

## STANDARDS OF LEARNING ASSESSMENTS, VERIFIED UNITS OF CREDIT, AND DIPLOMA CLASSIFICATION REGULATIONS

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

- A. Each student in middle and high school shall take all applicable end-of-course SOL Assessments following course instruction. Students who enroll in high school as freshmen before July 1, 2018, as sophomores before July 1, 2019, as juniors before July 1, 2020 or as seniors before July 1, 2021 are required to earn standard and verified units of credit as specified in the regulations of the Board of Education and as described below.
- B. Students who achieve a passing score on an end-of-course SOL Assessment and a passing grade for the course shall be awarded a verified unit of credit in that course.
- C. Students may earn verified units of credit in any course for which end-of-course SOL Assessments are available.
- D. Upon the recommendation of the 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 Assessment to earn a verified credit without having to meet the 140-clock-hour requirement.
- E. Students may earn verified credits by taking substitute assessments approved by the Board of Education that may be used in lieu of a Standards of Learning Assessment to obtain verified credit. The Board of Education will set the score that must be achieved to earn a verified unit of credit on the additional assessment options.
- F. **Limited English Proficient Students:** All students identified as Limited English proficient (LEP) shall participate in the Virginia assessment program:
  1. A school-based committee shall convene and make determinations regarding the participation of LEP students in the Virginia assessment program and which, if any, testing accommodations and/or exemptions are appropriate in accordance with state and federal guidelines.
  2. Exemptions from testing must be documented in the student's LEP Student Assessment Participation Plan and conveyed to the LEP student's parent(s) or guardian(s).
- G. **Students with Disabilities:** Students with disabilities shall be assessed in accordance with state and federal guidelines:
  1. The IEP Team or 504 Committee makes decisions about participation in each of the assessments and the need for and selection of accommodations.

2. All students with disabilities must be considered for participation in the SOL Assessments.
3. Generally, decisions about how a student with a disability will be assessed should be made independently for each content area.
4. The IEP Team or 504 Committee should consider the available assessment options.

## **II. Graduation Requirements and Parent/Guardian Notification of Student Status Related to Graduation**

- A. In order to graduate from ACPS, a student must meet all applicable requirements set forth in the Standards of Accreditation, the Standards of Quality and this regulation. The requirements for a student to earn a diploma are those in effect when he or she enters the ninth grade for the first time.
- B. Notification of Student Status in Completing Graduation Requirement  
ACPS will notify the parent/guardian of rising eleventh- and twelfth-grade students of:
  1. The number of standard and verified units of credit required for graduation pursuant to the Standards of Accreditation; and
  2. The remaining number of such units of credit the individual student requires for graduation.
- C. Notification Related to Students' Failure to Graduate:
  1. School Board designees shall notify the parent/guardian of students who fail to graduate or who fail to achieve the number of verified credits required for graduation as provided in the Standards of Accreditation and who have not reached 20 years of age on or before August 1<sup>st</sup> of the school year of the right to a free public education.
  2. School Board designees will notify the parent/guardian of students with disabilities who have an IEP and who fail to meet the requirements for graduation of the student's rights to a free and appropriate education to age 21, inclusive, pursuant to Va. Code §22.1-213 et seq.
  3. If a student who does not graduate or achieve such verified units of credit is a student for whom English is a second language and who entered school in Virginia for the first time after reaching his/her twelfth birthday, the School Board designees will notify the parent/guardian of the student's opportunity for a free public education to age 21, in accordance with Virginia Code § 22.1-5.

## **III. Types of Verified Credit Diplomas Offered in Alexandria City Public Schools**

ACPS will offer two verified credit diplomas:

## A. Advanced Studies Diploma

ACPS shall award an Advanced Studies Diploma to any student who successfully completes the requirements set forth in the Standards of Accreditation and the Standards of Quality, which are reflected in the current Program of Studies.

Advanced Studies Diploma requirements from the 2016-17 Program of Studies are listed below:

2016-17 PROGRAM OF STUDIES: A PLANNING GUIDE FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS

General Information

7

## GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

ADVANCED STUDIES DIPLOMA		
Discipline Area	Standard Credits Revised Advanced Studies Diploma Effective with the 9th Grade Class of 2011-12 and beyond	Verified Credits
English	4	2
History and Social Sciences	4	2
Mathematics	4	2
Laboratory Sciences	4	2
World Languages	3	
Health and Physical Education	2	
Fine Arts or Career and Technical Education (CTE)	1	
Human Growth and Development**	1**	
Economics and Personal Finance	1	
Electives	2	
Student-Selected Tests		1
<b>Total</b>	<b>26*</b>	<b>9</b>

Note: Requirements for a student to earn a diploma from a Virginia high school shall be those in effect when that student enters the 9th grade for the first time.

