



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF PLANNING, EVALUATION AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT

ASSISTANT SECRETARY

June 29, 2006

Dr. Patricia I. Wright  
Acting Superintendent of Public Instruction  
State Department of Education  
101 North 14th Street  
Richmond, Virginia 23218-2120

Dear Dr. Wright,

This letter is in response to Virginia's proposal for an alternative rigorous secondary school program of study for the new Academic Competitiveness Grant (ACG) program for the 2006-07 school year.

On May 2, 2006, Secretary Spellings sent a letter outlining four options that she has recognized as rigorous secondary school programs of study for purposes of student eligibility for the ACG program. States were given until June 1, 2006, to propose additional options.

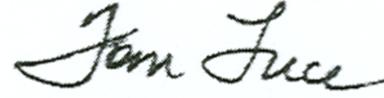
The Department is recognizing the proposal from Virginia for the 2006-07 school year. In addition, students from your State will be eligible for the ACG program through the options previously outlined in the Secretary's letter. The options for students in your State for the 2006-07 school year are identified in the attachment to this letter. Also, States have an opportunity to submit proposals for additional rigorous programs of study for the 2007-08 school year. Proposals for this purpose should be sent to the Department by November 1, 2006, pursuant to the details provided in the earlier letter.

There is no further action needed from your State Educational Agency in order for students from your State to become eligible for funding under the ACG program. On or around July 1, 2006, we will begin to notify potentially eligible students by email or letter that they may be eligible for an ACG. Students will be directed to submit additional information to the Department demonstrating their eligibility. College financial aid offices will be notified and, after verifying the student's eligibility, will award and disburse the ACG.

We look forward to a smooth implementation of this exciting new grant program, and we appreciate your support in continuing to communicate with students, parents and colleges and universities about this program.

Should you have any further questions about the ACG program, please do not hesitate to contact us at the Department by emailing [ACGrants@ed.gov](mailto:ACGrants@ed.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Luce". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "T" and "L".

Tom Luce

cc: State Higher Education Executive Officer  
Governor

Attachment

## Virginia

The options for eligibility for the 2006-07 school year for a student from Virginia are:

- ***The Virginia Advanced Studies Diploma***
- ***The State Scholars Initiative requirements.*** This program, currently offered in Virginia and twenty-one other States and patterned after the recommendations of the National Commission on Excellence in Education, requires at least:
  - Four years of English;
  - Three years of math (including Algebra I, Algebra II and Geometry);
  - Three years of lab science (biology, chemistry, physics);
  - Three-and-one-half years of social studies; and
  - Two years of a language other than English.
- ***A set of courses similar to the State Scholars Initiative.*** This program of study requires passing grades in the following:
  - Four years of English;
  - Three years of Math (including Algebra I and a higher level course such as Algebra II, Geometry, or Data Analysis and Statistics);
  - Three years of science (including at least two courses from biology, chemistry or physics);
  - Three years of social studies; and
  - One year of a foreign language.
- ***Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) courses and test scores.*** This program requires a minimum of two Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) courses in high school and a minimum passing score on the exams for those classes. Students must score 3 or higher on AP exams and 4 or higher on IB exams.
- ***Virginia Coursework Requirements.*** This program requires:
  - Four years of English;
  - Three years of mathematics (including Algebra I and a higher level course such as Algebra II, Geometry, or Data Analysis and Statistics);
  - Three years of science (including at least two courses from biology, chemistry or physics);
  - Three years of social studies; and
  - An industry certification, state professional license, or successful completion of an occupational competency exam.