Summers County Board of Education

Scope: This policy is established to make known the rationale, philosophy and goals of the school district with respect to the central purpose of public education therein.

Authority: Board of Education Minutes

Adopted: June 10, 1982.

Amended: December 2, 2004; June 10, 2021.

Reviewed: December 2, 2004; May 13, 2021.

RATIONALE, PHILOSOPHY AND GOALS OF SUMMERS COUNTY

Summers County Schools recognizes that the central purpose of public school education is to provide a program of instruction for which all students, including exceptional and disadvantaged, ages three through adult may acquire academic, social, and vocational skills to his or her maximum potential. Public school education also should reinforce values, which help to make students competent, self sufficient and worthwhile citizens of a democratic, dynamic, and diverse society.

To help accomplish this central purpose the educational system is arranged in four separate but highly related groups: early childhood, middle childhood, adolescent, and adult. In providing curriculum for public school education, the differences in these groups must be considered. On this and the following pages you will find the rationale, philosophy, and goals for each of the four groups on which the curriculum for Summers County is based.

Early Childhood

Rationale: Early childhood education is the developmental sequence of educational experiences for children ages 3 to 10 with attention focused on the intellectual, physical/motor and social/emotional development of each individual child. This span of 7 years will include both gradual and marked transitions in each learner's growth and development. Taken from Programmatic Definition for ECE W.V.D.E.

Because of the uniqueness of each learner, it becomes vital that the appropriate educational program and setting be developed and organized. Some of the characteristics for this age group (3-10 years) are:

1. The major portion of a child's language development occurs.
2. 50% of an individual's measurable intelligence is developed in the first 4 years of life, another 30% by the age of 8.
3. The child is self-centered; they see their world as unchanging.
4. Development of self-concept.
5. By age 7, children are beginning to understand more abstract processes (math).

6. Physical development is rapid at age 3-7. Girls are usually ahead in small muscle coordination, boys are slightly more developed in large muscle growth; age 7-10 physical development is less rapid.
7. Skeletal, muscular, and nervous systems are developing.
8. Vision and sight are more highly developed.
9. Develops sex role behaviors.
10. Peer group influence begins to emerge.
11. Decreased contact with parents.
12. Develop defense mechanisms to protect their self-concepts.
13. Beginning to make value judgments.

Philosophy: Educational experiences begin in the home. Early childhood education should build upon the home experiences and provide maximum growth and development for each individual child. Therefore, early childhood education must consider all the facets of a child's growth and development.

Young children are alike in many ways. For example (1) they are active, both physically and mentally, (2) they are curious to find out more about their world, (3) they are discovering who they are, what they can do, and how they fit into the world, (4) they're learning to express their thoughts, ideas, and feelings, and (5) they grow in a sequential pattern of development.

Although children have these likenesses, they are also very different. Different in experiences, family backgrounds, abilities, and interests. When developing an ECE program these likenesses and differences must be taken into account in order to maximize each child's potential to learn, to think, adapt to their environment, and become responsible productive citizens.

To promote maximum growth in all areas the following goals have been identified:

1. The child will develop self-confidence.
2. The parent and teacher will work cooperatively to help the child make a smooth and happy transition from home to school.
3. The child will develop and learn rules of behavior for group living.
4. Develop and improve learning through the sense.
5. Instruction will be personalized on the basis of diagnostic-prescriptive results.
6. The students will develop skills in curiosity, critical thinking, and problem solving.
7. Develop awareness for the world around him/her.
8. Will learn how to make choices.
9. Will develop skills in the use of language and numbers.
10. Will be introduced to different types of careers.
11. Teacher wills further education to better fulfill the needs of the students.

The goals of the student's growth at the early childhood level are necessarily broad because of the nature of the characteristics of this child. Therefore these goals are not divided into intellectual, physical, social, and emotional categories as in the middle childhood and adolescent student groups which follow.

<u>Middle Childhood</u>

Rationale: Middle childhood students (grades 5-8) have enough significant and varying characteristics from the other two groups, early childhood and adolescent, to justify a unique educational setting that will meet the special needs of these students. Some of the characteristics of the 10-14 age group are:

1. Their interest level toward school declines.
2. They begin to have thoughts of dropping out of school.
3. They become more aware of personal appearance.
4. Their desire for peer acceptance grows.
5. They begin to question values and morals of adults in authority.
6. They develop a wide variety of interests in a short time
7. They exhibit emotional turmoil, moodiness, and sway between dependence and independence.
8. They search for self-identity (variety of behaviors).
9. Their physical growth is rapid.

Philosophy: The educational environment must meet all the needs indicated by the characteristics of this age group. To promote maximum growth in all areas the following goals have been identified:

A. Intellectual goals:

1. Mastery of basic educational skills including communications and mathematics skills.
2. Introduction of independent thinking skills.
3. Provide programs to promote decision making skills.
4. Individualization (progress at own rate).

B. Physical goals:
1. Understand physical growth in order to develop and use bodies properly.
2. Use of sports for experimentation, not competition.

