

# Standards for Accrediting Schools in Virginia

**ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

July 1983

Commonwealth of Virginia  
Department of Education  
Richmond, Va. 23216

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## FOREWORD

The program for accrediting schools, as set forth in this bulletin, is regarded as an important instrument for the further strengthening of education throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia. In fulfilling its responsibilities to the citizenry of Virginia, the Board of Education constantly studies the needs, problems, and progress of public education, and in light of its continuing appraisal, adopts policies for implementing educational programs that are consistent with the demands of today's society. One of the outcomes of this process is the new standards set forth in this bulletin.

A committee of public and private school representatives was appointed by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction to review, revise, and strengthen accreditation standards for schools K-12. The contents of this bulletin reflect their efforts to reconcile ideas and theories of what constitutes quality with the practical application and implementation of standards that will provide a foundation on which to build a strong educational program for all students.

Appreciation is expressed to the members of this committee and to the many school board members, professional educators, and other individuals throughout the state who contributed to the revision of the standards.

S. JOHN DAVIS

Superintendent of Public Instruction

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
Introduction .....	1
Purpose of Accreditation .....	1
Procedures for Accreditation .....	2
Reports and Accreditation Status .....	2
Evaluation and Review .....	3
Application of the Standards .....	3
Philosophy and Objectives .....	4
Instructional Program .....	5
Length of School Year .....	5
Length of School Day .....	5
Elementary School Instructional Program .....	5
Middle School Instructional Program .....	5
Computer Literacy .....	6
Secondary School Offerings .....	6
Unit of Credit .....	6
Summer School .....	7
Elective Courses .....	7
Experimental and Innovative Programs .....	7
Full-day Schedule .....	8
Homework .....	8
Advanced Education .....	8
Homebound Instruction .....	8
Correspondence Courses .....	8
Extracurricular Activities .....	9
Competitive Sports—Elementary Schools .....	9
Staffing .....	10
Middle or Secondary Schools .....	10
Elementary Schools .....	10
Guidance Counselors .....	10
Alternative Staffing Plan .....	11
Elementary Classroom Membership .....	11
Teaching Load—Middle and Secondary Schools .....	11
Instructional Leadership .....	13
Delivery of Instruction .....	15
Guidance Programs .....	15
Library Media Center .....	16
Student Achievement .....	18
Goals of Education .....	18
20-Credit Diploma .....	18
22-Credit Diploma .....	19
8th Grade Credit .....	19
Transferred Students .....	20
Community Relations .....	21

# STANDARDS FOR ACCREDITING SCHOOLS IN VIRGINIA ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

July 1983

## INTRODUCTION

These standards shall become effective beginning with the 1984-85 school year. However, students who complete the ninth grade prior to that year may earn a diploma by meeting the 18-credit graduation requirement in effect when they entered the ninth grade. Beginning with the graduating class of 1985, the 22-credit diploma and seal shall be available to those students who qualify for it. The requirement for one unit of science or mathematics to be taken in the eleventh or twelfth grade shall be effective with the class of 1986. These standards will be reviewed again in 1986 or sooner if deemed necessary by the Board of Education.

## PURPOSE OF ACCREDITATION

The purpose of standards for accreditation of schools in Virginia is to provide a foundation for quality education. Accreditation standards provide guidance and direction to assist schools in their continuing efforts to offer educational programs to meet the needs, interests, and aspirations of all students. The accreditation standards are designed to ensure that schools have the capability of providing a sound educational program and to encourage continuous appraisal and improvement.

The Major Functions of Accreditation of Schools are as follows:

1. To meet the requirement of Section 22.1-19 of the Code of Virginia which includes the following statement:

*Accreditation of elementary and secondary schools; nursery schools.*

The Board shall provide for the accreditation of public elementary and secondary schools in accordance with standards prescribed by it. The Board may provide for the accreditation of private elementary and secondary schools in accordance with standards prescribed by it, taking reasonably into account the special circumstances and factors affecting such private schools. The Board in its discretion may recommend provisions for standards for private nursery schools. Any such accreditation shall be at the request of the private school only.

