

## Notes on the History of Standards of Accreditation

The Code of Virginia in Section 22.1-19 requires the Board of Education to accredit public elementary, middle and secondary schools in accordance with standards prescribed by it.

SOA provide requirements for school instructional programs, roles of staff, graduation, school accreditation and the School Performance Report Card

### Reform Begins 1994, First SOA 1997

Board of Education reform focus areas:

- Raising academic standards through new Standards of Learning
- Measuring student achievement and progress in more rigorous standards through SOL testing
- Ensuring the accountability of schools for student achievement through the Standards of Accreditation
- Communicating with parents, taxpayers, and the community through the School Performance Report Card
- Linking what is taught to what is measured, and what is awarded

Information from the Literacy Passport Test indicated that nearly one in three sixth graders did not pass all three content areas of the test at Grade 6. The failure rate had not improved since the test was first given in 1989. Sweeping reform began in 1994, starting with the revised Standards of Learning, adopted in 1995. The first administration of SOL tests was the spring of 1998.

August 1996 Preliminary public hearings conducted statewide to prepare for comprehensive revisions to the SOA

March-July 1997 public hearings held on draft SOA

October 1997 BOE adopts SOA after 21 public hearings

December 1997 VDOE conducts eight informational workshops about new SOA

School Year 1998-99 SOA new diploma requirements, consisting of 22 units of credit for Standard diploma (raised from 21) and 24 units of credit for Advanced Studies diploma (raised from 23), became effective for Class of 2002

School Year 2000-2001 SOA requirements for six units of verified credits, which require passage of applicable SOL tests, for the Standard diploma and nine units of verified credits for Advanced Studies diploma become effective for Class of 2004

“Standard” unit earned after successful completion of 140 clock hours of instruction in course offered for high school credit and “Verified” unit earned after successful completion of 140 clock hours of instruction and passing SOL test for specific high school course

“Provisionally Accredited” rating representing less than 70 percent passing rate but improvement in scores over previous year phased out after 2003 and replaced with “Accreditation with Warning” for schools not attaining 70 percent passing rate (50 percent for 3<sup>rd</sup> grade Science and History and Social Science)

Beginning with school year 2003-2004, three consecutive years of “Accredited with Warning” status leads to “Accreditation Denied.”

School Year 2006-2007 first year a public school may be denied accreditation (failed to achieve accreditation by the end of the 2005-2006 academic year)

## First Revision 2000

BOE proposed revisions in Oct. 1999 and April 2000, spurred by annual retreat with national educators with expertise in high stakes school accountability and assisting low-performing schools

11 public hearings in 1999 and 2000 in addition to public comment

BOE adopted revised standards in July 2000

Goals of Revision:

- Reaffirm commitment to academic standards
- Identify and target for early intervention and intensive assistance schools needing most help
- Provide flexibility for school achieving or failing to achieve standards
- Recognize schools making major strides but not reaching standards
- Encourage exceeding minimum standards

Major Changes Made:

Substitute tests for SOL tests, such as the Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate for earning verified credits and counting for accreditation

Student-selected SOL test for verified credit may include computer science, technology, or other subjects prescribed by the BOE. Verified credits may be earned for elective courses identified by the BOE as directed by the General Assembly.

Modified Standard Diploma created for certain students with disabilities

Expedited retakes for SOL end-of-course tests; schools may institute remediation recovery established by BOE in English and mathematics –for students retained in grade and not passing the related SOL test to receive additional instruction and retake the SOL test. K-8 in English and mathematics and 9-12 end-of-course mathematics tests and the eighth – grade English (Reading, Literature, and Research) and mathematics SOL tests. Schools receive bonus points for pass rates when students pass.

Standard Diploma must include at least two sequential electives in the six standard units of credit required

Waiver of 140 clock hours of instruction and permission to sit for related SOL test for verified credit upon demonstration of mastery of academic course content and recommendation of school division superintendent

New diploma seals in response to General Assembly requirements: *Board of Education Career and Technical Seal and Seal of Advanced Mathematics and Technology*

Intermediate annual SOL pass rate benchmarks in core academic areas of English, mathematics, science and history/social studies established for academic years 2000-01 through 2003-04 to support rating of “Provisionally Accredited.” Designation of “Provisionally Accredited/Needs Improvement” created for school within 20 percentage points of benchmarks. Pass rate at or below the 20 percentage points results in “Accredited with Warning” designation.

