ARTICLE IV: STUDENT CLASSIFICATION AND ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS

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POLICY 6-4.1 GRADE PLACEMENT

Elementary Schools

Entrance

Age 5 - A pupil who will be age five on or before September 30 may enroll in the Poquoson City Public Schools and be classified as a kindergarten student.

A pupil entering school who is not age six on or before September 30 and who has prior kindergarten experience may be classified as a kindergarten or first grade student based on his performance on the school division’s reading and mathematics basal placement tests, Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) results, and evaluations from other schools.

Age 6 - A pupil entering school who is age six on or before September 30 without prior kindergarten experience may be classified as a kindergarten or first grade student based on his performance on the school division’s reading and mathematics basal placement test, and Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) results.

Transfer

After age six, students who transfer from other elementary schools, either within or outside the school division, shall be placed in the grade which has been recommended by the previous school. The principal shall require a continuous evaluation of the capabilities and adjustment of the student and, if necessary, shall reassign such student at the earliest possible opportunity to the appropriate grade as determined by the evaluation.

Middle and High Schools

A student who transfers to Poquoson City Public Schools and who is not deficient in any subject requirements in the school division from which he/she transfers shall receive the same grade classification status in the middle and high schools in Poquoson City. The student shall not be required to take courses to erase deficiencies that are normally required of 8th grade students enrolled in the Poquoson City Public Schools.

Transfer students shall meet any and all accreditation standards for graduation requirements.


Adopted: November 2002
POLICY 6-4.2 PLACEMENT OF TWINS AND HIGHER ORDER MULTIPLES

Parents of twins or higher order multiples who are enrolled in the Poquoson City Public Schools in the same grade may request that the children be placed in the same classroom or separate classrooms if they are in the same elementary school. Such request must be made in writing to the school’s principal no later than three (3) days after the first day of each school year or three (3) days after the first day of attendance of the children during a school year. The principal may recommend classroom placement to a parent, but placement shall be made in accordance with the parent’s request, unless the division superintendent or his or her designee makes a classroom placement determination following the school principal’s request in accordance with this Policy. At the end of the initial grading period, if the school principal, in consultation with the children’s classroom teacher, determines that the requested classroom placement is disruptive to the school or is harmful to the children’s educational progress, the school principal may request that the division superintendent or his or her designee determine the children’s classroom placement.

LEGAL REFERENCE: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, § 22.1-79.3(D)

Adopted: June 2009
POLICY 6-4.3 GROUPING FOR INSTRUCTION

The grouping of students within individual public schools in Poquoson City for instructional purposes shall be based solely on:

1. the best interests of the student;
2. the educational or achievement level of the student;
3. the availability of space;
4. the best educational climate for learning; and
5. the student's best chance for success.

Grouping shall remain flexible in order to take advantage of the best educational research currently available.


Adopted: November 2002
POLICY 6-4.4 PROMOTION AND RETENTION

Generally

The State Board of Education charges school principals with the ultimate responsibility of assigning pupils to classes, programs, and activities that are designed to promote maximum learning. In accordance with this provision, the school principal is the final authority in all matters of promotion and retention.

Grade Placement

Primary School and Elementary School (grades K-5)

Promotion or retention of Poquoson City Public School elementary students shall be based on what best serves the educational welfare of the individual student. In making the determination for placement, the student’s teacher and principal shall take into consideration several factors regarding the individual student’s performance, including but not limited to:

1. Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) results;
2. Standards of Learning (SOL) test scores;
3. Division-wide quarterly and summative assessments;
4. Attendance;
5. Academic performance;
6. Evaluation of interventions;
7. Reading development;
8. Intellectual ability;
9. Journal samples/writing assessments;
10. Work study habits;
11. Chronological age;
12. Physical, social and emotional development; and

The initial responsibility for recommending the promotion or retention of students in grades kindergarten through five (5) lies with the teacher in concurrence with the Teacher Assistance Team (TAT)/Child Study Team and the principal, after consultation with the student’s parent(s) or guardian(s).

