



Fairfax County School Board

Strategic Governance Manual

Adopted: December 7, 2006
Effective: January 1, 2007
Last Revised: November 11, 2013

BELIEFS

Each student is entitled to an excellent education that meets his or her individual needs.

Effective educators are essential to student success.

We thrive in a vibrant, healthful, safe, enriching, and respectful environment.

A well-rounded education enables students to lead productive, fulfilling, creative and culturally rich lives

A successful education system fosters effective communication, critical thinking, creativity and collaboration.

A dynamic partnership among students, parents, educators and with the community is critical to meet student needs and provide enriching experiences.

Families play a fundamental role in their children's education.

Our diversity is a strength that creates resilient, open and innovative global citizens.

High expectations inspire high performance.

An educated citizenry sustains our economy and our system of self-governance.

Self-motivation and personal responsibility are keys to future success.

Early childhood education is crucial to school readiness and future success.

Reading proficiency by third grade is critical for the academic success of all students.

VISION

Looking to the Future

FCPS prepares all students for the world of the future by giving them a broad spectrum of opportunities to prepare for education and employment beyond high school. All graduates are productive and responsible members of society, capable of competing in the global economy and motivated to pursue learning throughout their lifetimes.

Commitment to Opportunity

FCPS values its diversity, and acknowledges that all people contribute to the well-being of the community. FCPS provides opportunities for all its students and employees to grow educationally, personally, and professionally.

Community Support

Fairfax County embraces its schools. Businesses and community members generously volunteer their time and resources to help students. Schools are integrated into the fabric of the community, and residents take pride in their schools. The success of FCPS draws businesses to Fairfax County. Citizens support the financial and capital needs of the school system.

Achievement

Fairfax County students achieve at high levels in all core areas and across a broad spectrum of pursuits. FCPS values a well-rounded education that goes beyond basics, and encompasses the arts, technology, communication, and critical thinking skills in preparation for the work of the world. FCPS provides a breadth and depth of opportunities to allow all students to stretch their capabilities and pursue their passions.

Accountability

FCPS is accountable for the academic achievement of all students. FCPS measures academic progress, to ensure that all students, regardless of race, poverty, language or disability, will graduate with the knowledge and skills necessary for college and/or employment. FCPS spends money wisely. FCPS directs funds to the classroom, and finds ways to improve performance across the spectrum of academic programs and business processes.

MISSION

Fairfax County Public Schools inspires and empowers students to meet high academic standards, lead ethical lives, and be responsible and innovative global citizens.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT GOALS

1. Pursue Academic Excellence

All students will be literate, able to obtain, understand, analyze, integrate, communicate and apply knowledge and skills to achieve success in school and in life. Academic progress in the core disciplines will be measured to ensure that all students, regardless of race, poverty, language or disability, will graduate with the knowledge and skills necessary for college and/or employment, effectively eliminating achievement gaps.

Students will:

- 1.1. Achieve their full academic potential in the core disciplines of:
 - 1.1.1. English Language Arts: reading, writing, oral communication.
 - 1.1.2. Math.
 - 1.1.3. Science.
 - 1.1.4. Social Studies.
- 1.2. Communicate in at least two languages.
- 1.3. Explore, understand, and value the fine and practical arts.
- 1.4. Understand the interrelationship and interdependence of the countries and cultures of the world.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT GOALS

2. Develop Essential Life Skills

All students will demonstrate the aptitude, attitude, and skills to lead responsible, fulfilling, and respectful lives.

