

Virginia Board of Education Agenda Item



Agenda Item: "L"

Date: September 28, 2017

Title	First Review of the Addition of Expedited Retake Criteria to the <i>Guidelines for Standard Diploma Credit Accommodations for Students with Disabilities</i>		
Presenter	Mr. John Eisenberg, Assistant Superintendent, Division of Special Education and Student Services Mrs. Shelley Loving-Ryder, Assistant Superintendent, Division of Student Assessment and School Improvement		
E-mail	John.Eisenberg@doe.virginia.gov	Phone	804/786-8079
	Shelley.Loving-Ryder@doe.virginia.gov		804/225-2102

Purpose of Presentation:

Required by Board of Education Regulation

Previous Review or Action:

The Board of Education adopted the *Guidelines for Standard Diploma Credit Accommodations for Students with Disabilities* on March 28, 2013

Action Requested:

Board action requested to waive first review and approve the addition to the *Guidelines for Standard Diploma Credit Accommodations for Students with Disabilities*.

Alignment with Board of Education Goals: Please indicate (X) all that apply:

	Goal 1: Accountability for Student Learning
	Goal 2: Rigorous Standards to Promote College and Career Readiness
	Goal 3: Expanded Opportunities to Learn
	Goal 4: Nurturing Young Learners
	Goal 5: Highly Qualified and Effective Educators
X	Goal 6: Sound Policies for Student Success
	Goal 7: Safe and Secure Schools
	Other Priority or Initiative. Specify:

Background Information and Statutory Authority:

Goal 2: The adoption of expedited retake criteria for students with disabilities who are pursuing a standard diploma using credit accommodations will strengthen postsecondary education and workplace readiness opportunities for students with disabilities.

The *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia* (Standards of Accreditation) currently provide opportunities for students who meet criteria adopted by the Board of Education to have an expedited retake of a Standards of Learning test to earn verified credit.

The Board of Education originally established criteria for high school students eligible for “emergency” retakes of Standards of Learning (SOL) tests in [Resolution Number 2000-11](#) adopted on September 28, 2000.

The criteria adopted by the Board of Education for “emergency” retakes of SOL tests were subsequently set forth in the *Guidance Document Governing Certain Provisions of the Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia*, which was adopted by the Board of Education on October 25, 2006 and amended by the Board of Education on January 13, 2011.

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.

Summary of Important Issues:

Currently, based on the guidelines adopted by the Board, students are eligible for an immediate retake of a failed test if their score falls between 375 and 399. Additionally, the *Guidelines for Standard Diploma Credit Accommodations for Students with Disabilities* provide that local school may award locally awarded verified credits in reading, writing, and mathematics, in addition to science and history, to students with disabilities.

According to the guidelines, eligible students must:

- 1) Pass the high school course,
- 2) Score within 375-399 scale score range on any administration of the Standards of Learning test after taking the test at least twice, and
- 3) Demonstrate achievement in the academic content through an appeal process administered at the local level.”

Because the credit accommodations guidelines permit local school boards to award verified credit to students with disabilities who score within the 375-399 scale score range after taking the test at least twice, there is a need to expand the expedited retake scale score range for these students to a lower range. The Board is asked to approve an addition to the *Guidelines for Standard Diploma Credit Accommodations for Students with Disabilities*, found in Attachment A, which would permit students who are using credit accommodation to earn a standard diploma to immediately retake a test if their scaled score is between 350 and 375. The additional language is underlined for easy identification. This change would allow these students an expedited retake so that they could attempt to reach the 375 scaled score necessary for the locally awarded verified credit.

Impact on Fiscal and Human Resources:

There is no fiscal impact on local school divisions.

Timetable for Further Review/Action:

N/A

Superintendent's Recommendation:

The Superintendent of Public Instruction recommends that the Board of Education waive first review and adopt the additions to the *Guidelines for Standard Diploma Credit Accommodations for Students with Disabilities*

Rationale for Action:

Action is recommended at this meeting in order to allow local school divisions to offer expedited retakes to students with disabilities who are pursuing a standard diploma using credit accommodations.

