

Part VIII WORKING DOCUMENT NOT FOR DISTRIBUTION 5/12

Notes and explanations are displayed in text boxes throughout this working document.

Part VIII. School Accreditation

~~8VAC20-131-280. Expectations for School Accountability. [repealed]~~

~~8VAC20-131-290. Procedures for Certifying Accreditation Eligibility. [repealed]~~

~~8VAC20-131-300. Application of the Standards. [repealed]~~

~~8VAC20-131-310. Action Requirements for Schools That Are Designated Partially Accredited in the Following Categories: (I) Improving School Pass Rate; (II) Improving School Graduation and Completion Index; and (III) Warned School. [repealed]~~

~~8VAC20-131-315. Action Requirements for Schools That Are Denied Accreditation. [repealed]~~

~~8VAC20-131-325. Recognitions and Rewards for School and Division Accountability Performance. [repealed]~~

~~8VAC20-131-340. Special Provisions and Sanctions. [repealed]~~

~~8VAC20-131-350. Waivers. [repealed]~~

~~8VAC20-131-360. Effective Date. [repealed]~~

8VAC20-131-370. Expectations for School Accountability and Accreditation.

A. The system of school accountability and accreditation provides a means of determining the quality and effectiveness of schools for the purposes of:

- 1. Providing a comprehensive picture of school quality information to the public;**
- 2. For all schools, driving continuous improvement in school achievement;**
- 3. Building on strengths in schools and addressing specific areas needing improvement; and**
- 4. Informing areas for technical assistance and the use of school improvement resources**

Components of the accountability system, which present expectations and standards for schools and school divisions include:

- 1. The Code of Virginia's Standards of Quality, which provide the foundational education program to be offered by school divisions, including priorities for instructional programs supporting the Standards of Learning, and encompass requirements for assessments and school accreditation**
- 2. The School Quality Profile, as referenced in 8VAC20-131-270A.2., which provides information to parents, citizens, the community, businesses and other agencies, and the general public, about school characteristics and about a comprehensive range of school indicators**

3. The federal accountability provisions required under the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015; and

4. The state accreditation provisions for schools and school divisions, as presented in Part VIII of these regulations

B. Each school shall be accredited based on achievement of the conditions specified in 8VAC20-131-400 and on continuous improvement of performance levels on measures of selected school quality indicators as described in 8VAC 20-131-380.

8VAC20-131-380. Measurement of School Quality for Accreditation.

This section describes the school quality indicators, performance levels, and benchmarks used in to measure school quality for accreditation purposes.

A. School quality for the purposes of accreditation shall be measured for each school using multiple indicators as provided for in Part VIII. School quality indicators include student academic outcomes and other factors which are associated with student learning.

Designation of school quality indicators for accreditation purposes by the board is based on the following criteria:

- 1. Research demonstrates that the indicator is related to academic performance;**
- 2. Standardized procedures exist across schools and school divisions for collection of data used for the indicator;**
- 3. The data about the indicator is reliable and valid;**
- 4. Performance in the indicator is modifiable through division and school-level policies and procedures;**
- 5. The measure meaningfully differentiates among schools based on progress of all students and student reporting groups;**
- 6. The indicator does not unfairly impact one type or group of schools or students; and**
- 7. The indicator is moderately to strongly correlated with school-level pass rates on state assessments.**

Specific indicators designated by the board for accreditation purposes and defined in subsection E include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 1. Academic achievement as measured by passing rates on state assessments from the Virginia Assessment Program for English (reading and writing), mathematics, and science, student growth, and English Learner progress**
- 2. Academic achievement gaps**
- 3. Graduation and school progress as measured by the Graduation Completion Index and dropouts in schools with a graduating class**
- 4. Dropout rates in schools with a graduating class**

5. **Student participation and engagement as measured by chronic absenteeism in elementary and middle schools**
6. **College and career readiness in schools with a graduating class**

The following is taken from the existing 8VAC20-131-280.D.

