

Board of Education Agenda Item

Item: _____ I. _____

Date: _____ July 28, 2011 _____

Topic: First Review of a Request for Approval of an Alternative Accreditation Plan from Chesterfield County Public Schools for Chesterfield Community High School

Presenters: Dr. Kathleen M. Smith, Director of the Office of School Improvement
Dr. Marcus Newsome, Superintendent, Chesterfield County Public Schools

Telephone Number: (804) 225-2865

E-Mail Address: Kathleen.Smith@doe.virginia.gov

Origin:

_____ Topic presented for information only (no board action required)

X Board review required by
_____ State or federal law or regulation
X Board of Education regulation
_____ Other: _____

_____ Action requested at this meeting X Action requested at future meeting: September 22, 2011

Previous Review/Action:

X No previous board review/action

_____ Previous review/action
date _____
action _____

Background Information:

Section 8 VAC 20-131.280.C. of the *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia* 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 Major Elements:

As indicated in Attachment A, Chesterfield Community High School has just completed its 12th year as an alternative school, specializing in dropout recovery and dropout prevention. Most students who come to Chesterfield Community High School are behind their academic cohort by about two years. Chesterfield Community High School has been *Fully Accredited* for the last three consecutive years and has made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for the last two years.

As part of its request for an alternative accreditation plan for Chesterfield Community High School, Chesterfield County Public Schools is requesting a waiver of the following section of the *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia* so that adjustments may be made to the accreditation calculations for accountability purposes.

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

B. Each school shall be accredited based, primarily, on achievement of the criteria established in 8 VAC 20-131-30 and in 8 VAC 20-131-50 as specified below:

1. The percentage of students passing the Virginia assessment program tests in the four core academic areas administered in the school, with the accreditation rating calculated on 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 on the current year's scores, whichever is higher.
2. The percentage of students graduating from or completing high school based on a graduation and completion index prescribed by the Board of Education. The accreditation rating of any school with a twelfth grade shall be determined based on achievement of required SOL pass rates and percentage points on the board's graduation and completion index. School accreditation shall be determined by the school's current year index points or a trailing three-year average of index points that includes the current year and the two most recent years, whichever is higher. The Board of Education's graduation and completion index shall include weighted points for diploma graduates (100 points), GED recipients (75 points), students not graduating but still in school (70 points), and students earning certificates of program completion (25 points). The Board of Education's graduation and completion index shall account for all students in the graduating class's ninth-grade cohort, plus students transferring in, minus students transferring out and deceased students. Those students who are not included in one of the preceding categories will also be included in the index.

Chesterfield County Public Schools is not requesting a waiver from section 8 VAC 20-131-100 of the *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia*.

Superintendent's Recommendation:

The Superintendent of Public Instruction recommends that the Virginia Board of Education accept for first review the request for an alternative accreditation plan from Chesterfield County Public Schools for Chesterfield Community High School.

Impact on Resources:

None

Timetable for Further Review/Action:

Final action will be requested at the meeting on September 22, 2011.

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF AN ALTERNATIVE ACCREDITATION PLAN –
SPECIAL PURPOSE SCHOOLS

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, 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.

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:

Schools described in this section are those that serve as a student's school of principal enrollment and where students are reported in fall membership for the school. Fall membership determines whether or not these schools are subject to the provisions of the accrediting standards; therefore, schools reporting fall membership are subject to the provisions of the standards.

In accordance with the provisions of 8 VAC 20-131-330 of the standards, local school boards may seek waivers of provisions of the standards to address the unique needs of these special purpose schools. Such requests may include an alternative accreditation plan. Applications must be submitted to the Board for consideration at least ninety 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.

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.

