



# VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION

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# AGENDA ITEM

**Agenda Item:** N

**Date:** March 17, 2022

**Title:** First Review of Requests for Alternative Accreditation Plans

**Presenter:** Amy Siepka, Director of Accountability  
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**Purpose of Presentation:**

Action required by state or federal law or regulation

**Executive Summary**

Eight special purpose schools in Virginia are requesting approval of Alternative Accreditation Plans from the Virginia Board of Education (Board):

- **Arlington County Public Schools:** Arlington Community High School.
- **Chesterfield County Public Schools:** Carver College and Career Academy;
- **Fairfax County Public Schools:** Kilmer Center School, Fairfax County Adult High School, Key Center School, Mountain; View High School, and Bryant High School; and
- **Loudoun County Public Schools:** William Obediah Robey High School.

Such schools are allowed to request this flexibility under [8 VAC 20-131-420.D](#) of the *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia*.

From 2000 to 2018, school accreditation ratings were primarily based on student performance on SOL tests and graduation information. However, the accreditation model based on the 2017 Standards of Accreditation (SOA), which was implemented beginning in 2018-2019, is based on a variety of indicators that provide a more comprehensive picture of school performance: achievement rates, achievement gap rates, chronic absenteeism, and for schools with a graduating class, Graduation Completion Index (GCI), dropout rate, and a College, Career, and

Civic Readiness Index (CCCRI). (The CCCRI will be used in accreditation beginning with the 2023-2024 accreditation year.)

Approved Alternative Accreditation Plans under the old model often included weighted “index” models for pass rate calculations and bonus point scenarios that could be applied to calculations to reach benchmarks. For example, previously approved plans included the application of weighted values by weighting an advanced pass score on a Standards of Learning (SOL) test more than a pass proficient score in the achievement calculations. An example of a bonus point scenario was to “award 20 points to a modified achievement rate if at least 20 percent of students who withdrew and re-enrolled within the same academic year passed the SOL test.”

The last time the Board approved Alternative Accreditation Plans was in January 2020. At that time, the Board requested that Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) staff take a new look at submitted plans to ascertain that they align with the 2017 Accreditation model.

A working committee of VDOE staff members from the Offices of Student Assessment, Data Services, Research, Instructional Services, Career, Technical and Adult Education, and School Quality outlined new guidelines for schools. At the [November 2021 Board work session](#), VDOE staff discussed a realignment of the Alternative Accreditation Plans, and sought the Board’s guidance to ensure that the realignment efforts met their expectations.

Updated guidelines, along with the flexibilities are to:

- Include all students to the greatest extent possible in the alternate model, rather than excluding students, to meet established criteria. Flexibilities are provided for students who are enrolled in school after compulsory attendance age and for students who are incarcerated;
- Keep the established benchmarks for Level indicators consistent with the state model (i.e., The Level 1 performance level for English must remain greater than or equal to 75%.);
- Maintain “sufficient improvement” as a criteria for determination of the Level 1 and Level 2 performance levels, but modified sufficient improvement percentages can be used (i.e., use 5% to demonstrate improvement rather than 10%);
- Keep an established minimum pass rate when using the “sufficient improvement” criteria to earn a Level 2 performance rating in the achievement indicators, but the rate can be amended from the state rate of 50% (i.e., the minimum pass rate could be 45% rather than 50%);
- Calculate the consecutive multi-year rate without excluding any years, but additional years can be added (i.e., a cumulative 4-year rate could be used instead of the standard cumulative 3-year rate);
- Track chronic absenteeism per division policy, but that policy may use “meaningful engagement” definitions to guide absenteeism;

- Use statewide assessment results to calculate student achievement indicator rates. Passing scores and approved substitute tests are to be used in the results, as per the state guidelines. Flexibility to use test scores in the [locally awarded verified credit range](#) in the achievement rate is permissible;
- Calculate CCCRI consistent with the state, but there is flexibility to allow broader definitions for the criteria. For example, definitions of work-based learning and service-learning can be expanded to match their population’s current life experiences; and
- Optionally, to include other indicators, in addition to the state’s established indicators, if the measure showcases high quality foundational educational programs, demonstrates the school is raising student achievement, and is preparing students for real-life, authentic experiences.

