# Superintendent’s Memo #316-20


**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education**

DATE: December 4, 2020

TO: Division Superintendents

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

## SUBJECT: Update to the Emergency Guidelines for Locally Awarded Verified Credits

At its November 19, 2020 business meeting, the Board of Education approved an update to the [*Emergency Guidelines for Locally-Awarded Verified Credits*](https://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/meetings/2020/11-nov/item-g-attachment-a-b.docx). The revised *Emergency Guidelines* remove barriers to earning a verified credit for students who continue to be impacted by ongoing pandemic conditions and meet the enumerated conditions. These guidelines are available for immediate implementation.

The *Emergency Guidelines* establish two pathways to earning a verified credit through an amended locally-awarded verified credit process. Option one applies to those students enrolled in any high-school credit bearing course that was eligible for verified credit in the fall of 2020. These students may earn a locally-awarded verified credit if they: (1) pass the corresponding high school course; **and** (2) attempt the associated Standards of Learning assessment and receive a score within the 350 – 399 range; **and** (3) demonstrate mastery of the standards, competencies, and objectives of the entire course through a locally-determined verification process.

Option two applies to those students enrolled in a high-school credit bearing course in history/social science that was eligible for a verified credit in the fall of 2020 or spring of 2021. The locally-determined verification process for these students must include the student’s responses to performance assessment tasks, however, there is no requirement that the student must have taken the associated history or social science Standards of Learning assessment.

In addition to providing flexibility to students, option two encourages school divisions to build and/or grow their capacity to administer performance assessments in history and social science, allows teachers to assess in dynamic ways, and creates a foundation for the use of this type of assessment model in the future.

Please review the [*Emergency Guidelines for Locally-Awarded Verified Credits*](https://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/meetings/2020/11-nov/item-g-attachment-a-b.docx) carefully for additional detail on student and course eligibility for the use of the revised locally-awarded verified credit process.

Per authority provided to him in [Executive Order 51](https://www.governor.virginia.gov/media/governorvirginiagov/executive-actions/EO-51-AMENDED-Declaration-of-a-State-of-Emergency-Due-to-Novel-Coronavirus-%28COVID-19%29.pdf) (2020) and [Chapter 1289](https://budget.lis.virginia.gov/item/2020/1/HB30/Chapter/1/143/) of the 2020 Acts of Assembly, the Superintendent of Public Instruction issued, and Secretary of Education approved, several waivers related to requirements for test attempts and caps on the use of locally-awarded verified credits to allow for the full implementation of the *Emergency Guidelines*.

Please note that the *Emergency Guidelines* are a companion to the Board’s [*Regulations Establishing Standards for the Accreditation of Public Schools*](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/) – or Standards of Accreditation – and supplement the [Guidance Document Governing Certain Provisions of the Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia](https://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/accreditation/soa-guidance-document.docx). The latter document as well as the Standards of Accreditation remain in effect for the purpose of awarding locally-awarded verified credits for students who do not meet the exemption criteria.

For more information on the length of school term waiver, you may contact the Office of Policy at (804)225-2092 or policy@doe.virginia.gov.

JFL/lms