Working in partnership with school and family, students will:

- 2.1. Demonstrate honesty, responsibility, and leadership.
- 2.2. Courageously identify and pursue their personal goals.
- 2.3. Develop the resilience and self-confidence required to deal effectively with life's challenges.
- 2.4. Possess the skills to manage and resolve conflict.
- 2.5. Work effectively within a group dynamic.
- 2.6. Demonstrate respect for cross-cultural differences and perspectives.
- 2.7. Develop practical life skills including but not limited to:
 - 2.7.1. Time management.
 - 2.7.2. Work habits.
 - 2.7.3. Problem solving/critical thinking.
 - 2.7.4. Financial competency.
 - 2.7.5. Self-sufficiency.
- 2.8. Effectively use technology to access, communicate, and apply knowledge, and foster creativity.
- 2.9. Make healthy and safe life choices.
- 2.10. Be inspired to learn throughout life.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT GOALS

3. Demonstrate Responsibility to the Community and the World

All students will understand and model the important attributes that contribute to the community and the common good.

Students will:

- 3.1. Know and practice the duties, responsibilities, and rights of citizenship in a democratic society.
- 3.2. Be respectful and contributing participants in their school, community, country, and world.
- 3.3. Understand the purpose, role, and means of engaging and advocating with the different levels and types of government.
- 3.4. Exercise good stewardship of the environment.

OPERATIONAL EXPECTATIONS

OE-1

Global Operational Expectation

The Superintendent shall not cause, allow, or fail to take reasonable measures to prevent any practice, activity, decision or organizational condition that is unlawful, unethical, unsafe, disrespectful, imprudent, in violation of School Board policy or endangers the district's public image or credibility.

The Superintendent shall maintain a system of continuous improvement that ensures excellent customer service in the most efficient, effective manner.

The Superintendent shall track, measure, and evaluate FCPS effectiveness in realizing student achievement and improving business processes, including both benefits and costs, in a timely manner.

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Monitoring Method: Internal report

Monitoring Frequency: Annually

Fairfax County School Board

OE-2

Emergency Superintendent Succession

The Superintendent shall designate at least one other executive staff member as acting superintendent who is familiar with the Board's governance process and issues of current concern and is capable of assuming Superintendent responsibilities in his or her absence.

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Treatment of Community Stakeholders

The Superintendent shall maintain an organizational culture that treats community stakeholders with respect, dignity and courtesy, and shall assure that the public is adequately informed about the condition and direction of the district.

The Superintendent shall:

1. Maintain an organizational culture that:
 - a. Values individual differences of opinion.
 - b. Reasonably includes people in decisions that affect them.
 - c. Provides open and honest communication in all written and interpersonal interaction.
 - d. Focuses on common achievement of the Board's **Student Achievement Goals** policies.
 - e. Maintains an open, responsive, and welcoming environment.
 - f. Effectively handles complaints.
2. Assure the timely flow of accurate and meaningful information.
3. Establish and maintain collaborative partnerships to advance the mission and goals of FCPS assuring appropriate input and ongoing, two-way, strategic, and meaningful dialog between the district and its diverse stakeholders.
4. Prepare and publish, on behalf of the Board, a clear, easily accessible and stand-alone annual progress report to the public that includes the following items:
 - a. Data indicating student progress toward accomplishing the Board's **Student Achievement Goals**.
 - b. Information about Board policies, district strategies and operations intended to accomplish the Board's **Student Achievement Goals**.
 - c. Revenues, expenditures, and costs of major programs and a review of the district's financial condition.
 - d. Information about the district's strategies to achieve the Board's vision for the future of student achievement and potential barriers to achieving that vision.

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Fairfax County School Board

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Human Resources

The Superintendent shall recruit, select, and retain a high quality and diverse workforce that enables FCPS to deliver a world-class education to every student in an environment characterized by high staff morale and loyalty to the FCPS mission and goals.

