# Chapter 131. Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia

All Proposed Revisions – Technical and Substantive

September 15, 2021

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| **Citation** | **Description of Change** | **Edit ID** | **Page No.** |
| 8VAC20-131-5 | Strikes "Authentic" from the term "Authentic performance assessment" and pluralizes assessments to align terminology and clarify expectations for the use of performance assessments. | 1 | 5 |
| 8VAC20-131-5 | Adds a definition for "Comprehensive, unified, long-range plan" to clarify the connection to the Standards of Quality requirement and standardize terminology. | 2 | 5 |
| 8VAC20-131-5 | Adds a definition for "corrective action plan" to clarify its development and use as it applies to accreditation. | 3 | 5 |
| 8VAC20-131-5 | To align with SB323 (2020), deletes reference to the specific types of diplomas to which "Credit accommodations" can apply. | 4 | 5 |
| 8VAC20-131-5 | Adds definition of "Essential actions" as it relates to comprehensive needs assessments and the comprehensive, unified, long-range plan. | 5 | 6 |
| 8VAC20-131-5 | Adds "but not limited to" the list of diploma to clarify the term "Graduate." | 6 | 6 |
| 8VAC20-131-5 and throughout | Adds a definition for "High school" to reference schools with grades 9 through 12. This change is carried through the SOA. | 7 | 6 and throughout |
| 8VAC20-131-5 | Adds definition for "Memorandum of Understanding" to clarify the use of an MOU as it applies to accreditation. | 8 | 7 |
| 8VAC20-131-5 | Amends definition of "Secondary school" to include both middle and high school grades and align with common vernacular. | 9 | 7 |
| 8VAC20-131-5 | Amends the "Reporting group" to "Student group" to align with reporting practices. | 10 | 7 |
| 8VAC20-131-5 | Amends definition of the "Standard school day" to comport with SB238 (2020) and the requirement that all kindergarten programs are full-time. Additional changes forthcoming once amendments are finalized. | 11 | 7 |
| 8VAC20-131-5 | Amends the definition of a "Verified unit of credit" to include new option related to history and social science and align language changes throughout the SOA. | 12 | 8 |
| 8VAC20-131-30.A and 8VAC20-131-30.B | Moves language on expectations for promotion to high school to promote clarity. | 13 | 12 |
| 8VAC20-131-30.A | Sets clear expectation that English Learners should not be retained in any grade solely due to language skills and proficiency. | 14 | 12 |
| 8VAC20-131-30.B and C | Strikes language related to expedited retakes to move to section FC below. | 15 | 12 |
| 8VAC20-131-30.C | Strikes language regarding requirements and expectations for remediation to move to 8VAC20-131-70 regarding instructional programs. | 16 | 12 |
| 8VAC20-131-30.D | Strikes language regarding requirements and expectations for remediation to move to 8VAC20-131-80 and 90 regarding instructional programs for elementary and middle schools, respectively. | 17 | 12 |
| 8VAC20-131-30.C | Clarifies requirements for students to take end-of-course assessments. | 18 | 12 |
| 8VAC20-131-30.D | Incorporates language on expedited retakes into the section on assessment. | 19 | 13 |
| 8VAC20-131-30.H | Strikes language regarding foreign exchange students and end-of-course assessments. Expectation clarified in 8VAC20-131-30.E. | 20 | 13 |
| 8VAC20-131-45 (NEW) | Moves section (formerly 8VAC20-131-110) on standard and verified unit of credits so that it follows information on assessments but provides necessary context for graduation requirements in the subsequent sections. This amendment includes changes formerly made to 110 including: (1) removing outdated language related to the Virginia Assessment program; (2) clarifying that locally-awarded verified credits are available in reading and writing as subsets of English; (3) adding language to indicate that performance assessments can be used to earn a verified credit in history/social science based on new language in the Appropriation Act; (4) amending language related to expectations for students on performance assessments; (5) clarifying language related to the administration of performance assessments; and (6) pluralizing authentic performance assessments to clarify the expectation that multiple assessments are required for the purpose of earning verified credit. | 21 | 14 |
| 8VAC20-131-45.B.2.b | Strikes language on the cap for locally-awarded verified credits for students following graduation requirements in 8VAC20-131-51 to move to SOA guidance. | 22 | 14 |
| 8VAC20-131-50.B.2 in the footnotes for mathematics | Makes grammatical edit in list of mathematics courses. | 23 | 16 |
| 8VAC20-131-50.B.2 in the footnotes for several discipline areas the Standard Diploma | Makes technical edits and adds language to clarify the numbers and types of courses that can apply towards certain graduation requirements. | 24 | 16 - 17 |
| 8VAC20-131-50.B.2 in the footnotes for the Standard Diploma | Clarifies what types of courses can fulfill the virtual course requirement. | 25 | 17 |
| 8VAC20-131-50.C.2 in the footnotes for several discipline areas the Advanced Diploma | Makes technical edits and adds language to clarify the numbers and types of courses that can apply towards certain graduation requirements. | 26 | 18 |
| 8VAC20-131-50.C.2 in the footnotes for the Advanced Diploma | Clarifies what types of courses can fulfill the virtual course requirement. | 27 | 18 |
| 8VAC20-131-50.H.1 | Amends requirements for the Governor’s Seal to clarify that not all college-level coursework may translate to college credit but may still be applied towards earning the diploma seal. | 28 | 19 |
| 8VAC20-131-50.H.5 | Makes technical edit to amend Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts to just Scouts. | 29 | 20 |
| 8VAC20-131-50.K | Adds additional language that requires informing students about potential consequences of bypassing or delaying opportunities to earn verified credits. | 30 | 20 |
| 8VAC20-131-51.A | Updates language related to workplace and citizenship skills to reflect the variety of work-based learning experiences that may apply. | 31 | 21 |
| 8VAC20-131-51.B.2 | Removes outdated language related to the Virginia Assessment Program. | 32 | 23 |
| 8VAC20-131-51.B.2 | Clarifies that locally-awarded verified credits are available in reading and writing as subsets of English. | 33 | 21 |
| 8VAC20-131-51.B.2 | Adds language to indicate that performance assessments can be used to earn a verified credit in history/social science based on new language in the Appropriation Act. | 34 | 21 |
| 8VAC20-131-51.B.2 | Amends language related to expectations for students on performance assessments. | 35 | 21 |
| 8VAC20-131-51.B.2 | Strikes "authentic" language as it relates to performance assessments for writing and clarifies their administration. | 36 | 21 |
| 8VAC20-131-51.B.2 | Strikes language on the cap for locally-awarded verified credits for students following graduation requirements in 8VAC20-131-51 to move to SOA guidance. | 37 | 22 |
| 8VAC20-131-51.B in the “Specifications” column for Mathematics | Makes grammatical edit in list of mathematics courses. | 38 | 22 |
| 8VAC20-131-51.B in the “Specifications” column for several discipline areas | Makes technical edits and adds language to clarify the numbers and types of courses that can apply towards certain graduation requirements. | 39 | 22 - 23 |
| 8VAC20-131-51.B in the Additional Requirements for Graduation Table | Clarifies what types of courses can fulfill the virtual course requirement. | 40 | 23 |
| 8VAC20-131-51.C.2 | Removes outdated language related to the Virginia Assessment program. | 41 | 24 |
| 8VAC20-131-51.C.2 | Clarifies that locally-awarded verified credits are available in reading and writing as subsets of English. | 42 | 24 |
| 8VAC20-131-51.C.2 | Adds language to indicate that performance assessments can be used to earn a verified credit in history/social science based on new language in the Appropriation Act. | 43 | 24 |
| 8VAC20-131-51.C.2 | Amends language related to expectations for students on performance assessments. | 44 | 24 |
| 8VAC20-131-51.C.2 | Strikes "authentic" language as it relates to performance assessments and clarifies their administration. | 45 | 24 |
| 8VAC20-131-51.C.2 | Pluralizes authentic performance assessments to clarify the expectation that multiple assessments are required for the purpose of earning verified credit. | 46 | 24 |
| 8VAC20-131-51.C in the “Specifications” column | Makes technical edits and adds language to clarify the numbers and types of courses that can apply towards certain graduation requirements. | 47 | 25 |
| 8VAC20-131-51.C in the Additional Requirements for Graduation Table | Clarifies what types of courses can fulfill the virtual course requirement. | 48 | 26 |
| 8VAC20-131-51.D | Makes grammatical edit on the awarding of an Applied Studies Diploma. | 49 | 26 |
| 8VAC20-131-51.E | Amends language related to Certificates of Program Completion to align with language in the Standards of Quality and to clarify how these certificates can be employed. | 50 | 26 |
| 8VAC20-131-51.F | Makes a technical edit for language consistency on the use of the singular student. | 51 | 26 |
| 8VAC20-131-51.H.1 | Amends requirements for the Governor’s Seal to clarify that not all college-level coursework may translate to college credit but may still be applied towards earning the diploma seal. | 52 | 26 |
| 8VAC20-131-51.H.3 | Amends the requirements for a Career and Technical Education Seal to enhance rigor for earning the diploma seal. The change requires the student maintain a “B” in CTE coursework as well as pass an exam leading to certification or a credential. | 53 | 27 |
| 8VAC20-131-51.H.3 | Provides clarifying language on the meaning of “concentration” and “specialization” in CTE coursework. | 54 | 27 |
| 8VAC20-131-51.H.5 | Makes technical edit to amend Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts to just Scouts. | 55 | 27 |
| 8VAC20-131-51.H.6 | Adds a new diploma seal for Fine Arts. | 56 | 27 |
| 8VAC20-131-51.K | Adds additional language that requires informing students about potential consequences of bypassing or delaying opportunities to earn verified credits. | 57 | 28 |
| 8VAC20-131-60.B | Strikes definitions of "beginning" and "during" as no longer necessary for determining graduation requirements for transfer students. | 58 | 29 |
| 8VAC20-131-60.E | Allows transfer students to use other states’ assessments for earning verified credit in Virginia. | 59 | 29 |
| 8VAC20-131-60.F | Removes “only” throughout the subsection to clarify that students can earn more than the enumerated verified credits. | 60 | 30-31 |
| 8VAC20-131-60.F.1, 2, and 3 | Reorganizes language on graduation requirements for transfer students depending on the applicable graduation requirements and time of entry. | 61 | 30 - 32 |
| 8VAC20-131-60.F.1.b | Clarifies discipline area verified credit requirements for transfer students | 62 | 30 - 31 |
| 8VAC20-131-60.F.3.b | Adjusts verified credit requirement for students entering tenth grade, recognizing some test opportunities will be unavailable. | 63 | 32 |
| 8VAC20-131-70.A | Updates language related to mathematics instruction. | 64 | 34 |
| 8VAC20-131-70.A | Adds engineering to the program of instruction. | 65 | 34 |
| 8VAC20-131-70.A | Refines language related to the arts. | 66 | 34 |
| 8VAC20-131-70.A and B | Updates language related to CTE to align with practice in the field and also clarifies expectations related to career exploration and readiness. | 67 | 34 |
| 8VAC20-131-70.E | Incorporates remediation language formerly in 8VAC20-131-30. | 68 | 34 |
| 8VAC20-131-80.A | Strengthens language concerning what Standards of Learning objectives must be taught in English, mathematics, science, and history and social science. | 69 | 36 |
| 8VAC20-131-80.B (as reordered) | Reorders section language for clarity and adds language to comport with SB238 (2020) requiring full-time kindergarten. | 70 | 36 |
| 8VAC20-131-80.C | Refines language related to the purpose of maintaining student achievement records. | 71 | 36 |
| 8VAC20-131-80.D (as reordered) | Refines language related to goals of the elementary instructional program and clarifies the responsibility of school boards relations to early identification, diagnosis, and assistance for students with reading and mathematics problems. | 72 | 36 |
| 8VAC20-131-80.D (as reordered) | Adds language about remediation and intervention for students not progressing in early mathematics proficiency. Mirrors language already included regarding intervention and remediation for students not progressing in early reading. | 73 | 36 |
| 8VAC20-131-80.D (as reordered) | Adds language to clarify the expectation that remediation and intervention services do not impede progress in other classes. | 74 | 37 |
| 8VAC20-131-80.E (as reordered) | Sets out, explicitly, the requirement that the instructional program in elementary school include daily recess. | 75 | 37 |
| 8VAC20-131-80.E | Incorporates remediation language formerly in 8VAC20-131-30. | 76 | 37 |
| 8VAC20-131-90.A | Strengthens language concerning what Standards of Learning objectives must be taught in English, mathematics, science, and history and social science. | 77 | 38 |
| 8VAC20-131-90.F | Clarifies requirements for remediation and intervention for mathematics. | 78 | 38 |
| 8VAC20-131-90.E | Incorporates remediation language formerly in 8VAC20-131-30. | 79 | 38 |
| 8VAC20-131-100 | Amends "secondary" to "high" in reference to the instructional program | 80 | 39 |
| 8VAC20-131-110 | Strikes section and reorders it as 8VAC20-131-45 (or edit ID #21) | 81 | 41-42 |
| 8VAC20-131-140.B | Strikes section for phased in implementation of Academic Career Plans as well as opportunities for advanced coursework and work-based learning opportunities. | 82 | 45 |
| 8VAC20-131-140.B and C | Makes technical changes to align with current practice and terminology in career and technical education. | 83 | 45 - 46 |
| 8VAC20-131-170 | Removes outdated language regarding the specific components of Family Life Education. | 84 | 49 |
| 8VAC20-131-210 | Updates the responsibilities of the principal as they pertain to statewide standardized assessments. | 85 | 55 |
| 8VAC20-131-260.A.3 | Requires schools to maintain suitable space in a school for various functions, including recess. | 86 | 60 |
| 8VAC20-131-260.B.2 and 3 | Clarifies expectations regarding the requirements and frequency of fire drills and lock down drills to comport with the Code of Virginia and other relevant regulatory language. | 87 | 60 |
| 8VAC20-131-260.E (new) | Add language related to security and the requirement to establish a comprehensive data security plan. | 88 | 61 |
| 8VAC20-131-380.C | Makes a technical edit in the subsection related to English Learners. | 89 | 77 |
| 8VAC20-131-380.E.3 | Updates language related to comprehensive, unified, long-range plan for clarity and consistency. | 90 | 79 |
| 8VAC20-131-380.F.1 | Modifies Level 1 and Level 2 descriptors to improve clarity around improvement measures and what prompts a change in Level. | 91 | 79 - 81 |
| 8VAC20-131-380.F.1 | Changes the College, Career, and Civic Readiness Index to College, Career, and Civic Readiness Indicator. | 92 | 81 |
| 8VAC20-131-380.F.6 | Adds language about the appeals process for certain indicators when performance level was determined by SLIFE students. | 93 | 82 |
| 8VAC20-131-390.A.8 | Removes language that suggests only students that take Standards of Learning assessments are taught the Standards of Learning which is inaccurate. | 94 | 83 |
| 8VAC20-131-390.A.9 | Updates language related to comprehensive, unified, long-range plan for clarity and consistency. | 95 | 83 |
| 8VAC20-131-390.A.9 | Requires comprehensive, long-range unified plans to identify and address opportunity and achievement gaps and advancing outcomes for all learners. | 96 | 83 |
| 8VAC20-131-390.B.4 | Reinstates the "new school" accreditation rating which was inadvertently dropped during the 2017 revisions to the Standards of Accreditation. All valid accreditation ratings must be defined in the SOA. | 97 | 84 |
| 8VAC20-131-400 | Clarifies language and expectations around comprehensive, unified, long-range plans. | 98 | 85 - 87 |
| 8VAC20-131-400.D.6 | Adds language regarding the Board's authority to require a division-level academic review under certain circumstances. | 99 | 88 |
| 8VAC20-131-420.D | Eliminates the alternative accreditation plans based on graduation classes with fewer than 50 students as there is no longer a need. | 100 | 90 |
| 8VAC20-131-430 | Strikes section on effective dates as implementation will be in full-effect. | 101 | 92 |

Chapter 131. Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia

Part I  
Definitions and Purpose

**8VAC20-131-5. Definitions.**

The following words and terms apply only to this chapter and do not supersede those definitions used for federal reporting purposes or for the calculation of costs related to the Standards of Quality (§ [22.1-253.13:1](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-253.13:1/) et seq. of the Code of Virginia). When used in this chapter, these words shall have the following meanings, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

"Accreditation" means a process used by the Virginia Department of Education to evaluate the performance of public schools in accordance with this chapter.

"Additional test" means a test, including substitute tests approved by the board, that students may use in lieu of a Standards of Learning test to obtain verified credit.

"~~Authentic p~~Performance assessments" ~~means a test that complies with guidelines adopted by the board~~ that require~~s~~ students to perform a task or create a product that is typically scored using a rubric. ~~An authentic p~~Performance assessments that comply with guidelines adopted by the board may be used to confer verified credit in accordance with the provisions of [8VAC20-131-110](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section110/) B 4.

"Board of Education" or "board" means the board responsible for the general supervision of the public schools system in Virginia as prescribed in Section 4 of Article VIII of the Constitution of Virginia and § [22.1-8](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-8/) of the Code of Virginia.

"Class period" means a segment of time during the instructional day that is allocated to lessons, courses, testing and assessments, or other instructional activities and excludes homeroom.

1

1

“Comprehensive, unified, long-range plan” means a school-level plan of action that addresses the factors identified in the needs assessment that are related to the performance on the indicator through essential actions and research-based strategies. The plan must identify specific timelines and the person(s) responsible for implementation. A school's comprehensive, unified long-range plan must inform a school division's comprehensive, unified long-range plan, as required by § [22.1-253.13:6](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title22.1/chapter13.2/section22.1-253.13:6/), and/or corrective action plan when necessitated by the accreditation status of schools in its division.

2

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"Corrective action plan" means a school-level plan of action that addresses issues and conditions that are likely contributing to the school's performance on school quality indicators, as well as plans and implements essential actions and research-based strategies designed to improve performance to the Level One standard. This is distinct from a division-level corrective action plan that is developed and implemented as a result of a division-level Memorandum of Understanding between the division and the Board of Education following a division-level academic review, pursuant to § 22.1-253.13:3.

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

4

"Department" means the Virginia Department of Education.

"Elementary school" means a public school with any grades kindergarten through 5.

"English learner" or "EL" means, as prescribed in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (P.L. 89-10, as amended), an individual:

1. Who is aged three through 21 years;

2. Who is enrolled or preparing to enroll in an elementary school or secondary school;

3. a. Who was not born in the United States or whose native language is a language other than English;

b. (1) Who is a Native American or Alaska native, or a native resident of the outlying areas; and

(2) Who comes from an environment where a language other than English has had a significant impact on the individual's level of English language proficiency; or

c. Who is migratory, whose native language is a language other than English, and who comes from an environment where a language other than English is dominant; and

4. Whose difficulties in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language may be sufficient to deny the individual the:

a. Ability to meet the challenging state academic standards;

b. Ability to successfully achieve in classrooms where the language of instruction is English; or

c. Opportunity to participate fully in society.

"Enrollment" means the act of complying with state and local requirements relative to the registration or admission of a child for attendance in a school within a local school division. This term also means registration for courses within the student's home school or within related schools or programs.

5

“Essential action” means actions needed for improvement in identified priority areas based upon a comprehensive needs assessment.

"First time" means the student has not been enrolled in the school at any time during the current school year (for purposes of [8VAC20-131-60](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section60/) with reference to students who transfer in during the school year).

"Four core academic areas" means English, mathematics, science, and history and social science for purposes of testing for the Standards of Learning.

"Graduate" means a student who has earned a board recognized diploma, which includes, but is not limited to, the Advanced Studies Diploma, the Standard Diploma, and the Applied Studies Diploma.

6

"Growth" or "student growth" means student progress toward achievement as demonstrated through a valid and reliable measure.

7

"High school" means a public school with any grades 9 through 12.

"Homebound instruction" means academic instruction provided to students who are confined at home or in a health care facility for periods of time that prevent normal school attendance, based upon certification of need by a licensed physician or a licensed clinical psychologist.

"Instructional day" means all the time in a standard school day, from the beginning of the first scheduled class period to the end of the last scheduled class period, including passing time for class changes and excluding breaks for meals.

"Instructional hours" means the hours in a standard school day, from the beginning of the first scheduled class period to the end of the last scheduled class period, including passing time for class changes and excluding breaks for meals.

"Locally awarded verified credit" means a verified unit of credit awarded by a local school board in accordance with [8VAC20-131-110](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section110/) B 3.

"Memorandum of Understanding" an agreement between the local school board and the board that may be required of divisions that do not demonstrate evidence of progress in adopting or implementing the comprehensive, unified, long-range plan for a school or schools with accreditation indicators at Level Three.

8

"Middle school" means a public school with any grades 6 through 8.

9

"Planning period" means a segment of time in middle and ~~secondary~~ high schools during the instructional day that is unencumbered of any teaching or supervisory duties, is not less than 45 minutes or the equivalent of a class period, whichever is greater, and that includes passing time for class changes.

"Planning time" means a segment of time for elementary teachers that provides at least an average of 30 minutes per day for planning during the student's school week as provided in § [22.1-291.1](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-291.1/) of the Code of Virginia.

"Recess" means a segment of unstructured recreational time exclusive of time provided for meals during the standard school day.

~~"Reporting group" means a subgroup of students who are identified as having common characteristics such as students identified as belonging to major racial and ethnic groups, economically disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, and English learners.~~

10

"School" means a publicly funded institution where students are enrolled for all or a majority of the instructional day and:

1. Those students are reported in fall membership at the institution; and

2. At a minimum, the institution meets the preaccreditation eligibility requirements of this chapter as adopted by the board.

11

"Secondary school" means a public school with any grades ~~9~~ 6 through 12.

"Standard school day" means a calendar day, including passing time for class changes and excluding breaks for meals, that averages a minimum of five and one-half instructional hours for students in grades ~~1~~ kindergarten through 12 ~~and a minimum of three instructional hours for students in kindergarten~~. Recess may be included in the calculation of required instructional hours for elementary school, provided that recess does not exceed 15% of the required instructional hours.

12

"Standard school year" means a school year of at least 180 teaching days or a total of at least 990 instructional hours per year, as specified in § [22.1-98](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-98/) of the Code of Virginia.

