

# Virginia Commission on Youth – Truancy and School Dropout Prevention Advisory Group

## *Virginia Board of Education - Proposed Changes to the Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia – 2009 Update*

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# Status of Regulatory Action:

- At its February meeting, the Virginia Board of Education approved final changes to its regulations governing the accreditation of public schools.
- The regulatory changes included the following:
  1. prescribing the requirements of the Standard Technical Diploma and the Advanced Technical Diploma;
  2. requiring a course in economics and personal finance as a graduation requirement;
  3. requiring all students, beginning in middle school, to have an Academic and Career Plan; and
  4. incorporating graduation rates into Virginia's accountability system.

# Technical Diploma Changes:

- The academic requirements for the two technical diplomas meet or exceed the requirements for the Standard and Advanced Studies Diplomas.
- The technical diplomas require one standard credit in economics and personal finance. (This change also applies to the Standard and Advanced Studies diplomas.)
- For the Standard Technical Diploma, a student must earn four standard credits in career and technical education in a career concentration approved by the Virginia Board of Education.

# Technical Diploma Changes (cont'd):

- For the Advanced Technical Diploma, a student must earn three standard credits in career and technical education in a career concentration approved by the Virginia Board of Education. For this diploma, students also have the option to either:
  1. take one additional credit in career and technical education or
  2. take one credit in fine arts.
- If a career concentration includes a specific assessment approved by the Virginia Board of Education and the student is eligible to take this assessment, the student must take this assessment to earn either diploma.
- Appendices A and B contain detailed information regarding the graduation requirements for the technical diplomas.

# The Academic and Career Plan:

- All schools must begin development of a personal Academic and Career Plan for each seventh grade student, for completion by the fall of the eighth grade.
- The plan shall include the student's program of study for high school graduation and a postsecondary pathway based on a student's academic and career interests.

# **The Academic and Career Plan (cont'd):**

- The plan shall be reviewed and updated if necessary before the student enters the ninth and eleventh grades.**
- Any personal Academic and Career plans prescribed by local school boards that are in effect as of June 30, 2009, are approved to continue without further action of the Board.**

# Graduation and Completion Index:

- Schools with a graduating class will be required to meet this index, in addition to meeting the required Standards of Learning pass rates, in order to be fully accredited.
- The inclusion of the index in the accreditation ratings will begin with tests administered in academic year 2010-2011, for accreditation ratings awarded for school year 2011-2012.
- There is a five-year phase-in period, where schools can be rated Provisionally Accredited. This rating is awarded if the school achieves the minimum thresholds for Standards of Learning tests scores but does not meet a minimum threshold for the graduation rate but meets prescribed benchmarks outlined in the regulations.

# Effective Dates for Regulations:

- Now that the Virginia Board of Education has approved the final version of the proposed regulations, the changes must go through the final stages of the regulatory process, in conformance with the Administrative Process Act.
- The final regulations would make all changes relative to graduation requirements effective with the 2010-2011 academic year.

# Next Steps:

- To supplement its regulations for accrediting Virginia public schools, the Virginia Board of Education also provides a guidance document to the regulations.
- Now that the regulatory changes are in the final stages, department staff will begin reviewing this guidance document in order to recommend appropriate changes to the Board. The guidance document will be examined to determine what changes are needed relative to the new graduation requirements.

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# Appendix A:

The proposed requirements for the Standard Technical Diploma are as follows:

Subject	Credits Needed for Graduation	Verified Credits
English	4	2
Mathematics	3	1
Laboratory Science	3	1
History & Social Sciences	3	1
Health and Physical Education	2	
Fine Arts or Foreign Language	1	
Economics and Personal Finance	1	
Career and Technical Education	4	
Electives	1	
Student Selected		1
Total	22	6

# Appendix B:

The proposed requirements for the Advanced Technical Diploma are as follows:

Subject	Credits Needed for Graduation	Verified Credits
English	4	2
Mathematics	4	2
Laboratory Science	4	2
History & Social Sciences	4	2
Foreign Language	3	
Health and Physical Education	2	
Economics and Personal Finance	1	
Fine Arts or Career and Technical Education	1	
Career and Technical Education	3	
Student Selected		1
Total	26	9