I. The Retirement Opportunity Program (ROP) provides additional income to all retirees who elect to participate in the retirement program per the provisions of this regulation. This program was developed as a bridge to Social Security benefits eligibility. It also provides the School Division with a pool of qualified and trained individuals with knowledge and expertise to perform a variety of services.

II. Employees who retire under the Virginia Retirement System (VRS) shall be eligible to participate in the ROP provided that, at the time of retirement, the following eligibility criteria have been met:

A. Employee is full-time.

B. Employee has completed at least ten (10) years of full-time employment with Prince William County Public Schools (PWCS) including seven (7) consecutive years of full-time employment completed immediately preceding retirement.

C. Employee is between the ages of 55 and the age when he/she is eligible to receive full Social Security Benefits.

D. Employee has at least 17 years of VRS service or full-time service from an accredited educational institution inclusive of the ten (10) years of full-time employment with PWCS.

E. Employees’ ROP employment only begins on July 1 of any fiscal year. Employees retiring at any other date during the year will not be able to begin ROP until the July 1 following their retirement and will lose one year of ROP eligibility.

F. Employee is not eligible for disability retirement.

G. Employee has received satisfactory performance reviews for each of the three years prior to the scheduled retirement date.

When possible, an employee should provide six (6) months notice of retirement to the employee’s administrator and to the Department of Human Resources.
III. Employees eligible to participate in the ROP must complete the Retirement Opportunity Program application. The completed application shall be submitted to the Director of Benefits & Retirement Services for approval at least 30 days prior to the employee’s retirement effective date.

IV. Participation in the ROP shall begin only after there has been a complete severance of employment for at least 30 days. The 30-day break-in-service must coincide with the contract period that active employees in the same or similar positions are working. For example, a 195-day contracted teacher who retires July 1, would not complete the 30-day break-in-service requirement until October 1, which is 30 days after the normal contract period begins.

V. A ROP supervisor shall be a “Administrator/Supervisor” in a position of higher authority than the ROP participant formerly held, i.e., teachers may have an assistant principal, principal, or central office supervisor as a supervisor. An assistant principal, principal, and director shall have an associate; a supervisor may have a director; and an associate shall have the Superintendent as their supervisor. Non-exempt (classified) participants shall have a supervisor in a management position higher than the position to which they were most recently employed.

Once approved to participate in the ROP, the retiree must comply with the following work assignment guidelines each year the retiree participates in the program:

A. Enter into a contractual obligation to work the equivalent of 20 days or 10 percent of the last annual work or contract period completed by the participant, whichever is greater.

B. Submit a Work Assignment Request to the Director of Benefits & Retirement Services prior to the beginning of each fiscal year for approval by the Superintendent or designee.

C. Complete the work assignment sometime during the 12-month period commencing July 1 and ending June 30. ROP participants shall work the number of hours for each day of ROP as required for the position to which they are assigned, and worked prior to retirement.

D. The work assignment shall be compatible with the retiree's training, experience, and qualifications. ROP participants may be required to participate in inservice/professional development activities at the direction of the administrator/supervisors. The purpose of such participation is to be “up-to-date” on Divisionwide initiatives and endeavors and to better fulfill instructional responsibilities in deploying ROP personnel. Said participation will count as a ROP day or portion thereof.
E. The supervisor and retiree shall mutually agree upon a work assignment and submit the work assignment request for approval to a Director, Principal, or Level Associate Superintendent. If the exigencies of the site or School Division require a greater need than the assignment to which the ROP participant is presently working, it shall be the prerogative of the Director, Principal, or Level Associate to reassign a ROP participant to an alternative assignment and/or location.

F. ROP participants shall complete a Temp/Sub/ROP time card and/or utilize as requested in the appropriate time and leave system. Time worked shall be entered on a daily basis by the ROP participant at the end of each day worked. The ROP participant shall be responsible for recording/entering their ROP time worked.

G. After completion of the work assignment but not later than 15 days from the close of the fiscal year (June 30), the supervisor shall submit to the Director of Benefit & Retirement Services a Work Assignment Completion/Evaluation Form for each participant completing the ROP work assignment under his/her supervision. The Work Assignment Completion /Evaluation shall be signed by both the ROP participant and supervisor.

H. Members of the ROP pool of available personnel are to be placed in positions that are most commensurate with their training, certifications, and experience and to the greatest benefit of the School Division. ROP participants are required to complete at least seventy-five percent of their assignments in positions that are in line with their training. As such, administrators/supervisors are discouraged from using ROP personnel for tasks and/or jobs that are not related to their training, certifications, and experience.

