SCHOOL OPERATIONS AND CULTURE

School Culture

West Virginia Academy will be unique in that all grades K-12 will be on one campus separated by a primary and secondary school. Evidence has been found that a K-12 campus can result in increased parental and family involvement, better attendance, improved behavior, healthier social adjustment and sense of belonging, and higher achievement.[1] Faculty and staff get to know students from a very early age and see their progression through the years. Student profiles are developed over time ensuring each child's needs are met. The school community has a consistent academic program and organization that will just get stronger with time. Lastly, opportunities for leadership and mentorship within the school community builds a strong supportive culture for all students, parents and staff.

Positive School Climate

As explained in our Rationale section under the WVA Mission category, we explained how we will be consistently evaluating our school's climate based on the School Climage Index, similar to the one used by the WVDE. The three domains within this index, include: engagement, safety, and environment. We have previously discussed how our school will engage our students by: (1) partnering with parents through effective communication of their child's progress on the standards he/she is mastering; (2) serving students from pre-k to 12th grade on one campus which provides opportunity for engagement and mentoring across grades and between family members; (3) we have prioritized our funding to ensure students are receiving experiential opportunities of all kinds with the transportation included; and (4) we will provide competitions, service learning opportunities and other group projects to engage our students with Morgantown and it's surrounding areas through our WVA Ambassador program.

As part of building a positive school culture, all who walk onto our campus need to feel safe and secure. We will apply a whole-school approach to controlling student behavior through a Positive Behavioral Support System (PBS). Student behavior and conduct will be explicitly taught and enforced consistently and positively. Our school will also implement a dress code, which has been found to increase the safety of students in a myriad of ways. We will also design our campus with safety in mind, including the use of key cards to keep track of where students are on campus and limited entrances into the school itself.

The final domain of a school's climate is environment. We will strive to make WVA a welcoming place for all who work, study, and visit. Our teachers will be encouraged to have multiple

[1] Lindner, A., (2009) "The School Climate in a K-12 Single-Campus School as Perceived by Students, Graduates, Parents, and Teachers". Dissertations. 522. https://digitalcommon s.andrews.edu/dissertations/522

positive interactions with their students, colleagues, and visitors; they will also be trained in the CHAMPs program to keep consistent expectations and standards throughout the school. WVA's environment will be filled with collaboration. Teachers will need to collaborate with each other to ensure personalized learning is taking place in the appropriate levels for each individual student. Students will be encouraged to collaborate within their ambassador teams, their classes, and within the community through various school-wide events. We will encourage creativity, experiential learning, innovation, and enriching courses to help give our students a whole-child approach to their education. Finally, we designed our PRA, specifically, to include concentrated areas with students of all backgrounds. Our school is open to all who want higher expectations to achieve more.

Dress Code

West Virginia Academy will require students to wear uniforms any time they are on school grounds (with the exception of Physical Education class) and while on field trips. Uniforms contribute to the school culture and sense of belonging. West Virginia Academy has also researched and determined many other advantages to uniforms in the public school setting:

1. Uniforms save time and money. WVA dress code was developed based on its simplicity. We have chosen as few pieces as necessary to achieve the benefits listed above. Choosing what to wear to school every morning can be a time consuming event and it can also be very expensive to keep up with the latest fashion trends. Parents can save both time and money with the purchase of school uniforms. French Toast is a provider of school uniforms that estimates that a year's supply of long-lasting school uniforms costs around $150 per student,[2] but uniforms also allow for a family swap that can reduce this price as well as programs that assist low income families. We would seek to provide as many options for parents as possible to reduce costs. Families will be notified of the frequently discounted prices on pants, polo shirts, sweaters, and other clothing items at stores such as Old Navy, Children's Place, JCPenney, and Walmart that meet the uniform standards. Lastly, uniforms open the door for exchange programs to drive costs down further and also provide better opportunities for discrete assistance to low income families who need school clothes.

2. Safety and Security. With security on everyone's mind, uniforms in the public school are an excellent way to increase student safety. Not only do uniforms help identify our students when on field trips or other outside events; within the school, uniforms readily identify members of our school community, which can be helpful in situations where an unknown visitor may pose a threat to the safety of our students and staff.

3. Uniforms give students a sense of school pride and belonging. Just as fans wear their team's colors to a sports event to show their support. Wearing school uniforms increases loyalty to the school and promotes a sense of belonging and school spirit.

[2] French Toast Uniforms. "School uniforms: Why school uniforms." School Uniforms: Why Students Should Wear Them (last visited 8/12/2021).

4. Lastly, uniforms reduce distraction and shift the focus to learning. Questions on whether a student will fit in based on their clothing are diminished or eliminated and students will not be concerned about the impact of their clothing on their social lives. This reduces distractions and increases the focus on academics and building positive friendships instead of fashion. The education of students is important to all members of the school community and as such needs to be reflected in dress and appearance.

School uniforms as a requirement are on the rise in public schools for many of the reasons stated above. The National Center for Education Statistics estimated that between the years 2000 and 2016 the percentage of public schools requiring uniforms increased from 12 to 21 percent. Public schools in economically disadvantaged locations are commonly adopting school uniforms. Schools with more than 76% of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunches constitute a greater percentage of schools adopting uniform policies, on average, than schools with lower percentages.[3] The advantages in leveling the playing field for students from affluent and low income families and the benefits in terms of safety may potentially be driving this trend.

Community School

As mentioned previously, our school campus is unique because it will serve Pre-K through 12th grade on one campus. This is commonly referred to as a "community school," which refers to an approach that better coordinates a school with local communities and social service agencies.[4] This will be done through our various after school programs, social and family support initiatives, as well as supports for educational transitions; referring to a "one-stop shop" to better support young people and their families.[5]

Mentoring

Mentoring is a service that benefits the one who is receiving the help as well as the one who does the helping. As older students excel in various subjects at West Virginia Academy, they will be given mentoring opportunities to assist and tutor those in younger grades through our Academic Extended Courses (AEC) program. Research shows that cross-age mentoring programs integrated in elementary schools can achieve increases in critical thinking skills, improvements in interpersonal skills, and increases in the use of conflict resolution skills.[6] Studies also found advantages for students participating in such programs, these included higher self-esteem, enhanced learning time, and an increased sense of responsibility. During the three week term breaks, students showing high proficiency in foundational topics will be invited to help in the remediation process for younger students (See Academic Extended Courses). Older students will be asked to assist in art, music, or fitness mini-courses for the

---

[3] NCES, "School uniforms." Available at Fast Facts: School uniforms (50) (last visited 8/12/2021)

[4] Ammar, A.A., Sondergeld, T.A., Provinzano, K. & Delaney, B. (2021) Exploring the impact of a community school reform initiative on the literacy achievement of middle level English Language Learners. Research in Middle Level Education Online. 44(4). 1-17.

[5] Anderson, J. A., Chen, M.-E., Min, M., & Watkins, L. L. (2019). Successes, challenges, and future directions for an urban full service community schools initiative. Education and Urban Society, 51(7), 894–921.

[6] Gensemer, P., (2000). "Effectiveness of Cross-Age and Peer Mentoring program." Information Analysis. Available at: Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original document. (last visited 8/12/2021)

younger grades. They will also be given leadership opportunities within the school as teaching assistants, leaders of Ambassador teams, and on School Government. These will all be opportunities for students to work with and mentor each other within our school community.

Community Events

A school's culture demonstrates what is valued and worthwhile through the use of traditions, behaviors, and routines. We want to institute annual traditions that bond students to their peers, teachers, and to the school. Participation in these events will be encouraged by all and will help to establish shared values that reinforce our academic, ethical, and social standards.

West Virginia Academy will operate on a balanced calendar schedule (See Balanced Calendar School Model). For each term the whole school will have a general rotating theme. Each grade and class will integrate the school-wide theme as themes for their instruction during that term. At each term end, WVA will hold a community culminatinating event where students and classes can showcase what they have been learning about that term. Students will be actively creating and planning during advisory time on Experience Days.

Term 1 - Fall Fest

At the end of the first term we will be holding an annual Fall Fest. Each grade will be responsible for running a booth at the Fall Fest with a game that fits the theme for the term. For example if the theme for Term 1 is "Earth On, Above, and Beneath" our students at all grade levels will learn various topics addressing our natural features on the Earth (e.g. land masses, oceans, etc), above the earth (i.e. weather and space), and beneath the earth (plate tectonics, earth's layers, etc). For example, the fourth grade could create a booth surrounding the states and capitals. They could make a large map of the United States and have participants throw bean bags on the map to see what state it lands on. If the participant can tell the state or capital the participant wins a prize. Landing on West Virginia would give participants a bonus prize!

Fall Fest will not only include educational and fun grade-level booths, but each homeroom class will be given an opportunity to make a scarecrow reflecting some aspect they learned that fits the theme. Families, Community members, and student groups will also be encouraged to create a scarecrow representing the current theme. The scarecrows will be displayed and judged with winners receiving certificates and awards.

Term 2 - Cultural Connection

At the end of December, our school will hold a Cultural Connection night. Cultural Connection is just like it sounds, an event to connect people and various cultures all around the world. To prepare for this community night, students will be learning about various aspects of culture within West Virginia, the United States, and all around the world. Each grade will be assigned a culture to represent at the festival. Students will be asked to volunteer at a booth or create art, objects, food, etc of their assigned culture to present at Cultural Connection. Students will also be learning a song that is commonly sung in their assigned region during celebrations. Each grade will be performing throughout the Cultural Connection night.

Term 3 - Science Fair
Gravity, Magnetism, Heat, and Energy, these are just some of the topics that we will discover during this third term. The theme will vary keeping the event exciting each year. Our scholars will be exploring the various science topics and experimenting either as a class or as a small group. Secondary students will be asked to present one with a partner. These projects will be on display for the community to see and learn from. There will also be fun science experiments to enjoy while browsing the top projects.

Term 4: Hall of History
"Knowing the Past, opens doors to the future." (Carter G. Woodson) West Virginia Academy's community event for the four term is the Hall of History. This event will turn our school into a living history exhibit. Based on the theme for the term, the primary students will discovery teh historical significance of various artifacts, pictures, posters, and other items that fit within a specific era they are learning in their grade. The secondary students will be assigned specific events surrounding the theme and historical time period they are studying in their courses. The oldest students, will be able to choose a famous individual and actually "become" that person for the night. They will answer questions and give a monologue to peers and community members throughout the night. Not only does this help our scholars truly experience history, it educates all those that come in an inventive unique way. Our goal is to make history come alive in our very school.

School Pride

Any thriving culture is centered on pride. This is not an arrogant, judgmental pride, but a pride in hard work, team effort, and the success that comes with it. It also comes through infusing the school culture and language through everything we do at West Virginia Academy. To celebrate our student's achievements and hard work, we will be holding a number of enrichment activities in addition to the culminating activities throughout the school year. Some examples of such events are: Ocean Week, Spirit Week, Speech Festival, Spelling Bee, Field Day, Show What you Know Assembly, Read Together Week, and A Night with the Romans. Students will also participate as a team in the WVA Ambassador's program including various sporting competitions, service learning field trips, and the ultimate field day challenge (See West Virginia Academy Ambassadors).

Field Trips and Experiential Learning

At West Virginia Academy, we want the time we have with our students to be as fulfilling and effective as possible. We have prioritized our funding, programs, and class schedules to provide growth experiences for our entire school community. Substantial experiential learning opportunities and enrichment programs will provide a foundation our students can build upon to progress toward a lifetime of learning. A study conducted by the University of Arkansas found that culturally enriching field trips are on the decline. Museums are seeing a steep drop in school tours. This study found that students who were randomly chosen to participate in the school field trip displayed: (1) a stronger ability to think critically about the subject being taught, (2) an increase in historical empathy, which is the ability to understand and appreciate what life

was like for people who lived in a different time and place, and (3) an increase in tolerance of those with differing opinions, and (4) increased interest in attending museums in the future.[7]

In addition to studies that demonstrate the importance of these activities, parents and students within our community highly value these experiences. In fact, experiential learning and field trips was the most commonly identified aspect of public education in greatest need of improvement among students that took our survey.[8] For parents, experiential learning and field trips was the second most common response.[9]

With these reasons in mind, West Virginia Academy will devote a significant amount of time and resources to give our students more of these valuable experiences. On an assigned Experience Day, every grade level will go on at least one field trip each term. These trips will be directly tied to the curriculum or their Roman virtue project. The funding for the transportation of students within our Primary Recruitment Area will also enable our programs to access transportation to field trips more readily during the school day.

