

# **Highlights of the Revised Standards of Quality 2003 General Assembly Session**

Virginia Department of Education  
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## Highlights of the 2003 Standards of Quality as Revised

### § 22.1-253.13:1. Standard 1. Basic skills, selected programs, and instructional personnel.

- A. The General Assembly and the Board of Education believe that the fundamental goal of the public schools of this Commonwealth must be to enable each student to develop the skills that are necessary for success in school and preparation for life, and find that the quality of education is dependent upon the provision of (i) the appropriate working environment, benefits, and salaries necessary to ensure the availability of high quality instructional personnel; (ii) *the appropriate learning environment designed to promote student achievement*; (iii) *quality instruction that enables each student to become a productive and educated citizen of Virginia and the United States of America*; and (iv) the adequate commitment of other resources. *In keeping with this goal, the General Assembly shall provide for the support of public education as set forth in Article VIII, Section 1 of the Constitution of Virginia.*
- B. The Board of Education shall establish educational objectives to implement the development of the skills that are necessary for success in school and for preparation for life in the years beyond. The current educational objectives, known as the Standards of Learning, shall not be construed to be regulations as defined in § 2.2-4001; however, the Board of Education may, from time to time, revise these educational objectives to maintain academic rigor.

In order to provide appropriate opportunity for input from the general public, teachers, and local school boards, the Board of Education shall conduct public hearings prior to establishing new educational objectives. Thirty days prior to conducting such hearings, the Board shall give written notice by mail of the date, time, and place of the hearings to all local school boards and any other persons requesting to be notified of the hearings and publish notice of its intention to revise these educational objectives in the Virginia Register of Regulations. Interested parties shall be given reasonable opportunity to be heard and present information prior to final adoption of any revisions of these educational objectives.

The Board shall seek to ensure that any revised educational objectives are consistent with the world's highest educational standards. These objectives shall include, but not be limited to, basic skills of communication, computation and critical reasoning including problem solving, decision making, and proficiency in the use of computers and related technology and the skills to manage personal finances and to make sound financial decisions, and the development of personal qualities such as self-esteem, sociability, self-management, integrity, and honesty.

With such funds as are made available for this purpose, the Board shall regularly review and revise the competencies for career and technical education programs to require the full integration of English, mathematics, science and social studies Standards of Learning. Career and technical education programs shall be aligned with industry and professional standard certifications, where they exist.

The Standards of Learning in all subject areas shall be subject to regular review and revision to maintain rigor and to reflect a balance between content knowledge and the application of knowledge in preparation for eventual employment and lifelong learning. By October 1, 2000, the Board of Education shall establish a regular schedule, in a manner it deems appropriate, for the review, and revision as may be necessary, of the Standards of Learning in all subject areas. Such review of each subject area shall occur at least once every seven years. Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit the Board from conducting such review and revision on a more frequent basis.

School boards shall implement these objectives or objectives specifically designed for their school divisions that are equivalent to or exceed the Board's requirements. Students shall be expected to achieve the educational objectives utilized by the school division at appropriate age or grade levels.

With such funds as are available for this purpose, the Board of Education shall prescribe assessment methods to determine the level of achievement of these objectives by all students. Such assessments shall evaluate knowledge, application of knowledge, critical thinking, and skills related to the Standards of Learning being assessed. The Board shall

- (i) In consultation with the chairpersons of the eight regional superintendents' study groups, establish a timetable for administering the Standards of Learning assessments to ensure genuine end-of-course and end-of-grade testing and
- (ii) With the assistance of independent testing experts, conduct a regular analysis and validation process for these assessments.

In prescribing such assessments, the Board shall provide local school boards the option of administering tests for United States History to 1877, United States History: 1877 to the Present, and Civics and Economics. The Board of Education shall make publicly available such assessments in a timely manner and as soon as practicable following the administration of such tests, so long as the release of such assessments does not compromise test security or deplete the bank of assessment questions necessary to construct subsequent tests.

