

BOARD MEMO

Date: October 19, 2023

For ACTION

For INFORMATION

FROM: Matt Smith, Policy Services Consultant

THROUGH: Melanie Kay-Wyatt, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools

TO: The Honorable Michelle Rief, Chair, and
Members of the Alexandria City School Board

TOPIC: Proposed Policy Revisions

ACPS 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL:

- Goal 1: Systemic Alignment
- Goal 2: Instructional Excellence
- Goal 3: Student Accessibility and Support
- Goal 4: Strategic Resource Allocation
- Goal 5: Family and Community Engagement

SY 2023-2024 FOCUS AREA:

N/A

FY 2024 BUDGET PRIORITY:

- Full Implementation of Students with Disabilities Action Plan
- Reduce Class Sizes
- K-4 Literacy
- Target Chronic Absenteeism
- Restorative Practices Supports
- Increase Support for Social and Emotional Learning

SUMMARY:

Staff are proposing the revision of several policies and regulations. Summaries of the revision, including links to code changes where appropriate, are presented in the Details section. Red-line changes and comments are included in the draft policies. These policies have been reviewed for code alignment and VSBA model policy alignment, audited for equity, edited by a team of staff members, and reviewed by the SLT and the Board Policy Subcommittee.

These policies were presented for information on October 5, 2023.

DETAILS:

The following summarizes the proposed revisions, details are in the track-changes of the draft policies.

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AF - Comprehensive Plan

- Policy updated to reflect amendment of Va. Code § 22.1-253.13:6 by [HB 319/SB 616](#) (2022) and [HB 1526](#) and SB 1175 (2023).
 - **Virginia Literacy Act; early student literacy; evidence-based literacy instruction; science-based reading research.** Makes several changes relating to early student literacy, including requiring (i) each education preparation program offered by a public institution of higher education or private institution of higher education or alternative certification program that provides training for any individual seeking initial licensure with an endorsement in a certain area, including as a reading specialist, to demonstrate mastery of science-based reading research and evidence-based literacy instruction, as such terms are defined in the bill; (ii) the literacy assessment required of individuals seeking initial teacher licensure with endorsements in certain areas to include a rigorous test of science-based reading research and evidence-based literacy instruction; (iii) each local school board to establish a divisionwide literacy plan; (iv) each local school board to employ one reading specialist for each 550 students in kindergarten through grade three; and (v) each local school board to provide a program of literacy instruction whereby, among other things, (a) the program provides reading intervention services to students in kindergarten through grade three who demonstrate deficiencies based on their individual performance on the Standards of Learning reading assessment or an early literacy screener provided or approved by the Department of Education; (b) a reading specialist, in collaboration with the teacher of any student who receives such reading intervention services, develops, oversees implementation of, and monitors student progress on a student reading plan; and (c) each student who receives such reading intervention services is assessed utilizing either the early literacy screener provided or approved by the Department or the grade-level reading Standards of Learning assessment again at the end of that school year. The provisions of the bill become effective beginning with the 2024–2025 school year. This bill is identical to [HB 319](#).
 - **Student literacy measures; scope; students in grades four through eight.** Expands several provisions of the Virginia Literacy Act, enacted during the 2022 Regular Session of the General Assembly, effective with the 2024–2025 school year, and currently applicable to students in kindergarten through grade three, to students in grades four through eight, including (i) requiring each local school board to provide a program of literacy instruction to such students that is aligned with science-based reading research and provides evidenced-based literacy instruction; (ii) requiring each local school board to provide reading intervention services to such students who demonstrate substantial deficiencies based on their individual performance on the Standards of Learning reading assessment or a literacy screener provided or approved by the Department of Education; (iii) permitting the reading plan required for certain students in grades six through eight to include a literacy course, in addition to the course required by the Standards of Learning in English, that provides the specific

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evidence-based literacy instruction identified in such plan; (iv) requiring the Department to develop a list of core literacy curricula, supplemental instruction practices and programs, and intervention programs that consist of evidence-based literacy instruction aligned with science-based reading research for such students; (v) requiring each local school board to employ one reading specialist for each 550 students in kindergarten through grade eight; (vi) requiring the Board of Education to provide guidance on and each local school board to provide high-quality professional development and training in science-based reading research and evidence-based literacy instruction for certain middle school personnel; and (vii) requiring each divisionwide comprehensive plan to include a divisionwide literacy plan for such students.

