



VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

BRIEFING

# INITIATING AND ESTABLISHING ACADEMIC- YEAR GOVERNOR'S SCHOOLS

PRESENTED TO THE

JOINT SUBCOMMITTEE STUDYING  
SCIENCE, MATHEMATICS, AND  
TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION

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## BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- Standard 1 of the *Standards of Quality* requires that local school boards implement the early identification of gifted students and enrollment of such students in appropriately differentiated instructional programs [§22.11-253.13:1D.5].
- The Virginia Board of Education has promulgated regulations addressing services for gifted students entitled, *Regulations Governing Educational Services for Gifted Students* [8 VAC 20-40-10 through 8 VAC 20-40-70].
- These regulations define gifted students as  
...students in public elementary and secondary schools beginning with kindergarten through graduation whose abilities and potential for accomplishment are so outstanding that they require special programs to meet their educational needs.
- The Virginia Department of Education administers funds that are appropriated by the General Assembly for Governor's Schools.
- The *Code of Virginia* recognizes the benefit of regional, joint endeavors among school divisions. § [22.1-26](#). *Joint and regional schools; regional public charter schools.*, allows two or more school divisions to develop cooperative endeavors to provides academic, career and technical, and other specialized educational services.

Two or more school boards may, with the consent of the State Board, establish joint or regional schools, including regional public charter schools as defined in § [22.1-212.5](#), comprehensive schools offering all-day

academic programs and career and technical education, and regional residential charter schools for at-risk pupils, for the use of their respective school divisions and may jointly purchase, take, hold, lease, convey and condemn both real and personal property for such joint, regional, or regional public charter schools.

- Further, the *Code of Virginia*, § [22.1-26](#), specifies that joint programs

...shall be managed and controlled by the school boards jointly, in accordance with such regulations as are promulgated by the State Board.

- The Board of Education's *Regulations Governing Jointly Owned and Operated Schools and Jointly Operated Programs* [8 VAC 20-280-20] establish the following requirements for such programs:

1. Member school boards shall have representation on the joint board;
2. Bylaws and rules of operation shall govern the operation of the regional board;
3. A finance officer shall have custody of its funds; and
4. Joint board shall have the right to employ staff required to operate the joint school and programs; purchase supplies; purchase, sell, or dispose of equipment or appliances; determine policies concerning instruction; approve the curriculum in keeping with the general laws, and with regulations, and requirements of the Board of Education; maintain jointly owned school buildings; and

in general to manage, operate, and conduct joint schools and programs.

- Further, those same regulations specify that

...The relevant school boards operating schools described in clause (ii) may, by agreement, establish alternative schedules for the delivery of instruction that may include alternatives to standard school day and year requirements, subject to the issuance of any necessary waivers by the Board of Education pursuant to § [22.1-79.1](#) and relevant Board regulations. Such school boards may contract with an accredited institution of higher education or other postsecondary school licensed or certified by the Board of Education or the State Council of Higher Education, as the case may be, pursuant to Chapter 16 (§ [22.1-319](#) et seq.) of this title or Chapter 21.1 (§ [23-276.1](#) et seq.) of Title 23, to deliver such instruction, which may include specialized instruction and training for students who are eligible to enroll in public high schools, consistent with §§ [22.1-3](#), [22.1-5](#), and [22.1-213](#).

- The 2006 Virginia Acts of Assembly, Chapter 3, Item 135 B.30 a and c require that students not be charged for participation in Academic-Year Governor's School programs and that equal amounts of local funds be included with the state general funds in support of these programs.
- The first four Academic-Year Governor's Schools were established in 1985. Those early programs served 736 high-school students from 21 school divisions.
- In 2006-2007, 18 Academic-Year Governor's Schools will serve more than 5,750 students from 119 school divisions

with 16 school divisions participating in more than one program.