By July 1, 1999, the Board shall develop and approve objectives for mathematics, at the middle and high school levels, for personal living and finances, which shall focus on money management skills for individuals and families. The personal living and finances objectives shall require instruction in those skills necessary to handle personal business and finances and shall include, but need not be limited to, the following: opening a bank account and how to judge the quality of a bank's services; balancing a checkbook; completing a loan application; the implications of an inheritance; the basics of personal insurance policies; consumer rights and responsibilities; dealing with salesmen and merchants; debt management, including retail and credit card debt; state and federal tax computation; local tax assessments; computation of interest rates by various mechanisms; understanding simple contracts; and how to contest an incorrect bill. These personal living and finances objectives shall not be required to be included in the Board's Standards of Learning, and shall be developed in a manner to ensure that instruction in the Standards of Learning shall not be de-

emphasized. The Board shall not be required to evaluate student achievement concerning such objectives in the Standards of Learning Assessment Tests required by § 22.1-253.13:3.

The Board of Education shall supplement the Standards of Learning for social studies to ensure the study of contributions to society of diverse people. For the purposes of this subsection, "diverse" shall include consideration of disability, ethnicity, race, and gender.

- C. Local school boards shall develop and implement a program of instruction for grades K through 12 that emphasizes reading, writing, speaking, mathematical concepts and computations, proficiency in the use of computers and related technology, and scientific concepts and processes; essential skills and concepts of citizenship, including knowledge of Virginia history and world and United States history, economics, government, foreign languages, international cultures, health and physical education, environmental issues and geography necessary for responsible participation in American society and in the international community; fine arts, which may include, but need not be limited to, music and art, and practical arts; knowledge and skills needed to qualify for further education and employment or, in the case of some handicapped children, to qualify for appropriate training; and development of the ability to apply such skills and knowledge in preparation for eventual employment and lifelong learning. School boards shall strive to employ licensed instructional personnel qualified in the relevant subject areas, including qualified teachers, licensed through the Board of Education's provisional licensure procedures, who have professional expertise in the relevant subject areas.

Local school boards shall also develop and implement programs of prevention, intervention, or remediation for students who are educationally at risk including, but not limited to, those whose scores are in the bottom national quartile on Virginia State Assessment Program Tests, ~~or~~ who fail to achieve a passing score on any Standards of Learning assessment in grades three, five, and eight *or who fail an end-of-course test required for the award of a verified unit of credit required for the student's graduation.*

Any student who does not pass ~~the literacy tests or~~ any of the Standards of Learning assessments in grades three, five, or eight shall be required to attend a summer school program or to participate in another form of remediation; any student who passes one or more, but not all, of the Standards of Learning assessments in grades three, five, or eight may be required to attend a remediation program. Division superintendents shall require such students to take special programs of prevention, intervention, or remediation, which may include attendance in public summer school programs, in accordance with clause (ii) of subsection A of § 22.1-254 and § 22.1-254.01. Remediation programs shall include, when applicable, a procedure for early identification of students who are at risk of failing the Standards of Learning assessments in grades three, five, or eight *or an end-of-course test required for the award of a verified unit of credit required for the student's graduation.* Such programs may also include summer school for all elementary and middle school grades and for all high school academic courses, as defined by regulations promulgated by the Board of Education, or other forms of remediation. Summer school remediation programs or other forms of remediation shall be chosen by the division superintendent to be appropriate to the academic needs of the student. Students who are required to attend such summer school

programs or to participate in another form of remediation shall not be charged tuition by the school division.

The requirement for remediation may, however, be satisfied by the student's attendance in a program of prevention, intervention or remediation which has been selected by his parent, in consultation with the division superintendent or his designee, and is either

- (i) Conducted by an accredited private school or
- (ii) A special program which has been determined to be comparable to the required public school remediation program by the division superintendent.

The costs of such private school remediation program or other special remediation program shall be borne by the student's parent.

The Board of Education shall establish standards for full funding of summer remedial programs that shall include, but not be limited to, the minimum number of instructional hours or the equivalent thereof required for full funding and an assessment system designed to evaluate program effectiveness. Based on the number of students attending and the Commonwealth's share of the per pupil instructional costs, state funds shall be provided for the full cost of summer and other remediation programs as set forth in the appropriation act, provided such programs comply with such standards as shall be established by the Board, pursuant to § 22.1-199.2.

To ensure consistency in program quality, each school board may establish a remediation program standards committee which may include, but need not be limited to, the superintendent or his designee, a teacher, a parent, and one representative of the community at large. The remediation program standards committee shall recommend the program components for the remediation programs and shall evaluate the success of the programs. Such program components may include pupil/teacher ratios, objectives, and time, site, and duration of the programs and may include a mechanism to ensure the smooth transition of students between remediation programs and regular instructional programs.

