

Section 22.1-253.13:1.D.8 of the *Standards of Quality* requires local school boards to provide educational alternatives for students whose needs are not met in programs prescribed elsewhere in these standards. Such students shall be counted in average daily membership (ADM) in accordance with the regulations of the Board of Education. Regulations governing programs such as this are found in the accrediting standards, which permit alternative accreditation plans and allow the Board to grant waivers to certain provisions of the standards.

In September 2004, at the board's request, the department developed a template for school divisions to use in preparing alternative accreditation plan proposals. The department also developed criteria for the evaluation of proposals. This request has been reviewed against the evaluation criteria and a copy of the department's review is attached.

Summary of Major Elements:

The school board of Richmond City is proposing an alternative accreditation plan for the Adult Career Development Center (ACDC), an alternative school that serves disadvantaged students ages 17 through 19. The school serves expecting mothers (ages 14-19), mothers with infant children needing child-care, and disadvantaged, over-aged students needing to earn fewer than seven credits for high school completion. In addition, the center serves as the essential community hub for Adult Basic Education, General Education Diploma (GED) preparation, infant care, early childhood education, English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), vocational educational training and parenting classes.

Seventy-five percent of the students referred to ACDC are seniors from comprehensive high schools who are at least two years behind in graduating. Thirty percent of the students are academically challenged because they have failed two or more classes. These students have not been allowed to take senior-level courses due to the sequential requirement for course enrollment. Seventy-five percent of the seniors referred to ACDC are deficient in Standards of Learning (SOL) verified credits. Approximately 20% of ACDC students have passed the course(s) but did not take the end-of-course SOL assessment(s) due to poor attendance, health and family issues (homelessness), or pregnancy. Seventy percent of the students at ACDC are taking two courses in the same subject area (e.g. English 11 and English 12 or United States History and United States Government). ACDC administers SOL assessments to students who are enrolled only a few days prior to the test administration due to the disciplinary hearing process or through release from incarceration. This time lapse and change of setting negatively impact both the student's success and the ACDC pass rate.

In most cases, students are referred to ACDC due to poor performance in the regular high school setting. This type of placement is voluntary; therefore, parents must agree to the placement and actively participate in an orientation session explaining the program. Pregnant students are referred to ACDC for the extraordinary resources available in the areas of child development, nutrition, and family literacy. The school has a full-time school social worker to assist these students.

Some students are referred to ACDC through the disciplinary hearing officer. This type of placement is usually involuntary and will, in most cases, last for the entire school year. In each instance, parents are required to attend an orientation session with a guidance counselor and administrator.

The purpose of ACDC is to offer students instructional support and behavioral fundamentals to successfully earn standard and verified units of credit needed to receive a diploma or prepare for the GED. Teachers disaggregate weekly assessment data and meet with administrators on a regular basis to discuss its implications for instruction.

Richmond City Public Schools is requesting that the school's accreditation be based on student academic achievement measured by a composite score of 70% passing in English Reading, English Writing, History, Science and Mathematics. All ACDC students will take required SOL test(s), and the results will count in the school's accreditation rating.

Richmond City Public Schools is requesting waivers to the provision of the *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia*, VAC 20-131-300 C, to allow accreditation for the ACDC to be based on combined pass rates in the four core content areas.

Superintendent's Recommendation: The Superintendent of Public Instruction recommends that the Board of Education accept for first review the request for approval of an alternative accreditation plan from Richmond City Public Schools for the Adult Career Development Center.

Impact on Resources: There is no impact on the resources of the Department of Education.

Timetable for Further Review/Action: This item will be presented to the Board of Education for final review at its meeting on November 30, 2005.

**COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA**

REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF AN ALTERNATIVE ACCREDITATION PLAN

Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia, (8 VAC 20-131-10 et. seq.) set the minimum standards public schools must meet to be accredited by the Board of Education. Accreditation of public schools is required by the Standards of Quality (22.1-253.13:1 et. seq.). The annual accrediting cycle for public schools is July 1 through June 30. This cover sheet, with the supporting documentation, must be submitted to the Department of Education for review and recommendation to the Board at least 90 days prior to August 1 of the school year in which the plan is to be implemented.