Alternative Accreditation Plan submission, approval, and implementation includes communication between VDOE staff and school leaders regarding the process, timeline, and established guidelines, individualized assistance to answer school-specific questions, reviewing the proposed plans, bringing the proposed plans to the Board for review and approval, verifying the accuracy of alternative calculations that are used for accreditation, and verifying that the accreditation status of the school is accurate, based on the state measures and/or alternate measures.

The presentation (Attachment A) details the process for the submission, approval, and implementation of an Alternative Accreditation Plan, the established guidelines, and the required information in the proposals. A process document that includes details regarding the updated guidelines and flexibilities is included as Attachment B. The Alternative Accreditation Plan proposals are also included as Attachments C-J.

The review of the plans align with “Priority 3: Ensure successful implementation of the *Profile of a Virginia Graduate* and the accountability system for school quality as embodied in the revisions to the *Standards of Accreditation*” from the [Board of Education Goals from the 2018-2023 Comprehensive Plan](#).

**Action Requested:**

Approval will be requested at a future meeting:  
April 21, 2022

**Superintendent’s Recommendation:**

The Superintendent of Public Instruction recommends that the Board of Education receive for first review the proposed Alternative Accreditation Plans from eight special purpose schools.

**Background Information and Statutory Authority:**

Eight special purpose schools in Virginia are requesting approval of Alternative Accreditation Plans from the Board of Education. Such schools are allowed to request this flexibility under [§ 8 VAC 20-131-420.D](#) of the *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia* states, which states:

D. Alternative accreditation plans. Subject to the provisions of subsection B of this section, the governing school board of special purpose schools such as those provided for in § 22.1-26 of the Code of Virginia, Governor's schools, special education schools, alternative schools, or career and technical schools that serve as the student's school of principal enrollment may seek approval of an alternative accreditation plan from the board. Schools offering alternative education programs, schools with a graduation cohort of 50 or fewer students as defined by the graduation rate formula adopted by the board may request that the board approve an alternative accreditation plan to meet the graduation and completion index benchmark. Special purpose schools with alternative accreditation plans shall be evaluated on standards appropriate to the programs offered in the school and approved by the board prior to August 1 of the school year for which approval is requested. Any student graduating from a special purpose school with a Standard Diploma or an Advanced Studies Diploma must meet the requirements prescribed in [8VAC20-131-50](#) or [8VAC20-131-51](#).

As set forth in the [Standards of Quality](#) and according to department procedures, any school board may request the board for release from state regulations or, on behalf of one or more of its schools, for approval of an Individual School Accreditation Plan for the evaluation of the performance of one or more of its schools as authorized for schools enumerated in this subsection, based on special circumstances.

In addition, the *Guidance Document: Governing Certain Provisions of the Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia* states:

In accordance with the provisions of [8VAC20-131-420\(B\)](#) of the standards, local school boards may seek waivers of provisions of the standards to address the unique needs of special purpose schools. Such requests may include an alternative accreditation plan. Applications must be submitted to the Board for consideration at least ninety days prior to August 1 of the school year. Requests for consideration must be accompanied by information that documents the need for approval of the request.

In January 2020, after the final review of Alternative Accreditation Plans submitted at that time, the Board requested that VDOE staff ensure that future Alternative Accreditation Plans aligned with the new 2017 Accreditation model, rather than the outdated model, which primarily used SOL test pass rates and GCI. The new accreditation model based on the 2017 SOA was implemented for the first time during the 2018-2019 school year (based on 2017-2018 school

year data).

Based on the Board's request, a working committee of VDOE staff members from the Offices of Student Assessment, Data Services, Research, Instructional Services, Career, Technical and Adult Education, and School Quality conveyed to outline new guidelines for schools. At the November 2021 Board work session, VDOE staff discussed a realignment of the Alternative Accreditation Plans, and sought the Board's guidance to ensure that the realignment efforts met their expectations.