B. When calculating the passing rates on Virginia assessment program tests for the purpose of school accreditation, the following tolerances for English Learners (EL) and transfer students will apply:

1. The scores of EL students enrolled in Virginia public schools fewer than 11 semesters may be removed from the calculation **used to measure a school quality indicator applied to accreditation.** 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.
2. In accordance with the provisions of 8VAC20-131-30, all students who transfer into Virginia public schools are expected to take and pass all applicable SOL tests in the content areas in which they receive instruction.
3. All students who transfer within a school division shall have their scores counted **in the calculation of the school's passing rates used for measuring the academic achievement school quality indicator.** Students who transfer into a Virginia school from home instruction, or from another Virginia school division, another state, or another country, in grades kindergarten through 8 shall be expected to take all applicable SOL tests or additional tests approved by the board as outlined in 8VAC20-131-110. 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 accreditation ratings.
4. Students who transfer into a Virginia middle or high school from home instruction, or 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 additional tests for that course approved by the board as outlined in 820VAC131-30 and 8VAC20-131-110. 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 accreditation ratings in the year the transfer occurs.
5. 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 **measuring the school academic indicator** in the year in which the transfers occur.

C. Performance Benchmarks. Each school shall be held accountable for attainment on each of the school quality indicators adopted by the board for accreditation purposes, based on measurement against performance benchmarks as defined in board guidelines. Benchmarks measure actual performance or improvement or decline in performance over time, or a combination of the two, for each school quality indicator used for accreditation.

In establishing performance benchmarks, the board shall use standard analytic protocols to assess the impact on schools. Consideration is to be given to whether a proposed benchmark reflects the board's values and expectations, or if the proposed benchmark results in consequences that were not anticipated which could adversely affect schools.

The board may incorporate additional indicators of school quality used for accreditation into these regulations according to the criteria in subsection A, provided that when the board incorporates additional indicators, the board shall also establish performance benchmarks to assign performance levels.

D. Performance Levels. Performance levels on school quality indicators are determined through the definition and application of benchmarks according to board guidelines. Performance levels will be designated for each indicator as one of the following: (a) Level One: At or Above Standard; (b) Level Two; Near Standard or Improvement from Level Three; or (c) Level Three: Below Standard.

The performance levels are described as follows:

1. Level One: At or Above Standard, represented by the color Green. A school's achievement on the specific indicator demonstrates acceptable performance or performance above the benchmark, or adequate improvement in the indicator

2. Level Two: Near Standard or Improvement from Level Three, represented by the color Yellow. A school's achievement on the specific indicator, although below Level One: At or Above Standard, is within specified ranges of performance which represent either: (1) achievement near Level One; or (2) improvement from Level Three: Below Standard.

A school quality indicator within the Level Two: Near Standard or Improvement from Level Three range which does not improve to the Level One: At or Above Standard, at the end of four years, with progress evaluated by the end of the second year, shall be designated as Level Three: Below Standard, at the end of the four-year period.

3. Level Three: Below Standard, represented by the color Red. A school's achievement on the specific indicator is below the performance benchmarks for Level One and Level Two.

Performance levels illustrate a school's standing for each school quality indicator. Displaying accountability information in this manner provides a comprehensive picture of a school's areas of strength, as well as specific areas where improvement is needed. Areas needing improvement shall be addressed through an improvement plan or corrective action plan, which will include specific interventions and strategies.

E. School Quality Indicators for Accreditation Purposes. Effective with the 2018-2019 school year, the board will measure performance levels on the school quality indicators described below and apply them to accreditation. As described in 8VAC20-131-390.B, the year 2018-2019 will be considered a transition year, with school accreditation designations evaluated using both the 2017-2018 criteria and the application of performance levels to school quality indicators according to board guidelines. For 2018-2019 only, a school may achieve accreditation by meeting the criteria of either the 2017-2018 year or the criteria effective 2018-2019, whichever benefits it the most.

1. **Academic Achievement Indicators, All Students. An academic achievement indicator shall be measured for all students for each of the content areas of English (reading and writing), mathematics, and science for each school, according to the number of Standards of Learning tests provided in each of these content areas. The components of the academic achievement indicators are as follows.**
 - a. **For English (reading and writing): the academic indicator will be calculated based on a combination of the student passing rate, student growth for Grades 3 through 8, and English Learner progress, as defined in board guidelines.**
 - b. **For Mathematics: the academic indicator will be calculated based on a combination of the student passing rate and student growth for Grade 3 through Algebra I, as defined in board guidelines;**
 - c. **For Science: the academic indicator will be calculated based on the student passing rate, as defined in board guidelines.**
2. **Graduation and Completion Index (GCI) for schools with a graduating class. The GCI is defined as the percentage of students graduating from or completing high school based upon a graduation and completion index prescribed by the board as provided for in its guidelines. The board's GCI shall include weighted points for diploma graduates, recipients of high school equivalency credentials approved by the board, students not graduating but still in school, and students earning certificates of program completion.**
3. **Academic Achievement Gaps. Academic achievement gaps shall be determined through board guidelines across designated reporting groups for English (reading and writing) and for Mathematics. The achievement gap performance level benchmarks will be defined within board guidelines, using a measure of the magnitude and change of the gap against a state Standard.**
4. **Dropout Rate for schools with a graduating class. The dropout rate shall be as reported by the Virginia Department of Education. A dropout reduction criterion will be part of the indicator to account for school achievement in decreasing the number of dropouts. Benchmarks and performance levels for the dropout rate indicator will be determined and**

