

INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

The Fort Smith Board of Education declares its commitment to provide the best educational opportunities possible for all students in the Fort Smith School District. The educational development of all students as expressed in the District's goals is the central concern of all school programs and activities. Toward these ends, the following goal statements are adopted:

- A. Fort Smith Schools will provide opportunities for all students to develop basic skills and to gain higher intellectual attainment in the areas of oral and written communication;
- B. Fort Smith Schools will provide opportunities for all students to develop basic skills and higher levels of competence in the areas of mathematical reasoning and problem-solving skills;
- C. Fort Smith Schools will provide opportunities for all students to develop basic skills and higher levels of understanding in those abilities which contribute to successful participation in society and its civic affairs;
- D. Fort Smith Schools will provide opportunities for all students to gain a full understanding of those historical perspectives which have served as a prelude to present local, national and worldwide conditions and events;
- E. Fort Smith Schools will provide opportunities for all students to gain a breadth of scientific understanding so as to be prepared to make wise decisions and to cope with a technological society;
- F. Fort Smith Schools will provide opportunities for all students to develop skills in the appreciation of the fine arts;
- G. Fort Smith Schools will provide opportunities for all students to develop physically, to gain understanding of personal and social health requirements and to gain recreational experiences which will contribute to the efficient use of leisure time;
- H. Fort Smith Schools will provide opportunities for all students to develop skills within and an understanding of the practical arts; and
- I. Fort Smith Schools will provide opportunities for all students to participate in a comprehensive program of co-curricular activities serving as a supplementary avenue for student interests.

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To facilitate the above objectives, the Fort Smith Schools will secure the most qualified staff available in all curricular areas. It is the commitment of the Board to develop policies to allow the attainment of these established goals.

Approved 7-27-98
New Policy

SCHOOL SESSION

In order to maintain an accredited status with the North Central Association of Secondary Schools and Colleges, a school session must be not less than 175 actual teaching days. The Fort Smith School District will have not less than 175 days. The school calendar setting forth the opening date will be prepared by the Superintendent of Schools assisted by members of the professional staff, subject to approval by the Board of Education.

Modification of the calendar; i.e., dismissing school for inclement weather and/or other extenuating circumstances and rescheduling time missed may be done by the Superintendent of Schools.

SCHOOL DAY

The school day for students in the Fort Smith schools will begin not earlier than 8:05 a.m. and close by 3:15 p.m. except for modified schedules. The school lunch periods will be set by the building principal consistent with the organization and proper functioning of the program in each building.

Students will not be excused during school hours if they miss classes to take music, speech or any other subject from private teachers.

Modification in beginning and closing times may be made by the Superintendent who also may dismiss school in case of emergencies and/or special community functions.

DAILY SCHEDULE

Consistent with state requirements, the length of the school day will be approved by the Superintendent and monitored by building principals. The specific opening and closing time for schools will also be set and standardized as much as possible.

FULL SCHOOL DAY ATTENDANCE FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS
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Beginning with the 2004-05 school year, students in Grades 9-12 in Fort Smith Public Schools will schedule and attend a full day of school. Students will enroll in no fewer than 360 minutes of planned instructional time each day as a requirement for graduation.

Under the provisions of *ACT 675 of 2003* the Board of Education will allow:

- Students to be assigned to no more than one class period each day for a study hall period which the student will be required to attend and participate in a full class period of self-study or organized tutoring in the school building; and
- No more than one class period each day for organized and scheduled student extracurricular classes to be included as planned instructional time.

If the extracurricular class is related to a seasonal activity, the class must continue to meet after the season ends to be counted toward the requirement of planned instructional time.

Policies may be developed for granting waivers to students who would experience proven financial hardships if required to attend a full school day.

Enrollment and attendance in vocational-educational training courses, college courses, school work programs, and other Department of Education sanctioned educational programs may be used to satisfy the requirements of full day attendance, even if the program is not located at the public schools.

Students may continue to graduate early if all graduation requirements are met.

CLOSING OF SCHOOLS

When schools are not to be open due to inclement weather or other emergency, public announcement will be made not later than 7:00 a.m. by the Superintendent through radio, television and newspaper.

When an announcement has been made that schools will be closed due to an emergency, the following staff members will not be required to report to work: classroom teachers, principals, supervisors and other professional personnel employed on a less-than-12-month basis, cafeteria employees and clerks (including elementary and secondary clerks who work only when school is normally in session). All other employees including administrators, principals, custodians, and other maintenance and clerical workers who are employed on a calendar-month basis, are expected to report to work unless otherwise notified.

If students have reported to school and an emergency arises during the day, they may be dismissed early. In that event all educational and building employees are to continue their work unless otherwise notified by the Superintendent. The Superintendent's office will notify newspapers, radio and television stations and other persons as necessary of the decision to dismiss early.

