

Virginia Board of Education Agenda Item



Agenda Item: I

Date: February 28, 2013

Title	First Review of Proposed <i>Guidelines for Standard Diploma Credit Accommodations for Students with Disabilities</i>		
Presenter	Mr. John Eisenberg, Assistant Superintendent for Special Education and Student Services		
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Purpose of Presentation:

Action required by state or federal law or regulation.

Previous Review or Action:

No previous review or action.

Action Requested:

Action will be requested at a future meeting. Specify anticipated date below:

Date: March 28, 2013.

Action: Final Review.

Alignment with Board of Education Goals: Please indicate (X) all that apply:

x	Goal 1: Accountability for Student Learning
x	Goal 2: Rigorous Standards to Promote College and Career Readiness
	Goal 3: Expanded Opportunities to Learn
	Goal 4: Nurturing Young Learners
	Goal 5: Highly Qualified and Effective Educators
	Goal 6: Sound Policies for Student Success
	Goal 7: Safe and Secure Schools
	Other Priority or Initiative. Specify:

Background Information and Statutory Authority:

Goal 1: The Board of Education must establish requirements for the Standard and Advanced Studies Diplomas.

Goal 2: The proposed guidelines support implementation of the 2012 General Assembly’s HB 1061 and SB 489, which amended § 22.1-253.13:4 of the *Code of Virginia* to strengthen postsecondary education and workplace readiness opportunities for all students and to consolidate the number of Board of Education approved diplomas.

As a result of the legislation, the Board of Education was required to adopt emergency regulations to establish the new diploma requirements, effective for students entering the ninth grade for the first time in 2013-2014. Among other requirements, the legislation eliminated the Modified Standard Diploma and

required the Board to “make provision in its regulations for students with disabilities to earn a standard diploma.”

In June 2012, the Board of Education adopted emergency amendments to the Standards of Accreditation (SOA) to permit students with disabilities to have “credit accommodations” to earn a Standard Diploma. The student’s Individual Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan would specify whether credit accommodations permitted by the Board would be applicable for the student.

The emergency amendments to the Standards of Accreditation include the following:

8 VAC 20-131-5. Definitions.

"Credit accommodations" means adjustments to meet the standard and verified credit requirements for earning a Standard Diploma for students with disabilities.

8 VAC 20-131-50. Requirements for graduation.

2. Requirements for a Standard Diploma.

3. The Board of Education shall establish, through guidelines, credit accommodations to the standard and verified credit requirements for a Standard Diploma. Such credit accommodations for students with disabilities may include:

a. Approval of alternative courses to meet the standard credit requirements;

b. Modifications to the requirements for local school divisions to award locally awarded verified credits;

c. Approval of additional tests to earn a verified credit;

d. Adjusted cut scores required to earn verified credit; and

e. Allowance of work-based learning experiences.

The student’s Individual Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan would specify any credit accommodations that would be applicable for the student.

Summary of Important Issues:

The proposed guidelines outlined in Attachment A were developed to provide school divisions with a list of approved “credit accommodations” for use by students with disabilities to obtain a Standard Diploma under *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia* (8 VAC 20-131). They build and expand upon existing Board of Education approved flexibility provisions to earn standard and verified credits.

The proposed “credit accommodations” fall under the following general categories:

- Standards of Learning (SOL) assessments,
- Modification to the requirements for local school divisions to award locally awarded verified credit, and
- Modification of course offerings to earn standard and verified credits.

A student who earns a Standard Diploma, with or without credit accommodations, will be prepared for successful transition to postsecondary education/training and a career. The expectations for earning a Standard Diploma, beginning with the ninth-grade class in 2013-2014, are rigorous. The requirements for the Standard Diploma are higher than the requirements for earning a Modified Standard Diploma, which is being eliminated. All students must earn standard and verified credits in high school mathematics, reading, writing, science and history courses. All students earning a Standard Diploma must earn a career and technical education credential and take a virtual course—either credit or non-

credit bearing. Credit accommodations allow students with disabilities different pathways and approaches to demonstrating mastery of the required content.

The proposed guidelines were drafted with the assistance of multiple stakeholder groups including parents, special educators, local administrators, special education advocacy groups, superintendents and members of the State Special Education Advisory Committee.

Impact on Fiscal and Human Resources:

The administrative impact required to develop these guidelines will be absorbed within existing resources.

Timetable for Further Review/Action:

Final Review- March 28, 2013.

Superintendent's Recommendation:

The Superintendent of Public Instruction recommends that the Board of Education accept for first review the proposed *Guidelines for Standard Diploma Credit Accommodations for Students with Disabilities*.

**Proposed Guidelines for Standard Diploma
Credit Accommodations for Students with Disabilities
February 28, 2013**

Background

The 2012 General Assembly passed, and Governor McDonnell signed into law, HB 1061 and SB 489, which amended § 22.1-253.13:4 of the *Code of Virginia* to strengthen postsecondary education and workplace readiness opportunities for all students, and to consolidate the number of Board of Education approved diplomas. The legislation requires the Board to adopt emergency regulations to establish the new diploma requirements, effective for students entering the ninth grade for the first time in 2013-2014. Among other requirements, the legislation eliminates the Modified Standard Diploma and requires the Board to “make provision in its regulations for students with disabilities to earn a standard diploma.” In June 2012, the Board of Education adopted emergency amendments to the Standards of Accreditation (SOA) to permit students with disabilities to have “credit accommodations” to earn a Standard Diploma. The student’s Individual Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan would specify whether credit accommodations permitted by the Board would be applicable for the student.