\* Advanced Studies Diplomas – One credit must be earned in an Advanced Placement or Dual Enrollment course.

\*\* To opt out of this requirement, follow the directions on pages 10-13.

## EXPLANATIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

### I. DISCIPLINES AND COURSES

#### English –

English 9, honors or standard  
English 10, honors or standard  
English 11, honors or standard, Advanced Placement (AP) English Language or Dual Enrollment (DE) College Composition  
English 12, honors or standard, AP English Literature and Composition, DE College Composition or DE Survey of World Literature

#### Mathematics –

At or above the level of Algebra, credits shall include at least three course selections from among Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra Functions and Data Analysis, Algebra II or above Algebra II. Students in grades 7 and 8 who take Algebra and Geometry during middle school will earn a high school credit for each subject.

#### Laboratory Sciences –

Four credits must be earned from among three different science disciplines: Earth Science, Biology, Chemistry or Physics. Students who enroll in AP Science courses must co-enroll in and complete the appropriate AP Science Lab Seminars. When planning course selections, students must count two full periods for each AP science course. The AP course earns science credit and the AP Science Lab Seminar earns elective credit.

#### Social Sciences –

World History and Geography, Part I, standard or honors  
World History and Geography, Part II, standard or honors, or AP World History  
Virginia and U.S. History, Honors, AP or DE  
Virginia and U.S. Government, standard, honors or AP

#### World Languages –

Three years of one language or two years each of two languages. Students in grades 6, 7 and 8 who successfully complete both parts 1A and 1B and year two of a World Language will earn two high school credits.

#### Electives –

Within core academic discipline areas, Fine Arts and/or CTE courses. Students must take two electives that are sequential (coursework that builds similar skills, as defined by the Virginia Department of Education).

#### Virtual Courses –

A student must successfully complete one virtual course, which may be non-credit bearing, to graduate with either a Standard or Advanced Studies Diploma, beginning with students entering 9th grade for the first time in 2013-14.

- 2. VERIFIED CREDITS** – To earn Verified Credits, students must pass Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL) end-of-course tests in certain subjects, in addition to two end-of-program English tests administered in Grade 11. Students must pass the courses and the corresponding SOL test(s) to be awarded Verified Credit. (Refer to "Standards of Learning, End-of-Course Tests and Verified Credits" on page 40.)
- 3. CERTIFICATE OF PROGRAM COMPLETION** – Students who successfully complete all academic coursework required for the Advanced Studies Diploma, but who have not earned/been awarded the necessary number of Verified Credits required by the state for the awarding of a diploma, will be awarded Certificates of Program Completion. These students may continue to take the SOL tests needed to upgrade their Certificates of Program Completion to diplomas.

**NOTE** – Each middle and high school student shall take ALL applicable SOL, AP and CTE tests following course instruction.

**NOTE** – Grades earned in Algebra, Geometry and/or World Languages during middle school will be used to calculate the high school grade point average (GPA) unless the parents/legal guardians exercise the option to omit the grades and credits from the high school transcript. When these high school courses are omitted from the student's transcript, all graduation requirements must be met. For example, omitting Algebra I in middle school will require the student to earn three or four standard and Verified Credits of high school mathematics to meet graduation requirements.

**B. Standard Diploma**

ACPS shall award a Standard Diploma to any student who successfully completes the requirements set forth in the Standards of Accreditation, the Standards of Quality and the current Program of Studies.

