



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education

November 21, 2014

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: Steven R. Staples, Superintendent of Public Instruction

SUBJECT: Clarification of Verified Credit Requirements for Transfer Students

As a result of several inquiries from school divisions and parents regarding verified credit requirements for transfer students, the following information is provided as a review of existing Virginia Board of Education regulations and associated assessment procedures.

Parents or guardians of transfer students should be notified as soon as possible of the graduation requirements for students entering a Virginia public high school. The notification should include definitions of standard and verified credits, information on available diploma types, and numbers of standard and verified credits required for each type of diploma. Specific criteria for determining the number of verified credits required by students who transfer into Virginia public schools are established in the [Emergency Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia](#) (SOA).

School divisions shall only require transfer students to take Standards of Learning (SOL) tests to earn verified credits toward graduation requirements:

- after verified credits earned as a result of another state's accountability system have been awarded; and
- after determining that certain SOL tests are necessary to fulfill the graduation requirements for the selected diploma based on the student's grade level and date of enrollment.

The Virginia Board of Education has established criteria for students from non-military families that differ from those established for students from active-duty military families. The verified credit requirements for each of these transfer situations are described.

Transfer Students from Non-Military Families

School divisions should determine the number of verified credits needed for the student to earn the desired diploma before administering any SOL tests. To determine the specific SOL tests a transfer student must complete, the school should follow these guidelines:

- Determine the number and type of verified credits required for the desired diploma, based on the student's grade level and the date of enrollment. A student is considered to have transferred at the **beginning** of the school year if 20 or fewer hours of instruction have been completed. A student is considered to have transferred **during** the school year if more than 20 hours of instruction has been completed. Refer to the following table for the specific verified credit requirements for students transferring into a Virginia public school for the "first time."

Note: "first time" refers to the first time the student enrolls in a Virginia public high school in that grade.

Student's Grade Level at the Time of Transfer	End-of-Course Content Area	Standard Diploma Verified Credit Requirements	Advanced Studies Diploma Verified Credit Requirements
During the 9th grade or at the beginning of the 10th grade	English: Reading	1	1
	English: Writing	1	1
	Mathematics	1	2
	Science	1	2
	History & Social Science	1	2
	Student Selected	1	1
During the 10th grade or at the beginning of the 11th grade	English: Reading	1 Reading or 1 Writing	1
	English: Writing		1
	Mathematics	1	1
	Science	1	1
	History & Social Science	1	1
	Student Selected	0	1
During the 11th grade or at the beginning of the 12th grade	English: Reading	1 Reading or 1 Writing	1 Reading or 1 Writing
	English: Writing		

For a student transferring during the 12th grade, every opportunity should be given to earn a diploma; if this is not possible, the local school division should seek to have the previous school award the diploma or request a waiver of the verified credit requirement from the Virginia Department of Education. More information about the procedures for requesting a waiver of the verified credit requirements may be found at: [Superintendent's Memo #070-14](#)

This information is also available on the Virginia Department of Education's Web site at: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/graduation/student_transfers.shtml.

- Once the number of verified credits needed is established, school personnel should evaluate the student's transcript to determine if the student already has test scores that can be used to verify credits. For example, if the sending state administers content-based end-of-course tests required for graduation and the student achieved a passing score on any of those tests, the school division shall accept the student's passing scores on the tests for the purpose of awarding verified credits in those subject areas if those tests meet all of the following criteria(SOA, *Standard 8 VAC 20-131-110. Standard and verified units of credit*):
 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 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 SOL content in the course for which verified credit is given.
- If the sending state requires a comprehensive subject area examination as a prerequisite for graduation from high school, at the request of the division superintendent, the Virginia Department of Education will review the examination to determine its suitability for use to award verified credit. Such requests shall be submitted by the division superintendent within 30 days of receipt of the student's record.
- If the student has completed any substitute tests approved by the Virginia Board of Education and achieved the approved cut scores, the school division shall award verified credit in lieu of administering the applicable SOL assessments. The list of approved substitute tests and associated cut scores is located on the Virginia Department of Education's Web site at:
http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/substitute_tests/index.shtml
- If the student has earned industry certifications or if the student has passed occupational competency or licensure assessments approved by the Virginia Board of Education, these certifications shall be accepted for the student-selected verified credit. The list of approved certifications and assessments is located on the Virginia Department of Education's Web site at:
http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/career_technical/path_industry_certification/index.shtml

Using the number of required verified credits in combination with the credits already earned (e.g., credits earned as part of another state's accountability system, credits earned from substitute tests, credits earned from certifications), the school division can determine which specific SOL tests the student should complete in order to meet the requirements for graduation with the desired diploma. If the student enrolls in any course for which there is an associated SOL test, the student must take that SOL test.

In all cases where students have earned a standard credit for coursework completed in another state but need to take the associated SOL test for verified credit, school divisions are encouraged to consider what supports should be made available to those students prior to testing. In order to aid preparation, efforts should be made to

provide these students and their parent/guardian(s) sufficient notice of testing dates and information about the testing process, as well as options for remediation and retakes that may be available if needed.

Transfer Students from Active-Duty Military Families

Alternate provisions exist for students from **military** families transferring into Virginia as part of the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children, under [§ 22.1-360](#) of the *Code of Virginia*.

[Superintendent's Memo #091-11](#) includes information related to students in military families transferring into Virginia from another state.

- If the student transfers after meeting the sending state's testing requirements for graduation, the student is **not** required to pass any additional tests in order to graduate in Virginia. The transfer student is required, however, to complete any SOL tests associated with courses in which the student enrolls.
- If the sending state requires the student to take a test or tests but the state has not set a specified cut score or passing score, the student must meet the same testing requirements as all other transfer students.
- If the sending state does not require students to pass end-of-course or exit tests in order to graduate, the student must meet the same testing requirements as all other transfer students.
- If the sending state administers content-based end-of-course tests required for graduation and the student achieved a passing score on any of those tests, the school division shall automatically accept the student's passing scores on the tests for the purpose of awarding verified credits in those subject areas. 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 sending state administers a comprehensive subject area examination (e.g., exit test) as a testing requirement for graduation, the school division shall automatically accept the student's passing scores on the tests for the purpose of awarding verified credits in those subject areas. 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.
- If the sending state administers a national norm-referenced achievement test and that state agency has established a "cut score" or passing score for the purpose of graduation, 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.
- If the student has taken any substitute test approved by the Virginia Board of Education for verified credit and achieved the required cut score, the school division shall accept the substitute test in lieu of the applicable SOL assessment.
- If the student has earned industry certifications, occupational competency assessments, and licensure assessments approved by the Virginia Board of Education, these shall be accepted for the student-selected verified credit.

The school division must consider each of these provisions in order to determine which SOL tests the transfer student from a military family should complete to meet the requirements for the desired diploma.

In all cases where students have earned a standard credit for coursework completed in another state but need to take the associated SOL test for verified credit, school divisions are encouraged to consider what supports should be made available to those students prior to testing. In order to aid preparation, efforts should be made to

provide these students and their parent/guardian(s) sufficient notice of testing dates and information about the testing process, as well as options for remediation and retakes that may be available if needed.

If you have questions regarding this information, please contact the student assessment staff at Student_Assessment@doe.virginia.gov or (804) 225-2102, or Joseph Wharff, school counseling career connections specialist, at CTE@doe.virginia.gov or (804) 225-2052.

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