2. To meet the requirement of the *Standards of Quality* as follows:  
Each school division shall maintain schools which meet accrediting standards adopted by the Board of Education.

3. To encourage school improvement;
4. To foster public confidence;
5. To assure recognition by other institutions of learning.

## **PROCEDURES FOR ACCREDITATION**

### **Reports and Accreditation Status**

The principal of each school shall submit school accreditation reports, through the division superintendent, to the Department of Education. A Summer School Accreditation Report shall be submitted for each secondary summer program conducted and shall be a part of the accreditation report for the regular school session immediately following the summer session. Report forms will be provided by the Department of Education. Failure to submit the reports on time will constitute grounds for withholding accreditation.

Information included in the reports as well as that obtained through other records and through visits by Department of Education personnel or other designated representatives of the Board of Education, will be used to determine the accreditation status of each school in accordance with tolerances approved by the Board of Education. Schools found to be deficient in meeting the standards will be accredited without condition, accredited with advisement, accredited with a warning, or unaccredited, depending on the extent of the deficiencies. Each school division shall develop by July first of the next school year an accreditation plan, acceptable to the Board of Education, for any school that is unaccredited or accredited with a warning. In instances where compliance with accreditation standards would cause extreme hardship, the Board of Education may grant provisional accreditation.

Schools will be accredited on a two-year cycle, with approximately half of the schools being accredited each year. All schools in a division will be reviewed for accreditation during the same cycle. The Board of Education may require immediate corrective action or change of accreditation status whenever significant deficiencies are reported by representatives of the Department of Education. Schools losing accredited status shall be considered for reaccreditation when subsequent reports and visits by Department of Education personnel reveal that prescribed standards are being met.

When a school applies for initial accreditation, a representative of the Department of Education shall visit the school to review the accreditation standards and procedures with the principal. A school with the number of deficiencies which would place it in the warned status will not be accepted for initial accreditation. No schools will be permitted to maintain accreditation in the warned status for more than two consecutive years.

### **Evaluation and Review**

A self-study followed with an evaluation by a visiting committee is required for all schools every ten years. This will be followed by a written progress report two years after the evaluation and an administrative review of accreditation standards within five years after the progress report.

The evaluation process will be conducted using established criteria designated by the Department of Education. A request for a school to be scheduled for evaluation shall be submitted by the division superintendent to the Department of Education at least two years prior to the preferred evaluation date.

The local school board shall review in public session the implementation of accreditation standards biennially and shall inform the Board of Education of the date this action was taken.

### **Application of the Standards**

These standards apply to schools for all grade levels, K-12, except as otherwise noted. For purposes of accreditation, schools organized as middle schools with no grade below the 6th and no grade above the 9th shall complete the middle school report. Schools with grades above the 8th grade and below the 6th grade are referred to as combined schools and shall complete the secondary report for grades 8-12 and the elementary report for grades K-7 or the secondary report for grades 9-12, the middle school report for grades 6-8, and the elementary report for grades K-5.

In schools for the handicapped, standards which are not appropriate to the special nature of the school program may be waived so long as state regulations governing services to handicapped students are met.

Nonpublic college preparatory secondary schools with a philosophy and purpose which differ from those of a comprehensive school may deviate from these standards with respect to vocational education and special education when admission policies ensure that enrollment is limited to students without needs in these areas. Such deviations must be consistent with the schools' purposes, must not diminish the quality of the schools' offerings, and must be specifically approved by the Department of Education.

## PHILOSOPHY AND OBJECTIVES

### STANDARD A

**Each School Shall Have Current Written Statements of Philosophy and Objectives Which Shall Serve as the Basis for All School Policies and Practices.**

*Criteria:*

1. The philosophy and objectives shall be developed cooperatively by professional and lay people who are concerned with and are interested in the students and community served.
2. The individual school philosophy and objectives shall be consistent with the *Standards of Quality* and the philosophy and objectives of the local school division.
3. A realistic and systematic needs assessment shall be the basis for the individual school philosophy and objectives.
4. The objectives for students shall be stated in terms of skills, abilities, and attitudes to be developed.
5. The school staff and community representatives shall review biennially the philosophy and objectives of the school and shall revise them as needed.
6. Copies of the school's philosophy and objectives shall be available to staff members, students, and parents.
7. The philosophy and objectives shall be the basis for the biennial school plan.



# INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

## STANDARD B

**Each School Shall Provide a Planned and Balanced Program of Instruction Which is in Keeping With the Abilities, Interests, and Educational Needs of Students and Which Promotes Individual Student Achievement.**

*Criteria:*

1. The school shall provide at least 180 days of instruction.
2. The school shall operate an instructional program, excluding intermission for meals, that shall average at least 5½ hours for students in grades 1-12 and a minimum of 3 hours for kindergarten.
3. Standards of Learning Objectives shall be used as references for designing local curriculum and instructional programs.
4. Schools shall offer opportunities for students to participate in planned and comprehensive programs of study designed to be challenging and consistent with Virginia's Goals of Education.
5. Each school with any combination of grades K-7 shall provide instruction in the following subjects:

Art	Music
Health	Physical Education
Language Arts*	Science
Mathematics	Social Studies

\*Language arts includes listening, speaking, reading, composition, handwriting, spelling, grammar and usage, thinking and study skills, and library skills.

6. Each middle, intermediate, or junior high school should be organized to provide a basic program of learning experiences which recognize the unique intellectual, physical, social, and emotional characteristics of early adolescence and shall provide instruction in the following subjects:

Art	Music
Health	Physical Education
Language Arts*	Science
Mathematics	Social Studies
Vocational Education	

\*Language arts includes listening, speaking, reading, composition, handwriting, spelling, grammar and usage, thinking and study skills, and library skills.

Each year the 8th grade shall provide a minimum of 8 offerings which shall include instruction in 5 academic areas—(language

arts, mathematics, science, social studies, and electives), and also in health and physical education, fine arts, and vocational education. A foreign language shall be available to all 8th-grade students with needs or interests in this area.

7. By graduation each student shall be provided educational experiences directed toward objectives outlined in *Computer Literacy for Students in Virginia* issued by the Department of Education.
8. Each secondary school shall offer options for students to pursue a program of studies in several academic and vocational areas. These offerings shall include:
  - a. Vocational education choices which prepare the student with a marketable skill in one of three or more occupational areas;
  - b. Academic choices which prepare the student for entry into technical or pre-professional programs of higher education;
  - c. Liberal arts choices which prepare the student for college-level studies in the arts and sciences;

Minimum course offerings for each secondary school shall be as follows:

	<u>8-12</u>	<u>9-12</u>
Academic Subjects .....	27	23
English .....	(5)	(4)
Mathematics .....	(5)	(4)
Science .....	(5)	(4)
Social Studies .....	(5)	(4)
Foreign Language .....	(3)	(3)
Electives .....	(4)	(4)
Vocational Education .....	11	11
Fine Arts .....	2	2
Health and Physical Education .....	3	2
Total Units .....	43	38

The content of these courses shall be developed in reference to Standards of Learning Objectives as provided in Standard B3.

When health and physical education are taught as a combination class, at least 40 percent of the instructional time shall be devoted to health education. Classroom driver education may count for 36 class periods of health education. Students should not be removed from classes in required courses other than health and physical education for the in-car phase of driver education.

The social studies offering shall include at least one-half unit in economics.

9. The standard unit of credit for graduation shall be based on a minimum of 150 clock hours of instruction. When credit is

awarded in less than whole units, the increment awarded must be no greater than the fractional part of the 150 hours of instruction. To award credit on a basis other than that of the standard unit of credit, the locality shall develop a written policy approved by the superintendent and school board which ensures: (1) that the scope of the course for which credit is awarded is comparable to 150 clock hours of instruction; and (2) that upon completion, the student will have met the aims and objectives of the course through the mastery of certain predetermined skills, knowledge, and values as indicated by such measures as criterion-referenced or standardized tests.