"Standard unit of credit" or "standard credit" means credit awarded for a course in which the student successfully completes 140 clock hours of instruction and the requirements of the course. Local school boards may develop alternatives to the requirement for 140 clock hours of instruction as provided for in [8VAC20-131-110](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section110/) and in accordance with board guidelines.

"Standards of Learning tests" or "SOL tests" means those criterion referenced assessments approved by the board for use in the Virginia Assessment Program that measure attainment of knowledge and skills required by the Standards of Learning.

"Standards of Quality" means the Standards of Quality prescribed in Chapter 13.2 (§ [22.1-253.13:1](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-253.13:1/) et seq.) of Title 22.1 of the Code of Virginia.

"Student" means a person of school age as defined by § [22.1-1](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-1/) of the Code of Virginia, a child with disabilities as defined in § [22.1-213](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-213/) of the Code of Virginia, and a person for whom English is a second language in accordance with § [22.1-5](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-5/) of the Code of Virginia.

"Student group" means a subgroup of students who are identified as having common characteristics such as students identified as belonging to major racial and ethnic groups, economically disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, and English learners.

10

"Verified unit of credit" or "verified credit" means credit awarded for a course in which a student earns a standard unit of credit and (i) achieves a passing score on a corresponding end-of-course SOL test; (ii) achieves a passing score on an additional test, as defined in [8VAC20-131-5](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section5/)~~, as part of the Virginia Assessment Program~~; (iii) meets the criteria for the receipt of a locally awarded verified credit conferred in accordance with board criteria and guidelines as provided in [8VAC20-131-110](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section110/) B 3 when the student has not passed a corresponding SOL test in ~~English~~ reading and writing, mathematics, laboratory science, or history and social science; (iv) successfully completes assessments in history/social science that include state-developed performance tasks scored locally in accordance with Board guidelines using state-developed rubrics; or ~~(iv)~~ (v) meets the criteria for the receipt of a verified credit for English (writing) by demonstrating ~~mastery~~ attainment of the content of the associated course on ~~an authentic~~ locally-administered performance ~~assessment~~ assessments as provided in [8VAC20-131-110](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section110/) B 4

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"Virginia Assessment Program" means a system used to evaluate student achievement that includes SOL tests and additional tests that may be approved from time to time by the board.

**Statutory Authority**

§§ [22.1-16](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-16/) and [22.1-253.13:3](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-253.13:3/) of the Code of Virginia.

**Historical Notes**

Derived from [Volume 22, Issue 24](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol22/iss24/v22i24.pdf), eff. September 7, 2006; amended, Virginia Register [Volume 25, Issue 21](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=25:21), eff. July 31, 2009; [Volume 31, Issue 05](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=31:05), eff. December 3, 2014; [Volume 31, Issue 26](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=31:26), eff. October 8, 2015; [Volume 34, Issue 08](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=34:08), eff. January 11, 2018; [Volume 35, Issue 25](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=35:25), eff. September 19, 2019.

**8VAC20-131-10. Purpose.**

The foremost purpose of public education in Virginia is to provide children with a high quality education giving them opportunities to meet their fullest potential in life. The standards for the accreditation of public schools in Virginia are designed to ensure that an effective educational program is established and maintained in Virginia's public schools. The mission of the public education system is to educate students in the essential knowledge and skills in order that they may be equipped for citizenship, work, and an informed and successful life.

The Standards of Accreditation provide the foundation for the provision of a high quality public education within a system of accountability and continuous improvement. They are intended to:

1. Provide an essential foundation of educational programs of high quality in all schools for all students.

2. Encourage and promote school quality and acknowledge achievement and continuous improvements by schools and school divisions in multiple areas.

3. Foster public confidence that graduating students have mastered multiple areas of learning to include academic subjects, workplace skills, career exploration and planning, and civic and community responsibility.

4. Assure recognition of Virginia's public schools by other institutions of learning.

5. Establish the means of determining the effectiveness of schools as prescribed in the Standards of Quality at § [22.1-253.13:3](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-253.13:3/) of the Code of Virginia, including student learning and progress and student outcomes for multiple areas affecting school quality.

Section [22.1-253.13:3](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-253.13:3/) A of the Code of Virginia requires the board promulgate regulations establishing standards for accreditation, which shall include student outcome measures, requirements and guidelines for instructional programs and for the integration of educational technology into such instructional programs, administrative and instructional staffing levels and positions, including staff positions for supporting educational technology, student services, auxiliary education programs such as library and media services, course and credit requirements for graduation from high school, community relations, and the philosophy, goals, and objectives of public education in Virginia.

The statutory authority for this chapter is delineated in § [22.1-19](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-19/) of the Code of Virginia, which includes the requirement that the board shall provide for the accreditation of public elementary, middle, and ~~secondary~~ high schools in accordance with regulations prescribed by it.

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This chapter governs public schools operated by local school boards providing instruction to students as defined in [8VAC20-131-5](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section5/). Other schools licensed under other state statutes are exempt from these requirements.

**Statutory Authority**

§§ [22.1-16](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-16/) and [22.1-253.13:3](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-253.13:3/) of the Code of Virginia.

**Historical Notes**

Derived from [Volume 14, Issue 01](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol14/iss01/v14i01.pdf), eff. October 29, 1997; amended, Virginia Register [Volume 16, Issue 25](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol16/iss25/v16i25.pdf), eff. September 28, 2000; [Volume 22, Issue 24](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol22/iss24/v22i24.pdf), eff. September 7, 2006; [Volume 31, Issue 26](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=31:26), eff. October 8, 2015; [Volume 34, Issue 08](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=34:08), eff. January 11, 2018.

Part II  
Philosophy, Goals, and Objectives

**8VAC20-131-20. Philosophy, goals, and objectives.**

A. Achieving school quality and continuous improvement are accomplishments dependent upon multiple factors, including instruction, leadership, learning environment, professional staff development, student supports, parent and community engagement, and continual evaluation of outcomes. Goals and objectives to be achieved through these and other areas include student opportunities for learning, closure of achievement gaps, reduction of the dropout rate, increased graduation rates, and student mastery beyond minimum requirements.

Preparation of all students should result in graduates who have explored and understand what opportunities exist for them after high school and have the knowledge and abilities necessary for the next phase of their lives as adults. Students should attain essential knowledge and skills in order that they may be equipped to be responsible citizens, understand and meet expectations for work, gain and apply knowledge, and plan and achieve personal life goals. In addition to academic and technical knowledge, their education should encompass mastery of creative and critical thinking, analysis and problem solving, and the development of personal attributes such as communication and collaboration skills, dependability, and persistence.

The philosophy, goals, and objectives of individual schools should reflect and encompass the means by which the Standards of Learning and Standards of Accreditation are to be achieved.

The board's objective is to provide an educational foundation that ensures students are ready to be successful in a global economy, which includes changing and growing technology. Families, students, employers, representatives from institutions of higher education, and educators have all expressed concerns about adequate preparation of Virginia's students for the future. In addition to appropriate content knowledge, stakeholders have asked that graduates be prepared with skills and attributes such as critical thinking, creative thinking, communication, collaboration, and citizenship in order to be prepared to be successful in life and competitive in the work world. In response, the board is redesigning the public school experience for Virginia's students so that they are adequately prepared for the future challenges they face.

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In Virginia, as a student progresses through elementary, middle, and ~~secondary~~ high school, the college-ready, career-ready, and citizenship-ready student is expected to achieve and apply appropriate academic and technical knowledge; attain and demonstrate age-appropriate productive workplace skills, qualities, and behavior; align knowledge, skills, and personal interests with career and civic opportunities; and attain and demonstrate knowledge and skills necessary for productive citizenship and participation in communities and governments.

B. Each school shall have current philosophy, goals, and objectives that shall serve as the basis for all policies and practices and shall be developed using the following criteria:

1. The philosophy, goals, and objectives shall be developed with the advice of professional and lay people who represent the various populations served by the school and in consideration of the needs of the community and shall serve as a basis for the creation and review of the biennial school plan.

2. The school's philosophy, goals, and objectives shall be consistent with the Standards of Quality.

3. The goals and objectives shall (i) be written in plain language so as to be understandable to noneducators, including parents; (ii) to the extent possible, be stated in measurable terms; and (iii) consist primarily of measurable objectives to raise student and school achievement in the core academic areas of the Standards of Learning, to improve student and staff attendance, to reduce student dropout rates, to increase graduation rates, and to increase the quality of instruction through professional staff development and licensure.

4. The school staff and community representatives shall review annually the extent to which the school has met its prior goals and objectives, analyze the school's student performance data, including data by grade level or academic department as necessary, and report these outcomes to the division superintendent and the community in accordance with local school board policy. This report shall be in addition to the school quality profile required by [8VAC20-131-270](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section270/) A.

C. Copies of the school's philosophy, goals, and objectives shall be available upon request.

**Statutory Authority**

§§ [22.1-16](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-16/) and [22.1-253.13:3](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-253.13:3/) of the Code of Virginia.

**Historical Notes**

Derived from [Volume 14, Issue 01](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol14/iss01/v14i01.pdf), eff. October 29, 1997; amended, Virginia Register [Volume 16, Issue 25](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol16/iss25/v16i25.pdf), eff. September 28, 2000; [Volume 22, Issue 24](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol22/iss24/v22i24.pdf), eff. September 7, 2006; [Volume 34, Issue 08](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=34:08), eff. January 11, 2018.

Part III  
Student Achievement

**8VAC20-131-30. Student achievement expectations.**

A. Each student should learn the relevant grade level/course subject matter before promotion to the next grade. The division superintendent shall certify to the Department of Education that the division's promotion and retention policy does not exclude students from membership in a grade, or participation in a course, in which SOL tests are to be administered. Students promoted to high school from eighth grade should have attained basic mastery of the Standards of Learning in English, history and social science, mathematics, and science and should be prepared for high school work. Each school shall have a process, as appropriate, to identify and recommend strategies to address the learning, behavior, communication, or development of individual children who are having difficulty in the educational setting. English Learners should not be retained in any grade solely due to language proficiency level or skills.

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B. In kindergarten through eighth grade, where the administration of Virginia Assessment Program tests is required by the board, each student shall be expected to take the tests following instruction. Students who are accelerated shall take the test aligned with the highest grade level, following instruction in the content. No student shall take more than one test in any content area in each year, except in the case of expedited retakes as provided for in this section. Schools shall use the Virginia Assessment Program test results in kindergarten through eighth grade as part of a set of multiple criteria for determining the promotion or retention of students. ~~Students promoted to high school from eighth grade should have attained basic mastery of the Standards of Learning in English, history and social science, mathematics, and science and should be prepared for high school work.~~ Students shall not be required to retake the Virginia Assessment Program tests unless they are retained in grade and have not previously passed the related tests.

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~~The board shall provide the same criteria for eligibility for an expedited retake of any SOL test, with the exception of the writing SOL tests, to each student regardless of grade level or course.~~

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~~C. In kindergarten through grade 12, students may participate in a remediation recovery program as established by the board in English (reading) or mathematics or both.~~

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~~D. The board recommends that students in kindergarten through grade 8 not be required to attend summer school or weekend remediation classes solely based on failing a SOL test in science or history and social science. However, any student who fails to achieve a passing score on all Standard of Learning assessments for the relevant grade level in grades 3 through 8 shall be required to attend a remediation program or to participate in another form of remediation. Further, any student who fails an end-of-course test required for the award of a verified unit of credit shall be required to attend a remediation program or to participate in another form of remediation.~~

~~E.~~ C. Except for those students with significant cognitive disabilities who participate in the Virginia Alternate Assessment Program, ~~Each~~ each student in middle and ~~secondary~~ high schools shall take all ~~applicable~~ end-of-course SOL tests necessary to meet federal accountability requirements and to earn the required verified credits for graduation. ~~following course instruction. The division superintendent shall certify to the Department of Education that the division's policy for dropping courses ensures that students' course schedules are not changed to avoid end-of-course SOL tests. Students who achieve a passing score on an end-of-course SOL test shall be awarded a verified unit of credit in that course in accordance with the provisions of~~[~~8VAC20-131-110~~](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section110/)~~. Students may earn verified units of credit in any courses for which end-of-course SOL tests are available. Students shall not be required to take an end-of-course SOL test in an academic subject after they have earned the number of verified credits required for that academic content area for graduation, unless such test is necessary in order for the school to meet federal accountability requirements.~~ Middle and ~~secondary~~ high schools may consider the student's end-of-course SOL test score in determining the student's final course grade. However, no student who has failed an end-of-course SOL test but passed the related course shall be prevented from taking any other course in a content area and from taking the applicable end-of-course SOL test. The board may approve additional tests to verify student achievement in accordance with guidelines adopted for verified units of credit described in [8VAC20-131-110](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section110/).

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~~F.~~ D. With such funds as are appropriated by the General Assembly, the board shall provide opportunities for students who meet criteria adopted by the board to have an expedited retake of a SOL test. The board shall provide the same criteria for eligibility for an expedited retake of any SOL test, with the exception of the writing SOL tests, to each student regardless of grade level or course.

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~~G.~~ E. Participation in the Virginia Assessment Program by students with disabilities shall be prescribed by provisions of their Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan. All students with disabilities shall be assessed with appropriate accommodations and alternate assessments where necessary.

~~H.~~ F. Any student identified as an English Learner (EL) shall participate in the Virginia Assessment Program. A school-based committee shall convene and make determinations regarding the participation level of EL students in the Virginia Assessment Program. In kindergarten through eighth grade, EL students may be granted a one-time exemption from SOL testing in the areas of writing and history and social science.

~~H. Students identified as foreign exchange students taking courses for credit shall be required to take the relevant Virginia Assessment Program tests, as specified in subsection E of this section. Foreign exchange students who are auditing courses are not eligible for academic credit for those courses and shall not be required to take the SOL tests for those courses.~~

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**Statutory Authority**

§§ [22.1-16](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-16/) and [22.1-253.13:3](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-253.13:3/) of the Code of Virginia.

**Historical Notes**

Derived from [Volume 14, Issue 01](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol14/iss01/v14i01.pdf), eff. October 29, 1997; amended, Virginia Register [Volume 16, Issue 25](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol16/iss25/v16i25.pdf), eff. September 28, 2000; [Volume 22, Issue 24](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol22/iss24/v22i24.pdf), eff. September 7, 2006; [Volume 25, Issue 21](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=25:21), eff. July 31, 2009; [Volume 31, Issue 26](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=31:26), eff. October 8, 2015; [Volume 34, Issue 08](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=34:08), eff. January 11, 2018.

**8VAC20-131-40. (Repealed.)**

**Historical Notes**

Derived from Virginia Register Volume 14, Issue 1, eff. October 29, 1997; amended, Virginia Register Volume 16, Issue 25, eff. September 28, 2000; repealed, Virginia Register Volume 22, Issue 24, eff. September 7, 2006.

**8VAC20-131-45. Standard and verified units of credit.**

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A. A "standard unit of credit" or "standard credit" is a credit awarded for a course in which the student successfully completes 140 clock hours of instruction and the requirements of the course. A school division may waive the requirement that a student receive 140 clock hours of instruction to earn a standard credit as prescribed in the Standards of Quality and board guidelines. When credit is awarded in less than whole units, the increment awarded must be no greater than the fractional part of the 140 hours of instruction provided. If a school division elects to award credit on a basis other than the 140 clock hours of instruction required for a standard unit of credit defined in this subsection, the local school division shall provide the board with satisfactory proof, based on board guidelines, that the students for whom the 140-clock-hour requirement is waived have learned the content and skills included in the relevant Standards of Learning. In addition, the local school division shall develop a written policy approved by the superintendent and school board that ensures:

1. That the content of the course for which credit is awarded is comparable to 140 clock hours of instruction; and

2. That upon completion, the aims and objectives of the course have been met.

B. A "verified unit of credit" or "verified credit" is a credit awarded for a course in which a student earns a standard unit of credit and completes one of the following:

1. Achieves a passing score on a corresponding end-of-course SOL test. In accordance with the provisions of the Standards of Quality, students may earn a standard and verified unit of credit for any elective course in which the core academic Standards of Learning course content has been integrated and the student passes the related end-of-course SOL test. Such course and test combinations must be approved by the board.

Upon waiver of the 140-clock-hour requirement according to board guidelines, qualified students who have received a standard unit of credit shall be permitted to sit for the relevant SOL test to earn a verified credit without having to meet the 140-clock-hour requirement.

2. Achieves a passing score on an additional test, as defined in [8VAC20-131-5](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section5/).

3. Meets the criteria for the receipt of a locally awarded verified credit when the student has not passed a corresponding SOL test.

a. Students who enter the ninth grade for the first time prior to the 2018-2019 school year and do not pass SOL tests in reading and writing, mathematics, science, or history and social science may receive locally awarded verified credits from the local school board in accordance with criteria established in guidelines adopted by the board. Credit accommodations for students with disabilities may be used to confer locally awarded verified credits as provided in [8VAC20-131-50](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section50/) B 3.

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b. Students who enter the ninth grade for the first time in the 2018-2019 school year or thereafter and do not pass SOL tests in reading and writing, mathematics, laboratory science, or history and social science may receive locally awarded verified credits from the local school board in accordance with criteria established in guidelines adopted by the board.

4. Successfully completes assessments in history/social science that include state-developed performance tasks scored locally in accordance with Board guidelines using state-developed rubrics.

5. Meets the criteria for the receipt of a verified credit in English (writing) by demonstrating attainment of the content of the associated course on performance assessments that comply with guidelines adopted by the board. Such students shall not also be required to take the corresponding SOL test in English (writing).

C. The board may from time to time approve additional tests for the purpose of awarding verified credit. Such additional tests, which enable students to earn verified units of credit, must, at a minimum, meet the following criteria:

1. The test must be standardized and graded independently of the school or school division in which the test is given;

2. The test must be knowledge based;

3. The test must be administered on a statewide, multistate, or international basis, or administered as part of another state's accountability assessment program; and

4. To be counted in a specific academic area, the test must measure content that incorporates or exceeds the Standards of Learning content in the course for which verified credit is given.

The board shall set the score that must be achieved to earn a verified unit of credit on the additional test options.

**8VAC20-131-50. Requirements for graduation (effective for the students entering ninth grade prior to the 2018-2019 school year).**

A. The requirements for a student to earn a diploma and graduate from a Virginia high school shall be those in effect when that student enters the ninth grade for the first time. Students shall be awarded a diploma upon graduation from a Virginia high school.

The Advanced Studies Diploma shall be the recommended diploma for students pursuing baccalaureate study. Both the Standard Diploma and the Advanced Studies Diploma shall prepare students for postsecondary education and the career readiness required by the Commonwealth's economy.

When students below the ninth grade successfully complete courses offered for credit in grades 9 through 12, credit shall be counted toward meeting the standard units required for graduation provided the courses are equivalent in content and academic rigor as those courses offered at the ~~secondary~~ high school level. To earn a verified unit of credit for these courses, students must meet the requirements of [8VAC20-131-110](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section110/).

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The following requirements shall be the only requirements for a diploma, unless a local school board has prescribed additional requirements that have been approved by the board. All additional requirements prescribed by local school boards that have been approved by the board remain in effect until such time as the local school board submits a request to the board to amend or discontinue them.

B. Requirements for a Standard Diploma.

1. Beginning with the ninth-grade class of 2013–2014 and through the ninth-grade class of 2017–2018, students shall earn the required standard and verified units of credit described in subdivision 2 of this subsection.

2. Credits required for graduation with a Standard Diploma.

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|  | Discipline Area | Standard Units of Credit Required | Verified Credits Required |
|  | English | 4 | 2 |
|  | Mathematics1 | 3 | 1 |
|  | Laboratory Science2,6 | 3 | 1 |
|  | History and Social Sciences3,6 | 3 | 1 |
|  | Health and Physical Education | 2 |  |
|  | World Language, Fine Arts or Career and Technical Education7 | 2 |  |
|  | Economics and Personal Finance | 1 |  |
|  | Electives4 | 4 |  |
|  | Student Selected Test5 |  | 1 |
|  | Career and Technical Education Credential8 |  |  |
|  | Total9 | 22 | 6 |
|  | 1Courses completed to satisfy this requirement shall include at least two different course selections from among: Algebra I~~,~~; Geometry~~,~~; Algebra, Functions, and Data Analysis~~,~~ Algebra II~~,~~; or other mathematics courses above the level of Algebra II. The board shall approve courses to satisfy this requirement. Per the Standards of Quality, ~~a computer science course credit earned by students may be considered a mathematics course credit~~ students may earn a math course credit through a computer science course approved by the Board.  2~~Courses~~ The three courses completed to satisfy this requirement shall include course selections from at least two different science disciplines: earth sciences, biology, chemistry, or physics~~, or completion of the sequence of science courses required for the International Baccalaureate Diploma~~. The board shall approve courses to satisfy this requirement. Per the Standards of Quality, ~~a computer science course credit earned by students may be considered a science course credit~~ students may earn a science course credit through a computer science course approved by the Board.  3Courses completed to satisfy this requirement shall include U.S. and Virginia History, U.S. and Virginia Government, and one course in either world history or geography or both. The board shall approve courses to satisfy this requirement.  4Courses to satisfy this requirement shall include at least two sequential electives as required by the Standards of Quality.  5A student may utilize additional tests for earning verified credit in computer science, technology, career and technical education, economics or other areas as prescribed by the board in [8VAC20-131-110](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section110/).  6Students who complete a career and technical education program sequence and pass an examination or occupational competency assessment in a career and technical education field that confers certification or an occupational competency credential from a recognized industry, or trade or professional association, or acquire a professional license in a career and technical education field from the Commonwealth of Virginia may substitute the certification, competency credential, or license for (i) the student-selected verified credit and (ii) either a science or history and social science verified credit when the certification, license, or credential confers more than one verified credit. The examination or occupational competency assessment must be approved by the board as an additional test to verify student achievement.  7Pursuant to § [22.1-253.13:4](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-253.13:4/) of the Code of Virginia, credits earned for this requirement shall include one credit in fine or performing arts or career and technical education. Per the Standards of Quality, ~~a computer science course credit earned by students may be considered a career and technical education course credit~~ students may earn a career and technical education course credit through a computer science course approved by the Board.  8Students shall earn a career and technical education credential approved by the Board of Education, except when a career and technical education credential in a particular subject area is not readily available or appropriate or does not adequately measure student competency, in which case the student shall receive satisfactory competency-based instruction in the subject area to satisfy the standard diploma requirements. The career and technical education credential, when required, could include the successful completion of an industry certification, a state licensure examination, a national occupational competency assessment, or the Virginia workplace readiness assessment.  9Students shall successfully complete one virtual course, fully-online or in a blended modality, which may be a noncredit-bearing course or a required or elective credit-bearing course that is offered online.  Beginning with first-time ninth-grade students in the 2016–2017 school year, students shall be trained in emergency first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, and the use of automated external defibrillators, including hands-on practice of the skills necessary to perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation. Students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan that documents that they cannot successfully complete this training shall be granted a waiver from this graduation requirement, as provided in [8VAC20-131-420](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section420/) B. | | |

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3. The board 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 IEP or 504 Plan shall specify any credit accommodations that are applicable.