C. Social goals:
1. Development of positive attitudes and value.
2. Opportunity to achieve peer acceptance.
3. Provide students with ability to cope with a changing society.

D. Emotional goals:

1. To promote the health and general well being of the student.
2. To provide enrichment experiences to promote the personality and self-identity of the learner as well as lead him/her toward constructive self-expression.
3. Promote a positive self-concept.
4. Provide a guided transition from elementary to secondary school.

<u>Adolescent</u>

Rationale: Adolescent education refers to the period of learning through the ages of 14-19, which would encompass grades 9-12. During this period the learner physically matures into a young adult and must

begin to make important decisions that will effect much of his/her adult life. Therefore, adolescent education should provide the learner with the skills necessary to function and contribute as an adult in our society. The complexities of our modern society deem it necessary that education provide instruction in a variety of areas. These various areas can be concentrated around the basic needs of individuals, (1) social needs, (2) emotional needs, (3) physical needs, (4) intellectual needs. Following are some of the characteristics of this 14-19 age group:

1. They begin to experience a more personal male-female relationship.
2. They feel increasing peer group pressure. This pressure has its greatest social influence during this period.
3. They refine the skills of communication and cooperation.
4. They develop various coping skills.
5. They become more selective in their choices and closeness of friends.
6. They experience many new feelings about themselves as well as their friends and families.
7. They sometimes experience rapid growth spurts that cause awkward and unsure feelings; others develop later causing a feeling of inadequacy.
8. They have questions concerning their physical development.
9. They generally begin to question more.
10. They narrow their course of study to an area of interest or career choice.

Philosophy: * The philosophy of adolescent education is based on an understanding of the characteristics of adolescent learners, of the perceived needs of adolescent learners, and of the education process. Attention must be given to the general education of each learner, but in addition the special needs of each learner must be taken into consideration. The adolescent educational program should be flexible, demanding, and humane enough to help all learners meet their needs. Taken from *A Programmatic Definition for Adolescent Education in WV.*

Over the past several years, the values and priorities of our highly personal and divergent society have been in conflict. Much of this conflict results from advances in technology and its resultant automation. Today there is no longer any agreement on what the educational programs available for the adolescent learner should accomplish. This lack of agreement is accomplished by more demands being placed on the schools, especially concerning the emotional and psychological needs of adolescent learners. To meet these changing intellectual and social/emotional needs, the school for adolescent learners must provide a curricular balance. Programs must be developed upon the basis of a belief system which evolves from sound educational philosophy, from what is known about adolescents, from the expectations held by the public, and from the *Educational Goals for West Virginia.* Developing a basic belief system enhances the possibility of gaining a perspective of what the nature of educational programs for the adolescent years should be.

The school for the adolescent learner must attempt to prepare him/her to be a successful, functioning member of society. For this to be achieved, each learner must learn how to learn; must develop a feeling of responsibility for his/her own learning; and must be guided to develop his/her personal identity, self-expression, self-respect, self-reliance, self-confidence, and decision-making skills.

Each learner should develop proficiency in basic functional skills to the level of his/her ability. If a learner has not achieved this proficiency, he/she must be given opportunities for remediation. However,

although adolescent educational program must strive for competency of all learners, a testing program should not be used as the only criterion for high school graduation.

Each learner should gain the knowledge and skills required to function in this culture. Such knowledge and skills should comprise the common curriculum to be required of all learners. A broad selection of the specific community, the parents and the individual learners should be considered.

Each learner should have school experience which develops in him/her a sense of civic responsibility. These experiences should reach beyond the environs of the classroom through school or community-based service or through student leadership activities. To assist the learner in assuming more responsibility for the welfare of others, school programs should provide an opportunity to work seriously for community aims as well as individual goals.

Each learner should be offered experiences, which prepare him/her for a vocation and vocational activities. These experiences should be broad and flexible enough to meet the needs of each learner be it college, secondary training, or job entry. Opportunities for the development of leisure time activities should include intellectual pursuits, athletic involvement, hobbies, and travel.

School personnel should involve adolescent learners, their parents, and other responsible persons within the community in the adolescent educational program. Usually the program will not be any better than the expectations held by the public in general. Therefore, it is essential that a positive climate of support characterizes the collaborative efforts of the community and school personnel in designing and implementing the educational program for adolescents of West Virginia.

To promote maximum growth in all areas the following goals have been identified:

A.   <u>Intellectual goals:</u>
   1.   Education should provide the learner with basic survival skills such as first aid, driver education, and safety.
   2.   Skills necessary to perform basic business transactions, as well as understanding basic principles of economics.
   3.   Education should provide learners with the basic problem solving skills necessary in our modern society.
   4.   Education should provide learners with the basic decision making skills necessary for everyday living.
   5.   Education should provide the learner with direction and proper preparation toward their career goals.
   6.   Education should provide the learner with an understanding of the scientific method, and the basic principles of science and biology which would include an appreciation of the environment.
   7.   Education should provide learners with the opportunity to explore their aesthetic interests through classes in art, music, crafts, and extracurricular activities.
   8.   Education should provide special programs for the exceptional learner.
   9.   Education should provide students with an understanding of basic mathematics concepts.

