

STANDARDS OF LEARNING TESTS AND GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

I. Standards of Learning (SOL) Tests and Verified Units of Credit

The Board of Education has established educational objectives known as the Standards of Learning, which form the core of Virginia's educational program, and other education objectives, which together are designed to ensure the development of this skills that are necessary for success in school and in preparation for life in the years beyond.

The Albemarle County School Board has developed and implemented a program of instruction that is aligned to the Standards of Learning and that meets or exceeds the requirements of the Board of Education.

In kindergarten through eighth grade, where Standards of Learning (SOL) tests are required by the Board of Education, each student is expected to take the SOL tests. Schools will use the SOL test results in kindergarten through eighth grade as part of a set of multiple criteria for determining the promotion or retention of students.

Each student in middle and secondary school will take all applicable end-of-course SOL tests. Students who successfully complete the requirements of the course and achieve a passing score on an end-of-course SOL test will be awarded a verified unit of credit in that course. Students may earn verified credits in any courses for which end-of-course SOL tests are available. Middle and secondary schools may consider the student's end-of-course SOL test score in determining the student's final course grade.

The standard unit of credit for graduation is based on a minimum of 140 clock hours of instruction and successful completion of the requirements of the course.

A verified credit for graduation is based on a minimum of 140 clock hours of instruction, successful completion of the requirements of the course, and the achievement by the student of a passing score on the end-of-course SOL test do that course or additional tests as described below.

A student may also earn a verified unit of credit by the following methods:

- in accordance with the provisions of the Standards of Quality, students may earn a standard and verified unit of credit for any elective course in which the core academic SOL course content has been integrated and the student passes the related end-of-course SOL test. Such course and test combinations must be approved by the Board of Education.
- upon the recommendation of the division superintendent and demonstration of mastery of course content and objectives, qualified students may receive a standard unit of credit and be permitted to sit for the relevant SOL test to earn a

verified credit without having to meet the 140-clock-hour requirement.

The superintendent by regulation will determine the manner in which a student may demonstrate mastery of course content and objectives, and documentation of such mastery will be maintained in the student's permanent record.

Students may also earn verified credits by taking alternative tests to the SOL assessment. Such tests may only be those approved by the Virginia Board of Education, and the student may earn verified credits only by achieving that score established by the Board of Education.

Participation in SOL testing program by students with disabilities will be prescribed by provisions of their Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan. All students with disabilities will be assessed with appropriate accommodations and alternate assessments where necessary.

All students identified as limited English proficient (LEP) will participate in the SOL testing program. A school-based committee will convene and make determinations regarding the participation level of the LEP students. In kindergarten through eighth grade, LEP students may be granted a one-time exemption from SOL testing in the areas of writing, science, and history and social science.

II. Graduation Requirements

A. Generally

In order to graduate from Albemarle County Public Schools, a student must meet all applicable requirements set forth in the Standards of Accreditation and the Standards of Quality. The requirements for a student to earn a diploma are those in effect when he or she enters ninth grade for the first time.

- The school board will notify the parent of rising eleventh and twelfth grade students of
- (i) the number of standard and verified units of credit required for graduation pursuant to the Standards of Accreditation and
 - (ii) the remaining number of such units of credit the individual student requires for graduation.

B. Types of Diplomas and Certificates

The Albemarle County School Board will award the following types of diplomas and certificates in accordance with state laws and regulations.

1. Standard Diploma

A Standard Diploma will be awarded to students who earn the following standard units of

credit:

Discipline	Standard units of credit required	Verified units of credit required
English	4	2
Mathematics	3	1
Laboratory Science	3	1
History and Social Sciences	3	1
Health and Physical Education	2	
Fine or Performing Arts or Career and Technical Education	1	
Electives	6	
Student Selected Test		1
Total	22	6

2. Advanced Studies Diploma

An Advanced Studies Diploma will be awarded to students who earn the following standard units of credit:

Discipline	Standard units of credit required	Verified units of credit required
English	4	2
Mathematics	4	2
Laboratory Science	4	2
History and Social Sciences	4	2
Foreign Language	3	
Health and Physical Education	2	
Fine or Performing Arts or Career and Technical Education	1	
Electives	2	
Student Selected Test		1
Total	24	9

3. Modified Standard Diploma

Note: The Modified Standard Diploma will not be an option for students with disabilities who enter ninth grade for the first time beginning in 2013-2014. Credit accommodations allow students with disabilities who previously would have pursued a Modified Standard Diploma to earn a standard diploma.

Eligibility and participation in the Modified Standard Diploma program will be determined by the student's IEP team and the student, where appropriate, at any point after the

student's eighth grade year. The school in which the student is enrolled must secure the informed written consent of the parent or guardian and the student to choose this diploma program after review of the student's academic history and the full disclosure of the student's options.

