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

## Date: September 20, 2018

### Title: Final Review of Proposed Guidelines for the Use of Local Performance Assessments for Verifying Credits in Writing

#### Presenter: Mrs. Shelley Loving-Ryder, Assistant Superintendent of Student Assessment and School Improvement

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## Purpose of Presentation:

Action required by Board of Education regulation.

## Executive Summary:

The 2017 Standards of Accreditation at 8VAC20-131-110 B5 permit local school divisions to award a verified credit in writing to a student who “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.”

Guidelines on the use of local performance assessments to verify credits in writing will be presented to the Board for final review and approval. The*Guidelines for the Use of Local Performance Assessment in Verifying Credits in Writing* are intendedtoprovide guidance to school divisions who choose to award verified credits in writing using local authentic performance assessments.

## Action Requested:

Final review: Action requested at this meeting.

## Superintendent’s Recommendation:

The Superintendent of Public Instruction recommends that the Board approve the guidelines for the use of local performance assessments for verifying credits in writing.

**Rationale for Action**:

Approval of the **Guidelines for the Use of Local Performance Assessments to Award Verified Credits in Writing** at the September 20, 2018, meeting will allow school divisions to implement them during the 2018-2019 school year.

## Previous Review or Action:

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

## First Review: July 26, 2018

## Background Information and Statutory Authority:

The 2017 *Standards of Accreditation* at 8VAC20-131-110 B5 permit local school divisions to award a verified credit in writing to a student who “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.”

Changes to the ***Guidelines* *for the Use of Local Performance Assessments to Verify Credits in Writing*** since the July 26, 2018, board meeting are shown in strikethrough and underline format in Attachment A.

As background, the Virginia Board of Education previously approved “**Local Alternative Assessment Guidelines for 2016-2017 through 2018-2019”** on October 27, 2016. The guidelines were developed in response to 2014 legislation that replaced the following Standards of Learning (SOL) assessments with local assessments: Grade 3 Science, Grade 3 History, Grade 5 Writing, United States History to 1865 and United States History:1865 to the Present. These guidelines were originally approved by the Board in September 2014 with an updated version adopted by the board in October 2016. The purpose of those guidelines is to provide guidance for school divisions in providing performance assessments for Grade 3 Science, Grade 3 History, Grade 5 Writing, United States History to 1865 and United States History:1865 to the Present and is different from the guidelines currently under consideration by the Board.

The guidelines being presented to the Board at the September 20, 2018, meeting, ***Guidelines* *for the Use of Local Performance Assessments to Verify Credits in Writing,*** provide guidance to school divisions that choose to use local performance assessments to verify credits in writing to meet the graduation requirements for a standard or advanced studies diploma.

## Timetable for Further Review/Action:

Following approval by the Board, the guidelines will be communicated to school divisions via superintendent’s memorandum.

## Impact on Fiscal and Human Resources:

Any costs associated with the implementation of the guidelines to the Virginia Department of Education will be covered by existing funds. The cost to school divisions that choose to verify writing credits through local performance assessments is indeterminate.

**Attachment A**

# Guidelines for the Use of Local Performance Assessments

# to Award Verified Credits in Writing

**September 20, 2018**

## Standards of Accreditation

The Standards of Accreditation at 8VAC20-131-110 B5 permit local school divisions to award a verified credit in writing to a student who “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.”

## Purpose of the Guidelines

The*Guidelines for the Use of Local Performance Assessment to Verify Credits in Writing* provide guidance to school divisions who choose to award verified credits in writing using local authentic performance assessments.

## Definition of Authentic Performance Assessments

Performance assessments generally require students to perform a task or create a product that is scored using a rubric. Authentic performance assessments often include tasks that mirror those that might occur in a “real-life” situation.

## Implementation Schedule for the 2017 English Standards of Learning

New English Standards of Learning (SOL) were adopted by the Virginia Board of Education in 2017. The 2018-2019 school year represents a transition year in which content common to the 2010 and 2017 English SOL will be taught. The 2019-2020 school year will be the first year of full implementation of the 2017 English SOL.

