

## GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

# STANDARD DIPLOMA: MINIMUM COURSE & CREDIT REQUIREMENTS

To graduate with a Standard Diploma, a student must earn at least 22 standard units of credit by passing required courses and electives, and earn at least six verified credits by passing end-of-course SOL tests or other assessments approved by the Board of Education.

Beginning with students entering ninth grade for the first time in 2013-2014, a student must also:

- Earn a board-approved career and technical education credential to graduate with a Standard Diploma; and
- Successfully complete one virtual course, which may be non-credit bearing.

The school counselor can advise on available courses to fulfill the requirements for a Standard Diploma.

### Approved Courses:

- [Approved Courses – Effective for Students Who Entered Ninth Grade for the First Time in 2010-2011 and Beyond](#) (PDF)
- [Approved Courses – Effective for Students Who Entered Ninth Grade for the First Time in 2003-2004 through 2009-2010](#) (PDF)

Standard Diploma Course Requirements (8 VAC 20-131-50.B)			
Discipline Area	Standard Credits: effective with first-time ninth graders in 2003- 2004 through 2010-2011	Standard Credits: effective with first-time ninth graders in 2011- 2012 and beyond	Verified Credits: effective for first-time ninth graders in 2003- 2004 and beyond
English	4	4	2
Mathematics <a href="#">[Note 1]</a>	3	3	1
Laboratory Science <a href="#">[Notes 2 &amp; 6]</a>	3	3	1
History & Social Sciences <a href="#">[Notes 3 &amp; 6]</a>	3	3	1
Health & Physical Education	2	2	

Fine Arts or Career & Technical Education	1		
Foreign Language, Fine Arts or Career & Technical Education <a href="#">[Note 7]</a>		2	
Economics and Personal Finance		1	
<a href="#">Electives</a> <a href="#">[Note 4]</a>	6	4	
Student Selected Test <a href="#">[ Note 5]</a>			1
Total	22	22	6

NOTE 1

- **For students entering the ninth grade for the first time in 2003-2004 through 2010-2011:** Courses completed to satisfy this requirement shall be at or above the level of algebra and shall include at least two course selections from among: Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II or other mathematics courses above the level of algebra and geometry. The Board may approve additional courses to satisfy this requirement.
- **For students entering the ninth grade for the first time in 2011-2012 and beyond:** Courses completed to satisfy this requirement shall include at least two different course selections from among: Algebra I; Geometry; Algebra, Functions and Data Analysis; Algebra II or other mathematics courses above the level of Algebra II. The Board shall approve courses to satisfy this requirement.

NOTE 2

- **For students entering the ninth grade for the first time in 2003-2004 through 2010-2011:** Courses completed to satisfy this requirement shall include course selections from at least two different science disciplines: earth sciences, biology, chemistry or physics. The Board may approve additional courses to satisfy this requirement.
- **For students entering the ninth grade for the first time in 2011-2012 and beyond:** Courses completed to satisfy this requirement shall include course selections from at least two different science disciplines: earth sciences, biology, chemistry or physics or completion of the sequence of

science courses required for the International Baccalaureate Diploma. The Board shall approve courses to satisfy this requirement.

NOTE 3

- **For students entering the ninth grade for the first time in 2003-2004 through 2010-2011:** Courses completed to satisfy this requirement shall include U.S. and Virginia History, U.S. and Virginia Government, and one course in either world history or geography or both. The Board may approve additional courses to satisfy this requirement.
- **For students entering the ninth grade for the first time in 2011-2012 and beyond:** Courses completed to satisfy this requirement shall include U.S. and Virginia History, U.S. and Virginia Government, and one course in either world history or geography or both. The Board shall approve courses to satisfy this requirement.

NOTE 4

- Courses to satisfy this requirement shall include at least two sequential electives as required by the Standards of Quality.

NOTE 5

- **For students entering the ninth grade for the first time in 2003-2004 through 2010-2011:** A student may utilize additional tests for earning verified credit in computer science, technology, career and technical education or other areas as prescribed by the Board in 8 VAC 20-131-110.
- **For students entering the ninth grade for the first time in 2011-2012 and beyond:** A student may utilize additional tests for earning verified credit in computer science, technology, career and technical education, economics or other areas as prescribed by the Board in 8 VAC 20-131-110.

