SECTION A: Foundations and Basic Commitments

AA	School Division Legal Status
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AD	Educational Philosophy
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AF	Comprehensive Plan
AFA	Evaluation of School Board Operational Procedures

File: AA

SCHOOL DIVISION LEGAL STATUS

The Constitution of Virginia provides that the General Assembly establish a system of free public elementary and secondary schools for all children of school age throughout the state, and seek to ensure that an educational program of high quality is established and continually maintained. The General Assembly requires that such an educational system be maintained and administered by the Board of Education, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, division superintendents and school boards. The Board of Education divides the Commonwealth into school divisions of such geographical area and school-age population as will promote the realization of the standards of quality and will periodically review the adequacy of existing school divisions for this purpose. The supervision of schools in **Southampton County** school division is vested in Southampton County School Board.

Adopted:

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Legal Refs.: Constitution of Virginia, article VIII, §§ 1, 5, 7.

Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 22.1-2, 22.1-28.

Cross Ref.:	BB	School Board Legal Status
	BBAA	Board Member Authority

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File: AC

NONDISCRIMINATION

The Southampton County School Board is committed to nondiscrimination with regard to sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, race, color, ethnic or national origin, disability, religion, ancestry, age, marital status, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions, military status, genetic information or any other characteristic protected by law. This commitment prevails in all of its policies and practices concerning staff, students, educational programs and services, and individuals and entities with whom the Board does business.

Adopted:

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Legal Refs.: 20 U.S.C. §§ 1681-1688.
29 U.S.C. § 794.
42 U.S.C. §§ 2000d-2000d-7, 2000e-2000e-17, 2000ff-1.

34 C.F.R. 106.9.

Constitution of Virginia, article I, section 11.

Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 2.2-3900, 2.2-3901, 2.2-3902, 2.2-3904, 2.2-3905, 2.2-3905.1, 22.1-23.3, 22.1-26.2, 22.1-295.2.

Cross Refs.:		
	FECBB	Accommodations for Individuals with Disabilities
	GB	Equal Employment Opportunity/Nondiscrimination
	GBA/JFHA	Prohibition Against Harassment and Retaliation
	JB	Equal Educational Opportunities/Nondiscrimination

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File: AD

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

Southampton County School Board is committed to providing equal opportunity for every student to achieve intellectual, social, emotional, and physical growth and to ensuring that each student be equipped to communicate effectively with other people, to be competent both in the work place and in higher education and to feel confident of the ability to make creative and constructive decisions.

Southampton County School Board:

- provides the necessary trained and dedicated leadership, qualified personnel, equipment, and materials to assure an appropriate education for every student;
- treats all members of the school community equitably and with respect; and
- allocates and uses assets fairly and efficiently.

[NOTE FROM VSBA IN JULY 2026: THE LANGUAGE ABOVE IS ONLY AN EXAMPLE FOR SCHOOL BOARDS TO CONSIDER. SCHOOL BOARDS MAY ELECT TO USE THE LANGUAGE AND INSERT ADDITIONAL MISSION, CORE VALUES, EDUCATIONAL PRIORITIES, COMMUNITY COMMITMENTS, OR OTHER LOCALLY DEVELOPED GOALS THAT REFLECT LOCAL PRIORITIES THAT ARE ALIGNED WITH SCHOOL BOARD POLICIES AND APPLICABLE LAWS.]

Adopted:

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Legal Refs.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 22.1-23.3, 22.1-78.

Cross Refs.:	AC	Nondiscrimination
	GA	Personnel Policies Goals
	GB	Equal Employment Opportunity/Nondiscrimination
	GBA/JFHA	Prohibition Against Harassment and Retaliation
	IGBC	Parent and Family Engagement
	JB	Equal Education Opportunities/Nondiscrimination

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File: AE

SCHOOL DIVISION GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Generally

The **Southampton County Public** School Division is committed to excellence in education, equality of educational opportunity, and the recognition of each student's individuality. Inasmuch as students differ in their rate of physical, mental, emotional, and social growth and vary in their needs and abilities, learning opportunities are provided that are consistent with personal development and potential. Programs emphasize diagnostic and prescriptive instruction, allowing an individual approach to each student's learning style and educational needs.