applied to high schools according to board guidelines. The board's guidelines may provide for allowances in a school's dropout rate calculation, based on specified circumstances.

5. Chronic Absenteeism for elementary and middle schools. Chronically absent students are defined as those who are enrolled in a given school who miss ten percent or more of the school year regardless of reason. Benchmarks and performance levels for the chronic absenteeism indicator will be determined and applied to elementary and middle schools according to board guidelines. Levels of performance on the indicator will be calculated according to board guidelines and include reduction in the rate of chronic absenteeism as a factor.

No later than the school year 2021-2022, performance levels for accountability will be applied to the following school quality indicator.

6. College and Career Readiness Index for schools with a graduating class. The College and Career Readiness Index measures the extent to which a school's students are engaged in advanced coursework, Career and Technical Education (CTE) coursework and credentialing, and work-based learning. The indicator will be based on data from a student cohort, and applicable to school quality measurement and accountability, according to board guidelines.

The board may designate and approve additional school quality indicators, according to its criteria as specified in subsection A and in its guidelines.

The following paragraph comes from existing 8VAC20-131-280.B.4

F. To establish performance levels for any of the school quality indicators that are based on Virginia Assessment Program outcome data in schools with grade configurations that do not house a grade or offer courses for which SOL tests or additional tests approved by the board as outlined in 8VAC20-131-110 are administered, such schools 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.

8VAC20-131-390. Accreditation.

A. The board shall accredit schools, based on achievement of the school accountability requirements of these regulations.

Provisions in "2" below are taken from existing "Preaccreditation" requirements, 8VAC20-131-290 with compliance with the actions to improve school quality indicator performance added.

The principal of each new or existing school and the division superintendent shall annually document and report to the Department of Education, in a manner prescribed by the board, the following:

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1. The division's promotion/retention policies have been developed in accordance with the requirements of 8VAC20-131-30;
2. Compliance with the requirements to offer courses that will allow students to complete the graduation requirements in 8VAC20-131-50 and 8VAC2021-131-51;
3. The school and school division's ability to offer the instructional program prescribed in 8VAC20-131-70 through 8VAC20-131-100;
4. Compliance with the leadership and staffing requirements of 8VAC20-131-210 through 8VAC20-131-240;
5. Compliance with the facilities and safety provisions of 8VAC20-131-260;
6. Compliance with the parental notification provisions of 8VAC20-131-270.B;
7. 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;
8. **A comprehensive school plan has been prepared and implemented as required by the Standards of Quality, in conjunction with the long-range comprehensive plan of the division. Such plan shall be available to students, parents, staff, and the public. Each school plan shall be evaluated as part of the development of the next plan. Schools may use other plans to satisfy this requirement with prior written approval from the Department of Education.**
9. **Actions prescribed by 8VAC20-131-400 of these regulations have been completed.**
10. Each school continues to meet the Standards reported as met in the previous year, and actions taken to correct any noncompliance issues reported in the previous year.

B. Accreditation Ratings

Effective no later than the academic year 2018-2019, schools that meet the conditions described in subsection A. above shall be assigned one of the following accreditation designations as described in this section.

1. Accredited: When a school has each of its school quality indicators in the Level One: At or Above Standard range, or the Level Two: Near Standard or Improvement from Level Three: range, it shall be "Accredited." For the transition year of 2018-2019, when a school meets the accreditation standards for designation as accredited under either the 2017-2018 accreditation calculation rules or the 2018-2019 rules for multiple school quality indicators, it shall be designated "Accredited."

2. Accredited with Conditions: When a school has any school quality indicator in the Level Three: Below Standard range, it shall be "Accredited with Conditions."