Student Behavior Plan

Positive Behavioral Support System (PBS)

It has been found that punitive interventions do not cultivate appropriate conduct or better self-regulation. “On the contrary, the literature indicates that punishment can worsen or escalate antisocial behaviors.”[10] A PBS system has been found to “foster self-regulation, self-discipline, and greater inner locus of control.”[11] The first goal of West Virginia Academy’s PBS is to attain high levels of academic engagement and achievement for all students, not just the gifted students, not just the typical students, but also students that sometimes present challenging behavior and those who have special needs. We also want to make sure our students demonstrate high levels of critical thinking, reasoning, and problem solving relative to interpersonal problem solving, conflict resolution, and coping skills.

Secondly, our goal is to make sure that teachers are confident in their ability to deliver high-quality instruction, effectively manage the learning environment, and work with chall enging students who may need modifications, accommodations, or more intensive services. And our final goal is to reach out to parents to make sure they are fully involved and reinforcing all of the elements of the management program just as we are implementing it at school. Consistency is key to the program and its participants flourishing academically.

---

[7] Greene, J.P., Kisida, B., Bowen, D.H., (2013) “The educational value of field trips,” Education Next Vol 14 (1) Available at: The Educational Value of Field Trips (last visited 8/12/2021)
[8] See Addendum 1, Table 2.2, pp.15-16.
[9] See Addendum 1, Table 1.3, p.8.
[10] Jean-Pierre, J. & Parris-Drummond, S. (2018) Alternative school discipline principles and interventions: An overview of the literature. McGill Journal of Education. 53(3). 414-433
[11] Bear, G. (2011). Positive psychology and school discipline: Positive is not simply the opposite of punitive. *Communiqué*, *39*(5), 8-9.

5 Positives for every Negative

Knoff (2013) studied and found that more positivity needs to occur in the classroom to build a positive school culture.[12] We are adopting his recommendation of 5 positive comments or feedback for every one negative interaction. We will be encouraging our administrators, staff, and students to also follow this simple guideline. We want to avoid criticism and derogatory feedback, instead follow our 5Bs: be specific, be immediate, be consistent, be frequent, and be preventative.

Educational Expectations

West Virginia's Academy's academic and behavioral program thrives on three vital components:

1. The work and effort of the teachers and staff
2. The work and effort of the students
3. The support of the parents and the community

West Virginia Academy believes that all students must be given the opportunity to succeed without regard to their family's background, socio-economic status, ethnicity, or disability. All students are welcome at WVA. Our faculty and staff will be trained and properly prepared to teach our scholars. However, if a teacher is not putting forth sufficient effort to enable the students to achieve mastery in their content area, the administration is committed to rectifying this through staff development, coaching, training, and other methods as described in the school policy.

Likewise, our scholars will be given a lot of responsibility and asked to exert effort to complete all assigned work so that they can benefit fully from the excellent academic programs of West Virginia Academy. We believe that it is the responsibility of the school to provide effective organizational systems, positive motivation, excellent teachers, and relevant, interesting curriculum for each student so that they can achieve academic success. We are confident that working together, all students can be successful scholars.

We recognize that parental support is key to student achievement. Where possible, West Virginia Academy parents will commit to support the learning process by ensuring their student has a time and place each day for studying, checking on daily learning plans, ensuring on-time arrival and minimizing absences. When able, parents will provide healthy food for lunch and engage in positive communication to address questions, concerns, or provide feedback. In order to assist parents, we will be offering before school activities, where students will receive a place to complete homework or do other academic and fitness-related activities. We will also be offering various after school options to help students with coursework and mentoring as well as building other talents and providing for a variety of social experiences.

---

[12] Knoff, H.M. (2013) Changing Resistant Consultees: Functional Assessment Leading to Strategic Intervention. Journal of Educational & Psychological Consultation. 23(4). 307-317.

We recognize that we cannot control student effort, participation, work or parental participation. We feel it is our duty to provide all the tools necessary, and do all we can to motivate students to succeed. Ultimately, we recognize that student effort is controlled by the student and motivated by the parent. After all we can do, academic success will not be the result, if the student and/or parent is unwilling to do their part, but our school will be dedicated to enabling parents and students to succeed in doing their part.

Bridging West Virginia Academy with the surrounding community through outreach strategies for students has the potential to not only improve academic success, but the community in which they reside. Community outreach is an approach that allows for students to teach, research, work, and learn in a community setting. The local community provides an excellent forum for learning to take place, and outreach strategies have the potential to improve different facets of the community, In turn, activities through the West Virginia Academy Ambassador program can help produce materials and products by students in class, these materials can then be disseminated in the local community as a form of community outreach. This allows for learning to occur outside the classroom for all parties involved while also addressing needs in the local community.

Behavioral Framework

Students and staff at West Virginia Academy will conduct themselves in a respectful, honorable manner. Members of our community will respect the mission of West Virginia Academy, and this will be reflected in their conduct and interaction while on school premises.

Core Principles

West Virginia Academy's Student Code of Conduct is outlined in Addendum 3. This code of conduct was written based on the following core principles:

1. Teachers will collaborate to create a set of behavioral expectations of standards that they teach and to which they hold students accountable.
2. Students must be taught the social, emotiona, and behavioral skills they are expected to demonstrate.
3. Teachers will recognize that some of the students may need modifications and accommodations becaust they do not learn the skills as quickly as others.
4. After the skill instruction, teachers then must teach studetns how to apply those skills in various classroom settings, in real-life situations, and across the common areas of the school.
5. Teachers will find ways to motivate students to use the skills that they've learned and mastered. Motivation can come in the form of meaningful incentives that encourage students to make good choices and consequences that motivate them to not make bad choices.

Behavior Matrix - CHAMPs

A behavioral matrix clearly identifies appropriate and inappropriate behavior for students and staff. It also gives a consistent roadmap that helps to reinforce appropriate student behavior and facilitate change in inappropriate behavior. West Virginia Academy will utilize the CHAMPs (Conversation, Help, Activity, Movement, Participation and Signal) program. Sprick created the CHAMPS program in 1998, with the understanding that behaviors must first be actively strengthened, instead of focusing on correcting bad behaviors. Teachers or grade-level teams come up with a Behavior Matrix (see Addendum 8) outlining expectations for the various activities done in class.

All teachers entering our school community will receive training through a series of DVD's that help them understand CHAMPS and how to implement the program within their classroom. Each teacher will also have access to the book, "Champs: A Proactive and Positive Approach to Classroom Management." It is a great reference of various "misbehaviors" and how to handle them in a positive manner. Teachers will be encouraged to collaborate with each other on various behavioral issues with their colleagues. They will also have the support of the curriculum specialist who is specifically trained in the CHAMPs methodology.

Once the expectations for the various classroom activities and for the common areas of school are established, all teachers are encouraged to stay positive and find ways of promoting appropriate behavior. As a school-wide incentive, leaders from the various student organizations will pick out students to recognize them as the Champs that month. Positive Student Awards (PSAs) will also be given out by peers and teachers to recognize positive behavior or actions seen around school. We want positivity to be rewarded and recognized as much as we can to encourage all to model the same behavior.

Behavior Modification Plan

Behavioral accountability for students in the classroom and across the common areas of our school involves two components: (1) identifying and communicating the behavioral standards, expectations, and response system for all students and (2) motivating students with powerful and meaningful incentives and consequences.

A Positive Behavioral Support System (PBSS), such as CHAMPs, in the classroom allows students to understand correct behaviors and self-manage their inappropriate behaviors. A well-developed behavior modification plan can help with classroom management. When behaviors distract from the learning environment in the classroom, there needs to be a system in place to help teachers know how to respond and intervene efficiently and effectively so that instruction time does not suffer. With a Response-to-Intervention (RtI) system in place all administration, staff, and educators can be unified in helping all students succeed.

Response to Intervention (RtI)

The RtI system used at West Virginia Academy was explained in the Education Design section as it pertains to academically struggling students. The same model can be used for students

struggling behaviorally as well. As explained before, Rti is a multi-tiered intervention system to help all student be successful. All students entering the school start at the Tier One setting. This is when the teachers explicitly teach the CHAMPs model and the students have a chance to practice and develop a thorough understanding of the expectations required of them in the general education classroom as well as the common areas of the school.

If a student is having trouble meeting those behavioral expectations, they may be placed in a Teir Two intervention. This is a more targeted approach to a small group of students who may continue to escalate in behavior if they are not redirected. Students will be grouped together based on similar issues. Students typically receive Tier III supports due to non-responsiveness to secondary interventions and intensity of behavior (e.g., self-injurious behavior, severe aggression).[13] The teacher will consult with the PBS School Leadership Team and then implement a Behavior Modification plan for the specific student. Interventions in Tier Three are mean to be temporary and the teacher will continue to consult with the PBS Leadership Team to determine when the plan can be altered for that student.

PBS School Leadership Team

The assistant directors along with the student services manager, special education counselor/nurse, and curriculum specialist will serve on the PBS School Leadership Team. The team's main goal is to implement and continually monitor the school-wide PBS system. The PBS Leadership team develops interventions and strategies for the groupings of misbehaviors in Tier Two. They assist the teacher in implementation within the classroom, then follow up with the teacher to see how the intervention is progressing.

All students on Tier Three will receive individual assessments and behavior intervention plans or individualized supports. The PBS Leadership team will be responsible to conduct the Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) and help the teacher come up with a Behavioral Intervention Plan with specific goals and interventions. The team will also follow up on the student progress and assist the teacher where needed.

Safeguard Procedures

A safeguard is protection put in place to either protect someone or prevent something undesireable from happening. In this case the procedural safeguards put in place by the Individuals with Disabilities Improvement Education Act (IDEA, 2004), help protect all parties involved in the special education process. These parties include: the child being examined, the parents of the child, and the school or school district that is conducting the evaluation.[14] According to Hurth and Goff (2002), "procedural safeguards are the checks and balances of the system, not a piece separate from the system."[15]

---

[13] Simonsen, B., MacSuga-Gage, A. S., Briere, D. E., Freeman, J., Myers, D., Scott, T. M., & Sugai, G. (2014). Multitiered Support Framework for Teachers' Classroom-Management Practices: Overview and Case Study of Building the Triangle for Teachers. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, *16*(3), 179–190.

[14] Individuals with Disabilities Improvement Education Act (2007) Available at: https://sites.ed.gov/idea/

[15] Hurth, J.L. & Goff, P. (2002). Assuring the family's role on the early intervention team: Explaining rights and safeguards (2" ed.). Chapel Hill, NC: National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center.

Parents are key advocates for their children and must be on board with the decisions made for their child at school. Procedural Safeguartds are explicitly explained in the IDEA act, however parents and children involved in the process are unaware of their rights under the law, as such, we will ensure that our parents receive this information in their native language.

As part of the safeguard procedures, we will provide written notice to the parents, in their native language, explaining the reasons for a behavioral or special education evaluation as well as their rights under the law. We will make sure the parents give written consent prior to any evaluation or extensive assessment be completed. Our administrative staff will help the parents also understand that they can withdraw their child at any time and/or disagree with the final evaluation outcome. If there is a disagreement, the parents can request a new evaluation at the expense of West Virginia Academy to have an Independent evaluation/assessment be conducted.