6/7/11
Date Approved by the Local School Board

Dianne E. Pettitt
Signature, Chairman of the School Board

6/2/11
Submission Date

Marcus J. Newson
Signature, Division Superintendent

**CHESTERFIELD COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
CHESTERFIELD COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL
CHESTERFIELD, VIRGINIA**

REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF AN ALTERNATIVE ACCREDITATION PLAN

School Name: Chesterfield Community High School

Division: Chesterfield County

School Address: 12400 Branders Bridge Road, Chester, VA 23831

Contact Person: Dr. Traci Teasley **Phone:** (804) 594-1694

Email: Traci_Teasley@ccpsnet.net

Proposed Duration of the Plan: Three Years

Grade Levels Served: 9-12

No. of Students Enrolled by Grade Level:

9 th Grade – 97 Students
10 th Grade – 124 Students
11 th Grade – 44 Students
12 th Grade – 101 Students

INTRODUCTION:

Chesterfield Community High School has just completed its 12th year as an alternative school, specializing in dropout recovery and dropout prevention, in the Chesterfield County Public School System. Community High School has been *Fully Accredited* for the last three consecutive years and has made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for the last two years. Most students who come to Community HS are behind their academic cohort by about two years. Because of the additional graduation requirement for full accreditation and the nature of the population that Community High School serves, the continued recognition of achievement by the staff and students at Community is at risk. As a result, the Chesterfield Community High School seeks an alternative accreditation plan, wherein the school shall be evaluated on standards appropriate to the programs offered in the school.

Community High School meets the state definition of a special purpose school and seeks approval for an alternative accreditation plan as provided in the *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia*, Part VIII, Section 8 VAC 20-131-280 D.

INTENT:

Chesterfield Community High School strives to provide a high school setting with innovative programs and supportive services for students.

VISION/MISSION:

Chesterfield Community High School strives to be a caring educational setting with high expectations for academic achievement, appropriate social behavior, and preparation for the work place and higher education.

TARGET POPULATION:

Community High School serves students in grades 9-12 who are overage, behind academically, and who prefer a smaller setting, with increased personal attention. Most of the students at Community High School are already behind their cohort for graduation when they enroll. Some transfer in after one to three years of high school with few or no course or verified credits. Despite the discrepancy, many Community High School students are able to recover credits through the school's unique instructional program.

INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM:

- The academic program for grades 9-12 will focus on the Virginia Standards of Learning and Virginia requirements for a standard diploma with elective courses offering vocational training, career counseling, job readiness and college preparation,
- Students take four courses each fall and spring term,
- Students are supported through Communities in Schools,
- Credit recovery programs will be provided to students in grades 9-12 using on-site technology and after-school programs,
- Students are given additional time to master specific course objectives, particularly in courses that have an end-of- course (EOC) *Standards of Learning* (SOL) test. This decision will be based on students' performance on four-week assessments, and/or social/environmental issues,
- Students have a variety of avenues to career and technical preparation. At the school, students may gain skills and experience in culinary arts, building trades, and information technology; as well as opportunities to take courses at the Chesterfield Career and Technical Center, and
- GED preparation is available on site.

STAFFING:

Chesterfield Community High School is staffed with a faculty of highly qualified teachers certified to teach the core subject areas proposed. The average class size is 17. Paraprofessionals are assigned to the school as instructional assistants.

STUDENT ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION:

Students will be administered assessments each four weeks in the core subject area with the achievement data tracked and analyzed. All students take the Degrees of Reading Power test to measure their ability to comprehend the meaning of text and place students in the appropriate level of reading materials. Students will participate in the Virginia Standards of Learning Assessment Program.

WAIVER REQUESTED:

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

B. Each school shall be accredited based, primarily, on achievement of the criteria established in 8 VAC 20-131-30 and in 8 VAC 20-131-50 as specified below:

1. The percentage of students passing the Virginia assessment program tests in the four core academic areas administered in the school, with the accreditation rating calculated on 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 on the current year's scores, whichever is higher.
2. The percentage of students graduating from or completing high school based on a graduation and completion index prescribed by the Board of Education. The accreditation rating of any school with a twelfth grade shall be determined based on achievement of required SOL pass rates and percentage points on the board's graduation and completion

index. School accreditation shall be determined by the school's current year index points or a trailing three-year average of index points that includes the current year and the two most recent years, whichever is higher. The Board of Education's graduation and completion index shall include weighted points for diploma graduates (100 points), GED recipients (75 points), students not graduating but still in school (70 points), and students earning certificates of program completion (25 points). The Board of Education's graduation and completion index shall account for all students in the graduating class's ninth-grade cohort, plus students transferring in, minus students transferring out and deceased students. Those students who are not included in one of the preceding categories will also be included in the index.

