# Superintendent’s Memo #055-19


**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education**

DATE: February 25, 2019

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: James F. Lane, Ed.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction

## SUBJECT: Diploma Seal Ordering Process and Diploma Seal Requirements

The purpose of this memo is to transmit the process for ordering diploma seals and to provide the requirements for each Board-established diploma seal. Orders for diploma seals needed for spring and summer 2019 graduation must be placed no later than **May 1, 2019** using the attached form.

Please note that for this year, the Board of Education has established two new seals, and another seal is being phased out:

* The Seal for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) is new and available for graduating seniors in the class of 2019.
* The Seal for Excellence in Science and the Environment is new and available for first-time ninth graders beginning in the 2018-2019 school year.
* The Seal of Advanced Mathematics and Technology will be phased out, but will remain available for students who entered the ninth grade prior to the 2018-2019 school year.

According to the *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia* at [8VAC20-131-50](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section50/) and [8VAC20-131-51](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section51/), students who meet the requirements for graduation and who demonstrate academic excellence may be eligible for one or more of the following diploma seals:

* **The Governor's Seal** shall be awarded to students who complete the requirements for an Advanced Studies Diploma with an average grade of "B" or better, and successfully complete college-level coursework that will earn the student at least nine transferable college credits in Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), Cambridge, or dual enrollment courses.
* **The Board of Education** **Seal** shall be awarded to students who complete the requirements for a Standard Diploma or an Advanced Studies Diploma with an average grade of "A."
* **The Board of Education's Career and Technical Education Seal** shall be awarded to students who earn a Standard Diploma or an Advanced Studies Diploma and complete a prescribed sequence of courses in a career and technical education concentration or specialization that they choose and maintain a "B" or better average in those courses; or (i) pass an examination or an occupational competency assessment in a career and technical education concentration or specialization that confers certification or occupational competency credential from a recognized industry, trade, or professional association; or (ii) acquire a professional license in that career and technical education field from the Commonwealth of Virginia. The Board shall approve all professional licenses and examinations used to satisfy these requirements.
* **The Board of Education's Seal for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)** shall be awarded to students who earn either a Standard Diploma or an Advanced Studies Diploma and (i) satisfy all Math and Science requirements for the Advanced Studies diploma with a “B” average or better in all course work; and (ii) successfully complete a 50 hour or more work-based learning opportunity in a STEM area; and (iii) satisfy all requirements for a Career and Technical Education concentration (A concentration is a coherent sequence of two or more state-approved courses as identified in the course listing within the [CTE Administrative Planning Guide](http://cteresource.org/apg/)); and (iv) pass one of the following: (a) a Board of Education CTE STEM-H credential examination, or (b) an examination approved by the Board that confers a college-level credit in a STEM field.

*PLEASE NOTE*: This seal was established by [House Bill 167](http://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?181+ful+CHAP0482) (2018) to replace the Board’s Seal of Advanced Mathematics and Technology. This seal is available to graduating seniors in the Class in 2019 and beyond. The Board’s Seal of Advanced Mathematics and Technology remains available to students that entered the ninth grade prior to the 2018-2019 school year.

* **The Board of Education's Seal of Advanced Mathematics and Technology** shall be awarded to students who earn either a Standard Diploma or an Advanced Studies Diploma and: (i) satisfy all of the mathematics requirements for the Advanced Studies Diploma (four units of credit including Algebra II; two verified units of credit) with a "B" average or better; and (ii) complete one of the following: (a) pass an examination in a career and technical education field that confers certification from a recognized industry, trade, or professional association; (b) acquire a professional license in a career and technical education field from the Commonwealth of Virginia; or (c) pass an examination approved by the Board that confers college-level credit in a technology or computer science area. The Board shall approve all professional licenses and examinations used to satisfy these requirements.

*PLEASE NOTE*: This sealwill be replaced by the Board’s STEM Seal as a result of [House Bill 167](http://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?181+ful+CHAP0482) (2018), but will remain available to students who entered high school prior to the 2018 – 2019 school year.

* **The Board of Education's Seal for Excellence in Civics Education** shall be awarded to students who earn either a Standard Diploma or an Advanced Studies Diploma and: (i) complete Virginia and United States history and Virginia and United States government courses with a grade of "B" or higher; (ii) have good attendance and no disciplinary infractions as determined by local school board policies; and (iii) complete 50 hours of voluntary participation in community service or extracurricular activities. Activities that satisfy the requirements of clause (iii) of this subdivision include: (a) volunteering for a charitable or religious organization that provides services to the poor, sick, or less fortunate; (b) participating in Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, or similar youth organizations; (c) participating in JROTC; (d) participating in political campaigns or government internships, or Boys State, Girls State, or Model General Assembly; or (e) participating in school-sponsored extracurricular activities that have a civics focus. Any student who enlists in the United States military prior to graduation shall be deemed to have met this community service requirement.
* **The Board of Education's Seal of Biliteracy** shall be awarded to students who demonstrate proficiency in English and at least one other language and meet additional criteria established by the Board. For additional information about this seal, please refer to the [Seal of Biliteracy webpage](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/graduation/diploma_seals/seal_of_biliteracy/index.shtml).
* **The Board of Education’s Seal for Excellence in Science and the Environment** shall be awarded to students who earn either a Standard Diploma or Advanced Studies Diploma and: (i) complete at least three different first-level board-approved laboratory science courses and at least one rigorous advanced-level or postsecondary-level laboratory science course, each with a grade of “B” or higher; and (ii) complete laboratory or field-science research and present that research in a formal, juried setting; and (iii) complete at least 50 hours of voluntary participation in community service or extracurricular activities that involve the application of science such as environmental monitoring, protection, management, or restoration.

*PLEASE NOTE*: This seal was established by the Board in the revised Standards of Accreditation at [8VAC20-131-51](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section51/) that became effective in the 2018-2019 school year. This seal is available to students who entered the ninth grade for the first time in the 2018-2019 school year and thereafter.

For additional information regarding the diploma seals referenced here, refer to the [Diploma Seals webpage](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/graduation/diploma_seals/index.shtml).

Local school boards determine the design and use of other seals or awards for exceptional academic, career and technical, citizenship, or other exemplary performance in accordance with local school board criteria. The Department of Education, through Bamboo Ink, can only make available the eight seals listed above, as outlined in the Standards of Accreditation, and does not have access to any other seals used by local school boards.

PLEASE NOTE: **School divisions should order only the seals needed for diplomas awarded during spring and summer 2019**. All orders must be placed directly with Bamboo Ink by **May 1, 2019**. Bamboo Ink will only accept orders from the central office of the school division; orders will not be accepted from individual schools. For the 2018-2019 school year, orders for diploma seals may be e-mailed using the attached form to:

Bamboo Ink
Brooke or Bob Rhodes
brooke@bambooink.com

Please direct additional questions about orders to Misty Kiser at misty.kiser@doe.virginia.gov.

For questions regarding a student’s eligibility for a specific Board-approved seal, please contact the Office of Policy at (804)225-2092 or policy@doe.virginia.gov.

JFL/LMS

### Attachment

1. [Diploma Seal Request Form](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/administrators/superintendents_memos/2019/055-19a.docx) (Word)