10. The summer school program shall be administered by local school authorities and shall be equal in quality to that offered during the regular school term.
  - a. One unit of new credit per summer session shall be the maximum for which a student may enroll, except that high school seniors who lack two units in meeting graduation requirements may be allowed to enroll in two subjects with approval of the principal and superintendent.
  - b. Credit for repeated work ordinarily will be granted on the same basis as that for new work. In justifiable instances, certain students may be allowed to enroll in two repeat subjects to be completed in not less than 75 clock hours of instruction per unit of credit.
  - c. Students repeating courses and who are taught for less than 150 clock hours shall be responsible for demonstrating competency in the same subject matter and/or skills as those students who are enrolled in a new course for 150 clock hours.
  - d. Students desiring to do summer school work in an accredited secondary school, other than that in which they are regularly enrolled, shall obtain prior approval from their principal for any credits that are to be transferred to apply toward graduation requirements.
11. Each school shall provide a variety of materials and equipment to support the instructional program.
12. Locally developed elective courses given for credit towards graduation shall be approved by the division superintendent and school board. Elective courses should offer a varied program to meet individual student needs. When suitable course code numbers for reporting purposes cannot be found in the *School Administrators Handbook of Course Codes and Endorsement Codes*, they will be assigned, upon request, through the Division of Research, Evaluation, and Testing.
13. Experimental and innovative programs which are in conflict with accreditation standards shall be submitted to the Department of

Education for approval prior to implementation. The request shall include purpose, objectives, outline, evaluation procedures, and approval of the local school board.

14. All students in grades 1-12 shall maintain a full-day schedule of classes (5½ hours); unless a waiver is granted by the local superintendent of schools.
15. Homework is an important aspect of the educational experience and shall be governed by a local policy which has been developed in cooperation with parents and teachers and which includes guidelines on the amount and timing of homework.
16. Students who begin advanced education prior to high school graduation, after having been accepted by an accredited college or university, may receive credit toward high school graduation when the following conditions are met:
  - a. Prior approval of the high school principal has been obtained;
  - b. All requirements for high school graduation are completed at the end of the first year of college;
  - c. At least 10 of the 14 specified courses (units) have been completed in an accredited high school;
  - d. The course(s) for which high school credit is to be issued corresponds to that needed for high school graduation (i.e., one year of college English for one credit of English);
  - e. ~~The college course(s) for which high school credit is to be granted is part of the student's program leading to college graduation, as evidenced by an official transcript.~~
17. Homebound instruction shall be made available to students who are confined for periods of time that would prevent normal educational progress. Homebound instruction shall be approved for credit, provided the Board of Education regulations governing such instruction are met.
18. Students may be allowed to enroll in supervised correspondence courses in subjects not available to them through the school's present schedule when approved by local school authorities. Credit may be awarded for the successful completion of such courses when the work is done under the supervision of a certified teacher approved by local school authorities.
19. The secondary school vocational program shall be competency-based so that students can develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for employment and/or advanced occupational preparation.
20. Gifted and talented students shall be identified and offered a curriculum generally appropriate to their talents.

21. Special education students shall be identified and offered a curriculum appropriate to their handicapping conditions to the extent required by law.
22. School-sponsored extracurricular activities shall be under the direct supervision of the staff and should contribute to the educational objectives of the school. They must be evaluated periodically and organized so that interruptions of the instructional program are avoided. They should not be permitted to interfere with the individual's required instructional activities. Extracurricular activities and eligibility requirements shall be established and approved by the superintendent and the school board.
23. Competitive sports of a varsity nature (scheduled league games) shall be prohibited as a part of the elementary school program.