[Superintendent's Memorandum #082-21](#) was sent to school divisions in March 2021 with information regarding the application and timeline for the Alternative Accreditation Plan proposals for the 2022-2023 accreditation year. The Office of Accountability then held a meeting with all school leaders who submitted a proposal to discuss the new guidance. One or more meetings with individual schools then took place to answer questions and ensure that the plan captured the unique needs and attributes of each school. The schools then submitted a draft plan. Feedback on clarity, completeness, and alignment with the guidance was provided. Schools then submitted a final plan to be brought before the Board. The Alternative Accreditation Plans are included as Attachments C-J.

**Timetable for Further Review/Action:**

Final review is anticipated at the April 21, 2022, meeting of the Board. Following Board approval, schools will be notified of the Board's decision.

**Impact on Fiscal and Human Resources:**

There is no impact of the action on VDOE resources (fiscal or staff), and the impact on local school divisions' resources is indeterminate.

# Alternative Accreditation Plans Submission to the Board of Education

**March 17, 2022**

# Standards of Accreditation (1 of 2)

[8 VAC 20-131-420.D](#) of the *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia* states (in part):

D. Alternative accreditation plans. Subject to the provisions of subsection B of this section, **the governing school board of special purpose schools** such as those provided for in § 22.1-26 of the Code of Virginia, **Governor's schools, special education schools, alternative schools, or career and technical schools that serve as the student's school of principal enrollment may seek approval of an alternative accreditation plan from the board.**

(Continued)

## Standards of Accreditation (2 of 2)

Schools offering alternative education programs, schools with a graduation cohort of 50 or fewer students as defined by the graduation rate formula adopted by the board may request that the board approve an alternative accreditation plan to meet the graduation and completion index benchmark. **Special purpose schools with alternative accreditation plans shall be evaluated on standards appropriate to the programs offered in the school and approved by the board prior to August 1 of the school year for which approval is requested. Any student graduating from a special purpose school with a Standard Diploma or an Advanced Studies Diploma must meet the requirements prescribed in 8VAC20-131-50 or 8VAC20-131-51.**



# Guidance Document

The *Guidance Document: Governing Certain Provisions of the Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia* states:

In accordance with the provisions of 8VAC20-131-420(B) of the standards, local school boards may seek waivers of provisions of the standards to address the unique needs of special purpose schools. Such requests may include an alternative accreditation plan. Applications must be submitted to the Board for consideration at least ninety days prior to August 1 of the school year. Requests for consideration must be accompanied by information that documents the need for approval of the request.

## Background Information (1 of 4)

- From 2000 to 2018, the Alternative Accreditation Plans were based on the old accreditation system that primarily used Standards of Learning (SOL) test pass rates and the Graduation and Completion Index (GCI) to calculate a school's accreditation status.
- Approved Alternative Accreditation Plans under the old model often included weighted "index" models for pass rate calculations, and bonus point scenarios that could be applied to calculations to reach benchmarks.

## Background Information (2 of 4)

- However, the accreditation model based on the 2017 Standards of Accreditation (SOA), which was implemented beginning in 2018-2019, is based on a variety of indicators that provide a more comprehensive picture of school performance: achievement rates, achievement gap rates, chronic absenteeism, and for schools with a graduating class, Graduation Completion Index (GCI), dropout rate, and a College, Career, and Civic Readiness Index (CCCRI).

## Background Information (3 of 4)

- In January 2020, after the final review of Alternative Accreditation Plans submitted at that time, the Board requested that VDOE staff ensure future Alternative Accreditation Plans aligned with the new 2017 Accreditation model.

## Background Information (4 of 4)

- At the Board's request, a working committee of Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) staff members from the Offices of Student Assessment, Data Services, Research, Instructional Services, Career, Technical and Adult Education, and School Quality outlined new guidelines for schools.
- At the November 2021 Board work session, VDOE staff discussed a realignment of the Alternative Accreditation Plans, and sought the Board's guidance to ensure that the realignment efforts met their expectations.