In the event severe weather or storm warnings are issued during the hours which schools are in session, it shall be the policy of the School District to remain in session for the remainder of the school day. Students will be excused only if the parent/guardian come to the school to pick them up.

Approved 7-27-98

Supersedes 3360 dated 10-27-75

BASIC INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

The Board of Education subscribes to the philosophy that well-developed communication and computational skills among our citizenry are essential to our society. The Board will adopt specific requirements to ensure that our high school graduates are sufficiently competent in these important skills. The instructional program will also provide for a planned sequence in the language arts, social studies, mathematics, the sciences, fine arts, industrial and practical arts, health and safety education and physical education. At all levels, provisions will be made for a wide range of individual differences in student abilities and learning rate through the use of a variety of materials, adjustments in programs and courses adapted to special needs of students.

The Fort Smith School District is committed to providing the best learning environment and academic experience possible for all students. The various instructional programs offered by the District will be developed with the view toward maintaining a balanced and sequential curriculum which will serve the educational needs of all school-aged children. The curricular offerings will be consistent with requirements specified in the District's Curriculum Frameworks and core curriculum.

The standard to be maintained is that of academic excellence from all students which includes, but is not limited to, good discipline, mature behavior and respect for all staff members and students. All students are important and deserve the School District's very best efforts to help them achieve.

The following are expectations of the Fort Smith Board of Education:

- A. Basic skills will be taught and emphasized. Students will be actively involved in learning activities that reinforce basic skills;
- B. Reading and writing skills will be emphasized across the curriculum;
- C. Students will be given many opportunities to use thinking skills in problem solving;
- D. Students will have school experiences which promote good citizenship and build strong character traits such as honesty, responsibility, dependability and respect for their fellow students and teachers;
- E. Teachers must have high expectations regarding student performance;
- F. Student progress and academic achievement will be evaluated using a variety of standardized performance indicators, as well as teacher-made instruments;
- G. The teacher will be the instructor in the classroom. Students will occasionally work in groups and learn to interact effectively with each other and learn the benefits of teamwork.

However, students will be held accountable for their individual achievement. Peer tutoring will never take the place of teacher-directed classroom instruction but may be utilized as appropriate;

- H. The ultimate aim of the instructional program will be the development of proficiency in each student's ability to read well, write legibly, spell accurately, listen attentively, speak clearly, think critically, use basic mathematical computational skills, observe carefully, solve problems, participate effectively in groups, keep healthy, enjoy aesthetic experiences and develop interest in and/or start his or her career development;
- I. Students will be given every opportunity to pursue and fulfill their individual potentials. Parent/guardian and students are responsible for decision making with regard to their choice of career pathways and goals. The Fort Smith School District believes that education is a dynamic, never-ending pursuit of knowledge and improvement. Maximum performance will be the collective finish-line goal; and
- J. It is the position of the Fort Smith School District that a strong public educational system is dependent upon the support and trust of the patrons of the District and will continue to seek parental and patron involvement. The District will strive to keep the public informed, never forgetting that the School District belongs to the community, and to earn and maintain that community support and trust daily.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

The Board of Education of the Fort Smith Public Schools adopts the academic standards and expected outcomes as defined and published by the State Board of Education. The Board further agrees to implement these standards and outcomes at all school campuses with the Fort Smith District.

The Board will ensure the implementation of revisions and updates to these standards and outcomes as they occur.

ABSTINENCE-BASED INSTRUCTION

Health education in the Fort Smith School District will emphasize and promote teaching students to make choices which develop healthy lifestyles and to avoid practices which are harmful such as sexual abuse, alcohol, drug and tobacco use. The focus of this component of the curriculum will be on life skills—communication, decision making, goal making and life planning.

The curriculum content in health will include topics which clearly show the advantage of making wise choices such as sexual abstinence by students. Abstinence will be presented as the best advice adults can give young people when it comes to making decisions about sex and will help them avoid many problems associated with adolescent sexual behavior. Abstinence-based instruction should encourage students to develop attitudes and skills to avoid sexual activity before marriage.

Out-of-wedlock births to teen parents put these parents at high risk for exposure to sexually transmitted diseases, repeat pregnancies, low academic achievement, substance abuse, emotional illness, poverty, and health problems. The babies are more likely to have low birth weight, serious health problems and developmental delays, and families headed by young single parents often suffer from social isolation, instability and inadequate resources.

