

BATH COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD

AGENDA ITEM: INFORMATION { } ACTION { X } CLOSED MEETING { }

SUBJECT: SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT – ACTION

VSBA Policy IKFD-Alternative Paths to Attaining Standard Units of Credit – 1st Reading

BACKGROUND: A school division may waive the requirement that a student receive 140 clock hours of instruction to earn a standard credit (8 VAC 20-131-110).

Optional Policy IKFD is being presented for board approval to allow the 140 clock hour requirement to be waived and to outline the procedures to follow.

RECOMMENDATION: Recommend approval after first reading to allow policy to be reflected in BCHS handbook.

ALTERNATIVE PATHS TO ATTAINING STANDARD UNITS OF CREDIT

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. The standard unit of credit is based on a minimum of 140-clock hours of instruction and successful completion of the requirements of the course. The Bath County School Board recognizes that instruction, learning and outcomes equivalent to those achieved in 140 clock hours of instruction can be attained in a variety of ways. Therefore, the School Board waives the requirement that a student receive 140 clock hours of instruction to earn a standard unit of credit as provided below. The total number of standard credits that can be achieved via the waiver option is twenty-two (22). Students may earn fractional credits via waiver.

Waivers are available for all secondary courses including Board of Education approved courses, Career and Technical education courses and local elective courses. Elective courses must be approved by the School Board, be explicitly described in the division's secondary course of study and have clearly defined and publicly available learning objectives commensurate in scope and detail with state learning standards and competencies.

In order to attain a standard unit of credit by means of a waiver of the 140-clock-hour requirement

- the outcomes of the work for which standard credit is awarded must be equal to progress and learning achieved in 140 clock hours of instruction;
- upon completion of the assigned work for the course, a student must have demonstrated mastery by meeting specific objectives and performance requirements of the course that match or exceed the expectations of students who have received 140 clock hours of instruction with similar standards, competencies or objectives; and
- the evidence of mastery of the pertinent content and skills for a student receiving a waiver must be fully documented, retained securely by the school division and available for review by the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) on request.

Procedures

Criteria for awarding a waiver of the 140-clock-hour requirement for the course must be clear, objective and clearly communicated to the student and the student's parents prior to a student embarking on the effort.

The consequences of standard credits achieved by waiver with regard to class rank, grade point average and extracurricular eligibility must also be clearly defined and communicated to students and parents before a student embarks on the effort.

A student must receive approval from the school principal and superintendent (or superintendent's designee) before pursuing the work, task or assessment that is required to meet the waiver criteria.

Students who meet the following criteria are eligible to seek standard units of credit via waiver of the 140-clock-hour requirement:

- Demonstrated current and prior satisfactory academic performance
- Recommended by school staff (teachers and administrators) or other knowledgeable staff

Miscellaneous

The superintendent will identify a process for developing accommodations for students with limited English proficiency.

Pursuit of credit by waiver by students with disabilities will be prescribed by the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan.

Students who attain credit by waiver of the 140-clock-hour requirement will receive a grade for the course.

The fact that a student has received credit via waiver will not be reflected on the student's transcript.

A student who is pursuing credit via waiver is enrolled in the relevant course for purposes of determining eligibility for extracurricular activities.

Waiver Pathway Options

Waivers are available by three pathways.

1. Courses that award a standard credit and have less than 140 clock hours of instruction

For students attaining standard units of credit by this waiver method, the school division maintains documentation based on this policy that defines its rationale for the reduction of instructional time and substantive evidence that it provides equivalent instruction with equivalent outcomes in the reduced clock hours.

2. Independent study, work sample portfolio, demonstrated performance and locally developed or Standards of Learning assessment

Evidence of the student's learning must encompass a comprehensive assemblage of media products, artifacts, and performance that demonstrates the student has mastered academically rigorous material and meets or exceeds approved learning standards, competencies or objectives for the course.

The required content and evaluative criteria for the products must be defined prior to the advent of student work and based on the same objectives as the standard course.

The assemblage of evidence and overall process must be managed by a licensed and endorsed teacher in the area of the coursework with a series of program checkpoints throughout a specified timeline for the study. The checkpoints and timeline must be clearly articulated and communicated to the student.

The managing teacher must determine whether the work is of commensurate depth and quality as work performed in the traditional secondary classroom and meets predefined evaluative criteria communicated to the student.

The student must meet a predefined performance level on a locally-developed assessment for the coursework. This may be an oral examination, performance (e.g., recital/concert), written test or some other objective tool or process developed by the school division. Applicable Standards of Learning assessments may also be used for this purpose.

Appeal Process

The superintendent shall appoint a review panel comprised of at least three educators to resolve disputes regarding the attainment of standard units of credit via waivers in accordance with this policy. Different panels may be appointed for individual schools or groups of schools.

The panel may review whether a student was properly denied permission to seek a standard unit of credit via waiver and whether a student was properly denied a standard unit of credit after having been determined to be eligible to seek the standard unit of credit via waiver

Based on the evidence it reviews, the review panel may:

- award the standard credit
- deny the standard credit
- make additional assignments prior to determining whether to award the standard credit

The decision of the review panel will be final.

Continuing Role of State Assessments

While the division may use the Standards of Learning assessments for awarding a standard credit as outlined above, the Standards of Learning assessments will continue to be used in their traditional role as determiners of awarding verified credits.

Adopted:

Legal Refs: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, § 22.1-253.13:4.

