any secondary school which permits one or more noncurriculum-related student group to meet on school premises during noninstructional time will provide equal access to any students who wish to conduct a meeting without discrimination on the basis of the religious, political, philosophical, or other content of the speech at such meetings.

Noncurriculum-related student groups may use school facilities provided that

- the group's meetings are voluntary and student-initiated;
- the group is not sponsored by the school, the government, or any government agent or employee;
- agents or employees of the school or government are present at religious meetings only in a nonparticipatory capacity;
- meetings do not materially and substantially interfere with the orderly conduct of educational activities at the school; and
- nonschool persons do not direct, conduct, control, or regularly attend activities of the group.

Meetings of Student Organizations

The principal of each school will determine the times and places which are available for the meetings of student organizations and inform the Superintendent. The principal will also develop procedures for scheduling meetings of student organizations. Meeting times will be limited to non-instructional time.

Faculty Involvement

Curriculum-related student organizations must be sponsored and supervised by one or more school faculty members and approved by the principal. Faculty sponsors will participate in the supervision and direction of all activities of the organization and will attend all meetings and activities.

Noncurriculum-related student organizations do not have a faculty sponsor. However, a member of the school's staff shall attend every meeting or activity of such organizations in a nonparticipatory capacity for purposes of general supervision. The organization is responsible for assuring the presence of a staff member for its meetings.

No school employee will be compelled to attend a meeting of any student organization if the content of such meeting is contrary to the beliefs of that school employee.

Compliance with Law and Policy

Student organizations shall not engage in any activity which is contrary to law, division policy, or school rules; which disrupts or clearly threatens to disrupt the orderly operation of the school; or which would adversely affect the health, safety or welfare of any students or staff members. Failure to comply with these provisions shall be grounds for disciplinary action.

Adopted: April 7, 1994
Revised: August 17, 1995
Revised: October 3, 1996
Revised: November 6, 1997
Revised: June 4, 1998
Revised: September 13, 2012

Legal Refs.: 20 U.S.C. § 4071.

Cross Refs.: KF Distribution of Information/Materials
KG Community Use of School Facilities

STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

1. Any group seeking to meet on school premises during non-instructional time as a student organization shall submit a written application to the principal. Applications shall be made on Division approved forms only and shall include at least the following information:
 - a. Name of the organization.
 - b. Name(s) of the faculty sponsor(s) or matter(s).
 - c. A general statement of the purposes of the organization.
 - d. A description of the qualifications for membership, if any. If students' sex is a qualification, the description shall state the reasons therefore.
 - e. A statement that the organizing students have read, understood and agree to comply with Division Policy IGDA and all applicable school guidelines and rules.
 - f. Applications for curriculum-related student organizations shall include a statement of the relation of the organization to the regular school curriculum. This shall include specific reference to classes or other elements of the educational program which the organization is intended to supplement and a description of how the organization will serve as an extension of or adjunct to the curriculum; and a description of the function of the faculty advisor in the promotion, supervision and leadership of the organization.
2. The principal shall review the application and such other information as he or she considers appropriate and shall approve or disapprove of the organization within ten (10) school days after receipt of the application. The principal's decision shall specify whether or not the student organization is approved as a curriculum-related student organization. The principal's decision shall be in writing, and a copy shall be given to the applicant. If the application is disapproved, the principal shall state the reasons for disapproval in the decision.
3. The applicant may appeal the principal's decision to the Superintendent of Schools, or his designee, by written appeal submitted to the Superintendent within five (5) school days after receipt of the principal's decision. The written appeal shall state the reasons for the appeal and shall enclose copies of the application and the principal's decision. The Superintendent, or his designee, shall review the appeal and such other information as he considers appropriate and give a written decision within ten (10) school days after receipt of the appeal.
4. The applicant may appeal the decision of the Superintendent, or his designee, to the Board of Education by written appeal submitted to the Secretary of the Board within five (5) school days after receipt of such decision. The written appeal shall state the reasons for the appeal and shall enclose a copy of the application, the appeal to the

Superintendent and all prior decisions. The board shall review the appeal and such other information as it considers appropriate and shall notify the applicant of the date and time at which it will meet to render a decision. At the meeting, the board shall enter its order affirming or reversing the decision of the Superintendent. The decision of the board shall be final.

5. The principal may revoke approval of any student organization at any time upon his or her own initiative or on complaint by any student or staff member for good cause. Revocation may be appealed to the Superintendent, or his designee, and the board as provided hereinabove.
6. At any time, the Superintendent or the board may, on his or its own initiative, review the approval of any student organization and revoke the same for good cause. Any such action by the Superintendent may be appealed to the board as provided hereinabove.

Issued: April 7, 1994

INTERSCHOLASTIC COMPETITION

A. Athletic Competition

The board approves of a board program of interscholastic athletics for students eligible under the rules of the Virginia High School League. The board endorses the VHSL and agrees to abide by its standards and rules.

The athletic programs shall be financed by income from community support and such supplemental funds as may be authorized by the board. The primary consideration in all decisions regarding the support of student athletics shall be the safety, health and welfare of the students.

B. Other Interscholastic Competition

All other competition between secondary schools governed by the Virginia High School League shall be conducted in accordance with its rules. The board encourages this type of competition and will support it within the financial limits of the budget.

Adopted: April 7, 1994

Legal Ref.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, Secs. 22.1-78, 22.1-176(B), 22.1-276.1

INTERSCHOLASTIC COMPETITION

Athletic Competition

A. Eligibility

To be eligible to participate in interscholastic athletics, a student must meet the regulations of the Amherst County School Board, the Virginia High School League, and the appropriate district. In addition, the student must:

1. Sign a VHSL statement of eligibility
2. Submit a VHSL parental consent form signed by a parent or guardian
3. Be covered with school accident insurance, football insurance or insurance satisfactory to the parents or guardian as required by VHSL regulations.
4. Submit a VHSL certificate signed by a physician stating that the student is physically able to compete in the sport.

A student must be in school the day of the game in order to participate in the game (exceptions include death in family, appearance in court and such other circumstances as the principal may approve).

B. Elementary Schools

Each school shall prohibit as a part of the school program competitive sports of a varsity nature, those having scheduled league games and a championship.

Adopted: April 7, 1994

ADULT EDUCATION

Adult education programs are offered to those residents of the school division over the age of compulsory school attendance who are not enrolled in the regular public school program, including adult basic education, credit programs, cultural adult education, external diploma programs, general adult education, and high school equivalency programs, and who are functioning below the high school completion level. The School Board seeks to ensure that every individual participating in such a program has the opportunity to earn a high school diploma or pass a high school equivalency examination approved by the Board of Education. Such programs may be conducted solely by the School Board or through a collaborative arrangement between the School Board and other school boards or agencies. Credits and diplomas are awarded in accordance with regulations established by the Board of Education. Additional educational programs for individuals over the age of compulsory attendance also may be offered. Tuition and fees are established by the School Board.

Adopted: April 7, 1994
 Revised: November 3, 1994
 Revised: October 3, 1996
 Revised: August 19, 1999
 Revised: August 12, 2004
 Revised: May 18, 2006
 Revised: April 10, 2014
 Revised: October 9, 2014
 Revised: July 12, 2018

Legal Refs.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 22.1-210, 22.1-223, 22.1-225, 22.1-253.13:1, 22.1-253.13:4.

8 VAC 20-30-20.

Cross Refs.: JEA Compulsory Attendance
 JEG Exclusions and Exemptions from School Attendance
 JN Student Fines, Fees and Charges
 IKF The Virginia Assessment Program and Graduation Requirements

GROUPING FOR INSTRUCTION

The Amherst County School Board recognizes the different educational needs of students and endorses the use of flexible assignment of students for instruction.

The grouping of students within individual schools for instructional purposes will be designed so each student will receive the maximum instructional benefit and will be based on

1. the best interests of the student,
2. the educational level, or achievement level, of the student,
3. the availability of space,
4. the best educational climate for learning,
5. the student's best chance for success,
6. Standards of Learning test scores, where available, or other standardized test scores, and
7. the creation of groups that may be taught effectively.

Grouping will remain flexible in order to take advantage of the best educational research currently available. Groups will be created, modified, or disbanded to be responsive to student needs.

Adopted: April 7, 1994
Revised: November 3, 1994
Revised: October 3, 1996
Revised: July 19, 2012

Legal Ref.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 22.1-70, 22.1-78.

Cross Ref.: IA Instructional Goals and Objectives

CLASS SIZE

The Amherst County School Board assigns licensed instructional personnel in a manner that produces divisionwide ratios of students in average daily membership to full-time equivalent teaching positions, excluding special education teachers, principals, assistant principals, counselors and librarians, that are not greater than the following ratios:

- 24 to one in kindergarten with no class being larger than 29 students; if the average daily membership in any kindergarten class exceeds 24 pupils, a full-time teacher's aide will be assigned to the class;
- 24 to one in grades one, two and three with no class being larger than 30 students;
- 25 to one in grades four through six with no class being larger than 35 students; and
- 24 to one in English classes in grades six through 12.

After September 30 of any school year, anytime the number of students in a class exceeds the class size limit established by this policy, the school division will notify the parent of each student in such class of such fact no later than 10 days after the date on which the class exceeded the class size limit. The notification shall state the reason that the class size exceeds the class size limit and describe the measures that the school division will take to reduce the class size to comply with this policy.

In addition, the Amherst County School Board assigns instructional personnel in a manner that produces schoolwide ratios of students in average daily memberships to full-time equivalent teaching positions of 21 to one in middle schools and high schools.

When determining the assignment of instructional and other licensed personnel for purposes of this policy, full-time students of approved virtual school programs are not included.

Adopted: September 2, 2004
Revised: September 9, 2010
Revised: September 8, 2016

Legal Ref.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, § 22.1-253.13:2.

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

The Amherst County School Board is responsible for the selection and use of instructional materials.

The superintendent or superintendent's designee creates and updates, as necessary, guidelines and procedures for the selection of instructional materials. The guidelines and procedures are designed to ensure that appropriate instructional materials are selected and provide an opportunity for the professional staff and community to participate and be informed on the selection and use of instructional materials.

Parents may inspect, on request, any instructional material used as part of their student's curriculum.

Adopted: April 7, 1994
Revised: November 3, 1994
Revised: October 3, 1996
Revised: August 22, 2002
Revised: August 28, 2008
Revised: August 13, 2009
Revised: April 10, 2014

Legal Refs.: 20 U.S.C. § 1232h.

Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, § 22.1-238.

8 VAC 20-720-160.

Cross Ref.:	IGAH	Family Life Education
	IIAA	Textbook Adoption, Selection and Purchase
	IIAB	Supplementary Materials Selection and Adoption
	KLB	Public Complaints About Learning Resources
	INB	Teaching About Controversial Issues

TEXTBOOK SELECTION, ADOPTION AND PURCHASE

Selection of Textbooks

The School Board may adopt textbooks, including print or electronic media, for student use that serve as the primary curriculum basis for a grade-level subject or course from the list of textbooks approved by the Board of Education. The School Board may also adopt books which are not on the state-adopted list in accordance with the Board of Education regulations.

In approving textbooks, the School Board⁴

- appoints evaluation committees to review and evaluate textbooks,
- gives notice to parents that textbooks under consideration will be listed on the division's website and made available at designated locations for review by any interested citizens,
- creates opportunities for persons reviewing such textbooks to present their comments and observations to the School Board,
- creates procedures to ensure appropriate consideration of citizen comments and observations and
- establishes and makes known selection criteria.

Textbooks Approved by the Board of Education

The Amherst County School Board may either enter into written term contracts or issue purchase orders with publishers of textbooks approved by the Board of Education. Such written contracts or purchase orders are exempt from the Virginia Public Procurement Act (Va. Code § 2.2-4300 et seq.) The contract price shall not exceed the lowest wholesale price at which the textbook or textbooks involved in the contract are currently bid under contract anywhere in the United States. If, subsequent to the date of any contract entered into by the School Board, the prices of textbooks named in the contract are reduced or the terms of the contract are made more favorable to purchase anywhere in the United States or a special or other edition of any book named in the contract is sold outside of Virginia at a lower price than contracted in Virginia, the publisher shall grant the same reduction or terms to the School Board and give the School Board the option of using such special or other edition adapted for use in Virginia and at the lowest price at which such special edition is sold elsewhere and the contract shall so state.