Instruction relating to human sexuality, sexually transmitted disease, human immunodeficiency virus or acquired immune deficiency syndrome shall be governed by the following guidelines:

- A. Present abstinence from sexual activity as the preferred choice of behavior in relation to all sexual activity for unmarried persons of school age;
- B. Devote more attention to abstinence from sexual activity than to any other sexual activity behavior;
- C. Emphasize that abstinence from sexual activity is the only method that is 100% effective in preventing pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, infection with human immunodeficiency virus, acquired immune deficiency syndrome and the emotional trauma associated with adolescent sexual activity; and
- D. Direct adolescents to a standard of behavior in which abstinence from sexual activity before marriage is recognized as the most effective way to prevent pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases and infection with human immunodeficiency virus or acquired immune deficiency syndrome.

CO-CURRICULAR AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

The Board of Education believes that student activities sponsored by the Fort Smith School District are a vital part of the total educational program and should be used as a means of developing wholesome attitudes and good human relations, as well as knowledge and skills. The Board further recognizes that not all of the District's goals and objectives can be met in formal classroom study. Therefore, the District's program of co-curricular and extracurricular programs will provide opportunities for student participation in activities designed to meet their leisure, recreational, social and emotional interests and needs. Co-curricular and extracurricular activities will be defined as those organized, supervised and conducted under the auspices of the School District or any element thereof which primarily involve students in other than a classroom situation and which are not part of a course of study. These activities will provide for individual, small group and/or student body participation. Activities in this classification may include, but will not be limited to, intramural sports, clubs, athletic teams, spirit groups and interscholastic adjuncts to music or academic courses conducted outside the classroom. The following are examples of activities governed by this policy:

- Student government and its related activities and organizations;
- Musical festivals or contests, speech contests, debates or drama activities;
- Organized activities which are part of intramural or interscholastic athletics;
- All types of interscholastic competition; and
- Special interest clubs or service organizations.

Any K-12 student is eligible for, or may participate in, extracurricular activities, including field trips, unless excluded for disciplinary or attendance reasons or for failure to meet designated activity qualifications.

The Board further believes that any program of student activities should be governed by the following guideposts:

- A. Although student participation is on a voluntary basis, all students should be encouraged to participate in one or more student activities in order to realize the benefits of involvement and participation;
- B. Student participation will be based upon interest and qualifications without regard to race, sex, religion, disability or national origin;
- C. Financial support for student activities will be provided utilizing the resources which may include fund raising, parent organizations, gate receipts or other available resources; and
- D. Participation in student activity programs is designed to develop a sense of involvement, pride, responsibility and teamwork consistent with the mission of the Fort Smith School District.

- E. Student activities will be scheduled so as to minimize interference with the academic program of each school. Each principal will monitor student activities in order to avoid excessive encroachment upon instructional time.

Responsibility for oversight of student activities will rest with the superintendent of schools and other administrative and teaching personnel who are assigned to coordinate the various programs.

The director of athletics and student activities will provide District-level coordination in cooperation with building principals with regard to allocation of resources, scheduling and administrative policy application.

Approved 12-20-04
Supersedes IGD dated 7-28-03

SCHOOL ORGANIZATIONS AND ACTIVITIES
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A. DEFINITION

1. School organizations and/or school activities shall include any and all student groups or functions which are identified by or exist by virtue of a particular school or school district.
2. Any activity or function planned by a school organization shall be considered a school activity.
3. Activities planned by patrons or support groups will be considered non-school functions.

B. SCHOOL ACTIVITY REQUIREMENTS

1. Every activity must have a school employee as a sponsor who shall be designated by the principal.
2. All activities must have the approval of the principal in advance of the activity.
3. Local District membership fees may not be charged. Regional, state and national dues may be collected when the organization is an affiliate with these groups. Students may be asked to share the cost of a particular activity.
4. The principal shall file or cause to be filed with the Superintendent an annual report for each organization which shall include, but not be limited to:
 - a. A list of activities for the year;
 - b. All revenue, including contributions and the source of the revenue; and
 - c. All expenditures.
5. All fund-raising activities must have the approval of the principal in advance of the activity. Door-to-door fund-raising projects are prohibited. Lotteries or selling of chances as a means of raising funds are prohibited.
6. All expenditures must be approved by the principal.
7. All receipts and expenditures must be processed through the District activity fund account. All receipts will be credited to the designated account of the designated school.

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8. Funds may be used for organizational activities—reimbursement to students and/or sponsors for personal expenses incurred as part of the activity.
9. Membership of any organization shall be open to all students who meet the written criteria for that organization. Written criteria will comply with existing civil rights laws and regulations.
10. The sponsor may discipline or drop students from the organization with the approval of the principal. The parent/guardian shall be notified and afforded an opportunity for a conference to discuss the reasons for suspension or dropping of the student.
11. The principal shall have the authority on interpretation of any rules and regulations pertaining to organizations or activities, whether or not they are stated in these policies.
12. Final authority on interpretation of any rules and regulations shall rest with the Board of Education.