## Local Authentic Performance Assessment Requirements for Students who are in grade 11 English or Beyond in the 2018-2019 School Year

**S**tudents who complete grade 11 English in the 2018-2019 school year or who have previously completed instruction in the Grades 9-11 English SOL have been instructed under the 2010 English SOL. Local performance assessments used to verify credits in writing for these students must measure the SOL included in the test blueprint for the end-of-course writing test found at <http://doe.virginia.gov/testing/sol/blueprints/english_blueprints/2010/2010_blueprint_eoc_writing.pdf> and must include a persuasive writing sample. School divisions will score such writing samples using readers trained and qualified through the rubric and accompanying materials available at <http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/sol/standards_docs/english/2010/online_writing/index.shtml#understandscoring>.

The student writing samples and the results of any other assessment used by the school division to determine student proficiency in the writing skills included in the 2010 English SOL for grades 9-11 constitute a body of evidence. School divisions will review the body of evidence against the current performance level descriptors found at <http://doe.virginia.gov/testing/scoring/performance_level_descriptors/index.shtml> to determine students’ level of achievement in high school writing. Performance levels for high school writing are advanced, proficient, or does not meet the standard (fails). Students who are judged to be proficient or advanced according to these descriptors should be awarded a verified credit.

## Local Authentic Performance Assessment Requirements for Students who are enrolled in grade 10 English or Below in the 2018-2019 School Year

### *SOL Coverage*

Students who are enrolled in grade 10 English or below in the 2018-2019 school year will be instructed primarily using the 2017 English SOL. **S**chool divisions that choose to award verified credits to these students in writing using authentic performance assessments must administer assessments that cover the writing and research standards included in the English Standards of Learning (SOL) for grades 9-11. A list of the applicable SOL is provided below.

Grade 9 English: SOL 9.6, 9.7, 9.8

Grade 10 English: SOL 10.6, 10.7, 10.8

Grade 11 English: SOL 11.6, 11.7, 11.8

### *Evaluation of Performance Tasks*

Performance tasks used to award verified credits must be evaluated using the quality criteria tool found at <http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/local_assessments/index.shtml>

and must include three types of writing covered by the English Standards of Learning for grades 9-11: persuasive, analytic, and argumentative. At least one of the writing samples must include a research component. School divisions are encouraged to develop writing assessments that require students to read a passage and respond to what they have read. Because the verified credit in writing covers content from the 2017 English SOL for grades 9-11, writing samples should be collected throughout the student’s high school career. Examples of writing assignments that address each type of writing are included in Appendix A. These examples provide ideas for school divisions to use in developing tasks but would require school division staff to customize them by providing additional detail before they could be administered to students.

### *Completion of Writing Samples*

All writing samples collected for the purpose of verifying a credit in writing must be completed at school under the supervision of school personnel. Writing samples must be completed independently by the student.

### *Scoring Student Writing Samples*

Student writing samples must be scored using the state-developed high school writing rubric by scorers who have been trained on the application of the rubric. Teachers used as scorers shall not score their own students' writing samples. A draft of the high school writing rubric may be found in Appendix B. Materials to be used in training scorers on the application of the rubric will be available in the late summer or early fall of 2019. Depending on the availability of funding, the Virginia Department of Education will provide opportunities for the external verification of local scores.

### *Determining if a Verified Credit Should be Awarded*

The student writing samples and the results of any other assessment used by the school division to determine student proficiency in the writing skills included in the English SOL for grades 9-11 constitute a body of evidence. School divisions will review the body of evidence against the performance level descriptors that describe the student’s level of achievement in high school writing and will determine if the student’s achievement is advanced, proficient, or does not meet the standard (fails). Students who are judged to be proficient or advanced according to these descriptors should be awarded a verified credit. More information on performance level descriptors for student achievement in high school writing based on the 2017 SOL for grades 9, 10, and 11 will be available in early fall 2019.

### *Verified Credit Plans*

On an annual basis, school divisions will be asked to notify the Virginia Department of Education if they choose to use local performance assessments to verify credits in writing. School divisions that choose this option must prepare verified credit plans which describe how the local performance assessments will meet the requirements included in these guidelines. Verified Credit Plans will be subject to periodic review by Department staff on behalf of the Board. Information gathered during the reviews will be used to provide technical assistance to school divisions and may be shared in summary form with the Board.

### *Desk Reviews*

Department staff will conduct annual “desk reviews” in which documents will be examined and school division staff interviewed either by webinar or by telephone. The purpose of these reviews will be to determine how local school divisions that choose to use performance assessments to verify writing credits are implementing these guidelines. The reviews will help Department staff to identify technical assistance needs and to identify best practices for sharing with other Virginia school divisions. Documents reviewed may include tasks administered to students, division-specific materials used to train teachers, and samples of student writing from the various score points of the rubric.