Adjustments to calculation of accreditation ratings during period from 2000-01-2002-03—no use of third-grade science and history/social science test scores. Pass rate for third- and fifth-grade English required for full accreditation changed to 75 percent beginning in 2003-2004

School “Accredited with Warning” in English or math must adopt an instructional method with documented record of success

Academic Reviews of schools “Accredited with Warning” established, to be conducted by VDOE. Review report the basis for School Improvement Plan, which must be filed annually with VDOE.

“Accreditation Withheld/Improving School” rating established for school reaching the pass-rate standard in English, having at least a combined 60 percent pass rate in other academic areas, and having increased their pass rates by at least 25 percentage points since 1998-1999 in the areas needing improvement (less than 70 percent). Designation for three years in place as long as progress is made.

Accreditation determined using a three-year rolling average of student pass rates or the current year’s scores, whichever is greater

Waivers from state regulations for schools achieving pass rates above those required for full accreditation

Role of principal amended with language to recognize role in accountability process

Superintendents must verify in writing by July 1 of each year that curriculum of school divisions has incorporated the SOL into each school’s curriculum and that it is being taught

### **Revision 2006**

Five public hearings and public comment

Goals of Revision:

- Remove obsolete transitional provisions
- Address consequences for schools failing to meet accountability requirements
- Address incentives for schools achieving success

Adopted May 2006

Major Changes Made:

A definitions section was added, to include “class period” “planning period,” and “student periods;” “graduate; “recess;” “reconstitution;” and “standard school day.”

Increased graduation rates: added to school’s goals and objectives

Remediation recovery expanded to K-12 in English and mathematics. Retesting provision removed because no longer needed with annual testing in grades three through eight.

Clarified that accelerated students are to test for the grade level of the content received

Language added to refer to Section 504 plans and Individual Education Programs for students with disabilities and to specify that students with disabilities would be assessed with appropriate accommodations and alternate assessments where necessary

Allowed one-time exemption of Limited English proficient students for SOL testing in writing, science, and history and social science, K-8

Repealed Literacy Passport Tests section

Award of verified credit for a completed career and technical program sequence and earned industry certification, state license or occupational competency credential added. When the credential conferred more than one verified credit, a second verified credit could be substituted for a mathematics, science, or history/social science verified credit for a Standard diploma.

Revision of requirements for Governor's Seal, the Board of Education Seal, and the Board of Education's Career and Technical Education Seal. The Board of Education's Seal for Excellence in Civics Education added.

Clarification that students receive credit for all grade-level work completed in grades K-8 when transferring from Virginia public schools and nonpublic schools accredited by constituent members of the Virginia Council for Private Education (VCPE). Language specifies that all secondary schools shall accept credits toward graduation for nonpublic schools accredited by constituent members of the VCPE.

Recognition that a student transferring into tenth grade from outside of Virginia for the first time may receive a verified credit for science or history or social science for a Standard Diploma, if he or she has completed a career and technical education program sequence and has a certificate, occupational competency credential or license.

Set out requirement to ensure students unable to read with comprehension receive additional instruction and the materials necessary for instruction for elementary, middle, and secondary schools

Required physical fitness programs for students in each elementary and middle school (Governor Warner)

Encouragement for elementary schools to provide foreign language instruction

Required Algebra I as part of minimum course offerings to students in eighth grade

Increased from two to three required secondary school offerings of Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, Cambridge, or college level courses for degree credit, or any combination

Clarified that expedited retakes of SOL tests would enable meeting literacy and numeracy requirements of the Modified Standard Diploma

Added locally awarded verified units of credit for science or history/social science for all students

Allowed substitute tests to include tests administered as part of another state's accountability program

Provided for counseling of students in opportunities for industry certification

Clarified that standard school year is based on instructional days and the standard school day is based on 5 and one half instructional hours

Deleted language referring to alternative schedules

Clarified that instructional time requirements or alternative means of awarding credit, as adopted by the local school board, have been met for homebound instruction

Added to role of principal the notification of parents of rising 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders of the number of standard and verified credits required for graduation, and the number of such credits the student must earn to graduate

Deleted staffing requirements already prescribed in the Standards of Quality (principals, assistant principals, librarians, guidance counselors, and clerical staff)

Specified that guidance counselors for all schools shall provide a minimum of 60 percent of time devoted to counseling of students

Revised language addressing planning periods for middle and secondary school teachers to align with § 22.1-253.13:2 of the Code

Clarified that teaching loads of middle and secondary teachers cannot exceed 5/6 of the instructional day. Beginning with 2008-2009, middle school teachers would have a teaching load of no more than 25 class periods a week. Clarified

that in schools with a traditional six or seven period day, teachers of block programs that encompass more than one class period with no more than 120 student periods per day may teach 30 class periods per week.

