

VII. Instructional Program

7.1 Curriculum

The Superintendent will coordinate the design and development of a comprehensive curriculum plan in accordance with state law and any requirements of the State Department of Education for approval by the Board.

7.2 Textbooks

Textbooks will be purchased and distributed in accordance with State Department of Education regulations. Only textbooks recommended by the local textbook committee will be approved by the Board, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent. The local textbook committee will be appointed by the Board and will consist of central office staff, local school representatives, and parents who will serve a term of one year. Students are loaned textbooks for the duration of the course that requires the textbook and are responsible for the care of the textbook. Students must reimburse the Board for the cost of any textbooks that are lost or damaged beyond reasonable wear and tear.

[Reference: ALA. CODE §16-36-62 (1975)]

7.3 Academic Standards

Teachers will assign grades and confer academic credit for work and activities performed by students in accordance with objective and generally accepted instructional and grading standards, applicable laws and regulations, and criteria hereinafter specified.

7.3.1 General Grade Scale – Grades for academic course work will be awarded according to the following scale:

| <u>Letter Grade</u> | <u>Numerical Grade (100 point scale)</u> | <u>Grade Point Average Points (4 point scale)</u> | <u>Grade Point Average Points Honors, AP, DE/DC</u> |
|---------------------|--|---|---|
| A | 90 – 100 | 4.00 | 4.5 |
| B | 80-89 | 3.00 | 3.5 |
| C | 70-79 | 2.00 | 2.5 |
| D | 60-69 | 1.00 | 1.5 |
| F | Below 60 | 0.00 | 0 |

7.3.2 Honors, Advanced Placement, and Dual Enrollment/Dual Credit Grade Scale – In grades (9) nine through (12) twelve, numerical grades in Honors, AP, and Dual Enrollment/Dual Credit courses (approved by the Board and/or Superintendent) will be weighted by adding ten (10) points (used for calculating class ranking). When calculating the grade point average on a four-point scale, .5 will be added for approved Honors, AP, and Dual Enrollment/Dual Credit courses. (GPA)

- 7.3.3 Special Education Grading Standards – Students who are receiving special educational services may be graded according to an individualized educational plan, and nothing in Board policy or procedure prohibits the extension of appropriate academic modifications or accommodations to students who may be eligible for such modifications or accommodations under provisions of state and federal law.
- 7.3.4 Report Cards – Report cards reflecting student progress will be provided to the parents or legal guardians of students on a regularly scheduled basis.
- 7.3.5 Promotion – Students are promoted from grade to grade on the basis of academic credit earned during the school year, in summer school programs, or in such other academic programs as may be approved or recognized by the Board. Students who are eligible for promotion from grade to grade may nevertheless be retained by agreement of the parents and appropriate school officials.
- 7.3.6 Class Rankings – Beginning with the ninth grade of high school, all students will be ranked based on the numerical grade average (calculated and weighted as described herein). The numerical grade calculation will be carried out four decimal places and rounded off.
- 7.3.7 Credit Recovery – The Superintendent is authorized to develop procedures for a program through which a student may recover credits in one or more failed courses, in compliance with regulations promulgated by the State Department of Education. The curriculum will align with the State Board of Education course of study and study content standards in which the student seeking credit recovery is deficient.

[Reference: Ala. Admin. Code 290-3-1-.02(10)]

7.4 *Testing*

The Superintendent is authorized to develop and implement a standardized testing program that will include, at a minimum, all testing required under state and federal law. All standardized tests are to be conducted in accordance with the appropriate test administration manual guidelines and any rules or regulations that are intended to ensure their security and validity. Teachers are authorized to conduct tests for their courses in order to determine their students' abilities, knowledge and skills, and to use in calculating a student's grade.

7.5 *Summer School Operations*

A "summer school" program may be implemented in compliance with regulations promulgated by the State Department of Education. Summer school is provided as a service by the Board and is separate and distinct from the regular academic year. The Superintendent is authorized to develop and maintain rules and regulations for the

Escambia County Board of Education

operation of summer school, including requirements for enrollment, attendance, transportation, and tuition, which will be subject to approval by the Board.

[Reference: Ala. Admin. Code 290-3-1-.02(6)]

7.6 *Dual Enrollment*

Upon recommendation of the Superintendent, the Board may establish guidelines in accordance with the regulations of the State Department of Education by which qualified high school students are allowed to take post-secondary college courses for high school credit.

