

# Virginia Board of Education Agenda Item



Agenda Item: K

Date: September 27, 2012

<b>Title</b>	First Review of Request for Approval of an Alternative Accreditation Plan from Albemarle County School Board for a High School with a Graduation Cohort of Fifty (50) Students or Fewer		
<b>Presenter</b>	Dr. Kathleen M. Smith, Director, Office of School Improvement, Division of Student Assessment and School Improvement		
<b>E-mail</b>	<a href="mailto:Kathleen.Smith@doe.virginia.gov">Kathleen.Smith@doe.virginia.gov</a>	<b>Phone</b>	(804) 225-2865

**Purpose of Presentation:**

Action required by Board of Education regulation.

**Previous Review or Action:**

No previous review or action.

**Action Requested:**

Action will be requested at a future meeting. Specify anticipated date below:  
October 25, 2012

**Alignment with Board of Education Goals: Please indicate (X) all that apply:**

	Goal 1: Expanded Opportunities to Learn
X	Goal 2: Accountability of Student Learning
	Goal 3: Nurturing Young Learners
	Goal 4: Strong Literacy and Mathematics Skills
	Goal 5: Highly Qualified and Effective Teachers and Administrators
	Goal 6: Sound Policies for Student Success
	Goal 7: Safe and Secure Schools
	Other Priority or Initiative. Specify:

**Background Information and Statutory Authority:**

Goal 2: Considering the request for alternative accreditation from Albemarle County School Board for Murray High School will provide the most appropriate course of action to ensure accountability of student learning.

Section 8 VAC 20-131.280.C. of the *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia* (SOA) states:

Subject to the provisions of 8 VAC 20-131-350, the governing school board of special purpose schools such as those provided for in § 22.1-26 of the *Code of Virginia*, Governor’s schools, special education schools, alternative schools, or career and technical schools that serve as the student’s school of principal enrollment may seek approval of an alternative accreditation plan from the Board of Education. Schools offering alternative education programs and schools with a graduation cohort of 50 or fewer students as

defined by the graduation rate formula adopted by the board may request that the board approve an alternative accreditation plan to meet the graduation and completion index benchmark. Special purpose schools with alternative accreditation plans 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.

**Summary of Important Issues:**

The Albemarle County School Board is requesting approval of an alternative accreditation plan for Murray High School, which has a graduation cohort of 50 or fewer students.

Name of School Division	Name of School(s) Submitting Alternative Accreditation Plan	2010 GCI Index	2011 GCI Index	Preliminary 2012 GCI Index
Albemarle County	Murray High	96	68	78

Due to the small cohort size, one student can make a significant difference in the Graduation and Completion Index (GCI). For this reason, the GCI alone is not an appropriate measure for these schools; additional criteria are needed to determine accreditation. The school division is requesting a waiver to 8VAC 20-131-280 (as provided in the background information) of the Standards of Accreditation so that adjustments may be made to the accreditation calculations for accountability purposes. The following are being requested by the school division for the accreditation cycles for three years beginning in 2012:

1. The proposed alternative accreditation plan will be used only if the school fails to meet the GCI benchmark for full accreditation AND the cohort size for the graduating class is less than 50.
2. The maximum number of GCI bonus points allowable for alternative accreditation will be based upon the size of the On-Time Graduation Rate cohort as follows:
  - 0-14 students, no bonus points assigned: the school division will submit a written appeal to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction.
  - Maximum of 5 points for cohorts of 15-20 students
  - Maximum of 4 points for cohorts of 21-40 students
  - Maximum of 3 points for cohorts of 41-50 students
3. The division will submit a written appeal of the accreditation rating to the Superintendent of Public Instruction for cohort sizes of less than fifteen students or in cases where special circumstances warrant explanation and consideration in addition to the maximum point values outlined above.

The proposed school plan is included as Attachment A.

In the event that the cohort size is less than fifteen (15) students or in cases where special circumstances warrant consideration, the Superintendent of Public Instruction will make the final determination.

**Impact on Fiscal and Human Resources:**

None

**Timetable for Further Review/Action:**

Final review at the October 25, 2012, meeting.

**Superintendent's Recommendation:**

The Superintendent of Public Instruction recommends that the Virginia Board of Education accept for first review the proposed alternative accreditation plan for Murray High School from Albemarle County School Board.

Revised 8-7-12  
COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

Attachment A

**REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF AN ALTERNATIVE ACCREDITATION PLAN –  
GRADUATION COHORT OF FIFTY OR FEWER STUDENTS**

The *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia* (8 VAC 20-131-10 et. seq.) set the minimum standards public schools must meet to be accredited by the Board of Education. Accreditation of public schools is required by the Standards of Quality (§§ 22.1-253.13:1 et. seq.). The annual accrediting cycle for public schools is July 1 through June 30. This cover sheet, with the supporting documentation, must be submitted to the Department of Education for review and recommendation to the Board at least 90 days prior to August 1 of the school year in which the plan is to be implemented.