Students completing the requirements for the Standard Diploma may be eligible to receive an honor deemed appropriate by the local school board as described in subsection H of this section.

C. Requirements for an Advanced Studies Diploma.

1. Beginning with the ninth-grade class of 2013–2014 and through the ninth-grade class of 2017–2018, students shall earn the required standard and verified units of credit described in subdivision 2 of this subsection.

2. Credits required for graduation with an Advanced Studies Diploma.

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|  | Discipline Area | Standard Units of Credit Required | Verified Credits Required |
|  | English | 4 | 2 |
|  | Mathematics1 | 4 | 2 |
|  | Laboratory Science2 | 4 | 2 |
|  | History and Social Sciences3 | 4 | 2 |
|  | World Language4 | 3 |  |
|  | Health and Physical Education | 2 |  |
|  | Fine Arts or Career and Technical Education5 | 1 |  |
|  | Economics and Personal Finance | 1 |  |
|  | Electives | 3 |  |
|  | Student Selected Test6 |  | 1 |
|  | Total7 | 26 | 9 |
|  | 1Courses completed to satisfy this requirement shall include at least three different course selections from among: Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, or other mathematics courses above the level of Algebra II. The board shall approve courses to satisfy this requirement. Per the Standards of Quality, ~~a computer science course credit earned by students may be considered a mathematics course credit~~ students may earn a math course credit through a computer science course approved by the Board.  2~~Courses~~ The four courses completed to satisfy this requirement shall include course selections from at least three different science disciplines from among: earth sciences, biology, or chemistry~~, or physics or completion of the sequence of science courses required for the International Baccalaureate Diploma~~. The board shall approve additional courses to satisfy this requirement. Per the Standards of Quality, ~~a computer science course credit earned by students may be considered a science course credit~~ students may earn a science course credit through a computer science course approved by the Board.  3Courses completed to satisfy this requirement shall include U.S. and Virginia History, U.S. and Virginia Government, and two courses in either world history or geography or both. The board shall approve additional courses to satisfy this requirement.  4Courses completed to satisfy this requirement shall include three years of one language or two years of two languages.  5Per the Standards of Quality, ~~a computer science course credit earned by students may be considered a career and technical education course credit~~ students may earn a career and technical education course credit through a computer science course approved by the Board.  6A student may utilize additional tests for earning verified credit in computer science, technology, career or technical education, economics or other areas as prescribed by the board in [8VAC20-131-110](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section110/).  7Students shall successfully complete one virtual course, fully-online or in a blended modality, which may be a noncredit-bearing course, or may be a course required to earn this diploma that is offered online. | | |

Students completing the requirements for the Advanced Studies Diploma may be eligible to receive an honor deemed appropriate by the local school board as described in subsection H of this section.

Beginning with first-time ninth-grade students in the 2016–2017 school year, students shall be trained in emergency first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, and the use of automated external defibrillators, including hands-on practice of the skills necessary to perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation. Students with an IEP or 504 Plan that documents that they cannot successfully complete this training shall be granted a waiver from this graduation requirement, as provided in [8VAC20-131-420](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section420/) B.

D. In accordance with the requirements of the Standards of Quality, students with disabilities who complete the requirements of their IEP and do not meet the requirements for other diplomas shall be awarded Applied Studies Diplomas.

E. In accordance with the requirements of the Standards of Quality, students who complete prescribed programs of studies defined by the local school board but do not qualify for a Standard Diploma, an Advanced Studies Diploma, or an Applied Studies Diploma shall be awarded Certificates of Program Completion. The requirements for Certificates of Program Completion are developed by local school boards in accordance with the Standards of Quality.

F. In accordance with the provisions of the compulsory attendance law and [8VAC20-30](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter30/), Regulations Governing Adult High School Programs, students who do not qualify for diplomas may earn a high school equivalency credential.

G. At a student's request, the local school board shall communicate or otherwise make known to institutions of higher education, potential employers, or other applicable third parties, in a manner that the local school board deems appropriate, that a student has attained the state's academic expectations by earning a Virginia diploma and that the value of such a diploma is not affected in any way by the accreditation status of the student's school.

H. Awards for exemplary student performance. Students who demonstrate academic excellence or outstanding achievement may be eligible for one or more of the following awards:

1. 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~~ may earn the student at least nine transferable college credits in Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), Cambridge, or dual enrollment courses.

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2. 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".

3. 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.

4. 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) either (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.

5. 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.

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6. 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. Such seal shall be awarded to eligible students graduating from public high schools in the Commonwealth beginning in 2016.

7. Students may receive other seals or awards for exceptional academic, career and technical, citizenship, or other exemplary performance in accordance with criteria defined by the local school board.

I. Students completing graduation requirements in a summer school program shall be eligible for a diploma. The last school attended by the student during the regular session shall award the diploma unless otherwise agreed upon by the principals of the two schools.

J. Students who complete Advanced Placement courses, college-level courses, or courses required for an International Baccalaureate Diploma shall be deemed to have completed the requirements for graduation under these standards provided they have earned the standard units of credit and earned verified units of credit in accordance with the requirements for the Standard Diploma and the Advanced Studies Diploma, as specified in subsections B and C of this section.

K. Students shall be counseled annually regarding the opportunities ~~for using~~ to earn verified credit including the use of additional tests for ~~earning verified credits~~ this purpose, as provided in accordance with the provisions of [8VAC20-131-110](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section110/), and the consequences of failing to fulfill the obligations to complete the requirements for verified units of credit.

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**Statutory Authority**

§§ [22.1-16](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-16/) and [22.1-253.13:3](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-253.13:3/) of the Code of Virginia.

**Historical Notes**

Derived from [Volume 14, Issue 01](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol14/iss01/v14i01.pdf), eff. October 29, 1997; amended, Virginia Register [Volume 16, Issue 25](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol16/iss25/v16i25.pdf), eff. September 28, 2000; [Volume 22, Issue 24](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol22/iss24/v22i24.pdf), eff. September 7, 2006; [Volume 25, Issue 21](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=25:21), eff. July 31, 2009; [Volume 27, Issue 24](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=27:24), eff. August 31, 2011; [Volume 31, Issue 05](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=31:05), eff. December 3, 2014; [Volume 31, Issue 26](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=31:26), eff. October 8, 2015; [Volume 34, Issue 08](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=34:08), eff. January 11, 2018.

**8VAC20-131-51. Requirements for graduation (effective with the students who enter the ninth grade in the 2018-2019 school year).**

A. The requirements for a student to earn a diploma and graduate from a Virginia high school shall be those in effect when that student enters the ninth grade for the first time. Students shall be awarded a diploma upon graduation from a Virginia high school.

Both the Standard Diploma and the Advanced Studies Diploma shall provide multiple paths toward college, career, and citizenship readiness for students to follow in the later years of high school. Each such pathway shall provide meaningful and rigorous opportunities tied to instruction to achieve workplace and citizenship skills through experiences such as ~~internships, externships~~ work-based learning experiences, credentialing, and blended learning, which may be offered for credit toward high school graduation.

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In accordance with the Profile of a Virginia Graduate approved by the board, the instructional program leading to a Standard Diploma or Advanced Studies Diploma shall ensure that students (i) attain the knowledge, skills, competencies, and experiences necessary to be successful in the evolving global economy whether immediately entering the world of work or pursuing a postsecondary education and (ii) acquire and be able to demonstrate foundational skills in critical thinking, creative thinking, collaboration, communication, and citizenship.

When students below the ninth grade successfully complete courses offered for credit in grades 9 through 12, credit shall be counted toward meeting the standard units required for graduation provided the courses are equivalent in content and academic rigor as those courses offered at the ~~secondary~~ high school level. To earn a verified unit of credit for these courses, students must meet the requirements of [8VAC20-131-110](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section110/).

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The requirements in this section shall be the only requirements for a diploma, unless a local school board has prescribed additional requirements that have been approved by the board. All additional requirements prescribed by local school boards that have been approved by the board remain in effect until such time as the local school board submits a request to the board to amend or discontinue them.

B. Requirements for a Standard Diploma.

1. Beginning with the ninth-grade class of 2018–2019 and beyond, students shall earn the required standard and verified units of credit described in subdivision 2 of this subsection.

2. Credits required for graduation with a Standard Diploma.

A "standard unit of credit" or "standard credit" is a credit awarded for a course in which the student successfully completes 140 clock hours of instruction and the requirements of the course. Local school boards may develop alternatives to the requirement for 140 clock hours of instruction as provided for in [8VAC20-131-110](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section110/) and in accordance with board guidelines.

A "verified unit of credit" or "verified credit" is a credit awarded for a course in which a student earns a standard unit of credit and (i) achieves a passing score on a corresponding end-of-course SOL test; (ii) achieves a passing score on an additional test, as defined in [8VAC20-131-5](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section5/) ~~as part of the Virginia Assessment Program~~; (iii) meets the criteria for the receipt of a locally awarded verified credit conferred in accordance with board criteria and guidelines as provided in [8VAC20-131-110](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section110/) B 3 when the student has not passed a corresponding SOL test in ~~English~~ reading and writing, mathematics, laboratory science, or history and social science; (iv) successfully completes assessments in history/social science that include state-developed performance tasks scored locally in accordance with Board guidelines using state-developed rubrics; or ~~(iv)~~ (v) meets the criteria for the receipt of a verified credit for English (writing) by demonstrating ~~mastery~~ attainment of the content of the associated course on ~~authentic~~ locally-administered performance assessments as provided in [8VAC20-131-110](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section110/) B 4.

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~~No more than one locally awarded verified credit may be used to satisfy these requirements, except as provided in subdivision 3 of this subsection for credit accommodations for students with disabilities.~~

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| Discipline Area | Standard Units of Credit Required | | Verified Credits Required |  |
| English (reading and writing) | 4 | | 2 |  |
| Mathematics | 3 | | 1 |  |
| Laboratory Science | 3 | | 1 |  |
| History and Social Science | 3 | | 1 |  |
| Health and Physical Education | 2 | |  |  |
| World Language, Fine Arts, or Career and Technical Education | 2 | |  |  |
| Economics and Personal Finance | 1 | |  |  |
| Electives | 4 | |  |  |
| Total | 22 | | 5 |  |
|  | | | |  |
| Discipline Area | | Specifications | | |
| Mathematics | | Courses completed to satisfy this requirement shall include at least two different course selections from among: algebra I~~,~~; geometry~~,~~; algebra, functions, and data analysis~~,~~; algebra II~~,~~; or other mathematics courses above the level of algebra II. The board shall approve courses to satisfy this requirement. Per the Standards of Quality, ~~a computer science course credit earned by students may be considered a mathematics course credit~~ students may earn a math course credit through a computer science course approved by the Board. | | |
| Laboratory Science | | ~~Courses~~The three courses completed to satisfy this requirement shall include course selections from at least two different science disciplines: earth sciences, biology, chemistry, or physics~~, or completion of the sequence of science courses required for the International Baccalaureate Diploma~~. The board shall approve courses to satisfy this requirement. Per the Standards of Quality, ~~a computer science course credit earned by students may be considered a science course credit~~ students may earn a science course credit through a computer science course approved by the Board.  A laboratory science verified credit may be awarded to students who complete a career and technical education program sequence and (i) pass two examinations or occupational competency assessments in a career and technical education field that confers certification or an occupational competency credential from a recognized industry, trade, or professional association; (ii) acquire two professional licenses in a career and technical education field from the Commonwealth of Virginia; or (iii) pass one examination or competency assessment from clause (i) and acquire one license from clause (ii). The examination or occupational competency assessment must be approved by the board as an additional test to verify student achievement. | | |
| History and Social Science | | Courses completed to satisfy this requirement shall include Virginia and U.S. history, Virginia and U.S. government, and one course in either world history or geography or both. The board shall approve courses to satisfy this requirement. | | |
| World Language, Fine Arts, or Career and Technical Education | | Per the Standards of Quality, credits earned for this requirement shall include one credit in fine or performing arts or career and technical education. Per the Standards of Quality, ~~a computer science course credit earned by students may be considered a career and technical course credit~~ students may earn a career and technical education course credit through a computer science course approved by the Board. | | |
| Electives | | Courses to satisfy this requirement shall include at least two sequential electives as required by the Standards of Quality. | | |
|  | | | | |
| Additional Requirements for Graduation | | | | |
| Advanced Placement, Honors, or International Baccalaureate Course or Career and Technical Education Credential | | In accordance with the Standards of Quality, students shall either (i) complete an Advanced Placement, honors, or International Baccalaureate course, or (ii) earn a career and technical education credential approved by the board, except when a career and technical education credential in a particular subject area is not readily available or appropriate or does not adequately measure student competency, in which case the student shall receive satisfactory competency-based instruction in the subject area to satisfy the standard diploma requirements. The career and technical education credential, when required, could include the successful completion of an industry certification, a state licensure examination, a national occupational competency assessment, or the Virginia workplace readiness assessment. | | |
| Virtual Course  40 | | Students shall successfully complete one virtual course, fully-online or in a blended modality, which may be a non-credit-bearing course or a required or elective credit-bearing course that is offered online. | | |
| Training in emergency first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), and the use of automated external defibrillators (AED) | | Students shall be trained in emergency first aid, CPR, and the use of AED, including hands-on practice of the skills necessary to perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation. Students with an individualized education plan (IEP) or 504 Plan that documents that they cannot successfully complete this training shall be granted a waiver from this graduation requirement, as provided in [8VAC20-131-420](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section420/) B. | | |
| Demonstration of the five Cs | | Students shall acquire and demonstrate foundational skills in critical thinking, creative thinking, collaboration, communication, and citizenship in accordance with the Profile of a Virginia Graduate approved by the board. | | |
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3. The board 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 IEP or 504 Plan shall specify any credit accommodations applicable for the student.

Students completing the requirements for the Standard Diploma may be eligible to receive an honor deemed appropriate by the local school board as described in subsection H of this section.

C. Requirements for an Advanced Studies Diploma.

1. Beginning with the ninth-grade class of 2018–2019 and beyond, students shall earn the required standard and verified units of credit described in subdivision 2 of this subsection.

2. Credits required for graduation with an Advanced Studies Diploma.

A "standard unit of credit" or "standard credit" is a credit awarded for a course in which the student successfully completes 140 clock hours of instruction and the requirements of the course. Local school boards may develop alternatives to the requirement for 140 clock hours of instruction as provided for in [8VAC20-131-110](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section110/) and in accordance with board guidelines.

A "verified unit of credit" or "verified credit" is a credit awarded for a course in which a student earns a standard unit of credit and (i) achieves a passing score on a corresponding end-of-course SOL test; (ii) achieves a passing score on an additional test, as defined in [8VAC20-131-5](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section5/)~~, as part of the Virginia Assessment Program~~; (iii) meets the criteria for the receipt of a locally awarded verified credit conferred in accordance with board criteria and guidelines as provided in [8VAC20-131-110](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section110/) B 3 when the student has not passed a corresponding SOL test in ~~English~~ reading and writing, mathematics, laboratory science, or history and social science; (iv) successfully completes assessments in history/social science that include state-developed performance tasks scored locally in accordance with Board guidelines using state-developed rubrics; or ~~(iv)~~ (v) meets the criteria for the receipt of a verified credit for English (writing) by demonstrating ~~mastery~~ attainment of the content of the associated course on ~~an authentic~~ locally-administered performance ~~assessment~~ assessments as provided in [8VAC20-131-110](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section110/) B 4.

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No more than one locally awarded verified credit may be used to satisfy these requirements.

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| Discipline Area | Standard Units of Credit Required | Verified Credits Required |
| English (reading and writing) | 4 | 2 |
| Mathematics | 4 | 1 |
| Laboratory Science | 4 | 1 |
| History and Social Science | 4 | 1 |
| World Language | 3 |  |
| Health and Physical Education | 2 |  |
| Fine Arts or Career and Technical Education | 1 |  |
| Economics and Personal Finance | 1 |  |
| Electives | 3 |  |
| Total | 26 | 5 |
|  | | |
| Discipline Area | Specifications | |
| Mathematics | Courses completed to satisfy this requirement shall include at least three different course selections from among: algebra I, geometry, algebra II, or other mathematics courses above the level of algebra II. The board shall approve courses to satisfy this requirement. Per the Standards of Quality, ~~a computer science course credit earned by students may be considered a mathematics course credit~~ students may earn a math course credit through a computer science course approved by the Board.  47 | |
| Laboratory Science | ~~Courses~~The four courses completed to satisfy this requirement shall include course selections from at least three different science disciplines from among: earth sciences, biology, chemistry, or physics ~~or completion of the sequence of science courses required for the International Baccalaureate Diploma~~. The board shall approve additional courses to satisfy this requirement. Per the Standards of Quality, ~~a computer science course credit earned by students may be considered a science course credit~~ students may earn a science course credit through a computer science course approved by the Board.  47 | |
| History and Social Science | Courses completed to satisfy this requirement shall include Virginia and U.S. history, Virginia and U.S. government, and two courses in either world history or geography or both. The board shall approve additional courses to satisfy this requirement. | |
| World Language | Courses completed to satisfy this requirement shall include three years of one language or two years of two languages. | |
| Fine Arts or Career and Technical Education | Per the Standards of Quality, ~~a computer science course credit earned by students may be considered a career and technical credit~~ students may earn a career and technical education course credit through a computer science course approved by the Board.  47 | |
| Electives | Courses to satisfy this requirement shall include at least two sequential electives as required by the Standards of Quality. | |
|  | | |
| Additional Requirements for Graduation | | |
| Advanced Placement, Honors, or International Baccalaureate Course or Career and Technical Education Credential | In accordance with the Standards of Quality, students shall either (i) complete an Advanced Placement, honors, or International Baccalaureate course or (ii) earn a career and technical education credential approved by the board, except when a career and technical education credential in a particular subject area is not readily available or appropriate or does not adequately measure student competency, in which case the student shall receive satisfactory competency-based instruction in the subject area to satisfy the advanced studies diploma requirements. The career and technical education credential, when required, could include the successful completion of an industry certification, a state licensure examination, a national occupational competency assessment, or the Virginia workplace readiness assessment. | |
| Virtual Course  48 | Students shall successfully complete one virtual course, fully-online or in a blended modality, which may be a non-credit-bearing course or a required or elective credit-bearing course that is offered online. | |
| Training in emergency first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), and the use of automated external defibrillators (AED). | Students shall be trained in emergency first aid, CPR, and the use of AED, including hands-on practice of the skills necessary to perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation. Students with an IEP or 504 Plan that documents that they cannot successfully complete this training shall be granted a waiver from this graduation requirement, as provided in [8VAC20-131-420](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section420/) B. | |
| Demonstration of the five Cs | Students shall acquire and demonstrate foundational skills in critical thinking, creative thinking, collaboration, communication, and citizenship in accordance with the Profile of a Virginia Graduate approved by the board. | |

D. 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 an Applied Studies ~~Diplomas~~ Diploma in accordance with state and federal laws and regulations regarding special education.

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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.

E. Requirements for Certificates of Program Completion. ~~In accordance with the requirements of the Standards of Quality, students who complete prescribed programs of studies defined by the local school board but do not qualify for a Standard Diploma, an Advanced Studies Diploma, or an Applied Studies Diploma shall be awarded Certificates of Program Completion. The requirements for Certificates of Program Completion are developed by local school boards in accordance with the Standards of Quality.~~ Students who have completed a prescribed course of study as defined by the local school board shall be awarded certificates of program completion by local school boards if they are not eligible to receive a Board of Education-approved diploma.

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F. In accordance with the provisions of the compulsory attendance law and [8VAC20-30](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter30/), Regulations Governing Adult High School Programs, ~~students~~ a student who ~~do~~ does not qualify for diplomas may earn a high school equivalency credential. The requirements for the General Achievement Adult High School Diploma are provided in [8VAC20-30-20](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter30/section20/).

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G. At a student's request, the local school board shall communicate or otherwise make known to institutions of higher education, potential employers, or other applicable third parties, in a manner that the local school board deems appropriate, that a student has attained the state's academic expectations by earning a Virginia diploma and that the value of such a diploma is not affected in any way by the accreditation status of the student's school.

H. Awards for exemplary student performance. Students who demonstrate academic excellence and outstanding achievement may be eligible for one or more of the following awards:

1. 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 ~~shall~~ may earn the student at least nine transferable college credits in Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), Cambridge, or dual enrollment courses.

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2. 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."

3. 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~~ and (i) pass an examination or an occupational competency assessment in a career and technical education concentration (approved sequence of two courses) or specialization (approved sequence of three or more courses) 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.

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4. The Board of Education's Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Seal shall be awarded to students who meet criteria established by the board.

5. 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.

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6. The Board of Education’s Excellence in Fine Arts is awarded to students who criteria established by the Board.

~~6.~~ 7. 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.

~~7.~~ 8. 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; (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.

~~8.~~ 9. Students may receive other seals or awards for exceptional academic, career and technical, citizenship, or other exemplary performance in accordance with criteria defined by the local school board.

I. Students completing graduation requirements in a summer school program shall be eligible for a diploma. The last school attended by the student during the regular session shall award the diploma unless otherwise agreed upon by the principals of the two schools.

J. Students who complete Advanced Placement courses, college-level courses, or courses required for an International Baccalaureate Diploma shall be deemed to have completed the course requirements for graduation under these standards provided they have earned the total number of standard units of credit and verified units of credit in each discipline area in accordance with the requirements for the Standard Diploma and the Advanced Studies Diploma, as specified in subsections B and C of this section.

K. Students shall be counseled annually regarding the opportunities ~~for using~~ to earn verified credit including the use of additional tests for ~~earning verified credits~~ this purpose, as provided in accordance with the provisions of [8VAC20-131-110](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section110/), and the consequences of failing to fulfill the obligations to complete the requirements for verified units of credit.