- Most of the regional Academic-Year Governor’s Schools use a “shared time” model of service. Students attend Governor’s School programs for part of the school day where accelerated instruction and content are sequenced and paced to extend their academic or artistic strengths. For the remainder of the day, these students return to their high schools for coursework they need for graduation where these students continue as members in their high schools serving as leaders in academics, arts, and athletics.
- Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Maggie L. Walker Governor’s School for Government and International Studies, and Appomattox Regional Governor’s School for Arts and Technology grant diplomas consistent with the Board of Education’s *Standards of Accreditation*, Requirements for graduation [8 VAC 20-131-50].
- A complete list of the current 18 Academic-Year Governor’s Schools is provided in Appendix A. Maps indicating the participating school divisions and the areas of service for each Academic-Year Governor’s School are provided in Appendices B and C.

## STEPS TO INITIATE AND ESTABLISH AN ACADEMIC-YEAR GOVERNOR'S SCHOOL

- Groups interested in initiating and establishing an Academic-Year Governor's School must first receive recognition of their intentions from the General Assembly. That recognition is made through inclusion of language and planning funds in the current appropriation act. Acknowledgement by the General Assembly prior to an approach to the Board of Education is required in response to language within the 2006 Virginia Acts of Assembly, Chapter 3, Item 135 B.30 d:

...The Board of Education shall not take any action that would increase the state's share of costs associated with the Governor's Schools as set forth in paragraph C. 26. of this Item. This provision shall not prohibit the Board of Education from submitting requests for the increased costs of existing programs resulting from updates to September 30 fall membership for school divisions currently participating in existing programs or for school divisions that begin participation in existing programs.

- In January 1998, the Board of Education established procedures for initiating an Academic-Year Governor's School. Those procedures are provided in Appendix D.
- Those guidelines require that school divisions requesting to implement an Academic-Year Governor's School shall provide the Department of Education with documentation of the following:
  - The existence of an active, on-going Governor's School Planning Committee of superintendents or their designees from the participating school divisions;

- The design of a Governor's School program, which is beyond the scope and sequence of the regular schools' program for gifted students;
- The determination of the initial location and fiscal agent;
- A statement of need/rationale for the school with an explanation of the separate and unique program to be offered to its secondary gifted students;
- A statement of assurance that all school divisions in the region have been invited to participate;
- A brief description of the proposed program, including site location, number of students, grade levels, and general curriculum design;
- A written memorandum of agreement with local businesses, industries, institutions of higher learning, and other community resources that will contribute to the Governor's School and broaden the scope of the students' educational experiences;
- A statement of assurance that the Governor's School Planning Committee has reviewed provisions of the *Administrative Procedures Guide for the Establishment of Academic-Year Governor's Schools* and agrees to follow the guidelines set forth in the document;
- A statement of assurance that an on-going Governing Board will be established to reflect current Board of Education regulations relative to jointly operated schools and programs; and
- A statement of assurance that all divisions listed in the proposal, at the time it is approved by the Board of

Education, intend to participate for a minimum of three years in the program.

- Once a planning group has satisfied the Board of Education that its proposal offers services for its gifted students beyond those provided in area high schools and that the proposed program will support these students' educational needs, the planning group must return to the General Assembly. This second request asks the General Assembly to provide additional operational funds to the existing appropriation for Academic-Year Governor's Schools to allow the new program to operate.
- The multi-step process acknowledges the importance that the General Assembly and the Board of Education place on regional recognition of educational opportunities and regional decision making.
- A typical timeline for the initiation and establishment of an Academic-Year Governor's School extends for 18 months. Such a timeline includes the formation of the initial regional planning group or committee and its contact with members of the regional legislative delegation. With its planning funds, the planning group works toward its objectives:
  1. Assessment of regional need and interest;
  2. Determination of the focus of the program and grades to be served;
  3. Selection of a site and outfitting the facilities;
  4. Determination of staffing requirements;
  5. Development of curricular frameworks;

6. Development of application criteria, timelines, and documents;
  7. Development of the joint board; and
  8. Development of a proposed budget.
- The joint board's proposal must then be presented for first and final review by the Board of Education. After the Board accepts the joint board's proposal, the joint board then returns to its legislative delegation to seek an increase in the appropriation in Academic-Year Governor's School funds to allow the program to select and serve students consistent with the joint board's approved proposal.