# Review of Accreditation Model

## Indicators

- Academic Achievement in Mathematics, English and Science
- Achievement GAP in Mathematics and English
- Chronic Absenteeism
- Graduation Completion Index (GCI)
- Dropout Rate
- College, Career, and Civic Readiness Index (CCCRI)

## Performance Levels

Each indicator is given a performance level.

**Level One** (green)

**Level Two** (yellow)

**Level Three** (red)

## Accreditation Ratings

Performance levels determine accreditation ratings.

**Accredited**




**Accredited with Conditions**

**Accreditation Denied**

# Review of Performance Levels

LEVEL ONE	Meets or exceeds state standard or shows sufficient improvement
LEVEL TWO	Near state standard or shows sufficient improvement
LEVEL THREE	Below state standard

# Review of Accreditation Determination

<p><b>ACCREDITED</b></p>	<p>Schools with all school-quality indicators at either Level One or Level Two</p>	
<p><b>ACCREDITED WITH CONDITIONS</b></p>	<p>Schools with one or more school-quality indicators at Level Three</p>	
<p><b>ACCREDITATION DENIED</b></p>	<p>Schools that fail to adopt or fully implement required corrective actions to address Level Three school-quality indicators.</p>	



## Who Has Submitted Plans?

**Arlington County:** Arlington Community High School

**Chesterfield County:** Carver College and Career Academy

**Fairfax County:** Mountainview High School, Kilmer Center, Key Center, Bryant High School, Fairfax County Adult High School

**Loudoun County:** William Obediah Robey High School

# Alternative Accreditation Process (1 of 6)

- A Superintendent's Memorandum is sent out to school divisions to provide information regarding the Alternative Accreditation application process.
- VDOE staff meets with school leaders who have applied to explain the process, timeline, and guidelines.
- The school submits an Alternative Accreditation Plan to the Office of Accountability for feedback regarding clarity, completeness, and alignment to the guidelines.

## Alternative Accreditation Process (2 of 6)

- A VDOE committee reviews the plans in order to provide the feedback. The committee consists of staff members from the Offices of Student Assessment, Data Services, Research, Instructional Services, Career, Technical and Adult Education, and School Quality.
- The Office of Accountability provides feedback to the school, and meets with school leaders to answer questions that specifically relate to their school.

## Alternative Accreditation Process (3 of 6)

- The school submits their final Alternative Accreditation Plan to the Office of Accountability so it can be brought before the Virginia Board of Education. The plan contains alternative measures for one or more indicators.
- The Board will receive the plans for first review and approve or deny the plans upon final review.
- The Office of Accountability notifies the school of the Board's decision.

## Alternative Accreditation Process (4 of 6)

For those schools whose Alternative Accreditation Plan was approved:

- During the state accreditation process, rates for all school indicators are calculated using the same methodology that is used for all other schools in the Commonwealth.
- The Office of Accountability reviews the state accreditation data and confers with the schools who have an Alternative Accreditation Plan.

## Alternative Accreditation Process (5 of 6)

- If an indicator the school included in their Alternative Accreditation Plan has a Level 3 rating using the state calculation, the school will calculate the rate using the alternative measure.
- If the alternative measure indicates a level other than a Level 3, the school presents the alternative calculations and corresponding data to the Office of Accountability. The accuracy of the calculations are verified.

## Alternative Accreditation Process (6 of 6)

- The Office of Accountability communicates with the Office of Data Services to ensure the indicators which have an alternative measure are accurately reported.
- Performance Levels for all indicators are used to determine the school's Accreditation status using the same methodology that is used for all schools in the Commonwealth.

# Main Tenets of Alternative Accreditation Plans

Alternative Accreditation plans need to stay true to the main tenets of the accreditation model and must show evidence that the school is-

- Providing high quality educational programs for **all** students;
- Encouraging **continuous appraisal and improvement** of the school program for the purpose of raising student achievement; and
- Establishing **a means of determining the effectiveness** of schools.



