



**REGULATIONS
ESTABLISHING STANDARDS
FOR ACCREDITING PUBLIC SCHOOLS
IN VIRGINIA
8 VAC 20-131-10 et. seq.**

Adopted by the Board of Education
July 28, 2000

NOTE TO THE READER

These regulations were adopted by the Board of Education on July 28. It is anticipated that they will go into effect on September 28 following a 30-day review period that begins with the publication of the regulations in the *Virginia Register* on August 28. Questions regarding the regulations may be directed to the Office of Accreditation by phone to (804) 786-9421 or by e-mail to cfinley@pen.k12.va.us.

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8 VAC 20-131-10. Purpose

The foremost purpose of public education in Virginia is to provide children with a quality education giving them opportunities to meet their fullest potential in life. The standards for the accreditation of public schools in Virginia are designed to ensure that an effective educational program is established and maintained in Virginia's public schools. The mission of the public education system is to educate students in the essential academic knowledge and skills in order that they may be equipped for citizenship, work, and a private life that is informed and free. The accreditation standards:

1. Provide an essential foundation of educational programs of high quality in all schools for all students.
2. Encourage continuous appraisal and improvement of the school program for the purpose of raising student achievement.
3. Foster public confidence.
4. Assure recognition of Virginia's public schools by other institutions of learning.
5. Establish a means of determining the effectiveness of schools.

Section 22.1-253.13:3 B of the Code of Virginia requires the Virginia Board of Education (hereinafter "Board") promulgate regulations establishing standards for accreditation.

The statutory authority for these regulations is delineated in § 22.1-19 of the Code of Virginia which includes the requirement that the Board shall provide for the accreditation of public elementary and secondary schools in accordance with regulations prescribed by it.

PART II

PHILOSOPHY, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES

8 VAC 20-131-20. Philosophy, goals, and objectives.

A. Each school shall have a current philosophy, goals, and objectives that shall serve as the basis for all policies and practices and shall be developed using the following criteria:

1. The philosophy, goals, and objectives shall be developed with the advice of professional and lay people who represent the various populations served by the school and in consideration of the needs of the community and shall serve as a basis for the creation and review of the biennial school plan.
2. The school's philosophy, goals and objectives shall be consistent with the Standards of Quality.
3. The goals and objectives shall (i) be written in plain language so as to be understandable to noneducators, including parents; (ii) to the extent possible, be stated in measurable terms; and (iii) consist primarily of measurable objectives to raise student and school achievement in the core academic areas of the Standards of Learning (SOL), to improve student and staff attendance, to reduce student drop-out rates, and to increase the quality of instruction through professional staff development and licensure.
4. The school staff and community representatives shall review annually the extent to which the school has met its prior goals and objectives, analyze the school's student performance data including data by grade level or academic department as necessary, and report these outcomes to the division superintendent and the community in accordance with local school board policy. This report shall be in addition to the school report card required by 8 VAC 20-131-270.B. of these regulations.

B. Copies of the school's philosophy, goals and objectives shall be available upon request.

PART III

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT EXPECTATIONS

8 VAC 20-131-30. Student achievement expectations.

A. Each student should learn the relevant grade level/course subject matter before promotion to the next grade. The division superintendent shall certify to the Department of Education that the division's promotion/retention policy does not exclude students from membership in a grade, or participation in a course, in which SOL tests are to be administered.

B. In kindergarten through eighth grade, where SOL tests are administered, each student shall be expected to take the SOL tests. Schools shall use the SOL test results in kindergarten through eighth grade as part of a set of multiple criteria for determining the promotion or retention of students. Students shall not be required to retake the SOL tests unless they are retained in grade and have not previously passed the related SOL test(s), or they participate in a remediation recovery program established by the Board in English (Reading, Literature, and Research) or mathematics or both.

C. In kindergarten through grade eight, students may participate in a remediation recovery program as established by the Board in English (Reading, Literature and Research) and mathematics or both. In grades nine through twelve, the remediation recovery program shall include all retakes of end-of course SOL mathematics tests only. However, students in the ninth grade who are participants in a remediation recovery program may be retested on the eighth grade English (Reading, Literature, and Research) and mathematics SOL tests.

D. The Board recommends that students in kindergarten through grade eight not be required to attend summer school or weekend remediation classes solely based on failing a SOL test in science or history/social science.

E. Each student in middle and secondary schools shall take all applicable end-of-course SOL tests following course instruction. Students who achieve a passing score on an end-of-course SOL test shall be awarded a verified unit of credit in that course in accordance with the provisions of 8 VAC 20-131-110.B. Students may earn verified units of credit in any courses for which end-of-course SOL tests are available. Middle and secondary schools may consider the student's end-of-course SOL test score in determining the student's final course grade. However, no student who has failed an end-of-course SOL test but passed the related course, shall be prevented from taking any other course in a content area and from taking the applicable end-of-course SOL test. The Board may approve other additional tests to verify student achievement in accordance with guidelines adopted for verified units of credit described in 8 VAC 20-131-110.B.

8 VAC 20-131-30. Student achievement expectations. *(continued)*

F. Participation in SOL testing by students with disabilities will be prescribed by provisions of their Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Beginning with the school year 2000-01, students with disabilities for whom participation in an alternate assessment is prescribed in their IEP shall demonstrate proficiency on that assessment.

G. Participation in SOL testing by students identified as limited English proficient (LEP) shall be guided by a school-based committee convened to make such determinations. In kindergarten through eighth grade, limited English proficient students may be granted a one-time exemption from SOL testing in each of the four core areas.

8 VAC 20-131-40. Literacy Passport Tests.

Students who were in the eighth grade or above in the 1998-99 school year shall be required to pass the Literacy Passport Tests in order to receive a Standard or Advanced Studies Diploma from a Virginia public school.

In order to receive a graded status, such students must pass the Literacy Passport Tests, except for students with disabilities who progress according to the goals of their Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Students who are not eligible for graded status shall be enrolled in appropriate programs leading to passing of the Literacy Passport Tests and one or more of the following:

1. High school diploma;
2. General Educational Development (GED) credential;
3. Certificate of Program Completion; and
4. Job entry skills.

8 VAC 20-131-50. Requirements for graduation.

A. The requirements for a student to earn a diploma from a Virginia high school shall be those in effect when that student enters the ninth grade for the first time. Students may be awarded a diploma or certificate upon graduation from a Virginia high school.

When students below the ninth grade successfully complete courses offered for credit in grades nine through twelve, credit shall be counted toward meeting the standard units required for graduation provided the courses meet SOL content requirements or are equivalent in content and academic rigor as those courses offered

8 VAC 20-131-50. Requirements for graduation. *(continued)*

at the secondary level. To earn a verified unit of credit for these courses, students must meet the requirements of 8 VAC 20-131-110.B.

The following requirements shall be the only requirements for a diploma, unless a local school board has prescribed additional requirements which have been approved by the Board. All additional requirements prescribed by local school boards, and in effect as of June 30, 1997, are approved to continue those requirements pending further action by the Board. The requirements for Certificates of Program Completion are developed by local school boards in accordance with the Standards of Quality.

B. Requirements for a Standard Diploma.

1. Beginning with the ninth grade class of 1998-99, students shall earn the standard units of credit outlined in subdivision 4 of this subsection.
2. During a transition period applicable only to the ninth grade classes of 2000-01, 2001-02, and 2002-03, students shall earn the standard units of credit described in subdivision 4 of this subsection and the following number of verified units of credit (see 8 VAC 20-131-110):
 - a. English-two;
 - b. Four additional verified units of credit of the student's own choosing.
3. Beginning with the ninth grade classes of 2003-04 and beyond, students shall earn the required standard and verified units of credit described in subdivision 4 of this subsection.
4. Credits required for graduation with a Standard Diploma.

Discipline Area	Standard Units of Credit Required	Verified Credits Required
English	4	2
Mathematics ¹	3	1
Laboratory Science ²	3	1
History and Social Sciences ³	3	1
Health and Physical Education	2	
Fine Arts or Practical Arts	1	
Electives ⁴	6	
Student Selected Test ⁵		1
Total	22	6

¹Courses completed to satisfy this requirement shall be at or above the level of algebra and shall include at least two course selections from among: Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, or other mathematics courses above the level of algebra and geometry. The Board may approve additional courses to satisfy this requirement.

²Courses completed to satisfy this requirement shall include course selections from at least two different science disciplines: earth sciences, biology, chemistry, or physics. The Board may approve additional courses to satisfy this requirement.

