



**MOBILE COUNTY PUBLIC
SCHOOL SYSTEM
POLICY BOOK**

**CHAPTER 4:
CURRICULUM AND
INSTRUCTION**

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CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Courses of study developed by the Alabama State Department of Education will serve as a framework for the development of local guides and teaching units in the school system.

COURSE OFFERINGS

A list of approved courses for middle and high schools will be published annually to serve as a guide for local school program planning. Departures from the list shall be approved by the superintendent.

RESEARCH

The professional staff is encouraged to conduct educational research aimed at developing, validating and standardizing new or alternative instructional programs, strategies or methods.

All formal research or experimental projects using either school system personnel or pupils shall be approved by the superintendent.

Informal studies in individual schools may be conducted upon the approval of the local school principal.

All research programs coordinated by persons or agencies outside the school system and all programs involving multiple schools within the system shall be approved by the superintendent.

Summary reports of all research efforts conducted in the school system will be submitted to the superintendent.

GROUPING

Students may be grouped in such a way as to facilitate sound and effective instruction. Grouping practices will be in keeping with accepted principles of learning.

CLASS SIZE

Reference: Class Size Resolution September 11, 1997, as amended January 8, 1998.

Date Adopted: December 11, 2007

OPEN-ZONED SCHOOLS

The Mobile County Public School System will maintain open-zoned, schools of choice for the purpose of providing a multicultural and challenging environment that stresses academic excellence. All open-zoned schools, including current magnet schools, will have a specialized theme and an aligned core curriculum. Entrance and selection criteria will be utilized to select and place applicants within the allotted number of slots at each school.

Procedures governing open-zoned schools' entrance and selection criteria, enrollment of students, curriculum, reporting, and instructional programs will be established by the Superintendent and/or Board of School Commissioners consistent with this policy and communicated through an MCPSS Magnet Schools' Procedures Manual that will be reviewed annually.

An MCPSS Choice Schools' Advisory Committee will be established to advise the open-zoned schools and the Magnet School Resource Teacher. The advisory committee will meet no fewer than once an academic year and consist of representatives of community members, parents of open-zoned school students, school administrators, teachers, the Magnet Schools' Resource Teacher, a supervisor from curriculum and instruction, the Student Services Executive Director, and the Superintendent or his/her representative.

Legal Reference: Magnet Schools Program Procedures Manual

Date Revised: July 31, 2017

STUDENT EXCHANGE PROGRAMS

In recognition of the value of learning from travel and living abroad, and from association with peoples of various nationalities, schools are encouraged to participate in student exchange programs provided no extra expense of the system is incurred.

Students participating in exchange programs may, with prior approval of the local school principal and the assistant superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction, be given academic credit for studies completed.

CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

School faculties are encouraged to develop and carry on a program of co-curricular activities that provide for a wide variety of student interests and relate to regular classroom activities.

Instructional co-curricular activities which involve two or more schools will be coordinated by the Division of Curriculum and Instruction within the framework of guidelines approved by the superintendent, in keeping with the Equal Access Act.

NON-ACCREDITED SCHOOLS

Reference: AAC 290-3-1-.02(7)(k)

Date Adopted: December 11, 2007

CORRESPONDENCE/ONLINE COURSES

Reference: AAC 290-3-1-.02 (11)
AAC 290-3-1-.02 (12)

Date Adopted: December 11, 2007

SEX EDUCATION

Reference: Alabama Code - §16-40A-3

Date Adopted: December 11, 2007

DRUG EDUCATION

Reference: Alabama Code - §16-40A-3

Alabama Code - §16-41-6 (parental exemption).

Date Adopted: December 11, 2007

PERIOD OF QUIET REFLECTION

Reference: Alabama Code - §16-1-20.4

Date Adopted: December 11, 2007

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Reference: Alabama Code - §16-6B-2(h)
Alabama Code - §16-43-5

Date Adopted: December 11, 2007

CHARACTER EDUCATION PROGRAM

Reference: Alabama Code - §16-6B-2(h)

Date Adopted: December 11, 2007

TEACHER PLANNING

In the event of absence, teachers shall provide lesson plans for substitute teachers and shall make available class rolls and other necessary records.