D. Local school boards shall also implement the following:

1. Programs in grades K through 3 ~~which~~ *that* emphasize developmentally appropriate learning to enhance success.
2. Programs based on prevention, intervention, or retrieval designed to increase the number of students who earn a high school diploma or general education development (GED) certificate. As provided in the appropriation act, state funding, in addition to basic aid, shall be allocated to support programs grounded in sound educational policy to reduce the number of students who drop out of school. From such funds as may be appropriated for this purpose, sufficient funds shall be provided to hold all local school divisions harmless by providing no-loss funding which maintains the level of each school division's funding as allocated for drop-out prevention programs on July 1, 1996, if the level of funding for such school division's drop-out prevention programs would be less than its level of

funding for such programs in fiscal year 1995. Effective on and after July 1, 1996, the Board of Education shall develop and implement a funding mechanism to ensure that no school board is penalized in its state funding for drop-out prevention programs for reducing the drop-out rate in its school division.

3. Career and technical education programs infused into the K through 12 curricula that promote knowledge of careers and all types of employment opportunities including, but not limited to, apprenticeships, the military, career education schools, and the teaching profession, and emphasize the advantages of completing school with marketable skills. School boards may include career exploration opportunities in the middle school grades.
4. Competency-based career and technical education programs, which integrate academic outcomes, career guidance and job-seeking skills for all secondary students including those identified as disabled that reflect employment opportunities, labor market needs, applied basic skills, job-seeking skills, and career guidance. Career guidance shall include employment counseling designed to furnish information on available employment opportunities to all students, including those identified as disabled, and placement services for students exiting school. Each school board shall develop and implement a plan to ensure compliance with the provisions of this subdivision. Such plan shall be developed with the input of area business and industry representatives and local community colleges and shall be submitted to the Superintendent of Public Instruction in accordance with the timelines established by federal law.
5. Academic and career and technical education for students who plan to continue their education beyond secondary school or who plan to enter employment.
6. Early identification of handicapped students and enrollment of such students in appropriate instructional programs consistent with state and federal law.
7. Early identification of gifted students and enrollment of such students in appropriately differentiated instructional programs.
8. 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.
9. Adult education programs for individuals functioning below the high school completion level. Such programs may be conducted by the school board as the primary agency or through a collaborative arrangement between the school board and other agencies.
10. A plan to make achievements for students who are educationally at risk a divisionwide priority which shall include procedures for measuring the progress of such students.
11. A plan to notify students and their parents of the availability of advanced placement classes, the International Baccalaureate program, and Academic Year Governor's School Programs, the qualifications for enrolling in such classes and programs, and the

availability of financial assistance to low-income and needy students to take the advanced placement and International Baccalaureate examinations.

*12. Identification of students with limited English proficiency and enrollment of such students in appropriate instructional programs.*

- E. Each local school board shall employ with state and local basic, special education, gifted, and career and technical education funds a minimum number of licensed, full-time equivalent instructional personnel for each 1,000 students in average daily membership (ADM) as set forth in the appropriation act. Calculations of kindergarten positions shall be based on full-day kindergarten programs. Beginning with the March 31 report of average daily membership, those school divisions offering half-day kindergarten shall adjust their average daily membership for kindergarten to reflect ~~eighty-five~~ 85 percent of the total kindergarten average daily memberships, as provided in the appropriation act.
- F. In addition to the positions supported by basic aid and in support of regular school year remedial programs, state funding, pursuant to the appropriation act, shall be provided to fund certain full-time equivalent instructional positions for each 1,000 students in grades K through 12 estimated to score in the bottom national quartile on Virginia State Assessment Program Tests and those who fail the literacy tests or Standards of Learning assessments for grades three, five, and eight prescribed by the Board. State funding for remedial programs provided pursuant to this subsection and the appropriation act may be used to support programs for educationally at-risk students as identified by the local school boards. The Board of Education shall establish criteria for identification of educationally at-risk students, which shall not be construed to be regulations as defined in § 2.2-4001; however, the Board of Education may, from time to time, revise these identification criteria. In order to provide appropriate opportunity for input from the general public, teachers, and local school boards, the Board of Education shall conduct public hearings prior to establishing or revising such identification criteria. Thirty days prior to conducting such hearings, the Board shall give written notice by mail of the date, time, and place of the hearings to all local school boards and any other persons requesting to be notified of the hearings and publish notice of its intention to establish or revise such identification criteria in the Virginia Register of Regulations. Interested parties shall be given reasonable opportunity to be heard and present information prior to final adoption of any such identification criteria or revisions thereto.