³Courses completed to satisfy this requirement shall include U.S. and Virginia History, U.S. and Virginia Government, and one world history/geography course. Courses which satisfy the world history/geography requirement are: (i) World History, (ii) World Geography, (iii) World History and

8 VAC 20-131-50. Requirements for graduation. (continued)

Geography Part I, (iv) World History and Geography, or (v) a semester course of World History Part I and a semester course of World Geography. The Board may approve additional courses to satisfy this requirement.

⁴Beginning with the graduating class of 2003, courses to satisfy this requirement shall include at least two sequential electives as required by the Standards of Quality

⁵A student may utilize additional tests for earning verified credit in computer science, technology, or other areas as prescribed by the Board in 8 VAC 20-131-110.B.

Students completing the requirements for the Standard Diploma may be eligible to receive an honor deemed appropriate by the local school board as described in subsection F of this section.

C. Requirements for an Advanced Studies Diploma.

1. Beginning with the ninth grade class of 1998-99, students shall earn the standard units of credit outlined in subdivision 2 of this subsection. Beginning with the ninth grade class of 2000-01, students shall earn the standard and verified units of credit outlined in subdivision 2 of this subsection.

2. Credits required for graduation with an Advanced Studies Diploma.

Discipline Area	Standard Units of Credit Required	Verified Credits Required
English	4	2
Mathematics ¹	4	2
Laboratory Science ²	4	2
History and Social Sciences ³	4	2
Foreign Language ⁴	3	
Health and Physical Education	2	
Fine Arts or Practical Arts	1	
Electives	2	
Student Selected Test ⁵		1
Total	24	9

¹Courses completed to satisfy this requirement shall be at or above the level of algebra and shall include at least three different course selections from among: Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, or other mathematics courses above the level of Algebra II. The Board may approve additional courses to satisfy this requirement.

²Courses completed to satisfy this requirement shall include course selections from at least three different science disciplines from among: earth sciences, biology, chemistry, or physics or completion of the sequence of science courses required for the International Baccalaureate Diploma. The Board may approve additional courses to satisfy this requirement.

³Courses completed to satisfy this requirement shall include U.S. and Virginia History, U.S. and Virginia Government, and two world history/geography courses. Acceptable courses to satisfy the world history/geography requirements include: (i) World History and World Geography; (ii) World History and Geography Part I, and World History and Geography Part II; or (iii) a semester course of World Geography, a semester course of World History Part I, and a year-long course of World History Part II. The Board may approve additional courses to satisfy this requirement.

⁴ Three years of one language or two years each of two languages.

⁵ A student may utilize additional assessments for earning verified credit in computer science, technology, or other areas as prescribed by the Board in 8 VAC 20-131-110.B.

8 VAC 20-131-50. Requirements for graduation. *(continued)*

Students completing the requirements for the Advanced Studies Diploma may be eligible to receive an honor deemed appropriate by the local school board as described in subsection F of this section.

D. Requirements for the Modified Standard Diploma.

1. The Modified Standard Diploma program is intended for certain students at the secondary level who have a disability and are unlikely to meet the credit requirements for a Standard Diploma. Eligibility and participation in the Modified Standard Diploma program shall be determined by the student's Individual Education Program (IEP) team and the student, where appropriate, at any point after the student's eighth grade year.
2. The school must secure the informed written consent of the parent/guardian and the student to choose this diploma program after review of the student's academic history and the full disclosure of the student's options.
3. The student who has chosen to pursue a Modified Standard Diploma shall also be allowed to pursue the Standard or Advanced Studies Diploma at any time throughout that student's high school career. The student must not be excluded from courses and tests required to earn a Standard or Advanced Studies Diploma.
4. Beginning with the ninth grade class of 2000-01, students pursuing the Modified Standard Diploma shall pass literacy and numeracy competency assessments prescribed by the Board.
5. Credits required for graduation with a Modified Standard Diploma.

Discipline Area	Standard Units of Credit Required
English	4
Mathematics ¹	3
Science ²	2
History and Social Science ³	2
Health and Physical Education	2
Fine or Practical Arts	1
Electives ⁴	6
Total	20

¹Courses completed to satisfy this requirement shall include content from among applications of algebra, geometry, personal finance, and statistics in courses that have been approved by the Board.

²Courses completed shall include content from at least two of the following: applications of earth science, biology, chemistry, or physics in courses approved by the Board.

³Courses completed to satisfy this requirement shall include one unit of credit in U.S. and Virginia History and one unit of credit in U.S. and Virginia Government in courses approved by the Board.

⁴Beginning with the graduating class of 2003, courses to satisfy this requirement shall include at least two sequential electives in the same manner required for the Standard Diploma.

6. The student must meet any additional criteria established by the Board.

8 VAC 20-131-50. Requirements for graduation. *(continued)*

E. In accordance with the requirements of the Standards of Quality, students with disabilities who complete the requirements of their Individualized Education Program (IEP) and do not meet the requirements for other diplomas shall be awarded Special Diplomas.

F. In accordance with the requirements of the Standards of Quality, students who complete prescribed programs of studies defined by the local school board but do not qualify for diplomas shall be awarded Certificates of Program Completion.

G. In accordance with the provisions of the compulsory attendance law and 8 VAC 20-360-10, et. seq., *Regulations Governing General Education Development Certificates*, students who do not qualify for diplomas may earn a high school equivalency credential.

H. At a student's request, the local school board shall communicate or otherwise make known to institutions of higher education, potential employers, or other applicable third parties, in a manner that the local school board deems appropriate, that a student has attained the state's academic expectations by earning a Virginia diploma and that the value of such a diploma is not affected in any way by the accreditation status of the student's school.

I. Awards for exemplary student performance. Students who demonstrate academic excellence and/or outstanding achievement may be eligible for one of the following awards:

1. Students who complete the requirements for an Advanced Studies Diploma with an average grade of "B" or better, and successfully complete at least one advanced placement course (AP), international baccalaureate (IB) or one college-level course for credit, will receive the Governor's Seal on the diploma.
2. Students who complete the requirements for a Standard Diploma with an average grade of "A" will receive a Board of Education Seal on the diploma.
3. The Board of Education's Career and Technical Education Seal will be awarded to students who earn a Standard or Advanced Studies Diploma and complete a prescribed sequence of courses in a career and technical education concentration or specialization that they choose and maintain a "B" or better average in those courses; or (i) pass an examination in a career and technical education concentration or specialization that confers certification from a recognized industry, trade or professional association or (ii) acquire a professional license in that career and technical education field from the Commonwealth of Virginia.
4. The Board of Education's Seal of Advanced Mathematics and Technology will be awarded to students who earn either a Standard or Advanced Studies Diploma and (i) satisfy all of the mathematics requirements for the Advanced Studies Diploma (four units of credit including Algebra II; two verified units of credit) with a "B" average or better; and (ii) either (a) pass an examination in a

8 VAC 20-131-50. Requirements for graduation. *(continued)*

career and technical education field that confers certification from a recognized industry, or trade or professional association; (b) acquire a professional license in a career and technical education field from the Commonwealth of Virginia; or (c) pass an examination approved by the Board that confers college-level credit in a technology or computer science area.

5. Students may receive other seals or awards for exceptional academic, career and technical, citizenship, or other exemplary performance in accordance with criteria defined by the local school board.

J. Students completing graduation requirements in a summer school accredited under this chapter shall be eligible for a diploma. The last school attended by the student during the regular session shall award the diploma unless otherwise agreed upon by the principals of the two schools.

K. Students who complete advanced placement, college-level, or courses required for an International Baccalaureate Diploma shall be deemed to have completed the requirements for graduation under these standards provided they have earned the standard units of credit and earned verified units of credit in accordance with the requirements of subsections B and C of this section.

L. Students shall be counseled annually regarding the opportunities for using substitute tests for earning verified credits as provided in 8 VAC 20-131-110.B. and the consequences of failing to fulfill the obligations to complete the requirements for verified units of credit.

8 VAC 20-131-60. Transfer of credits.

A. For the purposes of this section, the term “beginning” means within the first 20 hours of instruction per course. The term “during” means after the first 20 hours of instruction per course.

B. A secondary school shall accept credits received from other accredited secondary schools, including schools accredited through the Virginia Council for Private Education (VCPE). The Board will maintain contact with the VCPE to review its accrediting procedures and policies on a periodic basis as part of its policies under this section.

Students transferring into a Virginia public school shall be required to meet the requirements prescribed in 8 VAC 20-131-50 to receive a Standard, Advanced Studies, or Modified Standard Diploma, except as provided in subsection F of this section. To receive a Special Diploma or Certificate of Program Completion, a student must meet the requirements prescribed by the Standards of Quality.

