

Date: June 5, 2020
For ACTION X
For INFORMATION
Board Agenda: Yes X
No

FROM: Gerald R. Mann, Jr., Ed.D., Executive Director, Secondary Instruction
Darrell Sampson, Director, K-12 School Counseling
Jennifer Abbruzzese, Director of Policy and Board Initiatives
Marya Runkle, Director of Technology Services, Education and Business Systems
Theresa A. Werner, M.Ed., J.D., Executive Director of Specialized Instruction

THROUGH: Terri Mozingo, Ed.D., Chief Academic Officer
Gregory C. Hutchings, Jr., Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools

TO: The Honorable Cindy Anderson, Chair, and
Members of the Alexandria City School Board

TOPIC: Proposed Changes to [Policy IKFA](#) and [Regulation IKFA-R](#) (Locally-Awarded Verified Credits) for SY 2019-2020 in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic School Closure

ACPS 2020 STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL:

Goal 1: Academic Excellence and Educational Equity

SY 2019-2020 FOCUS AREA:

Focus Area 1: Educational Equity

FY 2020 BUDGET PRIORITY:

Specialized Instruction
English Learner Services
Gap Group Achievements
Academics

SUMMARY:

Adjustments to the locally-awarded verified credit (LAVC) policy and regulations were proposed at the May 15, 2020 Board Meeting to address the “cessation of all in-person instruction at K-12 schools, public and private, for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year” as ordered by Virginia Governor Northam’s [Executive Order 53](#) (March 23, 2020). They are aligned with the Virginia Board of Education’s (VBOE) recent LAVC [Emergency Guidelines](#) (April 2, 2020).

The proposed adjustments to the LAVC determination process and eligibility requirements are of limited duration and would apply to students who:

- **are scheduled to graduate in 2021 or after; and**
- **are enrolled in high school credit-bearing courses with end-of-course Standards of Learning (SOL) assessments during spring 2020.**

(If a declared state of emergency overlaps scheduled instruction for the summer 2020 term, the modified LAVC determination process would also apply to courses during the summer 2020 term.) The proposed revisions are intended to ensure equity, flexibility and benefit for ACPS students, while ensuring students have demonstrated mastery of the standards, competencies, and objectives of the relevant course.

Proposed Changes:

School Review Panels

In keeping with VBOE's emergency guidelines for the 2019-20 school year, the existing, divisionwide LAVC review panel would be expanded to establish review panels at each ACPS school offering high school credit-bearing courses.

Review Process

Instead of ACPS' current, limited practice of determining LAVC eligibility (at the division level) on a case-by-case basis, school review panels would determine whether *all* students in a course were provided with instruction in a *majority* of the course standards *and* demonstrated mastery of the standards, competencies, and objectives of the entire course by reviewing the following information (in lieu of SOLs):

- The content and standards covered in a course during the 2019-2020 school year as well as the teacher's course expectations; and
- The students' grades in the course.

School review panels could award LAVCs to all students in the course with passing grades.

(Passing grades for the 2019-20 school year may be based upon the average of Quarters 1-3 or Quarters 1-4 in accordance with Policy IKC and Regulation IKC-R.)

Based on the evidence reviewed, review panels would:

- Award the verified credit;
- Deny the verified credit;
- Suggest participation in a remedial program and retesting; or
- Make additional academic assignments as deemed appropriate prior to determining whether to award the verified credit.

In keeping with current ACPS policy, the decision of the review panel would be final.

(Note: Apart from the proposed revisions related to the spring 2020 SOL waiver, Regulation IKFA-R has been revised to clarify that ACPS's existing review panel has always performed initial award determinations and not appeals.)

As directed by the VBOE, students with disabilities who are eligible for a Special Permission Locally-Awarded Verified Credit Accommodation (SPLAVC-A) will continue to use the IEP/504 process as outlined in Policy IKFA.

Impact

LAVCs awarded under the emergency guidelines may be used to meet verified credit requirements towards either the standard or advanced studies diploma, regardless of graduation cohort. Further, LAVCs provided under the emergency guidelines will not count towards the Virginia Standards of Accreditation (SOA) maximum allowance.

BACKGROUND:

On Friday, March 13, 2020, ACPS closed all schools due to the Coronavirus/COVID-19 pandemic in order to promote physical distancing and the safety and wellness of school staff, students, and their families. On the same day, Governor Northam ordered all Virginia schools closed for a period of two weeks. On March 23, 2020 the Governor ordered all Virginia schools to remain closed for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year.

On April 2, 2020, the Virginia Board of Education released emergency guidelines requiring school division LAVC policies to address the Superintendent of Public Instruction's waiver of SOL testing requirements for spring 2020. The guidelines provided direction for awarding verified credits to all students in a course with passing grades as a group, instead of making individual determinations on a case-by-case basis.

Upon the release of these guidelines, ACPS convened a cross-disciplinary team of central office and secondary school administrators to consider the state's guidance and develop a proposal for amending ACPS' current LAVC policy for the 2019-2020 school year. The ACPS core team collaborated over multiple weeks to review and refine the proposed adjustments. The proposal continues to be shared with school and administrative staff to obtain additional insight.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Superintendent recommends that the School Board approve the proposed changes to [Policy IKFA](#) and [Regulation IKFA-R](#) for SY 2019-2020.

IMPACT:

The changes to Policy IKFA and Regulation IKFA-R will align ACPS with the emergency guidelines set forth by the Virginia Board of Education on April 2, 2020. They seek to help mitigate the impact of the Coronavirus/COVID-19 school closure on students' academic instruction, assessment, and record-keeping.

ATTACHMENTS:

Proposed Revisions to Policy IKFA and Regulation IKFA-R

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