When making parents aware of a student’s possible retention in a grade, teachers shall obtain the parent(s)’ or guardian(s)’ signature on a “Discussion of Retention” form to be provided to the building principal no later than February 20 of the year in which retention is recommended. If the decision is made to retain a student, the classroom teacher shall complete a “Retention Analysis Sheet” and provide it to the principal by May 15 of that same year. A letter outlining the student’s retention will be mailed to the student’s parent(s)/guardian(s).

In any grade in which SOL tests are administered, any student who fails all of his/her SOL tests shall participate in a remediation program before the student is placed in the next grade level, including summer school as required by applicable Virginia law. The student must successfully complete summer school before being promoted. If a student fails to do so, then the principal may retain the student.

Middle School

It is the belief of the middle school staff that failure in any of the core academic classes (i.e., science, social studies, mathematics, and language arts) significantly impacts a student’s ability to be successful in the next level of the same subject curriculum. Therefore, remediation is available during summer school.

Any middle school student who fails all of his/her SOL tests must successfully complete summer school prior to being promoted. If a student fails to do so, then the principal may retain them in grade.

A final determination of promotion will consider such factors as reading and math achievement, social maturation and other qualifications and predictor of success at the next level.
Teachers will recommend retention of students failing any core academic classes. Teachers must advise parents of the possibility of retention early in the spring and have a written record that this has been discussed with them.

**Promotion to 7th grade** – A sixth grade student must successfully complete all four academic core subjects: reading, language arts, math, science, and social studies. In addition, a sixth grade student must complete at least two elective/PE courses.

**Promotion to 8th grade** – A seventh grade pupil must successfully complete all four academic core subjects: language arts, math, science, and social studies. In addition, seventh graders must successfully complete two elective/PE courses.

**Promotion to 9th grade** – An eighth grade pupil must successfully complete all four academic core classes: language arts, math, science, and social studies. In addition, an eighth grade student must successfully complete two elective/PE courses.

**High School**

Directly related to graduation requirements are the promotion requirements for each grade level. In the Poquoson School System, the following minimum credit requirements must be met to be classified at each grade level:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9th</td>
<td>Freshman</td>
<td>8th Grade Promotion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10th</td>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>5 Credits (including English 9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11th</td>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>10 Credits (including English 10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12th</td>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>15 Credits (including English 11)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**High School Graduation:**
- Modified Standard Diploma – 20 Credits
- Standard Diploma – 22 Credits
- Advanced Studies Diploma – 26 Credits
- Special Diploma – Completion of IEP Requirements

Students are designated as Honor Graduates if they maintain a cumulative 3.4 GPA (including all courses taken for high school credit) through the second semester of the senior year. Students will be designated as Graduates with High Honors if they maintain a cumulative 4.0 GPA through the second semester of their senior year. Students will be designated as graduated with the highest honors if they maintain a GPA consistent with the GPA cap (4.4875).

**Special Education**

Determinations regarding promotion of special education students shall be made consistent with applicable law and relevant individualized education plans.

**Acceleration**

Qualified students may choose the acceleration option of obtaining Carnegie credit(s) and verified credit(s) in designated courses without completing the requirement of 140 clock hours of instruction. Designated courses will include all courses in English, mathematics, science, and social studies for which an end-of-course SOL test exists. To qualify for this option, students in grades 6-11 must demonstrate mastery of the course content and objectives in the manner prescribed by the division and have the recommendation of the division superintendent or his/her designee.

Having received Carnegie credit(s) for acceleration course(s), the students shall be permitted to sit for the relevant Standards of Learning assessment(s), and upon receiving a passing score, shall earn verified credit(s).
The curriculum and schedule of elementary, middle and high schools shall provide flexibility in placing certain students in programs or subjects normally considered above their grade level. Scheduling eighth grade students into subjects above the normal grade level should be done with counseling based on evidence of ability, past scholastic achievement, and cooperation of the individual student and his parents or guardian.

