

**The Vocational Agriculture Program of Study**  
**The Sound School Vo Ag Promotion and Retention**  
**Policies**  
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The program of study consists of a fixed two-year exploratory program with junior/senior concentrations in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> years. Students take semester courses (two marking periods) in either science or technology. The senior year can be either a science or technology concentration with a semester of special topics, a research or practicum that is designed with the student's advisor and the teacher offering the course. This allows the student to specialize in a topic that is of interest to the student. This can result in journal articles, lectures or reports, a completed project or cooperative placement in a educational or research institution.

**Exploratory/Intermediate**

This two-year sequence has four parts, 2 courses in science and 2 in technology science cross credits and partial mathematics credit can be attained. The exploratory program provides unique opportunity to explore many different career experiences and applications. It is usually during this two years "exploratory" that teachers learn more about the student, their interests and dedication to the program. If a student is not interested or does not take the program seriously it usually occurs during this time frame. Vo Ag centers usually dismiss students before they enter the advanced and intensive stage. Failure can consist of three parts, course failure, laboratory performance failures, SOE failures.

Course Failure - if students fails one component they will no longer be promoted to the next sequence. Usually, after the first marking period a probation letter is sent home to parents guardians a meeting to review the situation is usually scheduled. After a second failure the student is usually dismissed. There is an appeal process involving the consulting committee.

SOE Requirements - Usually, part of the course and linked to the course grade. Other Vo Ag Centers have incorporated the SOE to the course grade. If any student does not have an SOE and is not working towards their SOE they fail for that grade report. If a student fails twice they are no longer in the program. The student SOE must support the curriculum. Students that are not working on their SOE are just existing bringing nothing to the table. Unfortunately students are not urged to complete their SOE because there are no consequences.

Laboratory Performance Failure - Students refusing to complete or take part in industry applications. Unsafe behavior in laboratories is not safety protocols or best safety practices.

Retention and Dismissal Policies - The "good standing clause" carries forward into the program, dismissals can occur for:

- Three referrals for laboratory safety infractions or insubordination - 1 offense - report for file/review, 2<sup>nd</sup> letter is sent home, 3<sup>rd</sup> dismissal is possible. This is especially important for many of our laboratories are rated medium to high hazard industrial and applications require industry level equipment. On-the-water and on-the-farm activities can be especially hazardous. Students need to respect Vo Ag teachers and rules about lab safety.
- Failure to perform SOE hours and keep FFA record book and file a completed SOE plan. We are asking students to participate in one FFA subchapter (100 hours) and participate in one CDE event (50 hours). The FFA record book is in the process of being revised, SOE forms have been established for directed laboratory, cooperative placement and employment experiences. A total of 800 hours is required in the four-year program. A lack of consequences has created situations of students not taking this part of the Vo Ag program seriously.
- Course Failure - First marking period a probation letter is sent home. An "F" or grade below 60 results in dismissal from the program. If the student is allowed to remain the student must repeat the course. This is especially important as our unit applications change and new equipment arrives. At this point students are promoted to the next scope and sequence course. Students who fail the entire year have been promoted to the next Vo Ag course and sequence. The Vo Ag appeal process has state guidelines, see attached.

What had changed this year is that a new two-page special parental/guardian statement is part of the admission packet and is being placed in every admission folder. It includes clauses on safe dress, participation and laboratory behavior. Promoting students who fail Vo Ag courses has increased liability for the Vo Ag teachers especially around safe equipment operations, protocols, and behavior in the laboratory itself.

The Vocational Agriculture enrollment process is based upon student interest and performance. It has a two-year exploratory program in which students are required to

complete successfully, SOE, FFA and course participation. It is this two-year period that most of the dismissals occur. It is unfortunate but speaks to the admission process itself, no entrance exam, based upon interest and good standing, retention is based upon participation and performance. Students who withdraw can reapply after one year.