

## VII. Instructional Program

### 7.1 *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.

### 7.2 *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 include certified employees and parents, who will serve a term of one year.

Students are loaned textbooks for the duration of the course that requires the textbook. When a student is loaned textbooks, the student is 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)]

### 7.3 *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.

7.3.1 General Grading Scale - Grades for academic course work 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

7.3.2 Additional Grade Points - When calculating a student's grade point average, additional grade points may be awarded for advanced and honor courses as specified by the Board.

- 7.3.3 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.
- 7.3.4 Report Cards - Report cards reflecting student progress will be made available to the parents or legal guardians of students on a regularly scheduled basis.
- 7.3.5 Promotion - Students are promoted from grade to grade on the basis of 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. Students who are eligible for promotion from grade to grade may nevertheless be retained when the principal and the student's teacher determine that retention is in the best interest of the student. Each case of retention shall be considered on a case-by-case basis. Parents of students who may be candidates for retention will be notified of possible retention via a parent-teacher conference or by mail. Should the parent or legal guardian contest or disagree with the administrator and teacher's decision to retain the student, the issue shall go before the Admission, Review and Dismissal committee (ARD) for determination. This committee shall be made up of the building principal, the student's teacher, and guidance counselor. At the elementary level, a teacher from another school who teaches at the student's grade level will be included as a member of the ARD committee.
- 7.3.6 Class Rankings - Beginning with the ninth grade of high school, all students will be ranked based on the four point grade point average scale (GPA) (calculated and weighted as described herein). The GPA calculation will be carried out four decimal places and rounded off.
- 7.3.7 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 student and student content standards in which the student seeking credit recovery is deficient.

[Reference: Ala. Admin. Code 290-3-1-.02(12)]

## **7.4 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.

## **7.5 *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)]

## **7.6 *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)]

## **7.7 *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)]

## **7.8 *Career and Technical Education Programs***

7.8.1 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]

- 7.8.2 Live Work - Live work consists of work conducted by students that relates to the knowledge and skills taught as part of a Career and Technical Education (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 Business/Industry Certification requirements for a 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.
- 7.8.3 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 Business/Industry Certification requirements.

## **7.9 *Foreign Exchange Programs***

The Superintendent is authorized to develop guidelines and procedures, to be approved by the Board, under which foreign exchange students may attend Sheffield City schools and Sheffield City students may participate in foreign exchange programs.

## **7.10 *Extended Programs: Community Education***

Upon 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]

## **7.11 *Graduation, Certification of Completion, and Commencement***

Students who have satisfactorily completed requisite course work, met minimum attendance criteria, and passed required examinations are eligible for graduation. Students who have fulfilled coursework requirements but who have not passed all parts of the graduation examination may be eligible for a credit based diploma, provided students have met all criteria set forth by the Alabama State Department of Education. Students who successfully complete the requirements to earn a diploma or graduation certification are eligible to participate in graduation ceremonies. Student participation in graduation ceremonies and related graduation activities will be subject to the principal's approval and payment of outstanding financial obligations. Participation in a graduation-related ceremony 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.

7.11.1 Honor Graduates - Students who meet the following requirements shall be classified as honor graduates at high school commencement ceremonies:

- a. Enrolled in the school system for a minimum of one full academic semester prior to graduation;
- b. Successful completion and passing of the required graduation examinations and other requirements for graduation set forth by the Board; and
- c. Maintenance of an overall grade point average (GPA) of 4.00 or higher (on a 4.00 point scale) for all courses taken during the freshman (or ninth grade) year through the semester immediately preceding graduation. Grades will be calculated and weighted as prescribed in the grading section above.

7.11.2 Valedictorian/Salutatorian

- a. *Criteria* - The valedictorian and salutatorian for the graduating class of high school must qualify for the most advanced academic diploma offered and have been enrolled in the school system for a minimum of one (1) year prior to the date of graduation. The student with the highest numerical grade point average (calculated and weighted on a four point scale with weighting as defined in the Sheffield City Schools High School Course Description and Registration Guide for the current year) will be the class valedictorian. The student with the second highest numerical grade point average shall be the class salutatorian. In calculating the numerical grade point average, all semester grades will be used, beginning with the ninth grade through the semester immediately preceding graduation. The grade point average will be carried out four decimal points and rounded off. In the case of a tie, students having the same average will be recognized as co-valedictorians and co-salutatorians.
- b. *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 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 = 59
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.