Approved 8-28-95

Supersedes 6570 dated 9-23-85

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SUPERVISION OF ACTIVITIES

All activities of the students sponsored by the schools carried on in School District buildings or on School District grounds are considered a part of the educational program and as such will be supervised by teachers.

Approved 10-27-75
New Policy

STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

A. STATEMENT OF POLICY

1. The First Amendment to the Constitution protects the rights of students to freedom of expression. Educators have the obligation to teach the responsibilities that accompany this freedom. First Amendment rights of students may be limited when the exercise of those rights interferes with the educational objectives of the school.
2. Student publications shall serve as education tools, as means of expression for students, as forums for discourse on issues and as sources of entertainment and enlightenment.
3. School publications are not a public forum and, therefore, are not open to indiscriminate use by the public. School officials retain the right and the duty to exercise supervision and final judgment over the content of all school publications.

B. OFFICIAL SCHOOL PUBLICATIONS

1. School publications will offer students the opportunities to inform, to investigate, to interpret and to evaluate—all being accepted, responsible functions of the traditional democratic press. All students, through the editorial pages, will have the opportunity to express their views.
2. The criteria for the inclusion of a story, illustration, advertisement or other materials in any school publication will be those of accepted journalistic practice. As an integral part of the school curriculum, all school publications are under the direction of school officials.
3. It is recognized that a school publication should be prepared and published by students rather than professionally compensated journalists and that it thus becomes necessary to provide the students with a journalism advisor who has proper journalism training and whose duties include:
 - a. Teaching and implementing accepted, responsible journalism; and
 - b. Advising and counseling students in the implementation of the criteria for the inclusion of stories and other materials in the publication.

C. STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Truth, fairness, accuracy and responsibility are essential to the practice of journalism.

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1. Student journalists have an obligation to learn and observe the legal and ethical responsibilities expected of professional journalists, as discussed in the Code of Ethics of Professional Journalists, including accuracy and fairness.
2. Student journalists have the responsibility to know and observe applicable laws including libel, slander, obscenity, privacy, copyright and disruption of school activities, and should consider accepted community standards of decency and good taste.
3. In keeping with the above statements, the following types of publications by students are not authorized:
 - a. Publications that are obscene as to minors, as defined by state law;
 - b. Publications that are libelous or slanderous, as defined by state law;
 - c. Publications that constitute an unwarranted invasion of privacy, as defined by state law; and
 - d. Publications that so incite students as to create a clear and present danger of the commission of unlawful acts or the violations of lawful school regulations or the disruption of the orderly operation of the school.

Approved 7-27-98

Supersedes 6580 dated 9-23-85

<p>PARTIES, PICNICS AND END-OF-YEAR ACTIVITIES</p>

- A. Each room in the elementary schools will be limited to 2 parties a year involving the use of school time. Teachers and principals may advise PTA homeroom mothers and other interested patrons that they shall be limited to 2 events.
- B. A school party or picnic should not consume more than 1 hour of classroom time.
- C. The sixth grades of any school may schedule 1 end-of-the-year party or picnic in addition to the 2 parties mentioned above.
- D. The practice of “promotion” or “graduation” exercises, except those associated with high school commencement, is not approved.
- E. Programs or activities which occur after school hours may be planned in addition to those mentioned above. Any activity associated with the school will be approved by the principal and supervised by school staff.

CONTESTS

The Fort Smith School District may cooperate with individuals, community organizations or other agencies desiring to sponsor activities and contests in which District students may participate, provided that such contests are in keeping with the purposes and educational aims of the School District. In addition, such activities must be capable of being integrated into the school program without significant disruption or loss of instructional time for the student and without imposing an unreasonable added work load on the staff of the school.

School-sponsored organizations shall not participate in contests sponsored by agencies outside the School District without the approval of the Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee.

The approved Advisory List of National Contests and Activities published by the National Association of Secondary School Principals and/or by the Arkansas Activities Association shall be used as a guide for determining appropriate contests in which secondary students may participate.

<p>INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETICS</p>

The Board of Education believes that individual students shall have opportunities to grow physically and intellectually through their experiences in self-discipline and their contribution to team effort made possible through competitive interscholastic athletics.

Interscholastic athletic competition for secondary school students will be provided in a variety of sports. Decisions regarding specific sports will be determined in consideration of rules of the Arkansas Activities Association, availability of team sports in other AAAAA schools in the region, student interest and available resources. Students will be allowed to participate in individual sports on the basis of their physical condition and desire. Qualified professional staff will be provided for coaching and for the supervision of all athletic events.

The purpose of interscholastic athletic participation is both educational and recreational. The athletic program should encourage participation by as many male and female students as possible and should be conducted with the best interest of the participants as the primary consideration.

In addition to the numerous benefits for personal development provided for participants, a well-organized and implemented interscholastic athletic program can serve as a positive influence on the morale of all students in the school, as well as for the entire community.