8 VAC 20-131-280 of the *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia* states (in part):

*Subject to the provisions of 8 VAC 20-131-350 . . . schools with a graduation cohort of 50 or fewer students as defined by the graduation rate formula adopted by the board may request that the board approve an alternative accreditation plan to meet the graduation and completion index benchmark.*

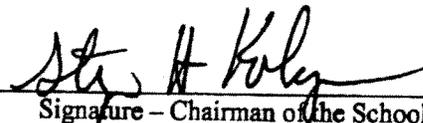
The Board of Education, in its *Guidelines Governing the Implementation of Certain Provisions of the Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia*, states:

*In accordance with the provisions of 8 VAC 20-131-350 of the standards, local school boards may seek waivers of provisions of the standards to address the unique needs of special purpose schools. Such requests must include documentation of the need for the waiver. Waiver requests for special purpose schools and schools with a graduation cohort of 50 or fewer student will be considered based upon specified criteria. All applications must be submitted to the Board for consideration at least 90 days prior to August 1 of the school year. Requests for consideration must be accompanied by information that documents the need for approval of the request. The chair of the local school board and the division superintendent are requested to be in attendance at the Board of Education meeting when the proposal is considered.*

We, the undersigned, submit this request for review and approval by the Board of Education and understand that we are expected to appear before the Board to discuss the program and respond to questions raised.

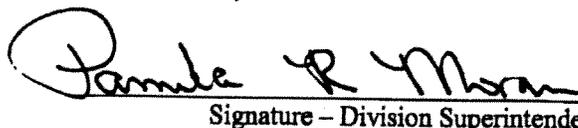
08/09/12

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Approved by the Local School Board

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature – Chairman of the School Board

07/30/12

\_\_\_\_\_  
Submission Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature – Division Superintendent

**ALTERNATIVE ACCREDITATION PLAN TEMPLATE**  
**GRADUATION COHORT OF FIFTY OR FEWER STUDENTS**

**School Name:** Murray High School  
**Division Name:** Albemarle County Public Schools  
**School Address:** 1200 Forest Street Charlottesville, VA 22903  
**Contact Person:** Ashby Kindler  
**Phone Number:** 434-296-3090  
**Email:** [akindler@k12albemarle.org](mailto:akindler@k12albemarle.org)  
**Proposed Duration of Plan:** Three years  
**Grade Levels Served:** 9 - 12  
**Number of Students Enrolled by Grade:**

9th grade 29  
 10th grade 27  
 11th grade 21  
 12th grade 23

**Rationale:**

If this school has a graduation cohort of 50 or fewer students and the school does not meet the 85% Graduation Completion Index (GCI) benchmark, the school would like to apply for an alternative accreditation plan as indicated in 8 VAC 20-131-280 of the *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia*.

Due to the small cohort size, one student can make a significant difference in the index. For this reason, the GCI alone is not an appropriate measure for the school; additional criteria are needed to determine accreditation.

**List the additional performance criteria on which you propose to base the school's accreditation and provide a proposed points award for meeting each criteria. The GCI cannot be changed. Additional criteria proposed must be objective, measurable, and directly address the school's graduation rate. (This will be different for each school. The Virginia Index of Performance may provide useful indicators that may be considered. This information can be found at [http://www.doe.virginia.gov/statistics/reports/va\\_index\\_performance\\_awards/index.shtml](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/statistics/reports/va_index_performance_awards/index.shtml))**

Description of Additional Criteria	Points Added to GCI for Meeting Criteria
GCI bonus for when 75% or more graduates enroll in post-secondary education, join the military, or obtain a full-time job.	+1
GCI bonus for increased percentage of students scoring advanced proficient on EOC reading, writing and/or math SOL assessments	+1
GCI bonus for earning at least 80 VIP Achievement Index Points in English	+1
GCI bonus for increased percentage of students enrolled in Advanced Placement courses	+1

The criteria listed above will be applied to the GCI only if: a) the school fails to meet the GCI benchmark for full accreditation, and b) the cohort size for the graduating class is 50 or fewer students according to the On-Time Graduation Rate cohort formula. If the criteria are applied, the maximum number of GCI points allowable according to cohort size will be:

- No bonus points assigned for 0-14 students. A written appeal to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction will be submitted.
- Maximum of five (5) points for cohorts of 15-20 students.
- Maximum of four (4) points for cohorts of 21-40 students.
- Maximum of three (3) points for cohorts of 41-50 students.

The division will submit a written appeal of the accreditation rating to the State Superintendent of Instruction for cohort sizes of less than 15 students or in cases where special circumstances warrant explanation and consideration in addition to the maximum point values outlined above.

**List those individuals who were involved in the development of the proposed plan.**

**Dr. Billy Haun, Ms. Ashby Kindler, Ms. Betsy Agee**