Standard Diploma requirements from the 2016-17 Program of Studies are listed below:

<b>General Information</b>	ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS	<i>Every Student Succeeds</i>
<b>8</b>		

**GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS**

**STANDARD DIPLOMA**

Discipline Area	Standard Credits Effective with 9th Grade Classes of 2003–04 through 2010–11	Standard Credits Revised Standard Diploma Effective with the 9th Grade Class of 2011–12 and beyond	Verified Credits
English	4	4	2
History and Social Sciences	4	4	1
Mathematics	3	3	1
Laboratory Sciences	3	3	1
Health and Physical Education	2	2	
Fine Arts or Career and Technical Education (CTE)	1		
World Languages, Fine Arts or CTE**		2	
Human Growth and Development*	1*	1*	
Economics and Personal Finance		1	
Electives**	4**	2**	
Student-Selected Tests			1
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>6</b>

Note: Requirements for a student to earn a diploma from a Virginia high school shall be those in effect when that student enters the 9th grade for the first time.  
 \* To opt out of this requirement, follow the directions on pages 10-13.  
 \*\* Courses to satisfy the electives requirement shall include at least two sequential electives.  
 \*\*\* A student must earn a board-approved CTE credential to graduate with a Standard Diploma, beginning with students entering 9th grade for the first time in 2013-14. Please see page 32 for a list of approved CTE credentials.

**EXPLANATIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS**

**I. DISCIPLINES AND COURSES**

- English –**  
 English 9, honors or standard  
 English 10, honors or standard  
 English 11, honors or standard, Advanced Placement (AP) English Language or Dual Enrollment (DE) College Composition  
 English 12, AP English Literature and Composition, DE College Composition or DE Survey of World Literature
- Mathematics –**  
 At or above the level of Algebra, credits shall include at least three course selections from among Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra Functions and Data Analysis, Algebra II, or above Algebra II. Students in grades 7 and 8 who take Algebra and Geometry during middle school will earn a high school credit for each subject.
- Laboratory Sciences –**  
 Three credits must be earned from at least two different science disciplines: Earth Science, Biology, Chemistry or Physics. Students who enroll in AP Science courses must co-enroll in and complete the appropriate AP Science Lab Seminars. When planning course selections, students must count two full periods for each AP science course. The AP course earns science credit and the AP Science Lab Seminar earns elective credit.
- Social Sciences –**  
 World History and Geography, Part I, standard or honors  
 World History and Geography, Part II, standard or honors, or AP World History  
 Virginia and U.S. History, Honors, AP or DE  
 Virginia and U.S. Government, standard or AP
- World Languages –**  
 Students in grades 6, 7 and 8 who successfully complete both parts 1A and 1B and year two of a World Language will earn two high school credits.
- CTE –**  
 A student must earn a board-approved career and technical education credential to graduate with a Standard Diploma, beginning with students entering 9th grade for the first time in 2013-14. Please see page 32 for a list of approved CTE credentials.

- Electives –**  
 Within core academic discipline areas, Fine Arts and/or CTE courses. Students must take two electives that are sequential (coursework that builds similar skills, as defined by the Virginia Department of Education).
  - Virtual Courses –**  
 A student must successfully complete one virtual course, which may be non-credit bearing, to graduate with either a Standard or Advanced Studies Diploma, beginning with students entering ninth grade for the first time in 2013-14.
  - 2. VERIFIED CREDITS –** To earn Verified Credits, students must pass Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL) end-of-course tests in certain subjects, in addition to two end-of-program English tests administered in Grade 11. Students must pass the course and the corresponding SOL test(s) to be awarded Verified Credit. (Refer to “Standards of Learning, End-of-Course Tests and Verified Credits” on page 40.)
  - 3. CERTIFICATE OF PROGRAM COMPLETION –** Students who successfully complete all academic coursework required for the Standard Diploma, but who have not earned/been awarded the necessary number of Verified Credits required by the state for the awarding of a diploma, will be awarded Certificates of Program Completion. These students may continue to take the SOL tests needed to upgrade their Certificates of Program Completion to diplomas.
- NOTE –** Each middle and high school student shall take ALL applicable SOL, AP and CTE tests following course instruction.
- NOTE –** Grades earned in Algebra, Geometry and/or World Languages during middle school will be used to calculate the high school grade point average (GPA) unless the parent/legal guardian exercises the option to omit the grades and credits from the high school transcript. When these high school courses are omitted from the student's transcript, all graduation requirements must be met. For example, omitting Algebra I in middle school will require the student to earn three or four standard and Verified Credits of high school mathematics to meet graduation requirements.

