INSTRUCTION
Standard Instructional Program

Instructional Grouping to Support Differentiation and Placement in Content Areas

This regulation supercedes Regulation 3250.2.

I. PURPOSE

To provide information and guidance about instructional grouping and placement in all content areas.

II. SUMMARY OF CHANGES SINCE LAST PUBLICATION

This regulation has been revised in its entirety.

III. INSTRUCTIONAL GROUPING—Grades PreK-12

To ensure that all students have equal access to the content described by the Program of Studies, students should be grouped by readiness, interest, and/or learning profile (refers to how students learn best based on learning style, area(s) of academic strength, culture, and gender).

IV. PLACEMENT AND PROMOTION—Grades K-12

Teachers and counselors will provide guidance in the selection of appropriate courses; however, a student and his or her parents or guardians have the right to select any course for which the student has satisfied the prerequisite. Decisions about placement exceptions are made by the building principal in consultation with the Fairfax County Public Schools content coordinator or specialist on a case-by-case basis in accordance with the criteria outlined in this regulation. Please note: seventh grade Algebra 1 Honors does have specific requirements.

V. PROCEDURES

A. Elementary School

The elementary school Program of Studies defines grade-level objectives as the goal for all students on a particular grade level. Reinforcement and/or intervention activities should be provided for individual students as needed. Based on formative assessments, teachers employ flexible grouping for specific topics so that students within a class will not be permanently assigned to ability-level groups. Enrichment activities, including extensions of grade-level objectives
or topics not included in the Program of Studies at a higher grade level, are appropriate program modifications for students with advanced skills in a specific area.

B. Secondary School

The secondary school Program of Studies defines course objectives by topics as the goal for all students in a particular course. Teachers may employ flexible grouping within courses for specific topics. Enrichment activities, including extensions of course objectives or topics not included in the Program of Studies for another course, are appropriate program modifications for students with advanced skills in a specific area. Teachers vary techniques to provide alternative approaches to the same objective to accommodate students with different learning styles and needs. Students within a class will not be permanently assigned to ability-level groups.

All students routinely select and are placed in courses provided they have earned a passing grade in any prerequisite course. Advanced and/or accelerated courses are available for students in grades 7-12 through an open enrollment process. Specific passing grades earned in prerequisite courses may not be used to exclude students from classes. Teachers and counselors will provide guidance in the selection of appropriate courses; however, a student and his or her parents or guardians have the right to select any course for which the student has satisfied the prerequisite. Please note: seventh grade Algebra 1 Honors does have specific requirements.

The structure of the secondary program groups students together by definition of course content and prerequisites. All secondary courses are defined by the program of studies. Course offerings will not be modified by either reducing the number of objectives or simplifying the complexity of objectives for the purpose of providing different levels of the same course. All sections for the same course have the same objectives as defined by the program of studies. Therefore, students will not be placed in different sections of the same course based on perceived ability or grades in prerequisite courses.

See also the current versions of:
Regulation 2460, Requirements for Graduation
Regulation 2410, Promotion and Retention of Students in Grades K-8