B.   Physical goals:
    1.   Education should encourage the development of proper physical health activities by promoting health and physical education programs, intramural sports, and extracurricular programs.

C.   Social goals:
    1.   Education should provide students with the opportunity to develop social skills that will enable them to communicate and cooperate with others.
    2.   Education should have enough flexibility to provide all learners with the skills to function in society as well as adjusting to the rapid technological and intellectual advancements.
    3.   Education should provide individuals with the political skills that would enable them to be responsible democratic citizens.
    4.   Education should provide for the multicultural difference inherent in the structure of modern society, as well as providing courses through which learners can gain an understanding of cultures inside and outside the American mainstream.

Emotional goals:

    1.   Education should include programs that consider the interests and abilities of the learner.
    2.   Education should encourage the learners to maximize their potential and gain a better understanding of themselves by educationally sound mental health programs.
    3.   Education should encourage the development of proper work attitudes, basic values, and ethical principles.
    4.   Education should encourage the development of self-disciplines and realization of consequences for behavior.

Adult Education

Rationale: Adult education is a special area within the broad field of education. It has many differences that can be identified from Early Childhood, Middle Childhood, and Adolescent Education. These differences can have a great influence on the design and implementation of effective programs for educating adults. These differences stem from differences between the adult and school age learners themselves.

These differences are:

1. Learners motivation. The adult will be motivated when he/she has established specific goals that can be achieved through the training. Children are motivated by a desire to please others.

2. Cognitive abilities. Adults generally score more poorly than youth on tasks requiring critical thinking. They may be less objective and less flexible. However, the adult usually exhibits significant strengths in pragmatic solutions and applied research.

3. Affective domain. The discomfort of change when learning occurs is usually greater for adults. This is further accentuated because much new learning may require unlearning for the adult learner.

4. Reaction time. Both physical and mental reaction times slow in adults. However, the ability to learn remains intact. Additionally time is perceived differently by the adult and child. Adults are apt to express an urgency regarding time, with little tolerance for that which is not well spent.

5. Vocabulary skills. These are generally greater in adults than the school age learner.

6. The expectations of the learner toward his/her teacher. Children usually expect the teacher to plan the learning experience, however adults enter the learning experience with definite expectations.

7. Background experience. Authorities agree that this is the single most important difference in adult education and school age education.

Philosophy: Educational experiences of adults in our society run from grams that prepare previous school drop-outs to take the tests of General Educational Development (GED); through community education, and hobby classes to post-secondary vocational training programs, and teacher continuing education programs. This complex educational environment is bound by one unifying factor, the adult learner. To promote maximum growth in the various adult education programs, the following conditions for adult learning have been identified. Goals to meet those conditions have been established and listed in the second column of the chart.

Conditions for Adult Learning	Recommendations for Programming and Teaching of Adults
The adult learner should be motivated to learn.	The adult learner should be given an opportunity for identifying his/her needs and understand how the objectives are derived from the needs. The learner should be aware of direct benefits that will
The learner should have a positive attitude toward the learning experience.	The learner should be aware that his/her individual needs and limitations will be accommodated as much as possible and that high quality relevant training will occur. Learner expectations and
The learning objectives should be meaningful and important to the learner.	Objectives should be arrived at systematically. Learner input should be provided. Communication must be clear and complete. Objectives should guide the learning process throughout.
The learning activity should be timely.	Restrictive conditions in the learner's environment should be considered in selecting the time for the training. Training should occur when it will be most advantageous to be useful to the
The learner should clearly understand how the learning may be put into use.	The learner should have the opportunity to obtain assistance from the trainer in understanding how to put the learning into practice in his/her own situation.
The environment in which the instruction occurs should be controlled to provide optimum opportunities for learning.	Care should be taken to provide a setting that is convenient, comfortable, and accommodating for the learners and adaptive to the mode of teaching.
The active participation of the learners, should be realized	The psychological and physical educational environment should be managed in order to encourage and permit the involvement of all of the participants in the learning activity. Provisions should be made to include participant involvement not only in "hands

Learning options should be provided for the learners	Teaching methods and techniques for learning utilized by the trainer should be based upon the nature of the training objective. Learner preferences for study methods by which they learn best and adult responsibilities and limitations should be taken into
Opportunities for communication between the trainer and the learner should be provided.	Trainers should accommodate the desire of adult learners to be active participants in the learning activity. This includes opportunities for questions, discussion, and periodic feedback as well as follow up by the trainer.
Anxiety should be controlled and kept at a minimum in the learning environment.	Trainers should be aware of conditions that promote anxiety for adult learners and employ proper techniques for reducing that factor. Where external forces have caused the anxiety, the trainer should assist as much as possible with efforts to

Condensed from *Adult Learning Characteristics and Learning Styles* published by the WV Department of Education.