3. Accreditation Denied: When a school or school division fails to implement school division or school corrective action plans with fidelity to address school quality indicators at Level Three: Below Standard according to 8VAC20-131-400, or has taken no action on identified strategies and interventions, the school is reviewed for potential designation by the board as "Accreditation Denied." The board shall deny accreditation for any school that continues to

demonstrate Level Three: Below Standard, performance levels in any school quality indicator due to a failure to implement actions prescribed in a corrective action plan.

The following is from the current
8VAC20-131-340.

C. Any school in violation of these regulations shall be subject to appropriate action by the board including, but not limited to the denial of a school's accreditation.

D. A school's accreditation rating may be withheld by action of the board for any school found to be in violation of test security procedures pursuant to § 22.1-19.1 of the Code of Virginia.

E. The board may exercise its authority to seek school division compliance with school laws pursuant to the relevant provisions of the Code of Virginia when any school within a division has its accreditation denied.

The following language concerning accreditation review cycles implements 2016 legislation according to the use of school quality indicators.

F. Review Cycles.

1. The board shall review annually the status of the performance levels for school quality indicators applied to accreditation for all schools in the Commonwealth.

2. If a school has been fully accredited for three consecutive years, the board shall review the accreditation status of the school every three years. However, the board shall review the status of each school quality indicator used for accreditation each individual year within that triennial period. If the board finds that the school would have been accredited every year of the triennial review period, the board shall accredit the school for another three years. A multiyear accreditation status shall not relieve any school or division of annual reporting requirements, nor shall it relieve any school or division of annual review of school quality indicators used for school accreditation and subsequent actions as appropriate and provided for in 8VAC20-131-400, depending on performance level.

8VAC20-131-400. Application of the School Quality Indicator Performance Levels to Actions.

A. All schools shall conduct a comprehensive needs assessment, in collaboration with their school division staff, to identify needed actions to ensure continuous improvement for their students. Results of the comprehensive needs assessment shall be used to develop a multi-year improvement plan. The multi-year improvement plan shall be reviewed and updated as needed on an annual basis. Confirmation of completion of the plan shall be provided to meet requirements of 8VAC20131-390.A.9.

In determining required actions for schools and school divisions, levels of performance shall be considered separately for each school quality indicator. Responses and actions to be taken by school divisions and schools according to the performance level of each school quality indicator are as follows.

1. Level One: At or Above Standard, Green performance level. If a school quality indicator falls within the Level One range for performance, the school division superintendent and the school principal shall continue to monitor the indicator and the multi-year school improvement plan for continuous improvement. The school's multi-year plan shall be submitted to the Department of Education (department) and reviewed through a department-established process, which may include peer review by staff from other school divisions.

2. Level Two: Near Standard or Improvement from Level Three, Yellow performance level. If a school quality indicator falls within the Level Two range of performance, the school and its school division shall have primary responsibility to determine the issues and conditions which are likely contributing to the school's performance on the indicator and to plan and implement the essential actions and research based strategies designed to improve performance on the indicator to achieve the Level One standard.

School division and school staff shall:

- a. identify factors related to the school's performance on the indicator as part of the school's comprehensive needs assessment
- b. use the results of the comprehensive needs assessment to develop a multi-year school improvement plan which addresses the factors identified in the needs assessment that are related to the performance on the indicator. The school's multi-year improvement plan shall be submitted to the department and reviewed through a department-established process, which may include peer review by staff from other school divisions.
- c. implement the essential actions and research/based strategies with fidelity
- d. regularly evaluate evidence of the school's progress in implementing the plan, monitor changes on the school quality indicator, and make adjustments as warranted
- e. evaluate the progress of the school quality indicator(s) in the Level Two range at the end of each year, and assess the results of the school improvement plan actions at the end of two years. If no progress is made within the two-year period on such school quality indicators, the plan shall be revised.

If the school quality indicator "Academic achievement for all students" is within the Level Two range, the school must undergo an academic review conducted by the department, or under its guidance, to further identify required actions to improve student achievement. Review of other indicators by the department, or under its guidance, may occur based on the school's multi-year school improvement plan.

School divisions with indicators in the Level Two performance range may request technical assistance from the department.