[Reference: Ala. Admin. Code 290-3-1-.02(11)]

7.7 *Correspondence or Online Courses*

Credit for correspondence and online courses will be recognized if the conditions and criteria established by the Alabama Department of Education for such programs are met.

[Reference: Ala. Admin. Code 290-3-1-.02(12, 13)]

7.8 *Virtual School Option*

7.8.1 Scope and Delivery of Services – Beginning with the 2016-2017 school year, Escambia County School System will provide the option of a virtual education for students in grades nine through twelve. Students selecting the virtual option will complete coursework away from their local school. Escambia County students selecting this option will complete courses delivered through the Alabama State Department of Education ACCESS program, locally developed virtual courses, and/or other online instructional programs approved by the Escambia County School Board. Students enrolled in the full time virtual program and meeting graduation requirements, will receive a diploma from the local school system.

7.8.2 Student Eligibility Criteria – Students must meet the following eligibility criteria to participate in the virtual option:

- a. Students must meet residency requirements for the Escambia County School System.
- b. Students must comply with Code of Student Conduct and school board policy.
- c. Students must meet requirements of Alabama State Department of Education's ACCESS program.
- d. Students must meet requirements of approved locally developed virtual courses, and/or other online instructional programs.

Escambia County Board of Education

- e. The student and parent must attend the virtual school orientation session and follow-up counseling sessions related to career path planning.
- f. Students must have access to an operational computer with reliable internet connection.
- g. Students must maintain appropriate progress in coursework. Progress will be monitored by the completion of weekly assignments, quizzes, and/or other assessments.
- h. Students must complete examinations at their home school. Students will be required to provide their own transportation to and from their local school for these requirements or utilize a regular school bus route.

The school system reserves the right to develop specific eligibility criteria for particular virtual programs or courses. Students may be transitioned back to a traditional day program if 1) the student's participation in the virtual program is impeding the student's academic progress; 2) the student fails to meet virtual course attendance requirements; or 3) the student repeatedly violates school system policies, procedures, rules or regulations, including, but not limited to, the school system's rules governing the use of its technology resources.

- 7.8.3 Monitoring Performance and Testing Requirements – Individual student performance will be monitored pursuant to the school system's traditional academic credit requirements and grade scale. Students utilizing the virtual school option will be subject to all state testing and accountability requirements and will be subject to the same rules and regulations regarding the administration of such tests applicable to traditional public school students enrolled in the traditional public school.

The Superintendent is hereby authorized to take whatever action may be necessary to facilitate the state testing and accountability requirements applicable to virtual school students. The school system reserves the right to require students utilizing the virtual school option to participate in state testing and accountability requirements on campus at a date and time selected by the school system.

- 7.8.4 Attendance – Students participating in the virtual school option are required to be active and submitting assignments in order to remain enrolled in the program. The school system reserves the right to set specific attendance requirements for each virtual course. The Superintendent or his or her designee is authorized to develop alternate attendance policies for virtual courses, provided that students in such programs are given notice of the attendance requirements. A student's failure to comply with such requirements may result in administrative

Escambia County Board of Education

action including, but not limited to, probation or removal from the class or a charge of truancy, if appropriate.

- 7.8.5 Extracurricular Activities – Students must meet any applicable extracurricular activity eligibility requirements including, but not limited to, any applicable Alabama High School Athletic Association (AHSAA) requirements. Student residency for purposes of participating in extracurricular activities will be determined in accordance with applicable state law and AHSAA guidelines.
- 7.8.6 Additional Procedures Authorized –The Superintendent or his or her designee is authorized to develop such procedures as he deems necessary to implement this policy including, but not limited to, eligibility criteria for courses, methods for informing students and parents of the virtual program’s requirements and rules, and a process for making determinations regarding a student’s continued eligibility.

[Reference: ALA. CODE §16-46A-1]

7.9 Career and Technical Education Programs

- 7.9.1 Work-Based Learning Experience – A work-based learning experience provides students with educational opportunities in a work setting that typically cannot be obtained in a classroom and may include, but is not limited to, cooperative education, internships, clinical experiences, and other related opportunities. The Superintendent is authorized to develop guidelines and procedures in accordance with the regulations of the Alabama State Department of Education for work-based learning experiences to be conducted in the school system, including, but not limited to, guidelines for decision making and protocol for solving problems at the workplace and school.