ACCREDITATION:

Alternate SOL Core Subject Composite Index Point System

Students will participate in SOL end-of-course tests as required by *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* and the *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia*. Student performance for accreditation will be determined based on students passing the SOL end-of-course tests, as shown in Table 1. The SOL scores of students, who receive an AYP Adjustment Code of A, B, or C, will be considered transfer students for the purpose of calculating the state accreditation rating.

Due to the small student population, a composite pass rate is necessary to create a larger number of student scores upon which to calculate state accreditation. An Alternate SOL Core Subject Composite Index score of at least 70 points and an Alternate Graduation and Completion Composite Index score of 85 points must be earned for Community High School will serve as the criteria for a rating of full accreditation.

- For purposes of calculating the Alternate SOL Core Subject Composite Index:
 - test results for all students in reading and mathematics will be included as follows:
 - A scaled score of 500-600 will be weighted at 100 points,
 - A scaled score of 400-499 will be weighted at 100 points,
 - A scaled score of 375-399 will be weighted at 75 points, and
 - A scaled score below 375 will carry no points in the calculation.

Table 1

SOL Core Subject Composite Index Points

Number of Tests Meeting Criteria	SOL Scaled Score	Tiers	Points Awarded for Each Tier	Points Awarded
	500-600	1	100	
	400-499	2	100	
	375-399	3	75	
	Below 374	4	0	
(A) Total Number of Points Awarded				
(B) Total Number of Student Scores				
SOL Core Subject Index Score = (A)/(B)				
Met Alternative Accreditation Requirements: YES/NO				
Yes = Index Score of 70 or above				

Alternate Graduation and Completion Composite Index Point System

An *Alternate Graduation and Completion Composite Index (GCI)* will be used to determine the score for the school's graduation and completion index. The index includes points assigned for the type of diplomas awarded during the school year. The Board of Education's graduation and completion index shall include weighted points for diploma graduates (100 points), GED recipients (75 points), students not graduating but still in school (70 points), and students earning certificates of program completion (25 points). The total points awarded, not to exceed 25, will be divided by the total number of students in the on-time graduation cohort (see Table 2).

Table 2

Alternate Graduation and Completion Index Points

Number of Graduates	Type of Diplomas	Points Awarded for Each Diploma	Points Awarded
	Advanced	100	
	Standard	100	
	Modified Standard	100	
	Special	100	
	GED	75	
	Still in School	70	
	Certificate of Program Completion	25	
(C)Number of Points Awarded			
(D)Number of Students in the Cohort			
Graduation and Completion Index Score (C)/(D)			

Additional GCI points may be earned by meeting the performance criteria in the other GCI indicator category (see Table 3).

Table 3

Additional Graduation and Completion Index Points

Other GCI Indicator	Points Awarded
Increase from the previous year in the percentage of students who complete high school with an Advanced, Standard diploma, or modified standard diploma	5
Increase from the previous year in the percentage of students who pass industry certification tests	5
Increase from the previous year in the percentage of students who successfully complete coursework for industry certification, but lack an overall B average (students will not be counted twice in the item below)	5
Increase in the percentage of students who complete high school with a GED and industry certification (students will not be counted twice in the item above)	5
Increase from the previous year in the percentage of students who enter post-secondary studies in a two- or four-year college, vocational school, enter the military, or obtain a full-time job	10
Increase from the previous year in the percentage of students who have 18 or more credits	5
Fifty percent of the student population placed by the Hearings Office are still enrolled or graduate	5
Increase the graduation rate by 10 points	10

In addition, the plan proposes that certain students be removed from the cohort as indicated:

- Students who discontinue school because of incarceration, and
- Students who are placed in a juvenile detention center.

