SPECIAL SERVICES
Promotion, Retention, Grading, and Graduation Requirements
Requirements for Graduation and Graduation Seals of Achievement

This regulation supersedes Regulation 2460.9.

I. PURPOSE
To provide information about graduation requirements and graduation (diploma) seals of achievement.

II. SUMMARY OF CHANGES SINCE LAST PUBLICATION
A. Section IV.A. has been updated to include special permission locally awarded verified credit accommodations.

B. Section V has been updated to remove the waivers for science and social studies as they are no longer needed.

C. Section VI has been updated to include the Seal for Science, Engineering, Technology, and Mathematics and the years of eligibility for the Advanced Mathematics and Technology have been added.

III. GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS
The requirements for a student to earn a diploma and graduate shall be those in effect when the student enters the ninth grade for the first time. In order to earn a diploma and graduate, a student must meet the Virginia and Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) local school board requirements for graduation, and currently be enrolled in an FCPS school or have received approval for beginning postsecondary education prior to high school graduation. It is the expectation that high school students will be scheduled for courses each year that facilitate an on-time graduation. Once a student has met the requirements for a diploma, they will be awarded the diploma and graduate from FCPS. The principal of the student’s high or secondary school shall approve the issuance of the diploma when all requirements of the high school diploma have been met. Requirements for students transferring into FCPS are outlined in Section V of this regulation.

IV. DIPLOMA REQUIREMENTS AND OPTIONS
A. Standard and Verified Credits

Students must meet specific standard and/or verified credit requirements to earn a diploma. A standard credit is earned when a student passes a course. A verified credit is earned when a student passes a course and the associated end-of-course Standards of Learning (SOL) or other assessment approved by the Board of Education. Students who do not pass an SOL test may be eligible to earn locally awarded verified credits. Appeals for locally awarded verified credits, including special permission locally awarded verified credit accommodations for eligible students with disabilities, must be reviewed and approved by a local school committee in accordance with Virginia Department of Education Regulations.

B. Virtual Course Requirement

Students entering ninth grade for the first time in 2013-14 and beyond shall be required to successfully complete one virtual course. Online instruction includes delivery of content, completion of assignments, and completion of assessment through a web-based learning management system. Courses that fulfill this requirement include approved credit-bearing online courses, approved credit-bearing blended courses, and approved non-credit-bearing online courses that meet the criteria outlined in this section.

1. Any credit-bearing FCPS online course or prior approved Virginia public school or Virginia Council for Private Education (VCPE) online course shall meet this requirement. Information about prior approval for courses taken outside of FCPS is outlined in the current version of Regulation 2408, Earning High School Credits.

2. The local school principal or his or her designee may review and approve credit-bearing courses taught in a blended format to meet this requirement. These courses must have a minimum of 30 hours of online instruction which is documented in the syllabus or overview of the course and have a completion document or grade summary with the student’s name and date of course completion.

3. The local school principal or his or her designee may review and approve non-credit-bearing course to meet this requirement. These courses must have a minimum of 30 hours of online instruction which is documented in the syllabus or overview of the course and have a completion document or grade summary with the student’s name and date of course completion. The assistant superintendent for Instructional Services may approve the development of courses that meet these requirements.

C. Career and Technical Education Credential Requirement for Students who Entered Ninth Grade in 2013-14 through 2017-18 (Standard Diploma)

Students entering ninth grade in 2013-14 through 2017-18 pursuing a Standard Diploma shall be required to earn a Virginia Board of Education approved Career and Technical Education Credential.
1. The Career and Technical Education Credential could include the successful completion of an industry certification, a state licensure examination, a national occupational competency assessment, or the Virginia workplace readiness assessment. A list of approved credentials may be found at http://www.pen.k12.va.us/instruction/career_technical/path_industry_certification/index.shtml.

2. The Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) may only be used towards this requirement if the student also completes a military science course.

D. Advanced Placement, Honors, or International Baccalaureate Course or Career and Technical Education Credential for Students who Entered Ninth Grade in 2018-19 and beyond (Standard and Advanced Studies Diploma)

Students entering ninth grade in the 2018-19 school year and beyond shall fulfill one of the criteria below in order to earn a Standard or Advanced Studies Diploma:

1. Earn a credit in an Advanced Placement, Honors, or International Baccalaureate course.

2. Earn a Career and Technical Education credential approved by the Board of Education, except when a Career and Technical Education credential in a particular subject area is not readily available or appropriate or does not adequately measure student competency, in which case the student shall receive satisfactory competency-based instruction in the subject area to satisfy the Advanced Studies diploma requirements. The Career and Technical Education credential, when required, could include the successful completion of an industry certification, a state licensure examination, a national occupational competency assessment, or the Virginia workplace readiness assessment.

