

HB 1477 (SEAT TIME FLEXIBILITY)



VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

WHAT IS SEAT TIME?

- Seat time, student hours, or the Carnegie Unit, was a way to standardize education across a decentralized system of schools by using **time** as a proxy for learning to determine how students earn credit for completing a course of study.
- For more than a century, students' progress toward academic degrees was broken into 140-hour chunks (aka "the Carnegie Unit").
- Students are awarded HS credit for a course based on how much time students spend directly with a teacher to earn one credit in a given subject, not on student mastery of the content.

WHAT IS SEAT TIME?

- Nearly 120+ years later, our educational system in large measure looks exactly how it did at the turn of the last century.
- The Carnegie Unit impacts almost every aspect of schooling:
 - How schools are organized
 - Bell schedules
 - How assessments work
 - What is assessed
 - What goes on a transcript
 - What accreditation is
 - Who gets financial aid and who doesn't
 - How course schedules are set along with staffing

A CENTURY-OLD SYSTEM RIPE FOR CHANGE

Now, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, which developed the time-based system in 1906, wants to rethink seat time:

“We’re at a key moment in human history that demands transformation, and transforming how we educate young people must be at the top of the list,” said **Timothy Knowles, who became the 10th president of the Carnegie Foundation in 2021.** “If it takes us 30 years to catch up to where we were before the pandemic, the United States is arguably in not just serious educational trouble, but serious social and economic trouble as well.”

SHIFTING FROM SEAT TIME TO MASTERY

- Virginia is in the process of moving from “time-based” policies to a “competency-based” structure to earn credits and capture learning based on demonstrating mastery of content and skills.
 - **This approach allows students to progress at a flexible pace so they can move on when they have mastered the material.**
- A redefinition of “instructional hours” enables principals and school division superintendents to have the flexibility to create learning experiences, environments, and timelines that will be more engaging for students and not when and how long they are physically present in a school building or course.
 - Total instructional time remains the same; what changes is where, when, and how learning occurs.
- It’s optional.

BOARD OF EDUCATION PRIORITY

On December 12, 2023 the Board of Education adopted one of the 7 SOQ Prescriptions focused on seat time flexibility.

“The Board of Education recommends that General Assembly require high school students have the opportunity to pursue individualized academic and career-based experiences in high school. Upon graduation all students should earn an industry recognized credential (IRC) from among the current VDOE list of meaningful IRCs or participate in a meaningful work-based learning experience as well as experience college and military readiness learning experiences. High schools must **use flexible scheduling and competency-based seat-time flexibility** in accordance with the Board’s regulations to ensure all students are able to engage in a credentialing program, work-based learning experience or a work-based learning seminar, dual enrollment/advanced learning opportunities.”

ALIGNMENT TO VIRGINIA'S FOCUS ON STUDENT READINESS FOR LIFE

A shift from seat time to mastery-based learning can:

- Help each student succeed.
- Facilitate educational flexibility and innovation.
- Support the Board's Readiness goals in Middle School and High School graduation goals.
 - Helps students to graduate with the knowledge, skills, and disposition to be successful and Ready for Life whether through enrollment in higher education, enlistment, or employment.
 - Aligns with new School Performance and Support Framework
 - The Ready for Life 3E Framework of the accountability system incentivizes divisions to put supports and structures in place for every student's post-secondary plans.

2024 LEGISLATIVE ACTION

HB 1477 (Chapter 421 of the
2024 Acts of the Assembly)



HB.1477 (1): ALTERNATIVE INSTRUCTIONAL MODELS ARE PERMITTED

Code of Virginia 22.1-200.3:

1. The Board shall provide local school boards **maximum flexibility** to waive existing instructional clock hour requirements by developing alternative instructional time models in accordance with regulations adopted by the Board and Board guidelines related to instructional time waivers.

Reminder: The decision whether to adopt seat time flexibility or to design personalized learning models is a local decision.

HB.1477 (2): FLEXIBILITY FOR MASTERY-BASED LEARNING

2. That the Board of Education, when revising its regulations and adopting Standards of Accreditation, **shall provide flexibility** for local school boards to develop programs that provide for acceleration, remediation, and multiple pathways to graduation that **permit students to demonstrate competency at different paces.**

HB.1477 (3): UPDATE GUIDELINES

- That the Board of Education shall, by December 1, 2024, update its Guidelines for Graduation Requirements: Local Alternative Paths to Standard Units of Credit (Alternatives to the 140-Clock-Hour Requirement) to include guidance regarding:
 - (i) waiver pathway options to allow students time within the school day to complete work-based learning opportunities such as internships, externships, youth registered apprenticeships, clinical experiences, service learning, and other career and workforce development opportunities;
 - (ii) advanced learning opportunities focused on problem-solving, critical thinking, creative thinking, communication, collaboration, and citizenship skills;
 - (iii) content that provides technical knowledge, skills, and competency-based applied learning;
 - (iv) a method for approving alternative programs, including dual enrollment courses, for which course credit may be granted for the purpose of satisfying high school graduation requirements to any student who completes such course and masters the course content by demonstrating the competencies required by course standards, regardless of time, place, or pace;
 - (v) other instructional time models adopted to meet instructional hour requirements through a variety of learning modalities such as project-based learning, mastery-based learning, weekend courses, and evening courses to allow a student to use flexible time options to accelerate demonstration of mastery; and
 - (vi) offering instructional and learning opportunities including innovative, advanced, and enrichment programs for the full school year.