## Updated Guidelines (1 of 6)

- Maintain the established benchmarks for Level indicators consistent with the state model (i.e., The Level 1 performance level for English must remain greater than or equal to 75%.);
- Maintain “sufficient improvement” as a criteria for determination of the Level 1 and Level 2 performance levels, but modified sufficient improvement percentages can be used (i.e., use 5% to demonstrate improvement rather than 10%);

## Updated Guidelines (2 of 6)

- Keep an established minimum pass rate when using the “sufficient improvement” criteria to earn a Level 2 performance rating in the achievement indicators, but the rate can be amended from the state rate of 50% (i.e., the minimum pass rate could be 45% rather than 50%);

## Updated Guidelines (3 of 6)

- Calculate the consecutive multi-year rate without excluding any years, but additional years can be added (i.e., a cumulative 4-year rate could be used instead of the standard cumulative 3-year rate);
- Use statewide assessment results to calculate student achievement indicator rates. Passing scores and approved substitute tests are to be used in the results, as per the state guidelines. Flexibility to use test scores in the locally awarded verified credit range in the achievement rate is permissible;

## Updated Guidelines (4 of 6)

- Track chronic absenteeism per division policy, but that policy may use “meaningful engagement” definitions to guide absenteeism;
- Calculate CCCRI consistent with the state, but there is flexibility to allow broader definitions for the criteria. For example, definitions of work-based learning and service-learning can be expanded to match their population’s current life experiences;

## Updated Guidelines (5 of 6)

- Include all students to the greatest extent possible in the alternate model, rather than excluding students, to meet established criteria. Flexibilities<sup>1</sup> are provided for students who –
  - enrolled in a Virginia Public School for the first time after compulsory attendance age<sup>2</sup>;
  - enrolled in the school for the first time over compulsory attendance age and did not complete *n* semester/months. Length of time depends on school data but should not exceed two semesters;

<sup>1</sup>for GCI, dropout rate, chronic absenteeism, and CCCRI indicators

<sup>2</sup>this is the only flexibility that applies to chronic absenteeism

# Updated Guidelines (6 of 6)

(Continued)

- Flexibilities are provided for students who –
  - are over compulsory attendance age and transfer out of state where there is not a program for them; and
  - fail to complete the school year due to incarceration.

## Other Indicators

- Schools also have the option of including other measures in their accreditation plan, in addition to the state's established indicators, if the measure showcases high quality foundational educational programs, demonstrates the school is raising student achievement, and is preparing students for real-life, authentic experiences.
- Two schools have utilized this option.

## Plan Information to Review (1 of 2)

- The purpose of the school and the characteristics of the student population served sufficiently justifies the need for an alternative accreditation plan. The characteristics of the student population are clearly defined.
- The rationale for determining which accreditation indicators need an alternative measure is sufficient for the indicators that were selected. To the extent possible, the rationale includes historical data.



## Plan Information to Review (2 of 2)

- All of the alternate indicators are clearly explained, have an appropriate sample calculation, are objective, measurable, and directly related to the purpose of the school.
- The achievement indicators include the use of statewide assessments, which are evaluated separately.

## Further Action

- Today these plans are being submitted for a first review.
- They will be brought in front of the Board again in April for final review and approval.



## Alternative Accreditation Plan Submission, Approval, and Implementation Process

- A Superintendent's Memorandum is sent out to school divisions to provide information regarding the Alternative Accreditation application process (memo includes the application as an attachment),
- VDOE staff meets with school leaders who have applied to explain the process, timeline, and guidelines.
- The school submits an Alternative Accreditation Plan to the Office of Accountability for feedback regarding clarity, completeness, and alignment to the guidelines.
- A VDOE committee reviews the plans in order to provide the feedback. The committee consists of staff members from the Offices of Student Assessment, Data Services, Research, Instructional Services, Career, Technical and Adult Education, and School Quality.
- The Office of Accountability provides feedback to the school, and meets with school leaders to answer questions that specifically relate to their school.
- The school submits their final Alternative Accreditation Plan to the Office of Accountability so it can be brought before the Virginia Board of Education. The plan contains alternative measures for one or more indicators.
- The Board will receive the plans for first review and approve or deny the plans upon final review. Schools may be asked to be present for Board questions at the final review.
- The Office of Accountability notifies the school of the Board's decision.

