



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education

August 21, 2015

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: Steven R. Staples, Superintendent of Public Instruction

SUBJECT: Age Requirements for Enrollment in the National External Diploma Program (NEDP)

The definitions in *Code of Virginia* § 22.1-223 for “adult education program,” “external diploma program,” and “high school equivalency program” clarify that “adult education programs” are intended for persons over the age of compulsory attendance. Pursuant to *Code of Virginia* § 22.1-254, compulsory attendance requirements are applicable to persons who have not passed their eighteenth birthday.

Section 8VAC20-30-20 of the Board of Education’s *Regulations Governing Adult High School Programs* specifies that an adult student must be at least 18 years of age. The regulation further provides that an adult high school diploma shall be awarded to an adult student “who demonstrates through applied performance assessment full mastery of the National External Diploma Program Generalized Competencies Correlated with CASAS Competencies, 1996, as promulgated by the American Council on Education and validated and endorsed by the United States Department of Education.” Therefore, participation in local and regional external diploma programs must be made available to adults who are 18 years of age and older who did not complete high school and are not enrolled in school. Students under the age of 18 may not participate in the external diploma program.

If you have questions or need additional program information, please contact Mr. George Bailey, specialist for communications and initiatives, via e-mail at george.bailey@doe.virginia.gov or by telephone at (804) 786-9937.

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