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Descriptor Term:
CITIZENSHIP AND CHARACTER EDUCATION

Descriptor Code:
3.4750

Legal References: 36 U.S.C. 106(d); G.S. 115C-12(33), -47(29a), -81(g), (h), (h1)

Cross References:

The board encourages all students to develop an understanding of citizenship. Learning about an individual's rights and responsibilities to himself/herself and to the community is one of the educational goals of the board. The principal of each school, with appropriate input from staff, students and the community, shall ensure the incorporation of citizenship in the school improvement plan.

Each school improvement plan shall describe how character education shall be incorporated into the curriculum. In addition, the plan shall identify how the citizenship curriculum will be used to reinforce the student behavior management plan. The school improvement plan shall address the following traits: courage, good judgment, integrity, civility, kindness, perseverance, respect, responsibility, and self-discipline. Schools are encouraged to include the following responsibilities: respect for school personnel, responsibility for school safety, service to others, and good citizenship.

The citizenship curriculum must require that:

1. the United States and North Carolina flags be displayed in each classroom, when available;
2. recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance be scheduled on a daily basis;
3. appropriate instruction be provided on the meaning and historical origins of the North Carolina and United States flags and the Pledge of Allegiance;
4. Constitution and Citizenship Day be observed on September 17 to commemorate the signing of the United States Constitution or be observed the preceding or following week if students are not in school on September 17; and
5. appropriate instruction and/or recognition be provided concerning the significance of Memorial Day.

The plan also may include appropriate instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, guidelines for the use and display of the North Carolina and United States flags, and opportunities for the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance. Any plan providing for the display of flags must provide that students shall not be compelled to stand or salute the flag. Any plan providing for the opportunity to recite the Pledge of Allegiance must ensure that no student shall be compelled to recite the Pledge of Allegiance or otherwise feel coerced to participate in the Pledge.

Furthermore, the plan may include, for middle school and high school students, a community volunteer service program in order to demonstrate the purpose and effectiveness of volunteer contributions to the community. The plan shall not infringe on the constitutional rights of students by compelling or coercing a student to hold a particular viewpoint on volunteerism.