

Virginia Board of Education Agenda Item



Agenda Item: E

Date: July 26, 2012

Title	Final Review of Proposed Revisions to the Board of Education Criteria for Character Education		
Presenter	Dr. Cynthia Cave, Director, Office of Student Services		
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Purpose of Presentation:

Action required by state or federal law or regulation.

Previous Review or Action:

Previous review and action. Specify date and action taken below:

Date: February 24, 2000

Action: Approval of the Board of Education criteria for character education programs

Date: June 28, 2012

Action: First review of proposed amended criteria

Action Requested:

Final review: Action requested at this meeting.

Alignment with Board of Education Goals: Please indicate (X) all that apply:

X	Goal 1: Expanded Opportunities to Learn
	Goal 2: Accountability of Student Learning
	Goal 3: Nurturing Young Learners
	Goal 4: Strong Literacy and Mathematics Skills
	Goal 5: Highly Qualified and Effective Teachers and Administrators
X	Goal 6: Sound Policies for Student Success
X	Goal 7: Safe and Secure Schools
	Other Priority or Initiative. Specify:

Goal 1: Expanded Opportunities to Learn. Character education promotes expanded opportunities to learn, emphasizing civic virtues and community-mindedness.

Goal 6: Sound Policies for Student Success. The *Code* states that the purpose of the character education program “shall be to instill in students civic virtues and personal character traits so as to improve the learning environment, promote student achievement, reduce disciplinary problems, and develop civic-minded students of high character.”

Goal 7: Safe and Secure Schools. Section 22.1-208.01 further provides required components of programs, such as trustworthiness, respect, tolerance and courtesy, responsibility, self-control, fairness, caring, consideration, and citizenship. These qualities support a safe and respectful learning environment.

Background Information and Statutory Authority:

Section 22.1-208.01. A. of the *Code of Virginia* requires each local school board to establish a character education program, and § 22.1-208.01. B. requires the Board of Education to establish criteria for character education programs consistent with the *Code*. On February 24, 2000, the Board of Education approved criteria for character education programs, which were developed by a committee of parents, teachers and administrators.

The 2012 General Assembly, through HB 1179 (Yost), amended § 22.1-208.01 to:

- Specify that a character education program may be established as a separate program, which may occur during the regular school year, or during summer youth development academies, or both
- Require the Department of Education to develop curricular guidelines for school divisions to use in establishing character education programs through summer youth development academies
- Specify that the Department of Education shall assist school divisions in implementation of character education programs and practices and clarify that the Department of Education shall provide resources, professional development, and technical assistance “with such funds as are made available for this purpose”
- Remove the requirement that the Board of Education establish the Commonwealth Character Initiative (This has been completed.)
- Specify that summer youth development academies are included in the award of grants to school boards for implementation of character education programs

Section 22.1-208.01, as amended by HB 1179, is attached.

On June 28, 2012, proposed revisions to the Board of Education’s criteria for character education programs were presented for first review, in order that the criteria align with the amended *Code*. As part of this first review, the Board further proposed that its criteria specify that programs be implemented at the middle school level, as well as at the named elementary and secondary levels.

Summary of Important Issues:

Proposed revisions to the criteria for alignment with HB 1179 follow:

Each local character education program shall:

1. Be developed in cooperation with the students, parents, and the community-at-large.

2. Specify those character traits to be taught, selecting from those which are common to diverse social, cultural, and religious groups and meeting the requirements of § 22.1-208.01 of the Code.
3. Avoid indoctrination of any religious or political belief.
4. Be implemented at the elementary, middle, and secondary levels.
5. Complement the state Standards of Learning, be interwoven into existing curricula or established as a separate program, and taught primarily by example, illustration, and participation.
6. Provide for relevant professional development and adequate resources.
7. Include a method for program evaluation.
8. Be held during the regular school year and/or summer to include programming in a youth development academy, or both.