E. Emergency First Aid, Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR), and Automated External Defibrillator (AED) Training Requirement

Students entering ninth grade in the 2016-17 school year and beyond shall complete training in emergency first aid, CPR, and the use of AED, including hands-on practice of the skills necessary to perform CPR. Students will be provided the opportunity to complete this training as part of the health and physical education curriculum in grade nine. Students with disabilities who are unable to complete this requirement due to physical limitations may be eligible for a waiver from this requirement.

F. Diploma Options

Diploma requirements and options are published annually in the FCPS Course Catalog and are available at: https://www.fcps.edu/academics/graduation-requirements-and-course-planning. Students may earn either a Standard Diploma or Advanced Studies Diploma. Certain students with disabilities who are unlikely to
meet the credit requirements for a Standard Diploma have the option of working towards additional diplomas. Eligibility requirements for students with disabilities to participate in the Modified Standard Diploma, Standard Diploma with credit accommodations, or Applied Studies Diploma programs are outlined in current version of Regulation 2466, Issuance of an Advanced Studies Diploma, a Standard Diploma, a Modified Standard Diploma, an Applied Studies Diploma, or a Certificate of Completion to an Eligible Student with Disabilities. Students attending Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology must fulfill requirements as outlined in the current version of Regulation 3355, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology (TJHSST).

G. Certificate of Completion

A student who has passed all of the courses required to earn a Standard Diploma, but lacks the verified credits required for the Standard Diploma may request a certificate of completion. The certificate of completion will be awarded only in cases where the student has made every effort to earn the required verified credits for graduation. Students who are awarded a certificate of completion are eligible and are strongly encouraged to continue to pursue the verified credits required for graduation as long as they meet the enrollment requirements in the current version of Regulation 2202, Required Admission Credentials for Students. Students who no longer meet age requirements outlined in Regulation 2202 may continue to pursue their verified requirements through Fairfax County Adult High School that will award the diploma if the requirements are met. To request a certificate of completion, parents and students will notify the student’s school within 30 days of the expected graduation date. The school will complete FCPS form IS-509, available at http://fcpsnet.fcps.edu/it/offices/eis/doc_mgmnt/information/is509.pdf, and forward to the region office for final approval. This link is available only through computers within the internal FCPS network (FCPSnet).

V. TRANSFER STUDENTS

Students transferring into FCPS must meet the requirements outlined in Section IV.C. of this regulation to receive a Standard Diploma or Advanced Studies Diploma, except as prescribed in this section. Each transfer student’s academic record shall be evaluated to determine the number and content of credits earned and specific credits still required for graduation and appropriate grade placement. Students entering from home instruction shall provide evidence of achievement as outlined in the current version of Regulation 2245, Home Instruction Requirements and Part-Time Enrollment Options. Nonnative speakers of English who transfer to FCPS may earn credits towards graduation as prescribed in the current version of Regulation 2442, Credit for Secondary Students With a Home Language Other Than English.

A. For students entering a Virginia public high school for the first time after the tenth grade, schools may substitute courses required in other states in the same content area if the student is unable to meet FCPS graduation requirements without taking a heavier than normal course load in any semester, by taking summer school, or taking courses after the time when the student would have otherwise graduated.
B. Students transferring above the tenth grade from schools or other education programs that do not require or give credit for health and physical education shall not be required to take these courses to meet graduation requirements. Students waived from these requirements must still earn the minimum number of credits required for the diploma.

C. Transfer students may be required to earn fewer verified credits depending upon the time they enter a Virginia public high school. Transfer students, including those covered by the provisions outlined in the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children, who passed end-of-course or comprehensive assessments in their previous school may have those assessment results reviewed for verified credit.

D. Students transferring after 20 instructional hours per course of their senior or twelfth grade year shall be given every opportunity to earn a Standard, Advanced Studies, or Modified Standard Diploma. If it is not possible for the student to meet the requirements for a diploma, arrangements should be made for the student’s previous school to award the diploma. If these arrangements cannot be made, FCPS may request a waiver from the Virginia Department of Education in accordance with guidelines prescribed by the Board of Education.

VI. STATE DIPLOMA SEALS

A. Governor’s Seal

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 shall receive the Governor’s Seal on the diploma. An average grade of “B” or better is defined by a cumulative GPA of 2.7 or higher. Each AP, IB, or dual enrollment course a student passes shall be considered three transferrable credits regardless of the score earned on the external exam. IB courses that carry a .5 weight are not transferrable credits.

B. Board of Education Seal

Students who complete the requirements for a Standard Diploma or Advanced Studies Diploma with an average grade of “A” shall receive a Board of Education Seal on the diploma. An average grade of “A” or better is defined by a cumulative GPA of 3.7 or higher.

