| **Virginia Board of Education Agenda Item** | **Seal of the Commonwealth of Virginia** |
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# Agenda Item: A

## Date: September 20, 2018

### Title: Final Review of the Addition of Special Permission Credit Accommodations to the *Guidelines for Standard Diploma Credit Accommodations for Students with Disabilities*

#### Presenter: John Eisenberg, Assistant Superintendent for Special Education and Student Services

#### Email: john.eisenberg@doe.virginia.gov Phone: 804/786-8079

## Purpose of Presentation:

Action required by state or federal law or regulation.

## Executive Summary:

## Based on feedback received from the United States Department of Education’s Peer Review Process on State Assessments, the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) received notification that the Virginia Substitute Evaluation Program (VSEP) would no longer be permissible for use in Virginia’s federal accountability system. Students with disabilities who would potentially use this assessment option would not be counted as participants and their scores would not counted. Due to this new interpretation, VDOE is proposing the use of Special Permission Credit Accommodations to provide those students with disabilities who previously might have used the VSEP with a pathway to earn the necessary locally awarded verified credits to obtain an standard diploma. The recommendation is as follows:

*Special Permission Credit Accommodation (requires submission of documentation to VDOE)*

The special permission credit accommodation permits local school boards to award locally awarded verified credits in reading, writing, mathematics, science and history, to certain students with disabilities. Eligible students must:

1. pass the high school course based on a non-modified curriculum,
2. score below 375 on the SOL test,
3. have a documented disability that presents a unique or significant challenge to the degree that the student is unable to demonstrate knowledge of the course content on the SOL test using available accommodations, and
4. demonstrate achievement in the academic content through an appeal process administered at the local level.

The decision to consider a special permission credit accommodation should be made through the IEP and/or 504 review process. School divisions must submit a *Special Permission Credit Accommodation* *Form* to the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) for each student being considered for a locally awarded verified credit with an SOL scaled score below 375. Documentation regarding the disability that prevents the student from fully demonstrating their knowledge of the course content on the SOL test even with accommodations must be included on the form. This documentation should include evidence of the use or consideration of other credit accommodations and other substitute assessment options. VDOE staff will review the submitted documentation and will return forms that do not meet the requirements included in these guidelines to the school division for additional work.

## Action Requested:

Final review: Action requested at this meeting.

## Superintendent’s Recommendation: The Superintendent of Public Instruction recommends that the Board Of Education approve the Addition of Special Permission Credit Accommodations to the *Guidelines for Standard Diploma Credit Accommodations for Students with Disabilities*

## Rationale for Action:

This action will create further options for students with disabilities to access the Standards of Learning Assessments and provide necessary accommodations due to their disability.

## Previous Review or Action:

Previous review and action. Specify date and action taken below:

July 26, 2018 First Review

Background Information and Statutory Authority:

This Board item relates to priority #1 of the Board’s Comprehensive Plan.

Priority 1: The adoption of Special Permission Credit Accommodations for students with disabilities who are pursuing a standard diploma using credit accommodations will provide high-quality, effective learning environments for students with disabilities.

The *Standards of Accreditation* include the following information regarding credit accommodations:

8 VAC 20-131-5. Definitions.

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

 8 VAC 20-131-50. Requirements for graduation.

2. Requirements for a Standard Diploma.

3. The Board of Education 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

On March 28, 2013, the Board of Education adopted Guidelines for Standard Diploma Credit Accommodations for Students with Disabilities. These guidelines were developed to provide school divisions with a list of approved “credit accommodations” for use by students with disabilities to obtain a Standard Diploma under *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia* (8 VAC 20-131).

The credit accommodation guidelines include the following provision regarding the local award of verified credit:

“Permit local school boards to award locally awarded verified credits in reading, writing, and mathematics, in addition to science and history, to students with disabilities. Use the same criteria for awarding credits currently approved for science and history. Eligible students must:

a. Pass the high school course,

b. Score within 375-399 scale score range on any administration of the Standards of Learning test after taking the test at least twice, and

c. Demonstrate achievement in the academic content through an appeal process administered at the local level.”

As noted in the guidelines, the Board may adopt additional credit accommodations.

Timetable for Further Review/Action:
Final review is anticipated at the September 20, 2018, Board meeting. Following the Board’s approval a Superintendents Memo will be issue highlighting the changes and requirements for compliance. Training materials will also be developed and disseminated.

## Impact on Fiscal and Human Resources:

There is no fiscal impact on local school divisions. The only fiscal impact to VDOE will be staff time and effort to develop and deliver the training content.