

Applied Studies Diploma

Dr. Samantha Marsh Hollins, Assistant Superintendent
for Special Education and Student Services



Background

- 2021 Virginia General Assembly Legislation
 - **HB2299 and SB1288** requires the Board of Education to adopt guidance for the statewide requirements for earning an Applied Studies Diploma
- Applied Studies Diploma
 - **State recognized diploma in Virginia (§22.1-253.13:4)**. This option is available to students identified as having a disability who complete the requirements of their Individualized Education Programs (IEP) and meet certain requirements prescribed by the Board pursuant to regulations, but do not meet the requirements for any named diploma.



Background *(continued)*

- 8VAC20-131-51.D. of the *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia*
 - Requirements for an Applied Studies Diploma. In accordance with the requirements of the Standards of Quality, a student with disabilities who completes the requirements of the student's IEP and does not meet the requirements for other diplomas shall be awarded Applied Studies Diplomas in accordance with state and federal laws and regulations regarding special education.
 - Students who pursue an Applied Studies Diploma shall be allowed to pursue a Standard Diploma or an Advanced Studies Diploma at any time during high school. Such students shall not be excluded from courses or tests required to earn these diplomas.



Applied Studies Diploma

- The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) has developed an Applied Studies Curriculum Map based upon national research analysis and stakeholder input to meet the needs of students with disabilities more effectively and to align instruction to ensure student success over a variety of skill domains and serve as a common planning resource.
 - Provision of statewide guidance to Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams to develop high quality goals and objectives
 - Improve communication skills and transition planning
 - Promote incorporation of high leverage practices into instruction and support of students with significant cognitive disabilities



Next Steps

- Adoption of the Applied Studies Curriculum Map as board guidance to support high-quality instruction aligned to individualized goals for students with significant disabilities.
- Impact on the field and VDOE support
 - This guidance and accompanying materials have been in use in the field, and the VDOE has supported targeted division-level pilots of the utilization of the materials across multiple school divisions during the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 school years.
 - Continued implementation of a plan for technical assistance and professional development to support school teams continuing in 2022-2023