#### **IV. Alternatives to Verified Credit Diplomas (Including Special Education and Adult Education Programs)**

##### **Special Education Alternatives**

In addition to the Advanced Studies and Standard Diplomas, ACPS offers two additional options to students with disabilities:

##### **A. Modified Standard Diploma**

1. ACPS shall award a Modified Standard Diploma to each student with a disability who successfully completes the credit requirements for the Modified Standard Diploma, as set forth in the Standards of Accreditation, and who meets any additional criteria established by the Virginia Board of Education. The requirements for the Modified Standard Diploma are included in the current Program of Studies and are listed below.
2. The school in which the student is enrolled must secure the informed written consent of the parent/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.
3. Students who enter the 9<sup>th</sup> grade for the first time in 2013-14 or beyond are not eligible to graduate with a Modified Standard Diploma. For younger students, that option has been removed by the State of Virginia. A student may seek a Standard or Advanced Diploma rather than the Modified Standard Diploma.

##### **B. Applied Studies Diploma**

1. ACPS shall award an Applied Studies Diploma to each student with a disability who successfully completes the requirements set forth in his/her IEP (Individualized Education Program) but does not meet the requirements for other diplomas.
2. The School Board will notify the parent/guardian of students with disabilities who have an IEP and who fail to meet the requirements for graduation of the student's rights to a free and appropriate education to age 21, inclusive, pursuant to Va. Code §22.1-213 et seq.

Modified Standard Diploma requirements from the 2016-17 Program of Studies are listed below:

## GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

### MODIFIED STANDARD DIPLOMA (20 STANDARD CREDITS)

Discipline Area	Standard Credits Required
English	4
Mathematics	3
Laboratory Science	2
History and Social Sciences	2
Health and Physical Education	2
Fine or Practical (Career and Technical Education) Arts	1
Electives	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>

Note: Requirements for a student to earn a diploma from a Virginia high school shall be those in effect when that student enters the 9th grade for the first time.

In addition to these credits, students must:

- pass the 8th-grade English (Reading, Literature and Research) Standards of Learning (SOL) test OR
- pass the 11th-grade English (Reading, Literature and Research) SOL test AND
- pass the 8th-grade Mathematics SOL test OR
- earn a Verified Credit in high school Mathematics

### EXPLANATIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

#### 1. DISCIPLINES AND COURSES.

##### English –

English 9, honors or standard  
English 10, honors or standard  
English 11, honors or standard, Advanced Placement (AP) English Language or Dual Enrollment (DE) College Composition  
English 12, AP English Literature and Composition, DE College Composition or DE Survey of World Literature

##### Mathematics –

From among applications of Algebra, Geometry, Personal Finance and Statistics. Students in grades 7 and 8 who take Algebra and Geometry during middle school will earn a high school credit for each subject.

##### Science –

From at least two of the following: applications of Earth Science, Biology, Chemistry or Physics.

##### Social Sciences –

Includes one unit of credit in Honors Virginia and U.S. History and one unit of credit in Virginia and U.S. Government.

##### Fine or Practical Arts –

Includes Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses.

##### Electives –

Within core academic discipline areas, Fine Arts and/or CTE courses. (See “Sequential Electives and the Standard Diploma” on page 40.)

**NOTE – Students who enter the 9th grade for the first time in 2013-14 or beyond are not eligible to graduate with a Modified Standard Diploma.**

**NOTE – Students pursuing the Standard Diploma and choosing to take SOL courses are required to take the corresponding SOL test(s).**

**NOTE – Students with a current 504 plan or an Individualized Education Program (IEP) may be eligible for credit accommodations for the Modified Standard Diploma. More information about credit accommodations may be found on page 42.**

### APPLIED STUDIES DIPLOMA

The Applied Studies Diploma is intended for certain students at the secondary level who have a disability and who will not meet credit requirements for another type of diploma. Eligibility and participation in the Applied Studies Diploma program shall be determined by the student’s Individualized Education Program (IEP) team and the student, when appropriate. The school must secure informed written consent of the parent/legal guardian and the student, when appropriate, to change this diploma program.

For more information, call the ACPS Office of Specialized Instruction at 703-619-8023.

## **V. Assessment of Students with Disabilities and Notification to Parents/Guardians of Special Education Alternatives to the Advanced and Standard Diplomas**

- A. Students with disabilities shall be assessed in accordance with state and federal guidelines.
- B. The IEP Team or 504 Committee makes decisions about participation in each of the assessments and the need for and selection of accommodations.
- C. All students with disabilities must be considered for participation in the SOL Assessments. Generally, decisions about how a student with a disability will be assessed should be made independently for each content area.
- D. The IEP Team or 504 Committee should consider the available assessment options.