8 VAC 20-131-60. Transfer of credits. *(continued)*

C. Standard or verified units of credit earned by a student in a Virginia public school shall be transferable, without limitation, regardless of the accreditation status of the Virginia public school in which the credits were earned.

D. Records of transferred students shall be sent directly to the school receiving the student, upon request of the receiving school, in accordance with the provisions of the 8 VAC 20-150-10 et seq., *Management of the Student's Scholastic Records in Virginia*

E. The academic record of a student transferring into Virginia public schools from other than a Virginia public school, shall be evaluated to determine the number of standard units of credit that have been earned, including units of credit from schools outside the United States, and the number of verified units of credit needed to graduate in accordance with subsection F of this section. Virginia public schools shall accept standard and verified units of credit from other Virginia public schools and state-operated programs. Standard units of credit also shall be accepted for courses satisfactorily completed in accredited colleges and universities when prior written approval of the principal has been granted or the student has been given credit by the previous school attended.

Students transferring above the tenth grade from schools or other education programs that do not require or give credit for health and physical education shall not be required to take these courses to meet graduation requirements.

F. Students entering a Virginia public high school for the first time after the tenth grade shall be encouraged to earn as many credits as possible toward the graduation requirements prescribed in 8 VAC 20-131-50. However, no such student shall earn fewer than the following number of verified units, nor shall such student be required to take SOL tests or other additional tests defined in 8 VAC 20-131-110.B. for verified units of credit in courses previously completed at another school or program of study, unless necessary to meet the requirements listed in subdivisions 1 and 2 of this subsection:

1. For a Standard Diploma:

a. Students entering a Virginia high school for the first time during the ninth grade or at the beginning of the tenth grade shall earn credits as prescribed in 8 VAC 20-131-50;

b. Students entering a Virginia high school for the first time during the tenth grade or at the beginning of the eleventh grade shall earn a minimum of four verified units of credit: one each in English, mathematics, history, and science; except that during the transition period 2000-01 through 2002-03, students shall earn one in English and three of the student's own choosing; and

8 VAC 30-131-60. Transfer of credits. *(continued)*

c. Students entering a Virginia high school for the first time during the eleventh grade or at the beginning of the twelfth grade shall earn a minimum of two verified units of credit: one in English and one of the student's choosing.

2. For an Advanced Studies Diploma:

a. Students entering a Virginia high school for the first time during the ninth grade or at the beginning of the tenth grade shall earn credit as prescribed in 8 VAC 20-131-50;

b. Students entering a Virginia high school for the first time during the tenth grade or at the beginning of the eleventh grade shall earn a minimum of six verified units of credit: two in English and one each in mathematics, history, and science and one of the student's choosing; and

c. Students entering a Virginia high school for the first time during the eleventh grade or at the beginning of the twelfth grade shall earn a minimum of four verified units of credit: one in English and three of the student's choosing.

G. Students entering a Virginia high school for the first time after the first semester of their eleventh grade year must meet the requirements of subdivision F.1.c. or F.2.c. of this section. Students transferring after 20 instructional hours per course of their senior or twelfth grade year shall be given every opportunity to earn a Standard, Advanced Studies, or Modified Standard Diploma. If it is not possible for the student to meet the requirements for a diploma, arrangements should be made for the student's previous school to award the diploma. If these arrangements cannot be made, a waiver of the verified unit of credit requirements may be available to the student. The Department of Education may grant such waivers upon request by the local school board in accordance with guidelines prescribed by the Board.

H. Any local school division receiving approval to increase its course credit requirements for a diploma may not deny either the Standard, Advanced Studies, or Modified Standard Diploma to any transfer student who has otherwise met the requirements contained in these standards if the transfer student can only meet the division's additional requirements by taking a heavier than normal course load in any semester, by taking summer school, or by taking courses after the time when he otherwise would have graduated.

I. The transcript of a student who graduates or transfers from a Virginia secondary school shall conform to the requirements of 8 VAC 20-160-10 et seq., *Regulations Governing Secondary School Transcripts*.

J. The accreditation status of a high school shall not be included on the student transcript provided to colleges, universities, or employers. The Board expressly states that any student who has met the graduation requirements established in 8 VAC 20-131-50 and has received a Virginia diploma holds a diploma that should be recognized

8 VAC 20-131-60. Transfer of credits. *(continued)*

as equal to any other Virginia diploma of the same type, regardless of the accreditation status of the student's high school. It is the express policy of the Board that no student shall be affected by the accreditation status of the student's school. The Board shall take appropriate action, from time to time, to ensure that no student is affected by the accreditation status of the student's school.

PART IV SCHOOL INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

8 VAC 20-131-70. Program of instruction and learning objectives.

A. Each school shall provide a program of instruction that promotes individual student academic achievement in the essential academic disciplines and shall provide additional instructional opportunities that meet the abilities, interests, and educational needs of students. Each school shall establish learning objectives to be achieved by students at successive grade levels that meet or exceed the knowledge and skills contained in the Standards of Learning for English, mathematics, science, and history/social science adopted by the Board and shall continually assess the progress of each student in relation to the objectives.

B. Instruction shall be designed to accommodate all students, including those with disabilities, those identified as gifted/talented, and those who have limited English proficiency. Each school shall provide students identified as gifted/talented with instructional programs taught by teachers with special training or experience in working with gifted/talented students. Students with disabilities shall have the opportunity to receive a full continuum of education services, in accordance with 8 VAC 20-180-10 et seq., *Regulations Governing Special Education Programs for Children with Disabilities in Virginia* and other pertinent federal and state regulations.

8 VAC 20-131-80. Instructional program in elementary schools.

A. The elementary school shall provide each student a program of instruction which corresponds to the Standards of Learning for English, mathematics, science, and history/social science. In addition, each school shall provide instruction in art, music, and physical education and health, and shall provide students with a daily recess during the regular school year as determined appropriate by the school.

B. In kindergarten through grade three, reading, writing, spelling, and mathematics shall be the focus of the instructional program. Schools shall maintain, in a manner prescribed by the Board, an early skills and knowledge achievement record in reading and math for each student in kindergarten through grade three to monitor student progress and to promote successful achievement on the third grade SOL tests. This record shall be included with the student's records if the student transfers to a new school.

C. To provide students with sufficient opportunity to learn, a minimum of 75 percent of the annual instructional time of 990 hours shall be given to instruction in the disciplines of English, mathematics, science, and history/social science. Students who are not successfully progressing in early reading proficiency, or who are unable to read with comprehension the materials necessary for instruction shall receive additional instructional time in reading.

8 VAC 20-131-90. Instructional program in middle schools.

A. The middle school shall provide each student a program of instruction which corresponds to the Standards of Learning for English, mathematics, science, and history/social science. In addition, each school shall provide instruction in art, music, foreign language, physical education and health, and career and technical exploration.

B. The middle school shall provide a minimum of eight courses to students in the eighth grade. Courses in English, mathematics, science, and history/social science shall be required. Four elective courses shall be available: level one of a foreign language, one in health and physical education, one in fine arts, and one in career and technical exploration.

C. Level one of a foreign language shall be available to all eighth grade students. For any high school credit-bearing course taken in middle school, parents may request that grades be omitted from the student's transcript and the student not earn high school credit for the course in accordance with policies adopted by the local school board. Notice of this provision must be provided to parents with a deadline and format for making such a request. Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to prevent a middle school from offering any other credit-bearing courses for graduation.

D. To provide students a sufficient opportunity to learn, each student shall be provided 140 clock hours per year of instruction in each of the four disciplines of English, math, science, and history/social science. Sixth grade students may receive an alternative schedule of instruction provided each student receives at least 560 total clock hours of instruction in the four academic disciplines.

8 VAC 20-131-100. Instructional program in secondary schools.

A. The secondary school shall provide each student a program of instruction in the academic areas of English, mathematics, science, and history/social science that enables each student to meet the graduation requirements described in 8 VAC 20-131-50 and shall offer opportunities for students to pursue a program of studies in academics, fine arts, and career and technical areas including:

1. Career and technical education choices that prepare the student as a career and technical education program completer in one of three or more occupational areas and that prepare the student for technical or preprofessional postsecondary programs;
2. Course work and experiences that prepare the student for college-level studies including access to at least two advanced placement courses or two college-level courses for credit;
3. Preparation for college admissions tests; and
4. Opportunities to study and explore the fine arts.