Contracts and purchase orders with publishers of textbooks approved by the Board of Education shall require the publisher to furnish an electronic file of the textbook in the National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standards (NIMAS) format that will then be deposited in the National Instructional Materials Access Center (NIMAC) from which accessible versions of the

⁴ School boards are required to include the listed procedures. If a school board includes additional procedures, they should be added to this list.

particular textbook may be produced for students with print disabilities, as defined in 20 U.S.C. § 1474. Publishers shall deliver the NIMAS file of the textbook on or before the date of delivery of the regular text version.

Contracts and purchase orders with publishers of textbooks approved by the Board of Education for use in grades 6-12 shall allow for the purchase of printed textbooks, printed textbooks with electronic files, or electronic textbooks separate and apart from printed versions of the same textbook. The School Board may purchase an assortment of textbooks in any of the three forms listed above.

The School Board shall order directly from the respective publishers the textbooks needed to supply the public schools in the school division. The publishers shall ship the textbooks to the School Board. The purchase price of such textbooks shall be paid directly to the publishers by the School Board.

Locally-Approved Textbooks

In approving textbooks that have not been approved by the Board of Education, the School Board will also include a correlation of the content to the Virginia Standards of Learning in the content area and an analysis of strengths and weaknesses of the textbook in terms of instructional planning and support when the textbooks pertain to Virginia Standards of Learning subjects.

The publishers of such textbooks shall

- provide the School Board with certification that the content of the textbook is accurate and
- sign an agreement with the School Board to correct all factual and editing errors found at its own expense.

The purchase of textbooks other than those approved by the Board of Education is not exempt from the Virginia Public Procurement Act.

Adopted: April 7, 1994
Revised: October 3, 1996
Revised: August 22, 2002
Revised: August 28, 2008
Revised: August 13, 2009
Revised: September 9, 2010
Revised: April 10, 2014
Revised: March 24, 2016

Legal Refs.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 22.1-238, 22.1-241.

8 VAC 20-720-170.

Cross Refs.:	DJF	Purchasing Procedures
	IIA	Instructional Materials
	KQ	Commercial, Promotional, and Corporate Sponsorships and Partnerships

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS SELECTION AND ADOPTION

Materials used by students under the guidance of teachers to extend, expand, and supplement basal materials constitute an integral part of the instructional program. Supplemental materials are those items which are used to assist the teaching and learning process and include such items as magazines, newspapers, charts, pictures, certain workbooks, kits, videos, film strips, and games. Materials selected for supplemental use must relate directly to the established objectives of the course or content area in which they are used.

The School Board delegates the responsibility for the selection and use of supplemental materials to the individual schools. Teachers must carefully review materials prior to use and exercise a high degree of professional judgment in their selection and use of supplemental materials to ensure that the use of such materials serves to both support and complement the basic educational objectives within the specific subject areas and classrooms.

Adopted: April 7, 1994
Revised: November 3, 1994
Revised: October 3, 1996
Revised: August 22, 2002
Revised: August 28, 2008
Revised: April 10, 2014

Legal Ref.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 22.1-78, 22.1-238.

8 VAC 20-720-160.

Cross Refs.: IIA Instructional Materials
IIAA Textbook Selection, Adoption and Purchase
KLB Public Complaints About Learning Resources
KQ Commercial, Promotional, and Corporate Sponsorships and Partnerships

INNOVATIVE OR EXPERIMENTAL PROGRAMS

Experimental and innovative programs that are not consistent with accreditation standards or other regulations promulgated by the Board of Education are submitted to the Board of Education for approval prior to implementation.

Adopted: April 7, 1994
Revised: November 3, 1994
Revised: October 3, 1996
Revised: June 4, 1998
Revised: July 19, 2012
Revised: April 12, 2018

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

8 VAC 20-131-420.

Cross Ref.: IKF The Virginia Assessment Program and Graduation
Requirements

SCHOOL LIBRARIES/MEDIA CENTERS

Each school shall maintain an organized library media center as the resource center of the school and provide a unified program of media services and activities for students and teachers before, during and after school. The library media center shall contain hard copy, electronic technological resources, materials, and equipment that are sufficient to meet research, inquiry, and reading requirements of the instructional program and general student interest.

Each school provides a variety of materials, resources and equipment to support the instructional program.

Adopted: April 7, 1994
Revised: October 3, 1996
Revised: August 22, 2002
Revised: June 20, 2013
Revised: April 12, 2018

Legal Ref.: 8 VAC 20-131-190.

DIVISION TECHNOLOGY SYSTEM

The Board is committed to the development and establishment of a quality, equitable, and cost effective division-wide technology system. The purpose of the system shall be the advancement and promotion of learning and teaching.

I. TECHNOLOGY PLAN

The Board recognizes that careful planning is essential to ensure the successful, equitable and cost-effective implementation of technology-based materials, equipment, and networks. Given the need for planning the Superintendent or designee shall develop a plan to address the short- and long-term technology needs of the division and provide for compatibility of resources among school sites, division offices, and other division operations. In creating this plan the Superintendent or designee shall examine and compare the costs and benefits of various resources and shall identify the blend of technologies and level of service necessary to support the instructional program.

The Superintendent or designee may appoint a technology committee to assist with the above investigations and determinations, and may employ a technology consultant to aid in development of the division's system.

II. SYSTEM USE

The Superintendent shall establish administrative regulations for the use of the division's system.

Failure to abide by division policy and administrative regulations governing use of the division's system may result in the suspension and/or revocation of system access. Additionally, student violations may result in discipline up to and including expulsion. Staff violations may also result in discipline up to and including dismissal. Fees, fines or other charges may also be imposed.

Adopted: August 21, 1997

ACCEPTABLE USE OF TECHNOLOGY

Internet and computer network and non-network access is available to authorized students, teachers and other staff in the Amherst County Public Schools. The goal of the Amherst County Public Schools in providing this service is to promote educational excellence by facilitating resource sharing, innovation and telecommunications as outlined in this policy and applicable regulations.

With the access to world-wide resources made possible through technology comes the availability of material that may not be considered of educational value in a school setting. All reasonable precautions are to be taken by teachers and other staff to restrict access to educationally inappropriate materials.

Use or transmission of any material in violation of any United States or state law is strictly prohibited. Also prohibited are the use or transmission of the following: material protected by federal or state intellectual property laws; copyrighted material; threatening, harassing or obscene material; and/or pornographic material. In addition, it shall be prohibited to access, attempt to access, use, or attempt to use the Internet, or other computer network or non-network facilities, for any other unauthorized purposes, including but not limited to commercial activities, introduction of viruses, manipulation or corruption of systems, files and other related resources.

Use of the Amherst County Public Schools' internet and computer facilities is a privilege, not a right. Inappropriate use by students will result in an immediate termination of access and other privileges relating to use, and may also result in disciplinary action up to and including suspension or expulsion, as well as, potential civil or criminal liability and prosecution. Inappropriate use by staff will result in an immediate termination of access and other privileges relating to use, and may also result in disciplinary action up to and including formal reprimand, suspension or dismissal, as well as, potential civil or criminal liability and prosecution.

Before using the Internet and computer facilities, students, teachers and staff shall meet with the building principal or designee, or other appropriate staff member to review this policy, learn about appropriate use of Internet and computer resources and become familiar with the protocols of using the Internet and computer facilities. In addition, students and/or their parents or other legal guardians shall, prior to the beginning of the school year or as soon as practical, receive and sign an acknowledgment of this Policy and return same to the appropriate individual school(s).

ACCEPTABLE USE OF TECHNOLOGY

Use of Electronic Telecommunications

Through the Internet, students in the Amherst County Public Schools have access to a variety of resources, including:

1. World-wide electronic mail.
2. Library catalogs from around the world, including the Library of Congress.
3. "Virginia's PEN", Virginia's On-line Public Education Network.
4. The World-Wide Web, a collection of Internet Resources.

Liability

1. The Amherst County Public Schools will not guarantee the availability of access to the Internet and will not be responsible for any information that may be lost, damaged, or unavailable due to technical or other difficulties.
2. The Amherst County Public Schools will not guarantee the accuracy and quality of information obtained through the Internet nor can information sent or received be assured to be private.
3. The Amherst County Public Schools cannot control or censor all illegal, defamatory, or potentially offensive materials which may be available to the user on systems accessible through the Amherst County Public Schools.

Responsibilities of School Staff

1. As in any classroom situation, the teacher is responsible for making Internet use appropriate to the learning activity.
2. Internet access will be protected by "staff only" passwords with a staff member present.
3. Staff members assigning or permitting Internet use will provide or arrange for instructions in acceptable use of the Internet. Topics to be addressed include:

- a. Content of the Amherst County Acceptable Use of Technology Policy and Acceptable Use of Technology Regulation
 - b. Generally accepted rules of network etiquette
 - c. Copyright issues
 - d. Privacy issues
 - e. Safety guidelines on the Internet
 - f. Respect for time and resource use
 - g. Making appropriate judgments about locating and using information which matches the learner's instructional level and the learning objectives of the assignment.
 - h. Discriminating among types of information sources and assessing the appropriateness of using the Internet as a resource for a specific learning activity.
4. All Virginia's PEN activities are subject to the terms outlined in Virginia's PEN Acceptable Use Policy in addition to those indicated in this policy. As indicated in Virginia's PEN Acceptable Use Policy, a standard Virginia's PEN account shall only be used by the person to whom the account was issued. Class accounts may be used by students under the direct supervision of the person to whom the account was issued.

Student Responsibilities

1. Students will access the Internet with hardware and software owned by the Amherst County Public Schools and under the direct supervision of a staff member, unless the student is utilizing hardware and software provided by a Virginia school division that has an established Memorandum of Understanding for educational services with Amherst County Public Schools.
2. The student is responsible for using the school access provided in an ethical, responsible, and legal manner for school-related tasks only. All other division and school codes of conduct apply.
3. The following rules apply for all student access to and use of the Internet and computer facilities:
 - a. The Internet will be used in Amherst County Public Schools for school related activities only.

- b. Students are responsible for their actions on school computer networks and any other network accessed through the school network just as they are in any school setting.
- c. Students will use appropriate language and follow all applicable codes of conduct.
- d. The school division reserves the right to review the content of all computer accounts and files. Network administrators may review files and communications to keep the network working properly and to ensure that users are using the system responsibly. Users should not expect that files will be private.
- e. Using or importing (transferring in) offensive, obscene, libelous, disruptive, or inflammatory language, pictures, or other material on any computer or network within Amherst County Public Schools is prohibited.
- f. Users will comply with the acceptable use contract they have signed.
- g. Students shall not respond to but will immediately report to the supervising teacher any type of harassment encountered on the Internet.
- h. Students with access to personal on-line accounts, such as America On-line, CompuServe, etc., may not access these accounts using Amherst County Public Schools' software or equipment. No student may use Amherst County Public Schools' software or equipment to access any service for which there is a fee, to conduct any purchase or to participate in any other commercial activity.
- i. For safety reasons, students shall not reveal home phone numbers, addresses, or other personal information. Messages shall be signed using only a first name and last initial. Electronic messages shall be transmitted via the Internet with direct teacher supervision using an appropriate electronic mail account.
- j. Students will respect the privacy of e-mail and will not re-post communications without consent of the sending party.
- k. Students will use the Internet for legal activities only. Illegal activities include, but are not limited to: knowingly spreading viruses, violating copyright laws, using unauthorized software, impersonating another user, unauthorized entry, and/or destruction of computer systems and files.
- l. Students will use the network in such a way that use of the network by other users is not disrupted. Network users shall be expected to respect all forms of password protection and use responsible file management techniques (saving, deleting, naming, etc.).

- m. Students may not participate in any form of on-line "chain letters" or the like, including unmoderated surveying of mailing lists or user groups.