HB.1477 (4): PROGRESS REPORT

- That the Board of Education shall submit to the Chairs of the Senate Committee on Education and Health and the House Committee on Education by November 1, 2024, a report on its progress in implementing the provisions of this act.

EXAMPLES OF STUDENT PROFILES

Seat time flexibility and personalized learning models can be implemented in various ways and leveraged for individual student needs.

Today we will highlight three examples of student profiles:

- Expanding opportunities for industry-based credentials and work-based learning experiences (e.g. CTE youth registered apprenticeships)
- Maximizing opportunities for accelerated EOC and college course completion (e.g. AP, Cambridge, IB, and Dual Enrollment courses)
- Providing additional time for learning and skill mastery to complete a credit (e.g. more than 140 hours to learn and demonstrate knowledge)

STUDENT PROFILE 1: CTE ACCELERATION

10th grade student pursuing a pharmacy technician credential aligned to Employment Pathway

Option: The student can complete required courses through flexible models that provide additional time for pharmacy technician coursework and clinical work-based learning experience requirements.



STUDENT PROFILE 2: MIDDLE SCHOOL ACCELERATION

8th grade student on an accelerated math pathway aligned to Enrollment Pathway

Option: Student can complete another elective or requirement virtually to open space in the schedule to attend the Geometry class virtually or at the local high school.



STUDENT PROFILE 3: STUDENT WHO NEEDS MORE TIME

11th grade English learner needs more time to pass English 11

Option: Rather than fail the course and remain classified as an 11th grader, the student is able to continue learning past the scheduled end of the school year.



PLAN OF ACTION

- Receive input from field on process that is transparent to the public and ensures superintendents and principals can act with confidence to establish alternative instructional time models at a single school, multiple schools, or system wide.
 - VDOE and SOE will create virtual and in-person spaces in August and September to provide input on the template and processes for local school boards and superintendents.
- Design and approve of clear and simple “alternative instructional time model” template form for local school boards to use.
- Develop and adopt Board guidelines related to instructional time waivers.

PLAN OF ACTION

- VDOE to design a principal and superintendent-focused flexibility guide like the South Carolina “Education Flexibility Guide” model.
 - Use this as example of robust support and guidance for principals to tactfully engage teachers on what is possible down to classroom level with personalized learning models and what’s allowable under law as outlined in (i)-(vi).
 - Builds credibility with the community and ensures trust and clarity on what truly is allowable and what is not.
- The Board must draft and update Guidelines here.
 - **Benchmarks:**
 - September BOE Meeting – First Draft
 - November BOE Meeting – Final Review and Approval (Deadline December 1)

DISCUSSION

- How do you think seat time flexibility will expand opportunities for students in Virginia?
- What additional resources and supports will school divisions need to implement this?
- What scenarios would be helpful to model in guidance?

STATE IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORT IS CRITICAL

In addition to the Board updating guidelines, additional significant support is essential for seat time flexibility to be fully implemented at scale. Namely:

1. Build Capacity
2. Cultivate Systems Change
3. Empower Student Learning
4. Ensure High-Quality Learning

1. BUILD CAPACITY

- Building capacity with professional development and technical assistance to allow teachers, staff, principals, and division leaders to understand and be able to implement the work, and the leadership structures needed to support the work is critical.
- National best practices for building capacity have several common characteristics:
 - Convenings: to provide opportunities for professional development, collaboration, and networking.
 - Ongoing Coaching
 - Cross-Division Collaboration
 - Technical Assistance
 - Design Team Support: includes trainings in design thinking and staffing

2. CULTIVATING SYSTEMS CHANGE

- It is critical to make sure that systems at the division and state level support seat time flexibility and personalized learning and can help scale and sustain the effort.
- National best practices for building capacity have several common characteristics:
 - Coordinating personalized learning supports within State Department of Education
 - Provide multiple entry points: explore (individual teachers/classrooms); launch (school level); transform (division wide)
 - Use demonstration site visits and classroom observations for others to learn how personalized learning and seat time flexibility works in practice

3 .EMPOWERING STUDENT LEARNING

- The specific strategies for empowering students are largely a local decision with support from the state, as components of personalized learning are often based on teacher discretion and decisions of local division leadership.
- However, increased **student agency** is a common focus of instructional change when using seat time flexibility.

4. ENSURING HIGH-QUALITY MODELS

- States leading on seat time flexibility and personalized learning have identified indicators to measure the implementation work through two key methods:
 - Independent Evaluation
 - Action Planning Metrics to help determine the level of implementation and measures of success at the state level

SPECIFIC EXAMPLES:

- Leverage national best practices, toolkits, and resources to help interested principals and superintendents understand seat time flexibility and how it can be utilized in their classrooms, school, or system.
- Establish a Personalized Learning Network to provide coaching, professional development, communities of practice, and targeted supports for school or division design teams.
- Design Peer-to-Peer Networks of Educators across school divisions who support each other in adopting, implementing, and scaling personalized learning.
- Work with national organizations to provide customized technical support for specific areas of the work
- Work with colleges of education to train teachers and aspiring school and system leaders on personalized learning models and best practices
- Identify initial demonstration sites for school leaders and teachers interested in exploring and launching personalized learning.

Discussion & Final Thoughts