*F1. In addition to the positions supported by basic aid and those in support of regular school year remedial programs, state funding, pursuant to the appropriation act, shall be provided to support 10 full-time equivalent instructional positions for each 1,000 students identified as having limited English proficiency.*

- G. Licensed instructional personnel shall be assigned by each school board in a manner that produces divisionwide ratios of students in average daily membership to full-time equivalent teaching positions, excluding special education teachers, principals, assistant principals, counselors, and librarians, that are not greater than the following ratios:

- (i) ~~Twenty-four 24 to one 1~~ in kindergarten with no class being larger than ~~twenty-nine 29~~ students; if the average daily membership in any kindergarten class exceeds ~~twenty-four 24~~ pupils, a full-time teacher's aide shall be assigned to the class;
- (ii) ~~Twenty-four 24 to one 1~~ in grade one with no class being larger than ~~thirty 30~~ students;
- (iii) ~~Twenty-four 24 to one 1~~ in grades two and three with no class being larger than ~~thirty 30~~ students;
- (iv) ~~Twenty-five 25 to one 1~~ in grades four through six with no class being larger than ~~thirty-five 35~~ students; and
- (v) ~~Twenty-four 24 to one 1~~ in English classes in grades six through twelve.

Further, pursuant to the appropriation act, school boards:

1. May implement in kindergarten through third grade, within certain schools, lower ratios of students in average daily membership to full-time equivalent teaching positions by assigning instructional personnel in a manner that produces ratios of students in average daily membership to full-time equivalent teaching positions, excluding special education teachers, principals, assistant principals, counselors, and librarians, as follows:
  - (i) In schools having high concentrations of at-risk students, ~~eighteen 18 to one 1~~; and
  - (ii) In schools having moderate concentrations of at-risk students, ~~twenty 20 to one 1~~.

For the purposes of this subsection, "schools having high concentrations of at-risk students" and "schools having moderate concentrations of at-risk students" shall be as defined in the appropriation act.

2. Shall assign instructional personnel in a manner that produces schoolwide ratios of students in average daily memberships to full-time equivalent teaching positions of ~~twenty-five 25 to one 1~~ in middle schools and high schools.

School boards shall, however, annually, on or before January 1, report to the public the actual pupil/teacher ratios in elementary school classrooms by school for the current school year. Such actual ratios shall include only the teachers who teach the grade and class on a full-time basis and shall exclude resource personnel. School boards shall report pupil/teacher ratios which include resource teachers in the same annual report. Any classes funded through the voluntary kindergarten through third grade at-risk student/lower ratio program shall be identified as such classes. Any classes having waivers to exceed the requirements of this subsection shall also be identified. Schools shall be identified; however, the data shall be compiled in a manner to ensure the confidentiality of all teacher and pupil identities.

- H. Students enrolled in a public school on a less than full-time basis shall be counted in ~~average daily membership~~ (ADM) in the relevant school division. Students who are either
  - (i) Enrolled in a nonpublic school or
  - (ii) Receiving home instruction pursuant to § 22.1-254.1,



and who are enrolled in public school on a less than full-time basis in any mathematics, science, English, history, social science, career and technical education, fine arts, foreign language, or health education or physical education course shall be counted in the average ~~daily membership~~ (ADM) in the relevant school division on a pro rata basis as provided in the appropriation act. However, no such nonpublic or home school student shall be counted as more than one-half a student for purposes of such pro rata calculation. Such calculation shall not include enrollments of such students in any other public school courses.

**§ 22.1-253.13:3. Standard 3. Accreditation, other standards and evaluation.**

- A. The General Assembly recognizes the need for the Board of Education to prescribe requirements to ensure that student progress is measured and that school boards and school personnel are accountable.
- B. The Board of Education shall promulgate regulations establishing standards for accreditation pursuant to the Administrative Process Act (§ 2.2-4000 et seq.) which shall include, but not be limited to, student outcome measures, requirements and guidelines for instructional programs and for the integration of educational technology into such instructional programs, administrative and instructional staffing levels and positions, including staff positions for supporting educational technology, pupil personnel services, special education program standards, auxiliary education programs such as library and media services, course and credit requirements for graduation from high school, community relations, and the philosophy, goals, and objectives of public education in Virginia.

