

## **GUIDELINES FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF JOINT OR REGIONAL CONTINUATION HIGH SCHOOLS OR PROGRAMS**

**Adopted by the Board of Education: May 26, 2004**

### Authority

Consistent with provisions in § 22.1-26.B of the Code of Virginia, as amended by the 2004 General Assembly, two or more school boards may, with the consent of the Virginia Board of Education, establish joint or regional schools, including regional public charter schools, to serve as high schools offering a specialized curriculum leading to a high school diploma and a postsecondary credential, such as industry certification, career certificate, or degree.

The relevant school boards may, by agreement, establish alternative schedules for the delivery of instruction that may include alternatives to standard school day and year requirements, subject to the issuance of any necessary waivers by the Board of Education pursuant to § 22.1-79.1 (Opening of the school year; approvals for certain alternative schedules) and relevant Board of Education regulations. Such school boards may contract with an accredited institution of higher education or other postsecondary school licensed or certified by the Board of Education or the State Council of Higher Education, as the case may be, pursuant to § 22.1-319 et seq. or § 23-276.1 et seq. to deliver such instruction, which may include specialized instruction and training for students who are eligible to enroll in public high schools, consistent with §§ 22.1-3, 22.1-5, and 22.1-213.

The arrangements, organization, and operating procedures for joint or regionally operated continuation high schools or programs are governed by the Board of Education's Regulations for Jointly Owned and Operated Schools and Jointly Operated Programs (8VAC 20-280-10 and 8VAC 280-20).

### Purpose

Joint or regionally operated continuation high schools or programs provide educational options that extend beyond the twelfth grade for students who have not met the requirements for a high school diploma by the completion of that grade. These programs will:

- develop individual education plans for eligible students that lead to completing the requirements for a high school diploma and a postsecondary credential, such as industry certification, career certificate, or degree as expeditiously as possible;
- provide students with academic and career counseling and other support to prepare students for further education or training and entry into a 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce;

- establish a cooperative educational environment where assets from school divisions, community colleges, colleges/universities, and the business community are aligned to enable students to be successful in attaining the objectives outlined in their individual education plans;
- incorporate the use of relevant technology for accessing courses that are applicable to the acquisition of a high school diploma and a postsecondary credential; and
- incorporate an evaluation of annual measurable objectives established for the program and approved by the joint school board.

#### Application and Approval Process

The establishment of a joint or regionally operated continuation high school or program must be approved by the Board of Education if the school or program (i) is subject to the *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Virginia Public Schools*, or (ii) requires a waiver of Board of Education regulations. The Department of Education will review proposals submitted by the school divisions. The Department of Education will review the documentation and submit to the Board of Education a summary of the proposal and all waivers that require Board of Education approval prior to the continuation high school or program offering services to students. School divisions may establish joint or regional continuation high school programs that do not involve waivers of regulations without Board of Education approval.

Proposals submitted to the Department of Education must include documentation of the following:

- The proposed continuation high school or program will have an organization and operating procedures regulated by the Board of Education's Regulations for Jointly Owned and Operated Schools and Jointly Operated Programs (8VAC 20-280-10 and 8VAC 280-20).
- An active, on-going continuation high school program planning committee exists composed of superintendents or their designees from the participating school divisions. This planning committee shall design its continuation high school program to respond to the needs of high school students who have not satisfied the requirements for high school graduation as outlined in the *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Virginia's Public Schools*.
- A description of the proposed programs, including facilities, number of students, curriculum design for both the academic and the career/industry certification strands that will culminate in students earning a high school diploma and a postsecondary credential and the type(s) of schedules that will be used is included.

- A description of all funding sources that will be used to implement the continuation high school program is included.
- The location(s) where the program will be offered and the fiscal agent (required by §22.1-118 of the Code of Virginia to be the treasurer of the city or county in which the school is located) are identified.
- Annual measurable objectives and the evaluation plan for the continuation high school program are identified.