8 VAC 20-131-100. Instructional program in secondary schools. *(continued)*

B. Minimum course offerings for each secondary school shall provide opportunities for students to meet the graduation requirements stated in 8 VAC 20-131-50 and must include:

English	4
Mathematics	4
Science (Laboratory)	4
History and Social Sciences	4
Foreign Language	3
Electives	4
Career and Technical Education	11
Fine Arts	2
Health and Physical Education	2
Total Units	38

C. Classroom driver education may count for 36 class periods of health education. Students shall not be removed from classes other than health and physical education for the in-car phase of driver education.

8 VAC 20-131-110. Standard and verified units of credit.

A. The standard unit of credit for graduation shall be based on a minimum of 140 clock hours of instruction and successful completion of the requirements of the course. When credit is awarded in less than whole units, the increment awarded must be no greater than the fractional part of the 140 hours of instruction provided. If a school division elects to award credit in a noncore academic course on a basis other than the standard unit of credit defined in this subsection, the local school division shall develop a written policy approved by the superintendent and school board which ensures:

1. That the content of the course for which credit is awarded is comparable to 140 clock hours of instruction; and
2. That upon completion, the student will have met the aims and objectives of the course.

B. A verified unit of credit for graduation shall be based on a minimum of 140 clock hours of instruction, successful completion of the requirements of the course, and the achievement by the student of a passing score on the end-of-course SOL test for that course or additional tests as described in this subsection. In accordance with provisions of the Standards of Quality, students may earn a standard and verified unit of credit for any elective course in which the core academic SOL course content has been integrated and the student passes the related end-of-course SOL test. Such course and test combinations must be approved by the Board.

8 VAC 20-131-110. Standard and verified units of credit. *(continued)*

Upon the recommendation of the division superintendent and demonstration of mastery of course content and objectives, qualified students may receive a standard unit of credit and be permitted to sit for the relevant SOL test to earn a verified credit without having to meet the 140-clock-hour requirement.

The Board may from time to time approve additional tests for the purpose of awarding verified credit. Such additional tests, which enable students to earn verified units of credit, must, at a minimum, meet the following criteria:

1. The test must be standardized and graded independently of the school or school division in which the test is given;
2. The test must be knowledge-based;
3. The test must be administered on a multistate or international basis; and
4. To be counted in a specific academic area, the test must measure content that incorporates or exceeds the SOL content in the course for which verified credit is given.

The Board will set the score that must be achieved to earn a verified unit of credit on the additional test options.

The Board will provide opportunities for students who meet criteria adopted by the Board to have an expedited re-take of an end-of-course SOL test to earn verified credit.

C. A school employing a scheduling configuration of less than 140 clock hours per core academic course may retain that scheduling configuration through the end of the 2000-01 school year unless a waiver is granted by the Board under the provisions of 8 VAC 20-131-325.B. or 8 VAC 20-131-330. If the school does not comply following the end of the 2000-01 school year, the Board may take appropriate action which may include, but not be limited to, adjustment or withdrawal of the school's accreditation.

8 VAC 20-131-120. Summer school.

A. The courses offered and the quality of instruction in the summer school program shall be comparable to that offered during the regular school term. At the middle and secondary school levels, credit for courses taken toward graduation other than a repeat course shall be awarded in accordance with the requirements of 8 VAC 20-131-110. Students must also meet the requirements for SOL testing if appropriate.

B. At the middle and secondary school levels, credit for repeat courses ordinarily will be granted on the same basis as that for new courses; however, with prior approval of the principal, students may be allowed to enroll in repeat courses to be completed in no less than 70 clock hours of instruction per unit of credit. Students must also meet the requirements for SOL testing if appropriate.

8 VAC 20-131-120. Summer school. *(continued)*

C. Summer school instruction at any level, which is provided as part of a state-funded remedial program, shall be designed to improve specific identified student deficiencies. Such programs shall be conducted in accordance with regulations adopted by the Board.

8 VAC 20-131-130. Elective courses.

Locally developed elective courses offered for credit toward high school graduation shall be approved by the division superintendent and local school board.

8 VAC 20-131-140. College preparation programs and opportunities for postsecondary credit.

Each middle and secondary school shall provide for the early identification and enrollment of students in a college preparation program with a range of educational and academic experiences in and outside the classroom, including an emphasis on experiences that will motivate disadvantaged and minority students to attend college.

Beginning in the middle school years, students shall be counseled on opportunities for beginning postsecondary education prior to high school graduation. Students taking advantage of such opportunities shall not be denied participation in school activities for which they are otherwise eligible. Wherever possible, students shall be encouraged and afforded opportunities to take college courses simultaneously for high school graduation and college degree credit (dual enrollment), under the following conditions:

1. Written approval of the high school principal prior to participation in dual enrollment must be obtained;
2. The college must accept the student for admission to the course or courses; and
3. The course or courses must be given by the college for degree credits (no remedial courses will be accepted).

Schools that comply with this standard shall not be penalized in receiving state appropriations.

8 VAC 20-131-150. Standard school year and school day.

A. The standard school year shall be 180 days. The standard school day for students in grades one through twelve shall average at least five and one-half hours, excluding breaks for meals, and a minimum of three hours for kindergarten. School divisions may develop alternative schedules for meeting these requirements as long as a minimum of 990 hours of instructional time is provided for grades one through

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8 VAC 20-131-150. Standard school year and school day. *(continued)*

twelve and 540 hours for kindergarten. Such alternative plans must be approved by the local school board and by the Board under guidelines established by the Board. No alternative plan which reduces the instructional time in the core academics shall be approved.

B. All students in grades one through twelve shall maintain a full day schedule of classes (five and one-half hours), unless a waiver is granted in accordance with policies defined by the local school board.

8 VAC 20-131-160. Additional reading instruction.

Each school shall ensure that students who are unable to read with comprehension the materials necessary for instruction receive additional instruction in reading, which may include summer school.

8 VAC 20-131-170. Family Life Education.

Each school may implement the Standards of Learning for the Family Life Education program promulgated by the Board or a Family Life Education program consistent with the guidelines developed by the Board, which shall have the goals of reducing the incidence of pregnancy and sexually-transmitted diseases and substance abuse among teenagers.

8 VAC 20-131-180. Off-site instruction.

A. Homebound instruction shall be made available to students who are confined at home or in a health care facility for periods that would prevent normal school attendance based upon certification of need by a licensed physician or licensed clinical psychologist. For students eligible for special education or related services, the Individualized Education Program committee must revise the IEP, as appropriate. Credit for the work shall be awarded when it is done under the supervision of a licensed teacher, a person eligible to hold a Virginia license, or other appropriately licensed professional employed by the local school board, and meets the requirements of 8 VAC 20-131-110.

B. Students may enroll in, and receive a standard and verified unit of credit for supervised correspondence courses with prior approval of the principal. Standard units of credit shall be awarded for the successful completion of such courses when the course is equivalent to that offered in the regular school program and the work is done under the supervision of a licensed teacher, or a person eligible to hold a Virginia license, approved by the local school board. Verified units of credit may be earned when the student has passed the SOL test associated with the correspondence course completed. The local school board shall develop policies governing this method of

8 VAC 20-131-180. Off-site instruction. *(continued)*

instruction in accordance with the provisions of 8 VAC 20-131-110 and the administration of required SOL tests prescribed by 8 VAC 20-131-30.

C. Schools are encouraged to pursue alternative means to deliver instruction to accommodate student needs through emerging technologies and other similar means. Standard units of credit shall be awarded for successful completion of such courses when the course is equivalent to that offered in the regular school program and the work is done under the supervision of a licensed teacher, or a person eligible to hold a Virginia teaching license and approved by local school board. Verified units of credit may be earned when the student has successfully completed the requirements and passed the SOL test associated with the course. The local school board shall develop policies governing this method of delivery of instruction that shall include the provisions of 8 VAC 20-131-110 and the administration of required SOL tests prescribed by 8 VAC 20-131-30.

8 VAC 20-131-190. Library media, materials, and equipment.

A. Library Media Services. Each school shall maintain an organized library media center as the resource center of the school and provide a unified program of media services and activities for students and teachers before, during, and after school. The library media center shall contain hard copy, electronic technological resources, materials, and equipment which are sufficient to meet research, inquiry, and reading requirements of the instructional program and general student interest.

B. Materials and Equipment. Each school shall provide a variety of materials and equipment to support the instructional program.

8 VAC 20-131-200. Extracurricular and other school activities.

A. School-sponsored extracurricular activities shall be under the direct supervision of the staff and shall contribute to the educational objectives of the school. Extracurricular activities must be organized to avoid interrupting the instructional program. Extracurricular activities shall not be permitted to interfere with the student's required instructional activities. Extracurricular activities and eligibility requirements shall be established and approved by the superintendent and the school board.

B. Competitive sports of a varsity nature (scheduled league games) shall be prohibited as a part of the elementary school program.

