



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA  
Department of Education

July 10, 2015

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: Steven R. Staples, Superintendent of Public Instruction

**SUBJECT: 2015 General Assembly Revisions to the Standards of Quality**

The 2015 General Assembly revised Standards One, Three, Four and Nine of the *Standards of Quality (SOQ)*, §§ [22.1-253.13:1](#) through [22.1-253.13:10](#) of the *Code of Virginia*. These changes became law effective on July 1, 2015, unless otherwise noted.

Revisions to Standard One (§[22.1-253.13:1](#))

**[HB 1320](#)** Requires that the Board's Licensure Regulations for School Personnel include requirements that every person seeking renewal of a license complete all renewal requirements including professional development in a manner prescribed by the Board, except that no person seeking renewal of a license shall be required to satisfy any such requirement by completing coursework and earning credit at an institution of higher education.

**[HB 1676](#)** Permits each local school board to enter into agreements for postsecondary credential, certification, or license attainment with community colleges or other public institutions of higher education or educational institutions that are established pursuant to [Title 23](#) of the *Code of Virginia* (Educational Institutions) that offer a career and technical education curriculum. These agreements must specify: (i) the options for students to take courses as part of the career and technical education curriculum that lead to an industry-recognized credential, certification, or license concurrent with a high school diploma; and (ii) the credentials, certifications, or licenses available for such courses.

Revisions to Standard Three (§ [22.1-253.13:3](#))

**[HB 1303](#)**  
**[SB 900](#)** Requires the VDOE to make available to school divisions SOL assessments typically administered by middle and high schools by December 1 of the school year in which such assessments are to be administered or when newly developed assessments are available, whichever is later.

**[HB 1419](#)** Requires the VDOE to develop processes for informing school divisions of changes in the SOL.

**[HB 1615](#)** Provides that the required end-of-course or end-of-grade assessments for English, mathematics, science, and history and social science (including the completion of the alternative assessments implemented by each local school board) may be integrated to include multiple subject areas.

**[HB 1674](#)** Permits the Board to review the accreditation status of a school once every three years if the school has been fully accredited for three consecutive years. The bill requires that, upon such triennial review, the Board review the accreditation status of the school for each individual year within that triennial review period. If the Board finds that the school would have been accredited every year of

that triennial review period, the Board may accredit the school for another three years. The bill specifies that the Board must review the accreditation status of any school that: (i) in any individual year within the triennial review period would have failed to achieve full accreditation; or (ii) in the previous year has had an adjustment of its boundaries that affects at least ten percent of the student population of the school. Current law requires the Board to annually review the accreditation status of all schools in the Commonwealth. Finally, the bill requires the reporting of the SOL assessment scores and averages for each year, regardless of accreditation frequency, as part of the School Performance Report Card.

[HB 1714](#) Makes a technical amendment to the SOQ to allow school divisions the flexibility to provide the science SOL assessment upon completing instruction in Grade 6 life science and physical science and before the end of Grade 8. This was a VDOE agency bill.

Revisions to Standard Four ([§22.1-253.13:4](#))

[HB 1351](#)  
[SB 916](#) Directs the Board to establish criteria for awarding a diploma seal of biliteracy to any student who demonstrates proficiency in English and at least one other language for the Board. The bill requires the Board to consider criteria, including the student's: (i) score on a College Board Advanced Placement foreign language examination; (ii) score on an SAT II Subject Test in a foreign language; (iii) proficiency level on an ACTFL Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages (AAPPL) measure or another nationally or internationally recognized language proficiency test; or (iv) cumulative grade point average in a sequence of foreign language courses approved by the Board. The bill contains a second enactment clause that requires the Board to establish criteria for awarding a diploma seal of biliteracy in time for any student graduating from a public high school in the Commonwealth in 2016 to be awarded such a diploma seal.

[HB 1675](#)  
[SB 982](#) Permits local school divisions to waive the requirement for students to receive 140 clock hours of instruction to earn a standard unit of credit upon providing the Board with satisfactory proof, based on Board guidelines, that the students for whom such requirements are waived have learned the content and skills included in the relevant SOL.

[HB 2276](#) Creates an alternative to the current requirement that, in order to receive a standard diploma, a student must earn a CTE credential. This alternative would apply when a CTE credential in a particular subject area is not readily available or appropriate or does not adequately measure student competency, in which case the student must receive competency-based instruction in the subject area to satisfy the standard diploma requirements.

[HB 2318](#) Requires the Board – for the purposes of the *Standards of Accreditation* – to use a graduation rate that excludes any student who fails to graduate because he or she is in the custody of the Department of Corrections, the Department of Juvenile Justice, or local law enforcement. [HB 2318](#) further requires that this data be made available to the public. In addition, the bill requires the Board to report to the chairmen of the House Committee on Education and the Senate Committee on Education and Health on the Board's progress towards updating its formula for collecting, analyzing, and reporting high school graduation and dropout data no later than December 1, 2015. The bill has a delayed effective date of July 1, 2016.

[SB 1236](#) Specifies that students identified as disabled who complete the requirements of their individualized education programs (IEPs) and meet certain requirements prescribed by the Board pursuant to regulations, but do not meet the requirements for any named diploma, shall be awarded *Applied Studies* diplomas by local school boards. The term *special diploma* is eliminated pursuant to this bill, and the term *Applied Studies* diploma replaces it in the *Code*. Currently, the *Code* provides that students identified as disabled who complete the requirements of their IEPs shall be awarded special diplomas by local school boards. This bill was proposed by the VDOE.

Revisions to Standard Nine ([§22.1-253.13:9](#))

[HB](#) Permits the Board to review the accreditation status of a school once every three years if the school

1674 has been fully accredited for three consecutive years. The bill requires that, upon such triennial review, the Board review the accreditation status of the school for each individual year within that triennial review period. If the Board finds that the school would have been accredited every year of that triennial review period, the Board may accredit the school for another three years. The bill specifies that the Board must review the accreditation status of any school that: (i) in any individual year within the triennial review period would have failed to achieve full accreditation; or (ii) in the previous year has had an adjustment of its boundaries that affects at least ten percent of the student population of the school. Current law requires the Board to annually review the accreditation status of all schools in the Commonwealth. Finally, the bill requires the reporting of the SOL assessment scores and averages for each year, regardless of accreditation frequency, as part of the School Performance Report Card.

For more information, please see:

- Attachment A for the full text of the 2015 *Standards of Quality* (with the changes effective July 1, 2015 highlighted).
- The *Standards of Quality* in the *Code of Virginia* at <http://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title22.1/chapter13.2/>
- The final legislative report for the 2015 General Assembly session at <http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/legislation/>
- The Superintendent's Memorandum summarizing 2015 legislation impacting public education at [http://www.doe.virginia.gov/administrators/superintendents\\_memos/2015/099-15.shtml](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/administrators/superintendents_memos/2015/099-15.shtml)
- If you have questions about this information, you may contact the Office of Policy at (804) 225-2092 or [policy@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:policy@doe.virginia.gov).

SRS/SBW/kfg

Attachment:

- A. [2015 Standards of Quality with changes effective July 1, 2015](#) (PDF)