

BOARD BRIEF

Date: May 21, 2021

BOARD INFORMATION X
MEETING PREPARATION:

FROM: Julie Crawford, Ed.D., Chief of Student Services and Equity
Terri H. Mozingo, Ed. D, Chief of Teaching, Learning, and Leadership
Darrell Sampson, Executive Director of Student Support Teams

THROUGH: Gregory C. Hutchings, Jr., Ed.D, Superintendent of Schools

TO: The Honorable Meagan Alderton, Chair, and
Members of the Alexandria City School Board

TOPIC: Waivers and Flexibility in Meeting Graduation Requirements for the Class of 2021

ACPS 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL

Goal 2: Instructional Excellence

SY 2020-2021 FOCUS AREA

Focus Area 3: Strategic Plan Implementation

Focus Area 5: Academic Disparities

FY 2021 BUDGET PRIORITY

MTSS including Restorative Practices and PBIS

Chronic Absenteeism among Hispanic Students

Outreach to Hispanic Families to Improve Attendance and Graduation

BACKGROUND

The *Virginia Department of Education (VDOE)* and the *Virginia Board of Education (VBOE)* have provided waivers and flexibility for schools and school divisions due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. These waivers and flexibility include items specifically targeted towards the class of 2021 (seniors):

- [State-Level Waivers and Relief Measures in Effect](#)

The class of 2021 is defined as any student who has attained senior (12th grade) status during the 2020-21 school year with an ability to graduate by August of 2021. It is important to note that *these guidelines only apply to seniors as defined above and do not apply to underclassmen*. School counselors and administrators at T.C. Williams High School and Chance for Change Academy are applying these waivers and flexibility to help ACPS seniors graduate on time.

WAIVERS & FLEXIBILITY

- The industry credential requirement is waived for a student who meets the requirements below:
 - A member of the class of 2021 as defined above;
 - Entered 9th grade in 2017-18 or prior; and
 - Seeking a standard diploma.
- The Advanced Placement (AP) course, dual enrollment (DE) course, honors (HN) course, or Industry Credential requirement is waived for a student who meets the requirements below:
 - A member of the class of 2021 as defined above;

- Entered 9th grade in 2018-19 or beyond;
- Is a career and technical education program completer as of summer 2020 term; and
- Intended to use a career and technical education credentialing test to meet the additional requirement for graduation with a standard or advanced studies diploma.
- The First Aid/CPR/AED requirement, including the hands-on portion, is waived for students in the class of 2021.
- The requirement that at least two of student's elective credits be considered sequential, meaning the content across those two credits is connected, is waived for students who meet the following:
 - The student is graduating during the 2020-2021 school year, regardless of when they first entered high school; AND
 - The student's course of study was negatively impacted by school closures or the move to virtual instruction; AND
 - The student has met all other graduation requirements, including the number of credits required for each discipline area.
- If a student was planning on using a CTE industry credential for their student-selected verified credit, the requirement is waived if the student meets the conditions below:
 - A member of the class of 2021 as defined above;
 - Entered 9th grade in 2017-18 or prior;
 - Is a career and technical education program completer as of summer 2020 term; and
 - Intended to use a career and technical education credentialing test to meet their student-selected test requirement.
- The VDOE and VBOE have provided some additional flexibility for earning locally-awarded verified credits in the 2020-21 school year, including specific guidance for seniors in the class of 2021.
- Board of Education's Seal for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM)
 - Students only have to successfully complete a **25**-hour or more (versus 50) work-based learning opportunity in a STEM area.
- Board of Education's Excellence in Civics Education Seal
 - Students only have to complete **25** hours (versus 50) of voluntary participation in community service or extracurricular activities.

RECOMMENDATION

The Superintendent recommends that the School Board review the information within this brief.

IMPACT

The 2021 VDOE and VBOE waivers and flexibility create additional opportunities for seniors to meet graduation requirements given the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

CONTACT

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