When a student starts a Tier Two or Tier Three intervention, an informational brochure (in their native language) will be given to the parents/caregivers explaining the RtI system and reasons for the extra support or intervention. If the PBS School Leadership feels that the student is not making progress academically or behaviorally through the RtI, they will recommend the student for a specialized evaluation to determine if there are any disabilities or special needs the child needs and accommodations to help them succeed in the class. The parents/caregiver will be reminded several times during the process that if they disagree with any intervention or evaluation results, they have the right to appeal it. We ask that appeals be written to the PBS Leadership Team. If they cannot resolve the situation, it will then go to the School Director and the Board for further evaluation and a resolution will be made. Research has found that parents' opinion on the services a school provides encourages these parents to be more involved with the service delivery.[16] Therefore the more the parents are involved in the process and agree with the outcome, the more likely they are to support the programs put in place for their child and ultimately, the more help the child will receive.

Supplemental Programming

The purpose of public education could be summarized as giving all students the opportunity to succeed without regard to their family's background, socio-economic status, or ethnicity. All students are welcome at West Virginia Academy, but we recognize that certain groups of students have been historically underserved within the public school system in West Virginia including, in particular, low SES, minority, and ELL students. Our school will be unique among charter schools in that we will have access to our own bus transportation fleet. This feature is vital in reaching out to at-risk students who may not have the ability to attend our school without transportation and may not be exposed to culturally enriching experiences unless transportation is provided. We recognize that all students can benefit greatly from academic, athletic, and

[16] Hyassat, M.A., Akhayat, M.M., Alzyoud, N., (2015). Development of a scale for measuring parental satisfaction with services available for disabled children in Jordan. *International Journal of Special Education*. 30(1).

enrichment programs offered at school. Our organization will be committed to providing all types of learning opportunities to that will enhance the lives of all our students.

Before School Program

Many students require care in the mornings before the 8:00 AM school start time. A before school program will begin at 6:45 AM and run until 7:45 AM (See Before School Schedule). All students participating in the before school program will receive breakfast.

Physical activity supports child learning.[17] We will provide students with a chance to participate in our BOKS before school program. Participation in physical activity before school has been found to increase student readiness for learning.[18] Students will participate in various BOK Bursts during the morning program. These "bursts" are one to ten minutes and completed sometimes individually, paired, or in a team. Training for these activities will be youth-led with guidance and oversight by faculty and staff, providing kids a health-focused leadership role within the school.

In between the BOK Bursts, students will be engaged in "Wake-up Brain Activities." These activities will provide specific cognitive training to help students become more proficient throughout their school day. Cognitive functions such as memory, attention, and problem-solving will be challenged during these fun wake-up activities.

Afterschool Program

According to the Afterschool Alliance, 69% of West Virginia parents agree that afterschool programs help give peace of mind about their children when they are at work. About half of parents agree that afterschool programs keep kids out of trouble and reduce the participation in risky behaviors. The time between 2pm and 6pm is the peak time for juvenile crime.[19] About 20% of West Virginia children are unsupervised an average of 6.65 hours per week after school.[20] In response to this area of need, West Virginia Academy will provide after school care until 6:00 PM Monday through Thursday. Following the end of school at 3:35 PM students participating in the WVA afterschool program will sign-in and receive an afterschool snack. The program is then organized into 3 forty-five minutes segments. Students can sign-up to participate in any or all of the three classes or clubs. If a student is not signed up for a particular club or has participated in a club and is waiting for their parents to pick them up, they will be

---

[17] Batez, M., Milošević, Ž., Mikulić, I., Sporiš, G., Mačak, D., & Trajković, N. (2021) Relationship between Motor Competence, Physical Fitness, and Academic Achievement in Young School-Aged Children. Biomed Research International. 1-7.

[18] Hall, Georgia, Kristen Fay Poston, and Stephanie Harris (2015) "Before the School Bell Rings: How a Before-School Physical Activity Program Improves Executive Functions." Afterschool Matters, Fall.

[19] Fight Crime: Invest in Kids. (2019). From Risk to Opportunity: Afterschool Programs Keep Kids Safe When Juvenile Crime Peaks. Available at: www.strongnation.org/articles/930-fromrisk-to-opportunity-afterschool-programs-keep-kids-safe (last visited 8/12/2021)

[20] AfterSchool Alliance (2014) "West Virginia after 3PM" Available at WEST VIRGINIA AFTER 3PM (last visited 8/12/2021)

able to stay in the main room to work on school work and receive homework help from a certified teacher and mentors (See Mentor Program).

West Virginia Academy recognizes the benefit of providing after school programming for our students' academic achievement. Research has shown that high-quality afterschool programs can lead to increases in attendance, better behavior, and higher quality student coursework.[21] Consistent participation in afterschool programming has also been found to help close the achievement gap for low-income students. Youth access to enrichment activities (arts, sports, theater, music, etc) is highly dependent on family income.[22] This opportunity gap results in, on average, low income students falling substantially behind their more affluent peers in academic achievement and diminished earning opportunities into adulthood.[23] A recent report, *America after 3PM,* found that only 19% of West Virginia Children participate in an afterschool program, however 48% would be enrolled if one were available to them.[24]

West Virginia Academy Afterschool program is a multipurpose program; it will provide opportunities to participate in various afterschool clubs daily (See Afterschool Schedule). Students that participate in the entire afterschool program will typically get an academic club, a fitness club, and an arts themed club. Each club will meet on a regular basis throughout the school year. Time for school support and homework help will be available each day during this program (see Afterschool Schedule).

Each club will be supervised by a teacher or parent volunteers. The Advisory Committee of Families (ACF), teachers, or students will be able to submit a proposal for a club meeting. Included in the proposal will be: when the club is offered, who will be the teacher or parent overseeing the program, and what type of activities they will engage in. The Student Government will read through all proposals, provide feedback and recommendations to the Executive Director, who will give final approval.

Afterschool Fitness Club

West Virginia Academy will be offering various sports clubs throughout each term based on the proposals received. These programs will align with our goal of providing fitness activities that students can participate in throughout an active and healthy life. A general fitness class will always be available throughout the year based on the BOKS after school program. This fitness club will provide a type of circuit training for all students to utilize after school. It will be overseen by a trained teacher and guidance will be given to students to ensure training is done properly. The idea is to provide real-life GYM training to help young people get into the habit of proper GYM fitness that will benefit them the rest of their lives. Students will be able to sign up for a 45

---

[21] Durlak, J. A., & Weissberg, R. P., Pachan, Molly (2010). A Meta-Analysis of After-School Programs That Seek to Promote Personal and Social Skills in Children and Adolescents. https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1007/s10464-010-9300-6 (last visited 8/12/2021)

[22] Duncan, Greg and Richard J. Murnane (2011) "Withering Opportunity? Rising Inequality, Schools, and Children's Life Chances," New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

[23] McCombs, Jennifer, Anamarie Whitaker, and Paul Yoo. (2017) "The Value of Out-of-School Time Programs." Rand Corporation.

[24] AfterSchool Alliance (2014) "West Virginia after 3PM" Available at WEST VIRGINIA AFTER 3PM (last visited 8/12/2021)

minute block with a warm-up, upper-body, core and trunk, Lower-body exercises, stretching and cool down at each session.

Academic Extended Courses

Academic Extended Courses (AEC) will also be included in our afterschool program in the first scheduled time block. Students are invited to the AEC program by teacher request based on academic need. All new 1st - 5th grade students will be invited to participate in AEC after school during the first term break to give them additional support as they learn West Virginia Academy's procedures and curriculum. The OC will be utilized to give students extra practice on subject matter that is in need of improvement. Students may be invited to or excused from AEC during the school year. Participation is based on the academic focus of the term and the progress of the student. This program will be overseen by a certified teacher and last about forty-five minutes. Students in AEC will then be able to join in other segments after completing this class. West Virginia Academy students showing high proficiency in a subject area will be granted the opportunity to mentor within the AEC, giving them valuable service learning experience as well as solidifying their knowledge in those subject areas (See Mentoring).

Other Academic Courses will be offered and they will meet in one of the 45 minutes segments. Such clubs will be based on teacher, student, and ACF suggestions. Some examples include: Science, Chess, Latin, Book, Robotics, Coding, etc.

The Arts Afterschool

The third afterschool block will be focused on the arts. Clubs such as drama, music, dance, creative writing, painting, etc. will be available based on teacher, student, and ACF suggestions. Studies show that students from low-income families receive fewer opportunities for out of school enrichment than students from higher income backgrounds.[25] West Virginia Academy aims at offering more enrichment opportunities to our low-income students through the afterschool program. Students who qualify for free or reduced lunches will receive significant discounts to encourage enrollment in the afterschool class offerings. Thus giving students a safe, culturally and academically enriching experience after school, and giving parents peace of mind knowing their children are being cared for so they can complete their work day.

Athletics

Childhood and adult obesity rates are a substantial social problem in West Virginia with childhood obesity levels of 20.9% (second highest in the US) and adult obesity levels of 39.5% (highest in the US).[26] Also, despite young childhood obesity rates declining nationwide, this rate

[25] Miller, Rachelle and Marcia Gentry (2010) "Developing Talents Among High-Potential Students from Low-Income Families in an Out-of-School Enrichment Program."Journal of Advanced Academics.
[26] See https://stateofchildhoodobesity.org/states/wv/; Flatley, Report: West Virginia continues to lead nation in adult obesity rate (WV MetroNews, Sept. 12, 2020) Report: West Virginia continues to lead nation in adult obesity rate (last visited 8/12/2021)

is actually on the increase in West Virginia.[27] Lifetime participation in physical activity should be the overall goal of physical education and athletics in the primary and secondary education, but most high school athletics programs and team sports devote substantial resources and focus on sports that rarely continue beyond highschool. West Virginia Academy will build its athletics programs around physical activities and team sports that have the greatest carryover into adulthood and will prioritize these sports.

Our athletics programs and budgeting will be guided by our goal to provide students with opportunities to engage in physical activities that are likely to progress into a lifetime of physical exercise beyond primary and secondary school. By way of example, some of the lifetime sports our school will prioritize and compete in include golf, track, volleyball, cross country, basketball, soccer, badminton, biking, tennis, and pickleball. Students will also compete in internal athletic competitions representing their respective teams in the Ambassador Program.

Team sports for competition outside the school will be offered seasonally based on feasibility and student demand. Water sports such as swimming, kayaking, rowing, and canoeing will be offered on occasion as part of field trips. Sports teams representing the school will be offered after school practice time as well as concentrated practice time during the term breaks to get ready for competitions and increase skill levels (See Term Break Schedule). As a public school, our secondary school grade levels will participate in interscholastic sports competitions within the public system at the appropriate division level for sports where our student body expresses a high interest. Programs with reasonable interest among the student body may participate in club sports programs, subject to available funding. This approach ensures that our allocation for resources in athletics will mirror the interests of our student body.

Membership and Participation in the WVSSAC

Our GYM teacher for the secondary school will be the designee to represent our school as a member of the WVSSAC. This individual wil certify in writing to the State Superintendent of schools of West Virginia that they have elected to delegate the control, supervision, and regulation of our interscholastic athletic and band activities. Our Athletic Director will understand that they must abide by the constitution, by-laws, rules and regulations of the Commission which have been adopted by the Board of Control. WVA will pay the one time membership fee (1500) as well as the annual dues (30 for first 100 students + 10 per 100 there after up to 1000) charged by the Commission by the 1 of February every year.

Term Break Programming

West Virginia Academy's unique balanced calendar provides for the reallocation of the 180 instruction days more evenly throughout the year. We have four terms consisting of nine weeks of instruction with two to three week term breaks in between. Our summer has been shortened from the traditional 10 weeks to 5 weeks between school academic years. During each of these

[27] See Stuck, Childhood Obesity Rates Rising in West Virginia (Charleston Gazette-Mail, Nov. 19, 2019) Childhood obesity rising in West Virginia | Health | wvgazettemail.com (last visited 08/12/2021).

term breaks West Virginia Academy will offer various mini-courses to provide enrichment and experiential learning while school is out of session. As part of their contract, each teacher will be responsible for creating one mini-course related to their subject area. The course will be available for one term break, however, if the teacher would like to teach more than one term break they will be subsidized for the extra time.

