

NOTICE OF GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to ensure that their child has all the credits needed to graduate. It is imperative that parents/guardians track and monitor the number of standard credits and verified credits their children have obtained. You can accomplish this by staying in touch with the assigned school counselor. Key questions to ask your child's school counselor are: How many credits does my child have and how many does he or she ultimately need for his/her diploma type? How many verified credits does he or she have and how many are ultimately needed for his/her diploma type? Is he or she on track for the current grade level? Have my child and I received his/her academic plan to ensure that he/she is on the right track toward graduation?

Dear Parent or Guardian:

Since 1995, the Commonwealth of Virginia has been committed to the Standards of Learning (SOL) program emphasizing the need for improving public education in four core subjects – English, mathematics, science, and history and social studies. The SOL have resulted in “high-stakes” testing designed to measure our students’ levels of mastery in these subject areas. The adjective “high stakes” is fitting because failure to pass these tests and/or pass certain required courses can affect whether or not your child graduates with his or her class. This document outlines specific graduation requirements. It is important that you review it carefully, because requirements are based upon the year your child entered the ninth grade. We encourage you to contact your child's school counselor to review his/her academic plan.

In Virginia there are several diploma options. These options and their accompanying requirements are explained at length in this document. Students in Virginia may opt to pursue an Advanced Studies Diploma, a Standard Diploma, or a Modified Standard Diploma. Students pursuing an Advanced Studies Diploma or a Standard Diploma must earn both standard and verified credits if they are to graduate from high school or participate in graduation ceremonies. Students earn a standard credit by successfully completing the requirements of the course. Students earn a verified credit by successfully completing the requirements of the course and achieving a passing score on the applicable end-of-course Standards of Learning (SOL) test or a test approved by the Virginia Board of Education. Six (6) verified credits are required for a Standard Diploma and nine (9) are required for an Advanced Studies Diploma. Other options available to special education students in addition to these diplomas are the Modified Standard Diploma and the Special Diploma. To determine the graduation requirements for your child, you must consider both the type of diploma sought and the year your child first entered ninth grade.

The following Virginia SOL end-of-course tests are available: English: Reading/Literature and Research, English: Writing, Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, Earth Science, Biology, Chemistry, World History I, World History II, World Geography, and Virginia and U. S. History. A list of additional tests approved by the Virginia Board of Education for verified credit is available in the appendix of the Student Guide: Secondary School Curriculum for Students of Virginia Beach City Public Schools. Copies of the guide are available at the high school and at our website vbschools.com.

It is the responsibility of each student and his/her parent that requirements for an Advanced Studies Diploma, a Standard Diploma, or a Modified Standard Diploma are met. Counselors review graduation requirements with students annually, and the guidance staff at each school is available to assist you. Please work closely with your child's school counselor in making academic decisions for your child. To determine the graduation requirements for your child, you must consider both the type of diploma sought and the year your child first entered ninth grade.



ADVANCED STUDIES DIPLOMA Requirements for Students who First Entered Ninth Grade Prior to 2011-12

The Advanced Studies diploma requires twenty-four (24) credits for students who first entered ninth grade prior to 2011-12. Of the 24 credits, nine (9) must be verified credits as follows: two (2) English, two (2) math, two (2) science, two (2) social studies, and one (1) student-selected test students must have to graduate.

DISCIPLINE AREA	UNITS OF CREDIT	REQUIRED TO BE VERIFIED
English 9, 10, 11, 12	4	2
Mathematics (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, AFDA (Algebra, Functions, and Data Analysis) Algebra II, or other mathematics courses above the level of Algebra II.)	4	2
Laboratory Science (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. NOTE: Oceanography and Astronomy are in the Earth Science Discipline)	4	2
History and Social Studies (Courses completed to satisfy this requirement shall include Virginia and U.S. History, Virginia and U.S. Government, and two world history/geography courses.)	4	2
Foreign Language (Courses completed to satisfy this requirement shall be three years of the same language or two years each of two languages)	3	
Health and Physical Education	2	
Fine Arts or Career and Technical Education	1	
Student-Selected Test		1
Required Courses	22	9
Elected Courses¹	2	
TOTAL	24	9

¹ Courses to satisfy this requirement must include at least two sequential as required by the Standards of Quality

ADVANCED STUDIES DIPLOMA Requirements for Students Entering Ninth Grade in 2011-12

The Advanced Studies Diploma requires twenty-six (26) credits for students entering ninth grade in 2011-12. Of the 26 credits, nine (9) must be verified credits as follows: two (2) English, two (2) math, two (2) science, two (2) social studies, and one student selected test students must have to graduate.