3. Level Three: Below Standard, Red performance level; Corrective Action Plan: If any school quality indicator falls within the Level Three: Below Standard range for performance, a school and school division shall work cooperatively with the department, under its direction, to determine the issues and conditions which are likely contributing to the school's performance on the indicator, and to plan and implement the essential actions and research-based strategies to achieve improvement to the Level One standard.

All schools with indicators in the Level Three performance range must undergo a review conducted by the department, or under its guidance, to further identify required actions to improve student achievement and the school quality indicators which are Below Standard.

Considerations for the level of direction and intervention from the department include, but are not limited to:

- a. **Specific characteristics of the school and school division**
- b. **The number of school quality indicators in the Level Three performance range for the school**
- c. **A school's trajectory on the indicator(s) in the Level Three performance range**
- d. **The length of time the school indicator has been Below Standard and remains Below Standard**
- e. **The number of schools in the division with multiple school quality indicators in Level Three**

Under the direction of department staff, school division and school staff shall:

- a. **identify factors related to the school's performance on the indicators in the Level Three performance range as part of the school's comprehensive needs assessment**
- b. **use the results of the comprehensive needs assessment to develop a multi-year corrective action plan which addresses the factors identified in the needs assessment that are related to the performance on the indicator**
- c. **submit the completed corrective action plan to the department, through the division superintendent**
- d. **implement the essential actions and research-based strategies with fidelity**
- e. **meet regularly with department staff to monitor evidence of the school's progress in implementing the plan, to track improvement on the indicator, and to identify next steps**

4. Level Three: Below Standard; Memorandum of Understanding

School divisions that do not demonstrate evidence of progress in implementing the corrective action plan(s) for a school(s) with indicators in the Level Three performance level shall be required to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding between the local school board and the Virginia Board of Education. The Memorandum of Understanding shall delineate responsibilities for the local school board, the Virginia Board of Education, school division

staff, school staff, and department staff and shall also include required essential actions to improve student achievement and to improve performance on school quality indicators.

Department staff shall meet regularly with school division staff to monitor the Memorandum of Understanding and corrective action plan, to track progress on the indicator(s), and to identify next steps.

School divisions that do not provide evidence of progress under the Memorandum of Understanding and the associated corrective action plan shall be subject to additional actions which may include more frequent meetings with department staff, required technical assistance, or appearance before the Virginia Board of Education.

The following implements 2016 legislation and a provision of the appropriation act.

B. If the board has required a local school board to submit a corrective action plan, the Superintendent of Public Instruction shall determine and report to the board whether each such local school board has met its obligation to develop and submit such corrective action plan(s) and is making adequate and timely progress in implementing the plan(s).

If a state academic review process has identified actions for a local school board to implement, the Superintendent of Public Instruction shall determine and report to the board whether the local school board has implemented required actions. If the Superintendent certifies that a local school board has failed or refused to meet any of those obligations, the board shall withhold payment of some or all At-Risk Add-On funds otherwise allocated to the affected division pursuant to this allocation for the pending fiscal year. In determining the amount of At-Risk Add-On funds to be withheld, the board shall take into consideration the extent to which such funds have already been expended or contractually obligated. The local school board shall be given an opportunity to correct its failure and, if successful in a timely manner, may have some or all of its At-Risk Add-On funds restored at the board's discretion.

The following includes language in the current 8VAC20131-325.

8VAC20-131-410. Recognitions and Rewards for School and Division Accountability Performance.

A. Schools and divisions may be recognized by the board in accordance with guidelines it shall establish for the Virginia Index of Performance (VIP) incentive program. In order to encourage school divisions to promote student achievement in science, technology engineering, and mathematics (STEM), the board shall take into account in its guidelines a school division's increase in enrollments and elective course offerings in these STEM areas. Such recognition may include:

- 1. Public announcements recognizing individual schools and divisions;**

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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, and participation in community activities when setting policy relating to schools and budget development, as well as other appropriate recognition.

B. Schools and divisions may be recognized by the board in accordance with criteria and guidelines it shall establish for top achievement of performance benchmarks for one or more school quality indicators in a peer category. Such schools shall be designated as having achieved an Exemplar level of performance among schools with similar characteristics.

8VAC20-131-420. Waivers and Alternative Accreditation Plans.

“A” below adapted from the current 8VAC20-131-290.D.