Term break school days will be broken up into three sessions beginning at 8:00 AM. Upon arrival, students will be encouraged to eat breakfast which they can bring, pre-purchase, or will be provided for those that qualify. The morning session will have an academic focus and go until lunch. Students will be encouraged to bring a lunch, pre-purchase one online, or one will be provided for those that qualify. The next session will run until 3:35 PM, after a small break and snack the final session will last until 6 PM and final pickup.

Term Break Mini-Courses

Academic Extended Courses (AEC)
Students who participate in the AEC program will be offered a mini-course that covers their individual needs. Students who need remediation will be able to access the OC as well as work with a teacher to increase skills in our foundational subjects. Students that qualified for the gifted and talented program will be offered mini-courses to stretch and enrich their education. Programs being considered are Destination Imagination and Science Olympiad (See Enrichment Programs).

Also offered during this session will be other mini-courses available to all students to provide further enrichment and fun experiential learning. These may include First Lego League, Cyber Robotics Coding Competition, Geography Olympiad, National Junior Classical League, etc.

Athletics and The Arts
After lunch the mini-courses will be focused on Athletics and the Arts. Sports clinics will be offered in various lifetime sports including golf, track, volleyball, soccer, badminton, biking, tennis, and pickleball. This will also be a time when our competitive sports teams will meet and practice for an extended period to help improve skills and teamwork.

Mini-courses in the Arts will provide a wonderful opportunity for our students to explore their creativity. Drama mini-courses that will end in a play, creative writing courses that end with a book, madrigals or a jazz band that end with a concert, and tap or social dance that end with a performance; all of these are possibilities with this program. We will provide a variety of courses that will enrich the lives of our students.

Enrichment Programs

Gifted and Talented Students
West Virginia Academy offers leveled courses within the foundational topics (See The Level System). This provides learning in the least-restrictive environment for each of our students.

Students will be given placement tests for each foundational topic and placed in the correct class to ensure efficient learning. Students that are “gifted” in a subject will be placed at a higher grade level, thus challenging and supporting learning for all students. Those that qualify as being gifted and talented will be invited to participate in term break mini-courses that will enhance learning and provide opportunity for additional growth.

Independent Reading Program (IRP)

West Virginia Academy Independent Reading Program (IRP) is a program that will encourage students to develop a lifelong habit of reading. Independent reading has been shown to be a defining indicator in a student’s academic success.[28] It is our goal to create enthusiastic independent readers and foster a reading community within our school. Research has shown that students read more, understand more, and are more likely to continue reading when they get to choose what they read.[29]

West Virginia Academy primary students (K-5) will have time each day for independent reading. Researchers have found that students in more-effective teachers' classrooms spent a larger percentage of reading instructional time actually reading; students in less-effective teachers' classrooms spent more time using worksheets, answering low-level, literal questions, or completing before-and-after reading activities.[30] Teachers will guide the students to books at their appropriate level so they can read accurately, fluently, and with understanding. After the reading period, students will have a chance to write (or draw pictures if they are young) about what they read in a reading journal. Students will receive recognition for the number of books read, K-5 students can redeem points earned at the school IRP store.

Generally, the goal of this program is to help students in developing the ability to read and learn independently, taking responsibility for their learning and becoming more independent and autonomous both inside and outside the classroom. Secondary school reading challenges will be established with incentives and recognition awards given for books read throughout the school year to encourage participation.

---

[28] Battye, C., & Rainsberry, M. (2013, September 11). Reading for pleasure puts children ahead in the classroom, study finds. Available at CLS | Reading for pleasure puts children ahead in the classroom, study finds (last visited 8/12/2021).
Cullinan, B. (2000). Independent reading and school achievement. School Library Media Research, 3(1523-4320), 1-24. Available at Independent Reading and School Achievement (last visited 8/12/2021)
[29] Allington, R., & Gabriel, R. (2012). Every child, every day. Educational Leadership, 69(6), 10–15.
[30] Taylor, B. M., Pearson, P. D., Peterson, D. S., & Rodriguez, M. C. (2003). Reading growth in high-poverty classrooms: The influence of teacher practices that encourage cognitive engagement in literacy learning. *Elementary School Journal, 104*, 3–28.

School Calendar and Schedule

Balanced Calendar School Model

West Virginia Academy will adopt a balanced calendar that will permit learning throughout the full calendar year. This calendar includes nine week concentrated times for school learning we refer to as "terms" followed by two to three week breaks where a variety of activities are provided for remediation, advancement, and enrichment. A balanced calendar has been found to help overall student learning and minimize time spent reviewing previously learned subjects.[31] This approach also provides a more consistent schedule of receiving essential nutrition for students that are most likely to suffer from lack of proper nutrition.

There are many "year-round" school models. West Virginia Academy has adopted a model that gives students a two to three week break in between terms and an approximately five week break between school years. This schedule provides a more consistent learning environment without large breaks over the summer, but still provides students with the opportunity to participate in summer camps offered by various local youth-serving organizations that give valuable opportunities for learning and growth outside the school.

Summer learning loss has been linked to the traditional school schedule. Many studies have shown that students lose up to three months of learning over the summer break.[32] In fact, this "summer slide" is more prominent in low SES and special education students.[33] In comparison, several studies have reported that nations with more than 180 days and have calendars that are year-round have out performed American schools.[34] Research also has found that students

---

[31]Alexander, K. Pitcock, S., Boulay, MC (2016)The summer slide: what we know and can do about summer learning loss. Teachers College Press. p.352.

[32] Atteberry, A., & McEachin, A. (2016). School's out: Summer learning loss across grade levels and school contexts in the United States today. In Alexander, K., Pitcock, S., & Boulay, M. (Eds). Summer learning and summer learning loss, pp35-54. New York: Teachers College Press.
Michelle Obama.(2015) Retrieved from A Summer Learning Day message from First Lady Michelle Obama (last visited 8/12/2021).
Alexander, K.L., Entwisle, D.R., and Olson, L.S. (2007). Lasting consequences of the summer learning gap. *American Sociological Review, 72, 167 - 180.*
Bracey, GW (2002). Summer loss: The phenomenon no one wants to deal with. Phi Delta Kappan, 84(1), 12 - 13.
Cooper, H., Nye, B., et a. (1996). The effects of summer vacation on achievement test scores: A narrative and meta-analytic review. *Review of Education Research, 66, 227 - 268.*

[33] Menard, J., Wilson, AM. (2014) Summer learning loss among elementary school children with reading disabilities. Exceptionality Education International, 2014 - ir.lib.uwo.ca (last visited 8/12/2021).
Kim J. S., Quinn D. M. (2013). The effects of summer reading on low-income children's literacy achievement from kindergarten to grade 8 a meta-analysis of classroom and home interventions. Review of Educational Research, 83(3), 386–431. The Effects of Summer Reading on Low-Income Children's Literacy Achievement From Kindergarten to Grade 8: A Meta-Analysis of Classroom and Home Interventions - James S. Kim, David M. Quinn, 2013(last visited 8/12/2021)
Entwisle D. R., Alexander K. L., Olson L. S. (2000). Summer learning and home environment. In Kahlenberg R. D. (Ed.), A notion at risk: Preserving public education as an engine for social mobility (pp. 9–30). New York, NY: Century Foundation Press.

[34] Massachusetts 2020 (2005) Research report. Time for a change: The promise of extended -time schools for promoting student achievement. Available at Time for a Change: (last visited 8/12/2021)

benefit from a year a round school model because of the shorter, more frequent breaks, as well as the remediation and enrichment that is available during the breaks.[35]

Year-round schools have been found to have health benefits for students. Child weight gain increases during the summer months,[36] which in turn increases the risk for obesity and negative health problems as adults. It has also been found that during the months of June and July, teens are more likely to begin experimenting with drugs and alcohol.[37] While the risks of substance abuse are real and experimentation is possible during any time of the year, the drastic increase during summer months highlights a need for education and preventative measures. Providing year-round school gives students more structured time during the summer, which provides opportunities for physical education and positive constructive activities.[38]

Academic Calendar

As stated above, West Virginia Academy will be one of just a handful of schools in the state of West Virginia to offer a balanced calendar schedule. We will also closely align our school calendar with the West Virginia University calendar to accommodate those families tied to the university.

Each February, the School Administration will develop the calendar for the following academic year, as well as a proposed for the next year. They will be distributed to staff for input. In March, the two-year calendars will be presented to the Governing Board. In April, the following-year calendar will be published to the parents via the school newsletter. The academic calendar will provide for a minimum of 180 days and 990 instructional hours as per state law.

At the beginning of each school year, every student will be given a copy of the School Calendar for their reference throughout the year. School Calendars will also be available online at www.WestVirginiaAcademy.org. Current school events and updates can be found in the weekly school newsletters and online.

---

[35] Pedersen, James (2015). Summer Versus School: The Possibilities of the Year-Round School. Rowman and Littlefield, p.137.

[36] Baranowski, t., et al (2014) School year versus summer differences in child weight gain: A narrative review. Childhood Obesity, 10(1).
Franckle, R., Alder, R., and Davison, K. (2014) Accelerated weight gain among children during summer versus school year and related racial/ethnic disparities: A systematic review. Preventing Chronic Disease. 11 (E101).

[37] SAMHSA report, (2012). Monthly Variation in Substance Use Initiation Among Adolescents. Available at Monthly Variation in Substance Use Initiation among Adolescents (last visited 8/12/2021).

[38] Lisa K. P. Olsen, Barry A. Garst & Gwynn M. Powell (2019) Parental Perceptions of Year-Round School Environments, Journal of Research in Childhood Education, 33:4, 579-591.(last visited 8/12/2021/2021).
Ballinger, C.E., Kneese, C. (2006). School Calendar Reform. Rowman and Littlefield Education. p. 239.

Academic Calendar for 2022 - 2023 School Year

Term Dates
Term 1 August 1 - September 30
Term 2 October 24 - December 20
Term 3 January 9 - March 10
Term 4 April 3 - June 9

July 18 - 22, 2022	Staff Training Days	Staff Only
July 26	Meet and Greet (4th - 8th grade)	
July 28	Meet and Greet (K - 3rd grade)	
August 1	First Day of School - All Grades	
September 5	Labor Day	NO SCHOOL
September 23	Parent/Teacher Conferences	Early Release Day
September 30	Fall Fest	
October 3 - 21	Term 1 Break/Mini-Courses	NO SCHOOL
October 24	First Day of 2nd Term	
November 23 - 25	Thanksgiving Break	NO SCHOOL
December 20	Cultural Connection	
Dec. 21 - January 6, 2023	Term 2 Break/Mini-Courses	NO SCHOOL
January 9	First Day of Term 3	
January 16	Civil Rights Day	NO SCHOOL
February 20	President's Day	NO SCHOOL
February 24	Hall of History	
March 3	Parent/Teacher Conferences	Early Release Day
March 13 - 31	Term 3 Break/Mini-Courses	NO SCHOOL
April 3	First Day of Term 4	
April 28	Science Fair	
May 10 - 19	School Testing Period	
May 22 - 26	Ocean Week	
May 26	Parent/Teacher Conferences	Early Release Day
May 30	Memorial Day	NO SCHOOL
May 31 - June 3	Spirit Week	
June 7	Field Day	
June 9	Last Day of School	Early Dismissal
June 12 - June 30	Summer Mini-Courses	

Weekly Schedule

West Virginia Academy believes that academic growth occurs when there are minimal distractions during the school day, therefore, Monday through Thursday will be devoted to academic subjects. Our weekly schedule offers Experience Days that are typically on Fridays. Experience Days are days for assemblies, field trips, and other school wide events that occur during the day (i.e. science fair, spelling bee, geography bee, internal athletic competitions, etc). These days will also be used for students to work on various assignments and projects relating

to the culminating activities and the West Virginia Academy Ambassador program. Students that are behind in any courses will complete missing assignments during this time until completed instead of participating in the non-academic extra activities. Specific weekly schedules can be found in Addendum 7.