## STAFFING

### STANDARD C

**Each School Shall Have Adequate Staff With Proper Certification and Endorsement.**

*Criteria:*

1. The following shall be the minimum staffing in a middle or secondary school, based on school membership:

<u>School Membership</u>	<u>Principal</u>	<u>Assistant Principal</u>	<u>Librarian</u>	<u>Clerical</u>
1- 299	1	—	½	1
300- 599	1	—	1	1
600- 899	1	1	1	*
900-1199	1	1	2*	*
1200-1500	1	2	2	*

\*The equivalent of one full-time additional clerical and/or secretarial person shall be provided for each additional 600 students beyond 200. In addition, a library secretary shall be provided when enrollment reaches 750 students and the second librarian when enrollment reaches 1000 students.

2. The following shall be the minimum staffing in an elementary school based on school membership:

<u>School Membership</u>	<u>Principal</u>	<u>Assistant Principal</u>	<u>Librarian</u>	<u>Clerical</u>
1- 299	½	—	Part-time	Part-time
300- 599	1	—	1	1
600- 899	1	½	1	1
900-1199	1	1	1	1
1200-1500	1	1	1	1

3. The principal of each middle school and each secondary school shall be employed on a 12-month basis, and principals of all schools shall be responsible for the instructional leadership of the school.
4. Guidance counselors shall be provided as follows:
  - a. Elementary schools may employ elementary school guidance counselors and are encouraged to do so wherever possible.
  - b. Each middle school shall have at least one full-time guidance counselor for the first 400 students and shall provide one period of counseling for each additional 75 students or major fraction thereof.
  - c. Each secondary school shall have at least one full-time guidance counselor for the first 350 students and provide one period of counseling for each additional 70 students, or major fraction thereof;

- d. Each secondary school with 350 or more students and each middle school with 400 or more students shall employ at least one member of the guidance staff for 11 months.

At the discretion of local school authorities an alternative staffing plan (Criteria 1-4) may be developed which ensures that the services set forth in these standards are met. Any locality electing to exercise this option shall develop a written policy approved by the division superintendent and local school board and shall submit it to the Department of Education for approval. An alternative staffing plan which reduces the number of staff positions will not be acceptable.

5. Teachers in departmentalized programs in grades 6 and/or 7 may be endorsed in the appropriate grade level or in specific subject areas assigned. Teachers in departmentalized programs in grades 6-8 with a middle school endorsement (4-8) shall be assigned according to their area(s) of concentration.
6. The ratio of pupils in Average Daily Membership in elementary schools to certified instructional personnel shall be that which is required by the *Standards of Quality*.
7. The maximum number of students in Average Daily Membership per certified classroom teacher for grades K-3 shall be that which is required by *Standards of Quality*.
8. The maximum number of students in Average Daily Membership per certified classroom teacher for grades 4-7 in elementary schools shall not exceed 35.
9. Each middle and secondary school shall have a student-teacher ratio (based on full-time equivalent teachers and excluding administrators, librarians, and guidance personnel) which does not exceed 25-1. Persons teaching less than full-time are considered part-time and are equated by the number of periods taught.
10. Middle school teachers with a 7 period day may teach 30 class periods per week provided all teachers with more than 25 class periods per week have 1 period per day unencumbered of all teaching and/or supervisory duties.
11. No secondary teacher shall teach more than 25 class periods per week, except teachers of block programs and teachers of very small classes. Teachers of block programs with no more than 90 student periods per day may teach 30 class periods per week. Teachers who teach very small classes may teach 30 class periods per week provided the teaching load does not exceed 75 student periods per day.
12. Middle or secondary school teachers shall teach no more than 750 student periods per week, except that physical education and music teachers may teach 1,000 student periods per week.

13. Every effort shall be made to provide staff members with an unencumbered lunch period.
14. The number of students in special and vocational education classrooms shall comply with regulations issued by the Department of Education.
15. The school plant and grounds shall be kept safe and clean. Custodial services shall be available as necessary for health and safety.
16. Students and staff shall share in the responsibility for care of buildings and grounds.
17. Health services, as determined by the local school board, shall be provided to care for students who become ill or injured during the school day.
18. The services of school psychologists, visiting teachers, and/or school social workers shall be available, as necessary, to comply with regulations of the Board of Education.



## INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

### STANDARD D

**The Administrative Staff Shall be Responsible for Instructional Leadership and Effective School Management Which Promotes Achievement of Individual Students.**

*Criteria:*

1. An atmosphere of mutual respect and courtesy shall be a primary goal of the school, and the administrative staff shall make every effort to achieve it.
2. The staff shall protect instructional time from interruptions and intrusions.
3. The scope of the regular school day shall be limited to teaching and learning activities.
4. The staff shall monitor instruction and evaluate its quality through:
  - a. Establishment of specific and mutually developed objectives for each teacher;
  - b. A systematic program of classroom observation and follow-up consultation with the individual teacher;
  - c. Professional assistance, in-service training, and other support based on the needs of teachers;
  - d. Analysis and use of data on pupil achievement.
5. Each member of the administrative staff shall participate annually in state and/or local in-service programs designed specifically for administrators.
6. The staff shall prepare and follow a biennial school plan approved by the division superintendent, which is consistent with the school philosophy and objectives and the divisionwide plan.
7. The staff shall be responsible for utilizing the resources of the community and involving parents and citizens as indicated in Standard G.
8. Each school division shall establish procedures for students' scholastic achievements to be recognized and rewarded.
9. The administrative staff shall demonstrate high expectations for all students.
10. The administrative staff, in cooperation with the instructional staff, shall establish rules of acceptable student conduct.
11. The staff shall maintain a school handbook of policies and procedures which includes the school division's standards of

student conduct and procedures for enforcement, along with other matters of interest to parents and students.

12. Each school shall maintain records of receipts and disbursements of funds handled. These records shall be audited annually by a professional accountant approved by the local school board.
13. Each school shall maintain a current record of certification, endorsement, and in-service training of the staff.
14. At least 40 percent of the time of the principal and assistant principal(s) shall be devoted to supervision of instruction and curriculum development.
15. Fire drills shall be held once a week during the first month of school and at least once per month for the remainder of the school term.
16. The principal and teachers shall be responsible for making daily fire and safety inspections. At least two fire inspections, one during each semester, shall be conducted in accordance with regulations contained in the *Fire Inspection Guide for Schools*.
17. School sponsored fund-raising activities which involve elementary students in door-to-door solicitation shall be prohibited.

## DELIVERY OF INSTRUCTION

### STANDARD E

**The Staff Shall Provide Instruction Which is Educationally Sound in an Atmosphere Which is Conducive to Learning and in Which Students are Expected to Achieve.**

*Criteria:*

1. An atmosphere of mutual respect, courtesy, and a genuine concern for all students in the learning environment should be maintained.
2. Staff members shall serve as personal models for effective communication through language usage, grammar, and spelling.
3. Daily teaching objectives shall be established that:
  - a. Identify and inform students of the learning expected;
  - b. Keep students engaged in learning tasks;
  - c. Allow the teacher to spend the maximum time possible in the teaching/learning process by keeping disruptions, clerical responsibilities, and student absences (out-of-class time) to a minimum.
4. The staff shall provide for individual differences through the use of varied materials and activities suitable for students with different interests and abilities.
5. The staff shall assess the progress of students and report to student and parents by:
  - a. Evaluating students' work promptly and constructively;
  - b. Certifying whether each student has mastered appropriate learning objectives.
6. The staff shall demonstrate a high expectation of learning for all students.
7. Classroom activities shall be structured and monitored to minimize disruptive behavior.
8. Inappropriate behavior shall be responded to quickly and consistently without demeaning the student responsible for the behavior.
9. Guidance programs and services shall be provided at appropriate grade levels, K-12, to achieve the following:
  - a. Ensure that individual curriculum planning is provided to assist each student to select appropriate courses;