Language added to strengthen provision for one planning period per day or equivalent for middle and secondary teachers

Facilities and safety section amended to provide for safe administration and storage of student medications; require written procedures for emergencies, including allergic reaction; and require written procedures for safe evacuation of persons with special physical, medical or language needs

School and Community Communications section amended to clarify that compliance with that section is part of the pre-accreditation eligibility process and to expand data reported on the School report Card to include the number of students obtaining industry certifications and passing state licensure assessments and occupational competency assessments while in high school

Clarified the link between accreditation eligibility and pre-accreditation eligibility, including responsibility of division superintendent in reporting compliance with pre-accreditation eligibility requirements

Revised requirement for pass rates of 75 percent in English in grades 3 and 5 to grades 3 through 5 to reflect annual testing

Revised pass rate for accreditation to 75 percent in English and 70 percent in mathematics, science, and history and social science, beginning with ratings earned in 2010-2011

Rating of "Accreditation Withheld/Improving School Near Accreditation" expired at end of school year 2006-2007

Clarified that accreditation ratings awarded in an academic year are based on assessment results from the immediately prior academic year. Clarified that withholding a school's accreditation rating shall not interrupt the three consecutive year criteria counted in receiving denied accreditation

Clarified that a reconstituted school rated "Conditionally Accredited" may have its accreditation rating revert to "Accreditation Denied" if it does not achieve "Fully Accredited" or fails to have its annual application for the rating renewed

Clarified actions for schools "Accredited with Warning" or "Accreditation Withheld/Improving School Near Accreditation" to include adoption of research-based instructional intervention, academic review, and preparation of a school improvement plan

Added new section to clarify action requirements for schools denied accreditation, including parent notification of rating within 30 calendar days; a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the BOE and the local school board to be entered into no later than November 1 of the year in which rating is awarded; submittal of a corrective action plan to BOE within 45 days of notification of rating, to be considered in the MOU; and submittal of status reports

Modification of the option for reconstituting a school to require local school board to apply annually for an accreditation rating of "Conditionally Accredited," to be granted up to three years if progress towards full accreditation is being made, according to the application terms

Repealed Provisional Accreditation benchmarks

Added recognitions and rewards for school accountability performance, including waiver from annual accreditation for maintaining a pass rate of 95 percent or above for two consecutive years

Revised provisions for Governor's Award for Outstanding Achievement Language to require full accreditation and significant closure of student subgroup achievement gaps

## **Revision 2009**

### Goals of Revision:

- Incorporate graduation and completion rate for schools into accountability system (Graduation and Completion Index)
- Prescribe requirements for Standard Technical Diploma and Advanced Technical Diploma, as directed by HB 2039 and SB 1147 (2007) and HB 97 (2008)
- Require all students, beginning in middle school, to have an Academic and Career Plan (Governor Kaine)

BOE committee researched and recommended policies to reduce students dropping out of high school and to improve graduation rates. The Graduation and Completion Index resulted.

### Major Changes Made:

Required one credit in economics and personal finance for Standard, Standard Technical, Advanced Studies, and Advanced Technical Diplomas

Permitted credit earned through online program Virtual Virginia to be accepted in Virginia public schools

Required the preparation of an Academic Career Plan, beginning with seventh graders in 2010-2011, with completion by fall of the eighth-grade year

Reduced points assigned in Graduation and Completion Index for certificate of completion from 60 to 25 points; First year of “Provisionally Accredited” or “Accredited with Warning” due solely to Graduation and Completion Index 2011-2012, based on 2010-2011 academic year

## **Revision June 2012**

Purpose: Emergency Regulations to comport with legislation passed by General Assembly (HB 1061 and SB 489)