The categories used to calculate the Alternate Graduation and Completion Index Score are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4

Alternate Graduation and Completion Index Score Calculations

Categories	Points Awarded
Graduation and Completion Index Score = (C)/(D)	
Total Number of Additional Index Points (up to 25 points)	
Alternate Graduation and Completion Index Composite Index Score = [(C)/(D)] + Total number of additional GCI indicator points up to 25 points	

Alternate Accreditation Composite Index Point System

An *Alternate Accreditation Composite Index Point System* will be used to determine the accreditation rating (see Table 5).

Table 5

Accreditation Status

Accreditation Category	Score	Score Required	Status (Met or Not Met)
Alternate SOL Core Subject Composite Index Score = [(A)/(B)]		Must Meet or Exceed 70 points	
Alternate Graduation and Completion Composite Index Score = [(C)/(D)] + Total no. of additional GCI points		Must Meet or Exceed 85 points	
Accreditation Rating			

PROGRAM EVALUATION:

The effectiveness of the program will be evaluated using several criteria. Student achievement will be monitored using report card grades; six-week benchmark assessments; and summer, fall and spring SOL test results. Student attendance and behavior will be monitored weekly by using the Star Base student management system to track attendance and violations of the *Student Standards of Conduct*. Surveys will be distributed to students, faculty/staff and students to gather data for school improvement.

TRANSITION PLAN:

Upon enrollment in Chesterfield Community High School, students and their parents will participate in a two-day orientation in which they are interviewed by the principal and guidance counselor of Community High School. The purposes of the interview are to explain the academic and behavioral expectations of students and to describe the different support services available to students and parents. Also, during the two-day orientation, students take reading, mathematics, and career assessments.

**Virginia Department of Education
Evaluation Criteria
Chesterfield Community High School, Chesterfield County Public Schools
Alternative Accreditation Plans for Special Purpose Schools**

Criteria	Yes	No	N/A
School characteristics and instructional program:			
1. The mission, purpose, and target population of the school justify its categorization as a "special purpose" school and, therefore, eligible to request an alternative accreditation plan.	X		
2. The characteristics and special needs of the student population are clearly defined, and the criteria for student placement require parental consultation and agreement.	X		
3. The program of instruction provides all students with opportunities to study a comprehensive curriculum that is customized to support the mission of the school. <i>The plan requests a waiver of 8 VAC 20-131-90 A-C and 8 VAC 20-131-100 A-B</i>	X		
4. The school provides transition planning to help students be successful when they return to a regular school setting.			X
5. Strategies used to evaluate student progress are aligned to the mission/purpose of the school and include academic achievement measures.	X		
6. Convincing evidence has been provided that students enrolled in the school have not been successful in other schools subject to all the accrediting standards.	X		
7. Students will be taught with highly qualified teachers who meet the Board of Education's licensure requirements for instructional personnel.	X		

Alternative Accreditation Accountability Criteria:			
School characteristics and instructional program:	Yes	No	N/A
8. Rationale and documentation provide convincing evidence that the “special purpose” nature of the school precludes its being able to reach and maintain full accreditation status as defined in the <i>Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia (SOA)</i> .	X		
9. Alternative accreditation criteria described in the plan include academic achievement measures that are objective, measurable, and directly related to the mission and purpose of the school.	X		
10. The plan includes use of statewide assessment student achievement results of English and mathematics.	X		
11. The plan meets the testing requirements of the SOA.	X		
12. The plan meets the testing requirements of NCLB and describes how the school plans to meet “adequate yearly progress” requirements of the federal law.	X		
13. The plan provides convincing evidence that all pre-accreditation eligibility criteria are met for standards in which waivers have not been requested.	X		
14. Waivers have been requested for accrediting standards that are not being met, and the rationale for the waivers are clear and appropriate for the mission/purpose of the school.	X		