Unacceptable Uses - Consequences of Unacceptable Use

The use of the Internet is a privilege, not a right. Misuse of Internet access or a violation of this regulation may result in the account or the individual's access privilege being denied, revoked, or suspended. Misuse may subject students to disciplinary action up to and including suspension and expulsion. Misuse may also subject staff to disciplinary action up to and including formal reprimand, suspension, or dismissal. In addition, any illegal activities will be reported to the appropriate agencies.

1. Endangering Personal Safety

- * Students shall not post personal contact information about themselves or other people. Personal contact information includes name, addresses, telephone, school address, work address, etc.
- * Students shall not agree to meet with anyone met on-line.
- * Students shall promptly disclose to a teacher any message that the student feels is inappropriate or that makes the student uncomfortable.

2. Illegal Activities

- * Students shall not attempt to gain unauthorized access to any computer system or go beyond personal authorized access. This includes logging into the system through another person's account or accessing another person's file.
- * Students shall not make deliberate attempts to disrupt the computer system or destroy data by spreading computer viruses or by any other means.
- * Students shall not use the system to engage in any illegal act, such as arranging for a drug sale, purchasing alcohol, threatening another person etc.

3. System Security Violations

- * Students are responsible for their individual accounts and should take all reasonable precautions to prevent others from using their account. Under no conditions should students reveal their passwords to another person.

- * Students shall notify a teacher of any possible security problems with the system. Students shall follow computer virus protection procedures when downloading software.

4. Inappropriate Communication

- * Restrictions against inappropriate language apply to public messages, private messages, and material posted on Web pages.
- * Students shall not use obscene, profane, lewd, inflammatory, threatening, disrespectful, or other inappropriate language in communication.
- * Students shall not engage in personal attacks, including prejudicial or discriminatory attacks.
- * Students shall not harass another person. Harassment includes persistently acting in a manner that annoys another person.
- * Students shall not knowingly post false or defamatory information about a person or organization.

5. Privacy Violations

- * Students shall not re-post a message that was sent privately to them without permission from the person who originally sent the message.
- * Students shall not post private information about another person.

6. Resource Limit Violations

- * Students shall not download files without permission.
- * Students shall not post chain letters or send a message to large numbers of people.
- * Students shall frequently check their e-mail and delete unwanted messages promptly.

7. Plagiarism and Copyright Infringement

- * Students shall not plagiarize works found on the Internet. Plagiarism is taking the ideas or writing of others and presenting them as if they were one's own.

- * Students shall respect the rights of copyright owners. If a student is unsure whether a work is copyrighted or whether you may reproduce a certain work, that student shall ask a teacher before using the work.

8. Inappropriate Access to Material

- * Students shall not use the system to access material that is profane or obscene (pornography), that advocates illegal acts, or that advocates violence or discrimination towards other people (hate literature).
- * Students shall follow the teacher's instructions regarding any further material inappropriate for their access.

Violation of the above rules may result in a loss of access as well as other disciplinary or legal action.

Adopted: August 21, 1997
Revised: August 25, 2015

Legal Ref.: The Communications Decency Act of 1995, 47 u.s. c. 201 *et seq.*

ACCEPTABLE COMPUTER SYSTEM USE

The School Board provides a computer system, including the internet, to promote educational excellence by facilitating resource sharing, innovation and communication. The term computer system includes, but is not limited to, hardware, software, data, communication lines and devices, terminals, printers, CD-ROM devices, tape or flash drives, servers, mainframe and personal computers, tablets, cellular phones, smart telephones, the internet and other internal or external networks.

All use of the Division's computer system must be (1) in support of education and/or research, or (2) for legitimate school business. Use of the computer system is a privilege, not a right. Any communication or material generated using the computer system, including electronic mail, instant or text messages, tweets, or other files deleted from a user's account, may be monitored, read, and/or archived by school officials.

The Division Superintendent shall establish administrative procedures, for the School Board's approval, containing the appropriate uses, ethics and protocol for the computer system.

The procedures shall include:

- (1) a prohibition against use by Division employees and students of the division's computer equipment and communications services for sending, receiving, viewing or downloading illegal material via the internet;
- (2) provisions, including the selection and operation of a technology protection measure for the division's computers having Internet access to filter or block Internet access through such computers, that seek to prevent access to:
 - (a) child pornography as set out in Va. Code § 18.2-374.1:1 or as defined in 18 U.S.C. § 2256;
 - (b) obscenity as defined by Va. Code § 18.2-372 or 18 U.S.C. § 1460; and
 - (c) material that the school division deems to be harmful to juveniles as defined in Va. Code § 18.2-390, material that is harmful to minors as defined in 47 U.S.C. § 254(h)(7)(G), and material that is otherwise inappropriate for minors;
- (3) provisions establishing that the technology protection measure is enforced during any use of the Division's computers;
- (4) provisions establishing that all usage of the computer system may be monitored;

- (5) provisions designed to educate students and employees about appropriate online behavior, including interacting with students and other individuals on social networking websites, blogs, in chat rooms, and cyber bullying awareness and response;
- (6) provisions designed to prevent unauthorized online access by minors, including “hacking” and other unlawful online activities.;
- (7) provisions prohibiting the unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of photographs and/or personal information of or regarding minors; and
- (8) a component of internet safety for students that is integrated in the Division’s instructional program.

Use of the School Division’s computer system shall be consistent with the educational or instructional mission or administrative function of the Division as well as the varied instructional needs, learning styles, abilities and developmental levels of students.

The Division’s computer system is not a public forum.

Each teacher, administrator, student and parent/guardian of each student shall sign the Acceptable Computer System Use Agreement, GAB-E1/IIBEA-E2, before using the Division’s computer system. The failure of any student, teacher or administrator to follow the terms of the Agreement, this policy or accompanying regulation may result in loss of computer system privileges, disciplinary action, and/or appropriate legal action.

The School Board is not responsible for any information that may be lost, damaged or unavailable when using the computer system or for any information retrieved via the Internet. Furthermore, the School Board will not be responsible for any unauthorized charges or fees resulting from access to the computer system.

The School Board will review, amend if necessary, and approve this policy every two years.

Adopted: August 21, 1997
Revised: August 19, 1999
Revised: August 16, 2001
Revised: October 18, 2001
Revised: May 5, 2005
Revised: August 17, 2006
Revised: September 21, 2006
Revised: August 13, 2009
Revised: September 9, 2010
Revised: July 25, 2013

Legal Refs: 18 U.S.C. §§ 1460, 2256.
47 U.S.C. § 254.
Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 18.2-372, 18.2-374.1:1, 18.2-390, 22.1-70.2, and 22.1-78.

Cross Refs.: GCPD Professional Staff Discipline
JFC Student Conduct
JFC-R Standards of Student Conduct

ACCEPTABLE COMPUTER SYSTEM USE

All use of the Amherst County School Division's computer system shall be consistent with the School Board's goal of promoting educational excellence by facilitating resource sharing, innovation and communication. The term computer system includes, but is not limited to, hardware, software, data, communication lines and devices, terminals, printers, CD-ROM devices, tape or flash drives, servers, mainframe and personal computers, tablets, cellular phones, smart phones, the internet and any other internal or external network.

Computer System Use-Terms and Conditions:

1. **Acceptable Use.** Access to the Division's computer system shall be (1) for the purposes of education or research and be consistent with the educational objectives of the Division or (2) for legitimate school business.
2. **Privilege.** The use of the Division's computer system is a privilege, not a right.
3. **Unacceptable Use.** Each user is responsible for his or her actions on the computer system. Prohibited conduct includes but is not limited to:
 - using the network for any illegal or unauthorized activity, including violation of copyright or contracts, or transmitting any material in violation of any federal, state, or local law.
 - sending, receiving, viewing or downloading illegal material via the computer system.
 - unauthorized downloading of software.
 - using the computer system for private financial or commercial purposes.
 - wastefully using resources, such as file space.
 - gaining unauthorized access to resources or entities.
 - posting material created by another without his or her consent.
 - submitting, posting, publishing, or displaying any obscene, profane, threatening, illegal, or other inappropriate material.
 - using the computer system while access privileges are suspended or revoked.
 - vandalizing the computer system, including destroying data by creating or spreading viruses or by other means.
 - intimidating, harassing, bullying, or coercing others.
 - threatening illegal or immoral acts.
4. **Network Etiquette.** Each user is expected to abide by generally accepted rules of etiquette, including the following:
 - be polite.
 - users shall not forge, intercept or interfere with electronic mail messages.
 - use appropriate language. The use of obscene, lewd, profane, lascivious, threatening or disrespectful language is prohibited.

- users shall not post personal information other than directory information as defined in Policy JO Student Records about themselves or others.
 - users shall respect the computer system's resource limits.
 - users shall not post chain letters or download large files.
 - users shall not use the computer system to disrupt others.
 - users shall not modify or delete data owned by others.
5. **Liability.** The School Board makes no warranties for the computer system it provides. The School Board shall not be responsible for any damages to the user from use of the computer system, including loss of data, non-delivery or missed delivery of information, or service interruptions. The School Division denies any responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through the computer system. The user agrees to indemnify the School Board for any losses, costs, or damages incurred by the School Board relating to or arising out of any violation of these procedures.
 6. **Security.** Computer system security is a high priority for the school division. If any user identifies a security problem, the user shall notify the building principal or system administrator immediately. All users shall keep their passwords confidential and shall follow computer virus protection procedures.
 7. **Vandalism.** Intentional destruction of or interference with any part of the computer system through creating or downloading computer viruses or by any other means is prohibited.
 8. **Charges.** The School Division assumes no responsibility for any unauthorized charges or fees as a result of using the computer system, including telephone, **data**, or long-distance charges.
 9. **Electronic Mail.** The School Division's electronic mail system is owned and controlled by the School Division. The School Division may provide electronic mail to aid students and staff in fulfilling their duties and as an education tool. Electronic mail is not private. Students' electronic mail will be monitored. The electronic mail of staff may be monitored and accessed by the School Division. All electronic mail may be archived. Unauthorized access to an electronic mail account by any student or employee is prohibited. Users may be held responsible and personally liable for the content of any electronic message they create or that is created under their account or password. Downloading any file attached to an electronic message is prohibited unless the user is certain of that message's authenticity and the nature of the file.

10. **Enforcement.** Software will be installed on the division's computers having Internet access to filter or block internet access through such computers to child pornography and obscenity. The online activities of users may also be monitored manually. **Any violation of these regulations shall result in loss of computer system privileges and may also result in appropriate disciplinary action, as determined by School Board policy, or legal action.**

Adopted: August 19, 1999

Revised: August 16, 2001

Revised: October 18, 2001

Revised: May 5, 2005

Revised: August 18, 2005

Revised: September 6, 2007

Revised: August 13, 2009

Revised: July 25, 2013

Legal Refs: 18 U.S.C. §§ 1460, 2256.
47 U.S.C. § 254.

Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 18.2-372, 18.2-374.1:1, 18.2-390, 22.1-70.2 and 22.1-78.

Guidelines and Resources for Internet Safety in Schools, Virginia Department of Education (Second Edition October 2007)

Cross Refs: GCPD Professional Staff Discipline
JFC Student Conduct
JFC-R Standards of Student Conduct

SAMPLE LETTER TO PARENTS:
ACCEPTABLE COMPUTER SYSTEM USE

Dear Parent/Guardian:

The Amherst County School Board offers your student the use of electronic communications through the Amherst County School Division's computer system. Your student will be able to communicate with other schools, colleges, organizations and individuals around the world through the internet and other electronic information systems/networks.

Part of the School Division's responsibility in preparing students for the 21st century is to provide them access to the tools they will be using as adults. The internet will be one of these tools. Through the Division's computer system your student will have access to databases, libraries and computer services from all over the world. We accept the responsibility of teaching your student about his/her role as a "network" citizen and the code of ethics involved with this new community.

With this educational opportunity also comes responsibility on the part of your student. It is important that you and your student read the enclosed division policy, administrative regulation and agreement form and discuss these requirements. The Division takes precautions to prevent access to inappropriate material. However, it is impossible to control access to all material and a user may access inappropriate material.