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**Statutory Authority**

§§ [22.1-16](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-16/) and [22.1-253.13:3](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-253.13:3/) of the Code of Virginia.

**Historical Notes**

Derived from [Volume 34, Issue 08](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=34:08), eff. January 11, 2018; amended, Virginia Register [Volume 35, Issue 25](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=35:25), eff. September 19, 2019.

**8VAC20-131-60. Transfer students.**

A. The provisions of this section pertain generally to students who transfer into Virginia high schools. Students transferring in grades kindergarten through 8 from Virginia public schools or nonpublic schools accredited by one of the approved accrediting constituent members of the Virginia Council for Private Education (VCPE) shall be given recognition for all grade-level work completed. The academic record of students transferring from all other schools shall be evaluated to determine appropriate grade placement in accordance with policies adopted by the local school board. The State Testing Identifier (STI) for students who transfer into a Virginia public school from another Virginia public school shall be retained by the receiving school.

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~~B. For the purposes of this section, the term "beginning" means within the first 20 hours of instruction per course. The term "during" means after the first 20 hours of instruction per course.~~

~~C.~~ B. Standard or verified units of credit earned by a student in a Virginia public school shall be transferable without limitation regardless of the accreditation status of the Virginia public school in which the credits were earned. Virginia public schools shall accept standard and verified units of credit from other Virginia public schools, Virginia's virtual learning program, Virtual Virginia, and state-operated programs. Standard units of credit also shall be accepted for courses satisfactorily completed in accredited colleges and universities when prior written approval of the principal has been granted or the student has been given credit by the previous school attended.

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~~D.~~ C. A ~~secondary~~ high school shall accept credits toward graduation received from Virginia nonpublic schools accredited by one of the approved accrediting constituent members of the VCPE. The board shall maintain contact with the VCPE and may periodically review its accrediting procedures and policies as part of its policies under this section.

Nothing in these standards shall prohibit a public school from accepting standard units of credit toward graduation awarded to students who transfer from all other schools when the courses for which the student receives credit generally match the description of or can be substituted for courses for which the receiving school gives standard credit, and the school from which the child transfers certifies that the courses for which credit is given meet the requirements of [8VAC20-131-110](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section110/) A.

~~E.~~ D.. The academic record of a student transferring from other Virginia public schools shall be sent directly to the school receiving the student upon request of the receiving school in accordance with the provisions of [8VAC20-150](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter150/), Management of the Student's Scholastic Record in the Public Schools of Virginia. The State Testing Identifier (STI) for students who transfer into a Virginia public school from another Virginia public school shall be retained by the receiving school.

~~F.~~ E. The academic record of a student transferring into Virginia public schools from other than a Virginia public school shall be evaluated to determine the number of standard units of credit that have been earned, including credit from schools outside the United States, and the number of verified units of credit needed to graduate in accordance with subsection G of this section. Standard units of credit also shall be accepted for courses satisfactorily completed in accredited colleges and universities when the student has been given credit by the previous school attended.

Students transferring above the tenth grade from schools or other education programs that do not require or give credit for health and physical education shall not be required to take these courses to meet graduation requirements.

Students transferring into a Virginia public school from other than a Virginia public school shall earn no fewer than the number of verified units listed in subdivision G 1 or G 2 of this section. The school division shall accept the following tests from the sending state, country, private school, or Department of Defense Educational Activity school for the purpose of awarding verified units of credit in courses previously completed at another school or program of study, for the purpose of awarding a Virginia high school diploma:

1. End-of-course or comprehensive subject area tests ~~required for graduation~~ administered by the sending state;

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~~2. Exit tests required for graduation by the sending state;~~ and

~~3.~~ 2. National norm-referenced achievement tests. When students transfer to a Virginia public school from a state that requires a national norm-referenced achievement test, and that state education agency has set a "cut score" or passing score for the ~~purpose of graduation~~ test, the school division shall accept the test for the purpose of awarding a verified credit if the test includes some content in a subject for which a verified credit may be awarded. If that state education agency has not set a cut score for the norm-referenced test, the test may not be used for the purpose of awarding a verified credit or earning a high school diploma.

Any substitute test approved by the board for verified credit shall be accepted in lieu of the applicable SOL tests if the applicable standard credit has been earned by the student.

The sending state's test must include content in the subjects for which verified credit is awarded. The test does not have to be comparable to a Virginia SOL test, so long as the test includes some content in the subject area. If the test includes some content from more than one subject, verified credits shall be awarded for every subject area covered by the test.

~~G.~~ F. Students entering a Virginia public high school for the first time after the tenth grade shall earn as many credits as possible toward the prescribed graduation requirements. However, schools may substitute courses required in other states in the same content area if the student is unable to meet the specific content requirements of [8VAC20-131-50](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section50/) or [8VAC20-131-51](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section51/), respectively, without taking a heavier than normal course load in any semester, by taking summer school, or by taking courses after the time when the student otherwise would have graduated.

The graduation requirements for students transferring into a Virginia high school for the first time shall be as follows:

1. For a Standard Diploma for students following the graduation requirements prescribed in 8VAC20-131-50:

a. Students entering a Virginia high school for the first time at the beginning of or during the ninth grade prior to the 2018–2019 school year shall meet the graduation requirements prescribed in [8VAC20-131-50](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section50/). Students entering a Virginia high school for the first time at the beginning of or during the ninth grade in the 2018–2019 school year or thereafter shall meet the graduation requirements prescribed in [8VAC20-131-51](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section51/).

b. Students entering a Virginia high school for the first time at the beginning of or during the tenth grade prior to the 2019–2020 school year or at the beginning of the eleventh grade prior to the 2020–2021 school year shall meet the graduation requirements prescribed in [8VAC20-131-50](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section50/), except that such students shall ~~only~~ be required to earn a minimum of four verified units of credit: one each in English, mathematics, history, and science. ~~Students entering a Virginia high school for the first time at the beginning of or during the tenth grade in the 2019–2020 school year or thereafter or at the beginning of the eleventh grade in the 2020–2021 school year or thereafter, shall meet the graduation requirements prescribed in~~[~~8VAC20-131-51~~](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section51/)~~.~~

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c. Students entering a Virginia high school for the first time during the eleventh grade prior to the 2020–2021 school year or at the beginning of the twelfth grade prior to the 2021–2022 school year shall meet the graduation requirements prescribed in [8VAC20-131-50](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section50/), except that such students shall ~~only~~ be required to earn a minimum of two verified units of credit: one in English and one in ~~mathematics if participation in mathematics testing is required by federal law, otherwise, such verified credit may be~~ a subject area of the student's own choosing. ~~Students entering a Virginia high school for the first time during the eleventh grade in the 2020–2021 school year or thereafter, or at the beginning of twelfth grade in the 2021–2022 school year or thereafter, shall meet the graduation requirements prescribed in~~[~~8VAC20-131-51~~](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section51/)~~, except that such students shall only be required to earn a minimum of two verified units of credit: one in English and one in mathematics if participation in mathematics testing is required by federal law, otherwise, such verified credit may be of the student's own choosing.~~

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d. Students transferring after 20 instructional hours per course of their senior or twelfth grade year shall be given every opportunity to earn a diploma following the graduation requirements prescribed in [8VAC20-131-50](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section50/) ~~for students entering prior to the 2021–2022 school year, or following the graduation requirements prescribed in~~[~~8VAC20-131-51~~](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section51/)~~for students entering in the 2021–2022 school year or thereafter~~. If it is not possible for the student to meet the requirements for a diploma, arrangements should be made for the student's previous school to award the diploma. If these arrangements cannot be made, a waiver of the verified unit of credit requirements may be available to the student. The Department of Education may grant such waivers upon request by the local school board in accordance with guidelines prescribed by the board.

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2. For an Advanced Studies Diploma for students following the graduation requirements prescribed in 8VAC20-131-50:

a. Students entering a Virginia high school for the first time at the beginning of or during the ninth grade prior to the 2018–2019 school year shall earn credit as prescribed in [8VAC20-131-50](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section50/). ~~Students entering a Virginia high school for the first time at the beginning of or during the ninth grade in the 2018-2019 school year or thereafter shall earn credit as prescribed in~~[~~8VAC20-131-51~~](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section51/)~~.~~

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b. Students entering a Virginia high school for the first time at the beginning of or during the tenth grade prior to the 2019–2020 school year or at the beginning of the eleventh grade prior to the 2020–2021 school year shall meet the graduation requirements prescribed in [8VAC20-131-50](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section50/), except that such students shall ~~only~~ be required toearn a minimum of six verified units of credit: two in English and one each in mathematics, history, and science and one of the student's own choosing. ~~Students entering a Virginia high school for the first time at the beginning of or during the tenth grade in the 2019–2020 school year or thereafter or at the beginning of the eleventh grade in the 2020–2021 school year or thereafter shall earn credit as prescribed in~~[~~8VAC20-131-51~~](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section51/)~~.~~

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c. Students entering a Virginia high school for the first time during the eleventh grade prior to the 2020–2021 school year or at the beginning of the twelfth grade prior to the 2021–2022 school year shall meet the graduation requirements prescribed in [8VAC20-131-50](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section50/), except that such students shall ~~only~~ be required to earn a minimum of four verified units of credit: one in English, one in mathematics if required participation in mathematics testing is required by federal law, otherwise such verified credit may be of the student's own choosing, and two additional verified credits of the student's own choosing. ~~Students entering a Virginia high school for the first time during the eleventh grade in the 2020–2021 school year or thereafter, or at the beginning of the twelfth grade in the 2021–2022 school year or thereafter, shall meet the graduation requirements prescribed in~~[~~8VAC20-131-51~~](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section51/)~~, except that such students shall only be required to earn a minimum of two verified units of credit: one in English, and one in mathematics if participation in mathematics testing is required by federal law, otherwise, such verified credit may be of the student's own choosing.~~

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d. Students transferring after 20 instructional hours per course of their senior or twelfth grade year shall be given every opportunity to earn a diploma following the graduation requirements prescribed in [8VAC20-131-50](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section50/) for students entering prior to the 2021–2022 school year~~, or following the graduation requirements prescribed in~~[~~8VAC20-131-51~~](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section51/)~~for students entering in the 2021–2022 school year or thereafter.~~ If it is not possible for the student to meet the requirements for a diploma, arrangements should be made for the student's previous school to award the diploma. If these arrangements cannot be made, a waiver of the verified unit of credit requirements may be available to the student. The Department of Education may grant such waivers upon request by the local school board in accordance with guidelines prescribed by the board.

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3. For a Standard or Advanced Studies Diploma for students meeting graduation requirements prescribed in 8VAC20-131-51:

a. Students entering a Virginia high school for the first time at the beginning of or during the ninth grade in the 2018-2019 school year or thereafter shall earn credit as prescribed in [8VAC20-131-51](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section51/).

b. Students entering a Virginia high school for the first time at the beginning of or during the tenth grade in the 2019–2020 school year or thereafter shall earn credit as prescribed in [8VAC20-131-51](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section51/), except that such students shall be required to earn a minimum of four verified units of credit: one each in English, mathematics, history, and science. Students shall still exhaust all options for meeting all graduation requirements as prescribed in [8VAC20-131-51](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section51/) before accessing the verified credit reduction.

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c. Students entering a Virginia high school for the first time at the beginning or during the eleventh grade in the 2020–2021 school year or thereafter shall earn credit as prescribed in [8VAC20-131-51](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section51/), except that such students shall be required to earn a minimum of two verified units of credit: one in English, and one in a subject area of the student's own choosing. Students shall still exhaust all options for meeting all graduation requirements as prescribed in [8VAC20-131-51](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section51/).

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d. Students transferring at the beginning or during senior or twelfth grade year in the 2021–2022 school year or thereafter shall be given every opportunity to earn a diploma following the graduation requirements prescribed in [8VAC20-131-51](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section51/) except that such students shall be required to earn a minimum of two verified units of credit: one in English and one of the student's own choosing. If it is not possible for the student to meet the requirements for a diploma, arrangements should be made for the student's previous school to award the diploma. If these arrangements cannot be made, a waiver of the verified unit of credit requirements may be available to the student. The Department of Education may grant such waivers upon request by the local school board in accordance with guidelines prescribed by the board.

~~3.~~ 4. For an Applied Studies Diploma: In accordance with the requirements of the Standards of Quality, students with disabilities who complete the requirements of their Individualized Education Plan and do 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.

~~4.~~ 5. For a Certificate of Program Completion: In accordance with the requirements of the Standards of Quality, students who complete prescribed programs of studies defined by the local school board, but do not qualify for a Standard Diploma, an Advanced Studies Diploma, or an Applied Studies Diploma shall be awarded Certificates of Program Completion. The requirements for Certificates of Program Completion are developed by local school boards in accordance with the Standards of Quality.

H. Any local school division receiving approval to increase its course credit requirements for a diploma may not deny either the Standard Diploma or the Advanced Studies Diploma to any transfer student who has otherwise met the requirements contained in these standards if the transfer student can only meet the division's additional requirements by taking a heavier than normal course load in any semester, by taking summer school, or by taking courses after the time when the student otherwise would have graduated.

~~H.~~ G. The transcript of a student who graduates or transfers from a Virginia ~~secondary~~ high school shall conform to the requirements of [8VAC20-160](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter160/), Regulations Governing Secondary School Transcripts.

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~~I.~~ H.. The accreditation status of a high school shall not be included on the student transcript provided to colleges, universities, or employers. The board expressly states that any student who has met the graduation requirements and has received a Virginia diploma holds a diploma that should be recognized as equal to any other Virginia diploma of the same type, regardless of the accreditation status of the student's high school. It is the express policy of the board that no student shall be affected by the accreditation status of the student's school. The board shall take appropriate action, from time to time, to ensure that no student is affected by the accreditation status of the student's school.

**Statutory Authority**

§§ [22.1-16](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-16/) and [22.1-253.13:3](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-253.13:3/) of the Code of Virginia.

**Historical Notes**

Derived from [Volume 14, Issue 01](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol14/iss01/v14i01.pdf), eff. October 29, 1997; amended, Virginia Register [Volume 16, Issue 25](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol16/iss25/v16i25.pdf), eff. September 28, 2000; [Volume 22, Issue 24](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol22/iss24/v22i24.pdf), eff. September 7, 2006; [Volume 25, Issue 21](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=25:21), eff. July 31, 2009; [Volume 27, Issue 24](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=27:24), eff. August 31, 2011; [Volume 31, Issue 05](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=31:05), eff. December 3, 2014; [Volume 31, Issue 26](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=31:26), eff. October 8, 2015; [Volume 34, Issue 08](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=34:08), eff. January 11, 2018.

Part IV  
School Instructional Program

**8VAC20-131-70. Program of instruction and learning objectives.**

A. As required by the Standards of Quality, each local school board shall develop and implement a program of instruction for grades kindergarten through 12 that is aligned to the Standards of Learning and meets or exceeds the requirements of the board. The program of instruction shall emphasize reading, writing, speaking, mathematical ~~concepts and computations~~ essential knowledge, skills, and processes, proficiency in the use of computers and related technology, computer science and computational thinking, including computer coding, and scientific and engineering concepts and processes; essential skills and concepts of citizenship, including knowledge of Virginia history and world and United States history, economics, government, world languages, international cultures, health and physical education, environmental issues, and geography necessary for responsible participation in American society and in the international community; fine arts, which may include music ~~and art, and practical arts~~ , visual arts, dance arts, and theatre arts; career and technical education offerings; knowledge and skills needed to qualify for further education, gainful employment, or training in a career ~~or technical field~~ cluster or pathway; and development of the ability to apply such skills and knowledge in preparation for eventual employment and lifelong learning and to achieve economic self-sufficiency.

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B. As described in [8VAC20-131-51](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section51/) and in accordance with the Profile of a Virginia Graduate approved by the board, the instructional program and learning objectives shall ensure that students (i) attain the knowledge, skills, competencies, and experiences necessary to be successful in the evolving global economy whether immediately entering the world of work or pursuing a postsecondary education and (ii) acquire and be able to demonstrate foundational skills in critical thinking, creative thinking, collaboration, communication, and citizenship. Consistent with the Profile of a Virginia Graduate, the instructional program and learning objectives shall ensure that, as age appropriate, during the kindergarten through grade 12 experience, students achieve and apply appropriate career development and technical knowledge. During the elementary and middle school years, students ~~shall explore personal interests, be exposed to different types of careers, and plan for career development~~ be provided opportunities to expand career awareness and exploration based on personal interests. In ~~the later~~ high school years students are to attain and demonstrate ~~productive~~ appropriate workplace readiness skills, qualities, and behaviors; align knowledge, skills, and personal interests with career opportunities; and understand and demonstrate civic responsibility and community engagement.

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C. Each school shall provide a program of instruction that promotes individual student academic achievement in the essential academic disciplines and shall provide additional instructional opportunities that meet the abilities, interests, and educational needs of students. Each school shall establish learning objectives to be achieved by students at successive grade levels that meet or exceed the knowledge and skills contained in the Standards of Learning for English, mathematics, science, and history and social science adopted by the board and shall continually assess the progress of each student in relation to the objectives.

D. Instruction shall be designed to accommodate all students, including those identified with disabilities in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or § 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, as amended, those identified as gifted or talented, and those who are ELs. Students with disabilities shall have the opportunity to receive a full continuum of education services, in accordance with [8VAC20-81](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter81/), Regulations Governing Special Education Programs for Children with Disabilities in Virginia and other pertinent federal and state laws and regulations.

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E. In kindergarten through grade 12, students may participate in a remediation recovery program as established by the board in English (reading) or mathematics or both.

**Statutory Authority**

§§ [22.1-16](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-16/) and [22.1-253.13:3](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-253.13:3/) of the Code of Virginia.

**Historical Notes**

Derived from [Volume 14, Issue 01](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol14/iss01/v14i01.pdf), eff. October 29, 1997; amended, Virginia Register [Volume 16, Issue 25](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol16/iss25/v16i25.pdf), eff. September 28, 2000; [Volume 22, Issue 24](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol22/iss24/v22i24.pdf), eff. September 7, 2006; [Volume 34, Issue 08](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=34:08), eff. January 11, 2018.

**8VAC20-131-80. Instructional program in elementary schools.**

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A. The elementary school shall provide each student a program of instruction that ~~corresponds to~~ aligns with the Standards of Learning for (i) English~~,~~; (ii) mathematics~~,~~; (iii) science ~~,~~; and (iv) history and social science. In addition, each school shall provide instruction in art, music, and physical education and health and shall require students to participate in a program of physical fitness during the regular school year in accordance with guidelines established by the board. In addition, each school shall provide instruction in career exploration in accordance with the provisions of [8VAC20-131-140](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section140/).

B. To provide students with sufficient opportunity to learn, local school divisions shall provide a minimum of 680 hours of the required 990 hours of instructional time to students in elementary school in the four academic disciplines of English, mathematics, science, and history and social science. Effective July 1, 2022, each kindergarten program shall provide 990 hours of instruction and shall meet the minimum of 680 hours of the required 990 hours of instructional time in the four academic disciplines of English, mathematics, science, and history and social science.

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~~B.~~ C. In kindergarten through grade 3, reading, writing, spelling, and mathematics shall be the focus of the instructional program. Schools shall maintain an early skills and knowledge achievement record in reading and mathematics for each student in grades kindergarten through 3 to ~~monitor student progress~~ establish foundational concepts necessary for future academic success and to promote successful achievement on the third grade SOL tests. This record shall be included with the student's records if the student transfers to a new school.

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~~In accordance with the Standards of Quality, local school boards shall implement early identification, diagnosis, and assistance for students with reading and mathematics problems and provide instructional strategies and reading and mathematics practices that benefit the development of reading and mathematics skills for all students.~~

~~C.~~ ~~To provide students with sufficient opportunity to learn, local school divisions shall provide a minimum of 680 hours of the required 990 hours of instructional time to students in elementary school in the four academic disciplines of English, mathematics, science, and history and social science. Local school divisions shall provide a minimum of 375 hours of the required 540 hours of instructional time to students in half-day kindergarten in the four academic disciplines of English, mathematics, science, and history and social science.~~

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D. In accordance with the Standards of Quality, local school boards shall implement a structured program of early identification, diagnosis, and assistance for students with reading and mathematics problems and provide instructional strategies and reading and mathematics practices that benefit the development of reading and mathematics skills for all students.

Students who are not successfully progressing in early reading proficiency or who are unable to read with comprehension the materials used for instruction shall receive additional instructional time in reading, which may include summer school.

In accordance with the Standards of Quality, local school divisions shall provide reading intervention services to students in grades kindergarten through 3 who demonstrate deficiencies based on their individual performance on the SOL reading test or any reading diagnostic test that meets criteria established by the Department of Education. The local school division, in its discretion, shall provide such reading intervention services prior to promoting a student from grade 3 to grade 4.

Students who are not successfully progressing in early mathematics proficiency or who exhibit delays in developing numeracy and fluency skills at the appropriate grade level shall receive additional instructional time in mathematics, which may include summer school.

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Each school shall ensure that remediation and intervention scheduling does not impede progress in other classes. Alternatives to long-term intermittent pull outs from resources shall be considered first.

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~~D.~~ E. It is recommended that elementary school students not be required to attend summer school or weekend remediation classes solely based on failing a SOL test in science or history and social science. However, any student who fails to achieve a passing score on all Standard of Learning assessments for the relevant grade level in grades 3 through 5 shall be required to attend a remediation program or to participate in another form of remediation. Further, any student who fails an end-of-course test required for the award of a verified unit of credit shall be required to attend a remediation program or to participate in another form of remediation.

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F. Each elementary school shall provide students with a daily recess during the regular school year as determined appropriate by the school.

G. Elementary schools are encouraged to provide instruction in world languages.

**Statutory Authority**

§ [22.1-16](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-16/) and [22.1-253.13:3](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-253.13:3/) of the Code of Virginia.

**Historical Notes**

Derived from [Volume 14, Issue 01](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol14/iss01/v14i01.pdf), eff. October 29, 1997; amended, Virginia Register [Volume 16, Issue 25](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol16/iss25/v16i25.pdf), eff. September 28, 2000; [Volume 22, Issue 24](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol22/iss24/v22i24.pdf), eff. September 7, 2006; [Volume 25, Issue 21](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=25:21), eff. July 31, 2009; [Volume 34, Issue 08](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=34:08), eff. January 11, 2018; [Volume 35, Issue 25](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=35:25), eff. September 19, 2019.