In establishing course and credit requirements for a high school diploma, the Board shall:

1. Provide for the selection of integrated learning courses meeting the Standards of Learning and approved by the Board to satisfy graduation credit requirements which shall include Standards of Learning testing, as necessary;
2. Establish the requirements for a standard or advanced studies high school diploma that shall include one credit in fine, performing, or practical arts and one credit in United States and Virginia history. The requirements for a standard high school diploma shall, however, include at least two sequential electives chosen from a concentration of courses selected from a variety of options that may be planned to ensure the completion of a focused sequence of elective courses. Students may take such focused sequence of elective courses in consecutive years or any two years of high school. Such focused sequence of elective courses shall provide a foundation for further education or training or preparation for employment and shall be developed by the school division, consistent with Board of Education guidelines and as approved by the local school board;
3. Provide, in the requirements for the verified units of credit stipulated for obtaining the standard or advanced studies diploma, that students completing elective classes into which the Standards of Learning for any required course have been integrated may take the relevant Standards of Learning test for the relevant required course and receive, upon achieving a satisfactory score on the specific Standards of Learning assessment, a verified unit of credit for such elective class that shall be deemed to satisfy the Board's requirement for verified credit for the required course;
4. Establish a procedure to facilitate the acceleration of students that allows qualified students, with the recommendation of the division superintendent, without completing the 140-hour class, to obtain credit for such class upon demonstration of mastery of the course content and objectives. Having received credit for the course, the student shall be permitted to sit for the relevant Standards of Learning assessment and, upon receiving a

passing score, shall earn a verified credit. Nothing in this section shall preclude relevant school division personnel from enforcing compulsory attendance in public schools; and

5. Authorize, as an elective in grades nine through twelve with appropriate credits toward graduation, a comparative religion class that focuses on the basic tenets, history, and religious observances and rites of world religions.

In addition, the Board may provide, in the requirements for the verified units of credit stipulated for obtaining the standard or advanced studies diploma, that appropriate and relevant industry certification or state licensure examinations may be substituted for correlated Standards of Learning examinations. The Board may also provide that students completing career and technical education programs designed to enable such students to pass such industry certification examinations or state licensure examinations may be awarded, upon obtaining satisfactory scores on such industry certification or licensure examinations, the appropriate verified units of credit for one or more career and technical education classes into which relevant Standards of Learning for various classes taught at the same level have been integrated. Such industry certification and state licensure examinations may cover relevant Standards of Learning for various required classes and may, at the discretion of the Board, address some Standards of Learning for several required classes.

In the exercise of its authority to recognize exemplary academic performance by providing for diploma seals, the Board shall establish (i) by July 1, 2000, criteria for awarding a diploma seal for advanced mathematics and technology for the standard and advanced studies diplomas. The Board shall consider including criteria for

- (i*a*) Technology courses;
- (i*b*) Technical writing, reading, and oral communication skills;
- (i*c*) Technology-related practical arts training; and
- (i*d*) Industry, professional, and trade association national certifications; *and*

*(ii) by July 1, 2003, criteria for awarding a diploma seal for excellence in civics education and understanding of our state and federal constitutions and the democratic model of government for the standard and advanced studies diplomas. The Board shall consider including criteria for (a) successful completion of history, government, and civics courses, including courses that incorporate character education; (b) voluntary participation in community service or extracurricular activities; and (c) related requirements as it deems appropriate.*

The Board shall include in the student outcome measures which are required by the Standards for Accreditation, end-of-course or end-of-grade tests for various grade levels and classes, as determined by the Board, in accordance with the Standards of Learning. These Standards of Learning assessments shall include, but need not be limited to, end-of-course or end-of-grade tests for English, mathematics, science, and social studies.

In revising the standards for accreditation, the Board shall seek to set pupil/teacher ratios for educable mentally retarded (EMR) pupils that do not exceed the pupil/teacher ratios for self-

contained classes for pupils with specific learning disabilities. The Board shall review annually the accreditation status of all schools in the Commonwealth.