The educational program introduces each student to a variety of interests and subject areas that offer exposure to the range of opportunities available in later years. These experiences produce the basis for further education and future employment. As students demonstrate increased maturity, they may assume more responsibility for the decisions regarding their education.

The school environment should be responsive and conducive to learning. The physical environment facilitates and enhances the learning experiences available to each student. A responsive environment includes competent, dedicated teachers using a variety of techniques and a classroom atmosphere where students can function and develop according to their abilities. Safety, physical comfort, and well-maintained facilities are vital environmental components.

Standards of Quality and Objectives

The School Board accepts the overall goals of public education as expressed in the Standards of Quality legislated by the Virginia General Assembly and implemented by Virginia Board of Education regulations.

The Board and the Superintendent report division compliance with the Standards of Quality to the Board of Education annually in a manner consistent with the Board guidelines.

Standards of Quality--Programs and Services

The School Board commits itself to providing programs and services consistent with the Standards of Quality and applicable state and federal funding provisions.

Adopted:

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Legal Ref.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 22.1-23.3, 22.1-253.13:1, 22.1-253.13:8.

Cross Ref.: IA Instructional Goals and Objectives
IK Academic Planning and Course Selection

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File: AF

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The **Southampton County** School Board adopts a divisionwide comprehensive, unified, long-range plan based on data collection, an analysis of the data, and how the data will be utilized to improve classroom instruction and student achievement. The plan is developed with staff and community involvement and includes, or is consistent with, all other divisionwide plans required by state and federal laws and regulations. The School Board reviews the plan biennially and adopts any necessary revisions. Prior to the adoption of the plan or revisions thereto, the School Board posts the plan or revisions on the division's official website if practicable, makes a hard copy of the plan or revisions available for public inspection and copying, and conducts at least one public hearing to solicit public comment on the plan or revisions.

The divisionwide comprehensive plan includes:

- the objectives of the school division, including strategies for (a) improving student achievement, particularly the achievement of educationally at-risk students, (b) maintaining high levels of student achievement, and (c) supporting student achievement through the adoption and implementation of textbooks and other high-quality instructional materials;
- an assessment of the extent to which these objectives are being achieved;
- a forecast of enrollment changes;
- a plan for projecting and managing enrollment changes including consideration of the consolidation of schools to provide for a more comprehensive and effective delivery of instructional services to students and economies in school operations;
- an evaluation of the appropriateness of establishing regional programs and services in cooperation with neighboring school divisions;
- a plan for implementing such regional programs and services when appropriate;
- a technology plan designed to integrate educational technology into the instructional programs of the school division, including the division's career and technical education programs, consistent with or as part of the comprehensive technology plan for Virginia adopted by the Board of Education;
- an assessment of the needs of the school division and evidence of community participation, including parental participation, in the development of the plan;
- any corrective action plan required pursuant to Va. Code § 22.1-253.13:3; **and**
- a plan for parent and family involvement to include building successful school and parent partnerships that will be developed with staff and community involvement, including participation by parents.

The divisionwide comprehensive plan also includes a divisionwide literacy plan for pre-kindergarten through grade eight in accordance with Virginia law and as identified in **[*INSERT DIVISION POLICY ON LITERACY PLAN (VSBA SAMPLE POLICY AG:* Southampton County Public Schools Policy AG: Literacy Plan**.]

The School Board presents a report to the public by November 1 of each odd-numbered year on the extent to which the objectives of the divisionwide comprehensive plan have been met during the previous two school years.

Each school prepares a comprehensive, unified, long-range plan, which the school board considers in the development of the divisionwide comprehensive plan.

Adopted:

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Legal Ref.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, § 22.1-253.13:6.

Cross Ref.:	AG	Literacy Plan
	IIAA	Textbook Selection, Adoption, and Purchase
	KA	Goals for School-Community Relations

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File: AFA

EVALUATION OF SCHOOL BOARD OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

The School Board reviews its performance annually to ensure its proper discharge of responsibilities to the community. Evaluation is based on a positive approach, identifying the strengths of the School Board and opportunities for improvement.

