

# Special Edition

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## IDEA—Proposed Changes in the Virginia Special Education Regulations

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*This federal regulation also requires that state rules, regulations, and policies under the IDEA '04 shall support and facilitate LEA and school-level system improvement designed to enable children with disabilities to meet the challenging state student achievement standards.*

The Regulations Governing Special Education Programs for Children With Disabilities in Virginia are being revised to comply with the changes outlined in the IDEA 2004. The IDEA governs how states and public agencies provide early intervention, special education, and related services to more than 6.5 million eligible infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities.

The reauthorization of the Individuals With Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) and the subsequent federal regulations prompted the need to revise Virginia's special education regulations. Input was received from a stakeholders group that included school personnel, parents, consumers, professionals, and members of the State Special Education Advisory Committee. The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) adhered to the requirements of Virginia's Administrative Process Act in the development and review of these regulations.

The VDOE also relied on the federal regulations for additional guidance in the formulation of these regulations. Under this federal mandate, each state shall:

- 1) Ensure that any state rules, regulations, and policies relating to the IDEA '04 conform to the requirements of the federal statute and regulations.
- 2) Identify in writing to local educational agencies located in the state and to the secretary of education any such rule, regulation, or policy as a state-imposed requirement that is not required by the

federal statute and regulations.

- 3) Minimize the number of rules, regulations, and policies to which the local educational agencies and schools located in the state are subject under the federal statute and regulations.

### What is next?

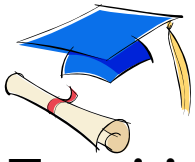
The governor's office has completed its review of the proposed regulations. As the process continues, the governor is seeking broad community input. Public hearings have been scheduled across the state and will begin in May.

The public hearing in Fairfax County has been scheduled for Monday, June 2, from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. at Oakton High School, 2900 Sutton Road, Vienna, VA 22181.

Those wanting to provide written comments may submit them by e-mail, fax, or U.S. mail or during one of the public hearings.

- A complete list of dates and locations as well as information on providing public comment may be accessed at <http://www.fcps.edu/ss/ACSD/PublicHearingDates.pdf>.
- Questions can be directed to the Parent Resource Center at 703-204-3941.
- Further information is available through the VDOE web site <http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/dueproc/regulationsCWD.html>
- Melissa Smith at 804-371-0524 and Suzanne Creasey at (804) 225-2923 are available to respond to questions.

**ACSD 2007 Annual Report** The Annual Report of the Advisory Committee for Students With Disabilities (ACSD) to the Fairfax County School Board has been posted. Go to <http://www.fcps.edu/ss/ACSD/ACSDAnnualreport.htm> to view the report or contact the Parent Resource Center at 703-204-3941 for more information.



## Transitioning High School and Beyond

For many families, helping a student plan his or her transition from high school to postsecondary life can be a puzzling time filled with uncertainty or even procrastination. Developing a comprehensive and flexible plan of action is the key to successful transition planning.

In eighth grade, a transition plan is added to the student's individualized education program (IEP). The transition plan takes into consideration the student's skills, interests, and desires and also includes a career goal as well as specific transition objectives that will help the student realize the career goal. The transition plan is discussed and revised as part of the IEP every year until the student graduates from high school.

How do parents understand the options available to their child? Collaboration and communication between school staff members, the student, and the student's family is critical. An employment and transition representative (ETR) is assigned to each high school. The ETR's job is to help students with disabilities as they prepare to transition out of high school. The ETR has an abundance of information and works with school staff members to ensure that each student has the information and resources he or she needs to make decisions about the future.

As parents, you can begin working with your child immediately to develop strong self-advocacy skills. Research shows that self-advocacy skills are critical to a student's success after he or she leaves school. Make sure your son or daughter understands his or her strengths and weaknesses and how his or her disability affects academic performance. It is also critical that students know what accommodations help them and how to request them. Students are required to advocate for themselves in the postsecondary environment, including the workplace and college, so they need to be well-prepared before they leave school.