- A. Recruitment, Selection, and Retention. The Superintendent shall:
1. Recruit, hire, and retain a highly qualified and diverse workforce with a reasonable annual turnover rate.
 2. Ensure that all staff members are qualified to perform the responsibilities assigned to them.
 3. Administer appropriate and thorough background inquiries and checks prior to hiring.
 4. Identify and develop a diverse pool of strong leaders to ensure leadership continuity.
- B. Staff Treatment. The Superintendent shall:
5. Value employees' talents and expertise.
 6. Establish a culture of respect that treats all staff members in a fair and balanced manner.
 7. Establish an atmosphere of openness, civility and responsiveness that fosters innovation and empowers employees to participate in identifying organizational needs and the means of implementing improvements.
 8. Seek broad-based staff participation in decision-making, considering various viewpoints and reasoned dissent while achieving sound decision-making.
 9. Establish and communicate clear personnel rules and procedures.
 10. Maintain favorable working conditions to promote high morale.
- C. Staff Evaluation. The Superintendent shall:
11. Consistent with the Superintendent's own evaluation, evaluate all employee performance according to their contribution toward achieving the Board's **Student Achievement Goals** policies and their compliance with the Board's **Operational Expectations** policies.

OE-4

- D. Staff Compensation. The Superintendent shall:
 - 12. Develop fair and competitive compensation and benefit plans that attract and retain the highest quality employees and considers the regional living wage.

- E. Professional Learning and Support. The Superintendent shall:
 - 13. Support and provide effective training designed to increase individual and team performance.

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Fairfax County School Board

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OE-5

Financial Planning

The Superintendent shall develop and maintain a multi-year financial plan that is related directly to the Board's **Student Achievement Goals** priorities and **Operational Expectations** goals, and that avoids long-term fiscal jeopardy to the district.

The Superintendent shall develop a budget that:

1. Is in a summary format that is understandable, transparent and easily accessible by the community and presented in a manner that demonstrates the relationship between the budget and the priorities within the **Student Achievement Goals** and any **Operational Expectations** goals.
2. Accurately describes revenues and expenditures.
3. Shows the amount spent in each budget category for the previous three fiscal years, the amount budgeted for the current fiscal year, and the amount budgeted for the next fiscal year.
4. Explains budget-planning assumptions, identifying significant trends and changes.
5. Provides the Board with a fiscal forecast of needs five (5) years into the future.
6. Reflects anticipated changes in employee compensation, including inflationary adjustments, step increases, performance increases and benefits.
7. Includes such amounts as the Board determines to be necessary for its governing function, including School Board staff, Board member training, consultation, attendance at professional conferences and events, and other matters determined by the Board to be necessary for it to effectively perform its governance duties.

The Superintendent shall not develop a budget that:

8. Plans for the expenditure in any fiscal year of more funds than are conservatively projected to be available during the year.
9. Provides for a School Board flexibility reserve of less than \$8 million.

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Fairfax County School Board

Financial Administration

The Superintendent shall not cause or allow any financial activity or condition that materially deviates from the budget adopted by the Board; cause or allow any fiscal condition that is inconsistent with achieving the Board's **Student Achievement Goals** or meeting any **Operational Expectations** goals; or places the long-term financial health of the district in jeopardy.

The Superintendent shall:

1. Assure that payroll and legitimate debts of the district are promptly paid when due.
2. Assure that all purchases are based upon comparative prices of items of similar value, including consideration of both cost and long-term quality.
3. All purchases shall be administered in accordance with the Fairfax County Purchasing Resolution, as adopted annually by the Board.
4. Coordinate and cooperate with the annual audit of all district funds and accounts.
5. Make all reasonable efforts to collect any funds due the district from any source.
6. Keep complete and accurate financial records by funds and accounts in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles.
7. Publish a financial condition statement annually.
8. File required financial reports accurately and on time.

The Superintendent shall not:

9. Expend more funds than have been received in the fiscal year unless revenues are made available through other legal means.
10. Indebt the organization beyond what is approved.

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Fairfax County School Board

OE-7

Asset Protection

The Superintendent shall assure that all district assets are adequately protected, properly maintained, appropriately used and not placed at undue risk.

