

Section 8-33.3. SOL Tests; standard units of credit; verified units of credit; three-member review panel created; limited proficiency in English exemption; student with disabilities exception. — A. In kindergarten through eighth grade, where Standards of Learning (SOL) Tests are required by the Board of Education, each student is expected to take the SOL tests. Students who are accelerated take the tests of the grade level enrolled or the tests for the grade level of the content received in instruction. No student takes more than one test in any content area in each year. Schools will use the SOL test results in kindergarten through eighth grade as part of a set of multiple criteria for determining the promotion or retention of students.

The student's respective grade, and the test results shall be part of a multiple set of criteria used in determining the promotion or retention of students. In addition, each student in middle and secondary school shall take all applicable end-of-course SOL tests. Students who successfully complete the requirements of the course and achieve a passing score on an end-of-course SOL test shall be awarded a verified unit of credit in that course. Students may earn verified credits in any courses for which end-of-course SOL tests are available. Students may also be awarded a locally verified credit guided by a division-based committee convened to make such determinations.

B. Each student in middle and secondary school will take all applicable end-of-course SOL tests following course instruction. 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 and as described below. Students who achieve a passing score on an end-of-course SOL test will be awarded a verified unit of credit in that course in accordance with 8 VAC 20-131-110. Students may earn verified credits in any courses for which end-of-course SOL tests are available. Middle and secondary schools may consider the student's end-of-course SOL test score in determining the student's final course grade.

C. In order to be awarded a diploma, secondary school students 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 for graduation is based on a minimum of 140 clock hours of instruction and successful completion of the requirements of the course. The 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. A standard unit of credit may also be awarded based on a waiver of the 140-clock hour requirement as provided for herein.

D. Upon recommendation of the superintendent and demonstration of mastery of course content and objectives, qualified students may receive a standard unit of credit and permitted to sit for the relevant SOL test to earn a verified credit without having to

meet the 140-clock-hour requirement. The superintendent by regulation shall determine the manner in which a student may demonstrate mastery of course content and objectives, and documentation of such mastery will be maintained in the student's permanent record. Suffolk Public Schools may award verified credits in English, mathematics, science and history and social science in accordance with Board of Education regulations and guidance.

To be eligible to earn locally awarded verified credits, a student must (i) pass the high school course and not pass the related Standards of Learning test; (ii) take the Standards of Learning test at least twice; (iii) score within a 375-399 scale score range on any administration of the Standards of Learning test; and (iv) demonstrate achievement in the academic content through the appeal process described below.

A verified unit of credit for graduation is based on a minimum of 140 clock hours of instruction, successful completion of the requirements of the course, and the achievement by the student of a passing score on the end-of-course SOL test for that course or additional tests as described herein. A student may also earn a verified unit of credit by the following methods: (1) 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 SOL 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 of Education; (2) upon waiver of the 140-clock-hour requirement according to the Board of Education's Guidelines for Graduation Requirements; (3) Local Alternative Paths to Standard Units of Credit as provided for in this Policy; and (4) by taking alternative tests to the SOL assessment. Such tests may only be those approved by the Virginia Board of Education, and the student may earn verified credits only by achieving that score established by the Board of Education.

E. In addition to verified credits in science and history/social sciences, Suffolk Public Schools may also award verified credits toward a standard diploma in reading, writing and mathematics to students with disabilities as credit accommodations for the standard diploma. To be eligible for such credit accommodations, students with disabilities must meet all criteria established by Virginia law or regulation and eligibility for such credit accommodations must be established in the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 plan. There is no maximum number of locally awarded verified credits that a student with a disability may earn toward a standard diploma.

F. All students identified as limited English proficient (LEP) will participate in the SOL testing program. A school-based committee will convene and make determinations regarding the participation level of LEP students. In kindergarten through eighth grade, limited English proficient students may be granted a one-time exemption from SOL testing in the areas of writing, science, and history and social science.

G. Participation in the SOL testing program by students with disabilities will be prescribed by provisions of their Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan. All

students with disabilities will be assessed with appropriate accommodations and alternate assessments where necessary.

H. The School Board awards diplomas to all secondary school students, including students who transfer from non-public schools or from home instruction, who meet the requirements prescribed by the Board of Education, and meet such other requirements as are prescribed by the School Board and approved by the Board of Education. (Adopted January 12, 1995; Revised June 14, 2001, Effective date: July 1, 2001; Ordinance Number 00/01-15; Revised November 21, 2002, Effective date: July 1, 2002; Ordinance Number 02/03-4; Effective July 1, 2003; Revised March 12, 2009; Ordinance Number 08/09-35; Effective July 1, 2009; Revised July 10, 2014; Ordinance Number 14/15-1; Effective July 10, 2014; Revised October 13, 2016; Ordinance Number 16/17-15; Effective Date: July 1, 2017; Revised December 13, 2018; Ordinance Number 18/19-45; Effective Date: December 13, 2018)

Legal Authority - Virginia Code §22.1-253.13:1 (1950) and 8 VAC 20-131-5, 8 VAC 20-131-50, and 8 VAC 20-131-110.