

Guidance for the Determination of the Accreditation Rating:

“Partially Accredited”

Revised July 28, 2016

Background: The 2015 Acts of Assembly directed the Board of Education to “promulgate regulations establishing additional accreditation ratings that recognize the progress of schools that do not meet accreditation benchmarks but have significantly improved their pass rates, are within specified ranges of benchmarks, or have demonstrated significant growth for the majority of their students. The Board shall implement such regulations no later than the 2016-2017 school year.”

The Board approved revisions to the *Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia* that incorporated these new ratings in July 2015 under the Fast Track Provisions of the Administrative Process Act. The changes to the regulations were effective on October 8, 2015.

Guidance: The following guidance provides additional information regarding the criteria that will be used to assign schools the new accreditation rating—“Partially Accredited” as described in 8VAC20-131-300. Specifically, guidance for the following categories under the “Partially Accredited” ratings is provided:

- Partially Accredited: Approaching Benchmark-Graduation and Completion Index
- Partially Accredited: Approaching Benchmark-Pass Rate
- Partially Accredited: Improving School- Graduation and Completion Index
- Partially Accredited: Improving School-Pass Rate

3. Partially Accredited. A school which meets criteria as prescribed by the Board of Education will be designated as Partially Accredited according to the specific categories shown below.

a. Approaching Benchmark (within specified margins):

(1) Graduation and Completion Index. Based on components of the graduation and completion index as described in 8VAC20-131-280 B 2, a school will be rated as Partially Accredited: Approaching Benchmark-Graduation and Completion Index when its eligible students meet pass rates required for full accreditation and its graduation and completion index is within a narrow margin of the minimum threshold as prescribed by the board. A school may remain in the Partially Accredited: Approaching Benchmark-Graduation and Completion Index status for no more than three consecutive years, unless an extension is granted based on criteria established by the board.

Guidance:

To achieve a rating of *Partially Accredited: Approaching Benchmark-Graduation and Completion Index*, the eligible students in the school must have met the pass rates required

for full accreditation in all four content areas (English, mathematics, science and history/social science) and the school must achieve 84 percentage points on the Board of Education's graduation and completion index.

(2) Pass Rate. Based on tests administered in the previous academic year, a school will be rated as Partially Accredited: Approaching Benchmark-Pass Rate if the school does not meet the requirements for full accreditation in all of the four core academic subject areas but the pass rate in each subject area either (i) meets the pass rate required for full accreditation or (ii) is within a narrow margin of the pass rate required for full accreditation, as defined by the board. A school may remain in the Partially Accredited: Approaching Benchmark-Pass Rate status for no more than three consecutive years, unless an extension is granted based on criteria established by the board.

Guidance:

A school will be rated as *Partially Accredited: Approaching Benchmark-Pass Rate* if the school does not meet the requirements for full accreditation but the school’s pass rate in each of the four content areas (English, mathematics, science, and history/social science) either: (1) meets the benchmark required for full accreditation or (2) meets the narrow margin criteria. Specific requirements for the *Partially Accredited: Approaching Benchmark-Pass Rate* are provided in Table A.

Table A—Pass Rate Requirements for Full Accreditation or Narrow Margin			
	Pass Rate Required for Full Accreditation	or	Pass Rate Required to Meet Narrow Margin Criteria
English	75%	or	73%
Mathematics	70%	or	68%
Science	70%	or	68%
History/Social Science	70%	or	68%

b. Improving School (meets criteria for improvement or student growth, or both, over previous year):

(1) Graduation and Completion Index. Based on components of the graduation and completion index as described in 8VAC20-131-280 B 2, a school will be rated as Partially Accredited: Improving School-Graduation and Completion Index when its eligible students meet pass rates required for full accreditation, but its graduation and completion index is not within the established narrow margin of the minimum threshold prescribed by the board; however it has achieved sufficient improvement in its graduation and completion index from the previous year, as prescribed by the board. A school may remain in the Partially Accredited: Improving School-Graduation and Completion Index status for no more than three consecutive years, unless an extension is granted based on criteria established by the board.

Guidance:

A school will be rated as *Improving School-Graduation and Completion Index*, if it fails to meet the requirements for the *Approaching Benchmark-Graduation and Completion Index* rating but 1) the eligible students in the school have met the pass rates required for full accreditation in all four content areas (English, mathematics, science and history/social science) and 2) the school’s Graduation and Completion Index has improved by at least one point from the previous year.