Scheduled Planning Time

Reference: Alabama Code - §16-1-1(1)

Date Adopted: December 11, 2007

MAKE-UP WORK

When the student is away from class with the consent of the teacher and the principal or when the student has an excused absence from school, he/she will not be penalized for not being present to take tests or to participate in daily work and will be given an opportunity to make up work missed within a reasonable timeframe.

FINAL EXAMINATIONS

Final evaluations will be given in all high school classes at the close of each semester and will be administered in accordance with a schedule approved by the superintendent.

Any plan for exempting students from the summary or final evaluation procedures will be approved by the superintendent.

Grading procedures adopted by the system will determine the value given the final evaluation.

REPORT CARD

All report cards used in the school system will be approved by the superintendent and will be distributed at regular, specified intervals.

HONOR ROLLS

Schools will maintain honor rolls fostering respect for scholarship and recognition to deserving students for their accomplishments. The local school faculty will develop honor roll standards to be applied in that school.

PROMOTION AND RETENTION

Decisions concerning promotions and retentions will be based on the student's total background of growth and achievement and the conditions under which his/her learning needs can best be accommodated. Decisions will be made cooperatively by teachers and principals in consultation with the student's parents or guardian.

Reference - Procedures: Middle School Promotion-Retention

**PROCEDURE:
MIDDLE SCHOOL PROMOTION-RETENTION PROCEDURES**

In order to be promoted to the next grade level, middle school students must:

Receive a passing yearly grade in all required core curriculum courses.

Students who fail to meet this requirement may be promoted to the next grade upon successful completion of the requirement during summer school.

DIPLOMA REQUIREMENTS

Requirements for graduation from high school will conform to those requirements of the Alabama State Department of Education.

To qualify for participation in senior class activities, the student shall be eligible for graduation at the end of the regular school term.

Reference: AAC 290-3-1-.02(8).

AAC 290-3-1-.02(8)(e) Changing Diploma Options.

TRANSFERRING CREDITS

In Mobile County, valid credits are accepted at face value. No accommodations will be made to waive core course requirements for graduation for students transferring from schools not following a block schedule. Transcripts for transfer students entering Mobile County during their senior cohort year only may be prorated to 24 credits (Alabama State Department Standard) provided all graduation requirements are met. The waiver may be granted through the Central Office only.

Reference: Education Planning Guide for High School Students (Mobile County Public Schools).
(Revised 7-29-2007)

Date Adopted: April 23, 2018

EVALUATION OF INSTRUCTION

To provide for continuous improvement in the teaching-learning process, a program of evaluation will be conducted at all levels – system, school and classroom level. Evaluation programs will use a variety of data-gathering instruments, including but not limited to teacher-made tests, standardized tests of achievement, intelligence tests, interest inventories, personality questionnaires and vocational surveys.

Data collected will be used to alter instructional programs to better meet the needs of students.

All testing and evaluation programs will be conducted in a manner minimizing interruption of the instructional program.

Schools are encouraged to collect and utilize a variety of non-test data in evaluating school programs. Such data will include but not be restricted to attendance records, observable behavior and demonstrated interest in school activities.

TEST SELECTION AND ADOPTION

A list of currently approved tests, questionnaires, and surveys will be maintained in the Division of Curriculum and Instruction.

Use of instruments not on this list, except for the use of teacher-made subject-oriented tests, should be approved by the superintendent.

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODOLOGY

Teachers may use a range of methods of teaching and instructional strategies which are in keeping with accepted principles of learning, and directed toward the achievement of objectives set forth in state and local courses of study.

TEXTBOOKS

Reference: Alabama Code - §16-36-62.

Date Adopted: December 11, 2007

SUPPLEMENTARY INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

Principals may expend local school funds and system allocations for the purchase of supplementary instructional materials. Said materials should serve to enrich and support the curriculum.

