

## EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

### I. Policy Statement

The Albemarle County School Board (“Board”) is committed to equal educational opportunities. Therefore, discrimination against any student on the basis of any category given protection under Board Policy AC, *Nondiscrimination* is prohibited. Educational programs shall be designed to meet the varying needs of all students.

No student, on the basis of sex or gender, shall be denied equal access to programs, activities, services or benefits or be limited in the exercise of any right, privilege or advantage or be denied equal access to educational and extracurricular programs and activities.

The School Board shall

- provide facilities, programs and activities that are accessible, usable and available to qualified disabled persons;
- provide a free, appropriate education, including non-academic and extracurricular services to qualified disabled persons;
- not exclude qualified disabled persons, solely on the basis of their disabilities, from any preschool, daycare, adult education or career and technical education programs; and
- not discriminate against qualified disabled persons in the provision of health, welfare or social services.

### II. Complaint Procedure

#### A. File Report

This procedure is for complaints that are not Title IX complaints. Title IX complaints are addressed in policy, GBA, *Prohibition against Harassment and Retaliation*.

Any person who believes they have not received equal educational opportunities ordinarily should report the alleged prohibited discrimination to immediate supervisors, department head, or principal for investigation and resolution. The Board supports site-based management and invests authority in school principals and operational department heads to solve problems at their level of the organization. If a student is not satisfied that a complaint has been resolved, or if the student feels uncomfortable reporting the alleged discrimination harassment or retaliation to the immediate supervisor, department head, or principal, he or she should report the alleged discrimination to one of the Equal Educational Opportunity Officers (“EO Officers”) designated in this policy. The alleged discrimination should be reported as soon as possible, and the report generally should be made within fifteen (15) business days of the occurrence. Any student who has knowledge of conduct which may constitute prohibited discrimination shall immediately report such conduct to one of the EO Officers designated in this policy.

The reporting party should use the form, Report of Discrimination, JB-F, to make complaints of discrimination. However, oral reports and other written reports shall also be accepted. The complaint must be filed with one of the EO Officers designated in this policy. Any complaint that involves the EO Officer shall be reported to the superintendent.

The complaint, and identity of the complainant and of the person or persons allegedly responsible for the discrimination will be disclosed only to the extent necessary to fully investigate the complaint and only when such disclosure is required or permitted by law. A complainant who wishes to remain anonymous will be advised that anonymity may limit the school division's ability to fully respond to the complaint and that such complaint may still make them identifiable even without using a name.

## B. Investigation

Upon receipt of a report of alleged discrimination, the EO Officer shall immediately authorize or undertake an investigation. The investigation may be conducted by school personnel or a third party designated by the school division. The investigation shall be completed as soon as practicable, which generally should be not later than fourteen (14) business days after receipt of the report by the EO Officer. Upon receiving the complaint, the EO Officer will acknowledge receipt of the complaint by giving written notice that the complaint has been received to both the complainant and the superintendent. If the EO Officer determines that more than fourteen (14) business days will be required to investigate the complaint and the Superintendent will be notified of the reason for the extended investigation and the date by which the investigation will be concluded.

The investigation may consist of personal interviews with the complainant, the person(s) alleged to have violated the policy and any others who may have knowledge of the alleged discrimination or the circumstances giving rise to the complaint. The investigation will consider witnesses and evidence from both the complainant and the person(s) responsible for the alleged discrimination. The investigation may also include the inspection of any documents or information deemed relevant by the investigator. The school division shall take necessary steps to protect the complainant and others pending the investigation.

Whether a particular action or incident constitutes a violation of this policy requires a case by case determination based on all of the facts and circumstances revealed by a complete and thorough investigation.

The EO Officer shall issue a written report to the superintendent upon completion of the investigation. If the complaint alleges the superintendent has violated this policy, then the report shall be sent to the Board. The report shall include a determination of whether the allegations are substantiated, whether this policy was violated and recommendations for corrective action, if any.

All students shall cooperate with any investigation of alleged discrimination

conducted under this policy or by an appropriate state or federal agency.

#### C. Action by Superintendent

Within five (5) business days of receiving the EO Officer's report, the superintendent or superintendent's designee shall issue a written decision regarding: (1) whether this policy was violated; and (2) the action, if any, that should be taken.

