# Superintendent’s Memo #053-20


**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education**

DATE: February 28, 2020

TO: Division Superintendents

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

## SUBJECT: Diploma Seals

The purpose of this memo is to alert all school divisions of the new process for obtaining diploma seals. The requirements for each Board of Education-established diploma seal are also provided below.

### Diploma Seals Process

Beginning this year, school divisions will no longer place orders for diploma seals. The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) will issue an appropriate amount of each diploma seal to each division. The number of seals issued will be determined by the number of diploma seals awarded in each division over the past three years, plus growth. All diploma seals will ship to school divisions by May 1, 2020.

Any division requiring more diploma seals to meet the needs of the 2019-2020 graduating class must contact the Office of Policy at VDOE for additional seals, with justification provided: policy@doe.virginia.gov.

### Student Requirements for Diploma Seals

In accordance with sections [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/) of the Board of Education’s [*Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia*](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/) (also referred to as the Standards of Accreditation), students who meet the requirements for graduation and demonstrate academic excellence and outstanding achievement may be eligible for one or more of the following awards:

* **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.
	+ *NOTE*: The Board’s STEM 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 of 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.
	+ *NOTE*: The Board’s Seal of Advanced Mathematics and Technology is being replaced by the Board’s STEM Seal, in accordance with [House Bill 167](http://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?181+ful+CHAP0482) (2018); however, this seal remains available to students who entered the ninth grade 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.
	+ *NOTE*: The Board’s Seal for Excellence in Science and the Environment was established by the Board in section [8VAC20-131-51](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section51/) of the Standards of Accreditation, which became effective in the 2018-2019 school year. Accordingly, this seal is available to students who entered the ninth grade for the first time in the 2018-2019 school year and thereafter.

### Additional Information

Please note that local school boards determine the design and use of any other seals or awards for exceptional academic, career and technical, citizenship, or other exemplary performance in accordance with local school board criteria. VDOE is only able to provide the seals listed above, as outlined in the [Standards of Accreditation](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/), and does not have access to any other seals used by local school boards.

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

Please direct questions regarding diploma seals to the Office of Policy at (804) 225-2092 or policy@doe.virginia.gov.

JFL/EMM