PART V

SCHOOL INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

8 VAC 20-131-210. Role of the principal.

A. The principal is recognized as the instructional leader of the school and is responsible for effective school management that promotes positive student achievement, a safe and secure environment in which to teach and learn, and efficient use of resources. As a matter of policy, the Board, through these standards, recognizes the critically important role of principals to the success of public schools and the students who attend those schools. The Board recommends that local school boards provide principals with the maximum authority available under law in all matters affecting the school including, but not limited to, instruction and personnel, in a manner that allows the principal to be held accountable in a fair and consistent manner for matters under his direct control.

B. As the instructional leader, the principal is responsible for ensuring students are provided an opportunity to learn, and shall:

1. Protect the academic instructional time from unnecessary interruptions and disruptions and enable the professional teaching staff to spend the maximum time possible in the teaching/learning process by keeping to a minimum clerical responsibility and the time students are out of class;
2. Ensure that the school division's student code of conduct is enforced and seek to maintain a safe and secure school environment;
3. Analyze the school's test scores annually, by grade and by discipline, to:
 - a. Direct and require appropriate prevention, intervention, and/or remediation to those students performing below grade level or not passing the SOL tests;
 - b. Involve the staff of the school in identifying the types of staff development needed to improve student achievement and ensure that the staff participate in those activities; and
 - c. Analyze classroom practices and methods for improvement of instruction;
4. Ensure that students' records are maintained and that criteria used in making placement and promotion decisions, as well as any instructional interventions used to improve the student's performance, are included in the record;
5. Monitor and evaluate the quality of instruction, provide staff development, provide support that is designed to improve instruction, and seek to ensure the successful attainment of the knowledge and skills required for students by the SOL tests; and

8 VAC 20-131-210. Role of the principal. *(continued)*

6. Maintain records of students who drop out of school, including their reasons for dropping out and actions taken to prevent these students from dropping out.

C. As the school manager, the principal shall:

1. Work with staff to create an atmosphere of mutual respect and courtesy and to facilitate constructive communication by establishing and maintaining a current handbook of personnel policies and procedures;
2. Work with the community to involve parents and citizens in the educational program and facilitate communication with parents by maintaining and disseminating a current student handbook of policies and procedures that includes the school division's standards of student conduct and procedures for enforcement, along with other matters of interest to parents and students;
3. Maintain a current record of licensure, endorsement, and in-service training completed by staff; and
4. Maintain records of receipts and disbursements of all funds handled. These records shall be audited annually by a professional accountant approved by the local school board.

8 VAC 20-131-220. Role of professional teaching staff.

The professional teaching staff shall be responsible for providing instruction that is educationally sound in an atmosphere of mutual respect and courtesy, conducive to learning, and in which all students are expected to achieve the objectives of the Standards of Learning for the appropriate grade level or course. The staff shall:

1. Serve as role models for effective oral and written communication, with special attention to the correct use of language and spelling;
2. Strive to strengthen the basic skills of students in all subjects;
3. Establish teaching objectives to achieve the following:
 - a. Identify what students are expected to learn; and
 - b. Inform students of the achievement expected and keep them engaged in learning tasks;
4. Provide for individual differences of students through the use of differentiated instruction, varied materials, and activities suitable to their interests and abilities; and
5. Assess the progress of students and report promptly and constructively to them and their parents.

8 VAC 20-131-230. Role of support staff.

The school's support staff shall work with the principal and professional teaching staff to promote student achievement and successful attainment of the school's goals.

8 VAC 20-131-240. Administrative and support staff; staffing requirements.

A. Each school shall have the staff as specified in the Standards of Quality with proper licenses and endorsements for the positions they hold including:

1. Principal; elementary: one half-time to 299, one full-time at 300; middle: one full-time; secondary: one full-time.
2. Assistant Principal; elementary: one half-time at 600, one full-time at 900; middle: one full-time each 600; secondary: one full-time each 600.
3. Librarian; elementary: part-time to 299, one full-time at 300; middle: one half-time to 299, one full-time at 300, two full-time at 1,000; secondary: one half-time to 299, one full-time at 300, two full-time at 1,000.
4. Guidance Counselors or Reading Specialists; elementary: one hour per day per 100, one full-time at 500, one hour per day additional time per 100 or major fraction.
5. Guidance Counselor; middle: one period per 80, one full-time at 400, one additional period per 80 or major fraction; secondary: one period per 70, one full-time at 350, one additional period per 70 or major fraction.
6. Clerical; elementary: part-time to 299, one full-time at 300; middle: one full-time and one additional full-time for each 600 beyond 200 and one full-time for the library at 750; secondary: one full-time and one additional full-time for each 600 beyond 200 and one full-time for the library at 750.

B. The principal of each middle and secondary school shall be employed on a 12-month basis.

C. Each secondary school with 350 or more students and each middle school with 400 or more students shall employ at least one member of the guidance staff for 11 months. Guidance counseling shall be provided for students to ensure that a program of studies contributing to the student's academic achievement and meeting the graduation requirements specified in 8 VAC 20-131-50 is being followed. In addition, the counseling program shall provide for a minimum of 60 percent of the time of each member of the guidance staff devoted to such counseling of students.

D. Middle school teachers in schools with a seven-period day may teach 150 student periods per day or 30 class periods per week, provided all teachers with more than 25 class periods per week have one period per day unencumbered of any teaching or supervisory duties.

8 VAC 20-131-240. Administrative and support staff; staffing requirements.
(continued)

E. The secondary classroom teacher's standard load shall be no more than 25 class periods per week. One class period each day, unencumbered by supervisory or teaching duties, shall be provided to every full-time classroom teacher for instructional planning. Teachers of block programs with no more than 120 student periods per day may teach 30 class periods per week. Teachers who teach very small classes may teach 30 class periods per week, provided the teaching load does not exceed 75 student periods per day. If a classroom teacher teaches 30 class periods per week with more than 75 student periods per day, an appropriate contractual arrangement and compensation shall be provided.

F. Middle or secondary school teachers shall teach no more than 750 student periods per week; however, physical education and music teachers may teach 1,000 student periods per week.

G. Each school shall report the extent to which an unencumbered lunch is provided for all classroom teachers.

H. Staff-student ratios in special and career and technical education classrooms shall comply with regulations of the Board.

I. Pupil personnel services, including visiting teachers, school social workers, school psychologists, and guidance counselors, shall be available as necessary to promote academic achievement.

8 VAC 20-131-250. Repealed.

PART VI

SCHOOL FACILITIES AND SAFETY

8 VAC 20-131-260. School facilities and safety.

A. Each school shall be maintained in a manner ensuring compliance with the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code (13 VAC 5-61-10 et seq.) and regulations of the Board pertaining to facilities. In addition, the school administration shall:

1. Maintain a physical plant that is accessible, barrier free, safe, and clean;
2. Provide for the proper outdoor display of flags of the United States and of the Commonwealth of Virginia;
3. Provide suitable space for classrooms, administrative staff, pupil personnel services, library and media services, and for the needs and safety of physical education; and
4. Provide adequate, safe, and properly-equipped laboratories to meet the needs of instruction in the sciences, technology, fine arts, and career and technical programs.

B. Each school shall maintain records of regular safety, health and fire inspections that have been conducted and certified by local health and fire departments. The frequency of such inspections shall be determined by the local school board in consultation with the local health and fire departments. In addition, the school administration shall:

1. Equip all exit doors with panic hardware as required by the Uniform Statewide Building Code (13 VAC 5-61-10 et seq.); and
2. Conduct fire drills at least once a week during the first month of school and at least once each month for the remainder of the school term. Evacuation routes for students shall be posted in each room. Additionally, at least one simulated lock-down and crisis emergency evacuation activity should be conducted early in the school year.

C. Each school shall have contingency plans for emergencies that include staff certified in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), the Heimlich maneuver, and emergency first aid. In addition, the school administration shall ensure that the school has:

1. Written procedures to follow in emergencies such as fire, injury, illness, and violent or threatening behavior. The plan shall be outlined in the student handbook and discussed with staff and students during the first week of each school year;

8 VAC 20-131-260. School facilities and safety. *(continued)*

2. Space for the proper care of students who become ill; and
3. A written procedure, in accordance with guidelines established by the local school board, for responding to violent, disruptive or illegal activities by students on school property or during a school sponsored activity.