8 VAC 20-131-280 of the *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia* states (in part): *Special purpose schools such as regional, special education, alternative, or career and technical schools that serve as the student's school of principal enrollment shall be evaluated on standards appropriate to the programs offered in the school and approved by the Board prior to August 1 of the school year for which approval is requested. Any student graduating from a special purpose school with a Standard, Advanced Studies, or Modified Standard Diploma must meet the requirements prescribed in 8 VAC 20-131-50.*

The Board of Education, in its *Guidelines Governing the Implementation of Certain Provisions of the Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia*, states:

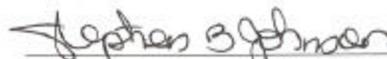
Schools described in this section are those that serve as a student's school of principal enrollment and where students are reported in fall membership for the school. Fall membership determines whether or not these schools are subject to the provisions of the accrediting standards; therefore, schools reporting fall membership are subject to the provisions of the standards. These schools may or may not administer Standards of Learning (SOL) tests.

In accordance with the provisions of 8 VAC 20-131-330 of the standards, local school boards may seek waivers of provisions of the standards to address the unique needs of these special purpose schools. Such requests may include an alternative accreditation plan. Applications must be submitted to the Board for consideration at least ninety days prior to August 1 of the school year. Requests for consideration must be accompanied by information that documents the need for approval of the request.

We, the undersigned, submit this request for review and approval by the Board of Education and understand that we are expected to appear before the Board to discuss the program and respond to questions raised.

September 06, 2005
Date Approved
by the Local School Board

September 06, 2005
Submission Date



Signature
Chairman of the School Board


Signature
Division Superintendent

ALTERNATIVE ACCREDITATION PLAN TEMPLATE

School Name	The Adult Career Development Center	Division	Richmond City Schools
School Address	119 West Leigh Street Richmond Virginia 23220		
Contact Person	Martha P. Suber, Principal	Phone	(804) 780-4388
Fax	(804) 780-8184	E-mail Address	msuber@ richmond.k12.va.us
Proposed Duration of the Plan	School year 2005-06		
Grade Levels Served	The High School Completion program at ACDC serves students in grades 6-12 (Gr. 6-8, expectant mothers only) – In addition to High School, ACDC provides Pre-GED and GED-Preparation, Adult Basic Education, ESOL and Family Literacy. The school also has Early Head Start and Head Start programs in the building.		
No. Students Enrolled by Grade Level	Gr. 6=0 Gr. 7=0 Gr 8=3 Gr. 9=2 Gr. 10=2 Gr. 11=13 Gr. 12=136		

I. Describe the mission and purpose of the school.

The High School Completion Program (HSC) at the Adult Career Development Center has, as its primary mission, drop-out intervention/prevention for disadvantaged students 17, 18, and 19 years old. Historically, the school has been an oasis for young expecting mothers (ages 14 – 19), young mothers with infant children needing child care, and disadvantaged overaged students needing to earn fewer than 7 credits for high school completion. In addition, the center serves as an essential community hub for Adult Basic Education, General Education Diploma preparation, Infant Care, Early Childhood Education (HeadStart,) English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), vocational educational training and parenting classes.

II. Describe the Characteristics of the Student Population Served by the School. Include demographic information that identifies the subgroups attending the school, the criteria used to determine the students' placement in this school, and the policies governing parental involvement in determining the placement.

Seventy-five (75%) percent of the students referred to ACDC are seniors from comprehensive high schools who are at least two years behind (overage), while only twenty-five (25%) percent are underclassmen. Thirty (30%) percent of the students are academically challenged because they have failed two or more classes normally passed in the ninth or tenth grades. These students have not been allowed to take senior level courses due to the sequential requirement for course enrollment. Seventy-

five (75%) percent of the seniors referred to ACDC are deficient in SOL verified credits. In some cases these students have passed the course(s) but did not take the EOC test due to poor attendance, health and family issues (homelessness), or pregnancy. In many cases the student has failed a non-sequential ninth or tenth grade course. Seventy (70%) percent of the students at ACDC are taking two courses in the same subject area (e.g. 11 English and 12 English or VA US History and 12 US Government).

Additionally, it should be noted that approximately twenty (20%) percent of the students at ACDC take EOC assessments for courses that were passed before these students were referred to ACDC. We administer the tests to students who may have come to us just a few days prior to the test administration due to the disciplinary hearing process or through release from incarceration. This time lapse and change of setting negatively impact both the student's success and the ACDC pass rate. Eighty-Seven (87%) percent of the total population attending ACDC are African-American. Eight (8%) of the total population attending ACDC are Hispanic. Three (3%) percent of the total population attending ACDC are Caucasian. Two (2%) percent of the total population attending ACDC are Asian/Pacific Islander.

