



Diploma Options

New standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia require all students to take end-of-course tests **IN ALL COURSES WHERE SUCH TESTS EXIST.**

Beginning with the ninth grade class of 2000-2001, a student who receives a **standard diploma** will be required to pass six (6) end-of-course SOL tests. A student who receives an **advanced diploma** must pass nine (9) SOL tests. See the chart below for specific diploma requirements.

STANDARD DIPLOMA				
Discipline Area	For students entering 9th grade PRIOR TO 2010-2011		For students entering 9th grade BEGINNING IN 2010-2011	
	Units of Credit	# of Verified Units Required	Units of Credit	# of Verified Units Required
English	4	2	4	2
Mathematics	3 ¹	1	3 ¹	1
Laboratory Science ⁶	3 ²	1	3 ²	1
History & Social Sciences ⁶	3 ³	1	3 ³	1
Health & Physical Ed.	2		2	
Fine Arts or Practical Arts	1			
Foreign Language, Fine Arts or Career & Technical Ed.			2	
Economics & Personal Finance			1	
Electives	6 ⁴		4 ⁴	
Student Selected Test		1 ⁵		1 ⁵
TOTAL	22	6	22	6
Verified units of credit (VC) are awarded upon successful completion of a core academic class and passing the corresponding Standards of Learning (SOL) end-of-course test. ⁶ Students who complete a career and technical education program sequence and pass a Board of Education approved industry certification, occupational competency assessment, or licensure may substitute the certification, competency credential, or license for (i) the student selected verified credit and (ii) either a science or history and social science verified credit when the certification, license, or credential confers more than one verified credit.	Beginning with the ninth grade class prior to 2010-2011 , students shall earn the required verified units of credit described above. ¹ At Algebra I and above to include two selections from Algebra I, Geometry and Algebra II or other courses above the level of Algebra and Geometry. ² Courses from at least two different science disciplines from Earth Science, Biology, Chemistry or Physics ³ World History & Geography to 1500 AD or World History & Geography 1500 AD to Present, VA/US History, VA/US Government ⁴ Courses to satisfy this requirement shall include at least two sequential electives. ⁵ May utilize additional tests for earning verified credit in computer science, technology, and career and technical education.		Beginning with the ninth grade class of 2010-2011 , students shall earn the required verified units of credit described above. ¹ At Algebra I and above to include two selections from Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra, Functions and Data Analysis, Algebra II or other courses above the level of Algebra II. ² Courses from at least two different science disciplines from Earth Science, Biology, Chemistry or Physics ³ World History & Geography to 1500 AD or World History & Geography 1500 AD to Present, VA/US History, VA/US Government ⁴ Courses to satisfy this requirement shall include at least two sequential electives. ⁵ May utilize additional tests for earning verified credit in computer science, technology, career and technical education and economics.	

ADVANCED DIPLOMA				
Discipline Area	For students entering 9th grade PRIOR TO 2010-2011		For students entering 9th grade BEGINNING IN 2010-2011	
	Units of Credit	# of Verified Units Required	Units of Credit	# of Verified Units Required
English	4	2	4	2
Mathematics	4 ¹	2	4 ¹	2
Laboratory Science ⁶	4 ²	2	4 ²	2
History & Social Sciences ⁶	4 ³	2	4 ³	2
Foreign Language	3 ⁴		3 ⁴	
Health & Physical Ed.	2		2	
Fine Arts or Career & Technical Ed.	1		1	
Economics & Personal Finance			1	
Electives	2		3	
Student Selected Test		1 ⁵		1 ⁵
TOTAL	24	9	26	9
Verified units of credit (VC) are awarded upon successful completion of a core academic class and passing the corresponding Standards of Learning (SOL) end-of-course test.	Beginning with the ninth grade class prior to 2010-2011 , students shall earn the required verified units of credit described above. ¹ At Algebra I and above to include three selections from Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II or other courses above the level of Algebra II. ² Courses from at least three different science disciplines from Earth Science, Biology, Chemistry or Physics ³ World History & Geography to 1500 AD, World History & Geography 1500 AD to Present, VA/US History, VA/US Government ⁴ Three years of one language or two years of two languages ⁵ May utilize additional tests for earning verified credit in computer science, technology, and career and technical education.		Beginning with the ninth grade class of 2010-2011 , students shall earn the required verified units of credit described above. ¹ At Algebra I and above to include three selections from Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II or other courses above the level of Algebra II. ² Courses from at least three different science disciplines from Earth Science, Biology, Chemistry or Physics ³ World History & Geography to 1500 AD, World History & Geography 1500 AD to Present, VA/US History, VA/US Government ⁴ Three years of one language or two years of two languages ⁵ May utilize additional tests for earning verified credit in computer science, technology, career and technical education and economics.	