Impact on Fiscal and Human Resources:

Participation in the implementation of the summer youth development academies is voluntary and will depend upon local decision-makers and local resources. The 2012 General Assembly has appropriated state funding to support three Academy sites in FY12 (during the summer of 2012 or in June 2013) and eight sites in FY14 (during summer 2103 or in June 2014).

Timetable for Further Review/Action:

Upon approval by the Board, the revision will be posted to the Department's Web site, and notification will be made to local school divisions through a Superintendent's Memorandum.

Superintendent's Recommendation:

The Superintendent of Public Instruction recommends that the Board of Education approve the proposed amendments to its criteria for character education programs to conform to HB 1179.

Appendix A

An Act to amend and reenact § [22.1-208.01](#) of the Code of Virginia, relating to public schools; character education.

[HB 1179]

Approved April 9, 2012

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § [22.1-208.01](#) of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:

§ [22.1-208.01](#). Character education required.

A. Each school board shall establish, within its existing programs; *or as a separate program*, a character education program in its schools, *which may occur during the regular school year, during the summer in a youth development academy offered by the school division, or both. The Department of Education shall develop curricular guidelines for school divisions to use in establishing a character education program through a summer youth development academy.* The purpose of the character education program shall be to instill in students civic virtues and personal character traits so as to improve the learning environment, promote student achievement, reduce disciplinary problems, and develop civic-minded students of high character. The components of each program shall be developed in cooperation with the students, their parents, and the community at large. The basic character traits taught may include (i) trustworthiness, including honesty, integrity, reliability, and loyalty; (ii) respect, including the precepts of the Golden Rule, tolerance, and courtesy; (iii) responsibility, including hard work, economic self-reliance, accountability, diligence, perseverance, and self-control; (iv) fairness, including justice, consequences of bad behavior, principles of nondiscrimination, and freedom from prejudice; (v) caring, including kindness, empathy, compassion, consideration, generosity, and charity; and (vi) citizenship, including patriotism, the Pledge of Allegiance, respect for the American flag, concern for the common good, respect for authority and the law, and community-mindedness.

Classroom instruction may be used to supplement a character education program; however, each program shall be interwoven into the school procedures and environment and structured to instruct primarily through example, illustration, and participation, in such a way as to complement the Standards of Learning. The program shall also address the inappropriateness of bullying, as defined in the Student Conduct Policy Guidelines adopted by the Board of Education pursuant to § [22.1-279.6](#).

This provision is intended to educate students regarding those core civic values and virtues which are efficacious to civilized society and are common to the diverse social, cultural, and religious groups of the Commonwealth. Consistent with this purpose, Virginia's civic values, which are the principles articulated in the Bill of Rights (Article I) of the Constitution of Virginia and the ideals reflected in the seal of the Commonwealth, as described in § [1-500](#), may be taught as representative of such civic values. Nothing herein shall be construed as requiring or authorizing the indoctrination in any particular religious or political belief.

B. The Board of Education shall establish criteria for character education programs, consistent with the provisions of this section. ~~☞~~ *The Department of Education shall* assist school divisions in implementing character education programs and practices that are designed to promote the development of personal qualities as set forth in this section and the Standards of Quality and that will improve family and

community involvement in the public schools; ~~the Board of Education shall also establish, within the Department of Education, the Commonwealth Character Initiative. The Board~~ *With such funds as are made available for this purpose, the Department of Education shall provide resources and technical assistance to school divisions regarding successful character education programs and shall (i) identify and analyze effective character education programs and practices and (ii) collect and disseminate among school divisions information regarding such programs and practices and potential funding and support sources. The ~~Board~~ Department of Education may also provide resources supporting professional development for administrators and teachers in the delivery of any character education programs.*

C. ~~The Board~~ *Department of Education shall award, with such funds as are appropriated for this purpose, grants to school boards for the implementation of innovative character education programs, including a summer youth development academy.*