

TEACHER AND PARENT FAQ



Senate Page
Leadership
Program

FAQ #1

Q: Will the student attend school?

A: No. Students are *excused* from school for the duration of the General Assembly session in Richmond. School administrators should mark students as having an “excused absence” in their records. Please see the Virginia Administrative Code sections [8VAC20-110-40](#) and [8VAC20-110-50](#) for more information. If your school has questions pertaining to the manner in which an extended absence of this magnitude should be documented, please ask administrators to contact the Superintendents of Public Instruction at the Virginia Department of Education.

Superintendent of Public Instruction
James Monroe Building
101 North 14th Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219
(804) 225-2023

FAQ #2

Q: How will the student receive assignments when they are participating in this program?

A: It is the responsibility of the student, parents, and teacher to collectively determine how the student will receive his or her assignments each week. The Senate Page Leadership Program recommends that teachers give an all-inclusive packet of assignments directly to the parent or student each Friday. This work should be completed and turned in the following Friday when the next packet is picked up if possible. Please note that the Senate Page Leadership Program is not responsible for handling the transfer of assignments through any means, including but not limited to: mail, fax, scans/emails, online assignments, and quizzes/tests (*see FAQ #7 for extraordinary cases*).

Students who receive admission to the program should have exceptional time management skills and be capable of doing a lot of independent study during their term of page service.

FAQ #3

Q: What does the Professional Development Track entail?

A: Students participating in this program will be assigned to Capitol Square from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday – Thursday, and 8:30 a.m. – Noon each Friday.

Each Senate Page will be expected to participate with reading, writing/critical thinking, team building, guest speakers and group discussion assignments through the program’s professional development track. In addition, the track also includes field trips to historical sites and other educational venues. The track changes on a yearly basis and is designed to engage students from various public, private and home school environments. Each Senate Page will maintain a binder in which writing assignments, team building simulations and notes from required readings and discussions will be kept.

FAQ #3 continued

The professional development track is organized similar to a college course syllabus. Content varies year to year. A copy is issued prior to the start of session to allow for maximum planning and time management throughout the program. Excluding field trips, night events and other learning opportunities through work assignments, the track equals **approximately 4 ½ to 6 hours of classroom-like activity per week** for a Senate Page. Each component of the professional development track is purposely designed with a young professional in mind.

Required Reading: Each Senate Page must read the Constitution of Virginia. Typically, the required reading is divided up in two Articles per week. The class will participate in 30 minute team breakouts each Monday afternoon to discuss what they learned from the assigned reading. Note taking is required.

Writing/Critical Thinking: The professional development track includes weekly essays to encourage critical thinking about a particular topic or reflection about a recent experience within the program. Essays (two pages in length) must be handwritten in a spiral notebook and kept in a binder. Sample topics include the following:

- *“My Local Government” Essay: Research (1) the mayor of your hometown/city, (2) the members of your Town/City Council, (3) the members of your County Board of Supervisors. List a few quick facts about each of these individuals. Be sure to include: their full name, party affiliation (if any), and several interesting facts about them (in your own words).*
- *Research one Virginia state agency, and discuss in detail (1) who it serves, (2) who has oversight over it, (3) problems associated with it, and (4) how you think the state should fix these issues.*

Team Building: Each page class is divided into three or four teams for the duration of session. A team building exercise may be 30 minutes long or two hours. Sample exercises include the following:

- *21st Century High School: Design and build a 21st century high school complete with a budget, building design and curriculum.*
- *Virginia Tourism Project: Identify a theme for your campaign to engage possible tourists to visit our beautiful beaches, lovely mountains and major cities.*

Guest Speakers: The class will hear from bankers, college and university representatives, attorneys, alumni of the program and other professionals who will speak about topics relevant to future young professionals. Note taking is required.

Group Discussion Assignments: Time permitting, the class will engage in group discussions with their team leaders or a member of the Senate staff about a previous writing assignment, guest speaker or debate that occurred during a floor session.

Participants in the Senate Page Leadership Program are urged to discuss the professional development track with their instructors, as many of those assignments may serve as a suitable substitute for homework or other class assignments a student is missing at school. Teachers should note that students participating in this program will not have enough time to complete all assignments that students at the

FAQ #3 continued

school are able to complete. As a result, the program encourages teachers to divide a student's work into two stacks: (1) priority work and (2) everything else. Deadlines for completion should be included with all assignments.

FAQ #4

Q: When will the student do homework?

A: Senate Pages are required to attend a mandatory study hall from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday. During this time period, they will have access to tutors who are experienced at teaching in many of the usual middle- and high-school fields of study (i.e. math, science, English, social studies). Please note that these tutors are simply resources for the Pages to utilize, and that no formal classes will be held during the program. In addition to the mandatory two hour nightly study hall, Senate Pages often have downtime during the day (usually during breaks, or when they are in-between jobs), and are encouraged to work on assignments during this time as well.

Again, students who receive admission to the program should have exceptional time management skills and be capable of doing a lot of independent study during their term of page service.

FAQ #5

Q: What is the electronics usage policy?

A: Permitted use of any electronic device is a privilege that can be suspended. In addition to a cell phone, a Senate Page is permitted to have one additional electronic device during the term of service.

The use of a cell phone is strictly prohibited during work hours, study hall or special events. Limited use of personal computers is permitted during work hours.

FAQ #6

Q: How will the student take his or her exams and quizzes?

A: We strongly recommend test taking be scheduled on a Friday at school. Our staff will administer tests, if necessary, per the guidelines in our program handbook and this FAQ. Students in the program will be excused from work to come home if they need to take exams. Due to the fast-paced environment during session, and the importance placed on Pages, **it is highly recommended that teachers allow students to take proctored exams and quizzes on Fridays at school** which are generally much slower-paced, or on the weekend (students go back to their home districts from Friday afternoon and return their assigned hotel on Sunday night).

FAQ #7

Q: To whom should assignments be sent on a weekly basis?

A: As stated in FAQ #2: “Please note that the Senate Page Leadership Program is not responsible for handling the transfer of assignments through any means, including but not limited to: mail, fax, scans/emails, online assignments, and quizzes/tests.”

In extraordinary circumstances, such as when a Page needs to complete a time-sensitive assignment that was not sent through the recommended packet system, such an assignment may be sent to the following:

Senate Page Leadership Program
C/O Senate Clerk’s Office
P.O. Box 396
Richmond, Virginia 23218
pageinfo@senate.virginia.gov

PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS SHOULD NOT BE THE PRIMARY WAY THAT ASSIGNMENTS ARE SENT, AND SHOULD ONLY BE USED AS A LAST RESORT.

If you must use this avenue, please include the page name and all necessary instructions. We recognize that many students obtain, complete and return assignments through web applications administered by their school.

FAQ #8

Q: If I have further questions?

A: Please call (804) 698-7410 or e-mail pageinfo@senate.virginia.gov Monday – Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.