**8VAC20-131-90. Instructional program in middle schools.**

A. The middle school shall provide each student a program of instruction that ~~corresponds to~~ aligns with the Standards of Learning for (i) English~~,~~; (ii) mathematics~~,~~; (iii) science ~~,~~; and (iv) history and social science. In addition, each school shall provide instruction in art, music, world language, physical education and health, and career and technical exploration and shall require students to participate in a program of physical fitness during the regular school year in accordance with guidelines established by the board. Each middle school shall provide a course in career investigation in accordance with the provisions of [8VAC20-131-140](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section140/). School divisions may seek alternate means of delivering the career investigation course content provided it is equivalent in content and rigor and provides the foundation for students to develop their academic and career plans as described in [8VAC20-131-140](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section140/) C 2. Possible alternative means to deliver the career investigation course content could include online methods, middle school exploratory course options, and delivering the course content through other courses.

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B. The middle school shall provide a minimum of eight courses to students in the eighth grade. English, mathematics, science, and history and social science shall be required. Four elective courses shall be available: level one of a world language, one in health and physical education, one in fine arts, and one in career and technical exploration.

C. Level one of a world language and an Algebra I course shall be available to all eighth grade students. For any high school credit-bearing course taken in middle school, parents may request that grades be omitted from the student's transcript and the student not earn high school credit for the course in accordance with policies adopted by the local school board. Notice of this provision must be provided to parents with a deadline and format for making such a request. Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to prevent a middle school from offering any other credit-bearing courses for graduation.

D. To provide students a sufficient opportunity to learn, each student shall be provided a total of 560 instructional hours per year in the four academic disciplines of English, mathematics, science, and history and social science.

E. Each school shall ensure that students who are unable to read with comprehension the materials used for instruction receive additional instruction in reading, which may include summer school.

F. In accordance with the Standards of Quality each school shall ensure that students in grades 6 through 8 who need targeted mathematics remediation and intervention, including remediation or intervention for ~~computational deficiencies~~ mathematics essential knowledge, skills, and processes as demonstrated by their individual performance on any diagnostic test or grade-level SOL mathematics test, shall receive additional instruction in mathematics, which may include summer school. Students in grades 6 through 8 who are at-risk of failing the algebra I end-of-course test shall be provided algebra readiness intervention services.

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G. It is recommended that middle school students not be required to attend summer school or weekend remediation classes solely based on failing a SOL test in science or history and social science. However, any student who fails to achieve a passing score on all Standard of Learning assessments for the relevant grade level in grades 6 through 8 shall be required to attend a remediation program or to participate in another form of remediation. Further, any student who fails an end-of-course test required for the award of a verified unit of credit shall be required to attend a remediation program or to participate in another form of remediation.

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**Statutory Authority**

§§ [22.1-16](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-16/) and [22.1-253.13:3](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-253.13:3/) of the Code of Virginia.

**Historical Notes**

Derived from [Volume 14, Issue 01](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol14/iss01/v14i01.pdf), eff. October 29, 1997; amended, Virginia Register [Volume 16, Issue 25](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol16/iss25/v16i25.pdf), eff. September 28, 2000; [Volume 22, Issue 24](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol22/iss24/v22i24.pdf), eff. September 7, 2006; [Volume 34, Issue 08](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=34:08), eff. January 11, 2018.

**8VAC20-131-100. Instructional program in ~~secondary~~ high schools.**

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A. The ~~secondary~~ high school, in accordance with the Profile of a Virginia Graduate approved by the board, shall provide a program of instruction to ensure that students (i) attain the knowledge, skills, competencies, and experiences necessary to be successful in the evolving global economy whether immediately entering the world of work or pursuing a postsecondary education and (ii) acquire and be able to demonstrate foundational skills in critical thinking and creative thinking, collaboration, communication, and citizenship in accordance with [8VAC20-131-70](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section70/) and the Profile of a Virginia Graduate.

The ~~secondary~~ high school shall provide each student a program of instruction in the four core academic areas of English, mathematics, science, and history and social science that identifies the knowledge and skills that students should attain, giving due consideration to critical thinking, creative thinking, collaboration, communication, and citizenship, in the early years of high school andenables each student to meet the prescribed graduation requirements. The ~~secondary~~ high school shall offer opportunities for each student, including:

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1. Career and technical education choices that incorporate knowledge of regional workforce needs and opportunities;prepare the student as a career and technical education program completer in one of three or more occupational areas; and that prepare the student for technical or preprofessional postsecondary programs;

2. Coursework and experiences that prepare the student for college-level studies including access to at least three Advanced Placement (AP) courses, college-level courses for degree credit, International Baccalaureate (IB) courses, Cambridge courses, or any combination thereof;

3. Preparation for college admissions tests;

4. Study and exploration of the fine arts and world languages; and

5. Participation in work experiences such as internships, externships, and other work-based learning experiences, and attaining workforce and career readiness and industry credentials.

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B. Minimum course offerings for each ~~secondary~~ high school shall provide opportunities for students to meet the graduation requirements stated in this chapter and must include:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | English | 4 |
|  | Mathematics | 4 |
|  | Science (Laboratory) | 4 |
|  | History and Social Science | 4 |
|  | World Language | 3 |
|  | Electives | 4 |
|  | Career and Technical Education | 11 |
|  | Fine Arts | 2 |
|  | Health and Physical Education | 2 |
|  | Economics and Personal Finance | 1 |
|  | Total Units | 39 |

C. Classroom driver education may count for 36 class periods, or the equivalent in minutes, of health education. Students shall not be removed from classes other than health and physical education for the in-car phase of driver education.

D. Each school shall ensure that students who are unable to read with comprehension the materials used for instruction receive additional instruction in reading, which may include summer school.

E. In accordance with the Standards of Quality, each school shall ensure that students who need targeted mathematics remediation and intervention, including remediation or intervention for computational deficiencies as demonstrated by their individual performance on any diagnostic test or grade-level SOL mathematics test shall receive additional instruction in mathematics, which may include summer school. Students in grade 9 who are at-risk of failing the algebra I end-of-course test, as demonstrated by their individual performance on any diagnostic test that has been approved by the department, shall be provided algebra readiness intervention services.

**Statutory Authority**

§ [22.1-16](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-16/) and [22.1-253.13:3](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-253.13:3/) of the Code of Virginia.

**Historical Notes**

Derived from [Volume 14, Issue 01](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol14/iss01/v14i01.pdf), eff. October 29, 1997; amended, Virginia Register [Volume 16, Issue 25](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol16/iss25/v16i25.pdf), eff. September 28, 2000; [Volume 22, Issue 24](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol22/iss24/v22i24.pdf), eff. September 7, 2006; [Volume 25, Issue 21](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=25:21), eff. July 31, 2009; [Volume 27, Issue 24](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=27:24), eff. August 31, 2011; [Volume 34, Issue 08](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=34:08), eff. January 11, 2018.

**~~8VAC20-131-110. Standard and verified units of credit.~~**

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~~A. A "standard unit of credit" or "standard credit" is a credit awarded for a course in which the student successfully completes 140 clock hours of instruction and the requirements of the course. A school division may waive the requirement that a student receive 140 clock hours of instruction to earn a standard credit, effective with students enrolled in the 2015-2016 school year, as prescribed in the Standards of Quality and board guidelines. When credit is awarded in less than whole units, the increment awarded must be no greater than the fractional part of the 140 hours of instruction provided. If a school division elects to award credit on a basis other than the 140 clock hours of instruction required for a standard unit of credit defined in this subsection, the local school division shall provide the board with satisfactory proof, based on board guidelines, that the students for whom the 140-clock-hour requirement is waived have learned the content and skills included in the relevant Standards of Learning. In addition, the local school division shall develop a written policy approved by the superintendent and school board that ensures:~~

~~1. That the content of the course for which credit is awarded is comparable to 140 clock hours of instruction; and~~

~~2. That upon completion, the aims and objectives of the course have been met.~~

~~B. A "verified unit of credit" or "verified credit" is a credit awarded for a course in which a student earns a standard unit of credit and completes one of the following:~~

~~1. Achieves a passing score on a corresponding end-of-course SOL test. In accordance with the provisions of the Standards of Quality, students may earn a standard and verified unit of credit for any elective course in which the core academic Standards of Learning course content has been integrated and the student passes the related end-of-course SOL test. Such course and test combinations must be approved by the board.~~

~~Upon waiver of the 140-clock-hour requirement according to board guidelines, qualified students who have received a standard unit of credit shall be permitted to sit for the relevant SOL test to earn a verified credit without having to meet the 140-clock-hour requirement.~~

~~2. Achieves a passing score on an additional test, as defined in~~[~~8VAC20-131-5~~](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section5/)~~, as a part of the Virginia Assessment Program.~~

~~3. Meets the criteria for the receipt of a locally awarded verified credit when the student has not passed a corresponding SOL test.~~

~~a. Students who enter the ninth grade for the first time prior to the 2018-2019 school year and do not pass SOL tests in English, mathematics, science, or history and social science may receive locally awarded verified credits from the local school board in accordance with criteria established in guidelines adopted by the board. Credit accommodations for students with disabilities may be used to confer locally awarded verified credits as provided in~~[~~8VAC20-131-50~~](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section50/)~~B 3.~~

~~b. Students who enter the ninth grade for the first time in the 2018-2019 school year or thereafter and do not pass SOL tests in English, mathematics, laboratory science, or history and social science may receive locally awarded verified credits from the local school board in accordance with criteria established in guidelines adopted by the board. No more than one locally awarded verified credit may be used to satisfy graduation requirements, except as provided in~~[~~8VAC20-131-51~~](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section51/)~~B 3 for students with disabilities seeking a standard diploma.~~

~~4. Meets the criteria for the receipt of a verified credit in English (writing) by demonstrating mastery of the content of the associated course on an authentic performance assessment, that complies with guidelines adopted by the board. Such students shall not also be required to take the corresponding SOL test in English (writing).~~

~~C. The board may from time to time approve additional tests for the purpose of awarding verified credit. Such additional tests, which enable students to earn verified units of credit, must, at a minimum, meet the following criteria:~~

~~1. The test must be standardized and graded independently of the school or school division in which the test is given;~~

~~2. The test must be knowledge based;~~

~~3. The test must be administered on a statewide, multistate, or international basis, or administered as part of another state's accountability assessment program; and~~

~~4. To be counted in a specific academic area, the test must measure content that incorporates or exceeds the Standards of Learning content in the course for which verified credit is given.~~

~~The board shall set the score that must be achieved to earn a verified unit of credit on the additional test options.~~

~~D. With such funds as are appropriated by the General Assembly, the board shall provide opportunities for students who meet criteria adopted by the board to have an expedited retake of a SOL test to earn verified credit.~~

~~E. The provisions of this section are effective on and after the beginning of the 2018–2019 academic year.~~

**Statutory Authority**

§§ [22.1-16](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-16/) and 22.1-253.13 of the Code of Virginia.

**Historical Notes**

Derived from [Volume 14, Issue 01](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol14/iss01/v14i01.pdf), eff. October 29, 1997; amended, Virginia Register [Volume 16, Issue 25](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol16/iss25/v16i25.pdf), eff. September 28, 2000; [Volume 22, Issue 24](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol22/iss24/v22i24.pdf), eff. September 7, 2006; [Volume 27, Issue 24](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=27:24), eff. August 31, 2011; [Volume 31, Issue 05](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=31:05), eff. December 3, 2014; [Volume 31, Issue 26](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=31:26), eff. October 8, 2015; [Volume 34, Issue 08](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=34:08), eff. January 11, 2018; [Volume 35, Issue 25](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=35:25), eff. September 19, 2019; [Volume 36, Issue 19](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=36:19), eff. June 25, 2020.

**8VAC20-131-120. Summer school.**

A. The courses offered and the quality of instruction in the summer school program shall be comparable to that offered during the regular school term. At the middle and ~~secondary~~ high school levels, credit for courses taken for credit toward graduation other than a repeat course shall be awarded in accordance with the requirements of [8VAC20-131-110](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section110/). Students must also meet the requirements for SOL testing if appropriate.

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B. Summer school instruction at any level, which is provided as part of a state-funded remedial program, shall be designed to improve specific identified student deficiencies. Such programs shall be conducted in accordance with regulations adopted by the board.

**Statutory Authority**

§§ [22.1-16](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-16/) and [22.1-253.13:3](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-253.13:3/) of the Code of Virginia.

**Historical Notes**

Derived from [Volume 14, Issue 01](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol14/iss01/v14i01.pdf), eff. October 29, 1997; amended, Virginia Register [Volume 16, Issue 25](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol16/iss25/v16i25.pdf), eff. September 28, 2000; [Volume 34, Issue 08](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=34:08), eff. January 11, 2018.

**8VAC20-131-130. Elective courses.**

Locally developed elective courses offered for credit toward high school graduation shall be approved by the division superintendent and local school board.

**Statutory Authority**

§§ [22.1-19](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-19/) and [22.1-253.13:3](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-253.13:3/) of the Code of Virginia.

**Historical Notes**

Derived from [Volume 14, Issue 01](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol14/iss01/v14i01.pdf), eff. October 29, 1997; amended, Virginia Register [Volume 16, Issue 25](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol16/iss25/v16i25.pdf), eff. September 28, 2000.

**8VAC20-131-140. College and career readiness; career exposure, exploration, and planning; and opportunities for postsecondary credit.**

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A. Each middle and ~~secondary~~ high school shall provide for the early identification and enrollment of students in a program with a range of educational and academic experiences related to college and career readiness in and outside the classroom, including an emphasis on experiences that will motivate disadvantaged and minority students to prepare for a career or postsecondary education.

~~B. Beginning with the 2013–2014 academic year and through the 2017–2018 academic year:~~

~~1. All schools shall begin development of a personal Academic and Career Plan (ACP) for each seventh-grade student with completion by the fall of the student's eighth-grade year. Students who transfer from other than a Virginia public school into the eighth grade shall have the plan developed as soon as practicable following enrollment. Beginning with the 2014–2015 academic year, students who transfer into a Virginia public school after their eighth-grade year shall have an ACP developed upon enrollment. The components of the ACP shall include the student's program of study for high school graduation and a postsecondary career pathway based on the student's academic and career interests. The ACP shall be developed in accordance with guidelines established by the board and signed by the student, student's parent or guardian, and school official designated by the principal. The ACP shall be included in the student's record and shall be reviewed and updated, if necessary, before the student enters the ninth and eleventh grades. The school shall have met its obligation for parental involvement if it makes a good faith effort to notify the parent or guardian of the responsibility for the development and approval of the ACP. Any personal ACPs prescribed by local school boards for students in grades 7 through 12 and in effect as of June 30, 2009, are approved to continue without further action by the board.~~

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~~2. Beginning in the middle school years, students shall be counseled on opportunities for beginning postsecondary education and opportunities for obtaining industry certifications, occupational competency credentials, or professional licenses in a career and technical education field prior to high school graduation. Such opportunities shall include access to at least three Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), or Cambridge courses or three college-level courses for degree credit pursuant to~~[~~8VAC20-131-100~~](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section100/)~~. Students taking advantage of such opportunities shall not be denied participation in school activities for which they are otherwise eligible. Wherever possible, students shall be encouraged and afforded opportunities to take college courses simultaneously for high school graduation and college degree credit (dual enrollment), under the following conditions:~~

~~a. Written approval of the high school principal prior to participation in dual enrollment must be obtained;~~

~~b. The college must accept the student for admission to the course; and~~

~~c. The course must be given by the college for degree credits (no remedial courses will be accepted).~~

~~Schools that comply with this standard shall not be penalized in receiving state appropriations.~~

~~C. Beginning with the 2018–2019 academic year:~~

~~1.~~ B. Each elementary, middle, and ~~secondary~~ high school shall provide for the identification by all students of personal interests and abilities to support planning for postsecondary opportunities and career preparation. Such support shall include provision of information concerning exploration of career cluster areas in elementary schools and course information and planning for college preparation programs, opportunities for educational and academic experiences in and outside the classroom, including ~~internships and~~ work-based learning experiences, and the multiple pathways to college and career readiness in middle and high school.

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~~2.~~ C. Beginning in the elementary school years, students are to explore the different occupations associated with career clusters and select areas of interest. Students shall begin the development of an academic and career plan portfolio (ACPP) in elementary grades to include information about interests, values such as dependability and responsibility, and skills supporting decisions about their future interests and goals. The ACPP is a repository for planning notes, class projects, interest inventory results, awards and recognitions, and other information related to academic and career plans and preparation. The ACPP is student led and updated and revised as the student continues to plan for the student's future throughout school years. The information contained in the ACPP shall serve as the foundation for creating the ACP in grade 7.

In middle school, students are to complete a locally selected career interest inventory and select a career pathway. To support development of the ACP, students shall complete a career investigations course selected from the career and technical education state-approved list, or a school division-provided alternative means of delivering the career investigations course content, provided that the alternative is equivalent in content and academic rigor. The course, or its alternative, shall address, at a minimum, planning for academic courses, work-based learning opportunities, completion of industry certifications, possible independent projects, and postsecondary education. The course, or its alternative, shall include demonstration of personal, professional, and technical workplace readiness skills.

All schools shall continue development of a personal ACP with each seventh-grade student with completion by the end of the fall semester of the student's eighth-grade year. Students who transfer from other than a Virginia public school into the eighth grade shall have the ACP developed as soon as practicable following enrollment. Students who transfer into a Virginia public school after their eighth-grade year shall have an ACP developed upon enrollment. The components of the ACP shall include the student's program of study for high school graduation and a postsecondary career pathway based on the student's academic and career interests. In high school, a career-related learning experience shall be chosen by the student and documented in the ACP.

~~3.~~ D. The ACP shall be developed in accordance with guidelines established by the board and signed by the student, student's parent or guardian, and school official or officials designated by the principal. The ACP shall be included in the student's record and shall be reviewed and updated annually.

~~4.~~ E. Beginning in the middle school years, students shall be counseled on opportunities for beginning postsecondary education and opportunities for obtaining industry certifications, occupational competency credentials, or professional licenses in a career and technical education ~~field~~  concentration (approved sequence of two courses) or specialization (approved sequence or three or more courses) prior to high school graduation. Such opportunities shall include access to at least three Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), or Cambridge courses or three college-level courses for degree credit pursuant to [8VAC20-131-100](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section100/). Students taking advantage of such opportunities shall not be denied participation in school activities for which they are otherwise eligible.

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~~5.~~ F. Wherever possible, students shall be encouraged and afforded opportunities to take college courses simultaneously for high school graduation and college degree credit (dual enrollment), under the following conditions:

~~a.~~1. Written approval of the high school principal prior to participation in dual enrollment must be obtained;

~~b.~~2. The college must accept the student for admission to the course;

~~c.~~3. The course must be given by the college for degree credits (no remedial courses will be accepted); and

~~a.~~4. Students participating in courses offered by an institution of higher education shall be permitted to exceed a dull course load in order to participate in courses that lead to a degree, certificate, or credential at such institution.

**Statutory Authority**

§§ [22.1-16](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-16/) and [22.1-253.13:3](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-253.13:3/) of the Code of Virginia.

**Historical Notes**

Derived from [Volume 14, Issue 01](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol14/iss01/v14i01.pdf), eff. October 29, 1997; amended, Virginia Register [Volume 16, Issue 25](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol16/iss25/v16i25.pdf), eff. September 28, 2000; [Volume 22, Issue 24](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol22/iss24/v22i24.pdf), eff. September 7, 2006; [Volume 25, Issue 21](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=25:21), eff. July 31, 2009; [Volume 27, Issue 24](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=27:24), eff. August 31, 2011; [Volume 28, Issue 24](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=28:24), eff. August 29, 2012; [Volume 34, Issue 08](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=34:08), eff. January 11, 2018; [Volume 35, Issue 25](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=35:25), eff. September 19, 2019.

**8VAC20-131-150. Standard school year and school day.**

A. The standard school year shall be 180 instructional days or 990 instructional hours. The standard school day, including passing time for class changes and excluding breaks for meals, shall average a minimum of five and one-half instructional hours for students in grades 1 through 12 and a minimum of three hours for kindergarten. Recess may be included in the calculation of required instructional hours for elementary school, provided that recess does not exceed 15% of the required instructional hours.

B. All students in grades 1 through 12 shall maintain a full day schedule of classes (5-1/2 hours), unless a waiver is granted in accordance with policies defined by the local school board.

**Statutory Authority**

§§ [22.1-16](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-16/) and [22.1-253.13:3](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-253.13:3/) of the Code of Virginia.

**Historical Notes**

Derived from [Volume 14, Issue 01](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol14/iss01/v14i01.pdf), eff. October 29, 1997; amended, Virginia Register [Volume 16, Issue 25](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol16/iss25/v16i25.pdf), eff. September 28, 2000; [Volume 22, Issue 24](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol22/iss24/v22i24.pdf), eff. September 7, 2006; [Volume 34, Issue 08](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=34:08), eff. January 11, 2018; [Volume 35, Issue 25](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=35:25), eff. September 19, 2019.

**8VAC20-131-160. (Repealed.)**

Historical Notes

Derived from Virginia Register Volume 14, Issue 1, eff. October 29, 1997; repealed, Virginia Register Volume 22, Issue 24, eff. September 7, 2006.

**8VAC20-131-170. Family Life Education.**

Each school may implement the Standards of Learning for the Family Life Education program promulgated by the board or a Family Life Education program consistent with the guidelines developed by the board~~, which shall have the goals of reducing the incidence of pregnancy and sexually- transmitted diseases and substance abuse among teenagers~~.

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**Statutory Authority**

§§ [22.1-16](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-16/) and [22.1-253.13:3](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-253.13:3/) of the Code of Virginia.

**Historical Notes**

Derived from [Volume 14, Issue 01](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol14/iss01/v14i01.pdf), eff. October 29, 1997; amended, Virginia Register [Volume 16, Issue 25](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol16/iss25/v16i25.pdf), eff. September 28, 2000; [Volume 22, Issue 24](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol22/iss24/v22i24.pdf), eff. September 7, 2006; [Volume 34, Issue 08](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=34:08), eff. January 11, 2018.

