

Discussion of Selected Concepts Related to the Comprehensive Review of the Standards of Accreditation

Presentation to the Virginia Board of
Education's Committee on School and
Division Accountability

October 21, 2015

Possible Expansion of School Divisions' Authority for Locally Awarded Verified Credits

Authority for Locally Awarded Verified Credits

“Students who do not pass Standards of Learning tests in science or history and social science may receive locally awarded verified credits from the local school board in accordance with criteria established in guidelines adopted by the Board of Education.”

From Standards of Accreditation at 8VAC20-131-110. Standard and verified units of credit.

Board-Adopted Guidance

- The awarding of verified credit using this process applies only for the Standard Diploma retroactive to the ninth-grade class of 2003-2004. This process does not apply to awarding verified credit for an Advanced Studies Diploma.
- No more than four verified credits may be awarded through this process and these may not be used to award verified credits for the Advanced Studies Diploma.
- The award of verified credits under this guidance will not be used to recalculate a school's accreditation rating.

Board-Adopted Guidance

- To be eligible to earn locally awarded verified credits in science, or history/social science under this guidance, a student must:
 - Pass the high school course,
 - Score within a 375-399 scale score range on any administration of the Standards of Learning test after taking the test at least twice, and
 - Demonstrate achievement in the academic content through an appeal process administered at the local level.



Board-Adopted Guidance

- The Board of Education requires that local school boards adopt policies to govern procedures used to award local verified credit. The appeal process will include:
 - The appointment by the local school board of a local review panel comprised of at least three educators. Different panels may be appointed for individual schools or groups of schools, at the local school board's discretion.

Board-Adopted Guidance

- The local review panel will review information that provides evidence of the student's achievement of adequate knowledge of the Standards of Learning content. The panel shall have discretion in determining the information to be considered and may include, but not be limited to, results of classroom assessments, divisionwide exams, course grades, and additional academic assignments (e.g., papers, projects, essay or written questions) as deemed appropriate.
- Based on the evidence reviewed, the local review panel may award the verified credit, deny the verified credit, suggest participation in a remedial program and retesting, or make additional academic assignments as deemed appropriate prior to determining whether to award the verified credit.

Summary of Current Guidance

- Available for Standard Diploma only
- Available for History/Social Science and Science Credits only
- Student must have taken and failed the SOL end-of-course test twice. Score on at least one test must be a scaled score of 375-399
- Maximum of 4 locally awarded verified credits
- Local school board must adopt a policy regarding local awarded verified credits.
- Panel appointed by the local school board must review evidence and determine if verified credit should be awarded.

Discussion of Possible Change

Should the current policy regarding locally awarded verified credits be expanded?

Credit Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Definition of Credit Accommodations

- “Credit accommodations ‘means adjustments to meet the standard and verified credit requirements for earning a Standard Diploma for students with disabilities.’”

From Standards of Accreditation at 8VAC20-131-5. Definitions

Credit Accommodations

- “The Board of Education shall establish, through guidelines, credit accommodations to the standard and verified credit requirements for a Standard Diploma. Such credit accommodations for students with disabilities may include:
 - a. Approval of alternative courses to meet the standard credit requirements;
 - b. Modifications to the requirements for local school divisions to award locally awarded verified credits;
 - c. Approval of additional tests to earn a verified credit;
 - d. Adjusted cut scores required to earn verified credit; and
 - e. Allowance of work-based learning experiences.
- The student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan would specify any credit accommodations that would be applicable for the student.”

From the Standards of Accreditation at 8VAC20-131-50. Requirements for graduation.

Credit Accommodations: Board Guidance on Locally Awarded Verified Credits

Permit local school boards to award locally awarded verified credits in reading, writing, and mathematics, in addition to science and history, to students with disabilities. Use the same criteria for awarding credits currently approved for science and history. Eligible students must:

- a. Pass the high school course,
- b. Score within 375-399 scale score range on any administration of the Standards of Learning test after taking the test at least twice, and
- c. Demonstrate achievement in the academic content through an appeal process administered at the local level.

Current Board Guidance on Expedited Retake Criteria

The Board of Education has approved the following criteria for students eligible for an expedited retake of an end-of-course Standards of Learning test:

- The student must: need the test for verified credit, have passed the course associated with the test, and have met one of the following:
 - Failed the test by a narrow margin, or
 - Failed the test by any margin and have extenuating circumstances that would warrant retesting, or
 - Did not sit for the regularly scheduled test for legitimate reasons.
- The “narrow margin” criterion shall be defined as a scaled score of 375-399. The division superintendent will be responsible for making the determination of what constitutes “extenuating circumstances” and “legitimate reasons” for the purposes of establishing eligibility for an expedited retest of an end-of-course Standards of Learning test.

Impact of Current Expedited Retake Criteria on Students Using Credit Accommodations

- Under the Board's current guidance students must achieve a scaled score of 375-399 to be eligible for an expedited retake. These criteria were established to allow students who were within a narrow range of the 400 scaled score required to pass the SOL test to immediately retake the test.
- However, to be eligible for an locally awarded verified credit under the credit accommodation policy, a student with a disability needs a scaled score of at least 375.
- Based on this difference, parents and school division staff have asked if the expedited retake criteria for students utilizing credit accommodations might include a range below 375. Such a change would account for the lower score needed for a locally awarded verified credit.

Discussion of Potential Change

Should a new scaled score range for expedited retake eligibility be established for students with disabilities using credit accommodations to pursue a standard diploma?

Current Accountability Policy for Schools with No Tested Grades

“Schools, with grade configurations that do not house a grade or offer courses for which SOL tests or additional tests approved by the Board of Education as outlined in 8VAC20-131-110 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.”

From Standards of Accreditation at 8VAC20-131-280. Expectations for school accountability

Discussion of Potential Change

Should schools that would otherwise be “paired” with another school for the purposes of state accreditation be permitted to submit an alternative accreditation plan for approval by the Board?