DB - Annual Budget

- Code Change (2023)
- Added a Board Belief Statement
- VSBA model policy alignment
- Policy updated to reflect amendment of Va. Code § 22.1-79 by [2161](#) and SB 1151
 - **Local government; standardization of public notice requirements for certain intended actions and hearings; report.** Standardizes the frequency and length of time that notices of certain meetings, hearings, and other intended actions of localities must be published in newspapers and other print media. The notice provisions included in the bill are organized into the following three groups: (i) publication required one week before the meeting, hearing, or intended action; (ii) publication required two consecutive weeks before the meeting, hearing, or intended action; and (iii) publication required three consecutive weeks before the meeting, hearing, or intended action. In addition, the bill amends provisions related to the content of notices for zoning ordinances and amendments to such ordinances by removing the requirement that such notices contain a descriptive summary of the proposed action and providing that such notices shall include the street address or tax map parcel number of the parcels subject to the action. In cases where the intended action affects more than 25 parcels, the notice must also include the approximate acreage subject to the intended action. For more than 100 parcels of land, the advertisement may instead include a description of the boundaries of the area subject to the changes and a link to a map of the subject area. The bill also removes the requirement that notices of proposed amendments to a zoning map state the general usage and density range of the proposed amendment and the general usage density set forth in the applicable part of the comprehensive plan. The bill directs the Virginia Code Commission to convene a work group to continue review of the notice requirements throughout the Code of Virginia and requires the Virginia Code Commission to submit a report to the Chairmen of the House Committee on General Laws and the Senate Committee on General Laws and Technology summarizing the work and any recommendations of the work group by November 1, 2023.

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DJF - Purchasing Procedures

- Code Change (2023)
- Policy updated to reflect amendment of Va. Code § 22.1-296.1 by [HB 1822](#).
 - **Public school employees; offense involving solicitation of sexual molestation, physical or sexual abuse, or rape of a child; penalty.** Provides that the convictions that bar employment and contract work that requires direct contact with students on school property during school hours or school-sponsored activities in public schools include any offense involving the solicitation of sexual molestation, physical or sexual abuse, or rape of a child. Current law prohibits any school board from employing or contracting with anyone who has been convicted of a violent felony set forth in the definition of barrier crime or any offense involving sexual molestation, physical or sexual abuse, or rape of a child, but does not specify that this includes any offense involving the solicitation of any such offense.

JFCF/JFCI - Alcohol and other Drugs (AOD) in Schools

JFCF-R/JFCI-R - Alcohol and other Drugs (AOD) Abuse: Regulations

- Updated to reflect legal references
 - Inclusion of marijuana in the list of prohibited substances
- VSBA Model Policy alignment

BACKGROUND:

The proposed revisions are part of the Board's ongoing work to provide ACPS with high-quality governance. ACPS has over 400 policies and regulations and has established the target of reviewing at least 100 policies and regulations each school year. Candidate policies for revision are drawn from code changes, changes in the VSBA model policies, the code requirement that policies are reviewed every 5 years, and policies and regulations that have been identified by the Board and/or staff for review.

Drafts of proposed revisions are available for public review as part of the Policy Subcommittee, Board Information, and Board Action processes.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Superintendent recommends that the School Board approve the proposed policy revisions. The Superintendent plans on approving the proposed regulation revisions pending board approval of the policy changes.

IMPACT:

By auditing policies for equity, code compliance, and appropriate guidance the School Board ensures that ACPS has high-quality governance.

ATTACHMENTS: (if there are none, write "None")

1. AF - Comprehensive Plan.pdf

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2. DB - Annual Budget.pdf
3. DJF - Purchasing Procedures.pdf
4. IKFB - Transfer Students and High School Credits.pdf
5. JFCF_JFCI - Alcohol and other Drugs (AOD) in Schools.pdf
6. JFCF-R_JFCI-R - Alcohol and other Drugs (AOD) Abuse: Regulations.pdf

REFERENCES:

1. [August 30, 2023 SB Policy Subcommittee Meeting](#)
2. [September 14, 2023 SB Policy Subcommittee Meeting](#)
3. October 5, 2023 Board Meeting

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