STANDARD AND ADVANCED TECHNICAL DIPLOMA

For students entering 9th grade BEGINNING IN 2010-2011

Discipline Area	STANDARD TECHNICAL DIPLOMA		ADVANCED TECHNICAL DIPLOMA	
	Units of Credit	# of Verified Units Required	Units of Credit	# of Verified Units Required
English	4	2	4	2
Mathematics	3 ¹	1	4 ¹	2
Laboratory Science	3 ^{2, 5}	1	4 ²	2
History & Social Sciences	3 ^{3, 5}	1	4 ³	2
Health & Physical Ed.	2		2	
Fine Arts or Foreign Language	1			
Foreign Language			3 ⁴	
Economics & Personal Finance	1		1	
Fine Arts or Career & Technical			1	
Career & Technical Ed.	4 ⁴		3 ⁵	
Electives	1			
Student Selected Test		1 ⁶		1 ⁶
TOTAL	22	6	26	9
Verified units of credit (VC) are awarded upon successful completion of a core academic class and passing the corresponding Standards of Learning (SOL) end-of-course test.	¹ At Algebra I and above to include three selections from Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra, Functions and Data Analysis, or Algebra II or other courses above the level of Algebra II. ² Courses from at least three different science disciplines from Earth Science, Biology, Chemistry or Physics ³ World History & Geography to 1500 AD or World History & Geography 1500 AD to Present, VA/US History, VA/US Government ⁴ Courses completed must include a career concentration. If a career concentration includes a specific assessment approved and the student is eligible to take the assessment, then the student must take this assessment. ⁵ Students who complete a career and technical education program sequence and pass a Board of Education approved industry certification, occupational competency assessment, or licensure may substitute the certification, competency credential, or license for (i) the student selected verified credit and (ii) either a science or history and social science verified credit when the certification, license, or credential confers more than one verified credit. ⁶ May utilize additional tests for earning verified credit in computer science, technology, career and technical education and economics.		¹ At Algebra I and above to include three selections from Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II or other courses above the level of Algebra II. ² Courses from at least three different science disciplines from Earth Science, Biology, Chemistry or Physics ³ World History & Geography to 1500 AD, World History & Geography 1500 AD to Present, VA/US History, VA/US Government ⁴ Courses shall include three years of one language or two years of two languages. ⁵ Courses completed must include a career concentration. If a career concentration includes a specific assessment approved and the student is eligible to take the assessment, then the student must take this assessment. ⁶ May utilize additional tests for earning verified credit in computer science, technology, career and technical education and economics.	

MODIFIED STANDARD DIPLOMA

Discipline Area	Standard Units of Credit Required (IEP Specification)
English	4
Mathematics	3 ¹
Laboratory Science	2 ²
History & Social Sciences	2 ³
Health & Physical Ed.	2
Fine Arts or Practical Arts	1
Electives	6 ⁴
TOTAL	20
Courses that have been approved by the Board shall include content from: ¹ Among applications of algebra, geometry, personal finance and statistics ² At least two of the following: applications of earth science, biology, chemistry or physics ³ One unit of credit in VA/US history and one credit in VA/US Government ⁴ Beginning with the graduating class of 2003, at least two sequential activities in the same manner required for the Standard Diploma.	

COURSES THAT HAVE END-OF-COURSE TESTS

The Board of Education has approved additional tests for the purpose of awarding verified credit. A list of tests is available in the guidance department.

