

VII. Instructional Program

7.01 *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.

7.02 *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 members, including 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)]

7.03 *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.

7.03.1 Standards-Based Grading – Students in grades K-12 may be graded based on a standards-based grading scale that is designed to show whether the student has mastered certain learning targets and/or performance standards rather than receiving a letter or numerical grade.

7.03.2 General Grade Scale – Grades for academic course work in grades 3-12 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>
A	90 – 100	4.00
B	80-89	3.00
C	70-79	2.00
D	60-69	1.00
F	Below 60	0.00

7.03.3 Advanced Placement, Dual Enrollment and Honors Grade Scale – Numerical grades in approved Advanced Placement, Dual Enrollment and Honors courses will be weighted in accordance with the guidelines contained in the applicable Student Code of Conduct.

7.03.4 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.

7.03.5 Report Cards – Report cards reflecting student progress will be provided to the parents or legal guardians of students on a regularly scheduled basis.

7.03.6 Promotion – Students are promoted from grade to grade based on 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 and in accordance with applicable law. Students who are eligible for promotion from grade to grade may nevertheless be retained by agreement of the parents and appropriate school officials.

[Reference: Ala. Code. §16-6G-1, *et seq.*]

7.03.7 Class Rankings – Beginning with the ninth grade of high school, all students will be ranked in accordance with the guidelines contained in the applicable Student Code of Conduct.

7.03.8 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)]

7.04 *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.

7.05 *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

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)]

7.06 *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)]

7.07 *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)]

7.08 *Virtual School Option*

7.08.1 Scope and Delivery of Services – The school system provides a virtual school option to full-time students in grades 9-12 who meet its enrollment requirements which will include, at a minimum, all courses that are required to obtain a high school diploma. Such courses may be delivered through the Alabama State Department of Education’s ACCESS program or another program approved by the Board. This policy also applies to any other virtual school option approved by the Board.

7.08.2 Student Eligibility Criteria – Students must meet any eligibility requirements of the Alabama State Department of Education’s ACCESS program, if applicable. In addition, students must meet school system enrollment requirements for the virtual program in question including, but not limited to, those contained in the school system’s student handbook or a similar document.

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.

A dependent of a member of the United States Armed Forces who has received orders to relocate in Alabama shall be considered a resident of Alabama and the school system for purposes of enrolling in and attending the school system’s virtual program.

- 7.08.3 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 that are applicable to students enrolled in the traditional day program.

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.

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

- 7.08.5 Extracurricular Activities – Students must meet the same extracurricular activity eligibility requirements as students enrolled in the traditional day program, 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.

- 7.08.6 Additional Procedures Authorized –The Superintendent or his 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, *et. seq.*]

7.09 Career and Technical Education Programs

The Career and Technical Education Program (CTE) consists of areas of study that blend academic, occupational, and life skills. The CTE program will be administered in accordance with the requirements of the Alabama State Department of Education and the board.

7.09.1 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]

7.09.2 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 state and/or federal 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.

7.09.3 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 state and/or federal requirements.

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

7.10 Foreign Exchange Program

The Superintendent is authorized to develop guidelines and procedures under which foreign exchange students may attend Alexander City Schools and Alexander City 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 and Commencement*

To obtain an Alabama high school diploma, a student must earn the credits mandated by the applicable Alabama Administrative Code requirements and meet any other requirements mandated by state law or the Alabama State Department of Education.

A student with a disability (as defined by the IDEA) who has met the applicable Alabama Administrative Code requirements and/or any other requirements provided by state or federal law will receive either a diploma or a graduation certificate as appropriate.

A student who has satisfactorily completed one of the above requirements is eligible to participate in graduation ceremonies as a member of the graduating class. Student participation in graduation-related ceremonies will be subject to the principal's approval and 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.

[Reference: Ala. Admin. Code R. §§290-3-1-.02(8); 290-8-9-.10(9)]

7.12.1 Honor Graduates –Students who meet the requirements contained in the applicable Student Code of Conduct.

7.12.2 Valedictorian/Salutatorian –The Valedictorian and Salutatorian will be selected in accordance with the criteria contained in the applicable Student Code of Conduct.

7.12.3 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.

7.12.4 Fifth Year Seniors – Upon approval of the principal, a fifth-year senior or a student eligible to graduate during the current scholastic year may attend only the

number of class periods necessary to take the courses needed to complete requirements for his/her diploma.

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 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)]

7.16 *Alabama Released Time Credit Act*

7.16.1 Alabama Released Time Credit Act – Pursuant to the *Alabama Released Time Credit Act*, school districts may offer released time classes and, in grades where credit is earned, award students elective credit for classes taken during the school day in released time programs.

"Released time" is defined by the Act as a period of time *during the school day* when a student is allowed to participate in an elective course in religious instruction, conducted *off school district property*, by a private entity.

7.16.2 Student Participation and Earned Credits –

- a. A student may participate in released time elective courses if all requirements of the LEA's Released Time Program *and* all the following are satisfied:
 - i. The parent or guardian of the student gives written consent.
 - ii. The sponsoring entity maintains attendance records and makes them available to the public school the student attends.
 - iii. The sponsoring entity makes provisions for and assumes liability for the student who is excused for released time.
 - iv. No public funds are expended other than de minimis administrative costs.
 - v. No public school personnel are involved in providing the religious instruction.