The Superintendent shall:

1. Assure that district property is insured at 100 percent of its replacement value, using reasonable application of self-insurance and commercial insurance.
2. Maintain both Errors and Omissions and Comprehensive General Liability insurance coverage protecting board members, staff and the district itself in an amount that is reasonable for school districts of comparable size and character.
3. Assure that all personnel who have access to material amounts of district and school funds are bonded.
4. Protect intellectual property, information, files, records and fixed assets from loss or significant damage.

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Relationship With the Board

The Board values a harmonious and positive relationship with the Superintendent characterized by excellent communication, mutual respect, personal ethics, and professional integrity and guidance. To assure this result, the Superintendent shall assure that the Board is fully and adequately informed about matters relating to Board work and significant district concern.

The Superintendent shall:

1. Submit required monitoring data (see S.1, Superintendent Delegated Authority, or S.2, Accountability and Evaluation) in a thorough, accurate and understandable fashion, according to the Board's annual work plan schedule, and including both Superintendent interpretations and relevant data to substantiate district operational condition or reasonable progress.
2. Present information in simple and concise form, indicating clearly whether the information is incidental, intended for decision preparation, or for formal monitoring.
3. Provide for the Board in a timely manner information about trends, facts and other information relevant to the Board's work, informing the Board of:
 - a. significant transfers of money within funds or other changes substantially affecting the district's financial condition;
 - b. anticipated significant media coverage;
 - c. administrative actions and decisions that are delegated to the Superintendent, but required by law to be approved by the Board;
 - d. administrative disposition of matters referred to the Superintendent by the Board;
 - e. significant initiatives, and program and operational changes;
 - f. important personnel issues.
4. Serve and lead the Board as its professional education expert by:
 - a. offering professional advice to the Board with recommendations based on thorough study and analysis supported by ample information, including assessment of alternatives, to enable the Board to make informed decisions;
 - b. serving as thought leader to the Board on current and emerging trends that impact public education;

OE-8

5. Maintain an ethical and harmonious working relationship with the entire Board by:
 - a. treating all members impartially and assuring that all members have equal access to information;
 - b. refraining from criticism of individual members;
 - c. responding to Board and individual member concerns in a timely and courteous manner;
 - d. communicating immediately and directly with the Board or individual Board members when an honest difference of opinion exists;
 - e. promoting a positive relationship in Board meetings;
 - f. encouraging an open exchange of information between Board and staff members;
 - g. discussing with the Board or individual members any perceived violation of Governance Culture or Superintendent (S.1 or S.2) policies, or any encroachment by an individual member or the Board into areas of responsibility assigned to the Superintendent.

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Fairfax County School Board

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Instructional Program

The Superintendent shall maintain a program of instruction that offers challenging and relevant opportunities for all students to achieve at levels defined in the Board's ***Student Achievement Goals*** policies.

The Superintendent shall:

1. Ensure that instructional programs are based on a comprehensive and objective review of best practices research.
2. Base instruction on district academic standards that meet or exceed the Board's ***Student Achievement Goals***.
3. Align curriculum with the ***Student Achievement Goals***.
4. Effectively measure each student's progress toward achieving or exceeding the ***Student Achievement Goals***.
5. Ensure that the instructional program includes opportunities for students to develop talents and interests in more specialized areas.
6. Ensure that the instructional program accommodates the different learning styles of students and differentiates instruction to meet the needs of students of various backgrounds and abilities.
7. Encourage new and innovative programs, carefully monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of all such programs at least annually.
8. Ensure that all instructional programs are regularly evaluated and modified as necessary to assure their continuing effectiveness.
9. Maintain a procedure for reviewing instructional materials upon formal request by a parent or other stakeholder.
10. Adequately monitor and control student access to and utilization of electronically distributed information.
11. Review academic program placement periodically to assure reasonable access and available capacity.
12. Operate an innovative, self-supporting child nutrition program that meets or exceeds Federal guidelines and that promotes healthy choices and wellness.

