

A. Purpose

1. To outline procedures and approval processes for trial implementation of new courses (“Pilot Courses”) in Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS).
2. To encourage staff members within FCPS to propose new courses.

B. Background

1. Pursuant to [Board Policy 500](#), *Approval of Curriculum and Instructional Materials*, the Superintendent is authorized by the Board of Education of Frederick County (Board) to establish a regulation(s) governing the approval of curricula and creation of courses, including pilot courses.
2. Pilot courses are implemented on a trial basis, so that staff can develop the essential curriculum, finalize textbook and material selection, determine professional learning needs, and review and evaluate the results before courses are approved for systemic implementation.
3. To align to state requirements, encourage innovation, remain current with relevant and engaging coursework, and respond to student interest, proposals for pilot courses may be initiated by any professional staff members in FCPS.

C. Definitions

1. “Course” is defined to mean an instructional experience defined for a specified time (i.e., term, semester, year) and content area that includes the essential curriculum, an approved text resource (if required), recommended hours/credits, and expected outcomes. Although “course” is primarily used as a term referring to secondary school offerings, this definition is also applicable to grade level content offered in elementary schools (*e.g.*, Grade 4 math, Grade 3 ELA, Grade 2 art, etc.).
2. “Essential Curriculum” is defined as the written curriculum prepared by FCPS staff, reviewed by the Curriculum and Instructional Committee, and approved by the Board.
3. “Pilot Courses” is defined as courses intended for trial implementation at a limited number of schools so that staff can review and evaluate the results, develop the essential curriculum, determine staff development needs, and finalize textbook and material selection.
4. “Textbook” is defined to mean a book or curricular program (print or digital) that serves as the primary or supplemental resource for students in a course.

D. Procedures

1. New courses can be approved for implementation without a pilot period, in order to address Board-approved initiatives or state mandates. In such cases, the proposed essential curriculum must accompany the request for course approval. See [FCPS Regulation 500-01](#), *Curriculum, Courses, and Instructional Resources*.
2. External curricula such as Advanced Placement (AP), Project Lead the Way (PLTW), and International Baccalaureate (IB) do not require pilot implementation, because the course objectives are established by the respective organizations to appropriately prepare enrolled students for the accompanying examinations. These new courses and their stated objectives still require Board approval. See [FCPS Regulation 500-01](#), *Curriculum, Courses, and Instructional Resources*.
3. Proposals for pilot courses may be initiated by any certificated instructional staff members in FCPS.
4. Prior to consideration by the Board's Curriculum and Instruction Committee, proposals must have concept and procedural approval of the:
 - a. Appropriate curriculum specialist;
 - b. Curriculum Director; and
 - c. Principal of any school intended as a pilot site.
5. Proposals for new courses and pilots shall be submitted on an annual basis, in accordance with the timelines established by the Board's Curriculum and Instruction Committee. The Curriculum and Instruction Committee will forward pilot courses for approval by the Board.
6. Proposals must be clearly defined in accordance with the Pilot Program Proposal format. See [Pilot Program Proposal Form](#).
7. Textbooks used in a pilot course must be approved by the Board in accordance with [FCPS Regulation 500-04](#), *Textbook Review, Selection and Approval*.
8. Pilot implementation of new courses is generally limited to two (2) school years following the date of initial approval by the Board. If additional time is needed, an extension must be granted by the Board.
9. During the period of pilot status, new courses are listed separately in the middle and/or high school course offering guides, with notation of the school or schools offering the pilot course, or are advertised to students through the individual school or schools identified for the pilot course.
10. Following completion of the pilot period, a written evaluation of the pilot shall be completed and submitted for consideration by the Board's Curriculum and Instruction Committee, prior to approval by the full Board.

11. The evaluation shall include student enrollment and performance information from the pilot period, student feedback, and teacher feedback, as well as a recommendation for the future status of the course.
12. Recommendations to change a course from pilot status to a regular course (used systemically) will be presented to the Curriculum and Instruction Committee prior to approval by the full Board (*see [FCPS Regulation 500-01](#), Curriculum, Courses, and Instructional Resources*). The proposed essential curriculum must accompany any recommendation to change the status of a course.
13. Instructional materials used in pilot courses are subject to reconsideration as outlined in [FCPS Regulation 500-39](#), *Reconsideration of Instructional Materials Already in Use*.

E. Related Information

1. **Board Policy**
 - a. [Policy 500](#), *Approval of Curriculum and Instructional Materials*
2. **FCPS Regulations**
 - a. [Regulation 500-01](#), *Curriculum, Courses, and Instructional Resources* (formerly 500-35)
 - b. [Regulation 500-04](#), *Textbook Review, Selection, and Approval* (formerly 500-38)
 - c. [Regulation 500-39](#), *Reconsideration of Instructional Materials Already in Use*
3. **FCPS Resources**
 - a. [Board of Education Curriculum & Instruction Committee Website](#)
 - b. [Pilot Program Proposal Form](#)

F. Regulation History (Maintained by Legal Services)

<i>Responsible Office</i>	Curriculum, Instruction & Innovation
Adoption Dates	11/28/24
Review Dates	
Revision Dates	03/05/08; 08/30/24