For those schools whose Alternative Accreditation Plan was approved:

- During the state accreditation process, rates for all school indicators are calculated using the same methodology that is used for all other schools in the Commonwealth.
- The Office of Accountability reviews the state accreditation data and confers with the schools who have an Alternative Accreditation Plan.
- If an indicator the school included in their Alternative Accreditation Plan has a Level 3 rating using the state calculation, the school will calculate the rate using the alternative measure.
- If the alternative measure indicates a level other than a Level 3, the school presents the alternative calculations and corresponding data to the Office of Accountability. The accuracy of the calculations are verified.
- The Office of Accountability communicates with the Office of Data Services to ensure



the indicators which have an alternative measure are accurately reported.

- Performance Levels for all indicators are used to determine the school's Accreditation status using the same methodology that is used for all schools in the Commonwealth.

## Alternative Accreditation Plan Guidelines

Current guidelines, along with their flexibilities are:

- Include all students to the greatest extent possible in the alternate model, rather than excluding students, to meet established criteria. Flexibilities are provided for students who are enrolled in school after compulsory attendance age and for students who are incarcerated;
- Keep the established benchmarks for Level indicators consistent with the state model (i.e., The Level 1 performance level for English must remain greater than or equal to 75%.);
- Maintain “sufficient improvement” as a criteria for determination of the Level 1 and Level 2 performance levels, but modified sufficient improvement percentages can be used (i.e., use 5% to demonstrate improvement rather than 10%);
- Keep an established minimum pass rate when using the “sufficient improvement” criteria to earn a Level 2 performance rating in the achievement indicators, but the rate can be amended from the State rate of 50% (i.e., the minimum pass rate could be 45% rather than 50%);
- Calculate the consecutive multi-year rate without excluding any years, but additional years can be added (i.e., a cumulative 4-year rate could be used instead of the standard cumulative 3-year rate);
- Track chronic absenteeism per division policy, but that policy can use “meaningful engagement” definitions to guide absenteeism;
- Use statewide assessment results to calculate student achievement indicator rates. Passing scores and approved substitute tests are to be used in the results, as per the State guidelines. Flexibility to use test scores in the [locally awarded verified credit range](#) in the achievement rate is permissible; and
- Optionally, to include other indicators, in addition to the state's established indicators, if the measure showcases high quality foundational educational programs, demonstrates the school is raising student achievement, and is preparing students for real-life, authentic experiences.



## Flexibilities Specific to Accreditation Indicators

### Academic and GAP Group Achievement

#### Allowable Modifications:

- May count test scores in the locally awarded verified credit range (i.e., 375-399) in the achievement rates;
- May change the minimum pass rate (“the floor”) when using the “sufficient improvement” criteria to earn a Level 2 performance rating;
  - Example: Use the reduction of the failure rate ( R10) when the pass rate is 45% rather than 50%
- May use additional years to calculate a multi-year rate;
  - Example: Use a cumulative 4-year rate rather than a cumulative 3-year rate
- May modify the reduction of the failure rate (R10) to another value.
  - Example: Use 5% instead of 10%

#### Non-allowable Modifications:

- Using a weighted value for any test outcome other than scores in the locally awarded verified credit range;
- Using scenarios to earn bonus points;
- Amending definitions and calculations of standard terms/concepts (i.e., recovery, transfers);
- Changing the performance level benchmarks for academic achievement indicators;
  - Example: The Level 1 performance level for English must remain greater than or equal to 75%.
- Using “best of” when using additional years to calculate a cumulative multi-year rate.
  - Example: Using the best 3 out of 4 years to calculate the 3-year rate