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The student’s Individual Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan would specify any credit accommodations that would be applicable for the student.

Current Flexibility Options Available to Earn Standard and Verified Credits

Assessments Used to Verify Credits

1. Accommodations for students with disabilities provided on all SOL assessments

2. Substitute tests for verified credit approved by the Board of Education
3. Virginia Modified Achievement Standards Test (VMAST) available in Algebra I and end-of-course reading for certain students with disabilities

Locally Awarded Verified Credits

4. Locally-awarded verified credit—up to four verified credits for Standard Diploma
 - a. Student may be eligible to earn locally-awarded verified credits in science or history/social science (8 VAC 20-131-110)
 - i. Student must pass the high school course,
 - ii. Score within 375-399 scale score range on any administration of the Standards of Learning test after taking the test at least twice, and
 - iii. Demonstrate achievement in the academic content through an appeal process administered at the local level.
 - b. Student may earn verified credits by passing a Board-approved industry credentialing exam—two credits may be earned for a single career and technical education (CTE) exam if at least two standard credits are associated with the credential

Career and Technical (CTE) Industry Credentials

5. Workplace Readiness Skills for the Commonwealth Assessment
 - a. Students are able to pre-test, receive remediation and retake assessment to earn CTE credential
6. Career Readiness Certificate (CRC) (battery of three tests)
 - a. Student can retake failed portions of assessment

Both of these CTE industry credentials will satisfy graduation requirements for the Standard Diploma (8 VAC 20-131-50).

Course Content Integration

7. Content courses may be split into two sections or integrated over a sequence of courses
Examples: Algebra I part 1 for 1 elective credit, Algebra I part II for 1 mathematics credit; Algebra I/Geometry/Algebra II, 3-year sequence
8. Career and Technical Education (CTE) coursework combined with courses required for graduation over two blocks/periods
Example: Biology and Biomedical Technician offered in two consecutive periods, with collaboration between the science and CTE teachers

Proposed Standard Diploma Credit Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Assessments Used to Verify Credits

1. Identify and approve additional substitute tests to earn a verified credit. The Board of Education may, from time to time, approve additional tests that are recommended by the Superintendent of Public Instruction for the purpose of awarding verified credit. The Virginia Department of Education may partner with a local school division in the procedure to nominate an additional test. Such additional tests, which enable students to earn verified units of credit, must, at a minimum, meet the following criteria:
 - a. The test must be standardized and graded independently of the school or school divisions in which the test is given;
 - b. The test must be knowledge based;
 - c. The test must be administered on a multistate or international basis, or administered as part of another state's accountability assessment program; and
 - d. To be counted in a specific academic area, the test must measure content that incorporates or exceeds the SOL content in the course for which verified credit is given.
2. Permit the continued use of the Virginia Modified Achievement Standards Test (VMAST) for verified credit purposes for Algebra I and EOC reading. Beginning in 2014-2015, The student must meet all eligibility determination requirements in effect for the 2013-2014 school year and meet all of the following criteria to be eligible to take the VMAST for verified credit purposes:
 - a. Student must pass the high school course; and
 - b. Score 374 or below on the end-of-course Standards of Learning test after taking the test at least twice

Beginning in 2014-2015, scores of students who participate in VMAST will no longer be included in the participation rate or pass rate calculations for federal accountability, as required for approval of Virginia's *Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)* flexibility application.

Locally Awarded Verified Credits

3. Permit local school divisions to award locally awarded verified credits in reading, writing, and mathematics, in addition to science and history, to students with disabilities. Use the same criteria for awarding credits currently approved for science and history. Eligible students must:
 - a. Pass the high school course,
 - b. Score within 375-399 scale score range on any administration of the Standards of Learning test after taking the test at least twice, and
 - c. Demonstrate achievement in the academic content through an appeal process administered at the local level.

Course Offerings

4. Approve additional course options available only to students with disabilities to meet the standard credit requirements for the Standard Diploma

- a. Augment the Personal Finance course (3120) to include the 21 Work Readiness Skills (WRS) for the Commonwealth. Allow this augmented course to meet the Economics and Personal Finance requirement *if* the student has earned at least 3 standard credits in history and social science. The economics strand in these courses would be deemed a credit accommodation. Upon completion of the augmented Personal Finance course, the student may take the WRS assessment to earn the Board-approved Work Readiness Skills credential. This approach would satisfy the graduation requirements for economics and personal finance, history and social sciences, and the workplace credential.
- b. Establish minimum content courses in the subject areas required for verified credits and provide flexibility in how the courses are delivered. Allow parts I and II of certain required courses to each earn a standard credit towards the total number required in the subject area. The student must successfully complete:
 - i. 4 standard credits in English and 1 verified credit each in Reading and Writing
 - ii. 3 standard credits in mathematics that include Algebra I and Geometry, and 1 verified credit in mathematics
 - iii. 3 standard credits in science that include Earth Science and Biology, and 1 verified credit in science
 - iv. 3 standard credits in history and social science that include Virginia and U.S. History and Virginia and U.S. Government, and 1 verified credit in history and social science

Additional Credit Accommodations

5. The Board may, from time to time, approve additional credit accommodations.