**8VAC20-131-180. Off-site instruction.**

A. Homebound instruction shall be made available to students who are confined at home or in a health care facility for periods that would prevent normal school attendance based upon certification of need by a licensed physician or licensed clinical psychologist. For students eligible for special education or related services, the Individualized Education Program (IEP) committee must revise the IEP, as appropriate. Credit for the work shall be awarded when it is done under the supervision of a licensed teacher qualified in the relevant subject areas and employed by the local school board, and there is evidence that the instructional time requirements or alternative means of awarding credit adopted by the local school board in accordance with the provisions of [8VAC20-131-110](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section110/) have been met.

B. Schools are encouraged to pursue alternative means to deliver instruction to accommodate student needs through virtual courses, emerging technologies, and other similar means. Students may enroll in and receive a standard and verified unit of credit for supervised virtual courses with prior approval of the principal. The local school board shall develop policies governing this method of delivery of instruction that shall include the provisions of [8VAC20-131-110](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section110/) and the administration of required SOL tests prescribed by [8VAC20-131-30](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section30/). For courses offered for possible high school credit, standard units of credit shall be awarded for successful completion of such courses when the course is equivalent to that offered in the regular school program and the work is done under the supervision of a licensed teacher qualified in the relevant subject areas. A verified unit of credit may be earned when the student has successfully completed the requirements specified in [8VAC20-131-110](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section110/).

**Statutory Authority**

§§ [22.1-16](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-16/) and [22.1-253.13:3](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-253.13:3/) of the Code of Virginia.

**Historical Notes**

Derived from [Volume 14, Issue 01](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol14/iss01/v14i01.pdf), eff. October 29, 1997; amended, Virginia Register [Volume 16, Issue 25](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol16/iss25/v16i25.pdf), eff. September 28, 2000; [Volume 22, Issue 24](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol22/iss24/v22i24.pdf), eff. September 7, 2006; [Volume 34, Issue 08](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=34:08), eff. January 11, 2018.

**8VAC20-131-190. Library media, materials, and equipment.**

A. Each school shall maintain an organized library media center as the resource center of the school and provide a unified program of media services and activities for students and teachers before, during, and after school. The library media center shall contain hard copy, electronic technological resources, materials, and equipment that are sufficient to meet research, inquiry, and reading requirements of the instructional program and general student interest.

B. Each school shall provide a variety of materials, resources, and equipment to support the instructional program.

**Statutory Authority**

§§ [22.1-16](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-16/) and [22.1-253.13:3](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-253.13:3/) of the Code of Virginia.

**Historical Notes**

Derived from [Volume 14, Issue 01](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol14/iss01/v14i01.pdf), eff. October 29, 1997; amended, Virginia Register [Volume 22, Issue 24](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol22/iss24/v22i24.pdf), eff. September 7, 2006; [Volume 34, Issue 08](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=34:08), eff. January 11, 2018.

**8VAC20-131-200. Extracurricular and other school activities; recess.**

A. School sponsored extracurricular activities shall be under the direct supervision of the staff and shall contribute to the educational objectives of the school. Extracurricular activities must be organized to avoid interrupting the instructional program. Extracurricular activities shall not be permitted to interfere with the student's required instructional activities. Extracurricular activities and eligibility requirements shall be established and approved by the superintendent and the school board.

B. Competitive sports of a varsity nature (scheduled league games) shall be prohibited as a part of the elementary school program.

C. Each elementary school shall provide students with a daily recess during the regular school year as determined appropriate by the school.

D. Local school boards shall provide a program of physical activity for all students in grades kindergarten through 5 consisting of at least 20 minutes per day or an average of 100 minutes per week during the regular school year and available to all students in grades 6 through 12 with a goal of at least 150 minutes per week on average during the regular school year.

**Statutory Authority**

§§ [22.1-16](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-16/) and [22.1-253.13:3](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-253.13:3/) of the Code of Virginia.

**Historical Notes**

Derived from [Volume 14, Issue 01](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol14/iss01/v14i01.pdf), eff. October 29, 1997; amended, Virginia Register [Volume 22, Issue 24](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol22/iss24/v22i24.pdf), eff. September 7, 2006; [Volume 34, Issue 08](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=34:08), eff. January 11, 2018.

Part V  
School and Instructional Leadership

**8VAC20-131-210. Role of the principal.**

A. The principal is recognized as the instructional leader and manager of the school and is responsible for:

1. Fostering the success of all students by facilitating the development, communication, implementation, and evaluation of a shared vision of teaching and learning that leads to student academic progress and school improvement;

2. Fostering the success of all students by developing, advocating, and sustaining an academically rigorous, positive, and safe school climate for all stakeholders;

3. Fostering effective human resources management by appropriately assigning, selecting, inducting, supporting, evaluating, and retaining quality instructional and support personnel;

4. Fostering the success of all students by communicating and collaborating effectively with stakeholders;

5. Fostering the success of all students by demonstrating professional standards and ethics, engaging in continuous professional development, and contributing to the profession; and

6. Providing leadership that results in acceptable, measurable student academic progress based on established standards.

As a matter of policy, the board, through these standards, recognizes the critically important role of principals to the success of public schools and the students who attend those schools and recommends that local school boards provide principals with the maximum authority available under law in all matters affecting the school, including instructional leadership, school climate, human resources management, organizational management, communication and community relations, and student academic progress, in a manner that allows the principal to be held accountable in a fair and consistent manner for matters under the principal's direct control.

B. As the instructional leader, the principal is responsible for ensuring that students are provided an opportunity to learn and shall:

1. Lead the collaborative development and sustainment of a student-centered shared vision for educational improvement and work collaboratively with staff, students, parents, and other stakeholders to develop a mission and programs for effective teaching and learning, consistent with the division's strategic plan and school's goals;

2. Collaboratively plan, implement, support, monitor, and evaluate instructional programs that enhance teaching and student academic progress, and lead to school improvement;

3. Analyze current academic achievement data and instructional strategies and monitor and evaluate the use of diagnostic, formative, and summative assessment, by grade and by discipline, to:

a. Make appropriate educational decisions to improve classroom instruction, increase student achievement, and improve overall school effectiveness; provide timely and accurate feedback to students and parents and to inform instructional practices; and direct and require appropriate prevention, intervention, or remediation to those students performing below grade level or not meeting expectations, including passing the SOL tests;

b. Involve the staff of the school in identifying and evaluating professional development needed to improve student achievement and provide professional development opportunities andensure that the staff participate in those activities;

c. Evaluate and improve classroom practices and instruction; and

d. Seek to ensure students' successful attainment of knowledge and skills set forth in the Standards of Learning;

4. Ensure that students' records are maintained and that criteria used in making placement and promotion decisions, as well as any instructional interventions used to improve the student's performance, are included in the record;

5. Protect the academic instructional time from unnecessary interruptions and disruptions and provide collaborative leadership for the design and implementation of effective and efficient schedules that protect and maximize instructional time;

6. Involve students, staff, parents, and the community to create and sustain a positive, safe, and healthy learning environment that enforces state, division, and local rules, policies, and procedures and consistently model and collaboratively promote high expectations, mutual respect, care, and concern for students, staff, parents, and the community;

7. Create a culture of shared accountability and continuous school improvement;

8. Involve students, families, staff, and other stakeholders to promote community engagement;

9. Maintain records of students who drop out of school, including their reasons for dropping out and actions taken to prevent these students from dropping out;

10. Notify the parents of rising eleventh-grade and twelfth-grade students of:

a. The number of standard and verified units of credit required for graduation; and

b. The remaining number of such units of credit the individual student requires for graduation; and

11. Notify the parent or guardian of students removed from class for disciplinary reasons for two or more consecutive days in whole or in part. The school shall have met its obligation if it makes a good faith effort to notify the parent or guardian.

C. As the school manager, the principal shall:

1. Support, manage, and oversee the school's organization, operation, and use of resources;

2. Demonstrate and communicate a knowledge and understanding of Virginia public education rules, regulations, laws, and school division policies and procedures;

3. Work with staff to create an atmosphere of mutual respect and courtesy and to facilitate constructive communication by establishing and maintaining a current handbook of personnel policies and procedures;

4. Ensure the use of data systems and technology to support goals;

5. Disseminate information to staff, parents, and other stakeholders in a timely manner through multiple channels and sources;

6. Work with the community to involve parents and citizens in the educational program;

7. Facilitate communication with parents by maintaining and disseminating a current student handbook of policies and procedures that includes the school division's standards of student conduct and procedures for enforcement, along with other matters of interest to parents and students;

8. Manage the supervision and research-based evaluation of staff in accordance with local and state requirements;

9. Maintain a current record of staff's licenses and endorsements to ensure compliance and professional development completed by staff;

10. Follow local and state laws and policies with regard to finances, school accountability, and reporting;

11. Maintain records of receipts and disbursements of all funds handled, whichshall be audited annually by a professional accountant approved by the local school board; and

12. Ensure the security of all tests administered to students, including those required by the board and the local school division. This includes:

a. The requirement that all schools adhere to a policy that prohibits students' access to cell phones and other electronic devices ~~with texting or camera capabilities during the administration of the SOL tests~~ that can transmit, receive, photograph, or record information while any students are testing;

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b. The requirement that, to the extent possible, the teacher should not administer the SOL test associated with the grade level content or class taught;

c. Notification to teachers of the penalties for breaching security on SOL tests, including actions against the teacher's license and civil penalties; and

d. Establishment of penalties for students who breach security on SOL tests.

**Statutory Authority**

§§ [22.1-16](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-16/) and [22.1-253.13:3](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-253.13:3/) of the Code of Virginia.

**Historical Notes**

Derived from [Volume 14, Issue 01](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol14/iss01/v14i01.pdf), eff. October 29, 1997; amended, Virginia Register [Volume 16, Issue 25](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol16/iss25/v16i25.pdf), eff. September 28, 2000; [Volume 22, Issue 24](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol22/iss24/v22i24.pdf), eff. September 7, 2006; [Volume 25, Issue 21](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=25:21), eff. July 31, 2009; [Volume 34, Issue 08](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=34:08), eff. January 11, 2018.

**8VAC20-131-220. Role of professional teaching staff.**

The professional teaching staff shall be responsible for providing instruction that is educationally sound in an atmosphere of mutual respect and courtesy, which is conducive to learning, and in which all students are expected to achieve the objectives of the Standards of Learning for the appropriate grade level or course. The staff shall:

1. Serve as role models for effective oral and written communication with special attention to the use of standard English;

2. Strive to strengthen the basic skills of students in all subjects and to close any achievement gaps among groups of students in the school;

3. Establish teaching objectives to achieve the following:

a. Identify what students are expected to learn; and

b. Inform students of the achievement expected and keep them engaged in learning tasks;

4. Provide for individual differences of students through the use of differentiated instruction, varied materials, and activities suitable to their interests and abilities; and

5. Assess the progress of students and report promptly and constructively to them and their parents.

**Statutory Authority**

§§ [22.1-16](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-16/) and [22.1-253.13:3](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-253.13:3/) of the Code of Virginia.

**Historical Notes**

Derived from [Volume 14, Issue 01](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol14/iss01/v14i01.pdf), eff. October 29, 1997; amended, Virginia Register [Volume 16, Issue 25](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol16/iss25/v16i25.pdf), eff. September 28, 2000; [Volume 34, Issue 08](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=34:08), eff. January 11, 2018.

**8VAC20-131-230. Role of support staff.**

The school's support staff shall work with the principal and professional teaching staff to promote student achievement and successful attainment of the school's goals.

**Statutory Authority**

§§ [22.1-16](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-16/), [22.1-19](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-19/) and [22.1-253.13:3](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-253.13:3/) of the Code of Virginia.

**Historical Notes**

Derived from [Volume 14, Issue 01](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol14/iss01/v14i01.pdf), eff. October 29, 1997.

**8VAC20-131-240. Administrative and support staff; staffing requirements.**

A. Each school shall have at a minimum the staff as specified in the Standards of Quality with proper licenses and endorsements for the positions they hold.

B. The principal of each middle and ~~secondary~~ high school shall be employed on a 12-month basis.

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C. Each elementary, middle, and ~~secondary~~ high school shall employ school counseling staff as prescribed by the Standards of Quality. School counseling shall be provided for students to ensure that a program of studies contributing to the student's academic achievement and meeting the graduation requirements specified in this chapter is being followed.

D. Each member of the school counseling staff in the counseling program for elementary, middle, and ~~secondary~~ high schools shall spend at least 80% of his staff time during normal school hours in direct counseling of individual students or groups of students.

E. A middle school classroom teacher's standard load shall be based on teaching no more than the instructional day minus one planning period per day or the equivalent with no more than 150 students or 25 class periods per week. If a middle school classroom teacher teaches more than 150 students or 25 class periods per week, an appropriate contractual arrangement and compensation shall be provided.

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F. The ~~secondary~~ high school classroom teacher's standard load shall be based on teaching no more than the instructional day minus one planning period per day or the equivalent with no more than 150 students or 25 class periods per week. If a secondary school classroom teacher teaches more than 150 students or 25 class periods per week, an appropriate contractual arrangement and compensation shall be provided.

G. Middle or ~~secondary~~ high school teachers shall teach no more than 150 students per week; however, physical education and music teachers may teach 200 students per week. If a middle or secondary school physical education or music teacher teaches more than 200 students per week, an appropriate contractual arrangement and compensation shall be provided.

H. Each elementary classroom teacher shall be provided at least an average of 30 minutes per day during the students' school week as planning time. Each full-time middle and ~~secondary~~ high classroom teacher shall be provided one planning period per day or the equivalent, as defined in [8VAC20-131-5](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section5/), unencumbered of any teaching or supervisory duties.

I. Staff-student ratios in special education and career and technical education classrooms shall comply with regulations of the board.

J. Student support positions as defined in the Standards of Quality shall be available as necessary to promote academic achievement and to provide support services to the students in the school.

**Statutory Authority**

§ 22.1-253.13 of the Code of Virginia.

**Historical Notes**

Derived from [Volume 14, Issue 01](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol14/iss01/v14i01.pdf), eff. October 29, 1997; amended, Virginia Register [Volume 16, Issue 25](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol16/iss25/v16i25.pdf), eff. September 28, 2000; [Volume 22, Issue 24](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol22/iss24/v22i24.pdf), eff. September 7, 2006; [Volume 27, Issue 24](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=27:24), eff. August 31, 2011; [Volume 34, Issue 08](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=34:08), eff. January 11, 2018; [Volume 36, Issue 03](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=36:03), eff. October 30, 2019.

**8VAC20-131-250. (Repealed.)**

Historical Notes

Derived from Virginia Register Volume 14, Issue 1, eff. October 29, 1997; repealed, Virginia Register Volume 16, Issue 25, eff. September 28, 2000.

Part VI  
School Facilities and Safety

**8VAC20-131-260. School facilities and safety.**

A. Each school shall be maintained in a manner ensuring compliance with the Virginia Statewide Building Code ([13VAC5-63](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title13/agency5/chapter63/)). In addition, the school administration shall:

1. Maintain a physical plant that is accessible, barrier free, safe, and clean;

2. Provide for the proper outdoor display of flags of the United States and of the Commonwealth of Virginia;

3. Provide suitable space for classrooms, administrative staff, pupil personnel services, library and media services, and for the needs and safety of physical education and recess;

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4. Provide adequate, safe, and properly-equipped laboratories to meet the needs of instruction in the sciences, technology, fine arts, and career and technical programs;

5. Provide facilities for the adequate and safe administration and storage of student medications; and

6. Carry out the duties of the threat assessment team established by the division superintendent and implement policies established by the local school board related to threat assessment, pursuant to § [22.1-79.4](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-79.4/) of the Code of Virginia.

B. Each school shall maintain records of regular safety, health, and fire inspections that have been conducted and certified by local health and fire departments. The frequency of such inspections shall be determined by the local school board in consultation with the local health and fire departments. In addition, the school administration shall:

1. Equip all exit doors with panic hardware as required by the Virginia Statewide Building Code ([13VAC5-63](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title13/agency5/chapter63/));

2. Conduct ~~a fire drill at least twice during the first 20 days of school and conduct at least two additional fire drills during the remainder of the school term~~ fire drills and inspections in accordance with § [22.1-137](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title22.1/chapter9/section22.1-137/) of the Code of Virginia and the Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code. Evacuation routes for students shall be posted in each room; and

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3. Conduct ~~a lock-down drill at least twice during the first 20 days of school and conduct at least two additional lock-down drills during the remainder of the school term~~ lock-down drills in accordance with § 22.1-137.2 of the *Code of Virginia*.

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C. Each school shall have contingency plans for emergencies that include staff certified in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), the Heimlich maneuver, and emergency first aid.

Each school building with instructional or administrative staff of 10 or more shall have at least three employees with current certification or training in emergency first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, and the use of an automated external defibrillator. If one or more students diagnosed as having diabetes attend such school, at least two employees shall have been trained in the administration of insulin and glucagon.

Each school building with instructional or administrative staff fewer than 10 shall have at least two employees with current certification or training in emergency first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, and the use of an automated external defibrillator. If one or more students diagnosed as having diabetes attend such school, at least one employee shall have been trained in the administration of insulin and glucagon.

D. In addition, the school administration shall ensure that the school has:

1. Written procedures to follow in emergencies such as fire, injury, illness, allergic reactions, and violent or threatening behavior. This shall include school board policies for the possession and administration of epinephrine in every school, to be administered by any school nurse, employee of the school board, employee of a local governing body, or employee of a local health department who is authorized by a prescriber and trained in the administration of epinephrine to any student believed to be having an anaphylactic reaction. The plan shall be outlined in the student handbook and discussed with staff and students during the first week of each school year;

2. Space for the proper care of students who become ill;

3. A written procedure, in accordance with guidelines established by the local school board, for responding to violent, disruptive, or illegal activities by students on school property or during a school sponsored activity; and

4. Written procedures to follow for the safe evacuation of persons with special physical, medical, or language needs who may need assistance to exit a facility.

E. Beginning with the 2022-2023 school year, a comprehensive data security plan has been prepared and implemented aligning with the model data security plan provided by the Department of Education as prescribed in § 22.1-20.2. Such plan shall include policies, procedures, and guidelines to protect the confidentiality, integrity, and accessibility of student data and division information systems. The plan shall minimally describe policies for cyber risk management including (i) disaster recovery and resiliency, (ii) incident response and breach notification, (iii) review and audits, (iv) security awareness training, (v) data retention and disposition, and (vi) data sharing.  A school division's cyber security plan can be used to satisfy this requirement for each school within the division.

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**Statutory Authority**

§§ [22.1-16](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-16/) and [22.1-253.13:3](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-253.13:3/) of the Code of Virginia.

**Historical Notes**

Derived from [Volume 14, Issue 01](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol14/iss01/v14i01.pdf), eff. October 29, 1997; amended, Virginia Register [Volume 16, Issue 25](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol16/iss25/v16i25.pdf), eff. September 28, 2000; [Volume 22, Issue 24](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol22/iss24/v22i24.pdf), eff. September 7, 2006; [Volume 31, Issue 26](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=31:26), eff. October 8, 2015; [Volume 34, Issue 08](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=34:08), eff. January 11, 2018.

Part VII  
School and Community Communications

**8VAC20-131-270. School and community communications.**

A. Each school shall promote communication and foster mutual understanding with parents and the community. Each school shall:

1. Involve parents, citizens, community agencies, and representatives from business and industry in developing, disseminating, and explaining the biennial school plan; on advisory committees; in curriculum studies; and in evaluating the educational program.

2. Provide annually to the parents and the community the School Quality Profile in a manner prescribed by the board. The School Quality Profile shall include designated information for the most recent three-year period. Such information shall be designated by the board to include indicators of the following: accountability, assessments, enrollment and demographics, college and career readiness, finance, learning environment, and teacher quality. Specific indicators shall include:

a. Virginia Assessment Program results by percentage of participation and proficiency and disaggregated by student reporting groups.

b. Accreditation status.

c. Attendance and absenteeism for students.

d. Information related to school safety to include incidents of crime and violence.

e. Information related to qualifications and educational attainment of the teaching staff.

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f. In addition, ~~secondary~~ high schools' School Quality Profiles shall include the following:

(1) Advanced Placement (AP) information to include percentage of students who take AP courses and percentage of students who take AP tests;

(2) International Baccalaureate (IB) and Cambridge course information to include percentage of students who are enrolled in IB or Cambridge programs and percentage of students who receive IB or Cambridge Diplomas;

(3) College-level course information to include percentage of students who take college-level courses including dual enrollment courses;

(4) Number and percentage of (i) graduates by diploma type as prescribed by the board, (ii) certificates awarded to the senior class including high school equivalency preparation program credentials approved by the board, and (iii) students who do not complete high school;

(5) As a separate category on the School Quality Profile, the number of students obtaining board-approved industry certifications and passing state licensure examinations, national occupational competency assessments and Virginia workplace readiness skills assessments while still in high school and the number of career and technical education completers who graduated; and

(6) Number and percentage of dropouts.

3. Cooperate with business and industry in formulating career and technical educational programs and conducting joint enterprises involving personnel, facilities, training programs, and other resources.

4. Encourage and support the establishment or continuation of a parent-teacher association or other organization and work cooperatively with it.

B. At the beginning of each school year, each school shall provide to its students' parents or guardians information on the availability of and source for receiving:

1. The learning objectives developed in accordance with the provisions of [8VAC20-131-70](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section70/) to be achieved at their child's grade level or, in high school, a copy of the syllabus for each of their child's courses, and a copy of the school division promotion, retention, and remediation policies;

2. The Standards of Learning applicable to the child's grade or course requirements and the approximate date and potential impact of the child's next SOL testing; and

3. An annual notice to students in all grade levels of all requirements for Standard Diploma and Advanced Studies Diploma, and the board's policies on promotion and retention as outlined in [8VAC20-131-30](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section30/).

The division superintendent shall report to the department compliance with this subsection as required by [8VAC20-131-390](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section390/) A.

**Statutory Authority**

§§ [22.1-16](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-16/) and [22.1-253.13:3](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-253.13:3/) of the Code of Virginia.