When students below the ninth grade successfully complete courses offered for credit in grades 9 through 12, credit shall be counted toward meeting the standard units required for graduation provided the courses meet the requirements of the Standards of Learning or are equivalent in content and academic rigor as those courses offered at the secondary level or verified units of credit, and provided the students achieve a passing score on the end of course Standards of Learning tests.

In any high school credit-bearing course taken in middle school, a parent may request that the grade be omitted from the student’s transcript and the student not earn high school credit for the course. Such request must be made in writing by July 1 prior to the student’s entry into ninth grade.

**LEGAL REFERENCE:** Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, § 22.1-78; Individuals with Disabilities Act, 20 U.S.C. 1400, et seq; Virginia Board of Education Regulations Governing Educational Services for Gifted Students, 8 VAC 20-40-10; and Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia, 8 VAC 20-131-10, and et seq.

*Adopted: November 2002
Revised: July 2003; July 2004; July 2005, November 2014*
POLICY 6-4.5 GRADUATION AND SOL REQUIREMENTS

SOL Tests and Verified Units of Credit

In kindergarten through eighth grade, where Standards of Learning (SOL) tests are administered, each student is expected to take the SOL tests. 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.

Each student in middle and secondary school will take all applicable end-of-course SOL tests. Students who achieve a passing score on an end-of-course SOL test and pass the course will 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. Middle and secondary schools may consider the student’s end-of-course SOL test score in determining the student’s final course grade.

Upon recommendation of the division superintendent and demonstration of mastery of course content and objectives, qualified students may receive a standard unit of credit and be permitted to sit for the relevant SOL test to earn a verified credit without having to meet the 140-clock-hour requirement. Additionally, the Board of Education may permit local school divisions to waive the 140-clock-hour requirement to earn a standard unit of credit upon providing the Board with satisfactory proof, based on Board guidelines, that the students for whom such requirements are waived have learned the content and skills included in the relevant Standards of Learning, without sitting for the test. The division superintendent by regulation will 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.

Effective in the 2001-2002 school year, students completing elective classes into which the Standards of Learning (SOL) for any required course have been integrated may take the relevant SOL assessment for the relevant required course and receive, upon achieving a satisfactory score on the specific SOL test, a verified unit of credit for such elective class which must be deemed to satisfy the Poquoson City School Board’s requirement for verified credit for the required course.

Participation in SOL testing by students identified as limited English proficient (LEP) will be guided by a school-based committee convened to make such determinations. In kindergarten through eighth grade, LEP students may be granted a one-time exemption from SOL testing in each of the four core areas. Students with disabilities for whom participation in the SOL testing program is deemed inappropriate according to their IEP or 504 plan will be expected to demonstrate proficiency on an alternative assessment prescribed by the Virginia Board of Education in accordance with federal laws and regulations beginning with the school year 2000-2001.

Retaking SOL Assessments

Eligible students may qualify for an expedited retake of an end-of-course SOL assessment to earn a verified credit where the student meets the criteria established by the Virginia Board of Education.

Under the criteria established by the Board of Education, the student must:

1. Need the test for verified credit; and
2. Have passed the course associated with the test, and one of the following:
   a. Failed the test by a narrow margin, or
   b. Failed the test by any margin and have extenuating circumstances that would warrant re-testing; or
   c. Did not sit for the regularly scheduled test for legitimate reasons.

For purposes of these criteria, “narrow margin” means a scaled score of 375-399. The division superintendent will be responsible for making the determination of what constitutes “extenuating circumstances” and “legitimate reasons” for purposes of an expedited re-test of an end-of-course SOL assessment.
Graduation Requirements

In order to graduate from the Poquoson City Public Schools, a student must meet all applicable requirements set forth in the Standards of Accreditation (SOA) and Standards of Quality (SOQ). The requirements for a student to earn a diploma are those in effect when he or she enters ninth grade for the first time.