In most cases, students are referred to ACDC due to poor performance in the regular high school setting. This type of placement is voluntary; therefore, parents must agree to the placement and actively participate in an orientation session explaining the program. Pregnant students are referred to ACDC for the extraordinary resources available in the areas of Child Development, GRADS, Nutrition and Family Literacy. The school has a full time school social worker to assist these students. Students are also referred to ACDC through the disciplinary hearing officer. This type of placement is usually involuntary and will in most cases last for the entire school year. In each instance, parents are required to attend an orientation session with a guidance counselor and administrator.

III. Describe the instructional program and support services offered by the school. Include a profile of the teaching staff and its qualifications, characteristics of the program that makes it a special purpose school, any differentiated instructional methodologies used, and transition plans for the students.

The instructional program at ACDC follows the direct instruction model and has a seven period day, with all teachers having a common unencumbered lunch. ACDC uses components of the High Schools That Work School Improvement Model. One-hundred (100%) percent of the core subject faculty have a common unencumbered planning period. Three (3) elective teachers share a different common planning period. Teachers at ACDC are not assigned monitorial duties. The established PTR is 15:1, the actual PTR is 12:1. In some cases history teachers have requested a higher PTR of 18:1 to facilitate better group instruction and teaming. Remediation is accomplished through an enrichment class which meets each day for 35 minutes and starting next year through double dosing, where some students will attend the same class two periods each day. All ACDC HSC teachers are highly qualified and hold certifications in the areas in which they teach. To address the need for improvement in math we have assigned three different teachers to teach the subject in three consecutive years. The teachers from 2004 and 2005 were both recruited to our building because they are highly qualified and fully certified in math. Both geometry teachers (2004 & 2005) hold advanced degrees and were extremely committed to surpassing the 70% pass percentage. The school is divided by High School Completion (HSC) and GED programs: elective teachers teach both HSC and GED students.

IV. Describe the strategies and instruments used by the school to evaluate student progress toward established goals and objectives.

For the school year 2004-05 ACDC followed the High Schools that Work Model. ACDC instituted an enrichment class that met for thirty-five (35) minutes each day. All HSC students were required to take the enrichment class. The class time was used primarily for remediation and tutoring. Classes with no EOC assessment used the time for career planning, counseling and tutoring. After assessing the students during regular class time, SOL teachers identified those students who would most likely benefit from the extra help. Students were then assigned to the enrichment class in which they needed extra help passing EOC SOL assessment. In cases where students were deficient in more than one SOL assessed course, teachers were encouraged to share those students for at least two days per week or when the need was most apparent based on weekly assessment data. ACDC has also worked with University Tutors Inc., to assist with direct one-on-one remediation for some students. This year, a well-respected, retired RPS employee was hired to tutor six (6) seniors who had not passed the World History SOL when they were in the 9th grade. The students needed the verified credit to receive a standard diploma but had not taken the World History II course in at least three years. Three of the six students passed the World History II exam, the other three received scores higher than 375 and met the criteria to receive a locally awarded verified credit. One of the students who passed the test had taken the assessment six (6) times prior to this year at another school.

Teachers at ACDC use the VDOE EOC Released tests from years 2001-2004 to assess student progress.

EOC teachers at ACDC judiciously use the Stuart Flanagan quarterly benchmark measures, in addition to the eduTest computer based assessments, and bi-weekly and weekly assessments. Teachers disaggregate the data weekly and meet with their administrator on a regular basis to discuss the data and its implications for instruction. English teachers use the VDOE issued EPAT computer programs.

Algebra I

Glencoe Algebra I Text - Glencoe Practice Workbook - Algebra I VA SOL by Luster
Algebra I VA SOL by Lapenskie - RPS Treasure Chest for Algebra I - Released Tests

Websites:

Regentsprep.org - education.jlab.org - Aaa.math.com - Nctm.illuminations.org
Shodor.org - ti.com - Math Science Center Lessons for Algebra I

Calculators: TI-83 plus.

Geometry:

Geometry I Glencoe (adopted text) - Practice Workbook for Geometry by Glencoe
SOL Test Geometry by Luster - Geometry Coach by Lapinskie - RPS Treasure Chest for Geometry –
VDOE Released tests.

Calculators :TI-83 plus

Websites:

education.jlab.org - www.pen.k12.va.us – eduTest.Com

<p>V. Does the school meet the pre-accreditation eligibility requirements outlined in 8 VAC 20-131-280.F. of the accrediting standards? (If not, waivers must be requested for each accreditation standard not being met.)</p>		<p>X Yes</p>		<p>No</p>
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VI. List each standard and provide a detailed explanation of why the standard is not appropriate for the school. (Note: Waivers of the assessment requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and the *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia* are not available.)