- b. Provide opportunities for parents, teachers, and other adults to participate in planned activities which encourage the personal, social, educational, and career development of students;
  - c. Include employment counseling and placement services to furnish information relating to the employment opportunities available to students graduating from or leaving school;
  - d. Provide for the coordination of a testing program which includes orientation to test-taking, use of test data, and the interpretation and use of student records data;
  - e. Provide for the evaluation of the guidance program by the principal, counselor(s), staff, and parents;
  - f. Ensure that at least 60 percent of the guidance staff's time shall be devoted to counseling of students.
  - g. Ensure that each student has a balanced program of studies each year, including at least one mathematics or laboratory science course in the 11th or 12th grade.
  - h. In elementary schools not employing guidance counselors, appropriate guidance services may be provided by classroom teachers or other staff members.
10. The library media center shall be organized as the resource center of the school and shall provide a unified program of media services and activities for students and teachers before, during, and after school. The library media center shall have the following characteristics:
- a. An average monthly circulation equal to at least 60 percent of the school membership;
  - b. Schedule that provides for library utilization by all students;
  - c. A policy for the selection and evaluation of all instructional materials purchased by the school division, with clearly stated procedures for handling challenged controversial materials;
  - d. Cataloging of all library media in the school, which promotes accessibility and ease of retrieval, including a functional loan system, an annual inventory of materials and equipment, and a procedure for screening and discarding media;
  - e. An information file that reflects curriculum needs and contains pamphlets, clippings, pictures, and information about local resources;
  - f. A minimum of two complete sets of encyclopedias, one of which has been copyrighted within the last five years;
  - g. An unabridged dictionary and abridged dictionaries;

- h. Newspaper subscription(s) providing daily, local, state, and national news;
  - i. Fifteen subscriptions to periodicals for elementary schools and 25 subscriptions for middle and secondary schools which are pertinent to various phases of the school program;
  - j. A current and accessible professional library in each school or in a centralized instructional media center in the school division;
  - k. Nonbook materials such as prints, charts, posters, recordings (disc and tape), filmstrips, multimedia kits, models, study prints, slides, transparencies, videotapes, videodiscs, computer software, maps and globes which are carefully selected to meet the needs of the instructional program.
11. Book requirements (20% of which may be nonprint instructional material) for each library media center shall be as follows:
    - a. 10 books per student in elementary schools;
    - b. In middle and secondary schools a basic collection of 1,000 well-selected titles, (In schools with more than 150 enrolled there shall not be fewer than 7 books per student).
  12. Fifty percent of the minimum basic collection shall be available for circulation during the first semester in a new school seeking accreditation.
  13. Services of the library media center shall be documented in the State Annual Instructional Media Report which includes circulation statistics, financial expenditures, collection and equipment inventories, and staff personnel.
  14. Librarians shall be involved in curriculum planning with teachers and administrators.
  15. Each school shall have necessary equipment to support utilization of audiovisual materials.

## STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

### STANDARD F

**Each School Shall Provide Specific Learning Objectives to be Achieved by Students at Successive Levels of Development and Shall Continually Assess the Progress of Each Student in Relation to These Objectives and the Goals of Education in Virginia.**

*Criteria:*

1. The school shall aid each student, consistent with his or her abilities and educational needs, to:
  - a. Develop competence in the basic learning skills;
  - b. Progress on the basis of achievement;
  - c. Qualify for further education and/or employment;
  - d. Develop ethical standards of behavior and participate in society as a responsible family member and citizen;
  - e. Develop a positive and realistic concept of self and others;
  - f. Enhance the beauty of the environment;
  - g. Respond to aesthetic experiences through the arts;
  - h. Practice sound habits of living and personal health;
  - i. Acquire a basic understanding of and an appreciation for the free enterprise system.
  
2. To graduate from high school, a student shall meet the minimum requirements for the 20-credit diploma as outlined below for grades 9-12. Students who graduate with an average grade of "B" or better will receive a Board of Education Seal on the diploma.

	<u>9-12</u>
English .....	4
Mathematics* .....	2
Laboratory Science* .....	2
Math or Science** .....	1
Social Studies: .....	3
United States and Virginia History—1	
United States and Virginia Government—1	
World Studies—1 (History and/or Geography)	
Health and Physical Education .....	2
Electives	
(Academics, Fine	
Arts, and Vocational Education) .....	<u>6</u>
Total Units .....	20

\*Must be selected from a list of courses approved for graduation requirements by the Board of Education.