### Chronic Absenteeism

#### Allowable Modifications:

- May exclude students who enrolled in a Virginia Public School for the first time after compulsory attendance age;
- May use additional years to calculate a multi-year rate;
  - Example: Use a cumulative 4-year rate rather than a cumulative 3-year rate
- May modify the reduction of the chronic absenteeism rate (R10) to another value.
  - Example: Use 5% instead of 10%



- May amend the student-level thresholds for chronic absenteeism;
  - Example: A student must be absent 15% or more of the school year, rather than 10%, to be included in the calculation.
- May explicitly define or redefine “meaningful engagement” and “meaningful interactions” to guide absenteeism policies or procedures (as referenced in [Superintendent’s Memorandum 230-21](#)).
  - Ensure meaningful engagement is rigorous enough to meet the intent of the indicator.

#### Non-Allowable Modifications:

- Excluding any students from the calculation except students who enrolled in a Virginia Public School for the first time after compulsory attendance age;
- Using “best of” when using additional years to calculate a cumulative multi-year rate.
  - Example: Using the best 3 out of 4 years to calculate the 3-year rate
- Applying weighted values for students meeting certain criteria;
- Using any scenario to earn bonus points; and
- Changing the performance level benchmarks for Chronic Absenteeism
  - Example: The Level 1 performance level must remain less than or equal to 15%.

### Graduation Completion Index (GCI)

#### Allowable Modifications:

- May exclude students who-
  - enrolled in a Virginia Public School for the first time after compulsory attendance age and did not graduate;
  - enrolled in the school for the first time over compulsory attendance age and did not complete  $n$  semester/months. Length of time depends on school data but should not exceed two semesters;
  - are over compulsory attendance age and transfer out of state where there is not a program for them;
  - fail to complete the school year due to incarceration;
- May use additional years to calculate a multi-year rate;
  - Example: Use a cumulative 4-year rate rather than a cumulative 3-year rate
- May modify the increase of the GCI rate (I2) to show improvement to another value.
  - Example: Use 2% instead of 2.5%
  -



#### Non-Allowable Modifications:

- Excluding student groups other than those indicated under *Allowable Modifications*;
- Using “best of” when using additional years to calculate a cumulative multi-year rate.
  - Example: Using the best 3 out of 4 years to calculate the 3-year rate
- Applying weighted values for students meeting certain criteria;
- Using any scenario to earn bonus points; and
- Changing the performance level benchmarks for GCI.
  - Example: The Level 1 performance level must remain greater than or equal to 88%

### Dropout Rate

#### Allowable Modifications:

- May exclude students who-
  - enrolled in a Virginia Public School for the first time after compulsory attendance age and did not graduate;
  - enrolled in the school for the first time over compulsory attendance age and did not complete  $n$  semester/months. Length of time depends on school data but should not exceed two semesters;
  - are over compulsory attendance age and transfer out of state where there is not a program for them;
  - fail to complete the school year due to incarceration;
- May use additional years to calculate a multi-year rate;
  - Example: Use a cumulative 4-year rate rather than a cumulative 3-year rate
- May modify the reduction of the dropout rate (R10) to another value.
  - Example: Use 5% instead of 10%

#### Non-Allowable Modifications:

- Excluding student groups other than those indicated under *Allowable Modifications*;
- Using “best of” when using additional years to calculate a multi-year rate;
  - Example: Use the best 3 out of 4 years to calculate the 3 year rate
- Applying weighted values for students meeting certain criteria;
- Using any scenario to earn bonus points; and
- Changing the performance level benchmarks for dropout rate.
  - Example: The Level 1 performance level must remain less than or equal to 6%.



## College, Career, and Civic Readiness Index (CCCRI)

Will not be used for determining accreditation status until the 2023-2024 accreditation year.