The following elements are included in the self-evaluation process:

1. School Board members are involved in the development of an evaluation instrument and procedure.
2. The School Board evaluation instrument is completed by individual Board members and submitted to the School Board Chairman, or the Chairman's designee, for compilation.
3. The School Board meets, with all members present, to review and discuss the composite results.
4. Each conclusion is supported by objective evidence.

Based on discussion of the results, the School Board develops both short-and long-range goals and objectives to ensure continued proficiency in its areas of excellence, to strengthen weak areas and to improve the efficiency of the Board.

Adopted:

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Legal Ref.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, § 22.1-78.

Cross Refs.:	AE	School Division Goals and Objectives
	AF	Comprehensive Plan
	BBA	School Board Powers and Duties

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Date	Policy Code	Policy Name	VSBA Explanation of Revision
May 2024 NEW	AG	Literacy Plan	Policy created to comply with the Virginia Literacy Act established in 2022 by HB 319 and amended by HB 1526, HB 2137, and SB 1175 in 2023 and HB 647/SB 624 in 2024.

File: AG

LITERACY PLAN

The Southampton County School Board adopts a divisionwide literacy plan for grade levels pre-kindergarten through grade eight as part of its divisionwide comprehensive plan identified in Policy AF Comprehensive Plan. The School Board uses programs from the lists developed by the Virginia Department of Education (the Department) or seeks approval from the Department for the use of alternative programs that consist of evidence-based literacy instruction and align with science-based reading research.

The School Board posts, maintains, and updates as necessary on the School Board's website a copy of its divisionwide literacy plan and the job description and contact information for any reading specialist employed by the division pursuant to Virginia Code § 22.1-253.13:2(G) and for any dyslexia specialist employed by such school division. The School Board submits its divisionwide literacy plan to the Department.

The divisionwide literacy plan includes:

- a program of literacy instruction that is aligned with science-based reading research and provides evidenced-based literacy instruction to students in kindergarten through grade eight;
- the School Board's alignment with (a) literacy professional development, (b) core reading and literacy curriculum for students in kindergarten through grade five, and (c) screening, supplemental instruction, and interventions for students through grade eight with evidence-based literacy instruction practices aligned with science-based reading research;
- how the School Board supports parents in their support of the literacy development of their children;
- reading intervention services provided to students in kindergarten through grade eight who demonstrate substantial deficiencies based on their individual performance on the Standards of Learning reading assessment or a literacy screener provided by the Department; and
- identification of which core literacy curricula, supplemental instructional practices and programs, and intervention programs from the list developed by the Department or alternative programs approved by the Department that consist of evidence-based literacy

instruction and align with science-based reading research are used in each grade level, kindergarten through 12, at each of the schools within the division.

Adopted:

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Legal Ref.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 22.1-1, 22.1-253.13:1, 22.1-253.13:2, and 22.1-253.13:6.

Cross Ref.:

AF	Comprehensive Plan
GCA	Reading Specialists
GCL	Professional Staff Development
IA	Instructional Goals and Objectives
IGBD	Programs for Students with Reading Deficiencies
IKH	Retaking SOL Assessments

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Date	Policy Code	Policy Name	VSBA Explanation of Revision
May 2024 NEW	AH	Digital Accessibility	The provisions of Va. Code §§ 2.2-3500 through 2.2-3505 are effective for school divisions located in a locality with a population of **50,000 or more** persons beginning **April 24, 2026**. The provisions are effective for school divisions located in a locality with a population of **less than 50,000** persons beginning **April 26, 2027**. For additional information on procuring technology, see https://www.vita.virginia.gov/procurement/forms-policies/buy-it-manual/. For the Information and Communications Technology Access Clause, see https://www.vita.virginia.gov/procurement/forms-policies/mandatory-contract-terms/?utm. If a division opts not to designate a Digital Accessibility Coordinator, the name of another individual to whom reports of barriers to digital accessibility may be reported must be posted.