Science - 3 tests Earth Science Advanced Earth Science Biology Advanced Biology Chemistry	History and Social Science - 3 tests World History & Geography to 1500 AD Adv. World History & Geography to 1500 AD World History & Geography 1500 AD to Present Advanced World History & Geography 1500 AD to Present U. S. History
Mathematics - 3 tests Algebra I Geometry Algebra II	English - 2 tests A writing test which has a multiple-choice component along with a response to the writing prompt. A reading/literature and research test with all multiple choice items. Both tests are to be administered after completing English 11.

DIPLOMAS

STANDARD DIPLOMA

To graduate from high school, a student shall meet the requirements for the 22-credit diploma. (See chart on previous page.)

Students who will graduate with a standard diploma are required to have earned at least two (2) sequential electives.

ADVANCED DIPLOMA

As an elective for students, each high school shall offer an Advanced Studies Program. For students entering 9th grade prior to 2010-2011, advanced diploma graduates are required to earn 24 units of credit. For students entering 9th grade beginning in 2010-2011, advanced diploma graduates are required to earn 26 units of credit. (See chart on previous page.)

TECHNICAL DIPLOMAS

For students entering 9th grade beginning in 2010-2011, graduates may meet the requirements to receive either a standard technical diploma or an advanced technical diploma. (See chart above.)

MODIFIED STANDARD DIPLOMA

The Modified Standard Diploma program 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 Modified Standard Diploma program shall be determined by the student's Individual Education Program (IEP) team and the student, where appropriate, at any point after the student's eighth grade year.

Beginning with the ninth grade class of 2000-01, students pursuing the Modified Standard Diploma shall pass literacy and numeracy competency assessments prescribed by the Board. (See chart above left.)

INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM (IEP)

DIPLOMAS

Students with disabilities who complete the requirements of their Individualized Education Program (IEP) and do not meet the requirements for other diplomas shall be awarded special diplomas.

CERTIFICATES

Students who do not earn units of credit or complete the requirements of their individualized education program do not qualify for diplomas, but do qualify for certificates if they complete a prescribed course of study as defined by the local school board.

GENERAL ACHIEVEMENT DIPLOMA (GAD)

The General Achievement Diploma is intended to provide a diploma option for high school dropouts and individuals who exit high school without a diploma. It should not be a first option for high school students.

Individuals who are at least 18 years of age and not enrolled in public school or not otherwise meeting the compulsory school attendance requirements set forth in the Code of Virginia 22.1-254 shall be eligible to earn the General Achievement Diploma. Diploma candidates may be individuals who are of the age (who has not reach twenty years of age on or before August 1 of the school year) to enroll in a public school whether they choose to enroll or not; or individuals who because of their age are not eligible to enroll in a public school.

Requirements for the award of a General Achievement Diploma have been established by the Board of Education. To receive this diploma candidates should have (i) achieved a passing score on the GED® examination; (ii) successfully completed an education and training program designated by the Board of Education; and (iii) satisfied other requirements as may be established by the board for the award of such a diploma.

Current credit and assessment requirements for graduation with a General Achievement Diploma are as noted.

Discipline Area	Standard Units of Credit Required	Assessment Required
English	4	Achieve a passing score on the GED® examination
Mathematics ¹	3	
Science ²	2	
History & Social Science ³	2	
Electives ⁴	9	
TOTAL	20	

¹ Shall include content in mathematics courses that incorporate or exceed the content of courses approved by the Board to satisfy any other Board-recognized diploma.

² Shall include content in science courses that incorporate or exceed the content of courses approved by the Board to satisfy any other Board-recognized diploma.

³ Shall include one unit of credit in Virginia and U. S. History and one unit of credit in Virginia and U. S. Government in courses that incorporate or exceed the content of courses approved by the Board to satisfy any other Board-recognized diploma.

⁴ Shall include at least two sequential electives in an area of concentration or specialization, which may include career and technical education and training.

CREDITS REQUIRED FOR GRADUATION

NOTIFICATION

Students with disabilities who have an IEP and who fail to meet the requirements for graduation have the right to a free and appropriate education to age 21, inclusive.

Students who fail to graduate or to achieve the number of verified units of credit required for graduation and who have not reached 20 years of age on or before August 1st of the school year have the right to a free public education. If the student is one for whom English is a second language, the student's opportunity for a free public education is in accordance with Va. § Code 22.1-5.