The Board's regulations on accrediting schools shall include in the minimum staffing requirements, according to the type of school and student enrollment, requirements for employment of

- (a) Principals in elementary schools, one half-time to 299 students, one full-time at 300 students; principals in middle schools, one full-time, to be employed on a 12-month basis; principals in high schools, one full-time, to be employed on a 12-month basis;
- (b) Assistant principals in elementary schools, one half-time at 600 students, one full-time at 900 students; assistant principals in middle schools, one full-time for each 600 students; assistant principals in high schools, one full-time for each 600 students;
- (c) Librarians in elementary schools, one part-time to 299 students, one full-time at 300 students; librarians in middle schools, one-half time to 299 students, one full-time at 300 students, two full-time at 1000 students; librarians in high schools, one half-time to 299 students, one full-time at 300 students, two full-time at 1000 students;
- (d) Guidance counselors in elementary schools, one hour per day per 100 students, one full-time at 500 students, one hour per day additional time per 100 students or major fraction thereof; guidance counselors in middle schools, one period per 80 students, one full-time at 400 students, one additional period per 80 students or major fraction thereof; guidance counselors in high schools, one period per 70 students, one full-time at 350 students, one additional period per 70 students or major fraction thereof;
- (e) Clerical personnel in elementary schools, part-time to 299 students, one full-time at 300 students; clerical personnel in middle schools, one full-time and one additional full-time for each 600 students beyond 200 students and one full-time for the library at 750 students; clerical personnel in high schools, one full-time and one additional full-time for each 600 students beyond 200 students and one full-time for the library at 750 students; and
- (f) Reading specialists in elementary schools, one full-time in each elementary school at the discretion of the local school board.

A combined school, such as kindergarten through twelve, shall meet at all grade levels the staffing requirements for the highest grade level in that school; this requirement shall apply to all staff, except for guidance counselors, and shall be based on the school's total enrollment; guidance counselor staff requirements shall, however, be based on the enrollment at the various school organization levels, i.e., elementary, middle, or high school. The Board of Education may grant waivers from these staffing levels upon request from local school boards seeking to implement experimental or innovative programs that are not consistent with these staffing levels.

- C. The Board shall also establish requirements for licensure of teachers, principals, supervisors and other professional staff and determine eligibility for appointment as a local division superintendent.

- D. The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall develop and the Board of Education shall approve criteria for determining and recognizing educational performance in the Commonwealth's public school divisions and schools. Such criteria, when approved, shall become an integral part of the accreditation process and shall include student outcome measurements. One year following the approval by the Board of such criteria, the Superintendent of Public Instruction shall annually identify to the Board those school divisions and schools that exceed or do not meet the approved criteria. Such identification shall include an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of public education programs in the various school divisions in Virginia and recommendations to the General Assembly for further enhancing student learning uniformly across the Commonwealth. In recognizing educational performance in the school divisions, the Board shall include consideration of special school division accomplishments, such as numbers of dual enrollments and students in Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses, and participation in academic year Governor's Schools.

The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall assist local school boards in the implementation of action plans for increasing educational performance in those school divisions and schools that are identified as not meeting the approved criteria. The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall monitor the implementation of and report to the Board of Education on the effectiveness of the corrective actions taken to improve the educational performance in such school divisions and schools.

The Department of Education shall conduct technical assistance visits for local school divisions. Schools accredited with a warning shall be given priority for such assistance, which shall include an analysis of relevant school data and the development and implementation of improvement plans to assist such schools in improving their accreditation status.

- E. In order to assess the educational progress of students, the Board of Education shall also
- (i) Develop appropriate assessments, which may include criterion-referenced tests and alternative assessment instruments which may be used by classroom teachers and
  - (ii) Prescribe and provide measures, which may include nationally normed tests, ~~to be designated as the Virginia State Assessment Program, which shall~~ be used to identify students who score in the bottom quartile at selected grade levels.

The Board of Education is authorized to pursue all available civil remedies for breaches in test security. Notwithstanding any other provision of state law, no test or examination authorized by this section, including the Standards of Learning assessments, shall be released or required to be released as minimum competency tests, if, in the judgment of the Board, such release would breach the security of such test or examination or deplete the bank of questions necessary to construct future secure tests.

With such funds as may be appropriated, the Board of Education may provide, through an agreement with vendors having the technical capacity and expertise to provide computerized tests and assessments, and test construction, analysis, and security, for

- (i) Web-based computerized tests and assessments for the evaluation of student progress during and after remediation and
- (ii) The development of a remediation item bank directly related to the Standards of Learning.

E1. The Department of Education shall make available and maintain a website, either separately or through an existing website utilized by the Department of Education, enabling public elementary, middle and high school educators to submit recommendations for improvements relating to the Standards of Learning, when under review by the Board according to its established schedule, and related assessments required by the Standards of Quality pursuant to Chapter 13.2 (§ 22.1-253.13:1 et seq.) of this title. Such website shall facilitate the submission of recommendations by educators.

