

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: Superintendent of Public Instruction

SUBJECT: Waiver of the 140-Clock-Hour Requirement to Earn Standard and Verified Credits

The Commission on Youth has advised me it believes that not all division superintendents are aware of a provision in statute and in regulations permitting them to allow students who demonstrate a mastery of course content and objectives to receive a standard unit of credit and to sit for the relevant Standards of Learning test to earn a verified unit of credit without having to meet the 140-clock-hour requirement. This e-mail is intended to ensure that all division superintendents are aware of this provision.

HB 1196 (2000), patroned by Delegate Hargrove, amended the Standards of Quality in § 22.1-253.13:4, subsection D.5 of the *Code of Virginia* to require the Board of Education to

“Establish a procedure to facilitate the acceleration of students that allows qualified students, with the recommendation of the division superintendent, without completing the 140-hour class, to obtain credit for such class upon demonstration of mastery of the course content and objectives. Having received credit for the course, the student shall be permitted to sit for the relevant Standards of Learning assessment and, upon receiving a passing score, shall earn a verified credit....”

See <http://leg1.state.va.us/cgi-bin/legp504.exe?000+cod+22.1-253.13C4>

The Board of Education established the procedure in the *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia*. The Standards of Accreditation say, in 8 VAC 20-131-110.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 on a basis other than the 140 clock hours of instruction required for a 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.

See http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/Accountability/soa_09.pdf

The Standards of Accreditation go on to say, in 8 VAC 20-131-110.B:

“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.”

See http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/Accountability/soa_09.pdf

The Board of Education has provided the following guidance to division superintendents in its *Guidance Document Governing Certain Provisions of the Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia*:

“The division superintendent shall be responsible for identifying the manner in which students demonstrate mastery of course content and objectives for the purposes of this standard. Documentation of such mastery shall be maintained in the student's permanent record.”

See <http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/Accountability/soa-guidance-doc.pdf>

Should you have questions or need any additional information about this policy, please contact the Office of Policy at (804) 225-2092 or Policy@doe.virginia.gov.