## **VI. Adult Education Alternatives**

For students 18 years or older, the Office of Adult Education offers the following three Adult Education programs:

- A. General Educational Development (GED) Certificate
  - 1. The Board of Education has established a program for testing for General Educational Development (GED) through which persons may earn a high school equivalency certificate. Under no circumstances shall persons under the age of 16 be eligible for the testing program.
  - 2. The following persons may participate in the General Education Development testing program:
    - (a) 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. Under special circumstances consistent with Va. Code § 22.1-254 and 22.1-254.2, the age limit may be lowered to 16;
    - (b) Persons 16 years of age or older who have been instructed by their parents/guardians pursuant to Va. Code § 22.1-254.1 and who have completed such home school instruction;
    - (c) Persons who have been excused from school attendance pursuant to subsection B and C of Va. Code § 22.1-254;
    - (d) Persons for whom an individual student alternative education plan has been granted pursuant to subsection D of Va. Code § 22.1-254; and

- (e) Persons 16 through 18 years of age who are housed in adult correctional facilities and who are actively pursuing a GED certificate or have achieved a passing score on a Board of Education-approved high school equivalent examination but who are not enrolled in an Individual Student Alternative Education Plan (ISAEP) pursuant to subsection D of Va. Code § 22.1-254.

#### B. General Achievement Adult High School Diploma (GAAHSD)

1. The GAAHSD Program is intended to provide a diploma option for individuals who are least 18 years of age, currently not enrolled in public education, and not subject to the attendance requirements of the Code of Virginia, § 22.1-254.
2. In order to be eligible for a General Achievement Adult High School Diploma, candidates must earn a total of twenty standard units of credit, including the following:

<b>DISCIPLINE AREA</b>	<b>STANDARD UNITS OF CREDIT REQUIRED</b>
English	4
Mathematics	3
Science	2
History and Social Sciences	2
Electives	9
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>20</b>

3. The electives taken by a candidate must include at least two sequential electives in an area of concentration or specialization, which may include career and technical education and training. The student may earn the required standard units of credit by enrolling in:
  - (a) A public school if the candidate meets the age requirements;
  - (b) Community college or other institution of higher education;
  - (c) An adult high school program; or
  - (d) Correspondence, distance learning, and online courses.
4. The assessment required for this diploma is the General Education Development Certificate (GED).



### C. Adult High School Diploma Program

The Adult High School Diploma Program enables an adult who is no longer enrolled in public education to complete the required coursework to earn an Adult High School Diploma, a credential approved by the Virginia Board of Education (BOE).

To obtain this credential, the adult student must complete all of the course requirements that were in place at the time they entered the ninth grade, with the exception of health and physical education. Certain requirements for specific assessments may be waived if the assessments are no longer administered to students in Virginia public schools. This diploma type is for students who entered the ninth grade prior to the year 2000.

Requirements for graduation with an Adult High School are as follows:

<b>DISCIPLINE AREAS</b>	<b>STANDARD UNITS OF CREDIT REQUIRED</b>
English	4
Mathematics	3
Science	2
History and Social Sciences	2
Electives	8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>19</b>

1. Courses completed to satisfy the requirements in mathematics and science shall include content in courses that incorporate or exceed the content of courses approved by the Virginia Board of Education (BOE) to satisfy any other BOE-recognized diploma.
2. Courses completed to satisfy the history and social science requirement shall include one unit of credit in Virginia and U.S. history and one unit of credit in Virginia and U.S. government in courses that incorporate or exceed the content of courses approved to satisfy any BOE-recognized diploma.
3. Courses completed to satisfy the electives requirement shall include at least two sequential electives, which may include career and technical education and training.
4. End-of-course assessments may be used in lieu of specific state assessments as recommended by the Virginia Board of Education.

Established: June 23, 2016

**Revised:**

Legal Refs.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, sections 22.1-253.13:1,  
22.1-253.13:3, 22.1-253.13:4, 22.1-254 (D), 22.1-254.2  
8 VAC 20-131-10 et seq.  
8 VAC 20-131-30  
8 VAC 20-360-10  
8 VAC 20-360-20  
8 VAC 20-680-10  
8 VAC 20-680-20

Legislative Mandate: House Bill 930 and Senate Bill 306 (2014-2015)

Cross Refs.: IAA Notification of Learning Objectives  
IKF Standards of Learning Assessments, Verified Units of Credit, and  
Diploma Classifications

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