Daily Schedule

The anticipated start to the school day will be at 8:00 a.m. Those students not involved in before school care will be able to enter the school at 7:45 a.m. Please see the following schedule for specific times:

	M - Th		Fridays		Early Release Days	
	School Begins	School Ends	School Begins	School Ends	School Begins	School Ends
K - 12th Grades	8:00 AM	3:35 PM	8:00 AM	2:35 PM	8:00 AM	12:00 PM
AM Kindergarten (optional)	8:00 AM	11:30 AM	8:00 AM	11:30 AM	8:00 AM	12:00 PM

Pre-K Schedule			
	Group A	**Group B**	**Group C**
7:45 - 8:05	Arrival/Free Play (Outdoors or in Gym)	Arrival/Free Play (Outdoors or in Gym)	Arrival/Free Play (Outdoors or in Gym)
8:05 - 8:35	Circle Time/Welcome (Large Room 1)	Circle Time/Welcome (Large Room 1)	Circle Time/Welcome (Large Room 1)
8:35 - 9:10	Music and Movement Center (Large Room 1)	Technology Center (Small Room 4)	Writing Center (Small Room 3)
9:10 - 9:30	Outdoor/Snack time	Outdoor/Snack time	Outdoor/Snack time
9:30 - 10:05	Manipulatives Center (Small Room 1)	Music and Movement Center (Large Room 1)	Technology Center (Small Room 4)
10:05 - 10:40	Writing Center (Small Room 3)	Manipulatives Center (Small Room 1)	Music and Movement Center (Large Room 1)
10:40 - 11:15	Dramatic Play Center (Large Room 2)	Literacy Center (Small Room 5)	Manipulatives Center (Small Room 1)
11:15 - 11:45	Lunch/Outdoor (Gym)	Lunch/Outdoor (Gym)	Lunch/Outdoor (Gym)

11:45 - 12:45	Rest Time (Large Room 1)	Rest Time (Large Room 1)	Rest Time (Large Room 1)
12:45 - 1:20	Art/Sensory Center (Small Room 2)	Writing Center (Small Room 3)	Literacy Center (Small Room 5)
1:20 - 1:55	Literacy Center (Small Room 5)	Art/Sensory Center (Small Room 2)	Dramatic Play Center (Large Room 2)
1:55 - 2:15	Outdoor/Snack time	Outdoor/Snack time	Outdoor/Snack time
2:15 - 2:50	Technology Center (Small Room 4)	Dramatic Play Center (Large Room 2)	Art/Sensory Center (Small Room 2)
2:50 - 3:20	Circle Time/Closing	Circle Time/Closing	Circle Time/Closing
3:20 - 3:35	Dismissal/Free play	Dismissal/Free time	Dismissal/Free time

	Kindergarten	1st Grade	2nd Grade	3rd Grade	
8:00 - 8:35	HOMEROOM	HOMEROOM	HOMEROOM	8:00 - 8:35	HOMEROOM
8:40 - 9:15	Reading	Reading	Reading	8:40 - 9:15	Reading
9:15 - 9:30	RECESS	RECESS	RECESS	9:15 - 9:30	RECESS
9:30 - 10:30	Math	Math	Math	9:30 - 10:30	Math
10:30 - 11:00	Language	Language	Language	10:30 - 11:00	Language
11:00 - 11:30	Handwriting/ Spelling	Handwriting/ Spelling	Handwriting/ Spelling	11:00 - 11:45	LUNCH
11:30 - 12:15	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	11:45 - 12:15	Homeroom (PM)
12:15 - 12:30	HOMEROOM	HOMEROOM	HOMEROOM	12:15 - 1:00	Science
12:30 - 1:00	History/ Geography	Specials	Read Aloud Library	1:00 - 1:30	Read Aloud Library
1:00 - 1:30	Specials	History/ Geography	History/ Geography	1:30 - 1:45	RECESS
1:30 - 1:45	Recess	Recess	Recess	1:45 - 2:15	History/ Geography
1:45 - 2:25	Read Aloud Library	Read Aloud Library	Specials	2:15 - 2:45	Handwriting/ Spelling
2:25 - 3:15	Science	Science	Science	2:45 - 3:15	Specials
3:15 - 3:35	Homeroom/ Dismissal	Homeroom/ Dismissal	Homeroom/ Dismissal	3:15 - 3:35	Homeroom/ Dismissal

4th Grade		5th Grade	
8:00 - 8:35	HOMEROOM	8:00 - 8:35	HOMEROOM
8:40 - 9:30	Writing	8:40 - 9:30	Writing
9:30 - 10:00	Spelling_ Vocabulary	9:30 - 10:00	Spelling_ Vocabulary
10:00 - 11:00	Math	10:00 - 11:00	Math
11:00 - 11:45	LUNCH	11:00 - 11:45	LUNCH
11:45 - 12:00	Read Aloud Library	11:45 - 12:00	Read Aloud Library
12:00 - 12:30	Specials	12:00 - 12:30	Specials
12:50 - 1:30	History/ Geography	12:50 - 1:30	History/ Geography
1:30 - 1:45	Recess/PE	1:30 - 1:45	Recess/PE
1:45 - 2:25	Science	1:45 - 2:25	Science
2:30 - 3:15	Language Arts/ Literature	2:30 - 3:15	Language Arts/ Literature
3:15 - 3:35	Homeroom/ Dismissal	3:15 - 3:35	Homeroom - dismissal

Secondary School Block Schedule

	Class 1		**Class 2**	
Times	**A Day (M/W)**	**B Day (T/Th)**	**A Day (T/Th)**	**B Day (M/W)**
8:00 - 8:25	Homeroom	Homeroom	Homeroom	Homeroom
8:30 - 10:00	1st period	5th period	1st period	5th period
10:05 - 11:35	2nd period	6th period	2nd period	6th period
11:35 - 12:20	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
12:25 - 1:55	3rd period	7th Period	3rd period	7th Period
2:00 - 3:35	4th period	8th Period	4th period	8th Period

Times	**Friday Experience Day (Example)**
8:00 - 9:00	Homeroom
9:05 - 10:05	Assembly
10:10 - 11:40	Project Rotation 1
11:40 - 12:20	Lunch
12:25 - 1:25	Project Rotation 2
1:30 - 2:35	Project Rotation 3

Term Break Schedule

Times	**Term Break Daily Schedule**
8:00 - 8:30	Breakfast and Morning Meeting

8:30 - 11:30 Academic Extended Courses
11:30 - 12:20 Lunch_Recess
12:25 - 3:30 Sports Clinic/Mini-Course 1
3:30 - 3:45 Dismissal/Recess
3:45 - 5:45 Sports Clinic/Mini-Course 3
5:45 - 6:00 Clean-up/Dismissal

Before School Schedule

<table>
<tr><th>Times</th><th colspan="4">Before School Schedule</th></tr>
<tr><td>6:45 - 7:00</td><td rowspan="4">Arrival - Student/Parent Sign In</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>7:00 - 7:15</td><td rowspan="2">Breakfast served</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>7:15 - 7:30</td><td rowspan="2">Yoga/Morning Exercises</td><td rowspan="2">Wake-up Brain Activities</td></tr>
<tr><td>7:30 - 7:45</td></tr>
<tr><td>7:45 - start of school</td><td colspan="4">Clean up and transition to school day</td></tr>
</table>

AfterSchool Schedule

<table>
<tr><th>Times</th><th colspan="2">AfterSchool Schedule</th></tr>
<tr><td>3:35 - 3:45</td><td>Arrival - Student Sign In and Afternoon Snack</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>3:45 - 4:30</td><td>AEC</td><td rowspan="3">Teacher Homework Help/Mentoring</td></tr>
<tr><td>4:30 - 5:15</td><td>Fitness Afterschool</td></tr>
<tr><td>5:15 - 6:00</td><td>The Arts Afterschool</td></tr>
</table>

Parent and Community Involvement

Parent Expectations

We recognize that parental and caregiver support is key for student achievement. We will ask those responsible for the students at West Virginia Academy commit to supporting the learning process by ensuring their student has time each day for studying and a place to study. This may include enrolling them in our Afterschool program to utilize the help from a certified teacher on their school work and assignments. It is the parent/caregiver's responsibility to ensure on-time arrival and minimal absences during the school year. We will provide transportation to all student within our primary recruitment area. Those that want to attend term break courses will also be able to utilize the transportation services. We will also ask that parents and caregivers are up-to-date on their child's learning plans and engage in positive communication to address questions, concerns, or provide feedback.

Parent/Caregiver Compact

PARENTS/CAREGIVERS AGREE TO:

1. Ensure that my student attends school regularly and on time. Notify the school promptly in the case of my student's absence. As often as possible, schedule appointments outside of school hours.
2. Abide by school policies and procedures regarding student drop-off and pickup.
3. If my student rides the bus, I will provide supervision for my K-3rd grader at all bus stops until the bus arrives for both pick up and delivery.
4. Ensure that my student receives sufficient rest and has a nutritious breakfast and lunch.
5. Ensure that my student arrives at school prepared for class with necessary materials and in appropriate dress uniform.
6. Abide by school policies regarding check-in/check-out procedures and visitor policies.
7. Review my student's homework and sign my student's learning plan each week
8. Provide an environment that will make it possible for students to engage in scholarly pursuits on a daily basis. This should include opportunities for exercise, study, homework, and reading. It may also include instrumental practice.
9. Support my student's education through attendance at school meetings, Parent-Teacher conferences, and Parent Interventions when necessary
10. Support West Virginia Academy by completing parent surveys and volunteer when available.
11. Help your child become a West Virginia Ambassador and have positive experiences in and around West Virginia.
12. Inform and provide constructive input to appropriate staff at West Virginia Academy in a timely manner should I become aware of obstacles to my student's education
13. Abide by other school policies and procedures as outlined in the Parent-Student Handbook and the Acceptance of Policy.

Parent to School Communication

Guidelines

Communication at West Virginia Academy will be positively framed and undertaken in good faith by all parties. Anyone with a question or concern is to take it to the person most able to address it. This allows for all members of the community to feel safe and valued, and to have confidence that all concerns will be addressed to the point of satisfaction if at all possible. Feedback from all stakeholders is essential for the school to be continually engaged in a process of improvement, and feedback is more likely to be shared freely when stakeholders are confident their feedback will be carefully heard and addressed.

Concerns must be brought by a parent about their own students or their own concerns. Parents may not represent a group in bringing concerns to the West Virginia Academy Administration or Governing Board, as each parent's concern must be addressed individually and confidentially. In order to preserve the confidentiality of our students, group concerns will not be addressed.

Parent Meetings and Events

Parents are required to attend the following:

- Back-to-School Night*
- Parent Teacher Conferences (at least 2)

Back-to-School Night will include far more than the introduction of a child's teacher. We will also be reviewing school policies and procedures, parent involvement, student expectations, Title I parent participation, school curriculum and assessments used, and more.

Other school events parents are invited and encouraged to attend will be: Fall Fest, Cultural Connection, Science Fair, Hall of History, Veteran's Day Program, Music Performances, Academic Updates, Ambassador Events, etc.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

WVA Primary School

Parent/Teacher conferences will be held twice per year according to the school calendar. This is a time when academic goals are set for each student with input from parents and, at times, students. We ask that all parents try to attend two out of the three offered conferences. Conferences will also be available to schedule at any time parents or teachers feel it would be beneficial.

WVA Secondary School

Parent-teacher conferences will be held twice per year according to the school calendar. Teachers will be at tables in a multi-purpose room and parents will meet with them on a first-come, first-served basis.

Comprehensive Needs Assessment

At the conclusion of each school year, end-of-year assessment data is reported and organized into a Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CNA). The CNA includes demographic, attendance, and assessment data. We conduct surveys to the following groups: Parent/Caregiver, Student, Faculty/Staff, and the Community.

The Comprehensive Needs Assessment will be analyzed by the Executive Director and the Governing Board as well as made available to the public. We also will use the information for potential improvement. School Plans are developed with goals, action steps, and budget relationships. School Parent and Family Engagement Policies will be evaluated for effectiveness. School, Parent, and Student Compacts will also examined by the end of the each school year for recommended changes.