DIPLOMA SEALS

Board of Education Seal:

Students who earn either a *Standard or Advanced Studies Diploma* and graduate with an **average grade of "A" or better** shall receive a *Board of Education Seal* on the diploma.

Governor's Seal

Students who complete the requirements for an Advanced Studies Diploma with an average of "B" or better and successfully complete at least three advanced placement (AP) or three college academic level course for credit shall receive a *Governor's Seal* on the diploma.

Career and Technical Education Seal

The Board of Education's *Career and Technical Education Seal* will be 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 (i) pass an examination or an occupational competency assessment in a career and technical education concentration or specialization that confers certification or an occupational competency credential from a recognized industry, trade or professional association, or (ii) acquire a professional license in that career and technical education field from the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Advanced Mathematics and Technology Seal

The Board of Education's Seal of *Advanced Mathematics and Technology* will be awarded to students who earn either a *Standard or Advanced Studies Diploma* and (i) satisfy all of the mathematics requirements for the Advanced Studies Diploma (4 units of credit including Algebra II; two verified units of credit) with a "B" average or better; and (ii) either (a) pass an examination in a career and technical education field that offers certification from a recognized industry, or trade or professional association; (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.

Excellence in Civics Education

"The Board of Education's Seal for *Excellence in Civics Education* will be awarded to students who earn either a Standard or Advanced Studies Diploma and; i) complete Virginia and U.S. History and Virginia and U.S. Government courses with a grade of "B" or higher; and, ii) have good attendance and no disciplinary infractions as determined by local school board policies and, iii) complete 50 hours of voluntary participation in community service or extracurricular activities. Activities that would satisfy the requirements of iii) 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 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."

CREDITS

Credits Required for Promotion

Graduates of 2004 and Beyond

Grade 9 to Grade 10	7 credits + 1 verified
Grade 10 to Grade 11	14 credits + 3 verified
Grade 11 to Grade 12	19 credits + 5 verified*

*Plus be eligible for graduation at the conclusion of the current session.

CLASS RANK

SINGLE RANKING SYSTEM for the Graduates of 2003 and Beyond

G.P.A. (Grade Point Average)

Total number of quality points divided by the number of credits attempted. The higher the average; the higher the rank. *See Points Per Credit.*

Points Per Credit	
Advanced & Advanced Placement Courses	All Other
A = 5	A = 4
B = 4	B = 3
C = 3	C = 2
D = 2	D = 1
F = 0	F = 0

Valedictorian/Salutatorian

In case of a tie for the number one ranking, co-valedictorians shall be declared with no salutatorian. In case of a tie for the number two ranking, co-salutatorians shall be declared.

Valedictorians and salutatorians will be determined by class rank at the end of the first semester of the senior year.

Piedmont Governor's School for Mathematics, Science and Technology Valedictorian/Salutatorian

Pittsylvania County Schools recognizes a valedictorian and salutatorian from the division's seniors attending the PGSMST. The ranking, calculated at the end of the fifth six weeks of the senior year, is based on the quality point average of courses taken at the Governor's School. In case of a tie for number one ranking, co-valedictorians are declared with no salutatorian. In case of a tie for the number two ranking, co-salutatorians are declared.

Honor Graduates

To qualify as an honor graduate, the student must acquire a 3.2 average on all units of credit attempted for subjects which are designated as ninth grade or above and must have a good conduct record.

The first semester grade of each senior shall be averaged with his previous yearly averages to determine the selection of honor graduates.

ADVANCED COURSES

Advanced courses carry special grade point value. Recommended criteria is as follows:

- ◆ Designated performance on standardized tests
- ◆ Teacher recommendations
- ◆ Student performance in previous courses
- ◆ Parental consent

ADVANCED PLACEMENT

Advanced placement (AP) courses carry special grade point value.

The content for these courses follows closely the syllabus as defined by The College Entrance Examination Board. Recommended criteria is as follows:

- ◆ Motivation and commitment to complete course
- ◆ Understanding of what is expected in an AP course
- ◆ Parental support at home
- ◆ Possessing appropriate skills - Reading/Writing
- ◆ Teacher recommendations
- ◆ Completion of prerequisite courses where applicable
- ◆ Overall GPA indicates high achievement (B's or better in core academic courses)
- ◆ Past performance in courses in the same subject area for which student is applying

Students are strongly encouraged to take Advanced Placement examinations, thus demonstrating achievement at the third-year college level. If students choose to take the AP examination, they will be responsible for the fee assessed by ETS unless financial assistance application to low-income and needy students is approved.