File: AH

DIGITAL ACCESSIBILITY

Background

The **Southampton County** School Board recognizes that information and communications technology (ICT) is a fundamental tool for education, employment, and public access. Universal access to ICT is essential to ensure that students, employees, and members of the public with disabilities have equitable access to the activities of the school division. Accessible technology prevents exclusion and ensures compliance with state and federal disability laws.

Policy Statement

In accordance with the Virginia Information Technology Access Act, Va. Code § 2.2-3500 et seq., it is the policy of the **Southampton County** School Board that all ICT purchased, acquired, or developed in-house for use by students, employees, program participants, and the general public be accessible to individuals with disabilities. The School Division ensures that individuals with disabilities have access to and use of information and data that is equivalent to the access and use provided to individuals without disabilities, unless an exception applies under federal law.

Definitions

“Accessibility” means alignment with federal § 508 standards and § 255 guidelines adopted pursuant to 29 U.S.C. § 794d and 47 U.S.C. § 255, and 28 C.F.R. § 35.200 and all other applicable federal and state laws.

“Accessibility Conformance Report” means a completed Voluntary Product Accessibility Template (VPAT) or other document indicating the conformance of a product to accessibility standards such as federal § 508 Standards and § 255 Guidelines adopted pursuant to 29 U.S.C. § 794d and 47 U.S.C. § 255. The Accessibility Conformance Report shall be completed by a digital accessibility subject matter expert with significant experience with product evaluation or by a qualified neutral third party.

“Information and communications technology” or “ICT” means any website, application, or other product or service primarily intended to fulfill or enable the function of information processing and communication by electronic means, including transmission and display via the Internet.

“Person with a disability” means the same as defined in Va. Code § 51.5-40.1.

Applicability

This policy applies to all ICT external and internal systems that are not included in the exceptions found in 28 C.F.R. § 35.201 or 36 C.F.R. Part 1194, Appendix A, § E202.

Assurance of Accessibility

The Superintendent or designee must ensure that all school division ICT:

- Provides equivalent access to individuals with disabilities.
- Is designed to present information in formats accessible or adaptable to all users.
- Conforms with the requirements of 28 C.F.R. 35.200, whether developed in-house or procured.

Procurement Requirements

All future contracts for the procurement of ICT shall include an “Information and Communications Technology Access Clause.”

- Certification: Vendors must certify that their products conform to accessibility standards.
- Non-Conformance: If a vendor cannot certify conformance, the Division may require a vendor-paid Accessibility Conformance Report and a Vendor Accessibility Roadmap. The roadmap must highlight non-conforming elements and provide a specific timeline for remediation.
- Exceptions: The Division may adopt non-accessible ICT only if its use does not result in individuals with disabilities being denied the benefits of any program, service, or activity, consistent with federal regulations.

Digital Accessibility Coordinator

The Superintendent or designee may designate an employee to serve as the Digital Accessibility Coordinator. This individual:

- Ensures compliance with state and federal laws, including the Virginians with Disabilities Act and the Virginia Human Rights Act, to ensure that ICT and other products or services can be accessed by persons with disabilities;
- Oversees the development and implementation of the school division's digital accessibility policy; and
- Serves as the point of contact for accessibility-related inquiries and reporting.

The name, phone number, email address, and office address of the digital accessibility coordinator will be published in a conspicuous and easily accessible location on the school division's website.

Reporting and Exclusions

The Superintendent or designee shall track any ICT that does not conform to accessibility standards and is not included in the exceptions found in 28 C.F.R. § 35.201 or 36 C.F.R. Part 1194, Appendix A, § E202. Any non-conforming technology not covered by federal exceptions must be reported to the appropriate executive branch agency.

Adopted:

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Legal Ref.:	28 C.F.R. 35.200; 36 C.F.R. Part 1194.	
	Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 2.2-3500 through 2.2-3505, 51.5-1 et seq.	
Cross Ref.:	AC	Nondiscrimination
	DJF	Purchasing Procedures

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