[Reference: Ala. Admin. Code 290-6-1-.04]

- 7.9.2 Live Work – Live work consists of work conducted by students that relates to the knowledge and skills taught as part of a CTE program of study, but is presented from outside the classroom. The Superintendent is authorized to develop for Board approval guidelines and procedures in accordance with the regulations of the Alabama State Department of Education and any applicable Business/Industry Certification requirements for live work to be conducted in the school system, including, but not limited to, a systematic method for managing live work, work requests and orders, and procedures for approval of where and for whom work may be conducted, school liability, and restrictions on live work. Any money collected for live work will be accounted for in accordance with the Board’s Finance Manual.

- 7.9.3 Safety – To the extent practicable, reasonable safety procedures will be implemented in the Career and Technical Education program in accordance with Alabama State Department of Education regulations and any applicable Business/Industry Certification requirements.

[Reference: Ala. Admin. Code 290-6-1-.04]

7.10 *Foreign Exchange Programs*

The Superintendent is authorized to develop guidelines and procedures, to be approved by the Board, under which foreign exchange students may attend Escambia County Schools and Escambia County students may participate in foreign exchange programs.

7.11 *Extended Programs: Community Education*

Upon their approval by the Board, the Superintendent is authorized to implement programs and projects designed to meet the needs of the community served by the school system in accordance with any laws or regulations governing such programs.

[Reference: Ala. Admin. Code 290-080-050]

7.12 *Graduation, Certificate of Completion, and Commencement*

Students who have satisfactorily completed requisite course work, met minimum attendance criteria, and passed any required examinations are eligible for graduation. Students who have fulfilled coursework requirements but who have not passed any required graduation examination are eligible to participate in graduation ceremonies and will be presented with a “certificate of completion.” Student participation in graduation ceremonies and related graduation activities will be subject to the principal’s approval and payment of outstanding financial obligations. Participation in a graduation-related ceremony may be prohibited by the principal if the student violates disciplinary standards or if, in the judgment of the principal, the student’s participation could lead or contribute to disorder or disruption of the ceremony or activity.

7.12.1 Valedictorian/Salutatorian

- a. *Criteria* – The valedictorian and salutatorian for the graduating class of each high school must have been enrolled in the high school on or before the first day of the student’s senior year. The student with the highest numerical grade average (calculated and weighted as prescribed in the grading section above) will be the class valedictorian. The student with the second highest numerical grade average shall be the class salutatorian. In calculating the numerical grade average, all grades beginning with the ninth grade through the third (3rd) nine (9) weeks of the student’s senior year will be used. The calculated average will be carried out four decimal places and rounded off. In the case of a tie, students having the same average will be recognized as co-valedictorians and co-salutatorians.

Escambia County Board of Education

- b. *Grade Conversion* – Where letter grades are present on a candidate’s transcript from a previously attended school, the candidate must have the respective school(s) submit the grades in numerical form. If school officials of the school the student previously attended cannot or will not convert the letter grades to numerical grades, the letter grades will be converted to numerical grades as follows:

| | | | | |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------|
| A+ = 99 | B+ = 89 | C+ = 79 | D+ = 69 | F = 55 |
| A = 95 | B = 85 | C = 75 | D = 65 | |
| A- = 90 | B- = 80 | C- = 70 | D- = 60 | |

Issues or uncertainties regarding eligibility or grade calculation will be resolved by the school principal in consultation with the Superintendent.

- 7.12.2 Early Graduation – Students may exit high school if they have reached their seventeenth (17th) birthday and have successfully completed all the requirements necessary to earn an Alabama High School Diploma. The Superintendent or his or her designee is authorized to develop procedures as he/she deems necessary to implement this policy including, but not limited to, eligibility criteria, methods for informing students and parents of the requirements and procedures, and a process for making determinations regarding a student’s eligibility for Early Graduation.
- 7.12.3 Fifth Year Seniors – Upon the recommendation of the counselor and approval of the principal, a student who has completed four full academic years of high school but who has not completed the required course work for graduation will be allowed to attend the number of class periods necessary to complete the courses required for graduation.