**Historical Notes**

Derived from [Volume 14, Issue 01](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol14/iss01/v14i01.pdf), eff. October 29, 1997; amended, Virginia Register [Volume 16, Issue 25](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol16/iss25/v16i25.pdf), eff. September 28, 2000; [Volume 22, Issue 24](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol22/iss24/v22i24.pdf), eff. September 7, 2006; [Volume 25, Issue 21](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=25:21), eff. July 31, 2009; [Volume 27, Issue 24](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=27:24), eff. August 31, 2011; [Volume 31, Issue 05](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=31:05), eff. December 3, 2014; [Volume 31, Issue 26](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=31:26), eff. October 8, 2015; [Volume 34, Issue 08](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=34:08), eff. January 11, 2018.

**8VAC20-131-280. (Repealed.)**

Historical Notes

Derived from [Volume 14, Issue 01](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol14/iss01/v14i01.pdf), eff. October 29, 1997; amended, Virginia Register [Volume 16, Issue 25](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol16/iss25/v16i25.pdf), eff. September 28, 2000; [Volume 22, Issue 24](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol22/iss24/v22i24.pdf), eff. September 7, 2006; [Volume 25, Issue 21](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=25:21), eff. July 31, 2009; [Volume 27, Issue 24](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=27:24), eff. August 31, 2011; [Volume 31, Issue 05](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=31:05), eff. December 3, 2014; [Volume 31, Issue 26](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=31:26), eff. October 8, 2015; repealed, Virginia Register [Volume 34, Issue 08](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=34:08), eff. January 11, 2018.

**8VAC20-131-290. (Repealed.)**

Historical Notes

Derived from [Volume 14, Issue 01](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol14/iss01/v14i01.pdf), eff. October 29, 1997; amended, Virginia Register [Volume 16, Issue 25](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol16/iss25/v16i25.pdf), eff. September 28, 2000; [Volume 22, Issue 24](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol22/iss24/v22i24.pdf), eff. September 7, 2006; [Volume 25, Issue 21](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=25:21), eff. July 31, 2009; repealed, Virginia Register [Volume 34, Issue 08](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=34:08), eff. January 11, 2018.

**8VAC20-131-300. (Repealed.)**

Historical Notes

Derived from [Volume 14, Issue 01](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol14/iss01/v14i01.pdf), eff. October 29, 1997; amended, Virginia Register [Volume 16, Issue 25](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol16/iss25/v16i25.pdf), eff. September 28, 2000; [Volume 22, Issue 24](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol22/iss24/v22i24.pdf), eff. September 7, 2006; Errata, 23:3 VA.R. 510 October 16, 2006; amended, Virginia Register [Volume 25, Issue 21](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=25:21), eff. July 31, 2009; [Volume 27, Issue 24](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=27:24), eff. August 31, 2011; [Volume 31, Issue 26](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=31:26), eff. October 8, 2015; repealed, Virginia Register [Volume 34, Issue 08](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=34:08), eff. January 11, 2018.

**8VAC20-131-310. (Repealed.)**

Historical Notes

Derived from [Volume 14, Issue 01](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol14/iss01/v14i01.pdf), eff. October 29, 1997; amended, Virginia Register [Volume 16, Issue 25](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol16/iss25/v16i25.pdf), eff. September 28, 2000; [Volume 22, Issue 24](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol22/iss24/v22i24.pdf), eff. September 7, 2006; [Volume 25, Issue 21](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=25:21), eff. July 31, 2009; [Volume 31, Issue 26](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=31:26), eff. October 8, 2015; repealed, Virginia Register [Volume 34, Issue 08](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=34:08), eff. January 11, 2018.

**8VAC20-131-315. (Repealed.)**

Historical Notes

Derived from [Volume 22, Issue 24](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol22/iss24/v22i24.pdf), eff. September 7, 2006; amended, Virginia Register [Volume 31, Issue 26](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=31:26), eff. October 8, 2015; repealed, Virginia Register [Volume 34, Issue 08](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=34:08), eff. January 11, 2018.

**8VAC20-131-320. (Repealed.)**

Historical Notes

Derived from Virginia Register Volume 14, Issue 1, eff. October 29, 1997; amended, Virginia Register Volume 16, Issue 25, eff. September 28, 2000; repealed, Virginia Register Volume 22, Issue 24, eff. September 7, 2006.

**8VAC20-131-325. (Repealed.)**

Historical Notes

Derived from [Volume 16, Issue 25](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol16/iss25/v16i25.pdf), eff. September 28, 2000; amended, Virginia Register [Volume 22, Issue 24](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol22/iss24/v22i24.pdf), eff. September 7, 2006; [Volume 25, Issue 21](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=25:21), eff. July 31, 2009; [Volume 27, Issue 24](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=27:24), eff. August 31, 2011; repealed, Virginia Register [Volume 34, Issue 08](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=34:08), eff. January 11, 2018.

**8VAC20-131-330. (Repealed.)**

Historical Notes

Derived from Virginia Register Volume 14, Issue 1, eff. October 29, 1997; repealed, Virginia Register Volume 22, Issue 24, eff. September 7, 2006.

**8VAC20-131-340. (Repealed.)**

Historical Notes

Derived from [Volume 14, Issue 01](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol14/iss01/v14i01.pdf), eff. October 29, 1997; amended, Virginia Register [Volume 16, Issue 25](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol16/iss25/v16i25.pdf), eff. September 28, 2000; [Volume 22, Issue 24](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol22/iss24/v22i24.pdf), eff. September 7, 2006; repealed, Virginia Register [Volume 34, Issue 08](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=34:08), eff. January 11, 2018.

**8VAC20-131-350. (Repealed.)**

Historical Notes

Derived from [Volume 22, Issue 24](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol22/iss24/v22i24.pdf), eff. September 7, 2006; amended, Virginia Register [Volume 27, Issue 22](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=27:22), eff. August 3, 2011; repealed, Virginia Register [Volume 34, Issue 08](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=34:08), eff. January 11, 2018.

**8VAC20-131-360. (Repealed.)**

Historical Notes

Derived from [Volume 22, Issue 24](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/vol22/iss24/v22i24.pdf), eff. September 7, 2006; amended, Virginia Register [Volume 25, Issue 21](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=25:21), eff. July 31, 2009; [Volume 26, Issue 25](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=26:25), eff. September 15, 2010; [Volume 27, Issue 24](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=27:24), eff. August 31, 2011; [Volume 31, Issue 05](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=31:05), eff. December 3, 2014; [Volume 31, Issue 26](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=31:26), eff. October 8, 2015; Errata, 32:2 VA.R. 296 September 21, 2015; repealed, Virginia Register [Volume 34, Issue 08](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=34:08), eff. January 11, 2018.

**8VAC20-131-360:1. APPENDIX I.[REPEALED]**

APPENDIX I. [REPEALED]

Historical Notes

Derived from Virginia Register Volume 16, Issue 25, eff. September 28, 2000; repealed, Virginia Register Volume 22, Issue 24, eff. September 7, 2006.

Part VIII  
School Accreditation

**8VAC20-131-370. Expectations for school accountability and accreditation.**

A. The system of school accountability and accreditation provides a means of determining the quality and effectiveness of schools for the purposes of:

1. Building on strengths in schools and addressing specific areas needing improvement;

2. Driving continuous improvement in school achievement for all schools;

3. Identifying areas for technical assistance and the use of school improvement resources; and

4. Providing a comprehensive picture of school quality information to the public.

B. Components of the accountability system, which present expectations and standards for schools and school divisions, include:

1. The Code of Virginia's Standards of Quality, which provide the foundational education program to be offered by school divisions, including priorities for instructional programs supporting the Standards of Learning and encompassing requirements for assessments and school accreditation;

2. The School Quality Profile, as referenced in [8VAC20-131-270](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section270/) A 2, which provides information to parents, citizens, the community, businesses and other agencies, and the general public about school characteristics and about a comprehensive range of school indicators;

3. The federal accountability provisions required under the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (P.L. 114-95, as amended) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 USC § 1400 et seq.); and

4. The state accreditation provisions for schools and school divisions as presented in this part.

C. Each school shall be accredited based on achievement of the conditions specified in [8VAC20-131-400](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section400/) and on continuous improvement of performance levels on measures of selected school quality indicators as described in [8VAC20-131-380](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency/).

**Statutory Authority**

§§ [22.1-16](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-16/) and [22.1-253.13:3](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-253.13:3/) of the Code of Virginia.

**Historical Notes**

Derived from [Volume 34, Issue 08](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=34:08), eff. January 11, 2018.

**8VAC20-131-380. Measurement of school quality for accreditation.**

A. School quality for the purposes of accreditation shall be measured for each school using multiple indicators as provided for in this part. School quality indicators include student academic outcomes and other factors that are associated with student learning.

Designation of school quality indicators for accreditation purposes by the board is based on the following criteria:

1. Research demonstrates that the indicator is related to academic performance;

2. Standardized procedures exist across schools and school divisions for collection of data used for the indicator;

3. The data about the indicator is reliable and valid;

4. Performance in the indicator can be positively impacted through division and school-level policies and procedures;

5. The measure meaningfully differentiates among schools based on progress of all students and student reporting groups;

6. The indicator does not unfairly impact one type or group of schools or students; and

7. The indicator is moderately to strongly correlated with school-level pass rates on state assessments.

B. Specific indicators designated by the board for accreditation purposes and defined in subsection F of this section include the following:

1. Academic achievement for all students in English (reading and writing), mathematics, and science as measured through board-approved assessments, including measures of student growth in English (reading and writing), mathematics, and English learner (EL) progress;

2. Academic achievement gaps in English (reading and writing) and mathematics for designated reporting groups, as determined through the performance of each reporting group against the state standard;

3. Graduation and school progress for schools with a graduating class as measured by the Graduation Completion Index;

4. Dropout rates in schools with a graduating class;

5. Student participation and engagement as measured by chronic absenteeism in schools; and

6. College, career, and civic readiness in schools with a graduating class.

C. When calculating passing rates and student growth on Virginia Assessment Program tests to measure academic achievement school quality indicators for the purpose of school accreditation, the following ~~tolerances~~ allowances for EL and transfer students shall apply:

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1. The scores of EL students enrolled in Virginia public schools fewer than 11 semesters may be removed from the calculation used to measure academic achievement school quality indicators applied to accreditation. Completion of a semester shall be based on school membership days. Membership days are defined as the days the student is officially enrolled in a Virginia public school, regardless of days absent or present. For a semester to count as a completed semester, a student must have been in membership for a majority of the membership days of the semester. These semesters need not be consecutive.

2. In accordance with the provisions of [8VAC20-131-30](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section30/), all students who transfer into Virginia public schools are expected to take and pass all applicable SOL tests in the content areas in which they receive instruction.

3. All students who transfer within a school division shall have their scores counted in the calculation of the school's academic achievement school quality indicators. Students who transfer into a Virginia school from home instruction or from another Virginia school division, another state, or another country in grades kindergarten through 8 shall be expected to take all applicable SOL tests or additional tests approved by the board as outlined in [8VAC20-131-110](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section110/). If the transfer takes place after the 20th instructional day following the opening of school, the scores on these tests may be used in calculating academic achievement school quality indicators applied to school accreditation.

4. Students who transfer into a Virginia middle or high school from home instruction or from another Virginia school division, another state, or another country and enroll in a course for which there is an end-of-course SOL test shall be expected to take the test or additional tests for that course approved by the board as outlined in [8VAC20-131-30](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section30/) and [8VAC20-131-110](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section110/). If the transfer takes place after 20 instructional hours per course have elapsed following the opening of school or beginning of the semester, if applicable, the scores on those tests may be used in calculating academic achievement school quality indicators applied to school accreditation in the year the transfer occurs.

5. Students who enroll on the first day of school and subsequently transfer to a school outside of the division for a total amount of instructional time equal to or exceeding 50% of a current school year or semester, whether the transfer was a singular or multiple occurrence, and return during the same school year shall be expected to take any applicable SOL test. The scores of those tests may be used in measuring the school academic indicator in the year in which the transfers occur.

D. Performance benchmarks. Each school shall be held accountable for attainment on each of the school quality indicators adopted by the board for accreditation purposes, based on measurement against performance benchmarks. Benchmarks measure actual performance or improvement or decline in performance over time, or a combination of the two, for each school quality indicator used for accreditation.

In establishing performance benchmarks, the board shall use standard analytic protocols to assess the impact on schools. Consideration is to be given to whether a proposed benchmark reflects the board's values and expectations, or if the proposed benchmark results in consequences that were not anticipated.

The board may incorporate additional indicators of school quality used for accreditation into this chapter according to the criteria in subsection A of this section, provided that when the board incorporates additional indicators, the board shall also establish performance benchmarks to assign performance levels.

E. Performance levels. Performance levels on school quality indicators are determined through the definition and application of board-established benchmarks. Performance levels shall be designated for each indicator as one of the following: (i) Level One: At or Above Standard; (ii) Level Two; Near Standard; or (iii) Level Three: Below Standard.

The performance levels are described as follows:

1. Level One: At or Above Standard. A school's achievement on the specific indicator demonstrates acceptable performance or performance above the benchmark or adequate improvement on the indicator.

2. Level Two: Near Standard. A school's achievement on the specific indicator, although below Level One: At or Above Standard, is within specified ranges of performance that either represent: (i) achievement near Level One or (ii) improvement from Level Three: Below Standard, within a specified range.

A school quality indicator within the Level Two: Near Standard range that does not improve to the Level One: At or Above Standard at the end of four years, with progress evaluated by the end of the second year as specified in [8VAC20-131-400](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section400/) C 5, shall be designated as Level Three: Below Standard, at the end of the four-year period.

3. Level Three: Below Standard. A school's achievement on the specific indicator is below the performance benchmarks for Level One and Level Two.

Performance levels illustrate a school's standing for each school quality indicator. Displaying accountability information in this manner provides a comprehensive picture of a school's areas of strength, as well as specific areas where improvement is needed. Areas needing improvement shall be addressed through a ~~multi-year school improvement~~ comprehensive, unified, long-range plan or corrective action plan as provided in [8VAC20-131-400](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section400/) D, which shall include specific interventions and strategies.

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F. School quality indicators for accreditation purposes. Effective with the 2018-2019 school year, the board shall measure performance levels on the school quality indicators and apply them to accreditation, except as provided in [8VAC20-131-390](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section390/) B 1 for the 2018-2019 school year.

1. The school quality indicators and performance levels for each are described in this subdivision:

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| School Quality Indicator | Performance Levels |
| a. Academic achievement indicator for all students for English (reading and writing): the academic indicator shall be calculated based on the rate of (i) students who passed board-approved assessments, (ii) any additional students who showed growth using board-approved measures, and (iii) any additional students who are English learners who showed growth toward English proficiency using board-approved measures. | Level One: Schools with a current year or three-year ~~average~~ rate of at least 75%, or schools ~~that were at~~ with a current year rate in the Level Two ~~the prior year and decrease~~ range that decreased the failure rate by 10% or more from the prior year.  Level Two: Schools not meeting Level One performance with a current year or three-year ~~average~~ rate of at least 66%, or schools with a ~~prior~~ current year rate of at least 50% that decrease the failure rate by 10% or more from the prior year. A school shall not receive a Level Two performance designation for more than four consecutive years.  Level Three: Schools not meeting Level One or Level Two performance. |
| b. Academic achievement indicator for all students for mathematics: the academic indicator shall be calculated based on the rate of (i) students who passed board-approved assessments and (ii) any additional students who showed growth using board-approved measures. | Level One: Schools with a current year or three-year ~~average~~ rate of at least 70%, or ~~that were at~~ with a current year rate in the Level Two ~~the prior year and decrease~~ range that decreased the failure rate by 10% or more from the prior year.  Level Two: Schools not meeting Level One performance with a current year or three-year ~~average~~ rate of at least 66%, or schools with a ~~prior~~ current year rate of at least 50% that decrease the failure rate by 10% or more from the prior year. A school shall not receive a Level Two performance designation for more than four consecutive years.  Level Three: Schools not meeting Level One or Level Two performance. |
| c. Academic achievement indicator for all students for science: the academic indicator shall be calculated based on the rate of students who passed board-approved assessments. | Level One: Schools with a current year or three-year ~~average~~ rate of at least 70%, or schools ~~that were at~~ with a current year rate in the Level Two ~~the prior year and decrease~~ range that decreased the failure rate by 10% or more from the prior year.  Level Two: Schools not meeting Level One performance with a current year or three-year ~~average~~ rate of at least 66%, or schools with a ~~prior~~ current year rate of at least 50% and decrease the failure rate by 10% or more from the prior year. A school shall not receive a Level Two performance designation for more than four consecutive years.  Level Three: Schools not meeting Level One or Level Two performance. |
| d. Academic achievement gaps for English (reading and writing): A single performance level is assigned for academic achievement gaps for English (reading and writing), based upon the composite of performance levels calculated individually for each reporting group using the same methodology and benchmarks as provided for in the academic achievement indicators for all students, as provided in subdivision F 1 a of this subsection. | Level One: Schools with no more than one reporting group demonstrating Level Two performance.  Level Two: Schools with two or more reporting groups demonstrating Level Two performance and no more than one reporting group demonstrating Level Three performance.  Level Three: Schools with two or more reporting groups demonstrating Level Three performance. |
| e. Academic achievement gaps for mathematics. A single performance level is assigned for academic achievement gaps for mathematics, based upon the composite of performance levels calculated individually for each reporting group using the same methodology and benchmarks as provided for in the academic achievement indicators for all students, as provided in subdivision F 1 b of this subsection. | Level One: Schools with no more than one reporting group demonstrating Level Two performance.  Level Two: Schools with two or more reporting groups demonstrating Level Two performance and no more than one reporting group demonstrating Level Three performance.  Level Three: Schools with two or more reporting groups demonstrating Level Three performance. |
| f. Graduation and completion index (GCI) for schools with a graduating class: The GCI is the percentage of students graduating from or completing high school based upon a graduation and completion index prescribed by the board. The board's GCI shall include weighted points for diploma graduates, recipients of high school equivalency credentials approved by the board, students not graduating but still in school, and students earning certificates of program completion. | Level One: Schools with a current year or three-year ~~average~~ index of at least 88, or schools ~~that were at~~ with a current year index in the Level Two ~~the prior year and increase~~ range that increased the index by 2.5% or more from the prior year.  Level Two: Schools not meeting Level One performance with a current year or three-year ~~average~~ index of at least 81, or schools ~~that were at~~ with a current year index in the Level Three ~~the prior year and increase~~ range that increased the index by 2.5% or more from the prior year. A school shall not receive a Level Two performance designation for more than four consecutive years.  91  Level Three: Schools not meeting Level One or Level Two performance. |
| g. Dropout rate for schools with a graduating class. | Level One: Schools with a current year or three-year ~~average~~ rate of no more than 6.0%, or schools ~~that were at~~ with a current year rate in the Level Two ~~the prior year and decrease the rate~~ range that decreased by 10% or more ~~from~~ of the prior ~~year~~ year's rate.  Level Two: Schools not meeting Level One performance with a current year or three-year ~~average~~ rate of no more than 9.0%, or schools ~~that were at~~ with a current year rate in the Level Three ~~the prior year and decrease the rate~~ range that decreased by 10% or more of the prior ~~year~~ year's rate. A school shall not receive a Level Two performance designation for more than four consecutive years.  Level Three: Schools not meeting Level One or Level Two performance. |
| h. Chronic absenteeism: Chronically absent students are defined as those who are enrolled in a given school who miss 10% or more of the school year, regardless of reason. Students receiving homebound instruction, as defined in [8VAC20-131-5](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section5/), shall be excluded from the chronic absenteeism rate. | Level One: Schools with a current year or three-year ~~average~~ rate of no more than 15%, or schools ~~that were at~~ with a current year rate in the Level Two ~~the prior year and decrease the rate~~ range that decreased by 10% or more ~~from~~ of the prior ~~year~~ year's rate.  Level Two: Schools not meeting Level One performance with a current year or three-year ~~average~~ rate of no more than 25%, or schools ~~that were at~~ with a current year rate in the Level Three ~~the prior year and decrease the rate~~ range that decreased by 10% or more ~~from~~ of the prior ~~year~~ year's rate. A school shall not receive a Level Two performance designation for more than four consecutive years.  Level Three: Schools not meeting Level One or Level Two performance. |
| i. College, career, and civic readiness ~~index~~ indicator for schools with a graduating class: The college, career, and civic readiness ~~index~~ indicator measures the extent to which a school's students successfully complete advanced coursework, career and technical education (CTE) coursework and credentialing, and work-based and service-based learning.  Application of the college, career, and civic readiness ~~index~~ indicator to performance levels for accreditation purposes shall occur no later than the 2021–2022 school year. | Level One: Schools with a current year or three-year ~~index~~ rate of at least 85 or schools with a current year indicator rate in the Level Two range that increased the indicator rate by a value set out by the Board.  Level Two: Schools not meeting Level One performance with a current year ~~index~~ rate of at least 71 or schools with a current year indicator rate in the Level Three range that increased the indicator rate by a value set out by the Board. A school shall not receive a Level Two performance designation for more than four consecutive years.  Level Three: Schools not meeting Level One or Level Two performance. |

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2. To focus on continuous improvement for all schools, the benchmarks delineating the performance levels provided in subdivision 1 of this subsection may be adjusted as provided in subsection D of this section, through board-approved guidance. Adequate notice shall be provided to local school boards of any such adjustment.

3. The board may adopt special provisions related to the measurement and use of a school quality indicator as prescribed by the board. The board may also alter the inclusions and exclusions from the performance level calculations by providing adequate notice to local school boards.

4. The board may add new assessments or discontinue the use of existing assessments in the Virginia Assessment Program by providing adequate notice to local school boards. As specified in the Standards of Quality, the board may adopt special provisions related to the administration and use of any SOL tests as applied to school quality indicators for any period during which the Standards of Learning content or assessments in that area are being revised and phased in. Notice shall be provided to local school boards regarding the special provisions prior to statewide administration of such tests.

5. The board may adopt valid and reliable measures of student growth to be used in calculating the Academic Achievement Indicators for English and mathematics and in determining the progress of English learners toward English proficiency.