In order for your student to take advantage of this educational opportunity, your authorization is needed. Attached to this letter are the Acceptable Computer System Use Policy GAB/IIBEA and Regulation GAB-R/IIBEA-R and the Acceptable Computer System Use Agreement GAB-E/IIBEA-E2 which both you and your student must sign before your child may use the computer system. Please review these materials carefully with your student before signing the required agreement.

Sincerely,

ACCEPTABLE COMPUTER SYSTEM USE AGREEMENT

Each employee must sign this Agreement as a condition for using the School Division's computer system. Each student and his or her parent/guardian must sign this Agreement before being permitted to use the School Division's computer system. Read this Agreement carefully before signing.

Prior to signing this Agreement, read Policy GAB/IIBEA and Regulation GAB-R/IIBEA-R, Acceptable Computer System Use. If you have any questions about this policy or regulation, contact your supervisor or your student's principal.

I understand and agree to abide by the School Division's Acceptable Computer System Use Policy and Regulation. I understand that the School Division may access, monitor, and archive my use of the computer system, including my use of the internet, e-mail and downloaded material, without prior notice to me. I further understand that should I violate the Acceptable Use Policy or Regulation, my computer system privileges may be revoked and disciplinary action and/or legal action may be taken against me.

Student/Employee Signature _____ Date _____

I have read this Agreement and Policy GAB/IIBEA and Regulation GAB-R/IIBEA-R. I understand that access to the computer system is intended for educational purposes and the Amherst County School Division has taken precautions to eliminate inappropriate material. I also recognize, however, that it is impossible for the School Division to restrict access to all inappropriate material and I will not hold the School Division responsible for information acquired on the computer system. I have discussed the terms of this agreement, policy, and regulation with my student.

I grant permission for my student to use the computer system in accordance with BLANK School Division's policies and regulations and for the School Division to issue an account for my student.

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ Date _____

Parent/Guardian Name _____
(Please Print)

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are off-campus instructional activities. Field trips can provide excellent educational experiences for students by enriching the curriculum and by making classroom learning experiences more meaningful. To be educationally beneficial, a field trip requires thoughtful selection, careful advance preparation, and opportunities to assimilate the experience during and after the trip. Teachers will plan advance activities that prepare students for the trip and follow-up activities that assist students in summarizing, applying, and evaluating information learned on the trip.

The following factors should be considered in proposing and approving field trips:

- The value of the trip to the particular class
- The relationship of the field trip to a particular aspect of the curriculum
- The distance traveled
- The time away from the regular instructional program
- The availability of transportation

No student will be denied the opportunity to participate in a field trip because of a lack of funds.

Trips will be approved by the superintendent or designee pursuant to regulations developed by the superintendent. Approval must be obtained before commitments are made to students, parents, or commercial establishments. The superintendent will make an annual report to the School Board on field trips taken.

Trips for activities governed by the Virginia High School League do not require approval on a trip-by-trip basis. Parental permission for such trips may be obtained for the entire athletic season or school year.

The Amherst County School Board does not endorse or accept responsibility for any privately sponsored trips for students or any student trips which are not part of the instructional program. Employees are not permitted to solicit students for such trips. Employees who are involved with such trips must emphasize to any interested student/parent that such trips are strictly private enterprises.

Adopted: April 7, 1994
Revised: November 3, 1994
Revised: July 19, 2012

Legal Ref.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 22.1-70, 22.1-78, 22.1-176.

Cross Ref.: JFCB Sportsmanship, Ethics and Integrity

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips may be taken provided that:

1. All school-sponsored trips must be approved by the Superintendent or designee.
2. Requests for use of school buses for school-sponsored trips must be made at least fourteen (14) days in advance of the departure date.
3. When a school-owned bus is used for approved field trips, there shall be no fees for transportation.
4. Chartered buses may be engaged when:
 - a. School-owned buses are not available.
 - b. The length of the trip requires them for safety and comfort.
 - c. The Superintendent decides that chartered buses can best fulfill the requirements.
5. Private cars may be used to transport students on field trips only with prior approval of the Superintendent. In such cases the owner of the vehicle will assume responsibility and provide assurances that all insurance requirements have been met. County-owned cars will be used when available. Vans or vehicles classified as such may not be used to transport students.
6. Permission forms signed by parent or guardian must be on file at the individual school for all field trips.
7. A minimum of one chaperone will be provided per ten students. Age of students, nature of field trip or other considerations may necessitate additional supervision.
8. Student trips out-of-state or requiring overnight accommodations must be approved in advance by the school board. Only those trips recommended by the Superintendent shall be considered.
9. No student shall be denied the privilege of going on a school-sponsored trip because of lack of funds.
10. The Board does not endorse any privately-sponsored trips that are not part of the instructional program.

11. Field trip fee schedule:
 - a. School-related organizations - \$1.25 per mile
 - b. Non school-related organizations - \$2.00 per mile
 - c. Overnight trips: Lodging & meals (\$20.00 per diem) must be provided for the school bus driver(s) by the trip sponsoring organization. When the school bus driver has to remain at the trip location, he/she will be compensated for a maximum of eight hours.

Revised: September 5, 1996

Revised: August 21, 1997

COMMUNITY RESOURCE PERSONS/SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS

The Amherst County School Board supports and encourages the active participation of parents and members of the community in providing and extending educational opportunities for children. The involvement of parents, volunteers and others in the community who can serve as a resource to schools is a fundamentally important component of successful school programs. The administration of each school will direct the activities of parents, volunteers and other community resources at the building level.

Adopted: April 7, 1994
Revised: November 3, 1994
Revised: October 3, 1996
Revised: August 16, 2001
Revised: August 22, 2002
Revised: June 20, 2013
Revised: September 14, 2017

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

8 VAC 20-131-270.

Cross Ref.: AD Educational Philosophy
IGBC Parent and Family Engagement
KA Goals for School-Community Relations
KN Sex Offender Registry Notification
KQ Commercial, Promotional, and Corporate Sponsorships and Partnerships

COMMUNITY RESOURCE PERSONS/SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS

The superintendent or designee will create appropriate procedures for screening community and parent volunteers and chaperones. Volunteering/chaperoning in the school division is a privilege, not a right. The Amherst County Schools will conduct screening and criminal background checks (including fingerprinting) before any volunteer/chaperone is placed in a position where he or she could be left alone with a student. All information collected on volunteers/chaperones will be considered confidential to the extent allowed by law and will only be used to protect the students or minimize disruption to the educational environment. The division may decline the services of any volunteer/chaperone for any reason. Volunteers/chaperones with misdemeanor convictions may be approved to volunteer/chaperone; however, their volunteer/chaperone activities may be limited. Volunteers/chaperones with felony convictions will be reviewed for approval to volunteer on a case-by-case basis. Volunteers/chaperones who are listed in the Child Abuse/Neglect Central registry with a founded disposition of child abuse/neglect will be reviewed for approval on a case-by-case basis. Individuals convicted of a sexual offense, including statutes § 18.2-370.2, 18.2-370.3 and 18.2-370.4, shall not be permitted on school property.

GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING PROGRAM

School Guidance and Counseling Services

Each school provides the following guidance and counseling services to all students:

- Academic guidance which assists students and their parents to acquire knowledge of the curricula choices available to students, to plan a program of studies, to arrange and interpret academic testing and to seek post-secondary academic opportunities.
- Career guidance which helps students to acquire information and plan action about work, jobs, apprenticeships and post-secondary educational and career opportunities.
- Personal/social counseling which assists a student to develop an understanding of themselves, the rights and needs of others, how to resolve conflict and to define individual goals, reflecting their interests, abilities and aptitudes. Information and records of personal/social counseling will be kept confidential and separate from a student's educational records and not disclosed to third parties without prior parental consent or as otherwise provided by law. Parents may elect, by notifying their child's school in writing, to have their child not participate in personal/social counseling.

No student is required to participate in any counseling program to which the student's parents object.

The guidance and counseling program does not include the use of counseling techniques which are beyond the scope of the professional certification or training of counselors, including hypnosis, or other psychotherapeutic techniques that are normally employed in medical or clinical settings and focus on mental illness or psychopathology.

Parents are notified annually about the counseling programs which are available to their children. The notification will include the purpose and general description of the programs, information regarding ways parents may review materials to be used in guidance and counseling programs at their child's school and information about the procedures by which parents may limit their child's participation in such programs.

Employment Counseling and Placement Services

The School Board provides to secondary students employment counseling and placement services to furnish information relating to the employment opportunities available to students graduating from or leaving the schools in the school division. Such information includes all types of employment opportunities, including, but not limited to, apprenticeships, the military, career education schools and the teaching profession. In providing such services, the School Board consults and cooperates with the Virginia Employment Commission, the Department of Labor and Industry, local business and labor organizations and career schools.

If the School Board provides access to one or more of its high schools and contact with such high school's student body or other contact with its high school students during a school or school division-sponsored activity to persons or groups for occupational, professional or educational recruitment, it provides equal access on the same basis to official recruiting representatives of the military forces of the Commonwealth and the United States.

Adopted: April 7, 1994
Revised: October 3, 1996
Revised: May 18, 2006
Revised: April 10, 2014
Revised: May 11, 2017
Revised: July 12, 2018

Legal Refs.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 22.1-130.1, 22.1-209.

8 VAC 20-620-10.

Cross Ref.: IGAD Career and Technical Education
IJD College and Career Readiness
JO Student Records

COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS

Each middle and secondary school provides for the early identification and enrollment of students in a program with a range of educational and academic experiences related to college and career readiness in and outside the classroom, including an emphasis on experiences that will motivate disadvantaged and minority students to prepare for a career or postsecondary education.

Each elementary, middle, and secondary school provides for the identification by all students of personal interests and abilities to support planning for postsecondary opportunities and career preparation. Such support includes provision of information concerning exploration of career cluster areas in elementary schools, and course information and planning for college preparation programs, opportunities for educational and academic experiences in and outside the classroom, including internships and work-based learning, and the multiple pathways to college and career readiness in middle and high school.

Beginning in the elementary school years, students explore the different occupations associated with career clusters and select an area or areas of interest. Students begin the development of an academic and career plan portfolio (ACPP) in elementary grades to include information about interests, values such as dependability and responsibility, and skills supporting decisions about their future interests and goals. The information contained in the ACPP serves as the foundation for creating the Academic and Career Plan (ACP) in grade 7.

In middle school, students complete a locally selected career interest inventory and select a career pathway. To support development of the ACP, students complete at least one course in career investigation selected from the career and technical education state-approved list, or a school division-provided alternative means of delivering the career investigation course content, provided that the alternative is equivalent in content and academic rigor.

The School Board may require such courses in career investigation at the high school level as it deems appropriate, subject to approval by the Board of Education. The School Board may require such courses in career investigation at the elementary school level as it deems appropriate.

All schools continue development of a personal ACP with each seventh-grade student with completion by the end of the fall semester of the student's eighth-grade year. The components of the ACP include the student's program of study for high school graduation and a postsecondary career pathway based on the student's academic and career interests. In high school, a career-related learning experience is chosen by the student and documented in the ACP.

The ACP is developed in accordance with guidelines established by the Board of Education and signed by the student, student's parent or guardian, and school official or officials designated by the principal. The ACP is included in the student's record and is reviewed and updated annually.

Beginning in the middle school years, students are counseled on opportunities for beginning postsecondary education and opportunities for obtaining industry certifications, occupational competency credentials, or professional licenses in a career and technical education field prior to high school graduation as described in Policy LEB Advanced/Alternative Courses for Credit. Such opportunities include access to at least three Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), or Cambridge courses or three college-level courses for degree credit pursuant to 8 VAC 20-131-100. Students taking advantage of such opportunities are not denied participation in school activities for which they are otherwise eligible. Wherever possible, students are encouraged and afforded opportunities to take college courses simultaneously for high school graduation and college degree credit (dual enrollment), under the following conditions:

- a. Written approval of the high school principal prior to participation in dual enrollment must be obtained;
- b. The college must accept the student for admission to the course or courses; and
- c. The course or courses must be given by the college for degree credits (no remedial courses will be accepted).