DUAL ENROLLMENT

Students receive both high school and college credit (with Danville Community College) in these courses. DCC enrollment requirements must be met for college credit.

ELECTRONIC CLASSROOM

Students may take courses via the internet. Electronic classes that are year-long courses that carry only one (1) Carnegie Unit of credit. See your guidance counselor for further details.

VIRTUAL ADVANCED PLACEMENT (VAP) SCHOOL

The Virtual Advanced Placement School provides a variety of college-level AP courses, enabling students to earn college credit, regardless of their home high school's ability to offer college-level courses. Courses are taught via online through this program.

Students eligible for this program must be identified as an Early College Scholar and are **required** to take the associated AP Exam.

BLOCK SCHEDULING

All Pittsylvania County high schools operate under a block scheduling system. Students take four (4) subjects per day, receiving a total of eight (8) credits in one year. Most classes meet for approximately 90 minutes each day. This enables students to take the courses required for their chosen pathway as well as other electives of interest.

PROGRAM OF INSTRUCTION

Pittsylvania County secondary schools shall provide each student a program of instruction in the academic areas of English, mathematics, science, and history/social science that enables each student to meet the graduation requirements described in 8 VAC 20-131-50 and shall offer opportunities for students to pursue a program of studies in academics, fine arts, and career and technical areas including:

1. Career and technical education choices that prepare the student as a career and technical education program completer in one of three or more occupational areas and that prepare the student for technical or preprofessional postsecondary programs;
2. Course work and experiences that prepare the student for college-level studies including access to at least three (3) advanced placement courses or three (3) college-level courses for credit;
3. Preparation for college admissions tests; and
4. Opportunities to study and explore the fine arts.

Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia 8 VAC 20-131-10 et seq.

GUIDELINES FOR DROPPING SECONDARY CLASSES

Students that drop a course after the first fifteen days or the day after first progress reports are issued, whichever is later, on a 4 X 4 schedule and after the first thirty days on a yearlong schedule will receive a failing grade for that course.

Students may not change from one elective class to a different class after the first day of enrollment, unless there is an error in scheduling.

A student's request to change a course requires administrator, teacher, and counselor recommendations.

Level changes within a specified course may occur if grades from original course transfers to the new course assignment.

Legitimate justification for course changes are as noted:

1. scheduling error
2. improper level placement
3. severe personal illness (requires administrator, teacher and counselor review).

Noted justification must prevent the completion of course requirements.

GRADING SYSTEM

The following marking system shall be used in evaluating student's work, reporting to parents and completing other school reports:

- A = Excellent (94-100)
- B = Good (86 - 93)
- C = Average (78 - 85)
- D = Experiencing Difficulty (70 - 77)
- F = Failing (Below 70)
- W = Withheld

The teacher will use the numerical grade in his/her grade book. All grades should be recorded on report cards and permanent records as letter grades.

Conduct shall be graded as follows:

- S = Satisfactory
- U = Unsatisfactory

At the end of the six weeks marking period, grades will be recorded on the student's report card. Division-wide interim reports will be sent to parents at the mid-point of each marking period for all students.

At the end of each semester, the final grade and the cumulative course credits will be recorded on the student's cumulative record. A final grade for classroom and behind-the-wheel driver training will be entered on the student's cumulative record.

No high school student will be exempt from taking an examination in a course with the exception of a senior who has an "A" average on the grades earned at the end of each six weeks and any student who has received a passing score on an end-of-course Standards of Learning test.

The following method shall be used in determining the final grade for each student unless exceptions are deemed necessary and are approved by the teacher and principal:

The six-weeks grade will be determined by the average of grades recorded during the six weeks. The weight of a specific grade will be determined by the nature and the content of the activity within the subject area.

The three six-weeks grades will count 75% of the final grade and the exam 25% of the final grade.

Pittsylvania County Schools - Policy IKH-PC (Revised 8/10/04)

REMEDIAL CLASSES

Remedial instruction must be provided to students who fail all of the SOL tests at grades three, five and eight.