6. The board shall provide a process for a local school board to appeal the performance level designation for a specific school quality indicator for any school in the division. The board shall grant such appeals only in limited circumstances that warrant special consideration in designating performance levels. The board shall grant any appeal related to the performance level designation for the dropout rate indicator when the local school board is able to demonstrate that late-entry students with limited and/or interrupted formal education, as defined by the Department, are the sole reason for a school earning a lower performance level designation for the dropout rate indicator. This grant of appeal for the dropout rate performance level designation shall only be guaranteed for four consecutive years at which point any further appeals shall be considered or approved by the board at its discretion. In order to appeal such designation the local school board shall submit a request to the board, signed by the chairman of the school board and the school superintendent, explaining why the school board is appealing the designation and shall include documentation supporting the request to change the performance level designation. For any appeal related to the performance level designation for the dropout rate indicator, the chairman of the school board and the school superintendent must also certify the availability of Certificate of Program Completion for students with limited and/or interrupted formal education.

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7. The board may designate and approve additional school quality indicators, according to its criteria as specified in subsection A of this section, provided that when the board incorporates additional indicators, the board shall also establish performance benchmarks to assign performance levels.

G. To establish performance levels for any of the school quality indicators that are based on Virginia Assessment Program outcome data in schools with grade configurations that do not house a grade or offer courses for which SOL tests or additional tests approved by the board as outlined in [8VAC20-131-110](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section110/) are administered, such schools shall be paired with another school in the division housing one or more of the grades in which SOL tests are administered. The pairing of such schools shall be made upon the recommendation of the division superintendent. The schools should have a "feeder" relationship and the grades should be contiguous.

**Statutory Authority**

§§ [22.1-16](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-16/) and [22.1-253.13:3](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-253.13:3/) of the Code of Virginia.

**Historical Notes**

Derived from [Volume 34, Issue 08](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=34:08), eff. January 11, 2018.

**8VAC20-131-390. Accreditation.**

A. The board shall accredit schools based on achievement of the school accountability requirements of this chapter.

The principal of each new or existing school and the division superintendent shall annually document and report to the Department of Education, in a manner prescribed by the board, the following:

1. The division's promotion and retention policies have been developed in accordance with the requirements of [8VAC20-131-30](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section30/);

2. Compliance with the requirements to offer courses that shall allow students to complete the graduation requirements in [8VAC20-131-50](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section50/) and [8VAC2021-131-51](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency2021/chapter131/section51/), as applicable;

3. The school and school division's ability to offer the instructional program prescribed in [8VAC20-131-70](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section70/) through [8VAC20-131-100](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section100/);

4. The school and school division's offering of history and social science and English, to include writing, as prescribed in [8VAC20-131-70](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section70/) C;

5. Compliance with the leadership and staffing requirements of [8VAC20-131-210](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section210/) through [8VAC20-131-240](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section240/);

6. Compliance with the facilities and safety provisions of [8VAC20-131-260](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section260/);

7. Compliance with the parental notification provisions of [8VAC20-131-270](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section270/) B;

8. The Standards of Learning have been fully incorporated into the school division's curriculum in all accreditation-eligible schools~~, and the Standards of Learning material is being taught to all students eligible to take the SOL tests~~;

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9. A comprehensive, unified, long-range school plan has been prepared and implemented as required by the Standards of Quality, in conjunction with the long-range comprehensive plan of the division. Such plan shall be available to students, parents, staff, and the public. Each school plan shall be evaluated as part of the development of the next plan. Schools may use other plans to satisfy this requirement with prior written approval from the Department of Education.

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Comprehensive, unified long-range school plans shall identify and report student outcomes based on data that has been disaggregated and analyzed by student groups; and shall include actions to improve the performance of all student groups to 1) close achievement gaps between student groups and 2) achieve school quality indicator improvement for all student groups to the Level One standard. Those schools with all students at the Level One standard on school quality indicators should include strategies to close achievement gaps between student groups if they exist within that level. The school plan should outline strategies to ensure access of opportunity to advance successful outcomes for all student groups and address inequitable access to opportunities. The plan should address how the division has allocated resources, and what additional resources are needed at the school level to 1) close achievement gaps between student groups and 2) bring all student groups to the Level One standard on school quality indicators. As part of its plan, the school should reflect on the need for any improved data collection and verification processes that will assist it in assessing and monitoring issue areas. This plan shall align with guidelines prescribed by the Board and shall be reviewed on an annual basis and revised as necessary.

10. Actions prescribed by [8VAC20-131-400](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section400/) have been completed; and

11. Each school continues to meet the standards in this chapter that the school reported that it met in the previous year, and actions taken to correct any noncompliance issues that the school reported in the previous year.

B. Accreditation ratings. Effective no later than the academic year 2018-2019, schools that meet the conditions described in subsection A of this section shall be assigned one of the following accreditation designations as described in this section.

1. Accredited: When a school has each of its school quality indicators at Level One or Level Two, it shall be "Accredited." For the transition year of 2018-2019, when a school meets the accreditation standards for designation as accredited under either the 2017-2018 accreditation calculation rules or the 2018-2019 rules for multiple school quality indicators, it shall be designated "Accredited."

2. Accredited with Conditions: When a school has any school quality indicator at Level Three, it shall be "Accredited with Conditions."

3. Accreditation Denied: If a school is designated "Accredited with Conditions," and the school or school division fails to adopt and implement school division or school corrective action plans with fidelity as specified by [8VAC20-131-400](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section400/) D, it may be designated by the board as "Accreditation Denied" as provided in [8VAC20-131-400](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section400/) D 4.

4. New School: New schools that are comprised of students from one or more existing schools in the division will be awarded a New School status for one year pending an evaluation of the school's eligible students' performance on all applicable indicators.

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C. Any school in violation of this chapter shall be subject to appropriate action by the board including withholding the school's accreditation rating.

D. A school's accreditation rating may be withheld by action of the board for any school found to be in violation of test security procedures pursuant to § [22.1-19.1](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-19.1/) of the Code of Virginia.

E. Review cycles.

1. The board shall review annually the status of the performance levels for school quality indicators

applied to accreditation for all schools in the Commonwealth.

2. If a school has been designated "Accredited" for three consecutive years, the board shall review the accreditation status of the school every three years. However, the board shall review the status of each school quality indicator used for accreditation each individual year within that triennial period. If the board finds that the school would have been accredited every year of the triennial review period, the board shall accredit the school for another three years. A multi-year accreditation status shall not relieve any school or division of annual reporting requirements, nor shall it relieve any school or division of annual review of school quality indicators used for school accreditation and subsequent actions as appropriate and provided for in [8VAC20-131-400](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section400/), depending on performance level.

**Statutory Authority**

§§ [22.1-16](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-16/) and [22.1-253.13:3](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-253.13:3/) of the Code of Virginia.

**Historical Notes**

Derived from [Volume 34, Issue 08](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=34:08), eff. January 11, 2018.

**8VAC20-131-400. Application of the school quality indicator performance levels to actions.**

A. In accordance with the Standards of Quality at § [22.1-253.13:6](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-253.13:6/) C of the Code of Virginia, all schools shall develop a comprehensive, unified, long-range plan. To develop such plans, schools shall conduct a comprehensive needs assessment, in collaboration with their school division staff, to identify needed actions to ensure continuous improvement for their students. Results of the comprehensive needs assessment shall be used to develop ~~a multi-year improvement plan~~ essential action(s), which shall be a component of the school's comprehensive, unified, long-range plan. ~~The multi-year improvement~~ This plan shall be reviewed and updated as needed on an annual basis. Confirmation of completion of the actions required by this section shall be provided to meet requirements of [8VAC20-131-390](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section390/) A 10.

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In determining required actions for schools and school divisions, levels of performance shall be considered separately for each school quality indicator. Responses and actions to be taken by school divisions and schools, under the leadership of division superintendents and school principals, according to the performance level of each school quality indicator are as prescribed in subsections B, C, and D of this section.

B. Level One. If a school quality indicator is at Level One, the school and its school division shall continue to monitor the indicator and the ~~multi-year school improvement~~ comprehensive, unified, long-range plan for continuous improvement.

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C. Level Two. If a school quality indicator is at Level Two, the school and its school division shall have primary responsibility to revise and implement its ~~multi-year school improvement~~ comprehensive, unified, long-range plan.

In developing such plan, the school and its school division shall determine the issues and conditions that are likely contributing to the school's performance on the indicator and plan and implement essential actions and research-based strategies designed to improve performance on the indicator to achieve the Level One standard.

School division and school staff shall:

1. Identify factors related to the school's performance on the indicator as part of the school's comprehensive needs assessment;

2. Use the results of the comprehensive needs assessment to develop and revise the ~~multi-year school improvement~~ comprehensive, unified, long-range plan to address the factors identified in the needs assessment that are related to the performance on the indicator. The school's ~~multi-year school improvement~~ comprehensive, unified, long-range plan shall be approved by the local school board. The department may implement an audit process to ensure compliance with this provision;

3. Implement the essential actions and research-based strategies with fidelity;

4. Regularly evaluate evidence of the school's progress in implementing the plan, monitor changes on the school quality indicator, and make adjustments as warranted; and

5. Evaluate the progress of the school quality indicators at Level Two at the end of each year and assess the results of the ~~multi-year school improvement~~ school's comprehensive, unified, long-range plan actions at the end of two years. If no progress is made within the two-year period on such school quality indicators, the plan shall be revised.

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If any of the academic achievement indicators for all students, as provided in [8VAC20-131-380](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section380/) F 1 a, 1 b, or 1 c is at Level Two, the school must undergo an academic review conducted by the department, or under its guidance, to further identify required essential actions to improve student achievement. ~~Review of other indicators by the department, or under its guidance, may occur based on the school's multi-year school improvement plan.~~ ~~School multi-year school improvement~~ The essential action(s) of the school's comprehensive, unified, long-range plans developed for academic achievement indicators ~~for~~ when, as a reporting group, all students ~~that~~ are at Level Two shall be reviewed through a department-established process, which may include peer review by staff from other school divisions. Review of other indicators by the department, or under its guidance, may occur based on the school's comprehensive, unified, long-range plan.

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School divisions with indicators at Level Two may request technical assistance from the department.

D. Level Three.

1. Corrective action plans. If any school quality indicator is at Level Three, the school and school division shall work cooperatively and in consultation with the department to develop a corrective action plan, which shall be incorporated as a component of the school's comprehensive, unified, long-range plan.

In developing such plan, the school and school division, in consultation with the department, shall determine the issues and conditions that are likely contributing to the school's performance on the indicator and plan and implement essential actions and research-based strategies to achieve improvement to the Level One standard.

All schools with indicators at Level Three must undergo an academic or other review, as appropriate, conducted by the department, or under its guidance, to further identify required actions to improve student achievement and the school quality indicators that are at Level Three.

a. Considerations for the level of direction and intervention from the department include:

(1) Specific characteristics of the school and school division;

(2) The number of school quality indicators at Level Three for the school;

(3) A school's trajectory on the indicators at Level Three;

(4) The length of time the school indicator has been at Level Three; and

(5) The number of schools in the division with multiple school quality indicators at Level Three.

b. In consultation with department staff, school division and school staff shall:

(1) Identify factors related to the school's performance on the indicators at Level Three as part of the school's comprehensive needs assessment;

(2) Use the results of the comprehensive needs assessment to develop a corrective action plan as part of the ~~multi-year correction action~~ comprehensive, unified, long-range plan that addresses the factors identified in the needs assessment that are related to the performance on the indicator through essential actions and research-based strategies;

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(3) Submit the completed corrective action plan and ~~correction action~~ comprehensive, unified, long-range plan to the department through the division superintendent for department approval;

(4) Amend the plan if the department disapproves any portion thereof, as needed to secure the department's approval;

(5) Implement the approved ~~correction action~~ comprehensive, unified, long-range plan with fidelity; and

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(6) Meet regularly with department staff to monitor evidence of the school's progress in implementing the plan, to track improvement on the indicator, and to identify next steps.

2. Superintendent agreement. The level of direction and intervention from the department may include requiring the local school division superintendent and the Superintendent of Public Instruction to enter into an agreement that shall delineate the responsibilities for the school division staff, school staff, and department staff and shall also include required essential actions to improve student achievement and to improve performance on school quality indicators.

3. Memorandum of understanding. School divisions that do not demonstrate evidence of progress in adopting or implementing correction action plans or a school or schools with indicators at Level Three shall be required to enter into a memorandum of understanding between the local school board and the board. The memorandum of understanding shall delineate responsibilities for the local school board, the board, school division staff, school staff, and department staff and shall also include required essential actions to improve student achievement and to improve performance on school quality indicators.

Department staff shall meet regularly with school division staff to monitor the memorandum of understanding and corrective action plan, to track progress on the indicators, and to identify next steps.

School divisions that do not demonstrate evidence of progress under the memorandum of understanding and the associated corrective action plan shall be subject to additional actions, which may include more frequent meetings with department staff, required technical assistance, or appearance before the board.

4. Denial of accreditation. If a school is designated "Accredited with Conditions," and the school or school division fails to adopt and implement corrective ~~action plans~~ actions into a school’s comprehensive, unified, long-range plan with fidelity as specified by this section, the Superintendent of Public Instruction shall review the school for potential designation by the board as "Accreditation Denied" and shall present the results of such review to the board with recommendations. If the board determines that any such school is at Level Three on any school quality indicator due to its failure to adopt and implement corrective ~~action plans~~ actions into a school’s comprehensive, unified, long-range plan with fidelity as required by this section, the board shall designate such school as "Accreditation Denied." The local school board shall be given an opportunity to correct such failure, and if successful in a timely manner, the school's "Accreditation Denied" designation may be rescinded at the board's discretion.

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5. At-risk add-on funds. As provided in the appropriation act, if the board has required a local school board to submit a corrective action plan pursuant to § [22.1-253.13:3](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-253.13:3/) A of the Code of Virginia, either for the school division pursuant to a division level review or for any schools within its division that have been designated as not meeting the standards as approved by the board, the Superintendent of Public Instruction shall determine and report to the board whether each such local school board has met its obligation to develop and submit such corrective action plan and is making adequate and timely progress in implementing the plan. Additionally, if an academic review process undertaken pursuant to § [22.1-253.13:3](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-253.13:3/) A of the Code of Virginia has identified actions for a local school board to implement, the Superintendent of Public Instruction shall determine and report to the board whether the local school board has implemented required actions. If the Superintendent of Public Instruction certifies that a local school board has failed or refused to meet any of those obligations, the board shall withhold payment of some or all at-risk add-on funds otherwise allocated to the affected division pursuant to this allocation for the pending fiscal year. In determining the amount of at-risk add-on funds to be withheld, the board shall take into consideration the extent to which such funds have already been expended or contractually obligated. The local school board shall be given an opportunity to correct its failure and, if successful in a timely manner, may have some or all of its at-risk add-on funds restored at the board's discretion.

6. Additional remedies. The board may exercise its authority to seek school division compliance with school laws pursuant to the relevant provisions of the Code of Virginia when any school within a division receives an accreditation designation other than "Accredited."

This includes the authority of the Board to require a division-level academic review when the Board finds that the failure of schools within a division to meet the standards established by the Board is related to division-level failure to implement the Standards of Quality or other division-level action or inaction. Following such review, the local school board and Board shall enter into a memorandum of understanding and the division shall subsequently submit a division-level corrective action plan, in accordance with § [22.1-253.13:3](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-253.13:3/).

In accordance with the Standards of Quality at § [22.1-253.13:3](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-253.13:3/) A of the Code of Virginia, if the board determines that a school division has failed or refused, and continues to fail or refuse, to comply with any of the Standards of Quality, including the requirement for local school boards to maintain schools designated as "Accredited" as provided in § [22.1-253.13:3](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-253.13:3/) A of the Code of Virginia, the board may petition the circuit court having jurisdiction in the school division to mandate or otherwise enforce compliance with such standard, including the development or implementation of any required corrective action plan that a local school board has failed or refused to develop or implement in a timely manner.

**Statutory Authority**

§§ [22.1-16](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-16/) and [22.1-253.13:3](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-253.13:3/) of the Code of Virginia.

**Historical Notes**

Derived from [Volume 34, Issue 08](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=34:08), eff. January 11, 2018.

**8VAC20-131-410. Recognitions and rewards for school and division accountability.**

Schools and divisions shall be recognized by the board in accordance with guidelines the board shall establish for the Exemplar School Recognition Program to recognize (i) schools or school divisions that exceed board-established requirements or show continuous improvement on academic and school quality indicators and (ii) schools, school divisions, and school boards that implement effective, innovative practices. Such recognition may include:

1. Public announcements recognizing individual schools and divisions;

2. Tangible rewards;

3. Waivers of certain board regulations;

4. Exemptions from certain reporting requirements; or

5. Other commendations deemed appropriate to recognize high achievement.

In addition to board recognition, local school boards shall adopt policies to recognize individual schools through public announcements, media releases, and participation in community activities when setting policy relating to schools and budget development, as well as other appropriate recognition.

**Statutory Authority**

§ 22.1-253.13 of the Code of Virginia.

**Historical Notes**

Derived from [Volume 34, Issue 08](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=34:08), eff. January 11, 2018; amended, Virginia Register [Volume 36, Issue 03](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=36:03), eff. October 30, 2019.

**8VAC20-131-420. Waivers and alternative accreditation plans.**

A. Except as specified in this section, the board may grant, for a period of up to five years, a waiver of requirements of this chapter that are not mandated by state or federal law or designed to promote health or safety. The board may grant all or a portion of the request for a waiver and designate conditions as appropriate. Waivers of requirements in [8VAC20-131-30](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section30/), [8VAC20-131-50](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section50/), [8VAC20-131-51](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section51/), [8VAC20-131-70](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section70/), and [8VAC20-131-370](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section370/) through [8VAC20-131-430](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section430/) shall not be granted, and no waiver may be approved for a program that violates the Standards of Quality.

B. Waivers of some of the requirements of this chapter may be granted by the board based on submission of a request from the division superintendent and chairman of the local school board. The request shall include documentation of the justification and need for the waiver. In no event shall waivers be granted to the requirements of Part III ([8VAC20-131-30](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section30/) et seq.) of this chapter except that the board may provide for the waiver of certain graduation requirements in [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/) upon (i) the board's initiative or (ii) the request of a local school board on a case-by-case basis. The board shall develop guidelines for implementing this chapter.

Any student with a disability whose Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan documents that the student cannot successfully complete training in emergency first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, or the use of automated external defibrillators, including hands-on practice of the skills necessary to perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation, as required for graduation in [8VAC20-31-50](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter31/section50/) B 2 and C 2 and [8VAC20-131-51](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section51/) B 2 and C 2 shall be granted a waiver from this graduation requirement.

C. Waivers for innovative or school experimental programs. With the approval of the local school board, schools seeking to implement experimental or innovative programs, or both, that are not consistent with this chapter shall submit a waiver request to the board for evaluation and approval prior to implementation. The request must include the following:

1. Purpose and objectives of the experimental or innovative programs;

2. Description and duration of the programs;

3. Anticipated outcomes;

4. Number of students affected;

5. Evaluation procedures; and

6. Mechanisms for measuring goals, objectives, and student academic achievement.

D. Alternative accreditation plans. Subject to the provisions of subsection B of this section, the governing school board of special purpose schools such as those provided for in § [22.1-26](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-26/) of the Code of Virginia, Governor's schools, special education schools, alternative schools, or career and technical schools that serve as the student's school of principal enrollment may seek approval of an alternative accreditation plan from the board. ~~Schools offering alternative education programs, schools with a graduation cohort of 50 or fewer students as defined by the graduation rate formula adopted by the board may request that the board approve an alternative accreditation plan to meet the graduation and completion index benchmark.~~ Special purpose schools with alternative accreditation plans shall be evaluated on standards appropriate to the programs offered in the school and approved by the board prior to August 1 of the school year for which approval is requested. Any student graduating from a special purpose school with a Standard Diploma or an Advanced Studies Diploma must meet the requirements prescribed in [8VAC20-131-50](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section50/) or [8VAC20-131-51](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section51/).

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As set forth in the Standards of Quality and according to department procedures, any school board may request the board for release from state regulations or, on behalf of one or more of its schools, for approval of an Individual School Accreditation Plan for the evaluation of the performance of one or more of its schools as authorized for schools enumerated in this subsection, based on special circumstances.

**Statutory Authority**

§§ [22.1-16](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-16/) and [22.1-253.13:3](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-253.13:3/) of the Code of Virginia.

**Historical Notes**

Derived from [Volume 34, Issue 08](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=34:08), eff. January 11, 2018.

**~~8VAC20-131-430. Effective dates.~~**

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~~A. Graduation requirements.~~

~~1. The graduation requirements for students entering the ninth grade for the first time in the 2013–2014 school year and prior to the 2018–2019 school year shall be those provided in~~[~~8VAC20-131-50~~](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section50/)~~.~~

~~2. The graduation requirements for students entering the ninth grade for the first time in the 2018-2019 school year and beyond shall be those provided in~~[~~8VAC20-131-51~~](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section51/)~~.~~

~~3. The graduation requirements applicable to students transferring into a Virginia high school for the first time shall be as determined by~~[~~8VAC20-131-60~~](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section60/)~~G.~~

~~B. Locally awarded verified credits.~~

~~1. Locally awarded verified credits conferred for English, mathematics, laboratory science, and history and social science for students entering the ninth grade for the first time prior to the 2018–2019 school year shall be as provided in~~[~~8VAC20-131-110~~](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section110/)~~B 3 a.~~

~~2. Locally awarded verified credits conferred for English, mathematics, laboratory science, and history and social science for students entering the ninth grade for the first time in 2018–2019 or thereafter shall be as provided in~~[~~8VAC20-131-110~~](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section110/)~~B 3 b.~~

~~C. Academic and career planning.~~

~~1. The requirements for academic and career planning prescribed in~~[~~8VAC20-131-140~~](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section140/)~~B shall be effective beginning with the 2013–2014 academic year and through the 2017–2018 academic year.~~

~~2. The requirements for Academic and Career Plans prescribed in~~[~~8VAC20-131-140~~](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section140/)~~C shall be effective beginning with the 2018–2019 academic year.~~

~~D. The application of the college, career, and civic readiness index as a school quality indicator used for accreditation shall be made no later than the 2021–2022 school year.~~

~~E. Unless otherwise specified, the remainder of this chapter shall become effective beginning with the 2018–2019 academic year.~~

**Statutory Authority**

§§ [22.1-16](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-16/) and 22.1-253.13.3 of the Code of Virginia.

**Historical Notes**

Derived from [Volume 34, Issue 08](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=34:08), eff. January 11, 2018; amended, Virginia Register [Volume 36, Issue 19](http://register.dls.virginia.gov/toc.aspx?voliss=36:19), eff. June 25, 2020.