NOTE 6

- Students who complete a career and technical education program sequence and pass an examination or occupational competency assessment in a career and technical education field that confers certification or an occupational competency credential from a recognized industry, or trade or professional association or acquires a professional license in a career and technical education field from the Commonwealth of Virginia may substitute the certification, competency credential or license for (1) the student selected verified credit and (2) either a science or history and social science verified credit when the certification, license or credential

confers more than one verified credit. The examination or occupational competency assessment must be approved by the Board of Education as an additional test to verify student achievement.

#### NOTE 7

- **For students entering the ninth grade for the first time in 2011-2012 and beyond:** Pursuant to Section 22.1-253.13:4, *Code of Virginia*, credits earned for this requirement shall include one credit in fine or performing arts or career and technical education.

## Electives

- **Sequential Electives** – Effective with the graduating class of 2003, students who wish to receive a Standard or Modified Standard Diploma must successfully complete two sequential electives. On February 5, 2002, the Board of Education approved [Guidelines for Sequential Electives for the Standard and Modified Standard Diploma](#) (PDF).
  - Sequential electives may be in any discipline as long as the courses are not specifically required for graduation.
  - Courses used to satisfy the one unit of credit in a fine arts or career and technical education course may be used to partially satisfy this requirement.
  - For career and technical education electives, check with the Office of Career and Technical Education at (804) 225-2051 (804) 225-2051 .
  - An exploratory course followed by an introductory course may not be used to satisfy the requirement.
  - An introductory course followed by another level of the same course of study may be used.
  - Sequential electives do not have to be taken in consecutive years.
- **Fine Arts and Career and Technical Education** – The Standard, Advanced Studies, and Modified Standard Diplomas each contain a requirement for one standard unit of credit in Fine Arts or Career and Technical Education. The Standards of Accreditation do not require that courses used to satisfy the requirement of Fine Arts or Career and Technical Education be approved by the Board. Therefore, local school officials should use their own judgment in determining which courses students take to satisfy this requirement.

### GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

---

## ADVANCED STUDIES DIPLOMA: MINIMUM COURSE & CREDIT REQUIREMENTS

---

To graduate with an Advanced Studies Diploma, a student must earn at least 24 or 26 standard units of credit, depending on when he or she entered ninth grade, and at least nine verified units of credit:

- Students who entered ninth grade for the first time during and after 2011-2012 must earn at least 26 standard units of credit.
- Students who entered ninth grade before 2011-2012 must earn at least 24 standard units of credit.

Beginning with students entering ninth grade for the first time in 2013-2014, a student must successfully complete one virtual course, which may be non-credit bearing, to graduate with an Advanced Studies Diploma.

Please note: Your school counselor can tell you which courses are offered by your school to fulfill the requirements for an Advanced Studies Diploma.

**Approved Courses:**

- [Approved Courses – Effective for Students Who Entered Ninth Grade for the First Time in 2010-2011 and Beyond](#) (PDF)
- [Approved Courses – Effective for Students Who Entered Ninth Grade for the First Time in 2003-2004 through 2009-2010](#) (PDF)

<b>Advanced Studies Diploma Course Requirements (8 VAC 20-131-50.C)</b>			
<b>Discipline Area</b>	<b>Standard Credits: effective with first-time ninth graders in 2003-2004 through 2010-2011</b>	<b>Standard Credits: effective with first-time ninth graders in 2011-2012 and beyond</b>	<b>Verified Credits - effective with ninth graders in 2000-2001 and beyond</b>
English	4	4	2
Mathematics <a href="#">[Note 1]</a>	4	4	2
Laboratory Science <a href="#">[Note 2]</a>	4	4	2
History & Social Sciences <a href="#">[Note 3]</a>	4	4	2
Foreign Languages <a href="#">[Note 4]</a>	3	3	
Health & Physical Education	2	2	

Fine Arts or Career & Technical Education	1	1	
Economics and Personal Finance		1	
<a href="#">Electives</a>	2	3	
Student Selected Test [ <a href="#">Note 5</a> ]			1
Total	24	26	9

NOTE 1

- **For students entering the ninth grade for the first time in 2003-2004 through 2010-2011:** Courses completed to satisfy this requirement shall be at or above the level of algebra and shall include at least three different course selections from among: Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II or other mathematics courses above the level of Algebra II. The Board may approve additional courses to satisfy this requirement.
- **For students entering the ninth grade for the first time in 2011-2012 and beyond:** Courses completed to satisfy this requirement shall include at least three different course selections from among: Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II or other mathematics courses above the level of Algebra II. The Board shall approve courses to satisfy this requirement.

