



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education

DATE: November 10, 2017
TO: Division Superintendents
FROM: Steven R. Staples, Superintendent of Public Instruction
SUBJECT: Environmental Science Course

In an effort to expand opportunities for students to learn science and become environmentally literate citizens, the Virginia Board of Education approved the addition of the Environmental Science course to the list of Board of Education Approved Courses to Satisfy Graduation Requirements for the Standard and Advanced Studies in Virginia Public Schools (see attachment). The purpose of the new Environmental Science course is to provide foundational content that will prepare students for either Earth Science I or Biology I while also including aspects of other disciplines such as civic engagement, mathematics, and engineering. The goal of the course is to provide the students with the skills and content necessary for them to analyze current and future environmental issues, both natural and man-made, through a critical lens and to provide a platform to make informed decisions. This course will provide students the opportunity to learn environmental concepts in depth and build on the concepts currently embedded in the 2010 *Science Standards of Learning*.

The new Environmental Science course, as well as the existing Advanced Placement Environmental Science course, may fulfill either an Earth Science or Biology requirement towards graduation. It is highly recommended that students planning to apply or attend college take four science courses to include Biology, Chemistry, Physics, and any other Board Approved Laboratory Science course. There is no state mandated standardized assessment aligned to either the new Environmental Science course or the Advanced Placement Environmental Science course. Both courses may be taught by a teacher who is endorsed in either Earth Science or Biology.

For more information about Virginia's environmental education efforts or about the new Environmental Science Course, please contact Anne Petersen, Science Coordinator, Office of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics, by email at anne.petersen@doe.virginia.gov or by telephone at (804) 225-2676.

SRS/AMP/pf

Attachments:

- A. [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](#) (Word)