The interscholastic athletic programs of the District will be organized in consideration of the following general guidelines:

- A. The athletic program is an integral part of the high school or junior high school curriculum and comes under the authority of the building principal to the same degree as all other school programs;
- B. The Director of Athletics and Student Activities shall be responsible for coordinating athletic programs in cooperation with the principal;
- C. All high schools and junior high schools shall be members of the Arkansas Activities Association. Interscholastic athletic competition shall be conducted in accordance with the rules and regulations promulgated by the Arkansas Activities Association, consistent with the philosophy of that Association and the National Federation of State High School Associations. Eligibility, transfer rules and other AAA guidelines shall be used to ensure fairness and equity;
- D. No student may practice or compete with any interscholastic athletic team until he or she has been examined and cleared for participation by a physician and written consent has been obtained from the parent/guardian on forms provided for that purpose;

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- E. Secondary insurance against accident or injury will be provided for students participating in interscholastic athletics.

Additional catastrophic coverage shall be provided by membership in the Arkansas Activities Association;
- F. Practice and competition for interscholastic athletics shall be scheduled so as to minimize interference with the academic program of each school. Each principal shall monitor athletic activities in order to avoid excessive encroachment upon other school activities;
- G. Academic eligibility for participation in interscholastic athletics shall be governed by rules of the Arkansas Activities Association, the Arkansas Department of Education and any other applicable rules adopted by the local Board of Education;
- H. Standards of conduct for interscholastic athletic participants shall be the responsibility of each coach or sponsor under the direct supervision of the Director of Athletics and Student Activities and school principal. No student shall compete while under suspension from classes; and
- I. Each principal or coach shall emphasize high standards of sportsmanship in order to maximize the teaching opportunities which athletics provide.

INSTRUCTIONAL DEPARTMENTS

The departments of instruction of the secondary schools shall be organized as follows:

- A. There shall be a minimum of 4 teachers in any one field before the department is recognized. If there are less than 4 teachers in any one field, individual teachers will be directly responsible to the principal or may be combined with another department at the discretion of the principal;
- B. Heads of departments are to be designated annually by the principal and referred to the Superintendent for approval; and
- C. Duties of heads of departments are to be outlined by the principal, the Deputy Superintendent, Director of Secondary Education and/or the Superintendent of Schools.

TEXTBOOK SELECTION AND ADOPTION
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The Arkansas Department of Education selects a state textbook selection committee which then determines the textbooks to be placed on the Arkansas state-approved textbook list.

In the Fort Smith School District, an official textbook selection committee will be designated and approved by the Board of Education. The committee may include representatives from various schools and grade levels, as well as other appropriate District personnel. Three parents, selected from the ranks of City Council PTA officers and committee chairs, will be requested to serve on the Textbook Selection Committee.

The state-approved list of textbooks will be distributed to the Textbook Committee members with other supplementary materials and information concerning the textbook selection process. An organizational meeting will be held with the committee members at which time the complete process of selecting textbooks will be reviewed. Sample textbooks from the state-approved list will be provided to members of the selection committee.

The Textbook Selection Committee will make written recommendations to the appropriate District administrator. The textbook recommendations will be reviewed and then presented to the Curriculum Committee of the Board of Education for approval.

The selected textbooks will be officially adopted by the Board of Education. All textbooks chosen will support District and state curriculum goals.

Approved 11-27-06

Supersedes IIAA dated 7-27-98

Supersedes 3330 dated 10-27-75

SELECTION OF MATERIAL FOR MEDIA PROGRAM
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Each school strives to maintain a good media collection that consists of a balance of recommended books, magazines, newspapers, electronic media and non-print materials to support all areas of the curriculum and to meet the individual differences of all the students. The changing role of the library media center includes technology support to enhance learning.

These materials for the school library media program are selected through the cooperation of the students, the teachers and the principal working with the media specialist. Prior to submitting requests to the media specialist, the teacher receives input from the students, studies the existing collection to ascertain the percentages of books in each classification and determines the need for materials in various subject fields of the curriculum.

Various selection aids containing the best and newest materials are circulated among the teachers in each school. The school should own and use such basic buying guides as the latest edition of the Children's Catalog, Elementary School Library Collection, Books for Elementary School Libraries, Booklist by the American Library Association, School Library Journal and Arkansas High School Library Catalog. Other buying guidelines which include a variety of audiovisual material should be available in each school.

The principal works with the media specialist and the teachers to establish policies on types of bindings to buy, to evaluate the existing collection and to best utilize the allocation of funds for the media program.