**Guidelines for Standard Diploma Credit Accommodations for Students with Disabilities
Proposed Additions
September 28, 2017**

Student Eligibility Criteria

Credit accommodations for the Standard Diploma shall be determined by the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) team or 504 plan committee, including the student where appropriate, at any point after the student's eighth grade year. The school must secure the informed written consent of the parent/guardian and the student, as appropriate, to choose credit accommodations after review of the student's academic history and full disclosure of the student's options.

The student must meet the following criteria to be eligible to receive credit accommodations for the Standard Diploma:

- a. Student must have a current IEP or 504 plan with standards-based content goals.
- b. Student has a disability that precludes him or her from achieving and progressing commensurate with grade level expectations, but is learning on-grade-level content.
- c. Student needs significant instructional supports to access grade level SOL content and to show progress.
- d. Based on multiple objective measures of past performance, student might not be expected to achieve the required standard and verified units of credit within the standard time frame.

Assessments Used to Verify Credits

1. Identify and approve additional substitute tests to earn a verified credit. The Board of Education may from time to time approve additional tests that are recommended by the Superintendent of Public Instruction for the purpose of awarding verified credit. The Virginia Department of Education may partner with a local school division in the procedure to nominate an additional test. Such additional tests, which enable students to earn verified units of credit, must, at a minimum, meet the following criteria:
 - a. The test must be standardized and graded independently of the school or school divisions in which the test is given;
 - b. The test must be knowledge based;
 - c. The test must be administered on a multistate or international basis, or administered as part of another state's accountability assessment program; and
 - d. To be counted in a specific academic area, the test must measure content that incorporates of exceeds the SOL content in the course for which verified credit is given.
2. Permit the continued use of the Virginia Modified Achievement Standards Test (VMAST) for verified credit purposes for Algebra I and EOC reading. To take the VMAST for verified credit purposes, a student must meet all current VMAST eligibility requirements and beginning in the 2014-2015 school year the student must also meet the following additional criteria:
 - a. Student must pass the high school course; and
 - b. Score 374 or below on the end-of-course Standards of Learning test after taking the test at least twice

Beginning in 2014-2015, scores of students who participate in VMAST will no longer be included in the participation rate or pass rate calculations for federal accountability, as required for approval of Virginia's *Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)* flexibility application.

Locally Awarded Verified Credits

3. 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:
 - d. Pass the high school course,
 - e. Score within 375-399 scale score range on any administration of the Standards of Learning test after taking the test at least twice, and
 - f. Demonstrate achievement in the academic content through an appeal process administered at the local level.

Expedited Retakes of Standards of Learning Tests

4. Permit local school boards to offer the opportunity for the expedited retake of end-of-course Standards of Learning tests with the exception of the writing Standards of Learning tests. Eligible students must:
 - a. Have passed the course associated with the test; and
 - b. One of the following:
 - i. Failed the test by a narrow margin; or
 1. "narrow margin" criteria shall be defined as a scaled score of 350-399.
 - ii. Failed the test by any margin and have extenuating circumstances that would warrant retesting; or
 - iii. Did not sit for the regularly scheduled test for legitimate reasons.

Course Offerings

5. Approve additional course options available only to students with disabilities to meet the standard credit requirements for the Standard Diploma
 - a. Augment the Personal Finance course (3120) to include the 21 Work Readiness Skills (WRS) for the Commonwealth. Allow this augmented course to meet the Economics and Personal Finance requirement *if* the student has earned at least 3 standard credits in history and social science. The economics strand in these courses would be deemed a credit accommodation. Upon completion of the augmented Personal Finance course, the student may take the WRS assessment to earn the Board-approved Work Readiness Skills credential. This approach would satisfy the graduation requirements for economics and personal finance, history and social sciences, and the workplace credential.
 - b. Establish minimum content courses in the subject areas required for verified credits and provide flexibility in how the courses are delivered. Allow parts I and II of certain required courses to each earn a standard credit towards the total number required in the subject area. The student must successfully complete:
 - i. 4 standard credits in English and 1 verified credit each in Reading and Writing
 - ii. 3 standard credits in mathematics that include Algebra I and Geometry, and 1 verified credit in mathematics

- iii. 3 standard credits in science that include Earth Science and Biology, and 1 verified credit in science
- iv. 3 standard credits in history and social science that include Virginia and U.S. History and Virginia and U.S. Government, and 1 verified credit in history and social science

Additional Credit Accommodations

- 6. The Board may, from time to time approve additional credit accommodations.