



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA  
Department of Education

**DATE:** May 11, 2018  
**TO:** Division Superintendents  
**FROM:** Steven M. Constantino, Ed.D., Acting Superintendent of Public Instruction  
**SUBJECT: Locally Awarded Verified Credits**

The purpose of this memorandum is to advise school divisions that effective May 9, 2018, all students are eligible to be considered for locally-awarded verified credits in English, mathematics, science, and history/social science in accordance with the Board of Education's regulations and guidance. Please be aware the number of locally-awarded verified credits and the diplomas to which they may be applied are different for students that entered the ninth grade prior to the 2018-2019 school year, and for those that enter in 2018-2019 and thereafter, as explained in this memorandum.

For students that entered the ninth grade for the first time prior to the 2018-2019 school year, locally-awarded verified credits were previously available to students only for science and history/social science. Those students may now be awarded a total of three locally-awarded verified credits in English, mathematics, science, and history/social science. These changes were adopted by the Board of Education and approved by Governor Northam through emergency changes to the *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia* (Standards of Accreditation or SOA) and the Board's *Guidance Governing the Use of Locally-Awarded Verified Credits*.

First-time ninth graders beginning with the 2018-2019 school year will be able to earn no more than one locally awarded verified credit in English, mathematics, science, and history/social science. These changes were adopted by the Board of Education through the comprehensive revisions to the SOA that will become effective in the 2018-2019 school year.

The criteria for the award of locally-awarded verified credit is summarized below:

- To qualify for locally-awarded verified credits, a student must:
  - Pass the high school course;
  - Score within a 375-399 scale score range on any administration of the Standards of Learning test after taking the test at least twice; and
  - Demonstrate achievement in the academic content through an appeal process administered at the local level (see *Guidance Governing the Use of Locally-Awarded Verified Credits* for details).
- Students with credit accommodations are not subject to the limit on the number of locally-awarded verified credits.
- Local school boards must have policies governing procedures used to award locally-awarded verified credit, including the use of a review panel to consider evidence of the student's achievement.
- **For students entering the ninth grade for the first time prior to the 2018-2019 academic year:**
  - No more than three locally-awarded verified credits may be awarded.
  - Locally-awarded verified credits cannot be applied toward an Advanced Studies diploma.
  - Students that are no longer in school who would now be eligible for a locally-awarded verified credit in English or mathematics may now earn a locally-awarded verified credit, provided that all criteria is met.

- **For students entering the ninth grade for the first time in the 2018-2019 academic year and beyond:**
  - No more than one locally-awarded verified credit may be awarded.
  - Locally-awarded verified credits can be applied toward either a Standard or an Advanced Studies diploma.

For questions regarding these changes to the availability of locally-awarded verified credits, please contact the Office of Policy at (804) 225-2092 or [policy@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:policy@doe.virginia.gov) ✉.

SMC/ZLR/bj

### **Attachments:**

- A. [Emergency revisions to the Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia \(Standards of Accreditation or SOA\)](#) (Word)
- B. [Revised Guidance Governing the Use of Locally-Awarded Verified Credits](#) (Word)

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