



**#276-21**

**Commonwealth of Virginia  
Virginia Department of Education  
Superintendent's Memo #276-21**

**DATE:** September 24, 2021  
**TO:** Division Superintendents  
**FROM:** James F. Lane, Ed.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction  
**SUBJECT:** **Revisions to the Guidelines for Locally Awarded Verified Credits to Allow for the Use of Performance Assessments to Verify Credits in History and Social Science**

On September 23, 2021, the Virginia Board of Education (Board) approved revisions to the *Guidelines for Locally Awarded Verified Credits* that are contained in the *Guidance Document Governing Certain Provisions of the Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia* (the *SOA Guidance Document*). This revision allows for the use of performance assessments to verify credits in history and social science. The revised *Guidelines for Locally Awarded Verified Credits* are a companion to the Board's *Regulations Establishing Standards for the Accreditation of Public Schools*, or Standards of Accreditation, and supplement the *SOA Guidance Document*.

## **Background**

The *Appropriations Act* approved by the 2020 and 2021 Virginia General Assembly made provisions for earning a verified credit in history and social science through the “successful completion of assessments that include state-developed performance tasks scored locally in accordance with Board guidelines using state-developed rubrics.” The *SOA Guidance Document* was revised to communicate the Board guidelines to which school divisions must adhere when exercising the option of using state-developed performance tasks, in

conjunction with other local assessments, to determine if a student has earned a locally awarded verified credit (LAVC) in history and social science.

## Amendments to SOA Guidance Document

The amendments to the *SOA Guidance Document* establish the new pathway to earn a verified credit in history and social science, as required by the legislation, through an amended LAVC process. LAVC earned through this new pathway do not count toward the cap on the number of LAVC a student might earn. The amendments to the LAVC process in the *SOA Guidance Document* include:

- Option One: The previously established criteria and requirements for awarding LAVC that remain in effect.
- Option Two: The criteria and requirements for using state-developed performance tasks scored locally using state-developed rubrics, in conjunction with other local assessments, for awarding LAVC in history and social science.

Please refer to the full text of the [Guidelines for Locally Awarded Verified Credits](#) for additional details.

In conjunction with these revised guidelines, [Implementation Support for School Divisions Using State-Developed Performance Tasks to Verify Credits in History and Social Science](#) is provided to further clarify details regarding the requirements and considerations for school divisions exercising this option.

## Annual Notification

As required by these guidelines, school divisions will be asked to notify the Virginia Department of Education on an annual basis if they choose to use state-developed performance assessments in conjunction with other local assessments to confer locally awarded verified credits in high school history and social science courses. Each Division Director of Testing or a designee should complete this [online survey](#) no later than Friday, October 15, 2021, to indicate if:

- 1) the division will verify credits in Virginia and U.S. History during the 2021-2022 school year through the use of state-developed performance tasks or through the associated Standards of Learning test; and
- 2) the division has interest in verifying credits in World Geography, World History and Geography to 1500, World History and Geography: 1500 to the Present, and/or Virginia and U.S. History during the 2022-2023 school year or beyond.

A PDF copy of the [2021-2022 School Division Intent and Interest: Verifying Credits in History and Social Science](#) survey is provided so that the questions may be shared with others as needed prior to submitting the survey.

### Locally Awarded Verified Credit Plans

Finally, in accordance with these guidelines, school divisions that choose to use state-developed performance assessments in conjunction with other local assessments to confer locally awarded verified credits in history and social science must prepare Locally Awarded Verified Credit Plans on an annual basis. These plans must describe how the collection of assessments reviewed by the local panel will meet the requirements described in the guidelines. [The Locally Awarded Verified Credit Plan for History and Social Science](#) fillable form to be used for this purpose includes details regarding the requirements and considerations when developing the local plan. Locally Awarded Verified Credit Plans for History and Social Science should be maintained locally and will be subject to periodic review by Department staff on behalf of the Board. Information gleaned from these reviews will be used to provide technical assistance to school divisions.

### For more information

For questions regarding these revisions to the Guidelines for Locally Awarded Verified Credits, please contact the Office of Student Assessment at (804) 225-2102 or [Student\\_Assessment@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:Student_Assessment@doe.virginia.gov).

JFL/SLR/tm