8 VAC 20-131-110.

Guidelines for Graduation Requirements; Local Alternative Paths to Standard Units of Credit, Virginia Board of Education (Oct. 2015).

Cross Refs:	IAA	Notification of Learning Objectives
	IGBG	Homebound, Correspondence and Alternative Means of Instruction
	IGBGA	On Line Courses and Virtual School Programs
	IGBF	English Learners
	IKEB	Acceleration
	IKF	Standards of Learning Tests and Graduation Requirements
	IKFA	Locally Awarded Verified Credits
	JO	Student Records

Virginia Administrative Code
Title 8. Education
Agency 20. State Board of Education
Chapter 131. Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia

8VAC20-131-110. Standard and Verified Units of Credit.

A. A "standard unit of credit" or "standard credit" is a credit awarded for a course in which the student successfully completes 140 clock hours of instruction and the requirements of the course. A school division may waive the requirement that a student receive 140 clock hours of instruction to earn a standard credit, effective with students enrolled in the 2015-2016 school year, as prescribed in the Standards of Quality and board guidelines. When credit is awarded in less than whole units, the increment awarded must be no greater than the fractional part of the 140 hours of instruction provided. If a school division elects to award credit on a basis other than the 140 clock hours of instruction required for a standard unit of credit defined in this subsection, the local school division shall provide the board with satisfactory proof, based on board guidelines, that the students for whom the 140-clock-hour requirement is waived have learned the content and skills included in the relevant Standards of Learning. In addition, the local school division shall develop a written policy approved by the superintendent and school board that ensures:

1. That the content of the course for which credit is awarded is comparable to 140 clock hours of instruction; and
2. That upon completion, the aims and objectives of the course have been met.

B. A "verified unit of credit" or "verified credit" is a credit awarded for a course in which a student earns a standard unit of credit and completes one of the following:

1. Achieves a passing score on a corresponding end-of-course SOL test. 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 Standards of Learning 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.

Upon waiver of the 140-clock-hour requirement according to board guidelines, qualified students who have received a standard unit of credit shall be permitted to sit for the relevant SOL test to earn a verified credit without having to meet the 140-clock-hour requirement.

2. Achieves a passing score on an additional test, as defined in 8VAC20-131-5, as a part of the Virginia Assessment Program.
3. Meets the criteria for the receipt of a locally awarded verified credit when the student has not passed a corresponding SOL test.
 - a. Students who enter the ninth grade for the first time prior to the 2018-2019 school year and do not pass SOL tests in science or history and social science may receive locally awarded verified credits from the local school board in accordance with criteria established in guidelines adopted by the board. Credit accommodations for students with disabilities may be used to confer locally awarded verified credits as provided in 8VAC20-131-50 B 3.

b. Students who enter the ninth grade for the first time in the 2018-2019 school year or thereafter and do not pass SOL tests in English, mathematics, laboratory science, or history and social science may receive locally awarded verified credits from the local school board in accordance with criteria established in guidelines adopted by the board. No more than one locally awarded verified credit may be used to satisfy graduation requirements, except as provided in 8VAC20-131-51 B 3 for students with disabilities seeking a standard diploma.

4. Meets the criteria for the receipt of a verified credit in history and social science by demonstrating mastery of the content of the associated course on an authentic performance assessment that complies with guidelines adopted by the board. Such students shall not also be required to take the corresponding SOL test in history and social science.

5. Meets the criteria for the receipt of a verified credit in English (writing) by demonstrating mastery of the content of the associated course on an authentic performance assessment, that complies with guidelines adopted by the board. Such students shall not also be required to take the corresponding SOL test in English (writing).

C. The board may from time to time approve additional tests for the purpose of awarding verified credit. Such additional tests, which enable students to earn verified units of credit, must, at a minimum, meet the following criteria:

1. The test must be standardized and graded independently of the school or school division in which the test is given;
2. The test must be knowledge based;
3. The test must be administered on a statewide, multistate, or international basis, or administered as part of another state's accountability assessment program; and
4. To be counted in a specific academic area, the test must measure content that incorporates or exceeds the Standards of Learning content in the course for which verified credit is given.

The board shall set the score that must be achieved to earn a verified unit of credit on the additional test options.

D. With such funds as are appropriated by the General Assembly, the board shall provide opportunities for students who meet criteria adopted by the board to have an expedited retake of a SOL test to earn verified credit.

Statutory Authority

§§ 22.1-16 and 22.1-253.13:3 of the Code of Virginia.

Historical Notes

Derived from Volume 14, Issue 01, eff. October 29, 1997; amended, Virginia Register Volume 16, Issue 25, eff. September 28, 2000; Volume 22, Issue 24, eff. September 7, 2006; Volume 27, Issue 24, eff. August 31, 2011; Volume 31, Issue 05, eff. December 3, 2014; Volume 31, Issue 26, eff. October 8, 2015; Volume 34, Issue 08, eff. January 11, 2018.

Website addresses provided in the Virginia Administrative Code to documents incorporated by reference are for the reader's convenience only, may not necessarily be active or current, and should not be relied upon. To ensure the

information incorporated by reference is accurate, the reader is encouraged to use the source document described in the regulation.

As a service to the public, the Virginia Administrative Code is provided online by the Virginia General Assembly. We are unable to answer legal questions or respond to requests for legal advice, including application of law to specific fact. To understand and protect your legal rights, you should consult an attorney.