



#041-21

Commonwealth of Virginia
Virginia Department of Education
Superintendent's Memo #041-21

DATE: February 12, 2021
TO: Division Superintendents
FROM: James F. Lane, Ed.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction
SUBJECT: Update to the *Emergency Guidelines for Locally-Awarded Verified Credits*

At its January 28, 2021 business meeting, the Board of Education approved an update to the [Emergency Guidelines for Locally-Awarded Verified Credits](#). Due to ongoing pandemic conditions, there is a continued need for remote and hybrid instructional models and the provision of support to students whose ability to earn a verified credit through existing pathways may be hindered by the unique impact of COVID-19 during the spring term. The updated Emergency Guidelines extend the flexibility provided in option one to students enrolled in any high-school credit bearing course that was eligible for verified credit in the spring of 2021 and who meet the enumerated conditions.

The updated *Emergency Guidelines* also respond to systematic issues related to transfer students and students attempting to retest for verified credits required for graduation in the fall of 2020 or the spring or summer of 2021. While this new category of eligible students received their course instruction prior to the pandemic and extended closures in the spring of 2020, they are still preparing to retest under challenging circumstances. The existing LAVC flexibility may not provide sufficient support to students seeking to graduate this year. The updated *Emergency Guidelines* adds a provision for these students to earn two LAVCs for courses in which they were enrolled in prior to spring 2020, attempted the test and scored within a modified range, and have since been provided with targeted sustained remediation.

The updates to option one of the *Emergency Guidelines* are highlighted below:

Option One: For students impacted by ongoing pandemic conditions during the fall of 2020 or spring or summer of 2021 semesters and seeking a verified credit in reading, writing, mathematics, history/social science or science, the following students may be considered for eligibility to use the revised LAVC process:

- Students graduating in 2020-2021 or beyond who were enrolled in a high-school credit bearing course that was eligible for a verified credit in the fall of 2020 or spring or summer of 2021.
- Students graduating in the fall of 2020 or spring or summer of 2021 **ONLY** who earned a standard credit prior to the spring 2020 semester, seeking **TWO** verified credits, and who meet the following conditions:
 - Previously failed the corresponding SOL end-of-course test needed for verified credit;
 - Have since been provided with targeted and sustained remediation or enrolled in a course intended to prepare them for taking the previously failed SOL end-of-course test.

To be eligible to earn a LAVC in reading, writing, mathematics, history/social science or science under this guidance, a student meeting one of the above eligibility categories must:

1. Pass the corresponding high school course; **AND**
2. Attempt the associated SOL assessment and receive a score within the 350 - 399 range. For courses taken prior to spring 2020, the test attempt may have occurred immediately following the eligible course; **AND**
3. Demonstrate mastery of the standards, competencies, and objectives of the entire course through a locally-determined verification process.

Please review the [Emergency Guidelines for Locally-Awarded Verified Credits](#) in entirety for additional information on all updates on student and course eligibility for the use of the revised locally-awarded verified credit process.

The updated *Emergency Guidelines* are a companion to the Board's [Regulations Establishing Standards for the Accreditation of Public Schools](#) – or Standards of Accreditation – and supplement the [Guidance Document Governing Certain Provisions of the Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia](#). The latter document as well

as the Standards of Accreditation remain in effect for the purpose of awarding locally-awarded verified credits for students who do not meet the exemption criteria. The guidelines are available for immediate implementation.

For more information

For questions regarding these new updates to the *Emergency Guidelines*, you may contact the Office of Policy at (804) 225-2092 or Policy@doe.virginia.gov.

JFL/bch