PART VII

SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY COMMUNICATIONS

8 VAC 20-131-270. School and community communications.

A. Each school shall promote communication and foster mutual understanding with parents and the community. Each school shall:

1. Involve parents, citizens, community agencies, and representatives from business and industry in developing, disseminating, and explaining the biennial school plan; on advisory committees; in curriculum studies; and in evaluating the educational program.
2. Provide annually to the parents and the community the School Performance Report Card in a manner prescribed by the Board. The information contained therein will be for the most recent three-year period. Such information shall include but not be limited to:
 - a. SOL test scores and scores on the literacy and numeracy tests required for the Modified Standard Diploma for the school, school division, and state.
 - b. Percentage of students tested, as well as the percentage of students not tested, to include a breakout of students with disabilities and limited English proficient students.
 - c. Percentage of students who are otherwise eligible, but do not take, the SOL tests due to enrollment in an alternative, or any other program not leading to a Standard, Advanced Studies, Modified Standard, or International Baccalaureate Diploma.
 - d. Performance of students with disabilities or students with limited English proficiency on SOL tests and alternate assessments as appropriate.
 - e. The accreditation rating awarded to the school.
 - f. Attendance rates for students.
 - g. Information related to school safety to include, but not limited to, incidents of physical violence (including fighting and other serious offenses), possession of firearms, and possession of other weapons.
 - h. Information related to qualifications and experience of the teaching staff including the percentage of the school's teachers endorsed in the area of their primary teaching assignment.
 - i. In addition, secondary schools' School Performance Report Cards shall include the following:
 - (1) Advanced Placement (AP) information to include percentage of students who take AP courses and percentage of those students who take AP tests;

8 VAC 20-131-270. School and community communications. *(continued)*

(2) International Baccalaureate (IB) information to include percentage of students who are enrolled in IB programs and percentage of students who receive IB Diplomas;

(3) College-level course information to include percentage of students who take college-level courses;

(4) Percentage of (i) diplomas, (ii) certificates awarded to the senior class including GED credentials, and (iii) students who do not graduate;

(5) Percentage of students in alternative programs that do not lead to a Standard, Advanced Studies, or Modified Standard Diploma;

(6) Percentage of students in academic year Governor's Schools; and

(7) Percentage of drop-outs.

3. Cooperate with business and industry in formulating career and technical educational programs and conducting joint enterprises involving personnel, facilities, training programs, and other resources.

4. Encourage and support the establishment and/or continuation of a parent-teacher association or other organization and work cooperatively with it.

B. At the beginning of each school year, each school shall provide to its students' parents or guardians:

1. The learning objectives developed in accordance with the provisions of 8 VAC 20-131-70 to be achieved at their child's grade level or, in high school, a copy of the syllabus for each of their child's courses, and a copy of the school division promotion, retention, and remediation policies;

2. A copy of the Standards of Learning applicable to the child's grade or course requirements and the approximate date and potential impact of the child's next SOL testing; and

3. An annual notice to students in all grade levels of all requirements for Standard, Advanced Studies, and Modified Standard Diplomas, and the Board's policies on promotion and retention as outlined in 8 VAC 20-131-30.

No later than the end of the first semester of each school year, the division superintendent shall certify to the Department compliance with this subsection.

PART VIII

SCHOOL ACCREDITATION

8 VAC 20-131-280. Expectations for school accountability.

A. Schools will be accredited annually based on compliance with pre-accreditation eligibility requirements and achievement of the school accountability requirements of 8 VAC 20-131-300.C.

B. These standards apply to schools for all grade levels, kindergarten through twelve as listed below:

1. Schools with grades kindergarten through five shall be classified as elementary schools;
2. Schools with grades six through eight shall be classified as middle schools;
3. Schools with grades nine through twelve shall be classified as secondary schools.
4. Schools with grade configurations other than these shall be classified in accordance with policies and practices of the Department of Education.

C. Each school shall be accredited based, primarily, on achievement of the criteria established in 8 VAC 20-131-30 as specified below:

1. All students enrolled in a grade or course in which a SOL test is administered shall take each applicable SOL test unless exempted from participating in all or part of the testing program by one of the following:
 - a. IEP Team;
 - b. LEP committee;
 - c. Use of additional tests for verified units of credit as outlined in 8 VAC 20-131-110.B.; or
 - d. In accordance with 8 VAC 20-131-30.B.
2. In a manner prescribed by the Board, the evaluation of the performance of schools shall take into consideration:
 - a. The percentage of eligible students who achieve a passing score on the prescribed SOL tests or additional tests used for verified units of credit as outlined in 8 VAC 20-131-110.B.;
 - b. The percentage of students who pass the literacy and numeracy tests required for the Modified Standard Diploma;
 - c. The percentage of those students with disabilities whose IEPs specify their participation in alternate assessment who attain a proficient level score (beginning with the 2001-02 school year); and

8 VAC 20-131-280. Expectations for school accountability. *(continued)*

- d. The school's attainment of the provisional accreditation benchmarks as described in 8 VAC 20-131-320.
 - e. The number of students who successfully complete a remediation recovery program and subsequently pass SOL tests in English (Reading, Literature, and Research) and/or mathematics during any scheduled administration by the end of the following school year.
3. The awarding of an accreditation rating shall be based on the percentage of students passing SOL tests or approved additional tests described in 8 VAC 20-131-110.B. or a trailing three-year average that includes the current year scores and the scores from the two most recent years, in each applicable academic area, or the current year's scores, whichever is higher.
 4. Eligible students shall be defined as the total number of students enrolled in the school at a grade or course for which a SOL test is required unless excluded under subsection E of this section and those students with disabilities who participate in the alternate assessment program.
 5. Schools shall be evaluated by the percentage of the school's eligible students who achieve a passing score on the SOL tests or other additional tests approved by the Board as outlined in 8 VAC 20-131-110.B. of these regulations in the four core academic areas administered in the school.
 6. Schools, with grade configurations that do not house a grade or offer courses for which SOL tests or other additional tests approved by the Board as outlined in 8 VAC 20-131-110.B. of these regulations are administered, will be paired with another school in the division housing one or more of the grades in which SOL tests are administered. The pairing of such schools will be made upon the recommendation of the local superintendent. The schools should have a "feeder" relationship and the grades should be contiguous.

D. 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.

E. When calculating the passing rates on SOL tests for the purpose of school accountability, the following tolerances for limited English proficient (LEP) and transfer students will apply:

1. LEP students shall have a one time exemption in each of the four core areas for SOL tests designed to assess SOL content in kindergarten through grade eight.
2. LEP students shall not be exempted from participating in the SOL end-of-course testing.

8 VAC 20-131-280. Expectations for school accountability. *(continued)*

3. The scores of LEP students enrolled in Virginia public schools fewer than 11 semesters may be removed from the calculation used for the purpose of school accreditation required by 8 VAC 20-131-280.C. and 8 VAC 20-131-300.C. Completion of a semester shall be based on school membership days. Membership days are defined as the days the student is officially enrolled in a Virginia public school, regardless of days absent or present. For a semester to count as a completed semester, a student must have been in membership for a majority of the membership days of the semester. These semesters need not be consecutive.

4. In accordance with the provisions of 8 VAC 20-131-30, all students who transfer into Virginia public schools are expected to take and pass all applicable SOL tests unless they have been exempted as defined in subdivision C.1. of this section.

5. All students who transfer within a school division shall have their scores counted in the calculation of the school's accountability (accreditation) rating. Students who transfer into a Virginia school from another Virginia school division, another state, or another country, in kindergarten through grade eight shall be expected to take all applicable SOL tests or other additional tests approved by the Board as outlined in 8 VAC 20-131-110.B. of these regulations. If the transfer takes place after the 20th instructional day following the opening of school, the scores on these tests may be used in calculating school accountability (accreditation) ratings.

6. Students who transfer into a Virginia middle or high school from another state or country and enroll in a course for which there is an end-of-course SOL test shall be expected to take the test or other additional tests for that course approved by the Board as outlined in 8 VAC 20-131-110.B. of these regulations. If the transfer takes place after 20 instructional hours per course have elapsed following the opening of school or beginning of the semester, if applicable, the scores on those tests may be used in calculating school accountability (accreditation) ratings in the year the transfer occurs.

7. Students who enroll on the first day of school and subsequently transfer to a school outside of the division for a total amount of instructional time equal to or exceeding 50 percent of a current school year or semester, whether the transfer was a singular or multiple occurrence, and return during the same school year, shall be expected to take any applicable SOL test. The scores of those tests may be used in calculating the school accountability (accreditation) rating in the year in which the transfer(s) occur(s).

8. The scores of LEP and transfer students will be used in the calculation of a school's accountability (accreditation) rating if it will benefit the school.

9. The Board may alter the inclusions and exclusions from the accountability calculations by providing adequate notice to local school boards.