Adopted: July 12, 2018

Legal Refs.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 22.1-253.13:1, 22.1-253.13:3.

8 VAC 20-131-140.

Guidelines for Academic and Career Plans (Adopted by the Virginia Board of Education Sept 17, 2009).

Cross Ref.:	IGAD	Career and Technical Education
	IJ	Guidance and Counseling Program
	JO	Student Records
	LEB	Advanced/Alternative Courses for Credit

PARENTAL ASSISTANCE WITH INSTRUCTION

The Amherst County School Board encourages parents to provide instructional assistance to their children in the home. The school division may offer a voluntary training program to the parents of children in kindergarten through third grade to assist them in developing the skills necessary to provide effective instructional assistance to their children.

Adopted: April 7, 1994
Revised: August 21, 2003
Revised: August 12, 2004
Revised: August 28, 2008
Revised: April 10, 2014

Legal Ref.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, § 22.1-253.13:7.C.5.

Cross Ref.: IGBC Parental Involvement
IKB Homework

HOMEWORK

Homework provides an essential communication link between the school and the home. One measure of a program or course is the quality of the work done at home by the student. A strong home-school partnership, with many lasting benefits for the individual student and the student's family, can be greatly enhanced by a sound program of homework. In addition, homework should be an important tool in developing independent thought, self-direction and self-discipline. It assists the student in developing good work habits and in the wise use of time.

Guidelines for homework include:

- Homework should be assigned after introduction and thorough explanation of the skills necessary to successfully complete the assignment.
- Homework should be assigned in such a manner that it will be clearly understood by all students.
- Homework should serve a valid purpose and be closely related to classroom activities.
- A student's access to resource materials should be considered when making assignments.
- Homework should be evaluated promptly and returned to the student. Appropriate rewards should be given to those students who successfully complete assigned work. Effort and competency should be recognized and rewarded.
- Teachers should seek to determine the cause if a student regularly fails to complete assigned work. Teachers should not avoid giving homework because they believe students will not do the work.
- Excessive homework, like the absence of homework, should be avoided.
- Homework should not be used for disciplinary purposes
- Teachers and administrators should take appropriate steps to communicate with parents regarding the division's homework policy and to solicit their support.

Adopted: April 7, 1994
 Revised: November 3, 1994
 Revised: October 3, 1996
 Revised: August 22, 2002
 Revised: August 28, 2008
 Revised: April 10, 2014

Legal Ref.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, § 22.1-78.
 Cross Ref.: IB Academic Freedom
 IGBC Parental Involvement
 IKA Parental Assistance with Instruction

HOMework

I. Guidelines for Homework

- A. Purpose of
 - 1. provide academic feedback
- B. Feedback is to be
 - 1. specific
 - 2. immediate
- C. Daily Time Limit (in minutes)
 - 1. Grade level specific
 - a. K 15 minutes
 - b. 1 & 2 30 minutes
 - c. 3 & 4 45 minutes
 - d. 5 60 minutes
 - e. 6-8 90 minutes
 - f. 9-12 No established limits. However, time should be reasonable and monitored so it does not become too long.
 - 2. Daily time limits for homework are based on an average student.
- D. Assessment of
 - 1. All grade levels and subjects may have homework assigned.
 - 2. All homework, with the exceptions of grades K-2, may be graded and averaged as part of a grading-period grade, at a maximum of 10%.

II. Guidelines for Parental Instructional Assistance

- A. Parents should provide a good learning environment in the home.
 - 1. Ensure adequate study time.
 - 2. Provide an atmosphere free from disruptions.
 - 3. Supply necessary reference materials, such as a dictionary, encyclopedias, atlas and other materials.
- B. Parents should:
 - 1. encourage the student to keep a list of assignments in a notebook.
 - 2. not do the homework assignment since work is intended to benefit the student.
 - 3. encourage and support students in accomplishing homework.
- C. Parents of elementary school students may help by:
 - 1. finding books and other research materials.
 - 2. reading aloud spelling and vocabulary lists.
 - 3. checking work for neatness and completeness.
 - 4. providing books, magazines and other leisure reading materials.
 - 5. asking the child to explain a chapter from the science or social studies book or other reading assignments.
 - 6. reviewing notes for a test.
 - 7. helping students allocate time for long-term assignments.
 - 8. encouraging students to meet deadlines.

9. reading with or to the student.
- D. Role of Parents
1. Show a positive interest in homework and in school.
 2. If problems arise, students should be encouraged to ask questions or parents should call the teacher at school.
 3. Refrain from complaining to the student to avoid creating a negative attitude about the work, teacher and school.
 4. Be aware of signs that indicate study problems.
 - a. Examples:
 - i. unclear writing
 - ii. lips moving when reading
 - iii. frustration with tasks
 - iv. procrastination
 - v. weak organizational skills
 5. Help students set appropriate priorities and learn to handle their time requirements between school work and extracurricular activities.

Issued: August 22, 2002

Issued: May 15, 2003

GRADING AND STUDENT EVALUATION

Teachers shall be responsible for the grading and evaluation of student achievement.

Students shall not be penalized academically for any personal action or for any excused absence. A student's grade shall be based on achievement.

Adopted: April 7, 1994

Legal Ref.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, section 22.1-79

GRADING AND STUDENT EVALUATION

Best practices will serve as the foundation for Amherst County Public Schools' grading policy and regulations. Grades may be accessed at any time through the Parent Portal Information System. Parent Portal can be accessed online at www.amherst.k12.va.us.

The purpose of a grade is to provide feedback on academic achievement. Although the basis for a grade is academic achievement, non-achievement factors may be appropriate in the fine arts and physical education courses.

The grading scale for grades 2-12 is as follows:

Scale	Symbol	Standard	PreAP	AP*
98-100	A+	4.0	4.5	5.0
93-97	A	4.0	4.5	5.0
90-92	A-	3.7	4.2	5.0
87-89	B+	3.3	3.8	4.0
83-86	B	3.0	3.5	4.0
80-82	B-	2.7	3.2	4.0
77-79	C+	2.3	2.8	3.0
73-76	C	2.0	2.5	3.0
70-72	C-	1.7	2.2	3.0
67-69	D+	1.3	1.8	2.0
63-66	D	1.0	1.5	2.0
60-62	D-	0.7	1.2	2.0
0-59	F	0	0	0

* Students taking Advanced Placement Courses receive letter grades without a plus or minus.

Grade Book Requirements

Grading reflects the assessment of student performance to determine academic achievement. A student's grades, to most accurately reflect his or her academic achievement, must be based on multiple assessment opportunities each grading period. Teachers must enter a minimum of two grades per week, per content area, in their grade books.

Categorical weights for the same course need to be consistent at middle and high school (e.g. Spanish I, Algebra I, Earth Science, etc.). If a teacher chooses to drop the lowest grade, it cannot include the nine weeks assessment or semester exam. Reporting period, semester, and final grades are to be averaged to the nearest whole number.

Zeros

Students are expected to complete all assigned work. When not completed by the deadline established, assigned work (or alternate assignment) must be completed at another assigned time during or outside of the school day. Parents will be notified when work completion becomes a problem. The teacher will seek to determine the cause of the student's failure to complete assigned work, and will make multiple attempts to have the student complete the work. If the student's failure to turn in work is justified, it may be turned in late with an appropriate grade assigned. In this instance, partially completed work will be graded according to the amount and quality of work completed. If a student willfully refuses to complete and turn in assigned work within a reasonable timeframe, a grade of zero may be given.

Homework

Homework can provide an essential communication link between the school and the home. In addition, homework should be an important tool in developing independent thought, self-direction, and self-discipline. It can assist the student in developing good work habits and time management.

Teacher feedback is to be specific and immediate. All homework, with the exception of kindergarten and first grade, may be graded and averaged as part of a grading-period grade, **at a maximum of 10%**. When assigning homework, teachers should follow the daily time limits below:

Kindergarten	15 minutes
First and Second Grades	30 minutes
Third and Fourth Grades	45 minutes
Fifth Grade	60 minutes
Sixth-Eighth Grades	90 minutes
Ninth-Twelfth Grades	No established time limits; however, time should be reasonable so it does not become too long. Daily time limits for homework are based on an average student.

Attendance

It is the responsibility of the student to see the teacher on the day he or she returns to school to receive assignments and schedule make-up work at the teacher's convenience. All work must be completed within five school days from the return to school. When a student is absent, if a parent requests, assignments are to be available at the school by the end of the next school day. **Students are required to complete make-up work regardless of the reason for an absence.**

Amherst County High School students will receive a 59 or earned grade if grade is already below a 59 when a student has four unexcused absences during a nine weeks grading period. Students have the right to one appeal per year with the principal if failing grades are assigned due to unexcused absences.

Report Cards

Grading periods are nine weeks for all grade levels. Academic achievement will be reported as follows for kindergarten and first grade:

- S Satisfactory
- P Progressing
- N Needs Improvement

Students in grades 2-5 will receive letter grades and percentages for English, reading, spelling, mathematics, science, and social studies. Elementary art, music, and physical education teachers will report student progress as Outstanding (O), Satisfactory (S), or Not Satisfactory (N). Students in grades 6-12 will receive letter grades and percentages for all classes. All teachers will evaluate students' work habits using the following system:

- O Outstanding
- A Acceptable
- I Inconsistent
- U Unacceptable

In grades K-5, teachers will provide instructional reading levels for students as either on/above grade level or below grade level. Instructional math levels will be given for students in grades 2-5 as either on/above grade level or below grade level.

Interims

The purpose of interim reports is to provide feedback to parents on students' performance at the mid-point of all grading periods. Teachers will provide feedback on interim reports using the same grading procedures they use for report cards.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Conferences will be scheduled at the mid-point of all grading periods to coincide with the distribution of interim reports. The purpose of these conferences is to provide feedback to parents on students' performance.

Semester Exams and Nine Weeks Assessments

Semester exams will not be given, with the exception of college-credit and Advanced Placement (AP) classes. Standards of Learning (SOL) End-of-Course Test results will not be included in the course grade. Culminating activities may replace the nine weeks assessments. These activities will be more hands-on, project-like endeavors. The grade for the culminating activity or nine weeks assessment should count **no more than 15%** of the nine-week grade for any credit bearing course.

Weighted Grades

Certain courses will be weighted at a higher level than other courses. The following courses will be weighted and included on the high school transcript: Pre-Advanced Placement (Pre AP) Courses, Advanced Placement (AP) Courses, Central Virginia Community College Dual Enrollment Courses, Early College Core Courses, Lynchburg Regional Governor's STEM Academy Courses, and Central Virginia Governor's School Courses. Weighted courses will have 1.0 added to the quality point value, with the exception of Pre-Advanced Placement (Pre AP) Courses. Pre AP Courses will have 0.5 added to the quality point value.

Pre-AP and AP Grading Scale

Grades for Pre-AP Courses are based on the standard ACPS grading scale and will have the following final grade point averaging: A=4.5; B=3.5; C=2.5; D=1.5; and F=0.

Dual-enrollment courses offered through ACPS, Advanced Placement(AP) courses, and CVGS courses that may lead to college credit are graded on a 10 point scale and will be weighted with A=5; B=4; C=3; D=2; and F=0.

Secondary Academic Recognition and Graduation Ceremony Guidelines

Students with the following designations indicated in the graduation program and with tassels or cords will be made:

3.25 to less than 3.50	Graduating with Honors
3.50 to less than 4.00	Graduating with Distinction
4.00 and above	Graduating with Excellence

The valedictorian, the salutatorian, and the top ten students, along with their parents, will be recognized. The top ten students will be seated on the stage during the graduation ceremony. Students who have maintained a cumulative GPA of 4.00 and above, along with their parents, will also be recognized. Students who have maintained a cumulative GPA of 4.00 and above will be seated in the first row. Students are not ranked until the completion of their junior year.

