

SCHOOL COUNSELING PROGRAM

The Albemarle County School Board affirms that parents are the student's first teachers and that the public schools should serve to strengthen family and parental support.

The Virginia Board of Education has implemented state Standards of Learning for students to ensure that all graduates of Virginia high schools have the knowledge and skills necessary to pursue higher education, compete in a technologically oriented workforce, and be informed citizens. Effective school counseling programs are staffed by licensed school counselors and designed to complement and support the state standards, ensuring that all students, in pre-K through grade 12, receive support in academic, career, and personal/social development. Professional school counselors collaborate with parents, teachers, administrators, and other school and community members to foster, promote, and improve student success and achievement in schools. The counselor's role is to provide the leadership necessary to manage the school-counseling program and ensure effective strategies to implement counseling standards.

Regulations of the Virginia Board of Education, Chapter 620, Section 10 (based on 22.1-16 of the Code of Va), state that, "*school guidance and counseling are support services designed to promote the academic mission of public education and exist primarily to aid students' academic achievement in elementary and secondary education.*"

These standards are consistent with Board of Education regulations in that they are comprised of three domains: academic, career, and personal/social. Specifically, the Board regulations provide the following description of school counseling services across these domains:

- a) *Academic guidance, which assist 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;*
- b) *Career Guidance, which helps students to acquire information and plan action about work, jobs, apprenticeships, and post-secondary educational and career opportunities;*
- c) *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.*
- d) *Employment Counseling and Placement Services: The School Board provides to secondary students employment counseling and placement services to furnish information relation 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 businesses and labor organizations and career schools.

A comprehensive school-counseling program is a shared and collaborative effort with other educators and parents that focuses on all aspects of student learning. Recognizing that there are multiple variables that affect a student's success throughout the school years, and that the school-counseling program is one important variable that affects all areas of growth, a well-planned school-counseling program will provide a collaborative effort and will function as an integral and essential part of the school structure and organization.

The *Standards for School Counseling Programs in Virginia Public Schools* reflect the progression of student growth throughout the school experience and ensure that, at all grade levels, students continue to develop appropriate knowledge and skills. Desired student learning outcomes are identified; however, they are not intended to be all-inclusive. School counselors should develop programs that may extend beyond these Standards to meet individual needs of students and foster academic success.

The standards are based on the premise that a student will acquire an understanding of the knowledge and skills that contribute to effective lifelong learning and offer a foundation for what a well-planned school-counseling program should address and deliver. The Academic Development component encourages the use of strategies and activities to help students succeed academically and to meet local, state, and national standards. The Career Development component helps students build a foundation for the acquisition of the knowledge and skills necessary to make a successful transition from school to the world of work and/or further training and education. The Personal/Social Development component support personal and social growth and the development of civic responsibility as students successfully progress through the public schools.

At least annually, parents shall be notified electronically or in writing about the academic and career counseling programs, and the personal/social counseling programs which are available to students within the School Division. Parents will be advised concerning the purpose, general description of the programs, how parents may review materials to be used in the programs, and procedures by which parents may limit the students' participation in the program. Information and records of personal/social counseling shall be kept confidential and separate and not disclosed to third parties without prior parental consent or as otherwise provided by law.

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

It shall be the policy of the Albemarle County School Board with respect to personal/social counseling that parents must notify the School Division in writing if the student is not to participate in any such counseling program. (Opt-Out)

The school counseling program will 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.

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: June 10, 1996

Amended: July 12, 1999; October 14, 2004; March 14, 2013; September 11, 2014;
April 27, 2017; August 23, 2018

Legal Ref: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 22.1-130.1; 22.1-209

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