7.11.3 Fifth Year Seniors - Upon the recommendation of the counselor and approval of the principal, a student who has completed four full academic years of high school but who has not completed the required course work for graduation will be allowed to attend the number of class periods necessary to complete the courses required for graduation.

7.11.4 Adult High School Diploma Program - The Superintendent is authorized to establish an adult diploma program in conformity with the regulations issued by the State Department of Education and such additional requirements as may be approved by the Board.

[Reference: Ala. Admin. Code 290-3-1-.02(18)]

## **7.12 School Wellness**

In furtherance of its commitment to fostering healthy nutritional and physical activities that support student achievement and to promote the development of lifelong wellness practices, the Board endorses the following programs, practices, and activities:

7.12.1 Nutrition Education - Nutrition education that teaches the knowledge, skills, and values needed to develop healthy eating behaviors will be integrated into the curriculum and offered throughout school campuses, including school dining areas and classrooms, by appropriately trained personnel.

7.12.2 Nutrition Standards - The Child Nutrition Program (“CNP”) will ensure that reimbursable school meals meet the program requirements and nutritional standards established by applicable state and federal regulations. The CNP 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. Offer vs. Serve is consistent with U. S. Department of Agriculture for students K-12 during breakfast and lunch. Pre-K students will not be participating in offer vs. serve; therefore, trays will be prepared by the CNP staff. The CNP will consider nutrient density and portion size before permitting food and beverages to be sold or served to students.

7.12.3 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 healthy 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.

7.12.4 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.

7.12.5 Administrative Implementation - The Superintendent is authorized to develop and implement administrative rules and directives that are consistent with this policy and that are 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.

### **7.13 *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.

### **7.14 *Parent/Family Involvement - Meeting the Requirements of No Child Left Behind Act of 2001***

7.14.1 Parental Involvement, Partnerships Encouraged - Training and appropriate resources will be provided for teachers, administrators, and parents to strengthen the ability of strong parent-school partnerships to enhance student achievement. Parents will be involved in jointly developing appropriate parental involvement policies and in reviewing school improvement through meetings with the school system's Parent Advisory Committee. Policies developed through this process will be distributed to parents of students attending Title I schools. Additionally, the Board will provide coordination, technical assistance, and other support necessary to assist Title I schools in planning and implementing effective parental involvement activities to improve student achievement and school improvement. The Board will coordinate and integrate parental involvement strategies with other programs as appropriate.

7.14.2 Annual Evaluation of Initiatives - An annual evaluation will be conducted, with the involvement of parents, to determine the effectiveness of the parental involvement policy in improving the academic quality of the schools. The evaluation will include parent surveys, focus groups, and student assessment data. Parents will also be given the opportunity to submit suggestions and concerns regarding the parental involvement policy to the parent advisory committee. This information will be reviewed annually and used to make revisions to the school system plan as necessary.

- 7.14.3 Impediments to Parent Participation to be Identified - The Board will identify barriers to greater participation by parents in parental involvement activities, with particular attention to parents who are economically disadvantaged, are disabled, have limited English proficiency, have limited literacy, or whose racial or ethnic background may impede effective participation. To the extent practicable, all information required under Section 1111 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (“ESEA”), 20 U.S.C. §6301 *et seq.*, will be provided to parents in a uniform, understandable format and upon request, in an alternative format and language that the parents understand.
- 7.14.4 Elementary and Secondary Education Act Compliance - The school system will work with its schools to ensure that school-level parental involvement policies meet the requirements of Section 1118(b) of the ESEA and each includes a school-parent compact consistent with Section 1118(3) of the ESEA. This policy will specify that each school will:
- a. Convene an annual meeting to explain the school programs to parents and inform them of their responsibilities and right to be involved in the program;
  - b. Offer a flexible number of informational parent meetings, including building a strong home/school connection, parenting skills, and literacy development;
  - c. Involve parents in an organized, ongoing, and timely way in planning, review, and improvement of school programs;
  - d. Provide timely information about its school programs to parents, described the curricula, student assessments, opportunities for regular meetings where parents can provide input, and respond promptly to parent suggestions; and
  - e. Provide parents with an opportunity for meaningful and ongoing consultation and communication about the academic quality of the school.
- 7.14.5 Notice of Rights and Information - The Board will comply with the *Parents Right to Know* provision of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*, including the rights of parents to be informed of the credentials/qualifications of their child’s teacher(s) and their school choice and/or supplemental educational services options when schools are identified for school improvement or determined to be unsafe within the meaning of the Act.