NOTE 2

- **For students entering the ninth grade for the first time in 2003-2004 through 2010-2011:** Courses completed to satisfy this requirement shall include course selections from at least three different science disciplines from among: earth sciences, biology, chemistry or physics or completion of the sequence of science courses required for the International Baccalaureate Diploma. The Board may approve additional courses to satisfy this requirement.
- **For students entering the ninth grade for the first time in 2011-2012 and beyond:** Courses completed to satisfy this requirement shall include course selections from at least three different science disciplines from among: earth sciences, biology, chemistry, or physics or completion of the sequence of science courses required for the International Baccalaureate Diploma. The Board shall approve courses to satisfy this requirement.

NOTE 3

- **For students entering the ninth grade for the first time in 2003-2004 through 2010-2011:** Courses completed to satisfy this requirement shall include U.S. and Virginia History, U.S. and Virginia Government, and two courses in either world history or geography or both. The Board may approve additional courses to satisfy this requirement.
- **For students entering the ninth grade for the first time in 2011-2012 and beyond:** Courses completed to satisfy this requirement shall include U.S. and Virginia History, U.S. and Virginia Government, and two courses in either world history or geography or both. The Board shall approve courses to satisfy this requirement.

#### NOTE 4

- Courses completed to satisfy this requirement shall include three years of one language or two years of two languages.

#### NOTE 5

- **For students entering the ninth grade for the first time in 2003-2004 through 2010-2011:** A student may utilize additional tests for earning verified credit in computer science, technology, career or technical education or other areas as prescribed by the Board in 8 VAC 20-131-110.
- **For students entering the ninth grade for the first time in 2011-2012 and beyond:** A student may utilize additional tests for earning verified credit in computer science, technology, career or technical education, economics or other areas as prescribed by the Board in 8 VAC 20-131-110.

## Electives

- **Fine Arts and Career and Technical Education** – The Standard, Advanced Studies, and Modified Standard Diplomas each contain a requirement for one standard unit of credit in Fine Arts or Career and Technical Education. The Standards of Accreditation do not require that courses used to satisfy the requirement of Fine Arts or Career and Technical Education be approved by the Board. Therefore, local school officials should use their own judgment in determining which courses students take to satisfy this requirement.
- **Foreign Language**—The Advanced Studies Diploma contains a requirement for either three years of one foreign language or two years of two languages. In March 1998, the Board of Education approved the provision of three years of instruction in American Sign Language (ASL) for foreign language credit toward an Advanced Studies Diploma; other foreign

languages will satisfy this requirement as well. Details of this action are available in: [Superintendent's Memo](#), Interpretive, #1, June 12, 1998.

## News & Announcements

Students receiving a Modified Standard Diploma are now eligible for the Board's Excellence in Civics Education Seal. See [Superintendent's Memo #87-12](#)

The Modified Standard Diploma is intended for certain students at the secondary level who have a disability and are unlikely to meet the credit requirements for a Standard Diploma. Eligibility and participation in the program are determined by the student's IEP team and the student, when appropriate. Decisions of eligibility and participation may be made at any point after the student's eighth grade year. Written consent from parent/guardian must be obtained for a student to choose this diploma program.