Appendix A

NAME (Fiscal Agent)	GRADES	SEPTEMBER 30 ENROLLMENT	NUMBER OF PARTICIPATING DIVISIONS
A. Linwood Holton Governor's School (Washington County)	11 – 12	258	12
Appomattox Regional Governor's School (Chesterfield County)	9 – 12	343	14
Blue Ridge Governor's School (Fluvanna County)	11 – 12	321	6
Central Virginia Governor's School (Lynchburg City)	11 – 12	109	5
Chesapeake Bay Governor's School (Essex County)	11 – 12	178	12
Commonwealth Governor's School (Spotsylvania County)	9 – 12	441	3
Governor's School of Southside Virginia (Charlotte County)	11 – 12	169	11
Governor's School for the Arts (Norfolk City)	9 – 12	344	8
Jackson River Governor's School (Alleghany County)	11 – 12	9	3
Maggie L. Walker Governor's School for Government and International Studies (Richmond City)	9 – 12	668	11
Massanutten Governor's School for Integrated Environmental Science and Technology	11 – 12	75	4
Mountain Vista Governor's School (Fauquier County)	11 – 12	109	7
New Horizons Governor's School (Hampton City)	11 – 12	195	7
Piedmont Governor's School (Henry County)	11 – 12	117	5
Roanoke Valley Governor's School (Roanoke City)	9 – 12	269	7
Shenandoah Valley Governor's School (Augusta County)	11 – 12	178	3
Southwest Virginia Governor's School (Pulaski County)	11 – 12	168	7
Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology (Fairfax County)	9 – 12	1,802	6
<b>Total</b>		<b>5,753</b>	



# 2006-2007 VIRGINIA ACADEMIC-YEAR GOVERNOR S SCHOOL PROGRAM



- **A. Linwood Holton GS**  
 Bland, Bristol, Buchanan, Dickenson, Galax, Grayson, Lee, Norton, Russell, Scott, Smyth, Tazewell, Washington, Wise
- **Appomattox Regional GS for the Arts and Technology**  
 Amelia, Charles City, Chesterfield, Colonial Heights, Dinwiddie, Franklin City, Hopewell, Petersburg, Powhatan, Prince George, Richmond City, Southampton, Surry, Sussex
- **Blue Ridge GS**  
 Fluvanna, Goochland, Greene, Louisa, Nelson, Orange
- **Central Virginia GS for Science and Technology**  
 Amherst, Appomattox, Bedford, Campbell, Lynchburg
- **Chesapeake Bay GS for Marine and Environmental Sciences**  
 Caroline, Colonial Beach, Essex, Gloucester, King & Queen, King George, King William, Lancaster, Mathews, Middlesex, Northumberland, Richmond (County), Westmoreland
- **Commonwealth GS**  
 King George, Spotsylvania, Stafford
- **GS of Southside Virginia**  
 Amelia, Brunswick, Buckingham, Charlotte, Cumberland, Greenville, Halifax, Lunenburg, Mecklenburg, Nottoway, Prince Edward
- **GS for the Arts**  
 Chesapeake, Franklin City, Isle of Wight, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Southampton, Suffolk, Virginia Beach
- **Jackson River GS**  
 Alleghany, Bath, Botetourt, Buena Vista, Covington
- **Maggie L. Walker GS for Government and International Studies**  
 Charles City, Chesterfield, Goochland, Hanover, Henrico, New Kent, Petersburg, Powhatan, Prince George, Richmond City
- **Massanutten GS for Integrated Environmental Science and Technology**  
 Harrisonburg, Rockingham, Shenandoah
- **Mountain Vista GS**  
 Clarke, Culpeper, Fauquier, Frederick, Rappahannock, Warren, and Winchester
- **New Horizons GS for Science and Technology**  
 Gloucester, Hampton, Isle of Wight, Newport News, Poquoson, Williamsburg/James City, York
- **Piedmont GS**  
 Danville, Henry, Martinsville, Patrick, Pittsylvania
- **Roanoke Valley GS for Science and Technology**  
 Bedford, Botetourt, Craig, Franklin County, Roanoke (City and County), Salem
- **Shenandoah Valley GS**  
 Augusta, Staunton, Waynesboro
- **Southwest Virginia GS for Science, Mathematics, and Technology**  
 Carroll, Galax, Giles, Montgomery, Pulaski, Smyth, Wythe
- **Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology**  
 Arlington, Fairfax, Falls Church, Fauquier, Loudoun, Prince William