Students pursuing the Modified Standard Diploma will pass literacy and numeracy competency assessments prescribed by the Board of Education. In addition, students must earn the following standard units of credit:

Discipline	Standard units of credit required
English	4
Mathematics	3
Science	2
History and Social Sciences	2
Health and Physical Education	2
Fine or Performing Arts or Career and Technical Education	1
Electives	6
Total	20

4. Special Diplomas

A Special Diploma will be awarded to each disabled student who successfully completes the requirements set forth in his/her IEP, but does not meet the requirements for other diplomas.

The school board will notify the parent of students with disabilities who have an IEP and who fail to meet the requirements for graduation of the student's right to a free and appropriate education to age 21, inclusive, pursuant to Va. Code § 22.1-213 et seq.

5. Certificates of Program Completion

A Certificate of Program Completion will be awarded to any student who completes a prescribed program of studies defined by the local school board but who is not eligible to receive a standard, advanced studies, modified standard, special, or general achievement diploma.

The school board will notify the parent of students who fail to graduate or who fail to achieve the number of verified units of credit required for graduation as provided in the Standards for Accreditation and who have not reached 20 years of age on or before August 1st of

the school year of the right to a free public education. If the student who does not graduate or achieve such verified units of credit is a student for whom English is a second language, the school board will notify the parent of the student's opportunity for a free public education in accordance with Va. Code § 22.1-5.

6. General Educational Development (GED)

a. Generally

The Board of Education has established a program of testing for general educational development (GED) through which persons may earn a high school equivalency certificate or a General Achievement Diploma. The following persons may participate in the testing program:

- persons who are at least 18 years of age and not enrolled in public school or not otherwise meeting the school attendance requirements set forth in Va. Code § [22.1-254](#);
- persons 16 years of age or older who have been instructed by their parents in their home pursuant to Va. Code § [22.1-254.1](#) and who have completed such home school instruction;
- persons who have been excused from school attendance pursuant to subsections B and C of Va. Code § [22.1-254](#);
- persons for whom an individual student alternative education plan has been granted pursuant to subsection D of Va. Code § [22.1-254](#); and
- persons 16 through 18 years of age who are housed in adult correctional facilities and who are actively pursuing a GED certificate but who are not enrolled in an individual student alternative education plan pursuant to subsection D of Va. Code § [22.1-254](#);
- persons 16 years of age or older who have been expelled from school pursuant to Va. Code §§ [22.1-277.06](#) through [22.1-277.08](#); and
- persons required by court order to participate in the testing program.

Under no circumstances will anyone under the age of 16 be eligible for the testing program.

Only those entities designated by the Department of Education as official Virginia GED testing centers will determine whether an individual is eligible to take GED tests. GED tests will be administered only at official Virginia GED testing centers or addendum test sites that have been approved by the Virginia GED Administrator and the GED Testing Service.

Official test scores may be accepted from an approved state agency, an official jurisdiction responsible for overseeing GED testing, or an official GED testing center outside of Virginia.

An individual may take the full battery of tests up to three times during a calendar year. Test scores may be combined in accordance with GED Testing Service policy.

b. General Achievement Diploma

A General Achievement Diploma is intended to provide a diploma option for individuals who leave high school without a diploma. It should not be a first option for high school students. A General Achievement Diploma will be awarded to eligible candidates who satisfy the following requirements.

In order to be eligible for a General Achievement Diploma, an individual must meet one of the following criteria:

- be at least 18 years old and not enrolled in public school;
- not otherwise be subject to Virginia's compulsory school attendance requirements.

In order to be awarded a General Achievement Diploma, candidates must earn a total of twenty standard units of credit including the following:

- four standard units of credit in English;
- three standard units of credit in mathematics;
- two standard units of credit in science;
- two standard units of credit in history and social sciences; and
- nine standard units of credit in electives.

The required standard units of credit may be earned by enrolling in:

- a public school if the candidate meets the age requirements;
- a community college or other institution of higher education;
- an adult high school program; or
- correspondence, distance learning, and online courses.

Candidates for a General Achievement Diploma must participate in GED preparation and must achieve a passing score on the GED examination.

c. General Educational Development (GED) Certificates

GED certificates may be issued to individuals who:

- are at least 18 years of age and not enrolled in a public or private high school; and
- achieve the minimum passing score requirements set by the GED Testing Service of the American Council on Education or such higher score requirements that may be established by the Virginia Board of Education.

Amended: April 24, 2008; October 10, 2013

Legal Ref.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 22.1-253.13:1, 22.1-253.13:3, 22.1-253.13:4

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