Helping a student prepare for life after high school

requires planning, communication, and self-advocacy. The following resources can help you and your child develop a plan that addresses needs, strengths, and future goals. To locate your child's ETR and download the Transition Toolkit for Parents, visit <http://www.fcps.edu/ss/careertransition/index.htm>.

**Getting Ready for High School and Beyond** provides a timetable as well as information about postsecondary education and the planning process. This document is published by the Department of Special Services and is available for download at <http://www.fcps.edu/ss/linkedfiles/GettingReady.pdf>.

**Virginia College Quest** provides information for students with disabilities transitioning to college. Information is available at <http://www.vacollegequest.org/>.

**Family Connection** is available to students in grades 9-12 and is the comprehensive 24-7 planning center.

**The Career Center** and your child's school counselor can help provide information and resources and can explain the process of planning for high school and college.

**The Internet** provides valuable information about academic and career planning as well as post-secondary resources.

- **Career Connections:** <http://www.fcps.edu/ss/CareerConnections/> is a comprehensive college and career planning site.
- **Academic and Career Planning:** <http://www.vaview.org/> (user names, passwords, and assessment codes are available through the school counselor).
- **Test Preparation:** <http://www.fcps.edu/ss/CareerConnections/student/testprep.htm>.
- **Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services:** <http://www.vadrs.org/default.htm>.

## FCPS Summer Services Information for Students with Disabilities 2008

### Summer Services Information

Do you know what summer services are available this year? Central summer school will not be offered as it has been in previous years. However, extended school year (ESY) services will be provided at all levels for students whose individual education program (IEP) teams determine that these services are required.

One ESY option at all levels is participation in an ESY learning community, an intensive intervention program. Based on feedback from parents and teachers and research into practices that enhance student success, services have been significantly redesigned. Instruction will be goal-specific and will include opportunities to practice and apply skills across multiple subject areas.

#### ESY Learning Community Service Dates:

Preschool:	July 7-July 25 (Session 1)
	July 28-August 15 (Session 2)

Elementary School:	July 7-August 1
Middle School:	July 9-August 1
High School:	July 9-August 1

For more information on summer services for students with disabilities for 2008, contact your child's school or go to <http://www.fcps.edu/ss/SpecialEd/summerschool/index.htm>.

Parents whose children do not meet the criteria for ESY, but who might benefit from some summer intervention, should contact their school principal for information about school-based programs.

High school general and special education courses for credit and SOL remediation classes will be advertised in the *Encore* course catalog, available at high schools in early May.

## Social Skills—Disabilities and Social Skills

### Promoting Social Skills

Sleepovers, playdates, birthday parties, and school all require social skills. Difficulty with social skills can prevent children from having successful relationships with family members, peers, and adults. Without basic social skills, children are unable to make and maintain friendships; yet, it is through interacting with peers that children learn and practice ways of relating to one another. Social skills are essential to a productive and satisfying educational experience. Educators and parents find that children who have learning difficulties often struggle with social skills. Getting along with others is as important as getting along in school, so it's critical for children to develop good social skills.

### How Parents Can Help

If you recognize that your child is experiencing difficulty with his or her social interactions, you can provide opportunities to learn and practice appropriate social skills in many ways. Watch for teachable moments to coach your child in everyday interactions with others and model the desirable behavior you want your child to imitate.

- **Focus on a specific behavior.**  
Model appropriate behavior when you interact with your child and other people.
- **Offer prompts before your child acts and encourage role-playing.**  
Help your child rehearse behaviors in "pretend" situations. With guidance, your child can practice and improve specific social skills.
- **Praise your child for positive interactions.**  
Promote generalization. Help your child learn how and when to apply specific social skills to different situations.