## Use of Local Authentic Performance Assessments in State Accreditation or Federal Accountability

The results of the local authentic performance assessments will not be used to designate state accreditation or federal accountability status.

# Appendix A

## Writing Tasks That Could be Used as Part of the Body of Evidence for a Verified Credit in Writing

Writing tasks that could be used with students enrolled in grade 10 English or below in 2018-2019 who are seeking a verified credit in writing may be found below. Sample tasks are organized by the type of writing: persuasive, analytical, and argumentative. All choices require reading, and some require additional research and use of media literacy. School divisions decide when or if to use a specific choice depending on the local curricula, reading requirements and student needs. Each of the choices below can be scored using the Virginia Department of Education-developed common rubric for high school writing.

### Persuasive Writing

#### Choice: Write a persuasive essay with a viable action step based on research

Read two or more contrasting informational texts including cross-curricular content

(E.g. science or environmental issues, history or political news) and write a persuasive essay including data, evidence, and facts to support your side. Include counterclaims and evidence and argue effectively against them. Conclude with a viable action step based on reading and research. Sharing the findings in a multimodal presentation would enhance the impact of this selection.

#### Choice: On demand writing

Choose a piece of literature that has been studied during the academic year. Write a persuasive letter to the editor convincing the public that the book should/should not be removed from the school’s reading list and public library shelves. Incorporate evidence from the text for support.

### Analytical Writing

#### Choice: Write an analysis of reviews of an author’s work(s)

After reading several works by the same author, students will read several reviews of the author’s work(s) and determine the qualities and characteristics of an effective review, comparing/contrasting their ideas to those of critics. Students will then write an analysis of the author’s work(s) incorporating information from their own review as well as the critics.

#### Choice: Write an analytical essay on a career cluster/path

Research and write an analytical essay on a career path including required education, analysis of workplace trends, globalization, innovation, trends, and salary possibilities. Include specific information on required workplace readiness skills and best educational plan to achieve the career goals. Interviewing/shadowing professionals in the field would enhance the experience.

#### Choice: Fiction/Informational Text Comparative Analysis

Choose a work of fiction and an informational text on the same theme or topic. Write a comparative analysis of each work considering such aspects as author’s purpose, voice, theme/main idea, and impact. Choose and defend which text most successfully fulfills the author’s intent.

#### Choice: Comparative Analysis of Two Texts

Choose two texts by different authors written during the same period in history from the same geographic location. What is the social commentary each author is making? Analyze which text makes a stronger social commentary and defend the impact of that commentary and its importance.

#### Choice: Contrasting Pieces of Analytical Technical Writing

Choose a subject that you know a lot about, but which would probably not be familiar to a broad, general audience. (It could be anything from a skill, an object, or an activity etc.) Write a description, explanation, analysis for a broad, general audience who have no knowledge of this skill. Then write another description of the same thing for a more specialized audience who would be familiar with the thing; this piece will contain more specific information.

### Argumentative Writing

#### Choice: Argumentation Using Media Literacy

Choose a current topic evident in the media (e.g. political cartoons, editorials, newspapers, news magazines, social media etc.) Find pieces of media literacy with opposing points of view on the topic. Write an analysis of the varying media messages. Argue as to which media message/platform presented the most objective perspective of the event. A multimodal presentation exhibiting the various viewpoints and media platforms would enhance students’ understanding.

#### Choice: Argumentation on a Literary Author

Select the American author to celebrate who has had the largest impact on this country. Consider historical, social, and political aspects of this author’s work. Specify the fiction or nonfiction work(s) to be included in this honor. Explain why specific work(s) are included in this award and what the author’s lasting impact is in the United States. Argue why this author should be chosen above all other American authors.

#### Choice: Argumentation Editorial

Select a current topic that concerns students and about which you are passionate. (E.g. social media, technology, educational choices and restrictions, the arts, media, gender issues, race issues, sports, politics, the legal system, health and nutrition, science, etc.) Research the topic. Write an editorial or letter to the editor arguing your position supported with facts and evidence. Submitting the essays to a local newspaper, student newspaper, or *The* *New York Times* Student Opinion Feature would enhance the experience.