Honor Roll

This should reflect improvement, effort, and performance. All schools will implement an honor roll recognition program. Each school has the discretion as to whether or not they conduct this recognition multiple times throughout the school year.

Golden A Certificate

For students in grades 6-12 to qualify for a Golden A Certificate, they must earn at least an overall 3.70 GPA for the year. Certificates will be presented in the fall of the following school year.

Golden A Trophy

For seniors to qualify for a Golden A Trophy, they must earn at least an overall 3.70 GPA through the end of the first semester of their senior year. Golden A Trophy candidates must have taken and successfully completed at least one weighted course to be eligible. All awards are presented during a ceremony in the spring of the senior year.

Revised: July 2016

ACCELERATION

The curriculum and schedule of elementary, middle and high schools provides flexibility in placing certain students in programs or subjects normally considered above their grade level. Scheduling eighth grade students into subjects above the normal grade level is done with counseling based on evidence of ability, past scholastic achievement and cooperation of the individual student and his parents or guardian.

When students below the ninth grade successfully complete courses offered for credit in grades 9 through 12, credit is counted toward meeting the standard units required for graduation provided the courses are equivalent in content and academic rigor as those courses offered at the secondary level. To earn a verified unit of credit for these courses, students below ninth grade level must meet the same requirements applicable to other students.

In any high school credit-bearing course taken in middle school, a parent may request that the grade be omitted from the student's transcript and the student not earn high school credit for the course. Such request shall be made in the format and by the deadline set forth in regulations developed by the superintendent

Adopted: April 7, 1994
 Revised: November 3, 1994
 Revised: October 3, 1996
 Revised: June 4, 1998
 Revised: August 22, 2002
 Revised: August 11, 2011
 Revised: August 27, 2015
 Revised: September 8, 2016
 Revised: July 12, 2018

Legal Refs.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 22.1-78. 22.1-253.13:3.

8 VAC 20-131-50.

8 VAC 20-131-51.

8 VAC 20-131-90.

Cross Ref.:	IGBB	Programs for Gifted Students
	JO	Student Records
	JOA	Student Transcripts

OMITTING GRADES FROM TRANSCRIPTS IN MIDDLE SCHOOL

In accordance with Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia, parents may request that grades be omitted from the student's transcript for any high school credit-bearing course taken in the middle school and the student not earn high school credit for the course. Such requests must be made in writing to the middle school principal no later than April 1st of the year in which the course is taken.

Prior to the grade being removed from the transcript, a conference must be held with the principal and the teacher of the course for which the grade is being omitted. The grade will be removed prior to the transcript being forwarded to the high school.

The principal of each middle school will develop procedures for informing parents and students regarding this regulation prior to the student being enrolled in the course.

Adopted: June 4, 1998

THE VIRGINIA ASSESSMENT PROGRAM AND GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Generally

The Board of Education has established educational objectives known as the Standards of Learning (SOLs), which form the core of Virginia’s educational program, and other education objectives, which together are designed to ensure the development of the skills that are necessary for success in school and in preparation for life in the years beyond.

The Amherst County School Board has developed and implemented a program of instruction that is aligned to the Standards of Learning and that meets or exceeds⁵ the requirements of the Board of Education. It awards diplomas to all secondary school students, including students who transfer from nonpublic schools or from home instruction, who meet the requirements prescribed by the Board of Education and meet such other requirements as are prescribed by the School Board and approved by the Board of Education.⁶

Amherst County School Board awards diplomas and certificates in accordance with state laws and regulations. The requirements for a student to earn a diploma and graduate from high school are those in effect when the student enters ninth grade for the first time.

Virginia Assessment Program

In third through eighth grade, where the administration of Virginia Assessment Program tests are required by the Board of Education, each student is expected to take the tests following instruction. Students who are accelerated take the test aligned with the highest grade level, following instruction in the content. No student takes more than one test in any content area in each year, except in the case of expedited retakes as provided for in 8 VAC 20-131-30. Schools use the test results in third through eighth grade as part of a set of multiple criteria for determining the promotion or retention of students.

Each student in middle and secondary school takes all applicable end-of-course SOL tests following course instruction. The superintendent certifies to the Department of Education that the division’s policy for dropping courses ensures that students’ course_schedules are not changed to avoid end-of-course SOL tests. Students who achieve a passing score on an end-of-course SOL test will be awarded a verified unit of credit in that course in accordance with 8 VAC 20-131-110. Students may earn verified credits in any courses for which end-of-course SOL tests are

⁵ Divisions which have graduation requirements which exceed the requirements of the Board of Education should include them in this policy, or in an accompanying regulation.

⁶ Divisions which do not have requirements other than those prescribed by the Board of Education should not adopt the portion of this sentence beginning with “and meet”.

available. Students are not required to take an end-of-course SOL test in an academic subject after they have earned the number of verified credits required for that academic content area for graduation unless such test is necessary in order for the school to meet federal accountability requirements. Middle and secondary schools may consider the student's end-of-course SOL test score in determining the student's final course grade.

Participation in the Virginia Assessment Program by students with disabilities is prescribed by provisions of their Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan. All students with disabilities are assessed with appropriate accommodations and alternate assessments where necessary.

Any student identified as an English Learner (EL) participates in the Virginia Assessment Program. A school-based committee convenes and makes determinations regarding the participation level of EL students in the Virginia Assessment Program. In kindergarten through eighth grade, EL students may be granted a one-time exemption from SOL testing in the areas of writing, and history and social science.

Definitions

Authentic Performance Assessment

An "Authentic Performance Assessment" is a test that complies with guidelines adopted by the Board of Education that requires students to perform a task or create a product that is typically scored using a rubric.

Standard Unit of Credit

A "standard unit of credit" or "standard credit" is a credit awarded for a course in which the student successfully completes 140 clock hours of instruction and the requirements of the course. A standard unit of credit may be awarded based on a waiver of the 140 clock hour requirement as provided in Policy IKFD Alternative Paths to Attaining Standard Units of Credit.⁷

Verified Unit of Credit

A "verified unit of credit" or "verified credit" is a credit awarded for a course in which a student earns a standard unit of credit and completes one of the following:

1. Achieves a passing score on a corresponding end-of-course SOL test.

⁷ Policy IKFD Alternative Paths to Attaining Standard Units of Credit is optional. School boards which do not adopt it should not include this sentence.

2. Achieves a passing score on an additional test, as defined in 8 VAC 20-131-5, as a part of the Virginia Assessment Program.
3. Meets the criteria for the receipt of a locally awarded verified credit when the student has not passed a corresponding SOL test.
4. Meets the criteria for the receipt of a verified credit in history and social science by demonstrating mastery of the content of the associated course on an authentic performance assessment that complies with guidelines adopted by the Board of Education.
5. Meets the criteria for the receipt of a verified credit for English (writing) by demonstrating mastery of the content of the associated course on an authentic performance assessment that complies with guidelines adopted by the Board of Education.

Students may also earn verified credits by taking alternative tests to the SOL assessment. Such tests may only be those approved by the Virginia Board of Education, and the student may earn verified credits only by achieving that score established by the Board of Education.

Virginia Assessment Program

The “Virginia Assessment Program” is a system used to evaluate student achievement that includes SOL tests and additional tests that may be approved from time to time by the Board of Education.

Adopted: April 7, 1994
Revised: May 5, 1994
Revised: August 17, 1995
Revised: October 3, 1996
Revised: January 23, 1997
Revised: January 21, 1999
Revised: August 19, 1999
Revised: January 6, 2000
Revised: August 24, 2000
Revised: January 5, 2001
Revised: May 3, 2001
Revised: August 16, 2001
Revised: August 12, 2004
Revised: August 18, 2005
Revised: May 18, 2006
Revised: September 21, 2006
Revised: August 2, 2007
Revised: September 9, 2010
Revised: June 20, 2013
Revised: October 9, 2014

Revised: March 24, 2016
Revised: September 8, 2016
Revised: April 12, 2018

Legal Ref.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 22.1-253.13:1, 22.1-253.13:4.

8 VAC 20-131-5.

8 VAC 20-131-30.

8 VAC 20-131-40.

8 VAC 20-131-50.

8 VAC 20-131-51.

8 VAC 20-131-110.

Guidelines for Graduation Requirements; Local Alternative Paths to Standard Units of Credit (Virginia Board of Education Oct. 2015).

Cross Refs.:	IAA	Notification of Learning Objectives
	IKFA	Locally Awarded Verified Credits
	IKFD	Alternative Paths to Attaining Standard Units of Credit
	IKH	Retaking SOL Assessments

LOCALLY AWARDED VERIFIED CREDITS

Generally

The Amherst County School Board awards verified credits in English, mathematics, science and history and social science in accordance with Board of Education regulations and guidance.

To be eligible to earn locally awarded verified credits, a student must

- pass the high school course and not pass the related Standards of Learning test
- take the Standards of Learning test at least twice
- score within a 375-399 scale score range on any administration of the Standards of Learning test
- demonstrate achievement in the academic content through the appeal process described below

Locally Awarded Verified Credits as Credit Accommodations

In addition to verified credits in science and history/social sciences, the School Board may also award verified credits toward a standard diploma in reading, writing and mathematics to students with disabilities as credit accommodations for the standard diploma. To be eligible for such credit accommodations, students with disabilities must meet all criteria established by Virginia law or regulation and eligibility for such credit accommodations must be established in the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 plan. There is no maximum number of locally awarded verified credits that a student with a disability may earn toward a standard diploma.

Appeal Process

The Amherst County School Board shall appoint a review panel comprised of at least three educators. Different panels may be appointed for individual schools or groups of schools.

The review panel will review information which provides evidence of the student's achievement of adequate knowledge of the Standards of Learning content. The panel will have discretion in determining the information it will consider. That information may include, but is not limited to, results of classroom assignments, divisionwide exams, course grades and additional academic assignments (e.g. papers, projects, essays or written questions) as the panel deems appropriate.

Based on the evidence it reviews, the review panel may:

- award the verified credit;
- deny the verified credit;
- suggest participation in a remedial program and retesting; or
- make additional academic assignments prior to determining whether to award the verified credit.

The decision of the review panel may be appealed to the School Board in accordance with regulations developed by the Board.

Adopted: November 7, 2002
Revised: August 21, 2003
Revised: August 12, 2004
Revised: November 30, 2006
Revised: February 8, 2007
Revised: July 25, 2013
Revised: November 14, 2013
Revised: April 10, 2014
Revised: November 12, 2015
Revised: September 8, 2016
Revised: July 12, 2018

Legal Refs.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, § 22.1-253.13:3.

8 VAC 20-131-5.

8 VAC 20-131-50.

8 VAC 20-131-110.

Guidelines for Standard Diploma Credit Accommodations for Students with Disabilities (Virginia Department of Education March 28, 2013) (attachment to Virginia Department of Education Superintendent's Memo No. 105-13 (Apr. 19, 2013)).

Additional Guidance on Credit Accommodations for Students with Disabilities July 2013 (Attachment A to Superintendent's Memo No. 191-13 issued July 26, 2013).

Guidance Document Governing Certain Provisions of the Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia 8 VAC 20-131 (as amended by the Board of Education January 13, 2011).

Revised Guidance Governing the Use of Locally-Awarded Verified Credits (Virginia Department of Education May 11, 2018) (attachment to Virginia Department of Education Superintendent's Memo No. 130-18 (May 11, 2018))

ALTERNATIVE PATHS TO ATTAINING STANDARD UNITS OF CREDIT

Students who enroll in high school as freshmen before July 1, 2018, as sophomores before July 1, 2019, as juniors before July 1, 2020 or as seniors before July 1, 2021 are required to earn standard and verified units of credit as specified in the regulations of the Board of Education. A “standard unit of credit” or “standard credit” is a credit awarded for a course in which the student successfully completes 140 clock hours of instruction and the requirements of the course. The Amherst County School Board recognizes that instruction, learning and outcomes equivalent to those achieved in 140 clock hours of instruction can be attained in a variety of ways. Therefore, the School Board waives the requirement that a student receive 140 clock hours of instruction to earn a standard unit of credit as provided below.⁸ The total number of standard credits that can be achieved via the waiver option is six⁹. Students may earn fractional credits via waiver.