C. Career and Technical Education Seal

The Board of Education’s Career and Technical Education Seal will be awarded to students who earn a Standard Diploma or Advanced Studies Diploma and complete a prescribed sequence of courses in a career and technical education concentration or specialization that they choose and (i) maintain a “B” or better average in those courses; or (ii) 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 (iii) 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. An average grade of “B” or better is defined by a GPA of 2.7 or higher for the courses in the designated concentration or specialization.

D. Advanced Mathematics and Technology Seal (Students who Entered Ninth Grade in 2017-18 and prior)

The Board of Education’s Seal of Advanced Mathematics and Technology will be awarded to students who earn either a Standard Diploma or Advanced Studies Diploma and (i) satisfy all of the mathematics requirements for the Advanced studies Diploma with a “B” average or better; and (ii) either (a) pass an examination in a career and technical education field that confers certification from a recognized industry, trade, or professional association; or (b) acquire a professional license in a career and technical education field from the Commonwealth of Virginia; or (c) pass an examination approved by the Board that confers college-level credit in a technology or computer science area. An average grade of “B” or better is defined by a GPA of 2.7 or higher.

E. Seal for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics

The Board of Education’s STEM Seal will be awarded to students who earn either a Standard Diploma or Advanced Studies Diploma and satisfy all math and science requirements for the Advanced Studies Diploma with a “B” average or better in all course work and (i) successfully complete a 50 hour or more work-based learning opportunity in a STEM area; and (ii) satisfy all requirements for a Career and Technical Education concentration; and (iii) pass either (a) a Board of Education CTE STEM-H credential examination; or (b) an examination approved by the Board that confers a college-level credit in a STEM field.

F. Excellence in Civics Education Seal

The Board of Education’s Seal for Excellence in Civics Education will be awarded to students who earn either a Modified Standard Diploma, Standard Diploma, or Advanced Studies Diploma and: (i) complete Virginia and United States history and Virginia and United States government courses with a grade of “B” or higher, and (ii) have good attendance and no disciplinary infractions as determined by School Board policies, and (iii) complete 50 hours of voluntary participation in community service or extracurricular activities. Activities that would satisfy the requirements of this clause (iii) of this subdivision include: (a) volunteering for a charitable or religious organization that provides services to the poor, sick, or less fortunate; (b) participating in Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, or similar youth organizations; (c) participating in Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC); (d) participating in political campaigns or government internships, or Boys State, Girls State, or Model General Assembly; or (e) 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. Students must achieve a letter grade of "B-" or higher in both courses to be eligible for this seal.

G. Seal of Biliteracy

The Board of Education’s Seal of Biliteracy will be awarded to students who earn either a Board of Education-approved diploma and (i) pass all required end-of-course assessments in English reading and writing at the proficient or higher level; and (ii) be proficient at the intermediate-mid level or higher in one or more languages other than English, as demonstrated through an assessment approved by the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

H. Seal for Excellence in Science and the Environment (Students who Enter Ninth Grade in 2018-19 and Beyond)

The Board of Education’s Seal for Excellence in Science and the Environment shall be awarded to students who earn either a Standard Diploma or Advanced Studies Diploma and (i) complete at least three different first-level board-approved laboratory science courses and at least one rigorous advanced-level or postsecondary-level laboratory science course, each with a grade of "B" or higher; (ii) complete laboratory or field-science research and present that research in a formal, juried setting; and (iii) complete at least 50 hours of voluntary participation in community service or extracurricular activities that involve the application of science such as environmental monitoring, protection, management, or restoration.

I. Other Seals or Awards

Students may receive other seals or awards for exceptional academic, career and technical, citizenship, or other exemplary performance in accordance with criteria defined by the School Board.

Legal references: Code of Virginia, Section 22.1-253.13:4
Virginia Department of Education Regulations 8VAC20-131-50 and 8VAC20-131-51

See also current versions of:
Regulation 2202, Required Admission Credentials for Students
Regulation 2245, Home Instruction Requirements and Part-Time Enrollment Options Home-Schooled Students
Regulation 2408, Earning High School Credits
Regulation 2410, Promotion and Retention of Students in Grades K-12
Regulation 2430, High School Teacher’s Guide: Grading and Reporting to Parents
Regulation 2442, Credit for Secondary Students With a Home Language Other Than English
Regulation 2466, Issuance of an Advanced Studies Diploma, a Standard Diploma, a Modified Standard Diploma, an Applied Studies Diploma, or a Certificate of Completion to an Eligible Student with Disabilities
Regulation 3355, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology (TJHSST)
Regulation 3511, Alternative High School Program