



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

DATE: February 10, 2023
TO: Division Superintendents
FROM: Jillian Balow, Superintendent of Public Instruction
SUBJECT: **Diploma Seals 2023**

This memo provides the process for school divisions to obtain diploma seals for 2023. The criteria for awarding each seal is provided below and also available on the [Diploma Seals webpage](#). Graduation requirements are available on the [Graduation Requirements webpage](#).

Diploma Seals Ordering Process

School divisions will place orders for diploma seals through the [2023 Diploma Seal Order Form](#). Only **one order per division** will be accepted.

- Orders are due by **March 24, 2023**.
- Only one order per division will be accepted. Please ensure that you are ordering on behalf of your entire division before completing the form.
- Diploma seals do not change in appearance year-to-year. Divisions must use any seals remaining from previous years before ordering new seals.
- The Seal of Advanced Mathematics and Technology is no longer available. This seal has been replaced by the STEM seal.
- Please order only the number of seals necessary for students graduating in spring and summer 2023.
- Divisions must accurately report the number of seals awarded in the Student Record Collection. These numbers inform manufacturing for seals. Many divisions are failing to report awarding any STEM or Science and the Environment seals.

Criteria for Awarding Diploma Seals

In accordance with section [8VAC20-131-51](#) of the Board of Education's [Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia](#) (referred to as the "Standards of Accreditation"), students who meet the requirements for graduation and demonstrate academic excellence and outstanding achievement may be eligible for one or more of the following awards:

Governor's Seal

The Governor's Seal shall be awarded to students who complete the requirements for an Advanced Studies Diploma with an average grade of "B" or better and successfully complete college-level coursework that shall earn the student at least nine transferable college credits in Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), Cambridge, or dual enrollment courses.

Board of Education Seal

The Board of Education Seal shall be awarded to students who complete the requirements for a Standard Diploma or an Advanced Studies Diploma with an average grade of "A."

CTE Seal

The Board of Education's Career and Technical Education Seal shall be awarded to students who earn a Standard Diploma or an Advanced Studies Diploma and complete a prescribed sequence of courses in a career and technical education concentration or specialization that they choose and maintain a "B" or better average in those courses or (i) pass an examination or an occupational competency assessment in a career and technical education concentration or specialization that confers certification or occupational competency credential from a recognized industry, trade, or professional association or (ii) acquire a professional license in that career and technical education field from the Commonwealth of Virginia. The board shall approve all professional licenses and examinations used to satisfy these requirements.

STEM Seal

The Board of Education's Seal for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) shall be awarded to students who earn either a Standard Diploma or an Advanced Studies Diploma and (i) satisfy all Math and Science requirements for the Advanced Studies diploma with a "B" average or better in all course work; and (ii) successfully complete a 50 hour or more work-based learning opportunity in a STEM area; and (iii) satisfy all requirements for a Career and Technical Education concentration (a concentration is a coherent sequence of two or more state-approved courses as identified in the course listing within the [CTE Program Area Guide](#)); and (iv) pass one of the following: (a) a Board of Education CTE STEM-H credential examination, or (b) an examination approved by the Board that confers a college-level credit in a STEM field.

The STEM seal was established by [House Bill 167](#) (2018) to replace the Seal of Advanced Mathematics and Technology.

Civics Seal

The Board of Education's Seal for Excellence in Civics Education shall be awarded to students who earn either a Standard Diploma or an Advanced Studies Diploma and (i) complete Virginia and United States history and Virginia and United States government courses with a grade of "B" or higher; (ii) have good attendance and no disciplinary infractions as determined by local school board policies; and (iii) complete 50 hours of voluntary participation in community service or extracurricular activities. Activities that satisfy the requirements of clause (iii) of this subdivision include (a) volunteering for a charitable or religious organization that provides services to the poor, sick, or less fortunate; (b) participating in Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, or similar youth organizations; (c) participating in JROTC; (d) participating in political campaigns or government internships, or Boys State, Girls State, or Model General Assembly; or (e) participating in school-sponsored extracurricular activities that have a civics focus. Any student who enlists in the United States military prior to graduation shall be deemed to have met this community service requirement.

Biliteracy Seal

The Board of Education's [Seal of Biliteracy](#) will be awarded to students who earn a Board of Education-approved diploma and (i) pass all required End-of-Course Assessments in English reading and writing at the proficient or higher level; and (ii) be proficient at the intermediate-mid level or higher in one or more languages other than English, as demonstrated through an assessment from a list to be approved by the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

As end-of-course assessments in spring 2020 were waived, students are considered to have met the Seal of Biliteracy English proficiency requirement for 2020 by successfully passing their English course for that year. For all years in which end-of-course assessments were #049-22 Page 4 administered, students must have passed the English reading and writing assessment at the proficient or higher level.

More information can be found on the [Seal of Biliteracy webpage](#), including the Evidence of Proficiency document, which provides a full list of assessment options for meeting the foreign language proficiency requirement.

Science and the Environment Seal

The Board of Education's Seal for Excellence in Science and the Environment shall be awarded to students who earn either a Standard Diploma or Advanced Studies Diploma and (i) complete at least three different first-level board-approved laboratory science courses and at least one rigorous advanced-level or postsecondary-level laboratory science course, each with a grade of "B" or higher; (ii) complete laboratory or field-science research and present that research in a formal, juried setting; and (iii) complete at least 50 hours of voluntary participation in

community service or extracurricular activities that involve the application of science such as environmental monitoring, protection, management, or restoration.

Other Seals and Awards

The diploma seals listed in this memo are the only seals provided by VDOE, on behalf of the Board of Education. Local school boards determine the design and use of any other seals or awards for exceptional academic, career and technical, citizenship, or other exemplary performance in accordance with local school board criteria.

Questions

Please direct questions to the Office of Policy at (804) 225-2117 or policy@doe.virginia.gov.

JB/EMC