When any media material is challenged by an individual, the following procedure will be followed:

- A. Most difficulties can and should be resolved at the building level. Issues can usually be resolved through informal inquiry and discussion with principals, teachers and library media specialists;
- B. If the issue is not resolved through an informal inquiry, the complainant should be requested to make the complaint in writing; and
- C. The following process shall then begin:
 1. The complainant shall complete a Request for Reconsideration form and submit it to the building principal;
 2. When the written complaint is received, a committee to reevaluate the material in question shall be appointed by the principal;

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- a. This committee should consist of:
 - (1) District-level administrator;
 - (2) Building-level administrator;
 - (3) Teacher from the subject area in question;
 - (4) Parent/guardian representative; and
 - (5) Library media specialist.

- b. Within 3 weeks of receipt of the written complaint, a fact-finding committee will meet and:
 - (1) Receive copies of the challenged material.
 - (2) Read and/or examine the material.
 - (3) Weigh values and faults of the challenged material.
 - (4) Call in consultant(s) to review materials in particular subject areas, if needed.
 - (5) Discuss and prepare a report presenting both majority and minority opinions. Send copies of the report to (1) complainant, (2) Superintendent and (3) principal of the school involved.

EDUCATIONAL TRIPS

Educational trips shall be planned and implemented in consideration of the following definition:

A field trip is an instructional activity/learning experience provided outside the regular classroom environment for the specific purpose of clarifying, reinforcing and/or enriching a particular skill and/or concept.

Before groups of students are taken on educational trips away from the school, written permission must be secured from the parent/guardian of each child. No trip may be taken without permission of the principal.

The classroom teacher shall accompany and supervise the students of his/her classroom on the field trip bus and at the field trip site. School volunteers and/or parent/guardian designated by the school principal may assist the classroom teacher with the supervision of students during the field trip; however, they may not be used to “replace” the classroom teacher.

Approval of the number of official trips will be determined in consultation with the Director of Elementary Education and the Director of Secondary Education. The total number permitted applies to trips taken on a school bus or by any other means of transportation. Transportation for field trips shall be limited to approved vehicles.

PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY-BASED ACTIVITIES
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There are varieties of ways in which students can benefit from community resources. The Board of Education encourages the use of community resources under regulations established for all schools. The Board desires to establish positive working relationships with all other public and private organizations which contribute to the education process and to the general welfare of the citizens of the community.

Although cognizant of the values, both social and scholastic, derived by students participating in various community-sponsored activities, the following points should be used by principals in determining whether or not students may participate in such activities during school hours:

- A. The participation in the project will not deprive students of time needed in acquiring basic skills;
- B. The regular schedule will not be interrupted unless the majority of the students benefit through their participation; and
- C. Neither an individual nor the school as a whole shall be permitted to use school time in working on community-sponsored projects unless such an undertaking is contributing to the educational program.

ICE

OUTSIDE AGENCY MATERIAL DISTRIBUTION

Materials submitted by outside agencies are not to be distributed to the students or teachers, displayed in the building or sent to the homes unless authorization for such distribution and display has come from the Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee.

Approved 7-27-98
Supersedes 3380 dated 10-27-75

GRADING SYSTEM

The issuance of grades on a regular basis serves to promote a process of continuous evaluation of student performance to inform the student, his or her parent/guardian, and counselor of progress toward established educational goals.

Letter grades will be used to denote academic achievement except at kindergarten where a check mark system will be employed. At Grades 1–12, the letters "A, B, C, D, and F" will be used according to the following numerical percentage equivalents:

A = 90-100

B = 80-89

C = 70-79

D = 60-69

F = 0-59

These grade assignment standards shall be used in all regular classes in all district schools. Special symbols and terms appropriate to special programs may be used to indicate student progress. Exceptional students shall be graded in accordance with their Individualized Education Program and current guidelines.

Permanent grades will be issued on a yearly basis at the elementary level and on a semester basis at the secondary level. Grades assigned to students for performance in a course shall reflect only the extent to which a student has achieved the expressed academic objectives of the course. Grades that reflect other educational objectives may also be given.

Student progress is reported to parent/guardian four times each year. These reports are distributed a few days after the close of each nine-week period. Supplementary notes of commendation, suggestions for improvement, parental conferences, meetings, and similar means of keeping in touch with parent/guardian are emphasized.

Approved 7-24-06

Supersedes IKA dated 7-27-98

SCHOOL REPORTING OF STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE

Teachers shall communicate personally during the school year with the parent/guardian of students to discuss academic progress. Elementary school teachers shall meet with the parent/guardian at least once a semester through a face-to-face parent/teacher conference or a telephone conference. Secondary school teachers shall meet with the parent/guardian of each student at least once during the school year through a face-to-face parent/teacher conference or telephone conference. Teachers will communicate more frequently with the parent/ guardian of students not performing at the level expected for their grade. If a student is to be retained at any grade level, notice of retention and the reasons for retention shall be communicated promptly in a conference.