## Appendix D

# Virginia Board of Education Approved Procedures for Initiating an Academic-Year Governor's School

Governor's Schools and Gifted Education  
Office of Secondary Instructional Services  
Virginia Department of Education  
1998

**Virginia Department of Education  
Procedures for Initiating an Academic-Year Governor's School**

Developing and implementing the program and administrative arrangements for an Academic-Year Governor's School involves extensive planning and discussions among the participating school divisions. It is recommended that these take place over the course of six to twelve months. The procedure includes the following steps:

1. School divisions desiring to implement an Academic-Year Governor's School shall provide the Department of Education with documentation of the following:
  - The existence of an active, on-going Governor's School Planning Committee of superintendents or their designees from the participating school divisions. The committee should also include some school board members and parents. The planning committee shall design a Governor's School program, which is beyond the scope and sequence of the regular schools' program for gifted students, and shall determine the initial location and fiscal agent.
  - A statement, which demonstrates the need/rationale for the school. This statement should be concise and state the important reasons to have a Governor's School, separate and unique from the existing program offerings for secondary gifted students. A statement of assurance that all school divisions in the region have been invited to participate.
  - A brief description of the proposed program, including site location, number of students, grade levels, and general curriculum design.
  - A written memorandum of agreement with local businesses, industries, and institutions of higher learning. This agreement will suggest ways in which community resources will contribute to the Governor's School to broaden the scope of the students' educational experiences.
  - A statement of assurance that the Governor's School Planning Committee has reviewed provisions of the *Administrative Procedures Guide for the Establishment of Academic-Year Governor's Schools* and agrees to follow the guidelines set forth in the document.
2. A statement of assurance that an on-going Governing Board will be established to reflect current Board of Education regulations relative to jointly operated schools and programs.
3. A statement of assurance that all divisions listed in the proposal, at the time it is approved by the Board of Education, intend to participate for a minimum of three years in the program.
4. The Department of Education will review the proposal and documentation and make a report to the Board of Education with a recommendation.
5. The Board of Education will determine if the proposed program is approved as a joint school (Section 22.1-26 of the Code of Virginia), and is to be recommended to the Governor to be designated, with appropriate funding, as a Governor's School.

6. The Department of Education may issue a contract involving the fiscal agent, the Governing Board, and the Department of Education.
7. The Department of Education will assist the planning committee in developing the Administrative Procedures and will evaluate the program on a regular basis.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES GUIDE FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF ACADEMIC-YEAR GOVERNOR'S SCHOOLS**

### **Introduction**

The Academic-Year Governor's School Programs shall provide educational options not available in home schools for students identified as gifted or eligible to be so designated. These programs will provide students with the following opportunities:

- to develop their own separate identity as a community of learners,
- to learn and grow in an environment that nurtures the unique abilities and needs of gifted learners,
- to develop a positive and realistic concept of self and others,
- to belong to a community of learners who share interests and abilities,
- to learn about subjects of interest to them,
- to be risk-takers and decision-makers in a non-threatening environment,
- to provide career exploration and/or advanced classes which may help students as they prepare for college or other post-secondary opportunities, and
- to expand their knowledge of and interest in science and technology, the humanities, and the arts by providing interaction with community, industry, professionals, and higher education.

