

EVALUATION OF NEW AND ESTABLISHED PROGRAMS

Loudoun County Public Schools (LCPS) supports a culture of continuous improvement that drives the fulfillment of its mission to empower all students to make meaningful contributions to the world. LCPS will therefore employ a systematic approach to program evaluation for the purpose of evidencing high-quality programs and practices that produce positive outcomes for students and other key stakeholders such as Advisory Groups as defined by Policy 2310.

For the purpose of this Policy, a program is defined as a cohesive set of Division-wide educational goals and objectives, resources, and practices approved by the Superintendent that: (a) impacts LCPS students and/or staff; (b) is currently in operation or being planned for implementation with local and/or external funds; and (c) aligns with the current or most recent LCPS strategic plan. Programs may include the adoption of packaged curricula, systemic change initiatives, and any special programs under Policy 5115¹. This Policy does not apply to: (a) Charter Schools which is under Policy 5410; or (b) new or established programs that are funded solely through school-based funds and managed by a school.

A. Evaluation of New Programs. All new programs will be evaluated for a minimum of two years, as determined by the Program Evaluation Schedule developed by the Division of Research, Assessment, and School Improvement (Office of Research). Such Schedule shall be approved by the Superintendent or designee and shared with the School Board annually. During the installation phase of the program, the Office of Research will focus on implementation factors, such as the selection of target participants, the progress made toward meeting the program's goals and objectives (both activities and outcomes), the satisfaction of stakeholders, and cost. The integration phase will begin when the installation phase is complete. During the integration phase of the program, the Office of Research will continue to document the progress made toward meeting the program's goals and objectives. The Program Evaluation Schedule for programs whose implementation will exceed two years will include a comprehensive evaluation, as further discussed in Section C(2) below, in the first year in which such programs are fully implemented.

The Superintendent or designee shall recommend to the School Board to immediately discontinue any programs that are found to violate the law or harm (e.g., physical or psychological harm, disruption of student learning or educational environment) students prior to the conclusion of the two-year evaluation period.

¹ To the extent special programs under Policy 5115 will be evaluated in accordance with that Policy and its accompanying Regulation.

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As part of the evaluation of new programs, an annual report will be presented to the Superintendent or designee and shared with the School Board. This report will include a recommendation to: (a) continue the program without modification(s); (b) continue the program with modification(s); (c) expand the program; or (d) discontinue/phase out the program within a time certain. The School Board shall vote upon the recommendation(s).

If a new program is recommended for continuation without modification(s) following its final evaluation, the program need not be evaluated again as a new program. Rather, the program will be classified as an established program and will be evaluated in accordance with Section B of this Policy. New programs with modifications or recommended for expansion may require additional program evaluations to monitor the implementation of modifications recommended by the Superintendent or designee and School Board.

B. Evaluation of Established Programs. Established programs are evaluated based on the Program Evaluation Schedule developed by the Office of Research. Such Schedule shall be shared with the School Board and approved by the Superintendent or designee annually. The Program Evaluation Schedule of established programs will be prioritized based on the measured need for each program. The order of priority areas are:

1. Community/stakeholder interest in the program;
2. Cross-departmental interest in the program;
3. Availability of research on program effectiveness;
4. Program cost;
5. Program scale;
6. Date of most recent evaluation; and
7. Available resources.

C. Program Assessment. After the Program Evaluation Schedule for an established program has been approved by the Superintendent, the Office of Research will conduct an assessment of the program to determine its recommended course of action. This assessment will investigate the extent to which the program's goals, objectives, activities, and outcomes are aligned, plausible, well-defined, and measurable. Based on the outcome of this assessment, the program will be scheduled for either an Evaluation Readiness Report or a Comprehensive Evaluation, as described below:

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1. Evaluation Readiness Report. For programs scheduled for an Evaluation Readiness Report, the Office of Research will assist program staff with defining measurable goals and objectives for their activities and outcomes. An Evaluation Readiness Report focusing on the outcomes of this process and baseline data (if available) will be presented to the Superintendent or designee and shared with the School Board with a recommendation regarding future evaluation plans for the program. If appropriate, the program will be scheduled for a Comprehensive Evaluation.

2. Comprehensive Evaluation. For programs scheduled for a Comprehensive Evaluation, the Office of Research will complete an evaluation focused on the program's goals and objectives (both activities and outcomes). Upon completion of the evaluation, a formal report with findings and recommendations will be provided to the Superintendent or designee and shared with the School Board. A Comprehensive Evaluation will include a recommendation to: (a) continue the program without modification(s); (b) continue the program with modification(s); (c) expand the program; or (d) discontinue/phase out the program within a time certain.

Programs that are continued with modifications or recommended for expansion may require additional program evaluations to monitor the implementation of any Superintendent or designee and School Board-approved modifications. If a program is continued without modification(s), the program need not be evaluated again until after at least one five-year evaluation cycle has lapsed. An evaluation cycle for established programs is five years, and the program will conduct a self-study at the beginning of the third year of the evaluation cycle.

D. Sunset Provision. All established programs that conclude a Comprehensive Evaluation with a recommendation for continuation without modification may be subject to the inclusion of a sunset provision that establishes a timeline for future program evaluation upon recommendation of the Superintendent or designee, and approval by the School Board. If a sunset provision is applied to a program, future program evaluations shall adhere to the established timeline.

Adopted: 6/27/23

Cross Refs: Policy [2310](#), Committees of the School Board, Policy [5115](#), Special Programs and Academies, Policy [5410](#), Charter Schools