Free and inexpensive instructional materials offered for systemwide distribution by businesses and other organizations must be approved by the assistant superintendent of the Division of Curriculum and Instruction prior to distribution.

SCHOOL SUPPLY STORES

Schools may sell instructional supplies considered essential to the instructional program. No student shall be required to purchase supplies at the school.

ASSEMBLIES, CEREMONIES AND OBSERVANCES

Schools are encouraged to conduct assemblies, ceremonies and observances that serve to support school spirit, emphasize student achievement, and provide opportunities for students to develop moral, ethical and patriotic values.

Such events should be scheduled as a part of the regular school calendar. Care should be exercised in scheduling to avoid undue interruption of the instructional program.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips should be an outgrowth of units of study and should be directed toward the achievement of specific educational objectives. Teachers should have a lesson plan to support these objectives.

Trips or excursions in which students are taken off the school campus must receive approval of the principal before being publicized or planned in detail.

All overnight and all out-of-county, including out-of-country, field trips must be approved a minimum of two weeks in advance of departure from the school by the superintendent or his/her designee.

CONTESTS

School officials may encourage student participation in contests sponsored by businesses, civic clubs and other outside organizations provided said contests have been approved by the superintendent or his/her designee. Participation by students and faculty members shall be voluntary.

OUTSIDE RESOURCES

Schools shall be encouraged to utilize the services of persons in the community to enhance, extend, and enrich the approved curriculum.

1. Resource persons shall be selected on the basis of qualifications, contributions to be made, and appropriateness of presentation.
2. Contributions of resource persons should relate to approved objectives set forth in teaching units and courses of instruction of student groups to which presentations are made.
3. The principal shall be involved in planning for the use of a resource person at the earliest time the use of resource services is considered.
4. Teachers and other staff personnel shall secure the principal's approval for the resource person(s) prior to the time an invitation is extended to come into the school.
5. Printed material that the resource person wishes to distribute shall be submitted to the principal for approval prior to his presentation.

VIRTUAL PROGRAM OPTION

The Mobile County Public School System will provide a virtual pathway or virtual education option for students in grades 9-12. Students enrolled in the virtual school will complete all coursework virtually from their computers and will complete major tests under testing supervision on campus. The coursework allows student scheduling flexibility to complete the course requirements.

Students must meet the following eligibility criteria to participate in the virtual pathway:

- Own an operational home computer
- Maintain a reliable internet connection
- Have an adult willing to serve as the learning coach
- Be proficient in reading, writing and math
- GPA
- Attendance
- Cohort year

Students must meet the established attendance criteria to participate in the virtual pathway. Attendance and academic progress will be monitored daily by the virtual school staff.

All state-mandated testing will be conducted at the student's reporting, zoned school. All full-time students enrolled in the virtual school will be counted in the average daily membership at their reporting, zoned school. All full-time students enrolled in the virtual school will participate in all state testing and accountability requirements. Upon satisfying all graduation requirements, students enrolled in the virtual school will receive a diploma from their reporting, zoned high school.

Students enrolled in Envision are eligible to participate in extracurricular activities in the school attendance zone in which they reside, and are subject to the same requirements, including Alabama High School Athletic Association rules.

Envision Virtual School shall accept inter-system and intra-system transfers for all eligible students and all students shall be subject to the same criteria.

Envision shall be exempt from any provision of general law, local law or administrative rules that apply to the traditional delivery of instruction, including, but not limited to, requirements to the physical presence of a student, student monitoring and security, staffing requirements, transportation obligations, facility requirements, space and location requirements, time requirements and physical education requirements, to the extent any of the forgoing conflict with the delivery of the virtual program.

Any online course delivery that is not supported by the Alabama State Department of Education shall be accredited by an institution recognized pursuant to administrative rule adopted by the ALSDE. Course work offered through the virtual program shall contain the requirement content as identified in the applicable Alabama Course of Study.

Legal Reference: Act No. 2015-89

Date Adopted: August 26, 2015

Date Revised: March 26, 2018