

## **THE VIRGINIA ASSESSMENT PROGRAM AND GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS**

### **I. General**

The Virginia Board of Education has established educational objectives known as the Standards of Learning, which form the core of Virginia's educational program, and other education objectives, which together are designed to ensure the development of the skills that are necessary for success in school and in preparation for life in the years beyond.

The Albemarle County School Board has developed and implemented a program of instruction that is aligned to the Standards of Learning and that meets or exceeds the requirements of the Virginia Board of Education. It awards diplomas to all secondary school students, including students who transfer from nonpublic schools or from home instruction, who meet the requirements prescribed by the Virginia Board of Education and meet such other requirements as are prescribed by the School Board and approved by the Virginia Board of Education.

The Albemarle County School Board requires an additional local high school graduation requirement pursuant to Section 8 VAC 20-131050 (A) of the Board of Education's *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia*. The Freshman Seminar course will count as one of the current VDOE elective credit requirements for graduation and will not increase the number of credits a student needs to earn a diploma. Transfer students will not be required to take the course if they transfer after the ninth-grade year. However, the course will have a non-credit bearing mentoring component that will extend into tenth through twelfth grade.

The Albemarle County School Board awards diplomas and certificates in accordance with state laws and regulations. The requirements for a student to earn a diploma and graduation from high school are those in effect when the student enters ninth grade for the first time.

### **Virginia Assessment Program**

In kindergarten through eighth grade, where the administration of Virginia Assessment Program tests are required by the Virginia Board of Education, each student is expected to take the tests following instruction. Students who are accelerated shall take the test aligned with the highest grade level, following instruction in the content. No student shall take more than one test in any content area in each year, except in the case of expedited retakes as provided in 8 VAC 20-131-30. Schools use the assessment results in kindergarten through eighth grade as part of a set of multiple criteria for determining the promotion or retention of students.

Each student in middle and secondary school shall take all applicable end-of-course SOL tests following course instruction. The superintendent certifies to the Department of Education that the division's policy for dropping courses ensures that students' course schedules are not

changed to avoid end-of-course SOL tests. Students who achieve a passing score on an end-of-course SOL test will be awarded a verified unit of credit in that course in accordance with 8 VAC 20-131-110. Students may earn verified credits in any courses for which end-of-course SOL tests are available. Students are not required to take an end-of-course SOL test in an academic subject after they have earned the number of verified credits required for that academic content area for graduation unless such test is necessary in order for the school to meet federal accountability requirements. Middle and secondary schools may consider the student's end-of-course SOL test score in determining the student's final course grade.

Participation in the Virginia Assessment Program by students with disabilities is prescribed by provisions of their Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan. All students with disabilities are assessed with appropriate accommodations and alternate assessments where necessary.

Any student identified as an English Learner (EL) participates in the Virginia Assessment Program. A school-based committee convenes and makes determinations regarding the participation level of EL students in the Virginia Assessment Program. In kindergarten through eighth grade, EL students may be granted a one-time exemption from SOL testing in the areas of writing, history, and social science.

### Definitions

#### Authentic Performance Assessment

An “Authentic Performance Assessment” is a test that complies with guidelines adopted by the Virginia Board of Education that requires students to perform a task or create a product that is typically scored using a rubric.

#### Standard Unit of Credit

A “standard unit of credit” or “standard credit” is a credit awarded for a course in which the student successfully completes 140 clock hours of instruction and the requirements of the course. A standard unit of credit may also be awarded based on a waiver of the 140-clock hour requirement as provided in Policy IKFD, Alternative Paths to Attaining Standard Units of Credit.

#### Verified Unit of Credit

A “verified unit of credit” or “verified credit” is a credit awarded for a course in which a student earns a standard unit of credit and completes one of the following:

1. Achieves a passing score on a corresponding end-of-course SOL test.
2. Achieves a passing score on an additional test, as defined in 8 VAC 20-131-5, as part of the Virginia Assessment Program.
3. Meets the criteria for the receipt of a locally awarded verified credit when the

student has not passed a corresponding SOL test.

4. Meets the criteria for the receipt of a verified credit in history and social science by demonstrating mastery of the content of the associated course on an authentic performance assessment that complies with guidelines adopted by the Board of Education.
5. Meets the criteria for the receipt of a verified credit for 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 of Education.

Students may also earn verified credits by taking alternative tests to the SOL assessment. Such tests may only be those approved by the Virginia Board of Education, and the student may earn verified credits only by achieving that score established by the Board of Education.

### Virginia Assessment Program

The “Virginia Assessment Program” is a system used to evaluate student achievement that includes SOL tests and additional tests that may be approved from time to time by the Board of Education.

Amended: April 24, 2008; October 10, 2013; September 11, 2014; May 12, 2016; September 8, 2016; July 12, 2018

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Legal Ref.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 22.1-253.13:1, 22.1-253.13:4

8 VAC 20-131-5

8 VAC 20-131-30

~~8 VAC 20-131-40~~

8 VAC 20-131-50

8 VAC 20-131-51

8 VAC 20-131-110

Guidelines for Graduation Requirements; Local Alternative Paths to Standard Units of Credit (Virginia Board of Education Oct. 2015)

Cross Refs.: IAA Notification of Learning Objectives  
 IKFA Locally Awarded Verified Credits  
 IKFD Alternative Paths to Attaining Standard Units of Credit  
 IKH Retaking SOL Assessments