

The Arlington Public Schools instructional program recognizes and values diversity of learning styles, cultures, and backgrounds.

The Arlington Public Schools instructional program accommodates student differences, including the needs of students requiring special education, second language instruction, gifted services, homebound instruction, additional instruction, drop-out prevention services, General Education Diploma (GED) preparation, adult education, and other services through flexible grouping and differentiation (including acceleration, concurrent enrollment in high school and college, independent study, and other alternatives). Arlington Public Schools provides students choices in their instructional programs to meet their academic goals.

The instructional program of the Arlington Public Schools seeks to challenge each student to achieve at high levels. To help meet this goal, the Arlington Public Schools develops and implements advanced classes as appropriate in each subject area. The Arlington Public Schools promotes the advantages of these courses for students. Staff encourages and supports students in their efforts to prepare for and enroll and succeed in advanced classes.

### **ADVANCED CLASSES**

The Arlington Public Schools offers Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, and comparable advanced courses. These courses provide students with opportunities to acquire higher level knowledge, skills and concepts in a discipline, often at the college and/or professional level. When enrollment is low in an advanced course listed in the program of studies, the School Board commitment to providing such courses may necessitate extra staff, transportation between schools and programs, distance learning, independent study, or cooperative arrangements with other educational institutions. To the extent possible, all students will have equal opportunity to participate in advanced courses.

### **ALTERNATIVE DELIVERY OF INSTRUCTION**

Arlington Public Schools provides a range of classes and courses to meet the instructional needs of all students. In the Arlington Public Schools, the preferred method of instruction is an established Arlington Public Schools course taught face-to-face with a classroom teacher.

When it is not possible for a student to receive instruction by this preferred method, APS also approves the following options in this order of preference:

1. APS developed electronic classes with a local teacher that travels alternatively between the class sites
2. APS approved distance learning courses delivered via video or satellite, in conjunction with several methods of communication
3. APS developed online courses or online courses by other providers which have been researched and approved, and with the guidance of a local facilitator

Under certain circumstances, other online or correspondence courses may be approved. Approval of such courses for credit will be determined in advance of the student's enrollment by considering the following criteria:

- The course is not offered by APS or the student is unable to take the APS course for reasons approved and verified by the school the student is attending
- The course is offered by an accredited institution
- The course is aligned with the appropriate Virginia Standards of Learning, where applicable
- Any correspondence course provider appears on the Virginia Department of Education list of providers
- The course is of an appropriate grade and content level
- The course meets APS distance learning standards and criteria

A student may receive credit for successful completion of one or more non-APS courses only if the course was recommended by the appropriate school staff and received prior approval by the Superintendent or designee.

References

*20-3 Program Differentiation, Concurrent Enrollment in High School and Colleges*

### **EARLY CHILDHOOD PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS**

The Arlington School Board believes that each preschool-aged child should experience high quality settings that promote success in school, whether in his or her home with family supervision, with a home day-care provider, in a private day care center, and/or in a publicly funded program. The Arlington School Board recognizes the critical influence of preschool experiences on school success and desires that more children begin their school careers in kindergarten fully prepared for success in school, including the ability to speak and understand English. As a result of this belief and recognition, the Arlington School Board supports other community agencies and stakeholders in providing additional preschool programs, as well as caregiver education opportunities and provides some preschool programs.

These principles frame the Arlington Public Schools approach to early childhood education:

- Valuing each young child
- Acknowledging the importance of each child's family and culture
- Working collaboratively with stakeholders, including Head Start and the Support Services of the Department of Human Services, to meet the needs of preschool children and their families
- Increasing the level of parent education and staff training available to those involved with young children in Arlington
- Creating community awareness of the importance of a child's early years and the necessity of ensuring children from low-income families the opportunity to enroll in a preschool if their families wish
- Emphasizing the importance and necessity of acquiring school readiness skills

In implementing these principles, the Arlington Public Schools provides

- preschool programs for identified students with disabilities, aged two years to four years old

- preschool programs for four-year-old students identified as at-risk for school failure, in selected locations and as limited resources allow
- Montessori programs for three-, four-, and five-year-old students, with provisions to enroll children identified as at-risk for school failure, in selected locations and as resources allow. Tuition shall be charged on a sliding scale for all enrolled students who do not meet the age-requirement for kindergarten. Two-thirds of the positions in each Montessori class will be reserved for children who meet the following criteria.
  1. The adjusted family income is at or less than the amount specified in the guidelines distributed annually
  2. The children speak little or no English.

