

## COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS

Each middle and secondary school provides for the early identification and enrollment of students in a program with a range of educational and academic experiences related to college and career readiness in and outside the classroom, including an emphasis on experiences that will motivate disadvantaged and minority students to prepare for a career or postsecondary education.

Each elementary, middle, and secondary school provides for the identification by all students of personal interests and abilities to support planning for postsecondary opportunities and career preparation. Such support includes provision of information concerning exploration of career cluster areas in elementary schools, and course information and planning for college preparation programs, opportunities for educational and academic experiences in and outside the classroom, including internships and work-based learning, and the multiple pathways to college and career readiness in middle and high school.

Beginning in the elementary school years, students explore the different occupations associated with career clusters and select an area or areas of interest. Students begin the development of an academic and career plan portfolio (ACPP) in elementary grades to include information about interests, values such as dependability and responsibility, and skills supporting decisions about their future interests and goals. The information contained in the ACPP serves as the foundation for creating the Academic and Career Plan (ACP) in grade 7.

In middle school, students complete a locally selected career interest inventory and select a career pathway. To support development of the ACP, students complete at least one course in career investigation selected from the career and technical education state-approved list, or a school division-provided alternative means of delivering the career investigation course content, provided that the alternative is equivalent in content and academic rigor.

The School Board may require such courses in career investigation at the high school level as it deems appropriate, subject to approval by the Board of Education. The School Board may require such courses in career investigation at the elementary school level as it deems appropriate.

All schools continue development of a personal ACP with each seventh-grade student with completion by the end of the fall semester of the student's eighth-grade year. The components of the ACP include the student's program of study for high school graduation and a postsecondary career pathway based on the student's academic and career interests. In high school, a career-related learning experience is chosen by the student and documented in the ACP.

The ACP is developed in accordance with guidelines established by the Board of Education and signed by the student, student's parent or guardian, and school official or officials designated by the principal. The ACP is included in the student's record and is

reviewed and updated annually. Lists, as compiled annually by the Department of Education and provided to the School Board, of 1) the top 100 professions in Virginia by median pay and the education, training and skills required for each such profession and 2) the top 10 degree programs at institutions of higher education in Virginia by median pay of program graduates are included as part of each student's ACP.

Beginning in the middle school years, students are counseled on opportunities for beginning postsecondary education and opportunities for obtaining industry certifications, occupational competency credentials, or professional licenses in a career and technical education field prior to high school graduation as described in Policy LEB Advanced/Alternative Courses for Credit. Such opportunities include access to at least three Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), or Cambridge courses or three college-level courses for degree credit pursuant to 8 VAC 20-131-100. Students taking advantage of such opportunities are not denied participation in school activities for which they are otherwise eligible. Wherever possible, students are encouraged and afforded opportunities to take college courses simultaneously for high school graduation and college degree credit (dual enrollment), under the following conditions:

- a. Written approval of the high school principal prior to participation in dual enrollment must be obtained;
- b. The college must accept the student for admission to the course or courses; and
- c. The course or courses must be given by the college for degree credits (no remedial courses will be accepted).

Information that assists high school students in making informed decisions about their futures after graduating from high school and ensures that such students are aware of the costs and benefits of different educational and certificate programs, as collected and compiled by the Virginia Department of Education in consultation with the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, is readily available to each high school student. The information is distributed to each high school student who expresses an interest in attending an institution of higher education or completing a training program.

Adopted: August 27, 2018

Revised: March 29, 2021, November 7, 2022, May 8, 2023

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Legal Refs.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 22.1-206.2, 22.1-253.13:1, 22.1-253.13:3.

8 VAC 20-131-140.

Cross Ref.: IGAD Career and Technical Education  
IJ Guidance and Counseling Program  
JO Student Records  
LEB Advanced/Alternative Courses for Credit