### **The Role of the Department of Education**

The Department of Education will act as a resource for these programs, providing training and technical assistance, including program and curriculum design, instructional strategies, and evaluation. The Department also will provide guidelines for program implementation, issue the agreement between participants, and approve program plans annually. In addition, it will establish the criteria for and conduct an external evaluation of each program at least once every six years.

## Program Description

- I. Each Regional Governor's School planning committee appointed by the Governing Board shall develop cooperatively with local school divisions, and have available for review and dissemination, a program description that includes the following:
  - A. Statement of program goals
  - B. Statement of program objectives
  - C. Course descriptions
    - If college credit is to be awarded, courses selected should be carefully scrutinized to assess the likelihood of acceptance of credit by recognized two- and four-year institutions. If a new course description is needed, it should be prepared and submitted through the appropriate college channels for approval.
    - If an academic credit is awarded, appropriate criteria for passing the course must be specified.
  - D. Description of relationship between Regional Governor's School programs and local plans for the education of the gifted
    - Local gifted coordinators should actively participate in program planning and implementation and work with the program director.
  - E. Length of program and daily schedule
    - Upon approval of program design, a detailed schedule of classes, activities, and assignment of personnel must be developed.
  - F. Facilities to be provided to accomplish program goals and objectives
    - Assurance from the fiscal agent that permanent facilities are available, are supportive of the need for a separate identity as a Governor's School, and are adequate to meet the needs of the program.
  - G. Materials and equipment to be provided to accomplish program goals and objectives
  - H. Internal program evaluation procedures including the following:
    - What is to be evaluated,
    - What process will be used, and
    - How data will be used for program improvement.

I. Program administration

Assurance from the Governing Board that the Governor's School program, consistent with Department of Education Administrative Procedures, will be administered by the program director with approval by the Governing Board.

II. Each regional Governor's School director will maintain, for review and dissemination, procedures developed cooperatively with participating school divisions which address the following topics:

- A. Student recruitment, selection, and admissions criteria; including a statement that ensures that all eligible gifted students, including underachievers and/or culturally disadvantaged, have an equal opportunity to apply;
  - Students' abilities and interests shall be consistent with program offerings.
- B. Code of student conduct and attendance
- C. Transportation arrangements which are in compliance with all applicable federal and state regulations
- D. Staff recruitment, selection, and assignment
  - The Governor's School shall hire a qualified director and staff with training and/or experience in gifted education and have their curriculum vitae on file.
  - To the extent possible, staff should be balanced as to race and gender and hired from participating school divisions.
- E. Staff development
  - The program will provide appropriate staff training in addition to staff planning time.
  - When any staff person(s), including a college or university instructor, is (are) employed without training or successful experience in gifted education, instructional supervision shall be provided to ensure the use of proper instructional strategies and techniques for gifted learners.
- F. Staff evaluation
  - The director should complete an evaluation report based on personal observations of each instructor. Instruments and procedures for evaluation shall be identified as part of staff development training and shall be a part of any workshop training.

- G. Parent/community involvement
  - In addition to opening/closing day ceremonies, parents should be considered as program resources, perhaps as mentors, or as resources for other activities which complement the educational experience. A PTA/PTO should be established and meetings should be held at least four times each academic year.
- H. Business, industry, higher education, and arts involvement
- I. Documentation that insurance and other fiscal information will be provided

### **Department of Education Evaluation Procedures**

- III. The Department of Education will conduct periodically, at least once every six years, an evaluation of each Governor's School program. A Governor's School proposal must include a statement of assurance that the Governor's School Director will work with the Department of Education to conduct an evaluation that includes the following:
  - A. Examination of the program's policies, procedures, and outcomes
  - B. Use of criteria addressing program design, delivery of instruction, and evaluation of the program
  - C. Interviews with program directors, staff, students, and parents
  - D. Review of documents
  - E. Observations
  - F. Follow up

*Cooperative Agreement Contract*  
Concerning the Establishment and Operation of

the \_\_\_\_\_ Governor's School  
between \_\_\_\_\_ School Board  
and The Governing Board of the \_\_\_\_\_ Governor's School and the Virginia  
Department of Education.