**Standard Diploma**

A Standard Diploma will be awarded to students who earn the following standard units of credit:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discipline</th>
<th>Standard units of credit</th>
<th>Verified units of credit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laboratory Science</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History and Social Sciences</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and Physical Education</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Language, Career or Technical Education</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electives</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economics and Personal Finance</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Selected Test</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

1. Earn a board-approved career and technical education credential, 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 content area; and

2. Successfully complete one virtual course, which may be non-credit bearing.

Beginning with students entering ninth grade for the first time in 2016-2017, a student must also become trained in emergency first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, and the use of automated external defibrillators, including hands-on practice of the skills necessary to perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation.

**Advanced Studies Diploma**

Beginning with the ninth grade class of 2011-2012 and beyond, an Advanced Studies Diploma will be awarded to students who earn the following standard units of credit:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discipline</th>
<th>Standard units of credit</th>
<th>Verified units of credit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laboratory Science</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History and Social Sciences</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Language</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and Physical Education</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fine Arts or Career and Technical Education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economics and Personal Finance</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Beginning with the graduating class of 2003, courses to satisfy this requirement must include at least two sequential electives.
Beginning with students entering ninth grade for the first time in 2013-2014, a student must also successfully complete one virtual course, which may be non-credit bearing.

Beginning with students entering ninth grade for the first time in 2016-2017, a student must also become trained in emergency first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, and the use of automated external defibrillators, including hands-on practice of the skills necessary to perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation.

General Achievement Diploma

A General Achievement Diploma is intended to provide a diploma option for individuals who leave high school without a diploma. It should not be a first option for high school students. A General Achievement Diploma will be awarded to eligible candidates who satisfy the following requirements.

1. In order to be eligible for a General Achievement Diploma, an individual must meet one of the following criteria:
   a. be at least eighteen (18) years old and not enrolled in public school; and/or
   b. not otherwise be subject to Virginia’s compulsory school attendance requirements.

2. In order to be awarded a General Achievement Diploma, candidates must earn a total of twenty standard units of credit including the following:
   a. four standard units of credit in English;
   b. three standard units of credit in mathematics;
   c. two standard units of credit in science;
   d. two standard units of credit in history and social sciences; and
   e. nine standard units of credit in elective courses.

3. The required standard units of credit may be earned by enrolling in:
   a. a public school if the candidate meets the age requirements;
   b. a community college or other institution of higher education;
   c. an adult high school program; or
   d. correspondence, distance learning, and on-line courses.

Candidates for a General Achievement Diploma MUST participate in GED preparation and must achieve a passing score on the GED examination.

Modified Standard Diploma

Eligibility and participation in the Modified Standard Diploma program will 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. The school in which the student is enrolled must secure the informed written consent of the parent or guardian and the student to choose this diploma program after review of the student’s academic history and the full disclosure of the student’s options. Students pursuing the Modified Standard Diploma will pass literacy and numeracy competency assessments prescribed by the Board of Education. In addition, students must earn the following standard units of credit:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Electives</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Selected Test</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2 The electives taken by a candidate must include at least two sequential electives in an area of concentration or specialization, which may include career and technical education and training.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discipline</th>
<th>Standard Units of Credit Required</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History and Social Sciences</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and Physical Education</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fine or Performing Arts or</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career and Technical Education</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electives ³</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Transfer Students and Transfer of Credits**

The Poquoson City secondary schools shall accept credits for transfer students in accordance with regulations promulgated by the Virginia Board of Education and relevant School Board policies. Course credits earned for online courses taken in the Department of Education’s Virtual Virginia program shall transfer to Virginia public schools in accordance with provisions of the standards for accreditation.

**Alternatives to a High School Diploma**

**Certificates of Program Completion**

A Certificate of Program Completion will be awarded to any student who completes a prescribed program of studies defined by the School Board but who is not eligible to receive a standard, advance studies, modified standard, special, or general achievement diploma.

**General Educational Development (GED) Certificates**

GED certificates may be issued to individuals who:

1. are at least eighteen (18) years of age ⁴ and not enrolled in a public or private high school; and
2. achieve the minimum passing score requirements set by the GED Testing Service of the American Council on Education or such higher score requirements that may be established by the Virginia Board of Education.