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OE-10

Learning Environment/Treatment of Students

The Superintendent shall establish and maintain a learning environment that is safe, healthful, non-discriminatory, respectful and conducive to effective learning.

The Superintendent shall:

1. Maintain a climate that is characterized by support and encouragement for high student achievement.
2. Assure that all confidential student information is properly used and protected.
3. Ensure that student behavior expectations and consequences of violation are:
 - a. Collaboratively developed;
 - b. Reflect community values;
 - c. Based on best practices, including positive behavior reinforcement;
 - d. Clearly defined, communicated, supported, and enforced consistently, using reasonable judgment.
4. Provide school environments that are healthful for students, promoting proper exercise, nutrition, and proper sleep.

The Superintendent shall not:

5. Tolerate any behaviors, actions, or attitudes by adults that hinder the academic performance or the well-being of students.
6. Permit unacceptable and inappropriate behaviors on school property and at school sponsored events by students or by adults that disrupt learning or that are disrespectful or dangerous.
7. Permit unnecessary or irrelevant collection of student information.

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Facilities and Transportation

The Superintendent shall assure that physical facilities and the transportation system support the accomplishment of the Board's ***Student Achievement Goals*** policies while guaranteeing full preparation for emergency situations.

A. Facilities

The Superintendent shall:

1. Maintain a Facilities Comprehensive Plan that assures that classroom capacity and infrastructure meet instructional program and community needs and is equitable across the county. The plan will:
 - a. Ensure sound instructional practices;
 - b. Maintain a reasonable balance of capacity utilization;
 - c. Uses resources wisely, efficiently and in an environmentally responsible way;
 - d. Disclose assumptions on which the plan is based, including growth patterns and the financial and human impact that individual projects will have on other parts of the organization and the community;
 - e. Ensure that land acquisition recommendations are based upon demographic trends and growth patterns, comparative costs, construction and transportation factors and extraordinary contingency costs due to potential natural and man-made risks.
 - f. Utilize energy as efficiently as possible;
 - g. Ensure proper recycling programs are in use.
2. Maintain an objectively prioritized Capital Improvement Plan that establishes priorities for construction, renovation and maintenance projects. The plan will:
 - a. Assign highest priority to the correction of unsafe conditions;
 - b. Include maintenance costs as necessary to enable facilities to reach their intended life cycles;
 - c. Plan for and schedules preventive maintenance;
 - d. Plan for and schedules system replacement when new schools open, schools are renovated or systems replaced.
3. Assure that facilities are safe, clean and properly maintained.
4. Provide for public use of facilities at a reasonable net cost to the school system, as long as safety, student functions, and the instructional program are not compromised and use guidelines are administered consistently.

OE-11

The Superintendent shall not:

5. Authorize construction schedules and change orders that significantly increase cost or reduce quality.

B. Transportation

The Superintendent shall:

6. Ensure that students eligible for transportation are transported in a safe, timely, efficient, and effective manner.

C. Safety, Security and Emergency Preparedness

The Superintendent shall:

7. Ensure the protection of students, staff members, visitors and FCPS property:
 - a. Maintain updated emergency management plans
 - b. Assure that key personnel receive training, as appropriate;
 - c. Maintain a collaborative and effective working relationship with local, state and federal emergency management representatives.

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Fairfax County School Board

OE-12

Technology

The Superintendent shall use technology to support teaching, learning, and the Board's ***Operational Expectations*** and ***Student Achievement Goals***.

The Superintendent shall:

1. Provide a comprehensive and functional technology infrastructure.
2. Provide technology capabilities that are useful for staff members and students.
3. Use technology to support diverse learning techniques and styles.
4. Provide a means for interactive communication between the school system and parents, students, and the community.
5. Provide information electronically about school and division programs and academic progress.
6. Provide a system to access relevant and current data by appropriate users.
7. Provide support to enable all students to have access to online instructional resources beyond school hours.

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