

**Section 7-26.3. Areas of professional staff development; areas of professional development for teachers and principals; training in science-based reading research; professional development in implementing Virginia IEP; required participation by instructional personnel; professional development in instructional practices; professional development to support children with autism; limit on number of professional development; mental health awareness training; annual review of professional development program.** — A. Suffolk Public Schools provides a program of high-quality professional development in the following areas:

1. In the use and documentation of performance standards and evaluation criteria based on student academic progress and skills for teachers and administrators to clarify roles and performance expectations and to facilitate the successful implementation of instructional programs that promote student achievement at the school and classroom levels;
2. As part of the license renewal process, to assist teachers and principals in acquiring the skills needed to work with gifted students, students with disabilities, and students who have been identified as having limited English proficiency and to increase student achievement and expand the knowledge and skills students require to meet the standards for academic performance set by the Board of Education;
3. In educational technology for all instructional personnel which is designed to facilitate integration of computer skills and related technology into the curricula;
4. For administrative personnel designed to increase proficiency in instructional leadership and management, including training in the evaluation and documentation of teacher and administrator performance based on student academic progress and the skills and knowledge of such instructional or administrative personnel; and
5. Designed to educate School Board employees about bullying as defined in Va. Code § 22.1-276.01 and the need to create a bully-free environment.

B. In addition, the Suffolk Public Schools provides teachers and principals with high-quality professional development programs each year in the following areas:

1. Instructional content;
2. The preparation of tests and other assessment measures;
3. Methods for assessing the progress of individual students, including Standards of Learning assessment materials or other criterion-referenced tests that match locally developed objectives;
4. Instruction and remediation techniques in English, mathematics, science, and history and social science;
5. Interpreting test data for instructional purposes;
6. Technology applications to implement the Standards of Learning; and
7. Effective classroom management.

C. The School Board provides high-quality professional development and training in science-based reading research and evidence-based literacy instruction, from the list developed and the resources provided by the Virginia Department of Education (the Department) pursuant to subsection C of Va. Code § 22.1-253.13:5 or an alternative

program that consists of evidence-based literacy instruction and aligns with science-based reading research approved by the Department, for:

1. Each elementary school principal and each teacher with an endorsement in early/primary education preschool through grade three, elementary education preschool through grade six, special education general curriculum kindergarten through grade 12, special education deaf and hard of hearing preschool through grade 12, special education blindness/visual impairments preschool through grade 12, or English as a second language preschool through grade 12, or as a reading specialist that builds proficiency in evidence-based literacy instruction and science-based reading research in order to aid in the licensure renewal process for such individuals;
2. Each teacher with an endorsement in middle education grades six through eight who teaches English that builds proficiency in evidence-based literacy instruction and science-based reading research; and
3. Each middle school principal and teacher with an endorsement in middle education grades six through eight who teaches mathematics, science, or history and social science that builds an awareness of evidence-based literacy instruction and science-based reading research.

D. The Beginning no later than the 2027-2028 school year, the School Board will provide high-quality professional development in implementing the Virginia IEP established pursuant to Va. Code § 22.1-214.4(11) and the referral, evaluation, reevaluation and eligibility forms and worksheets referenced in Va. Code §22.1-214.4(6), for each teacher with a provisional special education license or an endorsement in special education general curriculum kindergarten through grade 12, special education deaf and hard of hearing preschool through grade 12, and special education blindness and visual impairments preschool through grade 12.

E. The Beginning no later than the 2027-2028 school year, the School Board will provide high-quality professional development in instructional practices to support specially designed instruction in inclusive settings for:

- (1) each teacher with a provisional general education license or an endorsement in early/primary education preschool through grade three, elementary education preschool through grade six, and secondary education grades six through 12;
- (2) each principal with an endorsement in administration and supervision preschool through grade 12;
- (3) each teacher's aide or other paraprofessional; and
- (4) any teacher with a provisional special education license for whom the School Board determines there is a need for such professional development.

F. The School Board may provide high-quality professional development each year in communicating with and supporting students with autism spectrum disorder for any instructional personnel and School Board employees whose duties include regular contact with students. Such training is optional, and if given, will be provided in accordance with the guidance provided by the Board of Education pursuant to clause (x) of Va. Code § 22.1-253.13:5(C), that includes:

- (1) an overview of the characteristics and behavioral recognition of autism spectrum disorder,
- (2) strategies for communicating and interacting with and supporting students with autism spectrum disorder, and
- (3) best practices for responding to and de-escalating certain behavioral challenges and situations.

E. G. All instructional personnel are required to participate each year in professional development programs. No elementary or secondary school teacher is required to participate more frequently than once within six months of employment with the School Board and once every five years thereafter in any non-academic training activity, as defined in Va. Code § 22.1-298.8(A). ~~regarding appropriate management of student conduct and student offenses in violation of School Board policies or~~ Except that participation in additional training relating to secure mandatory test violations as set forth in Va. Code §§ 22.1-19.1 and 22.1-292.1 unless may be required as determined by the School Board or superintendent if it is determined determines that such additional training is necessary to comply with federal or state law or to remediate misconduct. Each teacher who completes such training must sign a written attestation that the teacher has been trained in and understands the relevant subject matter.

The total frequency and duration of non-academic training activities in which each public elementary or secondary school teacher is required to participate pursuant to (i) state law or regulation or (ii) policy or regulation of the School Board shall not exceed 25 hours every five years. Any non-academic training a teacher voluntarily participates in does not count toward this maximum number of hours. The provisions of Va. Code § 22.1-298.8(B) do not apply to any non-academic training activity or other training activity in which any public school teacher is required to participate pursuant to federal law or regulation.

H. All employees of Suffolk Public Schools including each teacher and counselor employed on a full-time basis, are required to complete a mental health awareness training or similar program. Every employee holding a license issued by the Board of Education is required to complete cultural competency training, in accordance with guidance issued by the Board of Education, at least every two years.

I. Suffolk Public Schools will annually review its professional development program for quality, effectiveness, participation by instructional personnel, and relevancy to the instructional needs of teachers and the academic achievement needs of the students in the school division. (Adopted: October 9, 2008; Ordinance Number 08/09-18; Effective: October 10, 2008; Revised June 9, 2016; Ordinance Number 15/16-64; Effective Date: July 1, 2016; Revised September 20, 2018; Ordinance Number 18/19-13; Effective Date: September 20, 2018; Ordinance 22/23-49, Revised/Effective: February 9, 2023; Ordinance 23/24-47; Revised/Effective: February 8, 2024; Ordinance 24/25-56, Revised/Effective: November 14, 2024)

**Legal Authority** – Virginia Code §§ 22.1-78, 22.1-23.3, 22.1-253.13:5, 22.1-276.01, 22.1-291.4, 22.1-298.6, 22.1-298.7 and 22.1-298.8 (1950), as amended.