West Virginia Academy CNA will be compared to the West Virginia Standards for High Quality Schools (§126-12-4) and used as a guide for self-assessment, decision making, professional development, and strategic planning.

Parent Survey

Each May, a parent survey will be distributed to each family attending West Virginia Academy. The survey is specific to West Virginia Academy, and solicits our parents' views on our programs and staff members. Families will have the opportunity to express their level of satisfaction with all aspects of the West Virginia Academy programs and provide suggestions for improvement. Survey results will be available at the school office, and major points from the survey will be communicated to the parent community via the school newsletter. Survey responses will also be included in annual teacher evaluations and so feedback from parents has both a direct impact on the classroom experience as well as a more general impact on the overall culture of the school.

There is no process for retaining or reporting anonymous written communications and the idiosyncratic nature of such communications prevents our organization from including or considering such communications formal parent feedback process.

School and Family Engagement Policy

Non-custodial parent/guardian

West Virginia Academy abides by the provisions of the Buckley Amendment with respect to the rights of non-custodial parents. In the absence of a court order to the contrary, the school will provide the non-custodial parent access to the academic records and to other school-related information regarding the student. It is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide the school with an official copy of any court orders relating to access rights for student records and update such orders as they change from time to time. West Virginia Academy is under no obligation to search out court records to verify or update records provided by a custodial parent or guardian. Non-custodial parents will have access to students during school hours in the same

way that custodial parents do (including picking up the student from school), unless documentation to the contrary is presented to the school.

Caregivers

If parents are going on vacation or a child is in the care of a designated caregiver, (i.e. grandparent, aunt, friend, nanny, etc), the caregiver must be added to the student's card so they can pick them up from school or from a bus stop, as applicable. Parents should also leave a "permission to treat" form with the caregiver in case there is a need for medical attention for the student when the parents are not immediately available.

Advisory Committee of Families (ACF)

The Advisory Committee of Families (ACF) is patterned after other parent-teacher organizations and associations. We feel the whole family should be building working relationships with West Virginia Academy faculty and administration. The ACF will also be responsible to help raise discretionary funds for programs and clubs offered at the school. They will organize and create proposals for various clubs including a parent or teacher as leader, details as to when the students will meet, and what type of activities they will engage in during the club time. Proposals will be given to the student leadership to review and make suggestions for the Executive director, who makes the final approval. The ACF will also serve as West Virginia Academy's Local School Improvement Council (See LSIC).

The President of the ACF will be selected by the Board of Governors, typically this will be the Vice President of the prior year. The ACF Vice President will be selected each year by the school administration. Both the President and Vice President will serve as members of the Board of Governors. The Vice President will be assisting the President in his/her duties. The ACF President works with the school as the volunteer coordinator for campus events or activities. The President also organizes parent/volunteer committees as necessary. Individuals who are interested in helping on a school level committee may contact the ACF President to volunteer.

Volunteer Guidelines

West Virginia Academy openly encourages and asks parents and caregivers to volunteer in our school. Parents and caregivers will be asked to contact their child's teacher or the administration staff for ways to serve. It is important that volunteers work together as team members with West Virginia Academy faculty and staff. The following guidelines are helpful in ensuring that volunteer service is a positive experience for parents and is effective for our students.

- Volunteers must sign in and out at the front office, get a Visitors badge, and wear it during the time they are in the building volunteering.
- Volunteer Dress & Behavior - please dress appropriately in business casual attire. The more we show respect for our school, the more respect the students will feel toward the school. West Virginia Academy's dress code is reflective of a high level of respect. We

encourage volunteers to reflect this same level of respect in their own appearance when they volunteer at the school.

- Volunteers work under the supervision of staff.
- As a matter of professional ethics, and personal privacy, volunteers do not discuss teacher, student, or school affairs with other people. It is extremely important that confidentiality be upheld at all times. Administrators have the same expectations of confidentiality from volunteers as they do from the West Virginia Academy staff.
- For the protection of students and our volunteers, volunteers must avoid being alone with one or two students at all times while at the school and should only be in the presence of students while accompanied by another adult (i.e. a teacher, administrator, or another volunteer). This policy does not apply to passing encounters, such as when a volunteer is moving from one classroom to another, but volunteers must make sure even passing encounters occur only in a public space such as a hallway or a room with a door that is open at all times. Volunteers should never be in an enclosed room with a child at any time.
- Student Discipline: Volunteers have a responsibility to inform staff right away if there is a problem with student behavior. Volunteers should never discipline students in any way.
- If volunteers are scheduled to work in the classroom with students, they will be asked not to bring young children as they may become a distraction in the classroom. For other meetings or a group work activity, bringing younger siblings may be acceptable.
- Volunteers have no claim to intellectual property created during their volunteer service at West Virginia Academy.

Community Involvement

Students tend to be more successful in school when educators, families, and community members work together to support learning.[39] Family and community involvement have been linked to improved student achievement, higher attendance rates, better social skills, and higher rates of postsecondary education.[40] This is true of students at all ages and from all backgrounds, regardless of family income level, ethnicticity, or cultural heritage.[41]

As described in the Community Involvement section above, we will be holding four culminating events at the end of each of our terms that will be open to anyone in the community. We will also open our school to other events throughout the year, namely: graduations, Veteran's Day assembly, musical concerts, drama productions, and athletic competitions.

---

[39] Ferguson, C. (2008). The school-family connection: Looking at the larger picture. Austin, TX: Southwest Educational Development Laboratory. http://www.sedl.org/connections/resources/ sfclitrev.pdf

[40] Harvard Family Research Project. (2007). Family involvement in elementary school children's education. Family Involvement Makes a Difference, 1(2), 1–12. Retrieved September 15, 2008, from www.hfrp.org/content/ download/1182/48686/file/elementary.pdf

[41] Bouffard, S. M., & Stephen, N. (2007). Promoting family involvement. Principal's Research Review, 2(6), 1–8.

Experiential Learning

The concept of experiential learning is “learning by doing.”[42] At West Virginia Academy we have dedicated one day out of the week for experiential learning, our Experience Days. These days will be filled with hands-on projects and activities. At each grade level students will be going on fieldtrips in the community that enhance their classroom learning. At the primary school, grades will attend two field trips per year; at the secondary school, they will be participating in one per year. As a WVA Amabassador Team, students will participate in one team field trip pertaining to their Roman Virtue.

Below is a list of field trip options that correspond to their curriculum per grade:

Grade Level	Community Experience
Kindergarten	JW Ruby Research Farm Field Trip or Guest Speaker: Fire, Police, Doctor, Nurse, Dentist, etc
1st	WVU Planetarium West Virginia Botanical Gardens
2nd	Spark! Imagination and Science Center Fort Necessity Prickett's Fort
3rd	West Virginia University Art Museum Pittsburgh Zoo
4th	Pittsburgh Airport Weather Station Friendship Hill National Historical Site
5th	Museum of Geology and Natural History Gettysburg National Park
6th	National Museum of Health and Medicine in DC
7th	Laurel Caverns
8th	MeadowCroft Rockshelter and Historic Village
9th	Tour Federal Reserve at Washington DC

[42] Experiential learning. (2021) Retrieved 08/12/2021 from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Experiential_learning

Ambassador Team Field Trips	
Inocentia	Tour of West Virginia Independent Hall; Good Zoo
Justicia	George Washington Headquarters Allegany Museum; Paw Paw Tunnel in Cumberland, MD
Constantia	Adventure WV near Morgantown, WV
Salubritas	WVU sporting event

Service Learning Projects

Our scholars will also have multiple opportunities to serve in our surrounding community through the WVA Ambassador program as well as the IB MYP. Each team will need to participate in one service project as it pertains to their virtue. The students in the Innocentia team will volunteer their time at a local senior care center or hospital; students in the Justicia team will pick a certain government issue and write to the appropriate government official regarding the matter; the Constantia team will help clean up various trails either at the Core Arboretum or West Virginia Botanic Garden; and the Salubritas team will volunteer with the food pantry.

The Ambassador program pairs nicely with the Community Service and Action (CSA) component required by the IB MYP. Students are to asked to complete an individual, school-based, or community related activity which satisfies elements of the Service and Action outcomes. These outcomes are: (1) increase awareness of your own strengths and areas for growth; (2) provides a new challenge for you to develop new skills; (3) requires perseverance and commitment; (4) requires you to work collaboratively with others; (5) consider the ethical implications of your actions; (6) discuss, evaluate and plan student-initiated activities; (7) develop international-mindedness through global engagement, multi-lingualism and intercultural understanding.

After School Partnerships

Our Afterschool Program provides for collaboration with businesses/service providers to bring in various programs that will enhance our afterschool offerings. We will reach out to community members and offer our classrooms, gym, and outdoor space for their services. These activities would be paid for by the parents of the students who use the services. For example, music majors could come and teach their instrument to a group of students for a nominal fee; or a yoga/dance instructor could use our gym to conduct classes. These activities would be overseen by our Afterschool coordinator to ensure they are in compliance with WVA's policies and procedures as outlined.

Special Populations and At-Risk Students

At Risk Population Strategies

West Virginia Academy will use the Direct Instruction (DI) method to teach all foundational subjects. It is a method of instruction that consistently shows strong positive effects with children of all ability levels and ages as well as with different subject matters.[43] Along with this specific instruction we also have several unique programs that will benefit specific groups of students that may be overlooked in the current public school system.

First, our unique calendar will greatly benefit at risk and historically underserved students. Research suggests that "[s]tudents may lose knowledge and skills achieved in the school year during the summer break, with losses greatest for students from low-income families."[44] Our balanced calendar approach reduces summer learning loss, specifically helping the West Virginia student at-risk population. Another study identified a significant difference between year-round education compared to traditional education when using proficiency and growth as a measure of success. This study stated "more awareness is needed to the potential positive impact of calendar reform, particularly among low socioeconomic status students, reducing the achievement gap that has been evident throughout academic history."[45]

Next our instructional methodology in the primary grades is Direct Instruction and several research studies across the past fifty years have articulated the benefits of this methodology, particularly for historically underserved student populations. The most recent article we can find, titled *The Value of Direct Instruction*, was published just in May of 2020 in the Journal of Education and Development, Volume 4 Number 2 page 10. The study states that "[s]tudents of color and low-income students are at a much higher risk of dropping out of school than more privileged students. Dropping out of school can lead to severe social issues -- students who drop out of school are much more likely to end up incarcerated and to remain unemployed for long periods of time. However, strong empirical research indicates that certain teaching methods are highly beneficial for the academic achievement of at-risk students in addition to being beneficial for the achievement of all students in general. These teaching methods are based around direct, teacher-centered instruction. In contrast, teaching methods based around minimally-guided instruction tend to be ineffective (or even detrimental) for at-risk students. This text outlines the benefits of direct instruction and the potential risks of minimally-guided instruction, along with specific steps for implementing effective teaching strategies."

More specifically, Direct Instruction has been found to help students with and without disabilities when taught in an inclusive setting. An article published this year in the Journal of the American

---

[43] Hattie, John (2009) "Visible learning: A synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement." Published by Rutledge.
[44] See Examining the effectiveness of year-round school calendars on improving educational attainment outcomes within the context of advancement of equity.
[45] Skeeter, J.D. (2019) *The Effects of Year-Round Education on Middle School Student Achievement in Math: A Program Treatment within the Equity Project Charter School.* St. John Fisher College.

Academy of Special Education Professionals, states, "[r]esearchers show that explicit instruction is effective in teaching students with disabilities mathematics."[46] Another article in the middle school setting that considered the impact of five different teaching strategies on every learner in the classroom, including English Learners and students with learning disabilities, found explicit instruction to "enhance the accessibility of course content."[47] Our intention is to deliver language courses in the middle school years using the direct instruction method.

