



**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA**  
**Department of Education**

December 16, 2016

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: Steven R. Staples, Superintendent of Public Instruction

**SUBJECT: Applied Studies Curriculum Map**

The Applied Studies Curriculum Map is now available online through the [Virginia Department of Education's](#) website. Supplemental resources are also available including video modules outlining the purpose and scope of the curriculum map as well as a mechanism for creating custom reports for students.

In July 2015, the term “Applied Studies Diploma” replaced the term “Special Diploma.” This diploma option is available for students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) who meet the requirements of their IEP, but do not meet requirements for a standard diploma.

Content area teachers and special educators in partnership with University Training and Technical Assistance Centers (TTAC) created the skills and competencies contained in the Applied Studies Curriculum Map. The map addresses the application of skills within the domains of English, Math, Science, Social Science, Employment, and Independent Living to address competencies that are likely to have an impact on the student’s life after graduation. The curriculum map is intended to:

1. Provide statewide guidance to IEP teams to develop goals and objectives that will:
  - a. supplement instruction on state standards (Virginia Standards of Learning or Aligned Standards of Learning) and address real life application of skills;
  - b. provide the student with instruction that directly address deficits leading to their post-secondary goals; and
  - c. provide a mechanism for linking skills back to state standards.
  
2. Improve communication of skills and provide a common planning resource to:
  - a. increase student participation, self-determination and motivation;
  - b. inform parents/ guardians/ advocates of critical skills; and
  - c. assist with long-term planning beginning as the student enters transition age.
  
3. Promote the incorporation of evidence based practices and predictors into student programs to:
  - a. support opportunities for instruction in real-life scenarios;
  - b. provide resources related to evidence based practices and data-based decision making;
  - c. increase the use of an authentic assessment.

If you have questions regarding the Applied Studies Curriculum Map or the Applied Studies Diploma, please contact Daniel Irwin at (804) 371-7421 or [Daniel.Irwin@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:Daniel.Irwin@doe.virginia.gov).

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