Approved by Governor 10/14/04

### Major Changes Made:

Required students to earn a career and technical education credential approved by BOE for Standard Diploma, beginning with first-time ninth graders in 2013-2014 school year

Folded the Modified Standard Diploma into the Standard Diploma, and required the BOE to establish credit accommodations for students with disabilities, including approved alternative courses; modifications or requirements for locally awarded verified credits; approval of additional tests to earn verified credit; adjusted cut scores required to earn verified credit; and allowance of work-based learning experiences

Eliminated Standard Technical Diploma and the Advanced Technical Diploma

Required completion of one virtual course for Standard or Advanced Studies Diploma, which may be noncredit-bearing

Specified that the Advanced Studies Diploma is recommended for students pursuing baccalaureate study. Both the Standard and Advance Diplomas shall prepare students for postsecondary education and career readiness

### **Proposed Revision to Add Section for Regulation of Public Virtual Schools Enrolling Students Full Time 2013**

Adopted by BOE April 2013 to comport with HB 1215, which requires the Board of Education to establish standards for accreditation of public virtual schools enrolling students full time under the authority of the local school board

Revises the definitions section to include definition of “public virtual school.”

Provides that public virtual schools would be required to meet all laws and regulations required of all other public schools

Requires access to the necessary technology for participation in the public virtual schools courses for each student enrolled in a public virtual school. Internet connection must be broadband. Policies must be developed to provide low cost or no cost access to technology hardware and Internet for students who cannot afford it.

Requires technical security for students and teachers, with supporting services and training

Subjects students in public virtual schools to the compulsory attendance law and would require further enrollment, or instructional support in various ways as needed, should a student master course content and complete all course requirements in fewer than 180 days or 990 hours

Requires student access to library resources, guidance counseling and student support services, and extracurricular activities, from appropriately licenses and endorsed personnel

Exempts public virtual schools from school facilities and safety requirements, unless operated in a stand-alone facility

Requires policies and procedures unique to enrollment and matriculation in the public virtual school to be provided to parents and posted on the school division’s Web site. Policies and procedures addressing student attendance and related disciplinary actions, including maintenance of records are included.

Permits licensed personnel employed by the public virtual school provider to supervise student testing for the Virginia assessment program. All teachers providing instruction in a full-time virtual school must hold a valid Virginia teaching license and appropriate endorsement

Requires monitoring of student engagement

### **Proposed Revisions as a Result of Comprehensive Review 2013 and Legislation**

Incorporates emergency regulations

Adopted by BOE October 2013

Pending completion of APA

Major changes include:

Closing the achievement gap as a focus area for schools

Permitting students in grades three through eight to have opportunities to retake a SOL test should funds be appropriated by the General Assembly, consistent with criteria set by Board

Requiring divisions to have polices preventing dropping courses to ensure that course schedules are not changed to avoid end-of-course assessments

Requiring the Special Diploma for students with disabilities to include career competencies identified by the IEP team

Deleting language that prohibits students in grades three through eight from taking more than one test in a content area in the same year

Adding a provision to clarify that students who fail to achieve a passing score on all relevant Standards of Learning tests in grades three through eight, and for students who fail to achieve a passing score on an end-of-course Standards of Learning test required for verified credit, are required to attend a remediation program or participate in another form of remediation.

In accordance with HB 2028 and SB 986, beginning with the ninth-grade class of 2016-2017, requiring students to be trained in emergency first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, and the use of automated external defibrillators to be awarded a Standard or an Advanced Studies Diploma, in 8VAC20-131-50. There would also be a provision for a waiver for students with disabilities whose Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or § 504 Plan documents that they cannot successfully complete the hands-on training. There would be corresponding language in 8VAC20-131-350, Waivers.

Clarifying that students who were first-time ninth graders prior to 2013-2014 would continue to be eligible to earn a Modified Standard Diploma.

The requirements for a Special Diploma for students with disabilities in 8VAC20-131-50 would include career competencies identified by the IEP team, in accordance with guidelines developed by the Board, and the IEP team would be responsible for verifying the successful completion of these competencies.

The requirements for a Governor's Diploma Seal would be more rigorous, and would include a provision that the student must earn a one-year Uniform Certificate of General Studies or an associate degree earned concurrent with the high school diploma.