DISCIPLINE AREA	UNITS OF CREDIT	REQUIRED TO BE VERIFIED
English 9, 10, 11, 12	4	2
Mathematics (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.)	4	2
Laboratory Science (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. NOTE: Oceanography and Astronomy are in the Earth Science discipline.)	4	2
History and Social Science (Courses completed to satisfy this requirement shall include Virginia and U.S. History, Virginia and U.S. Government, and two courses in either world history or geography or both.)	4	2
Foreign Languages (Courses completed to satisfy this requirement shall be three years of the same language or two years each of two languages.)	3	
Health and Physical Education	2	
Fine Arts or Career and Technical Education	1	
Economics and Personal Finance	1	
Student-Selected Test		1
Required Courses	23	9
Elected Courses¹	3	
TOTAL	26	9

¹ Courses to satisfy this requirement shall include at least two sequential electives as required by the Standards of Quality

STANDARD DIPLOMA Requirements for Students who First Entered Ninth Grade Prior to 2011-12

The Standard Diploma requires twenty-two (22) credits for students who first entered ninth grade prior to 2011-12. Of the 22 credits, six (6) must be verified credits as follows: two (2) English, one (1) math, one (1) science, one (1) social studies, and one (1) student-selected test students must have to graduate.

DISCIPLINE AREA	UNITS OF CREDIT	REQUIRED TO BE VERIFIED
English 9, 10, 11, 12	4	2
Mathematics (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, AFDA (Algebra, Functions, and Data Analysis), Geometry, Algebra II, or other mathematics courses above the level of Algebra and Geometry.)	3	1
Laboratory Science (Courses completed to satisfy this requirement shall include course selections from at least two different science disciplines: Earth Sciences, Biology, Chemistry, or Physics. NOTE: Oceanography and Astronomy are in the Earth Science Discipline.)	3	1
History and Social Sciences (Courses completed to satisfy this requirement shall include Virginia and U.S. History, Virginia and U.S. Government, and one world history/geography course.)	3	1
Health and Physical Education	2	
Fine Arts or Career and Technical Education	1	
Student-Selected Test		1
Required Courses	16	6
Elected Courses¹	6	
TOTAL	22	6

¹ Courses to satisfy this requirement shall include at least two sequential electives as required by the Standards of Quality.

STANDARD DIPLOMA Requirements for Students Entering Ninth Grade in 2011-12

The Standard Diploma requires twenty-two (22) credits for students entering ninth grade in 2011-12. Of the 22 credits, six (6) must be verified credits as follows: two (2) English, one (1) math, one (1) science, one (1) social studies, and one (1) student-selected test students must have to graduate.

DISCIPLINE AREA	UNITS OF CREDIT	REQUIRED TO BE VERIFIED
English 9, 10, 11, 12	4	2
Mathematics (Courses completed to satisfy this requirement shall include at least two course selections from among Algebra I, Geometry, AFDA (Algebra Functions, and Data Analysis), or Algebra II, or other mathematics courses above the level of Algebra II.)	3	1
Laboratory Science (Courses completed to satisfy this requirement shall include course selections from at least two different science disciplines: Earth Sciences, Biology, Chemistry or Physics. NOTE: Oceanography and Astronomy are in the Earth Science discipline.)	3	1
History and Social Science (Courses completed to satisfy this requirement shall include Virginia and U.S. History, Virginia and U.S. Government, and one course in either world history or geography or both.)	3	1
Health and Physical Education	2	
Foreign Languages, Fine Arts, or Career and Technical Education	2	
Economics and Personal Finance	1	
Student-Selected Test		1
Required Courses	18	6
Elected Courses¹	4	
TOTAL	22	6

¹ Courses to satisfy this requirement shall include at least two sequential electives as required by the Standards of Quality.

Diplomas for Students Identified as Having Disabilities

A student's IEP committee may consider two other diploma options for students identified as having disabilities.

(A) The Modified Standard Diploma requires twenty (20) standard credits, but no verified credits. Students seeking a modified standard diploma must pass the 8th Grade Standards of Learning (SOL) tests in both English: Reading, Literature and Research (R/L/R) and Mathematics.

DISCIPLINE AREA	STANDARD UNITS OF CREDIT REQUIRED
English 9, 10, 11, 12	4
Mathematics (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 State Board of Education.)	3
Science (Courses completed shall include content from at least <u>two</u> of the following: application of earth science, biology, chemistry, or physics in courses approved by the State Board of Education.)	2
History and Social Studies (Courses completed to satisfy this requirement should include one unit of credit in Virginia and U.S. History and one unit of credit in Virginia and U.S. Government in courses approved by the State Board of Education.)	2
Health and Physical Education	2
Fine Arts or Career and Technical Education	1
Required Courses	14
Electives Courses¹	6
TOTAL	20

(B) The Special Diploma is granted when a student does not qualify for other diplomas, but does meet the requirements of the individualized educational plan developed for that student.