The standard not appropriate for the school is the 70% pass rate in each high school EOC SOL testing area. The rationale for this request is based on the school's math scores historically being the subject area not meeting the 70% passing threshold due to the small number of students taking the test for the first time in math.

VII. List the standards or student academic achievement criteria on which you propose to base the school's accreditation and provide a detailed rationale for selecting each. The standards/criteria must be objective, measurable, and related directly to the mission and purpose of the school. Provide data to support your rationale.

ACDC is requesting that our accreditation be based on student academic achievement measured by a composite score of 70% passing in English Reading, English Writing, History, Science and Math. Our current data indicates that we have achieved passing rates above 80% in all areas other than math. For the last two years our combined math scores have been at least 65%, however, the small number of students testing and attendance issues that are common to the alternative population we serve have prevented our students from achieving a 70% pass rate in math due to the need for sequential learning of the math objectives. This request is based on the open enrollment policy in our high school completion program, multiple concerns with our pregnant and parenting youth, and student placements at any time during the school year by the Disciplinary Hearing Officer. These factors contribute to serious gaps in the timeline and sequential instruction needed to successfully pass the math SOL Tests. Another factor is the low number of students taking math SOL Tests for the first time at ACDC. For example, during this school year ACDC only had two students who took Algebra I for the first time. One student with serious attendance problems failed the test, yielding a 50% pass rate for first time testers. Each year we have had cases where students are referred to ACDC who have passed the math class at their zoned school, but due to attendance issues or disciplinary problems did not take the math SOL test at their zoned comprehensive high school. The 2004-05 attendance rate for students was 74.9%.

VIII. Describe who was involved in the development of the proposed plan.

Dr. Yvonne Brandon, Associate Superintendent for Instruction and Accountability - Richmond Public Schools

Martha P. Suber, Principal - ACDC

Betsy Roberson, Director of Pupil Personnel - Richmond Public Schools

Bill McGee, Asst. Principal | High School Completion Administrator | Site Testing Coordinator - ACDC

Jane B. Rule, Head Guidance Counselor - ACDC

Dr. Deborah Turner, Guidance Counselor | Co-Testing Coordinator - ACDC

IX. Describe the method(s) to be used in evaluating the success of the plan.

In 2005-06, the Adult Career Development Center will be evaluated using combined EOC assessment scores for high school English Reading, English Writing, History, Science and Math assessments with a composite minimum pass rate of 70%.

**Virginia Department of Education
Evaluation Criteria
Adult Career Development Center, Richmond City Public Schools
Alternative Accreditation Plans for Special Purpose Schools**

Criteria	Yes	No	Limited
School characteristics and instructional program:			
1. The mission, purpose, and target population of the school justify its categorization as a “special purpose” school and, therefore, eligible to request an alternative accreditation plan.	v		
2. The characteristics and special needs of the student population are clearly defined, and the criteria for student placement require parental consultation and agreement.	v		
3. The program of instruction provides all students with opportunities to study a comprehensive curriculum that is customized to support the mission of the school.	v		
4. The school provides transition planning to help students be successful when they return to a regular school setting. Note: Students transition to a diploma or GED not back to a base school.		v	
5. Strategies used to evaluate student progress are aligned to the mission/purpose of the school and include academic achievement measures.	v		
6. Convincing evidence has been provided that students enrolled in the school have not been successful in other schools subject to all the accrediting standards.	v		
7. Students will be taught with highly qualified teachers who meet the Board of Education’s licensure requirements for instructional personnel.	v		
Alternative Accreditation Plan:			
1. Rationale and evidence provide convincing evidence that the “special purpose” nature of the school precludes its being able to reach and maintain full accreditation status as defined in the SOA.			v
2. Alternative accreditation criteria described in the plan include academic achievement measures that are objective, measurable, and directly related to the mission and purpose of the school.	v		
3. The plan includes use of statewide assessment student achievement results of English and mathematics.	v		
4. The plan meets the testing requirements of the SOA. Note: All students are tested at the completion of the SOL course.			v

Criteria	Yes	No	Limited
5. The plan meets the testing requirements of NCLB and describes how the school plans to meet “adequate yearly progress” requirements of the federal law.			v
6. The plan provides convincing evidence that all pre-accreditation eligibility criteria are met for standards in which waivers have not been requested.	v		
7. Waivers have been requested for accrediting standards that are not being met, and the rationale for the waivers are clear and appropriate for the mission/purpose of the school.	v		