Waivers are available for all secondary courses including Board of Education approved courses, Career and Technical education courses and local elective courses. Elective courses must be approved by the School Board, be explicitly described in the division’s secondary course of study and have clearly defined and publicly available learning objectives commensurate in scope and detail with state learning standards and competencies.

In order to attain a standard unit of credit by means of a waiver of the 140 clock hour requirement

- the outcomes of the work for which standard credit is awarded must be equal to progress and learning achieved in 140 clock hours of instruction;
- upon completion of the assigned work for the course, a student must have demonstrated mastery by meeting specific objectives and performance requirements of the course that match or exceed the expectations of students who have received 140 clock hours of instruction with similar standards, competencies or objectives; and
- the evidence of mastery of the pertinent content and skills for a student receiving a waiver must be fully documented, retained securely by the school division and available for review by the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) on request.

Procedures

Criteria for awarding a waiver of the 140 clock hour requirement for the course must be clear, objective and clearly communicated to the student and the student’s parents prior to a student embarking on the effort.

⁸ This policy is optional. School boards which elect not to waive the requirement that a student receive 140 clock hours of instruction to earn a standard unit of credit should not adopt this policy.

⁹ Each school board must define the number of credits that may be earned via waiver of the 140 clock hour requirement.

The consequences of standard credits achieved by waiver with regard to class rank, grade point average and extracurricular eligibility must also be clearly defined and communicated to students and parents before a student embarks on the effort.

A student must receive approval from the school principal¹⁰ before pursuing the work, task or assessment that is required to meet the waiver criteria.

Students who meet the following criteria are eligible to seek standard units of credit via waiver of the 140 clock hour requirement:¹¹

- current and prior academic performance,
- student demonstrated readiness and/or
- recommendations by school staff or other knowledgeable adults.

Miscellaneous

The superintendent will identify a process for developing accommodations for students with limited English proficiency.

Pursuit of credit by waiver by students with disabilities will be prescribed by the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan.

Students who attain credit by waiver of the 140 clock hour requirement will receive a grade for the course. The course will be graded on a pass/fail basis).

The fact that a student has received credit via waiver will not be reflected on the student's transcript.

A student who is pursuing credit via waiver is enrolled in the relevant course for purposes of determining eligibility for extracurricular activities.

¹⁰ The school board may select someone other than the principal to make these decisions. If someone else is chosen, their position title should be substituted for “principal”.

¹¹ The Board of Education Guidelines suggest that the eligibility criteria include current and prior academic performance, student demonstrated readiness and/or recommendations by school staff or other knowledgeable adults. School boards may also include alternate or additional criteria.

Waiver Pathway Options¹²

Waivers are available by three pathways.

1. Courses that award a standard credit and have less than 140 clock hours of instruction

For students attaining standard units of credit by this waiver method, the school division maintains documentation based on this policy that defines its rationale for the reduction of instructional time and substantive evidence that it provides equivalent instruction with equivalent outcomes in the reduced clock hours.

2. Independent study, work sample portfolio, demonstrated performance and locally developed or Standards of Learning assessment

Evidence of the student's learning must encompass a comprehensive assemblage of media products, artifacts, and performance that demonstrates the student has mastered academically rigorous material and meets or exceeds approved learning standards, competencies or objectives for the course.

The required content and evaluative criteria for the products must be defined prior to the advent of student work and based on the same objectives as the standard course.

The assemblage of evidence and overall process must be managed by a licensed and endorsed teacher in the area of the coursework with a series of program checkpoints throughout a specified timeline for the study. The checkpoints and timeline must be clearly articulated and communicated to the student.

The managing teacher¹³ must determine whether the work is of commensurate depth and quality as work performed in the traditional secondary classroom and meets predefined evaluative criteria communicated to the student.

The student must meet a predefined performance level on a locally-developed assessment for the coursework. This may be an oral examination, performance (e.g., recital/concert), written test or some other objective tool or process developed by the school division. Applicable Standards of Learning assessments may also be used for this purpose.

¹² Each school board may elect to permit students to attain standard units of credit via one or more of the three Waiver Pathway Options. Boards which decide to use only one or two of the Waiver Pathway Options should not adopt the sections of the policy relevant to the other Options.

¹³ The School Board may assign these responsibilities to someone other than the managing teacher.

3. Demonstrated achievement via national or international assessments

The assessment must:

- have a standardized administration;
- be determined to be valid and reliable by an external body;
- be used in other states or internationally; and
- be scored independently of the school division.

Before a waiver may be granted under this option, the division must have completed a rigorous review of the assessment, in accordance with this policy, and determined that it is aligned with the course objectives for which the waiver is being requested. The division determines a qualifying score for awarding a standard credit that equates with mastery of the course content and skills and communicates that score to the student.

The student must provide evidence to the school principal or the principal's designee through performance, product, interview and/or school staff professional judgment that the student has some command of the course content and should be allowed to demonstrate mastery-level performance for a standard credit.

The superintendent will develop a process for determining a qualifying score for awarding a standard credit that equates with mastery of the course content and skills.

A student may attempt to achieve the qualifying score one time per testing session unless the student is a senior and will then receive two times per testing session.¹⁴

If the division selects an assessment that has a monetary cost, it will ensure equitable access to this option for all students.

Appeal Process

The superintendent shall appoint a review panel comprised of at least three educators to resolve disputes regarding the attainment of standard units of credit via waivers in accordance with this policy. Different panels may be appointed for individual schools or groups of schools.

¹⁴ Each school board must determine how many times a student can attempt to achieve the qualifying score and must also specify the period of time during which the attempts may be made. In making this determination, the board should consider the requirement that the assessments must have standardized administrations.

The panel may review whether a student was properly denied permission to seek a standard unit of credit via waiver and whether a student was properly denied a standard unit of credit after having been determined to be eligible to seek the standard unit of credit via waiver

Based on the evidence it reviews, the review panel may:

- award the standard credit
- deny the standard credit
- make additional assignments prior to determining whether to award the standard credit

The decision of the review panel will be final.

Continuing Role of State Assessments

While the division may use the Standards of Learning assessments for awarding a standard credit as outlined above, the Standards of Learning assessments will continue to be used in their traditional role as determiners of awarding verified credits.

Adopted: March 24, 2016

Revised: September 8, 2016

Revised: September 14, 2017

Revised: April 12, 2018

Legal Refs: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, § 22.1-253.13:4.

8 VAC 20-131-110.

Guidelines for Graduation Requirements; Local Alternative Paths to Standard Units of Credit, Virginia Board of Education (Oct. 2015).

Cross Refs: IAA Notification of Learning Objectives
IGBG Homebound, Correspondence and Alternative Means of Instruction
IGBGA On Line Courses and Virtual School Programs
IGBF English Learners
IKEB Acceleration
IKF The Virginia Assessment Program and Graduation Requirements
IKFA Locally Awarded Verified Credits
JO Student Records

REMEDATION RECOVERY PROGRAM

The Amherst County School Board supports efforts to provide instructional support to those students who have demonstrated a need for such support by their failure to pass certain Standards of Learning (SOL) assessments. Therefore, the Amherst County School Board has implemented a Remediation Recovery Program as established by the Virginia Board of Education. Remediation recovery is a program which encourages successful remediation of students who do not pass certain SOL tests in kindergarten through grade 8 and high school English and mathematics. In kindergarten through grade 12, students may participate in a remediation recovery program as established by the Board of Education in English (reading) or mathematics or both.

Students who fail the grades 3 through 7 reading and/or mathematics tests and participate in a remediation recovery program after being promoted to the next grade will not retake the failed test or tests.

Students who fail either the grade 8 reading or mathematics test, or an end-of-course English or mathematics test, and participate in a remediation recovery program will continue to retake the applicable SOL test at the next regularly scheduled administration.

Schools shall maintain evidence of a student's participation in a remediation recovery program along with the scores of any SOL tests taken following remediation in the student's record.

The following students are ineligible for the remediation recovery program:

- students in grade 8 who are retested because they were retained and had not previously passed the grade 8 test in reading or mathematics
- students who retake an end-of-course test as a result of failing and retaking an English or mathematics course at the high school level

Adopted: May 3, 2001
Revised: August 16, 2001
Revised: August 12, 2004
Revised: June 20, 2013
Revised: July 12, 2018

Legal Refs.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, § 22.1-253.13:3.

8 VAC 20-131-30.

Guidance Governing Certain Provisions of the Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public School in Virginia 8 VAC 20-131 (Virginia Board of Education as amended January 13, 2011).

Cross Refs.:	IKF	The Virginia Assessment Program and Graduation Requirements
	IKH	Retaking SOL Assessments
	IL	Testing Programs

GRADE PLACEMENT/TRANSFERS

A. Elementary Schools

Students who transfer from other elementary schools, either within or without this school division, shall be placed in the grade which has been recommended by the previous school. The principal shall require a continuous evaluation of the capabilities and adjustment of the student and, if necessary, shall reassign such student at the earliest possible opportunity to the appropriate grade as determined by the evaluation.

B. Secondary Schools

Students who transfer from other secondary schools shall be placed in a level best reflecting the units of credit earned and the regulations for promotion and graduation in the Amherst County Public Schools.

Adopted: April 7, 1994
Revised: May 3, 2001 (file name change)

Legal Ref.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, sections 22.1-79, 22.1-253.13:1, 22.1-253.13:4

Regulations of the Virginia Board of Education, Revised 1993, VR 270-01-0012

RETAKING SOL ASSESSMENTS

Students in kindergarten through grade 8 are not required to retake Standards of Learning (SOL) tests unless they are retained in grade and have not previously passed the test or they are placed in a remediation n recovery program developed by the School Board. Students in high school are not required to retake end-of-course SOL tests unless the student previously failed the course and the test, or the student needs to earn verified credit for graduation.

Expedited Retakes of SOL Tests for Grades 3-8 and End-Of-Course SOL Tests Administered to Meet Federal Accountability Requirements

The following criteria are used in determining the eligibility of students for an expedited retake of a SOL test for grades 3-8 or an end-of-course SOL test administered to meet federal accountability requirements.

The student must have a passing grade in the class associated with the test and one of the following:

- The student failed the test by a narrow margin as defined as a scaled score of 375-399, or
- The student failed the test with a scaled score below 375 and
 - had a documented extenuating circumstance that prevented the student from performing at the expected level and/or
 - there was a significant discrepancy between the student's SOL test score and the student's typical academic performance

An extenuating circumstance for purposes of expedited retakes of SOL tests for grades 3-8 and end-of-course tests administered to meet federal accountability requirements is defined as an unusual and uncontrollable event that negatively impacted a student's test performance. Examples of extenuating circumstances include, but are not limited to, the recent death of a family member, friend, or pet; a traumatic home situation, or other significant personal distress or disruption that does not qualify for irregularity retesting.

Evidence that the SOL test score is significantly lower than expected based on the student's typical level of achievement may be used to justify retesting. Data used to establish the student's typical performance may include previous SOL test data in the same content area or evidence of the student's current academic achievement.

Documentation of the unusual circumstances experienced for each student retested under the extenuating circumstances provision and evidence of the student's typical academic achievement for those retesting under the significant achievement discrepancy provision is maintained. The documentation is subject to periodic review by Virginia Department of Education staff on behalf of the Board of Education.

Prior to any expedited retake for students who have failed an SOL test for grades 3-8, the school division obtains, and thereafter maintains, documentation annually of affirmative parental consent and permission for their child to take an expedited retake. Parents of eligible students are notified 1) of the opportunity to retake the test(s), 2) that the decision not to retake any or all of the test(s) will not impact their child's grade or academic record; and 3) of the opt-in requirement.

Expedited Retakes for End-of-Course Tests Needed for Verified Credits

With such funds as are appropriated by the General Assembly, the Board of Education will provide opportunities for students who meet criteria adopted by that Board to have an expedited retake of a SOL test to earn verified credit.

The following criteria are used in determining the eligibility of students for an expedited retake of an end-of-course test for verified credit.