More on social skills and activities outside school:

**Learning Difficulties and Social Skills**

<http://www.schwablearning.org/articles.aspx?r=513>

**Learning and Teaching Social Skills**

<http://www.iser.com/teaching-social-skills.html>

**Social Skill Development**

<http://www.ricklavoie.com/competart.html>

**Max Weber—Social Skills**

[http://maxweber.hunter.cuny.edu/pub/eres/EDSPC715\\_MCI\\_NTYRE/SocialSkills.html](http://maxweber.hunter.cuny.edu/pub/eres/EDSPC715_MCI_NTYRE/SocialSkills.html)

## The Parent Resource Center

### [Dunn Loring Administrative Center](#)

2334 Gallows Road  
Dunn Loring, Virginia 22027  
703-204-3941 TDD 204-3956

Gail Holloman, Educational Specialist

[Gail.Holloman@fcps.edu](mailto:Gail.Holloman@fcps.edu)

Jane Thatcher, Parent Liaison

[Jane.Thatcher@fcps.edu](mailto:Jane.Thatcher@fcps.edu)

#### Hours:

Monday-Friday  
8 a.m.-4 p.m.

#### Satellite Offices:

### [Aldrin Elementary School](#)

11375 Center Harbor Road  
Reston, VA 20194  
703-904-3859

Dianna Rooney, Parent Liaison

[Dianna.rooney@fcps.edu](mailto:Dianna.rooney@fcps.edu)

### [Hayfield Elementary School](#)

7633 Telegraph Road  
Alexandria, VA 22315  
703-924-4512

Elaine Waldron, Parent Liaison

[Elaine.waldron@fcps.edu](mailto:Elaine.waldron@fcps.edu)

Sign up for **Keep in Touch** e-mails <https://fcps.medianext.com/fcps/signup.html> and get all PRC news directly. Fill out the required information and indicate that you would like information about **Special Education Services**.

## Fairfax County Public Schools

### Visit the Library at the Parent Resource Center

The library at the PRC has a large selection of books, DVDs, and other resources. Our books are now cataloged on the FCPS library system. The online catalog allows you to search by subject, title, and author.

Choose Dunn Loring Center to locate books you are interested in. Access information with the following link: <http://libcat.fcps.edu/uhtbin/cgisirsi/FAb0WxHzdC/305/198830285/60/1/X>

#### Life After High School

##### 1. *Complete Guide to Special Education Transition*

*Services* by Roger Pierangelo, PH.D.

##### 2. *Learning How to Learn*

*~Getting Into and Surviving College When You Have a Learning Disability* by Joyanne Cobb

##### 3. *The K&W Guide to Colleges for Students With Learning Disabilities or ADD* by Marybeth Kravets



#### Social Skills

##### 1. *The Social Skills Picture Book for High School and Beyond*

by Jed Baker

##### 2. *Seven Steps to Improve Your Child's Social Skills: A Family Guide* by Kristy S. Hagar

##### 3. *Model Me Conversation Clues Model Me Kids & Teaching Videos*, DVD

So glad you asked!

## Frequently Asked Questions

I'm moving to Fairfax County with a child who needs special education services. What is the *best* school for my child?

*Deciding where to live is a very personal decision. Whether you are purchasing or renting, the community you select to reside in should offer you and your family access to the amenities, resources, and activities you desire. Your child's school will provide comprehensive and flexible instructional opportunities designed to meet the needs of all students in Fairfax County Public Schools. Each school in FCPS is committed to inclusive practices through which students with disabilities are educated and participate in an engaging and challenging curriculum that allows for progress toward their IEP goals. Staff members and students benefit from a strong network of supports and services designed to meet the diverse needs of all our students. FCPS closely follows the guidelines set*

*forth in No Child Left Behind and the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act to ensure that all students who receive special education services benefit from highly qualified teachers in all classrooms. You can find a complete listing of all FCPS school information at <http://www.fcps.edu/suptapps/directory/>.*

Where can I find help to improve my child's social skills?

*The Parent Resource Center library has an extensive selection of books and videos on this subject that can be borrowed free of charge. During the year, the PRC also holds workshops on this topic.*

*Local agencies offer social skills groups at various times throughout the year. Call us at 703-204-3941 or visit our web site to view lists of additional resources that may also be helpful. <http://www.fcps.edu/ss/prc/websites.htm#8>*

*Another great resource is the guidance counselor at your child's school. He or she may be offering "friendship groups" in which your child can participate.*