I. There are several positions that receive assignments directly from their governing departments. Principals and assistant principals receive assignments directly from the Associate Superintendents, special education instructional directly from the Office of Special Education, custodians from the Office of Custodial Services, school nurses from the Office of Health Services, food services from the Office of School Food and Nutrition Services and librarians from the Office of Library Media Programs and Research and EL teachers and personnel from the Office of English Learner Programs and Services.

J. At the discretion of the Division, ROP participants, after completion of ROP work assignments, may work in substitute or temporary positions and be compensated at the standard rates for the positions.

The following are examples of possible ROP work assignments:

2. Assist directors, principals, supervisors, and teachers in evaluating textbooks.

3. Assist with in-service education and staff development programs.

4. Assist in the evaluation of existing instructional programs.

5. Assist principals, directors, and supervisors in compiling annual reports.

6. Assist with instructional, administrative, clerical, etc. duties during peak work periods.

7. Assist with on-going education programs throughout the year.

8. Assist the classroom teacher and other professional staff.

9. Work directly with students including tutoring, individualized instruction, implementation of IEP's, etc.

10. Mentoring staff.

K. A ROP participant must complete their ROP Assignment prior to working in any additional capacity during the school day for the School Division. ROP participants assisting in activities after school hours (e.g., coach and extracurricular assignments), may be approved by the Director of Benefits and Retirement Services prior to the incumbent completing their regular ROP assignment. Work performed during the school day including substituting and temporary assignments, shall not be permitted until after the ROP participant (1) has completed the ROP work assignment, or (2) the retiree elects not to participate in the ROP. Retirees participating in the ROP are not eligible for regular benefitted full or part-time employment through PWCS.

VI. The ROP participant shall work 20 days or 10 percent of the last annual work or contract period that was completed by the participant, whichever is greater, per fiscal year. In the event of death, the estate of the participant shall be paid for days the participant actually worked but was not compensated, prorated accordingly.

VII. Under no circumstances is payment available for more than seven (7) years or once the individual is eligible to receive full Social Security benefits, whichever comes first, or for days not worked.

VIII. The compensation for each retiree participating in the program shall be the lesser of
19 percent of the participant’s annual contracted salary that was in effect the last work or contract year completed by the participant or amount the individual would be entitled to receive if eligible for social security benefits.

A. The annual compensation shall be prorated and paid equally over the total number of eligible pay periods in the fiscal year.

B. The ROP participant shall be paid semi-monthly on the 15th and last day of each month. If the pay date falls on a holiday or weekend, the ROP participant shall be paid on the last work day preceding the weekend or holiday.

C. Legally required deductions shall be taken from the paycheck in accordance with current laws.

D. The ROP participant shall not receive any paid benefits, participants will be allowed participation in the supplemental retirement plan.

IX. A participant shall cease to be eligible for the ROP when any one of the following conditions exists:

A. The participant fails to perform the work assignment or is no longer physically or mentally capable of performing the work.

B. The participant has completed the fiscal year in which he/she reaches the age of eligibility to receive full Social Security benefits.

C. The participant has completed seven (7) years of service under the ROP.

D. The participant is judged by his/her administrator/supervisor(s) to be “ineffective” for two consecutive years.

E. In the event that the administrator/supervisor(s) recommends that the participant be deemed ineligible for further participation in the ROP, written notice of said recommendation and the reasons for that recommendation shall be provided to the participant. The participant shall also be provided with an opportunity for a meeting with the Director of Benefits & Retirement Services, or other designee of the Associate Superintendent for Human Resources, to discuss the reasons for the recommendation and to present evidence why the participant should or should not be deemed ineligible. The decision of the Director of Benefits & Retirement Services, or other designee of the Associate Superintendent for Human Resources, shall be final.
F. The participant has engaged in conduct in violation of School Board policies and regulations or which otherwise provides grounds rendering the participant unfit for further participation in the program.

X. Any ROP participant who becomes unable to comply with the terms and conditions of this regulation due to circumstances beyond the participant’s control must bring the problem or situation to the attention of the supervisor and the Director of Benefits and Retirement Services or the Associate Superintendent for Human Resources as soon as possible for consideration.

The Associate Superintendent for Human Resources (or designee) is responsible for implementing and monitoring this regulation.

This regulation and any related policy shall be reviewed at least every five years and revised as needed.