The student must need the test for verified credit, have a passing grade in the course associated with the test, and have

- failed the test by a narrow margin defined as a scaled core of 375-399, or
- failed the test by any margin and had extenuating circumstances that would warrant retesting.

Extenuating circumstances for the purposes of expedited retakes of end-of-courses tests needed for verified credit are defined by the superintendent but must be restricted to situations that specifically affect the student who is being retested. Extenuating circumstances may include the need to pass the test to graduate.

Adopted: May 3, 2001
Revised: August 12, 2004
Revised: June 20, 2013
Revised: March 24, 2016
Revised: July 12, 2018

Legal Refs.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, § 22.1-253.13:3.
8 VAC 20-131-30.
8 VAC 20-131-110.

Revisions to the Criteria for the Determination of Student Eligibility for Expedited Retakes of Standards of Learning (SOL) Tests, Virginia Board of Education, March 22, 2018.

Cross Refs.: IKF The Virginia Assessment Program and Graduation Requirements
IKG Remediation Recovery Program
IL Testing Programs

TESTING PROGRAMS

A program of standardized testing prescribed by the Virginia Department of Education is administered annually. Standardized tests are administered according to state and local directives.

In administering tests or other assessment instruments, School Board employees do not require any public school students being tested to disclose their race or ethnicity on such tests. School division personnel, however, may obtain such information from a student's permanent record and place the information on the test or assessment.

No student or his parent is required to disclose information related to the student's race or ethnicity unless (i) the student or his parent is given an option to designate "other" for the student's race or ethnicity or (ii) such disclosure is required by federal law.

Adopted: April 7, 1994
Revised: November 3, 1994
Revised: August 21, 1997
Revised: August 24, 2000
Revised: August 16, 2001
Revised: August 22, 2002
Revised: August 12, 2004
Revised: August 11, 2011
Revised: November 12, 2015
Revised: July 12, 2018
Revised: September 13, 2018

Legal Ref.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 22.1-4.2, 22.1-253.13:3.

TESTS AND MEASUREMENTS

Examinations

1. There will be no examinations required in grades Kindergarten - 5.
2. The progress of students in grades 6-12 shall be evaluated by examination and/or other appropriate procedures for determining students' progress.

The other appropriate procedures for evaluating students' progress shall be approved by the principal.

Adopted: April 7, 1994

PROMOTION/RETENTION

Decisions regarding promotion and retention shall be made by the principal in consultation with the parent or guardian, teachers and other school personnel. Although final authority for assignment of the student must rest with the principal, it is preferable that an agreement is reached with the parent or guardian that retention is desirable.

The Standards of Learning test results shall be used as part of a multiple set of criteria for determining promoting or retaining students in grades 3, 5, and 8. Specific criteria for promotion/retention shall be set forth in regulations developed by the superintendent.

Adopted: June 4, 1998

Legal Ref.: 8 VAC, sections 20-131-30, 20-131-40, 22.1-253.13:4

PROMOTION/RETENTION

The principal will be responsible for establishing a procedure for making decisions regarding the promotion and retention of students. In addition, the principal will ensure that appropriate lines of communication are established with the parent or guardian early in the school year regarding these matters. The following criteria will be used when determining promotion and retention.

I. High School

Students must obtain an appropriate number of credits in order to be promoted to the next grade. The number of credits required is:

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Credits</u>
9 to 10	6
10 to 11	12
11 to 12	16

II. Middle School

1. A student who passes all four SOL core content courses – English, math, science, and history – will be promoted.
2. A student who fails one of the four SOL core content courses must participate in SOL remediation.
3. A student who fails two or more of the four SOL core content courses will NOT be promoted.
4. Other factors will be considered in the promotion or retention of students in grades six, seven, and eight. These factors include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - a. Standards of Learning test results
 - b. Grades
 - c. Academic progress
 - d. Attendance
 - e. Age
 - f. Previous academic record
 - g. Previous retentions
 - h. Other factors specific to the student

Note: Students who are not promoted will be referred to a school-level promotion/retention committee to determine placement for the following year.

III. Elementary School

Other factors will be considered in the promotion or retention of students in grades K-5. These factors include, but are not limited to, the following:

- A. Standards of Learning test results
- B. Progress on grade level subject matter (emphasis on language arts and mathematics)
- C. Attendance
- D. Age
- E. Maturity
- F. Prior retention
- G. Other factors specific to the student

Adopted: June 4, 1998
Revised: February 1, 2001
Revised: May 6, 2004
Revised: June 9, 2004

TEACHING ABOUT CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

The Amherst County School Board recognizes that preparation for effective citizenship is one of the major purposes of education. The preparation for effective citizenship includes the study of issues that are controversial. Such study will be carried out in an atmosphere free from bias, prejudice, or coercion.

In teaching about controversial issues, teachers are expected to

- establish a learning environment where each student can study the issues within a curriculum that are appropriate to his or her knowledge and maturity; and
- provide instruction in an atmosphere that is free from bias, prejudice, or coercion.

Although the instructional program includes study of the political party system in the United States, the School Board does not endorse any political party or candidate.

Adopted: April 7, 1994
Revised: November 3, 1994
Revised: October 3, 1996
Revised: July 19, 2012

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

Cross Ref.: KF Distribution of Information/Materials

RELIGION IN THE SCHOOLS

The Amherst County School Board is neutral in matters of religion. This means that the Amherst County Public Schools

- assume no role or responsibility for the religious training of any student and
- do not become involved in the religious belief, disbelief or doubt of any student.

This neutrality does not preclude or hinder the Amherst County school division in fulfilling its responsibility to educate students to be tolerant and respectful of religious diversity. The division recognizes that one of its educational responsibilities is to advance the students' knowledge and appreciation of the role that religion has played in the social, cultural and historical development of civilization.

Therefore, the division approaches religion from an objective, curriculum-related perspective, encouraging all students and staff members to be aware of the diversity of beliefs and respectful of each other's religious and/or non-religious views. In that spirit of respect, students and staff members may be excused from participating in activities that are contrary to their religious beliefs.

The School Board may authorize, as an elective in grades nine through 12 with appropriate credits toward graduation, a comparative religion class that focuses on the basic tenets, history, and religious observances and rites of world religions.

Adopted: April 7, 1994
Revised: November 3, 1994
Revised: October 3, 1996
Revised: August 16, 2001
Revised: August 12, 2004
Revised: May 5, 2005
Revised: September 21, 2006
Revised: April 10, 2014

Legal Refs.: U.S. Const. amend. I.

Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 22.1-78, [22.1-202.1](#).

RELIGION IN THE SCHOOLS

In order to ensure that Amherst County Schools uphold constitutional standards within the religiously neutral role assigned the public schools, the following questions established by the United States Supreme Court should be asked of each school sponsored observance, program, instructional or other activity involving religious content, ceremony, or celebration:

1. What is the purpose of the activity? Is the purpose secular in nature?
2. What is the primary effect of the activity? Is it the celebration of religion? Does the activity either advance or inhibit religion?
3. Does the activity involve an excessive entanglement with a religion, religious group, or between the schools and a religious organization? Are funds of a religious origin being used for a school activity? Does either the school or religious activity require the consent or approval of the other?

If the purpose of the activity is not secular, if the effect of the activity is to advance or inhibit religion, or if the activity involves an excessive entanglement, then the activity is unconstitutional and will not be permitted in the Amherst County Schools.

Definitions

1. Religious Organizations - Although it is difficult to give a conclusive definition of a religious organization, there are certain characteristic forms of human activity which are commonly recognized as religious. Therefore, any group subscribing to one or more of the following practices may be defined as religious:
 - a. Has as its primary purpose belief in gods or a God
 - b. Has a theological creed and form of worship
 - c. Accepts supernatural revelation
 - d. Seeks spiritual salvation
 - e. Has a prescribed set of theological rituals
 - f. Has been declared to be a religious organization by the Federal government or the Commonwealth of Virginia for tax purposes or by the courts
 - g. Has a legally recognized organization of ordained ministers ministering to congregations
 - h. Has regular services, meetings, or assemblies at which a particular set of spiritual beliefs is advanced

- i. Claims to be religious or spiritual
 - j. Has an established system denying or objecting to religious belief.
2. School Hours - "School hours" includes the time from one-half hour before school until one-half hour after school.
 3. Sponsorship - "Sponsorship" means endorsement and/or the advancement of money to support an activity.

School Ceremonies and Observances

In order to provide guidance in the interpretation of the school division's policy on school ceremonies and observances, the following policy statements are adopted and apply to such school activities:

1. Religious heritages and their histories, arts, symbols, and tenets may properly be included within a program of religiously neutral education. Such studies must be objective in nature and directly related to the broader educational purposes in the various fields of study.
2. At no time shall any form of religious belief or systems denying or objecting to belief be advanced or disparaged, nor shall any form of religious indoctrination or exercise, including prayers, be conducted by the school division or its employees. (The baccalaureate service is traditionally religious in nature and should be sponsored by agencies separate from the school division.)
3. The historical and contemporary significance and the symbols and origins of religious holidays may be studied within the guidelines of this policy.
4. Music, art, literature, and drama related to religious holidays may be studied and performed in programs if they are presented in an objective and neutral manner as a tradition of the cultural heritage of the particular holiday. Such programs should be part of a curricular unit and should be simply staged and costumed.
5. In response to class questions and assignments, students are free to initiate expressions of religious belief or non-belief through compositions, art forms, music, speech, and debate.
6. Student groups sponsored by the division shall not perform as part of a religious worship service.

7. In order to prevent misinterpretation of this policy, teachers who work with children to prepare school programs involving religious content, ceremony, or celebration (i.e., references to deities, sacred writing, music and art) will meet with their building principal at the outset of the academic year. The purpose of this meeting is to place such school programs in appropriate instructional context and to establish a mutual dialogue for selecting, planning, and designing these programs. In the event that the teacher and principal are unable to reach agreement, either party may refer the matter to the area Superintendent.
8. At the discretion of the administration, a statement of purpose may be distributed at school programs and performances which include material of religious origin. The form of such a statement should be substantially the following:

This (program/performance) is presented for the purpose of helping students and the public become aware of, understand, and appreciate human culture, history, and religious diversity. By including these materials, the Amherst County School Division does not endorse any form of religious belief or systems denying or objecting to the belief, nor does it intend to disparage any such beliefs.

Religious Recruitment on School Properties

No person shall be allowed to recruit students for a religious purpose or organization on school properties or at school-sponsored activities (except as provided in Policy INB, Teaching About Controversial Issues).

Exemptions from Required Instruction

If the religious belief and teachings of a student or his/her parents or legal guardian are contrary to the content of a school subject, or to any part of a school course or activity, the student shall be exempt from participation. To receive such an exemption, the parent or legal guardian must present a written request for exemption to the school principal stating the conflict involved.

Exemptions from required instruction do not excuse a pupil from the total credit hours required for graduation.

Student Absences and Excuses

Regular attendance is of prime importance in the educational process. All students are expected to attend school for all days of the established school calendar as approved annually by the Board of Education and in compliance with the Virginia School Attendance Law. When requested by the parent or guardian, students will be excused for observance of religious holidays.

Use of School Grounds and Facilities by Religious Organizations

1. Places - Religious organizations may use school grounds and facilities only after school hours and on an equal basis with other organizations, including payment of rent, if any. Use of school facilities or grounds does not constitute endorsement. Note: Religious organizations who wish to rent school facilities for religious purposes refer to Policy KG, Community Use of School Facilities.
2. Communication - Religious groups and organizations may announce their meetings on designated public bulletin board(s) provided they meet school restrictions (i.e., card size, including the name of the group or organization, the activity, the date, place, time, and person and phone number to call for further information).

Challenge Procedure

The challenge procedure associated with policy INB-R, Teaching About Controversial Issues, will be used to respond to citizen challenges to the implementation of this policy.

Severability

Each section of this policy shall be deemed severable from each other section, and if any section shall be found by a court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid, the remaining sections shall continue in full force and effect.

Issued: April 7, 1994
Revised: November 3, 1994