**Whereas**, the \_\_\_\_\_ has requested that the Board of Education designate \_\_\_\_\_ High School as a Governor's School;

**Whereas**, the Board of Education has designated \_\_\_\_\_ as the Governor's School for \_\_\_\_\_.

**Whereas**, the Department of Education requires that the fiscal agent for the Governor's School abide by the regulations set forth in the Administrative Procedures Guide for Establishing a Governor's School;

**Whereas**, the Department of Education requires that the fiscal agent provide facilities to the Department of Education, the Governor's School, and the participating school divisions.

THE PARTIES HEREBY AGREE AS FOLLOWS:

1. That \_\_\_\_\_ Governor's School is an institution of the Virginia Department of Education, with \_\_\_\_\_ Schools serving as Fiscal Agent.
2. The Governing Board shall be established and maintained as required by Board of Education regulations on jointly operated schools and programs. [§22,1-26]
3. The Governing Board shall be responsible for and shall abide by procedures and regulations consistent with the Department of Education's *Administrative Procedures and Guidelines*. The Governing Board shall call and conduct meetings as it deems appropriate.
4. The Governing Board shall serve as an Advisory Board to the \_\_\_\_\_ School Board on all matters related to fiscal responsibility.
5. The \_\_\_\_\_ School Board shall be responsible for and abide by Department of Education policies and guidelines regarding fiscal responsibility.
6. The \_\_\_\_\_ School Board and the Governing Board shall abide by the specifications set forth in the proposal to the Board of Education and the guidelines from the Department of Education regarding the establishment, purpose, and administration of the Governor's School.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ Public Schools, serving as Fiscal Agent, shall provide permanent facilities that are adequate to meet the needs of the program.
8. Transportation of students is the responsibility of the participating school division.

9. This Cooperative Agreement is effective from the date of execution  
this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 200\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature, School Board Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature, Governor's School Governing Board Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature, Division Superintendent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature, Superintendent of Public Instruction

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

## Academic-Year Governor's Schools

The Department of Education sponsors regional Governor's Schools, which serve gifted high school students during the academic year. These schools create special educational opportunities for gifted students in science, mathematics, technology, social sciences, the humanities, and the arts. Students at each of these schools concentrate on their specific areas of interest while obtaining well-balanced instruction in other areas of study, either through the Governor's School or at their base school.

Academic-Year Governor's Schools are established through the organizational concept of creating a *Community of Learners*. Each Governor's School provides a community of learners whereby close, trusting relationships among faculty and students give rise to a climate that stimulates growth and intellectual development. In such communities, gifted students can rely on a small, caring group of specially trained adults who work closely with each other to provide coordinated, meaningful, and challenging educational experiences that match the unique needs and characteristics of the gifted learner. A Governor's School community of learners is created by bringing together gifted students, from three or more adjoining school divisions, to interact with and provide mutual support for their intellectual peers in the pursuit of academic and/or artistic growth and development commensurate with their needs and abilities.

Students use computers and other current technology in laboratory activities, conduct in-depth research, work with other students to develop special projects and performances, and work alongside mentors in business, industry, government, and universities gaining career experiences.

Each academic-year school has its own admissions process. For more information, contact the local director of the Governor's School in your area, or the local gifted program administrator in your school division. In addition, information may be obtained from the Department of Education.

## References

Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, (1989, June). Turning Points: Preparing American Youth for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Washington, DC: USDOE.

Virginia Governor's Schools. (1995). Richmond, VA: Virginia Department of Education.