A. Except as specified herein, the board may grant, for a period of up to five years, a waiver of these regulations 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 for **a waiver(s) and designate conditions as appropriate.** Waivers of requirements in 8VAC20-131-30, 8VAC20-131-50, **8VAC20-131-51, 8VAC20-131-70, and 8VAC20-131-370 through 8VAC20-131-430** shall not be granted, and no waiver may be approved for a program which would violate the Standards of Quality.

“B” below taken from existing 8VAC20-131-350 and includes language related to implementation of 2016 and 2017 legislation.

B. 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 **justification and/or need** for the waiver. In no event shall waivers be granted to the requirements of Part III (8VAC20-131-30 et seq.) of these regulations except that the board may provide for the waiver of certain graduation requirements in 8 VAC20-131-50 and VAC20-131-51 upon: (i) the board's initiative or (ii) the request of a local school board on a case-by-case basis. The board shall develop guidelines for implementing these requirements.

Any student with a disability whose Individualized Education Program (IEP) or § 504 Plan documents that he or she cannot successfully complete training in emergency first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, or the use of automated external defibrillators, including hands-on practice of the skills necessary to perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation, as required for graduation in B.2. and C.2. of 8VAC20-31-50 and 8VAC20-131-51 shall be granted a waiver from this graduation requirement.

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C. Waivers for innovative and/or school experimental programs.

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:

- a. Purpose and objectives of the experimental/innovative programs;
- b. Description and duration of the programs;
- c. Anticipated outcomes;
- d. Number of students affected;
- e. Evaluation procedures; and
- f. Mechanisms for measuring goals, objectives, and student academic achievement.

“D” below taken from existing 8VAC20-131-280 C, with addition for special circumstances based on Code language § 22.1-253.13:3.H.

D. Alternative Accreditation Plans. Subject to the provisions of subsection B, 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, 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 Diploma or an Advanced Studies Diploma must meet the requirements prescribed in 8VAC20-131-50 or 8VAC20-131-51.

As set forth in the Standards of Quality and according to department procedures, any school board may request the Board of Education for release from state regulations or, on behalf of one or more of its schools, for approval of an Individual School Accreditation Plan for the evaluation of the performance of one or more of its schools as authorized for schools enumerated above in this subsection, based on special circumstances.

“E” below modified from the existing 8VAC 20-131-280.E and includes reference to § 22.1-

E. The board may adopt special provisions related to the **measurement and use of a school quality indicator**, as prescribed by the board. The board may also alter the inclusions and exclusions from the **performance level** calculations by providing adequate notice to local school boards.

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The board may add new assessments or discontinue the use of existing assessments in the Virginia Assessment Program by providing adequate notice to local school boards. As specified in the Standards of Quality, the board may adopt special provisions related to the administration and use of any Standards of Learning test(s) as applied to accreditation ratings for any period during which the Standards of Learning content or assessments in that area are being revised and phased in. Notice shall be provided to local school boards regarding the special provisions prior to statewide administration of such tests.

8VAC20-131-430. Effective dates.

A. Graduation requirements.

1. The graduation requirements for students entering the ninth grade for the first time in the 2013-2014 school year and prior to the 2018-2019 school year shall be those provided in 8VAC20-131-50.
2. The graduation requirements for students entering the ninth grade for the first time in the 2018-2019 school year and beyond shall be those provided in 8VAC20-131-51.
3. The graduation requirements applicable to students transferring into a Virginia high school for the first time shall be as determined by 8VAC20-131-60.G.

B. Locally awarded verified credits.

1. Locally awarded verified credits conferred for history and social science for students entering the ninth grade for the first time prior to the 2018-2019 school year, shall be as provided in 8VAC20-131-110.B.3.a.
2. Locally awarded verified credits conferred for English, mathematics, laboratory science, and history and social science for students entering the ninth grade for the first time in 2018-2019 or thereafter shall be as provided in 8VAC20-131-110.B.3.b.

C. Academic and Career Planning.

1. The requirements for academic and career planning prescribed in 8VAC20-131-140.A shall be effective beginning with the 2013-2014 academic year and through the 2017-2018 academic year.
2. The requirements for Academic and Career Plans prescribed in 8VAC20-131-140.B shall be effective beginning with the 2018-2019 academic year.

D. The application of the College and Career Readiness Index as a school quality indicator used for accreditation will be made no later than the school year 2021-2022.

E. Unless otherwise specified, the remainder of these regulations shall be effective beginning with the 2018-2019 academic year.