8 VAC 20-131-280. Expectations for school accountability. *(continued)*

F. As a prerequisite to the awarding of an accreditation rating as defined in 8 VAC 20-131-300, each new or existing school shall document, in a manner prescribed by the Board, the following: (i) the division's promotion/retention policies developed in accordance with the requirements of 8 VAC 20-131-30, (ii) compliance with the requirements to offer courses that will allow students to complete the graduation requirements in 8 VAC 20-131-50, (iii) the ability to offer the instructional program prescribed in 8 VAC 20-131-70 through 8 VAC 20-131-100, (iv) the leadership and staffing requirements of 8 VAC 20-131-210 through 8 VAC 20-131-240, and (v) the facilities and safety provisions of 8 VAC 20-131-260.

8 VAC 20-131-290. Procedures for certifying accreditation eligibility.

A. Schools will be accredited under these standards annually based on compliance with the pre-accreditation criteria described in 8 VAC 20-131-280.F.

B. To be eligible for accreditation, the principal of each school and the division superintendent shall certify to the Department of Education:

1. The extent to which each school continues to meet standards reported as met in the previous year described in 8 VAC 20-131-280.F.
2. That the SOL have been fully incorporated into the school division's curriculum in all accreditation-eligible schools and the SOL material is being taught to all students eligible to take the SOL tests. This shall be certified in writing to the Board no later than July 1 of every year, by each local school division superintendent.
3. Actions taken to correct any noncompliance issues cited in the previous year.

The principal of each school and the division superintendent shall submit pre-accreditation eligibility reports in a manner prescribed by the Board to the Department of Education. Failure to submit the reports on time will constitute grounds for denying accreditation to the school.

C. In keeping with provisions of the Standards of Quality, and in conjunction with the six-year plan of the division, each school shall prepare and implement a biennial school plan which shall be available to students, parents, staff and the public. Each biennial school plan shall be evaluated as part of the development of the next biennial plan. Schools may use other plans to satisfy the requirement for the biennial plan with prior written approval from the Department of Education.

D. With the approval of the local school board, local schools seeking to implement experimental or innovative programs, or both, that are not consistent with these standards shall submit a waiver request, on forms provided, to the Board for evaluation and approval prior to implementation. The request must include the following:

8 VAC 20-131-290. Procedures for certifying accreditation eligibility. *(continued)*

1. Purpose and objectives of the experimental/innovative programs;
2. Description and duration of the programs;
3. Anticipated outcomes;
4. Number of students affected
5. Evaluation procedures; and
6. Mechanisms for measuring goals, objectives, and student academic achievement.

Except as specified below, the Board may grant, for a period up to five years, a waiver of any of the regulations promulgated by the Board that are not mandated by state or federal law or designed to promote health or safety. The Board may grant all or a portion of the request. Waivers of requirements in 8 VAC 20-131-30, 8 VAC 20-131-50, 8 VAC 20-131-70, and 8 VAC 20-131-280 through 8 VAC 20-131-340 shall not be granted, and no waiver may be approved for a program which would violate the provisions of the Standards of Quality.

8 VAC 20-131-300. Application of the standards.

A. Schools that meet the pre-accreditation requirements prescribed in 8 VAC 20-131-280.F. shall be assigned one of the following ratings as described in this section:

1. Earned During Academic Years Ending in 2000 through 2003:
 - a. Fully Accredited
 - b. Provisionally Accredited/Meets State Standards
 - c. Provisionally Accredited/Needs Improvement
 - d. Accredited with Warning (in specified academic area or areas)
 - e. Conditionally Accredited
2. Earned During Academic Years Ending in 2004 and 2005:
 - a. Fully Accredited
 - b. Accredited with Warning (in specified academic area or areas)
 - c. Conditionally Accredited
3. Earned During Academic Years Ending in 2006 and Beyond
 - a. Fully Accredited
 - b. Accredited with Warning in (specified academic area or areas)
 - c. Accreditation Denied
 - d. Conditionally Accredited

8 VAC 20-131-300. Application of the Standards. *(continued)*

e. Accreditation Withheld/Improving School Near Accreditation, not to be used after academic year ending in 2009.

B. Compliance with the student academic achievement expectations shall be documented to the Board directly through the reporting of the results of student performance on SOL tests and other alternative means of assessing student academic achievement as outlined in 8 VAC 20-131-110.B. Compliance with other provisions of these regulations will be documented in accordance with procedures prescribed by the Board.

C. Accreditation ratings defined.

1. Fully accredited.

a. A school will be rated Fully Accredited when its eligible students meet the pass rate of 70% in each of the four core academic areas except, effective with ratings earned in the academic year 2003-04 and beyond, the pass rates required shall be 75% in third and fifth grade English and 50% in third grade science and history/social science. In schools housing grades kindergarten through five, the English and mathematics pass rates for accreditation purposes shall be calculated for these grades as single rates by combining the scores of all grades three and five SOL tests administered in English and by combining the scores of all grades three and five SOL tests administered in mathematics.

b. During the transition period covering ratings earned during 1999-2000 through 2002-03, in schools housing grades kindergarten through five, the science and history/social science pass rates for accreditation purposes shall be calculated by using the fifth grade scores alone, or by combining the scores of all SOL tests administered in grades three through five in science and by combining the scores of all SOL tests administered in grades three through five in history/social science, whichever is higher. If the third grade scores are combined with the fifth grade scores, the required passing rate shall be 70% for full accreditation. In schools housing grades kindergarten through three, the accreditation rating shall be calculated using the English and mathematics scores only.

2. Provisionally Accredited/Meets State Standards. For ratings earned during the academic years 1999-2000 through 2002-03, a school will be rated Provisionally Accredited/Meets State Standards when it has met the provisional accreditation benchmarks as defined in accordance with 8 VAC 20-131-320 but has not met the requirement to be rated Fully Accredited.

3. Provisionally Accredited/Needs Improvement. For ratings earned during the academic years 1999-2000 through 2002-03, a school will be rated Provisionally Accredited/Needs Improvement when it fails to meet the provisional accreditation benchmarks as defined in 8 VAC 20-131-320 in one or more academic areas.

8 VAC 20-131-300. Application of the Standards. *(continued)*

4. Accredited with Warning (in specific academic area or areas).
 - a. For ratings earned during academic years ending in 1999-2000 through 2002-03, a school will be Accredited with Warning (in specific academic area or areas) if its pass-rate performance on SOL tests is 20 or more percentage points below any of the provisional accreditation benchmarks set forth in the appendix to these standards.
 - b. For ratings earned during academic years ending in 2003-04 and 2004-05, a school will be Accredited with Warning (in specific academic area or areas) if it does not meet the pass-rate requirements to be Fully Accredited.
 - c. For ratings earned during academic years 2005-06 and beyond, a school will be Accredited with Warning (in specific academic area or areas) if it has achieved Fully Accredited status but has failed to meet the requirements to maintain that status in any one year. Following academic year 2005-06, such a school may remain in the Accredited with Warning status for no more than three consecutive years.
5. Accreditation Denied. Based on a school's academic performance during academic years ending in 2006 and beyond, a school shall be rated Accreditation Denied if it fails to meet the requirements to be rated Fully Accredited, except for schools rated Accredited with Warning as set forth in subdivision 4.c. of this subsection.

In any school division in which one-third or more of the schools have been rated Accreditation Denied, the superintendent shall be evaluated by the local school board with a copy of such evaluation submitted to the Board no later than December 1 of each year in which such condition exists.

6. Accreditation Withheld/Improving School Near Accreditation. A school that has never met the requirements to be rated Fully Accredited by end of the academic year ending in 2006 may apply to the Board for this accreditation designation. To be eligible, the school must meet the following criteria:
 - a. By the year ending in 2006, at least 70 percent of its students must have passed the applicable English SOL tests except at third and fifth grade where the requirement is 75 percent.
 - b. By the year ending in 2006, a combined pass rate of 60 percent of its students must have passed the SOL tests in the other three core academic areas.
 - c. In each academic area in which the pass rate is below the rate required to be rated Fully Accredited, the school's pass rate must have increased by at least 25 percentage points as compared to the pass rates on tests taken during the academic year ending in 1999.

To retain this rating, a school must continue to show annual improvement in each academic area in which the pass rate is below the rate required for full

8 VAC 20-131-300. Application of the Standards. *(continued)*

accreditation. This rating will cease to exist after the academic year ending in 2009.

7. Conditionally Accredited. New schools that are comprised of students from one or more existing schools in the division will be awarded this status for one year pending an evaluation of the school's eligible students' performance on SOL tests or additional substitute tests described in 8 VAC 20-131-110.B. to be rated Fully Accredited.