\*\*Must be selected from a list of courses approved for graduation requirements by the Board of Education or, as an alternative, this requirement may be met by completing the sequence of courses needed for occupational preparation in one of the following programs:

- Agriculture
- Business
- Distribution
- Health Occupations
- Occupational Home Economics
- Trade and Industrial Education

3. As an elective for students, each high school shall offer an Advanced Studies Program which requires a minimum of 22 units of credit as outlined below for grades 9-12. Students who graduate with an average grade of "B" or better will receive a Governor's Seal on the diploma.

	<u>9-12</u>
English .....	4
Mathematics .....	3
Laboratory Science .....	3
Social Studies: .....	3
United States and Virginia History—1	
United States and Virginia Government—1	
World Studies—1 (History and/or Geography)	
Foreign Language .....	3
(3 years of one language or 2 years each of 2 languages)	
Health and Physical Education .....	2
Electives .....	4
Total Units .....	<u>22</u>

To earn an Advanced Studies Diploma, students must complete a mathematics sequence which includes Algebra I and two courses above the level of Algebra I, and a science sequence which includes three units from earth science, biology, chemistry, and physics.

4. In addition to the units of credit specified, each student must demonstrate mastery of minimum competencies as prescribed by the Board of Education, except as otherwise provided for certain handicapped students receiving special education.
5. When 8th grade students successfully complete subjects identified as 9th, 10th, 11th or 12th grade subjects, credit shall be counted for the specified subjects required for graduation, but not for meeting the total number of units required for graduation in grades 9-12. Students who are able to do so should be encouraged to take such courses in foreign language, science, or mathematics in the 8th grade.

6. Students shall be encouraged to take a course which provides an appreciation of the American economic system and a course in vocational education.
7. Students completing graduation requirements in a summer school accredited under these standards shall be eligible for a diploma. The last school attended during the regular session shall award the diploma.
8. The secondary school shall accept credits received from other accredited secondary schools, including summer school. Students entering an accredited high school from a nonaccredited school may establish credits through an examination given by the receiving school or by other means as determined by local school authorities.
9. Records of transferred students shall be sent directly to the school receiving the student upon request of the receiving school.
10. The transcript of a student who graduates or transfers from a Virginia secondary school shall show that a minimum of 20 units of credit in 9th-12th grade courses are required for graduation.
11. Students transferring from outside of Virginia shall be required to accrue 20 units of credit or the equivalent for graduation. Each student's prior record shall be evaluated to determine the number and content of additional credits required for graduation. Students transferring from states not giving credit for health and physical education shall not be required to repeat these courses. Specified courses normally taken at lower grade levels shall not be required, provided the student has completed the courses required at those grade levels by the state from which the individual transferred.



## COMMUNITY RELATIONS

### STANDARD G

**Each School Shall Have in Effect a School and Community Interaction Plan That Fosters Mutual Understanding of the Role of Each in Providing Quality Education.**

*Criteria:*

1. Parents, citizens, and representatives from business and industry shall be provided opportunities to participate on advisory committees, in curriculum study, and in cooperative evaluation of the total educational program.
2. A comprehensive and continuing program for interpreting the total school to the community shall be provided.
3. A close working relationship shall be established and maintained between the school and other community agencies related to student services.
4. Schools shall seek active cooperation with business and industry in formulating educational programs and conducting joint enterprises involving the use of such resources as personnel, facilities, and training programs.
5. The staff shall be responsible for utilizing the resources of the community and involving parents and citizens in:
  - a. Evaluating the school program;
  - b. Developing the biennial school plan;
  - c. Volunteer services and programs of supplemental instruction as may be deemed appropriate.
6. The school shall encourage and support the establishment of a Parent-Teacher Association/Organization and shall form a cooperative relationship with it.

As required by federal laws and regulations, the Virginia Department of Education does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, religion, handicapping conditions, or national origin in employment or in its educational programs and activities.