The student must:

- be allowed to pursue a Standard or Advanced Studies Diploma at any time throughout his or her high school career;
- not be excluded from courses and tests required to earn a Standard or Advanced Studies Diploma; and
- pass literacy and numeracy competency assessments as prescribed by the Board:
  - For students who entered the ninth grade prior to 2000-01, the literacy and numeracy competency assessments were the reading and mathematics subtests of the LPT.
  - For students who entered the ninth grade in 2000-01 and beyond, the literacy and numeracy competency assessments are the eighth-grade English Reading test and the eighth-grade Mathematics SOL test (Board action – November 30, 2000).
  - The Board also approved four additional substitute assessments to satisfy the literacy and numeracy requirements for students pursuing a Modified Standard Diploma.
    - [Substitute Numeracy and Literacy Tests for the Modified Standard Diploma](#)  
Superintendent's Memo – Informational #53, March 5, 2004

**Approved Courses:**

- [Approved Courses – Effective for Students Who Entered Ninth Grade for the First Time in 2010-2011 and Beyond](#) (PDF)
- [Approved Courses – Effective for Students Who Entered Ninth Grade for the First Time in 2003-2004 through 2009-2010](#) (PDF)

NOTE: The Modified Standard Diploma will not be an option for students with disabilities who enter the ninth grade for the first time after 2012-2013. Beginning with students entering ninth grade for the first time in 2013-2014, credit accommodations will be provided to allow students with disabilities who previously would have pursued a Modified Standard Diploma to earn a Standard Diploma. Guidelines for credit accommodations will be issued by the Board of Education.

<b>Modified Standard Diploma Course Requirements (8 VAC 20-131-50.D)</b>	
<b>Discipline Area</b>	<b>Standard Credits</b>
English	4
Mathematics <a href="#">[Note 1]</a>	3
Laboratory Science <a href="#">[Note 2]</a>	2
History & Social Sciences <a href="#">[Note 3]</a>	2
Health & Physical Education	2
Fine Arts or Career & Technical Education	1
<a href="#">Electives</a> <a href="#">[Note 4]</a>	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>

**NOTE 1:** Courses completed to satisfy this requirement shall include content from among applications of algebra, geometry, personal finance and statistics in courses that have been approved by the Board.

**NOTE 2:** Courses complete shall include content from at least two of the following: applications of earth science, biology, chemistry, or physics in courses approved by the Board.

**NOTE 3:** Courses completed to satisfy this requirement shall include one unit of credit in U.S. and Virginia History and one unit of credit in U.S. and Virginia Government in courses approved by the Board.

**NOTE 4:** Courses to satisfy this requirement shall include a least two sequential electives in the same manner required for the Standard Diploma.

## Electives

- **Sequential Electives** – Effective with the graduating class of 2003, students who wish to receive a Standard or Modified Standard Diploma must successfully complete two sequential electives. On February 5, 2002,

the Board of Education approved [Guidelines for Sequential Electives for the Standard and Modified Standard Diploma](#) (PDF).

- Sequential electives may be in any discipline as long as the courses are not specifically required for graduation.
- Courses used to satisfy the one unit of credit in a fine arts or career and technical education course may be used to partially satisfy this requirement.
- For career and technical education electives, check with the Office of Career and Technical Education at (804) 225-2051 (804) 225-2051 .
- An exploratory course followed by an introductory course may not be used to satisfy the requirement.
- An introductory course followed by another level of the same course of study may be used.
- Sequential electives do not have to be taken in consecutive years.
- **Fine Arts and Career and Technical Education** – The Standard, Advanced Studies, and Modified Standard Diplomas each contain a requirement for one standard unit of credit in Fine Arts or Career and Technical Education. The Standards of Accreditation do not require that courses used to satisfy the requirement of Fine Arts or Career and Technical Education be approved by the Board. Therefore, local school officials should use their own judgment in determining which courses students take to satisfy this requirement.

#### ▪ GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

---

#### ▪ **OTHER DIPLOMAS & CERTIFICATES**

---

##### ▪ **Special Diploma**

- Available to students with disabilities who complete the requirements of their IEP and who do not meet the requirements for other diplomas.

##### ▪ **General Achievement Diploma (GAD)**

- Available to students 18 years or older who meet the criteria set by the Board of Education.
- Superintendent's Memo – Informational #123, August 1, 2003

[Requirements for the General Achievement Diploma](#)

##### ▪ **General Education Development Certificates (GED)**

- Refer to Regulations Governing General Education Development Certificates (8 VAC 20-360-10, et. seq.)

- Superintendent's Memo – Informational #131, June 30, 2006

[General Educational Development \(GED\) Testing Eligibility, effective July 1, 2006](#)

- **Certificate of Program Completion**
- Available to students who complete prescribed programs of studies defined by a local school board but who do not qualify for diplomas.

## GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

---

## GRADUATION (DIPLOMA) SEALS OF ACHIEVEMENT

---

### News & Announcements

June 20, 2012, is the deadline for school divisions to request diploma seals for the Class of 2012. Orders must go directly to a private supplier. For more information and a Diploma Seal Request Form, see [Superintendent's Memo #87-12](#)

Students receiving a Modified Standard Diploma are now eligible for the Board's Excellence in Civics Education Seal. See [Superintendent's Memo #87-12](#)

Students meeting specific requirements for graduation and demonstrating exemplary performance may receive diploma seals for recognition. VDOE makes available to local school divisions the following seals:

**Governor's Seal** – Awarded to students who complete the requirements for an Advanced Studies Diploma with an average grade of "B" or better, and successfully complete college-level coursework that will earn the student at least nine transferable college credits in Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), Cambridge, or dual enrollment courses.

**Board of Education Seal** – Awarded to students who complete the requirements for a Standard Diploma or Advanced Studies Diploma with an average grade of "A" beginning with the ninth-grade class of 2006-2007 and beyond.

**Board of Education's Career & Technical Education Seal** – Awarded to students who:

- earn a Standard or Advanced Studies Diploma and complete a prescribed sequence of courses in a career and technical education concentration or specialization that they choose and maintain a "B" or better average in those courses
- OR pass an examination or an occupational competency assessment in a career and technical education concentration or specialization that confers certification or occupational competency credential from a recognized industry, trade or professional association

- OR acquire a professional license in that career and technical education field from the Commonwealth of Virginia.

The Board of Education shall approve all professional licenses and examinations used to satisfy these requirements.

**Board of Education's Advanced Mathematics & Technology Seal** – Awarded to students who earn either a Standard or Advanced Studies Diploma and satisfy all of the mathematics requirements for the Advanced Studies Diploma (four units of credit including Algebra II; two verified units of credit) with a "B" average or better; and either

- pass an examination in a career and technical education field that confers certification from a recognized industry, or trade or professional association
- OR acquire a professional license in a career and technical education field from the Commonwealth of Virginia
- OR pass an examination approved by the board that confers college-level credit in a technology or computer science area.

The Board of Education shall approve all professional licenses and examinations used to satisfy these requirements.

**Board of Education's Excellence in Civics Education Seal** – Awarded to students who meet each of the following four criteria:

- Satisfy the requirement to earn a Modified Standard Diploma, a Standard Diploma or an Advanced Studies Diploma
- Complete Virginia & United States History and Virginia & United States Government courses with a grade of "B" or higher
- Complete 50 hours of voluntary participation in community service or extracurricular activities, such as volunteering for a charitable or religious organization that provides services to the poor, sick or less fortunate; participating in Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts or similar youth organizations; participating in Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC); participating in political campaigns, government internships, Boys State, Girls State or Model General Assembly; and participating in school-sponsored extracurricular activities that have a civics focus. Any student who enlists in the United States military prior to graduation will be deemed to have met this community service requirement.
- Have good attendance and no disciplinary infractions as determined by local school board policies.

Local school divisions may award other diploma seals or awards for exceptional academic, CTE, citizenship or other exemplary performance in accordance with criteria defined by the local school board. The design, production and use of those seals is the responsibility of the local school boards awarding the seal.

## Resources

- [Superintendent's Memo # 084, April 1, 2011](#), concerning Diploma Seals, includes Diploma Seal Request Form
- [Superintendent's Memo # 060, February 25, 2011](#), concerning Diploma Seals
- [Superintendent's Memo # 5, March 14, 2008](#), concerning Diploma Seals
- [Superintendent's Memo # 9, March 10, 2006](#), concerning Diploma Seals
- [2006 Standards of Accreditation](#) (PDF), information on seals requirements took effect with the ninth-grade class of 2006-2007 and beyond
- Board of Education Approved Industry Certifications, Occupational Competency Assessments & Licensures
  - [February 17, 2011 Approved List](#) (PDF)
  - [January 14, 2010 Approved List](#) (PDF)
  - [January 15, 2009 Approved List](#) (PDF)
- [Competency Assessments & Licensures](#) (PDF)
- [Diploma Seals Resolutions](#)