8 VAC 20-131-310. Action requirements for schools that are accredited with warning.

A. With such funds as are appropriated by the General Assembly, the Department of Education shall develop a school academic review process and monitoring plan designed to assist schools rated as Accredited with Warning. All procedures and operations for the academic review process shall be approved and adopted by the Board.

B. Any school that is rated Accredited with Warning in English or mathematics is expected to adopt an instructional method that has a proven track record of success at raising student achievement in those areas as appropriate.

C. The superintendent and principal shall certify in writing to the Board that such a method has been adopted and implemented.

D. The Board shall publish a list of recommended instructional methods which may be amended from time to time.

E. Adoption of instructional methods referenced in subdivisions B and D of this subsection shall be funded by eligible local, state and federal funds.

F. A three-year School Improvement Plan must be developed and implemented, based on the results of an academic review of each school that is rated Accredited with Warning upon receipt of notification of the awarding of this rating and receipt of the results of the academic review. The plan:

1. shall be developed with the assistance of parents and teachers and made available to the public;
2. must include the components outlined in subsection G of this section; and
3. must be approved by the division superintendent and the local school board and be designed to assist the school in meeting the student achievement standard to be Fully Accredited as outlined in 8 VAC 20-131-300.

8 VAC 20-131-310. Action requirements for schools that are accredited with warning. *(continued)*

G. The improvement plan shall include of the following:

1. A description of how the school will meet the provisional accreditation benchmarks, or the requirements to be Fully Accredited, for each of the years covered by the plan,
2. Specific measures for achieving and documenting student academic improvement,
3. The amount of time in the school day devoted to instruction in the core academic areas,
4. Instructional practices designed to remediate students who have not been successful on SOL tests,
5. Intervention strategies designed to prevent further declines in student performance,
6. Staff development needed,
7. Strategies to involve and assist parents in raising their child's academic performance,
8. The need for flexibility or waivers to state or local regulations to meet the objectives of the plan, and
9. A description of the manner in which local, state, and federal funds are used to support the implementation of the components of this plan.

As part of its approval of the school improvement plan, the Board may grant a local school board a waiver from the requirements of any regulations promulgated by the Board when such a waiver is available.

H. The school improvement plan and related annual reports submitted to the Board shall provide documentation of the continuous efforts of the school to achieve the requirements to become rated Fully Accredited. The Board shall adopt and approve all policies and formats for the submission of annual reports under this section. The reports shall be due no later than October 1 of the school year.

8 VAC 20-131-320. Provisional accreditation benchmarks.

The Board will set the minimum acceptable pass rates required for a school to achieve the rating of Provisionally Accredited/Meets State Standards in the academic years 1999-2003. These benchmarks are outlined in the appendix to these standards.

8 VAC 20-131-325. Recognitions and rewards for school accountability performance.

A. Schools may be recognized by the Board in accordance with procedures it shall establish. Such recognition may include:

1. Public announcements recognizing individual schools;
2. Tangible rewards;
3. Waivers of certain Board regulations;
4. Exemptions from certain reporting requirements; or
5. Other commendations deemed appropriate to recognize high achievement.

In addition to Board recognition, local school boards shall adopt policies to recognize individual schools through public announcements, media releases, participation in community activities for input purposes when setting policy relating to schools and budget development, as well as other appropriate recognition.

B. A school that maintains a passing rate on SOL tests or other additional tests approved by the Board as outlined in 8 VAC 20-131-110.B. of these regulations of 80 percent or above may, upon application to the Department of Education, receive a waiver from some or all provisions of the following regulations and reporting requirements for a period of up to three years:

- 8 VAC 20-131-80. Instructional program in elementary schools
(clock hours only)
- 8 VAC 20-131-90. Instructional program in middle schools
(clock hours only)
- 8 VAC 20-131-100. Instructional program in secondary schools
- 8 VAC 20-131-110. Standard and verified units of credit
(clock hour requirement only)
- 8 VAC 20-131-120. Summer school (clock hours only)
- 8 VAC 20-131-130. Elective credit
- 8 VAC 20-131-140. College preparatory programs and opportunities for
postsecondary credit
- 8 VAC 20-131-150. Standard school year and school day
- 8 VAC 20-131-190. Library media, materials and equipment
- 8 VAC 20-131-200. Extracurricular and other school activities
- 8 VAC 20-131-210. Role of the principal
- 8 VAC 20-131-220. Role of professional staff
- 8 VAC 20-131-230. Role of support staff
- 8 VAC 20-131-240. Administrative and support staff required

C. Schools may be eligible to receive the Governor's Award for Outstanding Improvement. This award will be given to schools in each classification defined in 8 VAC 20-131-280.B. rated below Fully Accredited that exceed the improvement levels defined in 8 VAC 20-131-320 by 10 percentage points or more in one year during the school years 2000-01 through 2002-03. In addition, any school that raises its rating

8 VAC 20-131-325. Recognitions and regards for school accountability performance. *(continued)*

from Accredited with Warning to Fully Accredited in one year will receive this award when it was 10 percentage points or more below the performance level to be rated Fully Accredited.

8 VAC 20-131-330. Waivers.

Waivers of some of the requirements of these regulations may be granted by the Board based on submission of a request from the division superintendent and chairman of the local school board. The request shall include documentation of the need for the waiver. In no event will waivers be granted to the requirements of Part III-Student achievement expectations.

8 VAC 20-131-340. Academic reviews, special provisions and sanctions.

A. Beginning with the 2000-01 school year, schools rated Accredited with Warning must undergo an academic review in accordance with guidelines adopted by the Board and prepare a school improvement plan as required by 8 VAC 20-131-310.

B. The Board may enact special provisions related to the administration and use of any SOL test or tests in a content area as applied to this chapter for any period during which the SOL content in that area is being revised and phased in.

C. Any school in violation of this chapter shall be subject to appropriate action by the Board including, but not limited to, the adjustment or withdrawal of a school's accreditation.

APPENDIX

**PROVISIONAL ACCREDITATION BENCHMARKS
THROUGH 2003 PURSUANT TO 8 VAC 20-131-320**

Each school must meet the following pass-rate benchmarks in tests given in the academic years indicated to earn the rating of Provisional Accreditation/Meets State Standards:

	ENGLISH	MATH	SCIENCE	HISTORY/SOC. STUDIES
Grade 3				
1999-00	60%	55%	N/A	N/A
2000-01	63%	60%	N/A	N/A
2001-02	66%	65%	N/A	N/A
2002-03	70%	70%	N/A	N/A
Grade 5 (includes tests given in Grade 4)				
1999-00	60%	55%	60%	40%
2000-01	63%	60%	63%	45%
2001-02	66%	65%	66%	50%
2002-03	70%	70%	70%	55%
Middle (includes any tests given in middle school grades)				
1999-00	60%	55%	60%	40%
2000-01	63%	60%	63%	45%
2001-02	66%	65%	66%	50%
2002-03	70%	70%	70%	55%
High School				
1999-00	60%	55%	55%	40%
2000-01	63%	60%	60%	45%
2001-02	66%	65%	65%	50%
2002-03	70%	70%	70%	55%

1. Schools that do not meet the benchmarks in one or more academic areas will be rated "Provisionally Accredited/Needs Improvement" unless the school is rated "Accredited with Warning".
2. Schools that are 20 or more percentage points below the benchmarks in any academic area will be rated "Accredited with Warning in (specific academic area or areas)"
3. The provisionally accredited ratings may not be earned after school year 2002-03.
4. Schools must achieve pass rates of 70% in all applicable core academic areas to be rated Fully Accredited except that, beginning with school year 2003-04, schools must achieve pass rates of 75% in third and fifth grade English and 50% in third grade science and history/social science. In schools housing grades kindergarten through three, the accreditation rating shall be based on the English and mathematics scores only.

APPENDIX *(continued)*

**PROVISIONAL ACCREDITATION BENCHMARKS
THROUGH 2003 PURSUANT TO 8 VAC 20-131-320**

5. In determining accreditation ratings, a single pass rate will be calculated by combining third and fifth grade English and third and fifth grade mathematics scores.
6. In determining the accreditation ratings during the transition period, covering ratings earned during 1999-2000 through 2002-03, in schools housing grades kindergarten through five, the accreditation ratings shall be calculated by using the fifth grade scores alone or by combining the scores of all SOL tests given in grades three through five in science and by combining the scores of all SOL tests given in grades three through five history/social science, whichever is higher. In schools housing grades kindergarten through three, the accreditation rating shall be based on the English and mathematics scores only.

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