If the complaint alleges that the superintendent has violated this policy, the Board's standing Equal Educational Opportunity/Nondiscrimination Committee shall make the decision and determine what action should be taken. If the School Board does not have such a standing committee, at its next schedule meeting it shall appoint a committee consisting of three of its members to handle the matter. The committee shall issue a written decision within fourteen (14) calendar days of the time the Board receives the EO Officer's report or the time a committee is appointed, if there is no standing committee. The written decision shall state: (1) whether this policy was violated; and (2) the action, if any, that should be taken.

The written decision must be mailed to or personally delivered to the complainant within five (5) calendar days of the issuance of the decision. If the superintendent, superintendent's designee, or committee concludes that prohibited discrimination occurred, the Albemarle County School Division shall take prompt, appropriate action to address and remedy the violation as well as prevent any recurrence. Such action may include discipline up to and including dismissal.

#### D. Appeal

If the superintendent, superintendent's designee or committee determines that no prohibited discrimination occurred, the student who was allegedly subjected to discrimination may appeal this finding to the Board within five (5) business days of receiving the decision. Notice of appeal must be filed with the superintendent, or with a member of the committee which issued the written decision, who shall forward the record to the Board. The Board shall make a decision within thirty (30) calendar days of receiving the record. The Board may ask for oral or written argument from the aggrieved party and the superintendent, superintendent's designee, or the committee, whichever issued the written decision, and any other individual the Board deems relevant. Written notice of the Board's decision will be given to the complainant.

Students may choose to pursue their complaints arising under this policy through the relevant educational grievance procedure instead of the complaint procedure in this policy.

#### E. Equal Educational Opportunity (EO) Officers

The Board has designated

**Director of Special Education and Student Services, Albemarle County Public**

**Schools, 401 McIntire Road, Charlottesville, VA 22902, 434-296-5885**

as the EO Officer responsible for identifying, investigating, preventing and remedying prohibited discrimination for students. Complaints of discrimination by students or applicants may be made to

**Director of Human Resources, 401 McIntire Road, Charlottesville, VA 22902,  
434-296-5827**

The EO Officer

- receives reports or complaints of discrimination;
- conducts or oversees the investigation of any alleged discrimination;
- assesses the training needs of the school division in connection with this policy;
- arranges necessary training to achieve compliance with this policy; and
- ensures that any discrimination investigation is conducted by an impartial investigator who is trained in the requirements of equal education opportunity, and has the authority to protect the alleged victim and others during the investigation.

III. Retaliation

Retaliation against students who report discrimination or participate in the related proceedings is prohibited. The school division takes appropriate action against any employee who retaliates against another student or employee who reports alleged discrimination or participates in related proceedings. The EO Officer informs persons who make complaints, who are the subject of complaints, and who participate in investigations of how to report any subsequent problems.

IV. Right to Alternative Complaint Procedure

Nothing in this policy denies the right of any individual to pursue other avenues of recourse to address concerns relating to prohibited discrimination including initiating civil action, filing a complaint with outside agencies or seeking redress under state or federal law.

V. Prevention and Notice of Policy

Training to prevent discrimination is included in employee orientations and in-service training.

This policy is (1) displayed in prominent areas of each division building in a location accessible to school personnel, (2) included in student handbooks. All students are notified annually of the names and contact information of the EO Officers.

VI. False Charges

Students who knowingly make false charges of discrimination are subject to disciplinary action.

Adopted: July 1, 1993

Amended: December 13, 2001; April 25, 2013; January 8, 2015; November 12, 2015;  
September 24, 2020; September 9, 2021

Equity Review: N/A

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Legal Refs.: 20 U.S.C. §§ 1681 et seq.  
29 U.S.C. § 701  
42 U.S.C. §§ 6101 et seq., 2000e-2et seq.,2000ff-1(a) and 12101 et seq.

Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 2.2-3900, 2.2-3901, 2.2-3902, 2.2-3905.1, 22.1-23.3,  
22.1-295.2, 22.1-306.

Cross Ref.: AC, *Nondiscrimination*  
AD, *Educational Philosophy*  
GBA, *Prohibition Against Harassment and Retaliation*  
GBCA, *Employee Discipline*  
GBM, *Licensed Teaching Staff Grievances*  
GBMA, *Classified Staff Grievances*