F. Each local school board shall maintain schools that meet the standards of accreditation as prescribed by the Board of Education. The accreditation status of all schools in each local school division shall be reviewed annually in public session. Within the time specified by the Board of Education, each school board shall submit corrective action plans for any schools within its school division that have been designated as not meeting the criteria for determining effectiveness as approved by the Board.

G. Each local school board shall also provide teachers and principals with

- (i) Periodic in-service training in preparing tests and other assessment measures and
- (ii) Methods for assessing the progress of individual students, including Standards of Learning assessment materials or other criterion-referenced tests that match locally developed objectives.

H. In order to assess the educational progress of students as individuals and as groups, each local school board shall require the administration of appropriate assessments, which may include criterion-referenced tests, teacher-made tests and alternative assessment instruments and shall include ~~the Virginia State Assessment Program, the Virginia State Literacy Testing Program,~~ the Standards of Learning Assessments, and the National Assessment of Educational Progress state-by-state assessment. Each school board shall analyze and report annually, in compliance with any criteria that may be established by the Board of Education, the results from the ~~Virginia State Assessment Program~~ *Stanford Achievement Test Series, Ninth Edition (Stanford Nine) assessment, if administered,* and the Standards of Learning Assessments to the public.

*The Board of Education shall not require administration of the Stanford Achievement Test Series, Ninth Edition (Stanford Nine) assessment, except as may be selected to facilitate compliance with the requirements for home instruction pursuant to § 22.1-254.1*

I. To assist school divisions in implementing those programs and practices that will enhance pupil academic performance and improve family and community involvement in the public schools, and from such funds as may be appropriated for such purpose, there shall be

established within the Department of Education a unit to conduct evaluative studies and to provide the resources and technical assistance to increase the capacity of school divisions to deliver quality instruction. Such unit shall identify and analyze effective instructional programs and practices and professional development initiatives; evaluate the success of programs encouraging parental and family involvement; assess changes in student outcomes prompted by family involvement; and collect and disseminate among school divisions information regarding effective instructional programs and practices, initiatives promoting family and community involvement, and potential funding and support sources. Such unit may also provide resources supporting professional development for administrators and teachers. In providing such information, resources, and other services to school divisions, the unit shall give priority to those divisions demonstrating a less than 70 percent passing rate on

- (i) All three Literacy Passport tests by students taking these tests for the first time or
- (ii) The Standards of Learning assessment tests.

**2. That nothing herein shall be construed to restrict or change the authority and discretion of the Board of Education for establishing school accreditation standards and the requirements for obtaining a diploma or to require the Board to authorize the award of verified units of credit for any specific industry certification or state licensure examination.**

**§ 22.1-253.13:4. Standard 4. Diplomas and certificates; class rankings.**

A. Each local school board shall award diplomas to all secondary school students, including students who transfer from nonpublic schools or from home instruction, who earn the units of credit prescribed by the Board of Education, pass the prescribed tests, and meet such other requirements as may be prescribed by the local school board and approved by the Board of Education. Provisions shall be made for students who transfer between secondary schools and from nonpublic schools or from home instruction as outlined in the standards for accreditation. Further, reasonable accommodation to meet the requirements for diplomas shall be provided for otherwise qualified students with disabilities as needed.

In addition, each local school board may devise, vis-a-vis the award of diplomas to secondary school students, a mechanism for calculating class rankings that takes into consideration whether the student has taken a required class more than one time and has had any prior earned grade for such required class expunged.

B. Students identified as disabled who complete the requirements of their individualized education programs shall be awarded special diplomas by local school boards.

C. Students who have completed a prescribed course of study as defined by the local school board shall be awarded certificates by local school boards if they do not qualify for diplomas.

D. The Board of Education shall develop criteria for recognizing exemplary performance in career and technical education programs by students who have completed the requirements for a standard or advanced studies diploma and shall award seals on the diplomas of students meeting such criteria.

*E. By September 1, 2003, the Board shall establish, by regulation, requirements for the award of a general achievement diploma for those persons who have (i) achieved a passing score on the GED examination; (ii) successfully completed an education and training program designated by the Board of Education; and (iii) satisfied other requirements as may be established by the Board for the award of such diploma.*

**That the Board of Education shall promulgate regulations to implement the provisions of this act to be effective within 280 days of its enactment.**