The requirements for a Board of Education's Diploma Seal would also be more rigorous and would include a provision that the student must earn at least nine transferable college credits in Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, Cambridge, or dual enrollment courses, which is currently included in the requirements to earn the Governor's Diploma Seal.

The requirements for transfer students would be revised to comport with the provisions for the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children (with the exception of students transferring from one Virginia public school to another). Under those provisions, other states' end-of-course and exit assessments required for graduation would be accepted for the purpose of earning a verified credit.

Adding a provision to specify the requirement in the Standards of Quality that elementary schools would be required to provide early identification, diagnosis, and assistance for students with deficits in reading or mathematics.

Students in grade three who have reading deficiencies based on their performance on the Standards of Learning test in reading would be required to receive intervention services.

Students in middle schools and secondary schools who need targeted mathematics remediation and intervention would be required to receive additional instruction in mathematics.

Eliminating the requirement that students be provided with 140 clock hours of instruction in English, mathematics, science, and history/social science. Instead, students would be provided with a total of at least 560 clock hours of instruction in these four academic disciplines.

The 140 clock hour requirement for a standard credit would be eliminated, and would be replaced with the requirement to demonstrate mastery of the course content.

The clock hour requirement for summer school courses would also be eliminated.

The role of the principal would include determining strategies necessary to close the achievement gap.

A provision would clarify that the principal is also responsible for ensuring the security of tests administered to students, and cell phones and other devices with texting and camera capabilities would be prohibited in a room where Standards of Learning tests are administered.

Requirements for the standard teaching load for middle and secondary school teachers are clarified to include 5/6th of the instructional day, or the equivalent in minutes per week, with no more than 150 students per school year; however, physical education and music teachers may teach 200 students per school year. A teacher's planning period would be 1/6th of the instructional day, or the equivalent in minutes per week, regardless of configuration of class schedules.

A provision would be added about the threat assessment team required by HB 2344.

The number of lock-down drills would be increased to two, in accordance with HB 2346.

The requirements for staff trained in emergency first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, and the use of an automated external defibrillator would be added, pursuant to HB 2028 and SB 986.

The requirements for procedures to follow for the possession and administration of epinephrine, as specified in HB 1107 and SB 656 (2012) would be added.

Language would be added to include a notice to parents about any sensitive or explicit materials that may be included in the course, the textbook, or any supplemental instructional materials.

The calculation for the Graduation and Completion Index would be revised to add three points for students who earn a diploma and a CTE credential, pursuant to HB 642 and SB 514 (2012).

A school that is "paired" for accreditation purposes, and has no tested grades, may be unpaired and accredited based on an alternative accreditation plan, using growth indicators, approved by the Board.

A new accreditation rating, "Fully Accredited with Distinction," would be added. The criteria for this rating would be a pass rate of 90 percent or above in each of the four core academic areas; and in the case of elementary and middle schools, at least 50 percent of the lowest performing 25 percent of students meet student growth indicators approved by the Board; or in the case of high schools with a graduating class, a graduation rate of 90 percent or higher, based on Virginia's On-Time Graduation Rate.

The ratings would be separated for "Conditionally Accredited – New" and "Conditionally Accredited – Reconstituted."

With tests administered beginning in 2015-2016, for accreditation ratings awarded in 2016- 2017 and beyond, the pass rate would increase to 75 percent in mathematics for a school to be fully accredited.

There would be a process for a local school board to appeal an accreditation rating. The appeal process may consider student growth data from state assessments and other assessments approved by the Board.

The other assessments must meet specified criteria set by the Board and be administered on a multistate or international basis, or administered as part of another state's accountability assessment program, or listed on the Virginia Department of Education Student Growth Assessment state contract. The test must incorporate or exceed the applicable SOL content and must measure and report individual growth relative to a year's worth of progress.

Language references §§ 22.1-27.1 through 22.1-27.6 of the Code of Virginia, related to the Opportunity Educational Institution. There is similar language in 8VAC20-131-315, Action requirements for schools that are denied accreditation.

A provision would be added to permit schools "Accredited with Warning" at the beginning of the third year to seek a Conditionally Accredited-Reconstituted rating for a period not to exceed three years. The school division must apply annually to the Board for this rating. If the school fails to have its annual application approved, or if it fails to be Fully Accredited at the end of three years, the accreditation rating will revert to Accreditation Denied.