¹ Courses to satisfy this requirement must include at least two sequential electives: for example, Accounting and Advanced Accounting and Journalism I and II.

Students who earn a **Special Diploma** or a **Modified Standard Diploma** may participate in commencement exercises.

Transfer Students

Students who transfer from other Virginia public school systems must meet the same requirements as Virginia Beach City Public Schools students. The verified credits required of transfer students from private or out-of-state schools will vary depending on when the transfer student registers. The term “beginning” in the following charts means within the first twenty hours of instruction per course, and the term “during” means after the first 20 hours of instruction.

Advanced Studies Diploma Verified Credit Requirements for Students who Transfer into Virginia Beach City Public Schools	
Grade Level Student Enters Virginia Beach City Public Schools	Number of Prorated Verified Credits
During ninth grade or the beginning of tenth grade	Refer to requirements for Advanced Studies Diploma
During tenth or the beginning of eleventh grade	(2) English, (1) Mathematics, (1) social studies, (1) science, and (1) student-selected test
During eleventh or the beginning of twelfth grade	(1) English, and (3) student-selected test
During twelfth grade	<i>Students should be given every opportunity to earn a local diploma. If Virginia diploma requirements cannot be met, the previous school should award diploma or the student can request that the local school board seek a waiver from the Virginia Department of Education.</i>

Standard Diploma Verified Credit Requirements for Students who Transfer into Virginia Beach City Public Schools Students Transferring into a Virginia Public School for the first time.	
Grade Level Student Enters Virginia Beach City Public Schools	Number of Prorated Verified Credits
During ninth grade or the beginning of tenth grade	Refer to requirements for Standard Diploma
During tenth or the beginning of eleventh grade	(1) English, (1) Mathematics, (1) social studies, and (1) science
During eleventh or the beginning of twelfth grade	(1) English, and (1) student-selected test
During twelfth grade	<i>Students should be given every opportunity to earn a local diploma. If Virginia diploma requirements cannot be met, the previous school should award diploma or the student can request that the local school board seek a waiver from the Virginia Department of Education.</i>

Locally Awarded Verified Credits

A process exists to assist students seeking a standard diploma who have not met the verified credit requirements for a standard diploma. The School Board may award locally verified credits for the student-selected verified credits required for the Standard Diploma. This process **DOES NOT** apply to the awarding of the two (2) verified credits in English, also required for graduation, or to any verified credit a student wants to earn for mathematics. Any English or mathematics verified credits must be earned by passing the high school courses and the Standards of Learning tests (or approved substitute tests). Locally verified credits awarded through this process **CANNOT** be used if the student changes to the Advanced Studies Diploma track.

Students who do not pass Standards of Learning tests in science or history and social science may receive locally awarded verified credit from the local school board in accordance with criteria established in guidelines adopted by the Board of Education.

1. Meet the following requirements:
 - a. *Pass the high school course that corresponds to the failed SOL test*
 - b. *Not pass the related Standards of Learning or approved substitute test*
 - c. *Score within a designated range (375-399) on the Standards of Learning test*
2. Earn fewer than four of the student-selected verified credits required for the Standard Diploma.
3. Score within a 375-399 scale score range on any administration of the Standards of Learning test after taking the test at least twice without passing on any administration.

A student may be awarded no more than four verified credits through the above process. Another restriction is that the guidelines outlined above **MAY NOT** be used to award verified credits for the Advanced Studies Diploma.

The Certificate of Program Completion

The **Certificate of Program Completion** is designed for a student who has earned all of the required standard units of credit for graduation, but has not earned the appropriate corresponding verified credits. The student will be given the opportunity to earn verified credits in the summer and subsequent administrations of the SOL tests. If the student earns the appropriate verified credits, he/she will be considered a graduate and earn the appropriate diploma. If, however, the student does not earn the verified credits required, he/she can be awarded the **Certificate of Program Completion**.

The student who is awarded the **Certificate of Program Completion** *will not* participate in commencement exercises.

Students' school counselors are an important resource to help guide them during their academic careers. School counselors can also help families understand school requirements and access the resources that are available to support students. To schedule a meeting or a consultation call your child's guidance office.

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For further information, please call (757) 263-2010.

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Alternative formats of this publication which may include taped, Braille, or large print materials are available upon request for individuals with disabilities. Call or write Dr. Alveta G. Mitchell: Virginia Beach City Public Schools, 2512 George Mason Drive, P.O. Box 6038, Virginia Beach, VA 23456-0038. Telephone 648-6160 (voice); 263-1240 (TDD); or e-mail guidance@vbschools.com.



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