(2) Pass Rate. Based on tests administered in the previous academic year, a school will be rated as Partially Accredited: Improving School-Pass Rate if the school does not meet the requirements for full accreditation or for Partially Accredited: Approaching Benchmark-Pass Rate, but in each of the four core academic subject areas, one of the following criteria is met: (i) the pass rate meets the benchmark required for full accreditation; (ii) the pass rate is within a narrow margin of the benchmark required for full accreditation, as defined by the board; (iii) the school has demonstrated sufficient improvement in its pass rate from the previous year as defined by the board; or (iv) the school has demonstrated sufficient student growth, as defined by the board. A school may remain in the Partially Accredited: Improving School-Pass Rate status for no more than three consecutive years, unless an extension is granted based on criteria established by the board.

Guidance:

A school will be rated as *Partially Accredited: Improving School-Pass Rate* if the school does not meet the requirements for full accreditation or for Partially Accredited: Approaching Benchmark-Pass Rate but the school’s pass rate in each of the four content areas (English, mathematics, science, and history/social science) either: 1) meets the benchmark required for full accreditation, or 2) meets the narrow margin criteria, or 3) has shown sufficient improvement as compared to the pass rate for the previous year. Specific requirements for the *Partially Accredited: Improving School* rating are provided in Tables B and C below.

Table B—Requirements for Full Accreditation, Narrow Margin, and Improving Pass Rate					
	Pass Rate Required for Full Accreditation	or	Pass Rate Required to Meet Narrow Margin Criteria	or	Criteria to meet <i>Improving School-Pass Rate</i>
English	75%	or	73%	or	See Table C
Mathematics	70%	or	68%	or	See Table C
Science	70%	or	68%	or	See Table C
History/Social Science	70%	or	68%	or	See Table C

Table C—Requirements for Sufficient Pass Rate Improvement			
Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies		English	
If the school’s pass rate for last year was:	The school’s pass rate for this year must have increased by at least:	If the school’s pass rate for last year was:	The school’s pass rate for this year must have increased by at least:
66 – 67*	*	71 – 72*	*
65	2 points	70	2 points
60 – 64	3 points	65 – 69	4 points
50 – 59	9 points	60 – 64	7 points
40 – 49	10 points	45 – 59	11 points
Below 40	15 points	Below 45	15 points
* A school with a previous year’s pass rate of 66 or 67 in Mathematics, Science, or History/Social Science or a previous year’s pass rate of 71 or 72 in English cannot meet the criteria for Partially Accredited: Improving School. If the school does not meet the criteria for Partially Accredited: Approaching Benchmark in the subject, the school would be Partially Accredited: Warned.			

The pass rate increases necessary for a school to be rated as *Partially Accredited: Improving School—Pass Rate* are differentiated based on the previous year’s pass rate. Schools with lower pass rates in the previous year must make greater gains to be eligible for this rating. In most cases the required increases would allow schools to reach full accreditation in three years. While this is not the case for the schools with the lowest pass rates, the required pass rate increases, if met, could provide justification to request an extension from the Board before the school is denied accreditation.

A school may also be rated as *Partially Accredited: Improving School-Pass Rate* if the school does not meet the requirements for full accreditation, Partially Accredited: Approaching Benchmark-Pass Rate or Partially Accredited: Improving School-Pass Rate but the school has demonstrated sufficient student growth for its students who failed the reading and mathematics tests in the previous year, as measured by the Progress Tables.

In the Progress Tables student growth is determined by comparing the student’s test score in the current year to his/her prior test score. To facilitate the measurement of student growth, each of the performance levels used for the Standards of Learning tests in reading and mathematics, *Below Basic*, *Basic*, *Proficient*, and *Advanced*, is divided in half to create two sublevels. The resulting sublevels are: *Low Below Basic*, *High Below Basic*, *Low Basic*, *High Basic*, *Low Proficient*, *High Proficient*, *Low Advanced*, and *High Advanced*. Student progress is measured by the number of sublevels a student who failed the reading and/or mathematics the previous year has moved based on the current year’s data. For example, a student whose score on the grade 4 reading test in 2015-2106 was “low basic” has moved one sublevel if his score on the grade 3 reading test in 2014-2015 was “high below basic.”

			Current Year								
			Below Basic		Basic		Proficient		Advanced		
			Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	
Previous Year	Below Basic	Low									
		High									
	Basic	Low									
		High									
	Proficient	Low									
		High									
	Advanced	Low									
		High									

For the purposes of the accreditation rating, *Partially Accredited: Improving School-Pass Rate* a school has demonstrated sufficient student growth if, on average, the students who failed the test the previous year have grown by at least one sublevel in reading or mathematics.

School Division Appeals

In some limited situations there may be circumstances affecting student performance that would warrant special consideration by the Board in assigning an accreditation rating to a school. Should such a situation occur, the local school board must submit a request to the Board of Education signed by the chairman of the school board and the school division superintendent explaining why the school board is appealing the accreditation rating. The appeal must include documentation supporting the request to change the accreditation rating and may include other measures of student progress. The Department of Education will provide school divisions with additional guidance regarding the process for making such an appeal to the Board and the required documentation.