- b. Elective course credit may be earned if the course content and curriculum are approved by the local board in accordance with the *Alabama Administrative Code* and other ALSDE guidelines.

7.16.3 Attendance –

- a. No student may be released from a required core curriculum class to attend released time.
- b. No student may be released more than six (6) hours per week to attend released time.
- c. Student attendance in released time shall be calculated as part of the school day and subject to all normal attendance rules.

7.16.4 Transportation – Transportation to and from the place of released time, including transportation for any student with disabilities, is the complete responsibility of the sponsoring private entity, parent, guardian, or student and may not be arranged, coordinated, or provided for by public school personnel.

[Alabama Act. 2019-281]

7.17 *Extended Learning Opportunities*

7.17.1 Application Process for Accepting and Approving ELOs Offered for Credit by Outside Entities – Extended Learning Opportunities (ELOs) shall involve partnerships between local education agencies, parents or guardians, students, and outside entities who will be providing or assisting with high-quality instruction. Such partnerships shall clearly delineate the responsibilities of each partner and provide structures to guide the ELO.

7.17.2 Entities That Are Eligible to Submit Applications to Offer ELOs – According to Alabama Code section 16-46C-5, eligible entities shall include, but not be limited to, all of the following:

1. Nonprofit organizations.
2. Businesses with established locations in the state.
3. Trade associations.
4. Any of the Armed Forces of the United States, subject to applicable age requirements.

Partnership agreements with eligible entities shall comply with all federal and state labor laws and must include provisions for ensuring that students are supervised by approved individuals who meet and agree to guidelines set forth by the school system.

7.17.3 Process for Students to Follow for Requesting Credit -

- a. The ELO application is to be completed by the student, a certified educator, parent/guardian, ELO partner (supervising member of the eligible entity), superintendent or designee. At the time of application, the responsible entities will select the amount of elective credit to be awarded and will set the guidelines for awarding such credit.
- b. No student shall receive more than one (1) credit for any given ELO.
- c. Grading, calculation of GPA, and inclusion of ELO credit on the student transcript will be completed in accordance with the school board policies and procedures governing courses provided by the school system.
- d. The student and the certified educator will research the competencies/skills that can be met through the ELO to establish general expectations and goals for the project. The student and the certified educator will work together to develop an overview of the project.
- e. The student, a certified school personnel, family member/ adult advocate, and community member/non-school based mentor, will work as a team to provide a detailed plan that includes standards and assessment strategies and clearly defined grading criteria.
- f. Matriculation through the ELO requires benchmarks that may include, but are not limited to, small projects, rehearsals, practices, drafts, artifacts, or other work that allows the student to move towards competency mastery.
- g. Students with IEPs and 504 Plans shall be given the appropriate accommodations so that they can construct meaning from their ELO experience.

7.17.4 Criteria to Determine Whether a Proposed ELO Shall Be Approved to Count Toward Credit – ELOs shall, at a minimum, meet the following criteria:

- a. *Program and Activities*
 1. Includes a written learning plan.
 2. Activities are aligned to national, state and/or local standards.
 3. Offers engaging activities and promotes leadership skills.
 4. Provides student opportunity to demonstrate evidence of learning/mastery of skills through research, reflection and product/application of skills.

5. Includes a space that provides clear evidence of student input into the decision-making process. (Essential Question, Specific Learning Objectives, Personal Learning Goals, choice in activities, product)
6. Includes a space that provides clear evidence of the partnership between the school, family representative, community, and student.
7. Includes a space for activity assessment information.

b. *Equitable Access*

1. Accessible to all students, including students who have attendance issues, are failing classes, have diverse learning needs, are non-responsive to traditional teaching methods, and/or receiving additional services (i.e. IEP, Gifted, 504, EL).
2. Employs culturally competent and responsive practices.
3. Students with IEPs and 504 plans are given support and accommodations in order to effectively present their work.

c. *Stakeholder Involvement*

1. Promotes working partnerships with students, families, schools and communities.
2. Utilizes trained/skilled staff.

d. *Safety and Wellness*

1. Promotes a safe learning environment and sets guidelines for supervision of student(s).
2. Nurtures positive relationships among staff and participants.
3. Program activities address physical, cognitive, social, creative, and emotional development.

e. *Program Supervision*

1. Clearly identifies the certified faculty member who will oversee and assess student's progress in the ELO and to ensure that the student receives appropriate elective credit which is recorded on the student transcript.
2. The ELO plan/template is assessed, revisited and updated on a regular basis.

3. Timeline of student progress checks is included in the plan.

7.17.5 Criteria to Award a Student a Certificate of Completion and Credit for Completing an Approved ELO -

1. Assessments of ELOs shall be based upon the process and work product described in the application and learning plan.
2. Once the student satisfactorily completes the ELO, a signed copy of the ELO application shall be placed in the student cumulative record to document the standards by which the credit was awarded and transcribed.

[REFERENCE : ALA. CODE §16-46c-1, et. seq.]