The school shall document parent/guardian participation or nonparticipation in required conferences.

Approved 7-27-98

Supersedes 6311 dated 5-18-87

HOMEWORK AND INDEPENDENT STUDY SKILLS
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Parent/guardian and teachers should be partners in the education of children. Their joint efforts in assigning and monitoring homework can provide an excellent opportunity to strengthen the home-school relationship and to help the student feel that home and school are working together for his/her best interest.

Homework shall be assigned and used as an integral part of the teaching/learning experience of students. Specific homework assignments shall be made by the teacher, provided each school may adopt guidelines to assure balance in homework assigned to each student. The type of homework assignment and the time to do such homework should give consideration to the grade level or subject area. As general guidelines, homework for Grades 1–3 should average from 30–45 minutes per day, for Grades 4–6, 45–90 minutes per day, for Grades 7–12, 1-2½ hours per day. As a general rule, homework is rarely given to kindergarten students.

Homework should be assigned regularly, clearly stated, regularly collected, checked and returned to students. Each teacher should advise students how and the extent to which homework will be used in determining final grades. To develop students' independent study skills the teacher should:

- A. Discuss the skills needed to accomplish homework assignments;
- B. Demonstrate a simple step-by-step process of completing a homework assignment;
- C. Model the techniques of listening, following instructions, note taking, reading for comprehension, preparing papers and locating materials in the library;
- D. Have students demonstrate their knowledge of independent study skills; and
- E. Teach the students how to organize materials and to work independently.

Approved 7-25-05

Supersedes IKB dated 7-28-86

PROMOTION AND RETENTION OF STUDENTS
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A. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (Grades K–6):

Promotion in the elementary school is by grade level on an annual basis. Students who fail are required to repeat the entire grade level the following school year.

B. SECONDARY SCHOOL (Grades 7–8):

To be promoted from the seventh to the eighth grade, a student must earn 3 units of credit from the following 4 courses: English, math, social studies and science.

To be promoted from the eighth to the ninth grade, a student must earn 3 units of credit from the following 4 courses: English, math, social studies and science.

C. SECONDARY SCHOOL (Grades 9–12):

Promotion in Grades 9–12 is by subject on a semester basis.

1. A student in Grade 9 is classified as a Freshman.
2. To be classified as a Sophomore, a student must pass 4 units of study.
3. To be classified as a Junior, a student must have passed 8 units of study.
4. To be classified as a Senior, a student must have passed 12 units of study.

These units of study are applicable to a student's classification only. Students must pass 23 units of study to graduate as specified in Policy IKF.

D. RETENTION:

Retention will forever affect a student's self-concept and educational attainment; therefore, it is imperative that the retention decision be based upon careful consideration of available data concerning the student. The retention decision shall be a joint effort of the teacher, principal, counselor and parent/guardian. A student shall be retained only if the data supports benefit from retention. In the absence of such support, the student shall be promoted.

Approved 6-25-07

Supersedes IKE dated 7-27-98

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

- A. Beginning with the class of 2009 a minimum of 23 units must be earned in Grades 9–12 to be graduated from a Fort Smith high school.* These units must include:

English—4 units

Oral Communication—one-half unit

Social Studies—3 units (1 unit of world history, 1 unit of U.S. History, one-half unit of civics or government) are required

Mathematics— 4 units (1 unit of Algebra I, 1 unit of geometry are required.) All other math units must build on the base of algebra and geometry knowledge and skills.)

Science—3 units (at least 1 unit of biology or its equivalent and 1 unit of a physical science)

**Physical Education*—1½ units (not more than 1 unit of JROTC or marching band may be used to satisfy this requirement)

Health and Safety—one-half unit

Fine Arts—one-half unit

**A maximum of 2 units of physical education is allowed.*

- B. LETTER GRADE POINT VALUE:

In computing grade point averages which appear on the transcript, the following equivalents are used for all courses except advanced placement:

A=4 B=3 C=2 D=1 F=0.

Advanced placement courses will receive the following points:

A=5 B=4 C=3 D=2 F=0.

RANK IN CLASS:

Each graduating senior is assigned a class rank. Class rank is determined by total quality points accumulated by a student using the grading scales below:

Uniform Grading Scale and numeric values.

A	90-100	4 points
B	80-89	3 points
C	70-79	2 points
D	60-69	1 point
F	0-59	0 points

Uniform Grading Scale and numeric values for Advanced Placement courses.

A	90-100	5 points
B	80-89	4 points
C	70-79	3 points
D	60-69	2 points
F	0-59	0 points

Weighted credit shall be allowed for Advanced Placement courses only if the student takes the entire course which is being taught by an appropriately trained teacher or teacher under the provisions of an additional training plan (ATP). Student must also complete the applicable test.