In the secondary levels, our methodology changes to primarily follow the International Baccalaureate approach. This program's methods, too, have been found to help at risk students, including those of low-income and minority students. Based on a study done by Melissa Gordon and her associates in 2015, "[their] findings indicate that Diploma Programme (DP) students from Title I schools, including low-income and minority students, enroll in college at much higher rates than national averages. Moreover, DP students from Title I schools enroll in college at the same rate as DP students from US public schools generally. Additionally, results show that African American DP students from Title I schools enroll in college at higher rates than any other racial group, and this is even the case for African American DP students from low-income families."

Another way we are supporting students who are at risk of disengaging from school, those who have disabilities, and English Learners, is through our academic extended courses offered after school as well as in concentrated blocks during the mid-term breaks. Students that are not up to grade level will be encouraged to attend these classes. Those that qualify for free or reduced lunches will also qualify for free or reduced admission to these additional learning opportunities. During the mid-term breaks, bussing will continue to be available for these students to get them to a safe environment with options for breakfast, lunch and snacks, which will address food insecurity in a way that current public schools are not, and provide the academic help needed to get these at risk students up to grade level in every class.

An finally, at-risk students often experience low-academic performance, lack of interest in academics, and feeling disconnected to the school culture. West Virginia Academy dress code helps foster unity despite differences in socioeconomic status. At-risk learners will benefit from remediation courses between terms so they can keep up with rigorous academic material. These students will also receive food and other extracurricular opportunities during our term breaks. Helping at-risk students academically and socially will give this population of students confidence to participate in their courses throughout the term. The West Virginia Academy Ambassador program will also address the disconnect at-risk students feel to their school community. Group projects, experiences, and practices will help facilitate comradery and friendships among students.

---

[46] Hinton, V., Gibbs, A., Franklin, T (2020) *The Effects of CRA/CSA Explicit Instruction for Students with and without Disabilities Taught in an Inclusive Setting*. Journal of American Academy of Special Education Professionals, p.46-57. Win 2020.

[47] Katrina A. Hovey, Rhonda D. Miller, Elisheba W. Kiru, Lydia Gerzel-Short, Yan Wei & Jerae Kelly (2019) What's a middle school teacher to do? Five evidence-based practices to support English learners and students with learning disabilities, Preventing School Failure: Alternative Education for Children and Youth, 63:3, 220-226,

The Level System

The concept of setting tracks for students has been deeply embedded in the public school system for decades and, while the concept of levels may sound similar to tracks, the two ideas are critically different. At West Virginia Academy, our position is that all students, whether college bound or not, will need a similar skill set in order to be successful in an increasingly global and technology-driven economy, particularly in the foundational topics of math, reading, and writing. Our approach is to place students at their level to enhance their educational experience, but to not segregate students into altogether different tracks.

Public schools have had college-prep tracks and rudimentary tracks for many years. As early as elementary school students are funneled into talented and gifted (TAG) programs.[48] By middle school students are divided into different levels of math that follow entirely different paths in later years and offer honors and non-honors classes in several other topics. By high school, students can have entirely different educational experiences within the walls of the same public school and the differences are largely based on the track they are on. In some instances students choose these tracks, while in others these decisions are made by school administrators or by using rubrics based on student performance in prior years.

The difference in the track experience is not just limited to curriculum design and topic. The quality of the instructors is often vastly inferior in the non-college tracks. School administrators function in an environment where they must manage teachers, but there is a severely diminished incentive structure built into public school teacher contracts and the law for teacher salaries. Left with few incentives to reward high performing teachers or correct teachers who are under-performing, the track system is commonly used as a carrot and a stick for public teachers. High performing teachers are typically assigned to the "college-readiness" track students and will often teach the honors and AP classes while the low performing teachers are relegated to the rudimentary tracks.[49] School administrators apply this method to place the best teachers with the "best" students. So the discrepancy in the educational experience between the two tracks often runs deeper than just the curriculum being taught.

All students are unique individuals who learn and retain information at different rates and this variance applies to different topics and even individual concepts within a topic. We believe the traditional track system is harmful to students in public schools based on current and anticipated future market conditions. This harm is particularly pronounced with students who are "late bloomers" in their educational development or students who have a period of struggle due to factors outside the classroom, which are often beyond their control. Such temporary challenges can set a child on a different track that might otherwise be appropriate for the child overall, diminishing their future opportunities. Our plan is to implement a robust leveling system to ensure that students are being taught on their level, but not on a different track that segregates

---

[48] Brunello G (2004) Stratified or comprehensive? Some economic considerations on the design of secondary education. CESifo DICE Rep 4:7–10.

[49] Samuel Lucas, Tracking Inequality: Stratification and Mobility in American High Schools (New York: Teachers College Press, 1999).

them into the "haves and have-nots."[50] This approach is optimal both for gifted students as well as students who struggle with a particular topic.

We will also use a modified term schedule with two or three week breaks every nine weeks so that students who learn at slower rates in a given topic, or even just at a particular time, can be given the additional support they need to meet standards of excellence within their level throughout the year. This approach to permitting course corrections along the way is vastly superior to a system that allows students to get further and further behind throughout the year and then attempts to compensate with summer courses for students after they have already failed a topic. Additionally, because charter schools are not impeded by the archaic incentive structures and low pay that hinder public schools, students at all levels should be taught by motivated and high quality teachers. Students who are high-achievers in a particular topic will be given the flexibility to progress more quickly by enrolling in accelerated courses. However, the topics will remain constant between accelerated and standard courses as all courses are designed so that each student arrives at the level of college readiness in core topics prior to graduation culminating in potential for higher educational credit. A student that is learning at a faster pace will be able to complete these requirements sooner and then can continue their education with concurrent enrollment college courses or branch out into related AP courses. Additionally, the IB programs during the junior and senior years provide testing with substantial opportunities for earning college credit that is accepted at Universities throughout the world. This approach matches the educational experience to the individual learner rather than the other way around.

At West Virginia Academy, our goal will be for every student to be college-ready prior to graduation with competence in all core topics so that each student has the freedom to choose their own path forward post graduation. We believe these choices belong to students and their families rather than school administrators and that our role as educators is primarily to support students to attain knowledge that will enable them to succeed in an increasingly global economy.

Special Education

Partnership with Parents

A strong correlation has been found between parental involvement and a child's positive social, emotional, and academic growth.[51] Teachers play a significant role in the extent to which parents can become involved in their child's education. Studies have shown that teachers who reach out to parents and encourage participation are more likely to motivate parents to become

[50] Carol Corbett Burris, Jay P. Heubert, and Henry M. Levin, "Math Acceleration for All," Educational Leadership, February 2004, pp. 68-71
[51] Boethel, M. (2003). Diversity: Schools, families, and community connections. Annual Synthesis. Austin, TX: National Center for Family and Community Connections with Schools.

more involved.[52] This collaboration and communication between the teacher and parents have shown to be a critical factor for predicting successful student outcomes.[53] Parents of children with disabilities face unique challenges, some feel helpless and overwhelmed when trying to assist in their child's education.[54] Teachers are faced with the hard task of learning how to support, encourage, and empower parents as well as the students they work with. At West Virginia Academy we will support the teachers and provide routines where they can easily communicate with parents, providing the feedback and encouragement that is necessary for collaboration.

Daily communication between home and school is also a vital component of the collaboration between our staff and the families we serve. All parents will receive electronic newsletters from the school director monthly. We encourage our teachers to create weekly "Home Support Newsletters." Each student will also receive a Daily Learning Planner and a docket to keep them organized for school. Teachers can write messages and utilize the Daily Learning Planner for individualized communication to the parents/caregivers of the student. The docket is for all loose papers, homework assignments, newsletters, announcements, etc to be safely taken home. We will also encourage all our teacher to keep a Communication Log of correspondences with the families of their students. Our goals is to make more positive observations and feedback than negative ones. Consistent written communication between home and school is important for two reasons: 1) some people communicate thoughts, feelings and ideas more effectively and clearly in written form and 2) it provides a permanent product that can aid in record keeping. A communication log can be vital in keeping records and providing open communication between families and their teachers.

Partnerships with parents can also help with the critical decision-making process to ensure interventions and IEP plans meet the needs of the whole child. Garrick-Duhaney (2000) found that "the likelihood that students will be appropriately placed in their least restrictive environment increases when parents have a say in the decision-making process."[55] West Virginia Academy will make every effort to make sure parents/caregivers are invited and can attend the IEP meetings as well as other corresponding meetings.

Child Find Strategies

As a local education agency, we understand that it is our responsibility to actively search for "individuals with disabilities ages birth through twenty-one, gifted individuals from first through eighth grades, and exceptional gifted in grades nine through twelve, including students with disabilities who are homeless or are wards of the state and students with disabilities attending

---

[52] Green, C. L, Walker, K. V., Hoover-Dempsey, K. V., & Sandler, H. M. (2007). Parents' motivation for involvement in children's education: An empirical test of a theoretical model of parent involvement. Jounal of Educational Psychology, 99, 531–544.
[53] McCoach, D. B., Goldstein, J., Behuniak, P., Reis, S. M., Black, A. C., Sullivan, E. E., & Rambo, K. (2010). Examining the unexpected: Outlier analysis of factors affecting student achievement. Journal of Advanced Academics, 21(3), 426–468
[54] Huang, Y., Kellett, U. M., & St. John, W. (2010). Cerebral palsy: Experiences of mothers after learning their child's diagnosis. Journal of Advanced Nursing, 66(6), 1213–1221.
[55] Garrick Duhaney, L. M., & Salend, S. J. (2000). Parental Perceptions of Inclusive Educational Placements. *Remedial and Special Education*, *21*(2), 121–128.

private schools, regardless of the severity of their disability, who are in need of special education and related services."[56] In compliance with this policy, we will actively connect with foster care agencies and homeless shelters that serve individuals with special needs in our PRA. We will present information about specific services that are available at our school and explain the enrollment process. When presenting to recruit for our school, we will include information regarding special education services and note that evaluations will be completed at no cost to parents.

Pre-Evaluation Process

The purpose of the pre-referral process is to provide at risk students an opportunity to continue their education with their peers. Kizer and Sahin (2020) found that if a teacher is effective in the pre-referral process, then there is "an increase students' learning, decrease their behavioural problems, encourage in-class participation, and prevent many students from being labelled."[57] They also found that "incorrect diagnosis may lead to such consequences as discrimination and being labelled." Therefore, at West Virginia Academy we will train our teachers and staff on the pre-referral process. Throughout the year our Student Services Manager and Curriculum Specialist will be available to give feedback and assistance to any teacher that reaches out for help. If the student is struggling behaviorally, the PBS School Leadership Team will also provide additional assistance for the teacher.

Pre-referrals can be brought to our attention in a number of ways: (1) during universal screenings, (2) a general education teacher or other faculty member at WVA shows initial concern for a student, (3) a referral from a doctor or other health provider, or (4) parents express concern for their child. All concerns will be taken into consideration.

As discussed in the previous section under Student Data, the purpose of universal screening is to identify, as soon as possible, potential conditions that may exist and to identify those students who may need intervention. Parental permission or notification is not required for a screening activity, unless some sort of standardized test is used. Examples of screening activities are testing hearing or vision, testing kindergarten and pre-kindergarten children for articulation or sound production, and checking sixth graders for scoliosis. Those students at WVA that fail a universal screening will be placed on our "Watch List" where they will be monitored by the Student Services Manger. The Student Services Manager will also consult with the teachers that instruct these students to see if they need to be placed in any Tier Two or Tier Three interventions within our RtI system.

If there is continued concern and a failure to progress under the RtI system, a pre-referral team will be assigned to look more into the student's background and assessment data to determine if there is a need that warrants more specific strategies that can be implemented. Once the pre-referal process has been in place for at least two terms, the team then decides if the new

[56] West Virginia Department of Education Policy 2419, 2.2a. Available at https://wvde.us/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Policy2419_2017.pdf
[57]Kizir, M., & Sahin, C.H. (2020) Elementary School Teachers' Experiences Regarding the Prereferral Process. European Journal of Special Education Research. 6(2). 110-129.

supports are a practical option for the student to continue to improve or does the student need a formal referral process for special education under the IDEA regulations.

