



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education

October 24, 2014

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: Steven R. Staples, Superintendent of Public Instruction

SUBJECT: Transmittal of “Statement of Administrative Impact and Projected Costs of Implementation” for the Promulgation of Permanent Amendments to the Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia to Replace Emergency Amendments

As part of its responsibility for promulgating new regulations or revisions to existing regulations, pursuant to § [22.1-17](#) of the *Code of Virginia*, the Board of Education (Board) is required to develop a statement of the administrative impact and projected cost to school divisions related to implementing and complying with such regulations. In addition, the Board and the Department of Education are required to send a copy of the statement to each division superintendent.

The Board is in the process of revising the *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia*, (SOA) [8VAC20-131-5 et seq.](#) The SOA is designed to ensure that an effective educational program is established and maintained in Virginia's public schools.

The 2012 General Assembly passed, and the Governor signed into law, [HB 1061](#) and [SB 489](#), which amended § [22.1-253.13:4](#) of the *Code of Virginia* to strengthen postsecondary education and workplace readiness opportunities for all students, and to consolidate the number of Board approved diplomas. Further, the legislation required the Board to adopt emergency regulations to effect these changes. The emergency regulations were approved by the Board on June 28, 2012, and became effective on June 5, 2013. The Governor's office subsequently approved extending the emergency regulations until December 4, 2014. Permanent amendments to replace the emergency amendments were approved by the Board on July 24, 2014, and will become effective on **December 3, 2014**. They are exactly the same as the emergency regulations and include the following provisions to comport with the 2012 legislation:

The following changes will be made to the SOA so that it will comport with [HB 1061](#) and [SB 489](#):

- The regulations require that, beginning with first-time ninth graders in the 2013-2014 school year, students must earn a career and technical education credential that has been approved by the Board in order to graduate with a Standard Diploma. This credential may include, but not be limited to, the successful completion of an industry certification, a state licensure examination, a national occupational competency assessment, or the Virginia workplace readiness skills assessment.
- The regulations fold the Modified Standard Diploma into the Standard Diploma, and require the Board to establish guidelines for credit accommodations for students with disabilities. (See Superintendent's Memo #105-13; Standard Diploma CreditAccommodations for Students with Disabilities; issued April 19, 2013,

at http://www.doe.virginia.gov/administrators/superintendents_memos/2013/105-13.shtml.)

- The Standard Technical Diploma and the Advanced Technical Diploma currently included in the SOA have not yet been implemented and are eliminated by these regulations.
- The regulations require students pursuing a Standard or Advanced Studies Diploma to successfully complete one virtual course, which may be a noncredit-bearing course.
- Consistent with the legislation, the regulations specify that the Advanced Studies Diploma shall be the recommended diploma for students pursuing baccalaureate study.

The emergency regulations can be found on the Department's Web site at the following address: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/accreditation/soa_2013.pdf. The (identical) permanent regulations will be posted once they become effective.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPACT

It is anticipated that there will be little or no administrative costs related to consolidation of the diplomas. However, to the extent that school divisions must provide additional services to meet the other new requirements, there could be a local fiscal impact. Because any impact will depend on the current services offered in each division, the Department is not able to determine any fiscal impact at this time.

Please contact the Office of Policy at (804) 225-2092 or by e-mail at Policy@doe.virginia.gov if you have any questions.

SRS/SBW/kfg