Appendix B – DRAFT Common Rubric for High School Writing Samples

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| **COMPOSING** |
|  | **4** | **3** | **2** | **1** |
| **ORGANIZATION****AND****UNITY** | * Introduction with clear, focused thesis stating a well-defined position
* Exhibits unity by following a logical organizational plan
* Maintains a consistent point of view
* Uses transitions effectively connecting ideas within/ across paragraphs.
* Effective Conclusion provides a call to action, or offers a solution
 | * Introduction with clear thesis and identified position
* Exhibits some unity with an organizational plan and some minor digressions
* Point of view may shift occasionally
* Uses transitions connecting ideas within/across paragraphs
* Effective conclusion, may restate the problem and recommend a solution/call to action
 | * Introduction may include a thesis with an unclear position
* Exhibits inconsistent unity and a lack of organization due to major digressions
* Shifts in point of view
* Limited or inconsistent use of transitions within and across paragraphs
* Conclusion merely restates the thesis, no solution or call to action
 | * No introduction and no thesis
* Exhibits no unity due to a lack of an organizational plan and major digressions
* No clear point of view
* Absence of transitions connecting ideas
* Does not include a call to action or a conclusion
 |
| **ELABORATION** | * Contains precise, relevant evidence supporting purpose and intended audience
* Complete explanation of how evidence and details support position
* Details clarify and defend the writer’s position; fully, clearly elaborates ideas.
 | * Contains adequate evidence supporting purpose and audience
* Explanation of how evidence and details support position
* Some details clarify and defend the writer’s position, minor lapses in elaboration
 | * Contains limited evidence supporting purpose and audience
* Limited explanation of how evidence and details support position
* Few details clarify or defend the writer’s position, major lapses in elaboration
 | * Contains little or no evidence supporting purpose and audience
* No explanation of how evidence supports position
* Little or no elaboration
 |
| **COUNTERCLAIMS** | * Effectively distinguishes counterclaims and counterevidence from claims
 | * Adequately distinguishes counterclaims and counterevidence from claims
 | * Attempts to distinguish counterclaims and counterevidence from claims
 | * Fails to address counterclaims and/or provide counter evidence
 |
| **RESEARCH\*** | * Source material is smoothly integrated into the text
* Research is current, from credible, reliable sources and provides evidence
 | * Research is from reliable sources, but may lack credibility or be outdated.
* Sources are used and source material is integrated into the text
 | * Research is from sources that lack credibility or contain outdated evidence.
* Integration of source material is awkward
 | * Lack of supported evidence from sources.
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| **WRITTEN EXPRESSION** |
|  | **4** | **3** | **2** | **1** |
| **STYLE** | * Highly purposeful sentence variety
* Sentences incorporate subordination of ideas, and/or effective embedding of modifiers
 | * Some purposeful sentence variety
* Some sentences use subordination of ideas, and/or embedding modifiers
 | * Limited sentence variety
* Little subordination of ideas
 | * No sentence variety
* No subordination or embedding modifiers
 |
| **WORD CHOICE/****VOCABULARY** | * Contains highly specific word choice, descriptive language, and selected information
* Purposeful tone appropriate for intended audience with evidence of writer’s voice
 | * Contains specific word choice, descriptive language, and selected information
* Evidence of appropriate tone and some evidence of writer’s voice
 | * Limited word choice, descriptive language and/or selected information
* Inconsistent tone and limited evidence of writer’s voice
 | * Lacks tone and voice, little or no specific word choice, descriptive language, and/or selected information
 |
| **USAGE/MECHANICS** |
|  | **4** | **3** | **2** | **1** |
| **SENTENCE STRUCTURE** | * Use of complex sentence structure without run-ons and fragments
 | * Some use of complex sentence structure, may contain an occasional run-on /fragment.
 | * Limited use of complex sentence structure, many run-ons /fragments.
 | * No use of correct, complex sentence structure
 |
| **USAGE/MECHANICS/****FORMATTING** | * Consistent control of usage,

grammatical conventions, and spelling,* Correct formatting of citations using MLA/APA style
 | * Reasonable control of usage, grammatical conventions, and spelling,
* Formatting of citations with minor errors using MLA/APA style
 | * Inconsistent control of usage, grammatical conventions, and spelling
* Incomplete or inaccurate formatting of citations
 | * Little/ no control of usage, grammatical conventions, and spelling
* Little formatting of citations or citations not included
 |

Scores will be assigned in the domains of composing, written expression, and usage/mechanics using this rubric. In determining a total score, the composing and written expression scores will be weighted by multiplying these scores by 2. The usage/mechanics score will not be weighted.