### Allowable Modifications:

- May exclude students who-
  - enrolled in a Virginia Public School for the first time after compulsory attendance age and did not graduate;
  - enrolled in the school for the first time over compulsory attendance age and did not complete  $n$  semester/months. Length of time depends on school data but should not exceed two semesters;
  - are over compulsory attendance age and transfer out of state where there is not a program for them;
  - fail to complete the school year due to incarceration;
- May broaden the definitions used for student activities that count in the calculations;
  - The criteria must be rigorous and meaningful regarding the intent of the indicator.
  - The activity must strengthen students' preparation for college and the workforce before leaving high school.
- May create a connection of existing work-based experiences or service-learning experiences to coursework in order to count towards CCCRI.

### Non-Allowable Modifications:

- Excluding student groups other than those indicated under *Allowable Modifications*;
- Applying weighted values for students meeting certain criteria;
- Using any scenario to earn bonus points; and
- Changing the performance level benchmarks for CCCRI.
  - Example: The Level 1 performance level must remain greater than or equal to 85%.

## Other Indicators

The alternative accreditation may identify other indicators on which the school can be measured. Indicators should showcase high quality foundational educational programs, demonstrate the school is raising student achievement and is preparing students for real-life, authentic experiences.

The indicator should be a meaningful way to determine the effectiveness of the school for the student population served. It should be sustainable so that growth may be calculated over





multiple years. If other indicators are included in the plan, they should be in addition to the indicators that are part of regular state accreditation.

### Additional Information

- The alternate accreditation plan is not an "all or nothing" document. For instance, if a plan is submitted that includes academic achievement for math and GCI and under regular accreditation the school made a Level one or Level two in math but not GCI, the school would only use the GCI portion of the plan.
- Supporting historical data should be a minimum of two years and can be retrieved from SSWS.
- Locally administered growth assessments cannot be used as a substitute growth measure in accreditation plans.
- Small  $n$  size rules should help with concerns regarding negative impacts of small numbers on accreditation. These rules can be found in the Calculating Accreditation document in SSWS.
- CCCRI will not be used in accreditation in 2022-2023 but school divisions are encouraged to include it in the plan if it is a metric for which a modified indicator may be needed in the future.
- Specific to 2022-2023 accreditation: Schools cannot use statewide data from the past two waived school years in your justification for a modified indicator.

### Regulatory Authority

[8 VAC 20-131-420.D](#) of the *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia* states, which states:

D. Alternative accreditation plans. Subject to the provisions of subsection B of this section, the governing school board of special purpose schools such as those provided for in § 22.1-26 of the Code of Virginia, Governor's schools, special education schools, alternative schools, or career and technical schools that serve as the student's school of principal enrollment may seek approval of an alternative accreditation plan from the board. Schools offering alternative education programs, schools with a graduation cohort of 50 or fewer students as defined by the graduation rate formula adopted by the board may request that the board approve an alternative accreditation plan to meet the graduation and completion index benchmark. Special purpose schools with alternative accreditation plans shall be evaluated on standards appropriate to the programs offered in the school and approved by the board prior to August 1 of the school year for which approval is requested. Any student



graduating from a special purpose school with a Standard Diploma or an Advanced Studies Diploma must meet the requirements prescribed in [8VAC20-131-50](#) or [8VAC20-131-51](#).

As set forth in the [Standards of Quality](#) and according to department procedures, any school board may request the board for release from state regulations or, on behalf of one or more of its schools, for approval of an Individual School Accreditation Plan for the evaluation of the performance of one or more of its schools as authorized for schools enumerated in this subsection, based on special circumstances.

In addition, the *Guidance Document: Governing Certain Provisions of the Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia* states:

In accordance with the provisions of [8VAC20-131-420\(B\)](#) of the standards, local school boards may seek waivers of provisions of the standards to address the unique needs of special purpose schools. Such requests may include an alternative accreditation plan. Applications must be submitted to the Board for consideration at least ninety days prior to August 1 of the school year. Requests for consideration must be accompanied by information that documents the need for approval of the request.