Parents of four-year-old children whose income qualifies them for the free/reduced lunch program pay no fee.

### **FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION**

Arlington Public Schools, in accordance with the State of Virginia mandate, has developed a comprehensive, sequential, age-appropriate K-10 Family Life Education curriculum. The Family Life Education program will assist students to:

- Relate to self and others in a healthy and self-fulfilling manner,
- Form and maintain strong ties with family and community,
- Develop self-esteem, self confidence, and responsibility,
- Understand the importance of abstaining from sexual activity until marriage,
- Develop into responsible, productive and well-adjusted adults.\*

\*Arlington Family Life Education Program

Teachers who deliver the Family Life Education curriculum use a developmentally appropriate plan that recognizes the sensitive nature of the content. Teachers will not, in whole class instruction, demonstrate the use of contraceptives. Whenever the content is highly sensitive, staff will differentiate instruction according to student readiness and interest and may use strategies such as small groups, gender separate classes, and/or healthcare professionals to address sensitive issues. Sensitive issues include human reproduction, transmission of sexually transmitted diseases, contraceptives, sexual assaults, abortion, masturbation, sexual orientation, and suicide.

Family Life Education materials (curriculum guides, textbooks, print and non-print materials) are available for public review through each school and the Health and Physical Education Office at the Education Center. Each school will conduct an informational parent meeting in the fall to inform parents about the Family Life Education program. Each secondary school will hold this meeting after Back-to-School Night.

The Family Life Education grade level overview, grade level objectives, and the opt-out form are sent home as a packet with each student in the first day packet. The opt-out form and information about the meeting on the FLE program are mailed to families of secondary school students.

The Family Life Education program is not intended to conflict with family values and behavioral norms. Arlington Public Schools provides procedures for families to opt-out their children from instruction in any objectives in the Family Life Education curriculum. Parents/guardians will receive information about opt-out procedures and the Family Life Education curriculum and instruction. Some parents may choose to not have their child receive some portion of the Family Life Education. The opt-out policy is a process that allows parents/guardians to exempt their child from a specific objective (s).

Instructional procedures will be evaluated periodically to assess their appropriateness and effectiveness.

### **GIFTED SERVICES**

The Arlington Public Schools provides a program for gifted students as articulated in the Arlington Public Schools Division Plan for the Gifted. The Arlington Public Schools “provides each students identified as gifted/talented with instructional programs taught by teachers with special training or experience in working with gifted/talented students.” (8 VAC 20-131-70)

### **HIGH SCHOOL CREDIT AT THE MIDDLE SCHOOL**

The Arlington Public Schools offers opportunities for middle school students to study high school courses and earn high school credit. Students are encouraged to enroll in these advanced courses in foreign language and mathematics. Almost all middle school students are required to take World Geography I grade eight. The Arlington Public Schools has provisions to prevent any potential negative effects of a middle school student’s enrollment in these courses on his or her high school grade point average.

The Arlington Public Schools provides two options for middle school students who take courses while in middle school that carry high school credit:

- Count the credit (if earned) and course toward high school graduation requirements, and include the course final grade in the student’s grade point average (GPA) when computed at the high school level.
- Do not count the course final grade in the student’s grade point average when computed at the high school level, and do not count the credit (if earned) and course toward high school graduation requirements.

Parents/guardians will receive notification of these options with the student’s final report card. A parent/guardian has until July 31 of that year to request the omission of the course from the student’s high school records. After July 31, if no notice is received, any grade and credit earned will be included in the student’s high school records. Appeals of past decisions are made to the Superintendent’s designee.

**STUDENT ACCELERATION OPPORTUNITIES**

Students have a variety of choices in their instructional programs to meet their academic goals within the Arlington Public Schools including acceleration of progress in school, correspondence courses, concurrent enrollment in high school and college, independent study, credit for educational experiences in the armed forces, and other alternatives as authorized by the School Board. (8 VAC 20-131-140 & 8 VAC 20-131-180)