

BOARD MEMO

Date: February 22, 2024
For ACTION X
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 at the February 8, 2024, School Board Meeting. After the presentation and based on staff and Board feedback, the proposed revisions to JED – Student Absences/Excuses/Dismissals were modified to permit up to 90 school days or the equivalent number of hours each year to participate in a High School to Work Partnership. This will permit students to spend up to ½ of their time in a partnership. This is a maximum, most students spend far less than this amount of time.

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Based on a public comment the proposed revisions to JEG and JEG-R have been postponed so staff can provide the Board with an update.

DETAILS:

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

JEA – Compulsory Attendance

JEA-R/JED-R – Attendance Regulations

JEA-R2/JED-R2 – Attendance Codes

- Requested review
- Standard changes
- VSBA model policy alignment
- Added that Superintendent responsible for developing Regulations for the policy
- Updated to reflect Va. Code § 22.1-261
- Updated to reflect amendment of Va. Code § 22.1-207.7 by [HB 246](#)/SB 596
 - **School attendance; 4-H educational programs and activities.** Provides that students who miss a partial or full day of school while participating in 4-H educational programs and activities shall not be counted as absent for the purposes of calculating average daily membership and shall receive course credit in the same manner as they would for a school field trip. The bill directs each local school board to develop policies and procedures for students to make up missed work and may determine the maximum number of school days per academic year that a student may spend participating in 4-H educational programs and activities to not be counted absent. This bill is identical to [SB 596](#).
- Updated to reflect amendment of Va. Code § 22.1-254 by [HB 1022](#)
 - **Certain public elementary and secondary school students; excused absences; attendance at pow wow.** Provides that, subject to guidelines established by the Department of Education, any student who is a member of a state-recognized or federally recognized tribal nation that is headquartered in the Commonwealth and who is absent from school to attend such tribal nation's pow wow gathering shall be granted one excused absence per academic year, provided that the parent of such student provides to the student's school advance notice of such absence in the manner required by the school.
- Relocated and revised process for attendance for virtual learning
- Added content and references for period absences
- Updated dates/timeframes to reflect current Code of Virginia
- Relocated attendance codes to a new regulation
- Added the creation of an attendance plan for a pattern of unexcused absences

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- Added that the principal must assist families with obtaining a Dr's note for medical absences to address equity issues.

JED – Student Absences/Excuses/Dismissals

- Requested change
- Standard changes
- VSBA model policy alignment
- Reorganization to improve readability
- Added the number of days a student can be out for HS Work Partnerships
- Added a requirement to keep a log of parental notifications
- Added breadcrumbs to regulation JEA-R which lists the reason for excused absences

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 review the information about the proposed policy revisions.

IMPACT:

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

ATTACHMENTS:

1. 240222_JEA – Compulsory Attendance.pdf
2. 240222_JEA-R/JED-R – Attendance Regulations.pdf
3. 240222_JEA-R2/JED-R2 – Attendance Codes.pdf
4. 240222_JED – Student Absences/Excuses/Dismissals.pdf

REFERENCES:

1. January 25, 2024, SB Policy Subcommittee Meeting
2. February 8, 2024, School Board Meeting

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