

BOARD MEMO

Date: September 23, 2021

For ACTION _____

For INFORMATION X_____

Board Agenda: Yes x_____

No _____

FROM: Jennifer Abbruzzese, Director of Policy and Board Initiatives

THROUGH: Julie A. Crawford, Ed.D., Chief of Student Services and Equity
Marya Runkle, Director of Education and Business Applications
Darrell Sampson, Executive Director of Student Support Teams
Stephen M. Wilkins, Ed.D., Chief of Staff
Gregory C. Hutchings, Jr., Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools

TO: The Honorable Meagan L. Alderton, Chair, and
Members of the Alexandria City School Board

TOPIC: Policy Revisions re: the Treatment of Transgender Students

ACPS 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL:

Goal 1: Systemic Alignment

Goal 3: Student Accessibility and Support

Goal 5: Family and Community Engagement

SY 2021-2022 FOCUS AREA:

FY 2022 BUDGET PRIORITY:

Implementation of 2025 Strategic Plan

MTSS Implementation with Restorative Practices and PBIS

Stress/Counseling Support especially around Trauma

Professional Learning and Cultural Competency Training for all Staff and Partners

SUMMARY:

Several School Board policy and regulatory revisions are being proposed to reflect the Virginia Department of Education's (VDOE's) [Model Policies for the Treatment of Transgender Students in Virginia's Public Schools](#) ("Model Policies"), developed in response to the amendment of [Va. Code § 221.-23.3](#) by the Virginia General Assembly. The proposed revisions are compiled from the following policy manual classifications:

G Policies: Personnel

I Policies: Instructional Program

J Policies: Students

These revisions highlight eight common issues, identified in the legislation, regarding the treatment of transgender students. They are required to be addressed by School Board policies at the beginning of the 2021-22 school year, in a manner that is consistent with the *Model*

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Policies. They are:

1. Compliance with applicable nondiscrimination laws;
2. Maintenance of a safe and supportive learning environment free from discrimination and harassment for all students;
3. Prevention of and response to bullying and harassment;
4. Maintenance of student records;
5. Identification of students;
6. Protection of student privacy and the confidentiality of sensitive information;
7. Enforcement of sex-based dress codes; and
8. Student participation in sex-specific school activities and events and use of school facilities. (“Activities and events” do not include athletics.)

9/23/21 Board Meeting: Draft Policy Revisions		
Policy/ Reg.	Title	Revision
POLICY REVISIONS REFLECTING VA. CODE § 22.1-23.3 & VDOE’S MODEL POLICIES		
GCL	Professional Staff Development	Revised to reflect the VDOE’s <i>Model Policies</i> Requirement # 3 (prevention of and response to bullying and harassment). This requirement is also reflected in School Board Policies/Regulations IGAI , JFC and JFC-R .
IGDA	Student Organizations	Revised to reflect the VDOE’s <i>Model Policies</i> Requirement # 8 (student participation in sex-specific school activities and events and use of school facilities). This requirement is also reflected in School Board Policies/Regulations AC , AD , AE , IA , IICA-R , JB and JFCB .
IICA-R	Field Trip Procedures (Policy IICA has no recommended revisions at this time.)	Revised to reflect the VDOE’s <i>Model Policies</i> Requirement # 8 (student participation in sex-specific school activities and events and use of school facilities). This requirement is also reflected in School Board Policies/Regulations AC , AD , AE , IA , IGDA , JB and JFCB .
JB	Nondiscrimination in Education	Revised to reflect the VDOE’s <i>Model Policies</i> Requirement # 1 (compliance with applicable nondiscrimination laws). This requirement is also reflected in School Board Policies/Regulations AC and GBA/JFHA . Further revised to reflect Requirement #5 (identification of students).