7.13 *School Wellness*

In furtherance of its commitment to fostering healthy nutritional and physical activities that support student achievement and that promote the development of lifelong wellness practices, the Board endorses the following programs, practices, and activities:

- 7.13.1 Nutrition Education and Promotion – Nutrition education that teaches the knowledge, skills, and values needed to develop healthy eating behaviors and nutrition promotion that promotes and reinforces student health will be integrated into the curriculum and offered throughout school campuses, including school dining areas and classrooms, by appropriately trained personnel.
- 7.13.2 Nutrition Standards and Guidelines – The Board will ensure that reimbursable school meals meet the program requirements and nutritional standards established by applicable state and federal regulations. The Board will encourage students to make nutritious food choices and will monitor all food and beverages sold or served to students, including those available outside federally regulated child

nutrition programs. The Board will consider nutrient density and portion size before permitting food and beverages to be sold or served to students.

- 7.13.3 Physical Education and Physical Activity Opportunities – The Board will offer physical education opportunities that include the components of a sound physical education program. Physical education will equip students with the knowledge, skills, and values necessary to maintain healthful lifelong physical activity. Physical education instruction will be aligned with the curriculum. All students will be provided the opportunity to participate regularly in supervised physical activities that are intended to maintain physical fitness and to impart the benefits of maintaining a physically active and healthy lifestyle.
- 7.13.4 Other School-Based Activities Designed to Promote Student Wellness – The Board may implement other programs that help create a school environment that conveys consistent wellness messages and that is conducive to healthy eating and physical activity.
- 7.13.5 Administrative Implementation – The Superintendent is authorized to develop and implement administrative rules and directives that are consistent with this policy and to oversee the implementation and periodic review and update of the wellness policy based on input from teachers (including specialists in health and physical education), school nurses, parents and guardians, students, representatives of the school food service program, school board members, school administrators, and the public .

The Superintendent will report to the Board, as requested, on programs and efforts that are designed to meet the purpose and intent of this policy and will inform and update the public regarding the content and implementation of the wellness program. The Superintendent will ensure each local schools compliance with the wellness policy and will measure periodically and make available to the public an assessment of the implementation of the wellness policy, including the extent to which schools are in compliance with the policy, the extent to which the policy compares to model policy and to describe the progress made in attaining the goals of the policy.

7.14 *Selection of Instructional Materials and Materials for the School Libraries*

The Superintendent is authorized to develop criteria for approval by the Board for selection of materials (other than textbooks) that are used in conjunction with student instruction and for circulation in school libraries. The Superintendent is further authorized to develop a procedure for review of objections to instructional and library materials.

7.15 Parental and Family Engagement

In order to comply with the requirements of section 1116 of Every Student Succeeds Act (“ESSA”), the Board will comply with the following requirements:

7.15.1 Joint development of required plans –The school system will involve parents and family members in jointly developing the Board’s Title I, Part A plan, and the development of school support and improvement plans as required by the ESSA.

7.15.2 Coordination of activities within the school system –The school system will provide the coordination, technical assistance, and other support necessary to assist and build the capacity of all participating schools within the school system in planning and implementing effective parent and family involvement activities designed to improve student academic achievement and school performance. Such coordination may include meaningful consultation with employers, business leaders, and philanthropic organizations, or individuals with expertise in effectively engaging parents and family members in education.

7.15.3 Coordination with other laws and programs – The school system will coordinate and integrate parent and family engagement strategies to the extent feasible and appropriate, with other relevant Federal, State, and local laws and programs.

7.15.4 Annual evaluation – The school system will conduct, with the meaningful involvement of parents and family members, an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of the parent and family engagement policy in improving the academic quality of all schools served under this part, including identifying—

- a. Barriers to greater participation by parents/families in activities authorized by this section (with particular attention to parents who are economically disadvantaged, are disabled, have limited English proficiency, have limited literacy, or are of any racial or ethnic minority background);
- b. The needs of parents and family members to assist with the learning of their children, including engaging with school personnel and teachers; and
- c. Strategies to support successful school and family interactions.

The school system will use the findings of the annual evaluation to design evidence-based strategies for more effective parental and family engagement, and to revise, if necessary, the parent and family engagement policies described in this section.

7.15.5 Involvement of parents/family members – The school system will involve parents in the activities of the schools, which may include establishing a parent advisory board comprised of a sufficient number and representative group of parents or

Escambia County Board of Education

family members served by the school system to adequately represent the needs of the population. This advisory board will help develop, revise, and review the parent and family engagement policy.

[Reference: 20 U.S.C.A.§ 6318(a)(2)]

Escambia County Board of Education

Instructional Program

Policy Manual

Revised September 14, 2017

May 17, 2018

August 15, 2019