



**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education**

February 17, 2017

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: Steven R. Staples, Superintendent of Public Instruction

SUBJECT: Clarification Regarding Memo #296-16 Subject: CTE Credential Requirement

This memo serves as clarification of guidance from the Virginia Department of Education in Superintendent's Memo #296-16 Subject: CTE Credential Requirement of the Standard Diploma. In response to a number of requests for clarification related to this requirement specifically as it relates to students with disabilities the Division of Special Education and Student Services has provided the following clarification for special education providers and Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams.

Earning a workforce credential (also known as a CTE Credential) is one requirement for the standard diploma. The State Board of Education has provided some flexibility regarding earning this important credential. This flexibility is found in Note 8 of the Standards of Accreditation.

8. Students shall earn a career and technical education credential approved by the Board of Education, except when a career and technical education credential in a particular subject area is not readily available or appropriate or does not adequately measure student competency, in which case the student shall receive satisfactory competency-based instruction in the subject area to satisfy the standard diploma requirements. The career and technical education credential, when required, could include the successful completion of an industry certification, a state licensure examination, a national occupational competency assessment, or the Virginia workplace readiness assessment.

Exceptions may be granted in rare cases when:

- There is no credential readily available; or
- The credential is not appropriate; or
- The credential does not adequately measure student competency.

When any one of the above exceptions is deemed appropriate for a student earning a standard diploma, the student will receive competency-based instruction to satisfy the requirements for the credential.

When a career and technical education credential is required it may include an industry certification, or a state licensure test, or a national occupational readiness assessment such as the National Career Readiness Assessment or the Workplace Readiness Skills for the Commonwealth. The State Board of Education Approved List can be found on the VDOE website at:

http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/career_technical/path_industry_certification/index.shtml

Decision makers must be knowledgeable about the many potential exams in a career area. For a student with an Individual Education Program (IEP), the IEP Team members, to include the student where appropriate, make decisions regarding courses of study. The CTE Resource Center's website at <http://www.cteresource.org/verso/> has information on these exams. Each course has identified assessments that may qualify as a credential. As an example, Leadership Development (9097) lists the following possible assessments under the Industry Certification tab:

- College and Work Readiness Assessment (CWRA+)
- National Career Readiness Assessment
- Professional Communications Certification Examination
- Workplace Readiness Skills for the Commonwealth Examination

Another example is Economics and Personal Finance (6120), requirement for the standard diploma.

- Concepts of Entrepreneurship and Management Assessment
- W!SE Financial Literacy Certification Examination
- Workplace Readiness Skills for the Commonwealth Examination

Personal Living and Finances (3120), for those eligible for a credit accommodation may utilize one of the following:

- College and Work Readiness Assessment (CWRA+)
- National Career Readiness Assessment
- Workplace Readiness Skills for the Commonwealth Examination

The IEP team must review the student's IEP and document responses to the following questions.

- What efforts were put forth to assist the student with attaining a credential? These efforts should include specially designed instruction and supports/accommodations.
- How will the decision impact the program?
- Will the student be able to become employed in their chosen career without a credential?
- Is there adequate documentation that indicates a student has met all essential competencies, and will this suffice for the student to move from school to postsecondary employment, and/or education and training?
- Do the members of the team understand that exiting school with a standard diploma ends the student's eligibility to a free and appropriate public education?
- How has this been clearly communicated to the student and family?
- Does the school division have informed written consent?

SRS/MM