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		Requirement #5 is also reflected in School Board Policies/Regulations AC , AD , AE , IICA-R and JO ; and Requirement #6 (protection of student privacy and confidentiality of sensitive information); which is also reflected in School Board Policies/Regulations AC , AD , IICA-R and JO .
JFC-R	Standards of Student Conduct (Policy JFC has no recommended revisions at this time.)	Revised to reflect the VDOE's <i>Model Policies</i> Requirement # 7 (enforcement of sex-based dress codes). This requirement is also reflected in School Board Policies/Regulations AD , AE , JB , and GBA/JFHA .
JO	Student Records	Revised to reflect the VDOE's <i>Model Policies</i> Requirement # 4 (maintenance of student records). This requirement is also reflected in School Board Policy JOA . Further revised to reflect Requirement #5 (identification of students); which is also reflected in School Board Policies/Regulations AC , AD , AE , IICA-R and JB ; and Requirement #6 (protection of student privacy and confidentiality of sensitive information); also reflected in School Board Policies/Regulations AC , AD , IICA-R and JB .
JOA	Student Transcripts	Revised to reflect the VDOE's <i>Model Policies</i> Requirement # 4 (maintenance of student records). This requirement is also reflected in School Board Policy JO .
JOA-R	Student Transcript Regulations	*Newly proposed regulation consisting of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contact information for submitting transcript requests; • relevant deadlines; and • request form JOA-F is being finalized and will be attached for the October 7, 2021 Board Meeting.
JR	School Counseling Program	Revised to reflect the VDOE's <i>Model Policies</i> Requirement # 2 (safe and supportive learning environment). This requirement is also reflected in School Board Policies/Regulations AC , AD , AE , IGBC and IGBC-R , JB , JFC , JFC-R , and GBA/JFHA .

BACKGROUND:

[Va. Code § 221.-23.3](#) requires each school board in Virginia to adopt policies that are consistent with, and which may be more comprehensive than, the VDOE [Model Policies for the Treatment of Transgender Students in Virginia's Public Schools](#) at the beginning of the 2021-22 school year.

As stated in the introduction to the *Model Policies*,

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“In June 2020, an advisory committee was formed to review model policies, local policies throughout the nation, and resources pertaining to the treatment of transgender students in public schools. The committee included school-based personnel representing diverse Superintendent’s Regions and disciplines, representatives from state professional associations, parent representatives, student representatives, representatives from advocacy organizations, and specialists from the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE). The development of these model policies is a result of consultation and collaboration with multiple stakeholders throughout the Commonwealth with a variety of backgrounds and expertise.” (*Model Policies*, p. 5.)

The Model Policies define “transgender” as:

“A self-identifying term that describes a person whose gender identity is different from their sex assigned at birth. A transgender girl is a girl who was presumed to be male when she was born, and a transgender boy is a boy who was presumed to be female when he was born. Note that there is a wide range of gender identities in addition to transgender male and transgender female, such as nonbinary.” (*Model Policies*, p. 7.)

RECOMMENDATION:

The Superintendent recommends that the School Board review the policy and regulatory revisions regarding the treatment of transgender students.

IMPACT:

Revising the attached policies as proposed supports the “key guiding principle of the model policies...that all children have a right to learn, free from discrimination and harassment.” These policy and regulatory revisions seek to “minimize social stigmatization for [transgender] students and maximize opportunities for social integration so that all students have an equal opportunity to attend school, be engaged, and achieve academic success.” (*Model Policies*, pp. 8-9.)

As stated by the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) in a resolution, “all persons, including children and adolescents who are diverse in their sexuality and gender identities, expression, and/or presentation, have the inherent human right to equal opportunity and a physically and psychologically safe environment within all institutions.” (*Model Policies*, p. 9.)

REFERENCES:

[Model Policies for the Treatment of Transgender Students in Virginia’s Public Schools](#), Virginia Department of Education (VDOE), (March 2021).

[Resolution on Supporting Sexual/Gender Diverse Children and Adolescents in Schools](#), American Psychological Association (APA) & National Association of School Psychologists(NASP), (2020).

ATTACHMENTS:

G, I and J policies and regulations as listed above.

CONTACT:

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