Only those entities designated by the Department of Education as official Virginia GED testing centers will determine whether an individual is eligible to take GED tests. GED tests will be administered only at official Virginia GED testing centers or addendum test sites that have been approved by the Virginia GED Administrator and the GED Testing Service.

Official test scores may be accepted from an approved state agency, an official jurisdiction responsible for overseeing GED testing, or an official GED testing center outside of Virginia.

An individual may take the full battery of tests up to three times during a calendar year. Test scores may be combined in accordance with GED Testing Service policy.

**Applied Studies Diplomas**

An Applied Studies diploma will be awarded to each disabled student who successfully completes the requirements set forth in his IEP (Individualized Educational Program), but does not meet the requirements for a diploma set forth in the Standards of Quality and the Standards of Accreditation.

³ Beginning with the graduating class of 2003, courses to satisfy this requirement must include at least two sequential electives.

⁴ Under special circumstances consistent with Virginia Code §§ 22.1-254 and 22.1-254.2, the age limit may be lowered to sixteen (16).
Notice of Credits Needed for Graduation and of the Right to a Free Public Education

The School Board will notify the parents or guardian of rising eleventh and twelfth grade students of:

(i) the number and subject area requirements of standard and verified units of credit required for graduation pursuant to the Standards of Accreditation; and
(ii) the remaining number and subject area requirements of such units of credit the individual student requires for graduation.

The School Board will notify the parents or guardians of students with disabilities who have an individualized education plan (IEP) and who fail to meet the requirements for a standard or advanced studies diploma of the student’s right to a free and appropriate education to age 21, inclusive, pursuant to Virginia Code § 22.1-213, et seq., and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1400, et seq.

The School Board will notify the parents or guardians of students who fail to graduate or who fail to achieve the number of verified units of credit required for graduation as provided in the Standards of Accreditation and who have not reached 20 years of age on or before August 1st of the school year of the right to a free public education. If the student who does not graduate or achieve such verified units of credit is a student for whom English is a second language, the School Board will notify the parents or guardians of the student’s opportunity for a free public education in accordance with Virginia Code § 22.1-5.

Waiver of Certain Graduation Requirements

Upon a recommendation from the division superintendent and for good cause, the School Board may request a waiver by the Virginia Board of Education of certain graduation requirements on a case-by-case basis.

See Superintendent’s Regulation 6-4.5.


Adopted: November 2002
POLICY 6-4.6 ALTERNATIVE METHODS FOR GRANTING CREDIT

The Poquoson City School Board shall delegate to the division superintendent the development of methods and procedures for granting alternative credit for courses approved by the School Board in accordance with all applicable law and the standards/regulations of the Southern Association for Schools and Colleges and the Virginia Standards for Accreditation of Schools.


Adopted: November 2002
POLICY 6-4.7  LOCALLY AWARDED VERIFIED CREDITS

Generally

The Poquoson City School Board will award verified credits in science and history/social sciences to students entering ninth grade for the first time in school years 2000-2001, or thereafter, in accordance with this policy. These credits may be applied to a standard diploma only. No student may earn more than four locally awarded verified credits.

Eligibility

To be eligible to earn locally awarded verified credits, a student must:
1. enter the ninth grade for the first time in school years 2000-2001, or thereafter;
2. have earned fewer than four of the student-selected verified credits required for the standard diploma;
3. pass the high school course and not pass the related Standards of Learning test;
4. take the Standards of Learning test at least twice; and
5. score within a 375-399 scale score range on any administration of the Standards of Learning test.

Appeal Process

If the student wishes to apply for locally awarded verified credit, he/she must attend and successfully complete the “SOL Brush-up” class for the subject in question. There will be no charge for this class.

The School Board shall appoint a review panel comprised of at least three educators (an administrator, a guidance counselor, and a subject-matter teacher) to evaluate the student’s evidence of achievement of adequate knowledge of the Standards of Learning. Based on the evidence it reviews, the review panel may:
1. award the verified credit;
2. deny the verified credit; or
3. make additional academic assignments prior to determining whether to award the verified credit.

The decision of the panel will be final.


Adopted: November 2002
Revised: July 2004; July 2007