All courses* taken as a part of the school day in Grades 9-12 will be counted in this calculation. Courses taken prior to the ninth grade that will count in this calculation are Algebra I and Spanish I. If students have the same total quality points, they will tie for that rank. The following courses will not count in the rank calculation, but will count for graduation and will be assigned letter grades unless otherwise indicated:

- College courses, unless the course is a part of the Western Arkansas Technical Center Program.
- Courses taken at The Basic School, Summer School, and by correspondence.
- High School courses taken prior to the ninth grade other than Algebra I and Spanish I.
- Credits earned in Home School (will be assigned Pass/Fail grades only).

*Credits earned at any school not fully accredited by a state's education department or one of the state's regional accrediting agencies (i.e., North Central Association) must be approved by the director of secondary education.

- C. Students identified with disabilities in accordance with Arkansas Department of Education definition may be graduated by meeting the requirements set forth in this policy or by completion of their IEP (Individual Education Program) for graduation, as established by the student's programming committee.

D. **DIPLOMAS:**

Upon completion of graduation requirements, the Fort Smith Schools award 2 types of diplomas:

Honors Diploma—Meet requirements for graduation; maintain 3.0 grade average; and pass 8 units of Pre-AP/AP courses, 6 units of which must be earned in Grades 10, 11, 12.

Diploma—Meet requirements for graduation or meet requirements of Individual Education Program (IEP) for special education students.

- E. Beginning with the class of 2014 students must have completed all required units of credit to be eligible to participate in spring commencement exercises.

F. **CONCURRENT COLLEGE AND HIGH SCHOOL CREDIT:**

Consistent with *Act 1097 of 1991*, any student in Grades 9-12 who enrolls in and successfully completes a course(s) offered by a publicly supported community college or four-year college or university shall be entitled to receive both college and high school credit, including credit toward graduation. The following regulations will apply to awarding the high school credit.

- Simultaneously with college courses taken during the fall and spring terms, an 11th grader must be taking at least four high school courses which count toward graduation; a senior must be taking three high school courses which count toward graduation.
- A student may earn high school credit for college courses taken during the summer terms immediately preceding the 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grades in high school.
- Of the 23 units needed for graduation, a student is expected to earn 17 required units in Grades 9-12 in junior high school and senior high school. A student may earn the remaining 6 elective units in college courses.

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- Three, four, and five hours of college credit will be equivalent of one unit of high school credit.
- Only courses taken at the Western Arkansas Technical Center will count in class rank calculation.
- A student must request high school credit during the semester immediately following the semester in which the college is taken.

Approved 7-22-13

Supersedes IKF dated 6-25-12

Supersedes IKF dated 7-28-08

Supersedes IKF dated 6-25-07

Supersedes IKF dated 6-21-04

RESIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATION

A student who graduates from the Fort Smith senior high schools must (1) have been in attendance at that school during the final semester before graduation and (2) have earned at least 2 units in that semester.

An exception to this will be made when a student completes the requirements for a diploma by correspondence or extension work as outlined by the Arkansas Department of Education and/or the North Central Association or by transferring not more than 2 units from an accredited high school.

Approved 2-17-92
Supersedes 6331 dated 10-27-75

SMART CORE CURRICULUM

In order to ensure that every child has access to a rigorous curriculum, the Smart Core curriculum and Core curriculum will be standard components of the required course of study to graduate from Arkansas public schools.

All students will participate in the Smart Core curriculum unless the parent or guardian waives a student's right to participate. In order to waive a student's right to participate in the Smart Core curriculum, the parent must sign the separate Smart Core Waiver Form. In the case of a waiver, the student will be required to participate in the Core curriculum.

Each spring all 6th-grade students in Fort Smith Public Schools and their parents will be provided the Smart Core curriculum, as well as the option of waiving Smart Core and thus electing the Core curriculum. When appropriate, these curricular provisions will be reviewed and revised through grade 12.

Parents may be informed of their curricular choices through counselor meetings, parent teacher conferences, PTA, newsletters, student handbooks, etc.

Upon receipt of the Arkansas Department of Education's Smart Core Informed Consent Form, parents will be required to sign and return their choice of curriculum for their child to the school. Returned Informed Consent Forms become a part of the student's permanent record and are attached to the transcript. Students transferring to other schools and/or districts will have transferred, as a part of their permanent record, the signed Informed Consent Form.

Parents will be provided the option of changing the Informed Consent Form by contacting the building principal in writing. Requests will be honored only if the student can complete the newly selected course of study by the end of their senior year.

Appropriate school personnel including teachers, counselors, and administrators will be informed and trained about the provisions of this policy.

Approved 7-23-12

Supersedes IKFD dated 6-21-10

Supersedes IKFD dated 6-26-06

Supersedes IKFD dated 6-21-04