If a formal referral process is needed, a multidisciplinary team (MDT)[58] will be created. This team will include: the student services manager, school nurse and counselor, general education teacher, parents of the student, and a specialist in the area of concern. The purpose of this team is to determine if the student has a disability that is preventing them from succeeding in class. Prior to any evaluation procedures, the MDT will ensure the parents/guardian of the student have given us written consent to evaluate their child. Our Special Education Coordinator will provide the parents with an outlined brochure of the evaluation procedures and the procedural safeguards under the law. The coordinator will explain the procedure and safeguards, in the parents native language, to ensure the parents understand the process. This initial evaluation will be conducted within 60 days of the receipt of parental consent.

During the evaluation, there are a number of assessments and evaluations that will be conducted by our trained staff to ensure the information received is accurate and interpreted correctly. The MDT will complete general evaluations, assessments, and observations for the student being evaluated. The student services manager special education coordinator will usually take the lead on gathering and conducting the various assessments needed in order to determine if the student qualifies for special services under IDEA. However, collaboration is key. Typically, multiple assessments will be completed, these include: a Clinical Diagnostic Assessment, developmental assessments, psychological assessment of cognitive level and adaptive function, interviews with parents and classroom teachers, analysis of formative and summative assessments, and analysis of the student school work. Gathering data from a variety of sources is critical in determining if there are more than one disability. It also ensures the evaluation gets the whole picture. Some disabilities can be masked or have similar symptoms, but different underlying problems. At WVA we will make sure that all areas under IDEA are assessed, which will reduce missed diagnoses. Special education services are based on correct diagnosis and research-based accommodation and modifications that give students with disabilities the best chance to achieve the highest academic outcomes.

Placement Process

If the MDT has completed their evaluation and determined that the student does qualify for special accommodations or services under IDEA, placement decisions will be considered. At West Virginia Academy, we feel strongly that all students can and should remain in the general education classroom, in a manner consistent with the IDEA policy. IDEA states that eligible students must be educated in the general education classroom to the maximum extent appropriate. Least Restrictive Environment decisions will be based on with whom the student is educated rather than where the student will be educated.

To the extent possible, we will keep all students within classrooms of similar aged peers. Within our leveling structure, there will be classes composed of students of different ages. Students

[58] The multidisciplinary team will also serve as a Student Assistance Team as referenced in WVDE Policy 2419.

that are found with disabilities will be placed in general education classrooms at their appropriate level within the foundational topics only. They will remain with their age groups in the general education classroom for science, social studies and other “specials” courses. Instructional aids will be provided as needed by the IEP accommodations. Parents/Guardians of the student will give written consents for the classes and schedule provided to their child. Considerations will be made if there is any harmful effects on the student or their peers due to their placement; or if the quality of services cannot be provided then exceptions will be made.

Annual Review Process

At West Virginia Academy we will evaluate each student’s IEP annually. If there is concern or potential changes to the IEP, written notice will be give to the parent/guardian. At each annual review the IEP team will determine the following: (1) whether the student’s annual goals have been achieved; (2) if revisions to the IEP need to be made due to any lack of expected progress toward the annual goals; (3) whether a reevaluation is necessary or to address the results of the reevaluation; and (4) any other anticipated needs for the student, including transitional services. For WVA students that have an IEP for giftedness, a reevaluation will be conducted during their eighth grade year to determine continued eligibility for exceptional student services. Re-evaluations will be conducted, with parental consent, on all students on their IEP’s triennial review.

Specialized Staff

Student Services Manager

As in accordance with the Every Child Succeed Act, the Student Services Manager will hold at least a bachelor’s degree. They will have certified as a special education teacher[59] or passed the state special education teacher licensing examination. and has not had any certification or licensure requirements waived. In order for this individual to have their annual contract reviewed, they will complete 12 hours of professional development in the special education field. The School Director will track documentation of such development including retaining the documentation. Annually the Student Services Manager will train our staff on the RtI process as well as provide an overview of IEPs and how to implement various accommodations within the classroom.

Special Education Coordinator

“Collaboration among educators is critical… It turns out that high-performing schools—similar to high-performing businesses— organize people to take advantage of each other’s knowledge and skills and create a set of common, coherent practices so that the whole is far greater than the sum of the parts.”[60] Our teachers will be grouped in building-level teams to collaborate, coordinate curriculum, organize field trips, plan the upcoming terms, etc. There will be a total of five (5) building-level teams: Nursery, K-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12. For each building-level team, one teacher will be assigned to be the Special Education Coordinator. This will be a teacher that has had special training focusing on teaching students with disabilities. The Special Education

[59] This includes the alternate route to certify in special education.
[60] Darling-Hammond, Linda. 2017. Empowered Educators. Jossey-Bass

Coordinator will make sure that all the teachers within their building-team have all the essential IEP information for their students. This teacher will be the first line of defense when other teachers within that team have questions relating to an IEP, a low achieving student, or the RtI system in general.

Student service needs

Level 1 Needs	WVA Programs/Services to Meet the Needs
Receiving varying levels of assistance from a special educator during general education core academic classes or elective classes;	Integrated Classes; Leveled classes within foundational core topics
Receiving small group instruction within special education classes;	Integrated Classes; Leveled foundational courses at the lowest level per grade will be smaller classes
Taking the regular assessments under standard conditions or with accommodations;	Regular assessments will be taken in general education classrooms with necessary accommodations
Participating in physical education classes independently;	Integrated Classes; All students will participate in physical education classes
Participating in co-curricular or extracurricular activities independently;	All students will participate in the Ambassador program; Before and after school options are open to all students
Using assistive technology to access WV CCRS;	Assisted technology will be provided in the general education classroom
Working toward a standard diploma;	All students will have the option to graduate in the diploma program or receive a career-related certificate
Participating in transition activities leading to a vocational completer certificate, postsecondary education, military service or employment.	Transitions services will be provided through in conjunction with Student Services Manager and the School Counselor.

Level 2 Needs	WVA Programs/Services to Meet the Needs
A markedly modified curriculum with a focus on basic or functional academics and life skills;	Within building teams, one teacher will provide basic or functional academic and life skills in each of the foudational subjects
Close adult supervision in structured opportunities when participating in general education classes, co-curricular and/or extracurricular activities;	Teachers will be aware and monitor participation in general education classroom; at team events there will be a team advisor that will closely monitor students who fall under this category; teachers/staff that run the afterschool and before school programs will also be aware of and monitor closely any students that qualify for this accommodation
Close adult supervision to maintain the safety of the student or others;	Same as above
Close adult instruction, assistance and/or supervision with the use of assistive technology, medical equipment, medical procedures, travel training or mobility;	An aide will be assigned to any student needing assistance throughout the day on assistive technology, medical equipment, or general mobility
A wide array and/or intensity of related services;	Therapy services will be contracted through an independent agency, these providers will have a day when they can come and utilize our therapy room for the students that need their services. This is scheduled as per the needs of our students
A large number of repetitive trials or opportunities to demonstrate skills with a concomitant need for progress monitoring and record keeping on a daily basis;	Teachers will be trained on necessary accommodations; for students who need repetitive trials these will be provided in the general education classroom
Transition activities that focus on vocational classes, supported employment or community-based work exploration;	Transitional services will be provided through the Special Services Manager and the School Counselor; Students will have community-based work and vocational classes through the career-related program
Instruction until the age of twenty-one;	All students will be allowed to continue with the CP or DP program through the age of 21
and/or Transition services that include coordination and linkage with the WV Division of Rehabilitation Services and community providers	Transitional services will be provided through the Special Services Manager and the School Counselor; Students will have community-based work and vocational classes through the career-related program

Level 3 Needs	WVA Programs/Services to Meet the Needs
Intense adult supervision across settings because the student poses a danger to him/herself and/or to others;	One aid will be hired to accompany students with this level of care
Intensive instruction, services, safety assistance and supervision to learn and maintain skills and to increase independence in activities of daily living;	Therapy services will be contracted through an independent agency, these providers will have a day when they can come and utilize our therapy room for the students that need their services. This is scheduled as per the needs of our students
Transition services that include coordination and linkages with the Office of Behavioral Health Services for Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities, (I/DD) Waiver Program, Division of Rehabilitation Services and adult community services and community use.	The student services manager will connect to each of these agencies to help with the transition for student with this level of care.

Discipline

IDEA 2004 provides added procedures and safeguards regarding discipline for a student with a disability. We intend to consider each of these circumstances on a case-by-case basis. Each decision will be made to ensure a safe and secure environment that is conducive to learning for all our students at West Virginia Academy.

Gifted Students

Underrepresentation of racially, ethnically, and linguistically different; economically disadvantaged; and differently abled children with high potential is an ongoing problem within gifted education programs.[61] Many formal programs for gifted students start at the end of second or third grade, and for some children this is too late. For young children from racially, ethnically, and/or linguistically different families and for those from economically disadvantaged circumstances, the child's innate potential may not have been nurtured. Starting early by recognizing and nurturing children's strengths in kindergarten and continuing this process through third grade is essential to the development of each child's potential abilities.

[61] Ford, D.Y., M.R. Coleman & J.L. Davis. 2014. Racially, ethnically, and linguistically different gifted and talented students. Gifted Child Today 37: 133–134.

Rather than any single gifted program, West Virginia Academy will offer a continuum of programming services for gifted learners. Gifted education programming services will be an integral part of the general education school day through flexible groupings of students, differentiated instruction and curriculum. An RtI model that is geared toward gifted and talented students will be utilized. This model will use a problem-solving approach and incorporate (a) curriculum and instructional practices, (b) monitoring of student progress, (c) collaboration, and/or (d) tiered levels of services.[62]

Levels of Services (LoS) Approach

The Levels of Services Approach (LoS) has been found to meet the needs of more students, beginning with targeting all students based on strengths and interest and with opportunities for advanced learners based on interest and skill.

Level I: Services Provided to All Students

Within our programs, curriculum, and methodology we provide students with foundational skills and tools that will help all students discover and build their personal strengths and talents. We provide character development, creative opportunities, fine arts enrichment, flexible grouping and cross-grade level grouping, project and problem-based learning and mid-term/after school enrichment opportunities. All of these services will help and support the scholars at West Virginia Academy equally.

Level II: Services Needed by Many Students

Level two services are opportunities for a more targeted group of students to engage in activities through which they can investigate their interests and verify areas in which they may demonstrate additional strength. These services include academic competitions, athletic and intramural sporting programs, cluster grouping, entrepreneurship opportunities, advanced foreign language study, internships and mentorships, school plays and talent shows, STEM opportunities on Fridays, and virtual learning experiences.

Level III: Services Needed by Some Students

This level of services are provided to a smaller group of students who need to be engaged on a more rigorous and complex level of learning in documented areas of strength and/or sustained interest. These services include advanced material, curriculum compacting, and subject-level acceleration.

Monitoring

Recognizing an individual's strengths is the first step. Once we do that, we can respond by providing advanced learning opportunities tailored to their needs. By looking for strengths in our students, we reframe our view of them, moving our understanding of them from at risk to at potential. Too often in our schools, outstanding potential of students is not tapped and remains hidden, leading to disengagement of learning and, over time, the loss of talent. All our educators in kindergarten through third grade will use the Teacher's Observation of Potential in Students

[62] Colorado Department of Education (CDE). (2008). Response to Intervention (RtI): A practitioner's guide to implementation. Retrieved from http://cde.state.co.us/sites/default/files/documents/rti/downloads/pdf/rtiguide.pdf

(TOPS) forms. The TOPS is a classroom observational tool to guide teachers as they observe their children in multiple settings over time and recognize outstanding potential. The TOPS begins with a whole-class observation, ensuring that all children are being observed systematically, and leads to individual observations of children as the need becomes apparent. As teachers utilize the TOPS, their view of children refocuses from “at-risk” to “at-potential” and they further modify the curriculum and instruction to respond to needs.