



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education

DATE: November 2, 2018

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: James F. Lane, Ed.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction

SUBJECT: **Updates to *Board of Education Approved Courses to Satisfy Graduation Requirements for World Languages***

The 2018 General Assembly approved two bills related to world language education. House Bill 443 pertains to the substitution of computer coding credits for world language credits for certain English Learners (EL). House Bill 84 requires local school divisions to accept American Sign Language (ASL) transfer credits from approved providers on the same basis as any other world language.

The Board of Education (BOE) approved changes and additions to the *Board of Education Approved Courses to Satisfy Graduation Requirements for the Standard, Advanced Studies, and Modified Standard Diplomas in Virginia Public Schools Approved Courses Effective with Ninth-Grade Class of 2010-2011 and Beyond* to comply with the legislative requirements and to update the list to align with current practice in world languages. The relevant changes begin on page 8 and include the following bulleted items:

- **Credits in any modern or classical language other than English** makes explicit the understanding that any world language may be used to fulfill the world language requirements, even if it is not currently offered at the local school division. This item also contains additional information about transfer credits.
- **Credits in American Sign Language** adds language to comply with House Bill 84 as incorporated in § 22.1-253.13:4 of the *Code of Virginia*, which requires local school divisions to accept American Sign Language (ASL) transfer credits from approved providers on the same basis as any other world language.
- **Credits in English as a Second Language (ESL)** lists the course codes and criteria for awarding world language credit for grades 9-12 English as a Second Language (ESL)

courses. This language was previously disseminated via Superintendent's Memorandum #205 dated September 21, 2007.

- **Credits for Demonstrated Proficiency** explains how credits may be granted for demonstrated proficiency in a language other than English to students who achieve a minimum score on an approved assessment as noted in the [Guidelines for Graduation Requirements: Local Alternative Paths to Standard Units of Credit](#)
- **Course Substitution for English Learners (EL)** adds language to comply with House Bill 443 as incorporated in § 22.1-207.5 of the *Code of Virginia*. Beginning with the 2018-2019 school year, English Learners who have previously earned a sufficient score in one of the identified world language assessments may substitute computer coding course credit for any world language course credit. This option is available only to students classified as English Learners under Section 8101(20) of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) guidelines. See page 10 of attachment A for a list of sufficient scores and additional guidance.

Additional Updates

- The term “foreign language” has been changed to “world language” throughout the document to align with the changes in the revised *Standards of Accreditation* (SOA).
- Language relating to a world language requirement for the Standard Diploma was removed to align with the 2016 *Standards of Quality* (SOQ).
- An explanatory sentence was added to make clear that the term “foreign language”, as used in the *Code of Virginia* and current legislation pertaining to languages other than English, is considered the same content area as “world language.”

For further information, please contact Dr. Lisa Harris, Specialist for World Languages and International Education, Office of Humanities, at (804) 225-3666 or by email at Lisa.Harris@doe.virginia.gov.

JFL/LAH/as

Related Links

- [Board of Education Approved Courses to Satisfy Graduation Requirements for the Standard, Advanced Studies, and Modified Standard Diplomas in Virginia Public Schools \(Word\)](#)
- [Guidelines for Graduation Requirements: Local Alternative Paths to Standard Units of Credit](#)
- [Virginia Seal of Biliteracy](#)
- [Supporting World Language Learning for Students with Disabilities](#)