

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

The Botetourt County School Board will award the following types of diplomas and certificates in accordance with state laws and regulations.

1. Standard Diploma

Students desiring to earn a Standard Diploma must earn the standard **units of credit** and **verified units of credits** outlined below.

Discipline Area	Diploma Units of Credit		
	Standard Class of 2014	Standard Class of 2015 and Beyond	Verified Credits (same for all)
English	4	4	2
Mathematics ¹	3	3	1
Laboratory Science ^{2 & 6}	3	3	1
History and Social Science ^{3 & 6}	3	3	1
Health and Physical Education	2	2	
Fine Arts or CTE ⁴	1		
Foreign Language, Fine Arts, or CTE ⁷		2	
Fine Arts or Foreign Language			
Economics and Personal Finance		1	
CTE			
Electives ⁴	10	8	
Student Selected ⁵			1
Total	26	26	6

- a. Credit accommodations provide alternatives for students with disabilities in earning the standard and verified credits required to graduate with a Standard Diploma
Credit accommodations for students with disabilities may include:
 - Alternative courses to meet the standard credit requirements
 - Modifications to the requirements for locally awarded verified credits
 - Additional tests approved by the Board of Education for earning verified credits
 - Adjusted cut scores on tests for earning verified credits
 - Allowance of work-based learning experiences through career and technical education (CTE) courses
- b. Credit accommodations are determined by the IEP team or 504 committee at any point after the student's eighth-grade year. The school must secure the informed written consent of the parent/guardian and the student to choose credit accommodations after a review of the student's academic record and full disclosure of the student's options. IEPs and 504 plans must specify which credit accommodations are allowed and under what circumstances.

A student must meet the following criteria to be eligible for Standard Diploma credit accommodations:

- The student must have a current IEP or 504 plan with standards-based content goals.
- The student must have a disability that precludes him or her from meeting grade-level expectations but is learning on-grade-level content.
- The student must need significant instructional supports to access grade-level SOL content and to show progress.
- The student, based on multiple objective measures of past performance, might not be expected to achieve the required units of credit within the standard time frame.

2. Advanced Studies Diploma

Students desiring to earn an Advanced Studies Diploma must earn the standard **units of credit** and the **verified units of credit** outlined below:

Discipline Area	Diploma Units of Credit		
	Advanced Class of 2014	Advanced Class of 2015 and Beyond	Verified Credits (same for all)
English	4	4	2
Mathematics ¹	4	4	2
Laboratory Science ²	4	4	2
History and Social Science ³	4	4	2
Health and Physical Education	2	2	
Foreign Language	3	3	
Fine Arts or CTE	1	1	
Economics and Personal Finance		1	
CTE			
Electives	6	5	
Student Selected ⁴			1
Total	28	28	9

3. Modified Diploma

The Modified Standard Diploma will not be a diploma option for students entering the ninth grade for the first time in 2013-2014 and beyond. Students entering ninth grade for the first time in 2013-2014 will have the option to earn an Advanced Studies Diploma, a Standard Diploma, or a Special Diploma.

Discipline Area	Standard Units of Credit 2011 and beyond
English	4
Mathematics ¹	3
Laboratory Science ²	2
History and Social Sciences ³	2
Health and Physical Education	2
Fine Arts or Career & Technical Education ⁴	1
Fundamentals of Financial Literacy	1
Electives	9
Total	24

Additional requirements for earning a Modified Standard Diploma are as follows:

- a. The Modified Standard Diploma program is intended for certain students at the secondary level who have a disability and are unlikely to meet the **verified** 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, when appropriate, at any point after the student's eighth grade year.
- b. The school must secure the informed written consent of the parent/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.
- c. The student who has chosen to pursue a Modified Standard diploma shall also be allowed to pursue the Standard or Advanced Studies Diploma at any time throughout that student's high school career, nor excluded from courses and tests required to earn a Standard or Advanced Studies Diploma.
- d. Students pursuing the Modified Standard Diploma must pass the appropriate state approved assessments as determined by the IEP team in both English and mathematics.

4. Special Diplomas

A Special Diploma will be awarded to each disabled student who successfully completes the requirements set forth in his/her IEP, but does not meet the requirements for other diplomas.

The school board will notify the parent of students with disabilities who have an IEP and who fail to meet the requirements for graduation of the student's right to a free and appropriate education to age 21, inclusive, pursuant to Va. Code § 22.1-213 et seq.

5. 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 local school board but who is not eligible to receive a standard, advanced studies, modified standard, special, or general achievement diploma.

The school board will notify the parent 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 for 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 parent of the student's opportunity for a free public education in accordance with Va. Code § 22.1-5.

6. General Educational Development (GED)

a. Generally

The Board of Education has established a program of testing for general educational development (GED) through which persons may earn a high school equivalency certificate or a General Achievement Diploma. The following persons may participate in the testing program:

- persons who are at least 18 years of age and not enrolled in public school or not otherwise meeting the school attendance requirements set forth in Va. Code § [22.1-254](#);
- persons 16 years of age or older who have been instructed by their parents in their home pursuant to Va. Code § [22.1-254.1](#) and who have completed such home school instruction;
- persons who have been excused from school attendance pursuant to subsections B and C of Va. Code § [22.1-254](#);
- persons for whom an individual student alternative education plan has been granted pursuant to subsection D of Va. Code § [22.1-254](#); and
- persons 16 through 18 years of age who are housed in adult correctional facilities and who are actively pursuing a GED certificate but who are not enrolled in an individual student alternative education plan pursuant to subsection D of Va. Code § [22.1-254](#);
- persons 16 years of age or older who have been expelled from school pursuant to Va. Code §§ [22.1-277.06](#) through [22.1-277.08](#); and
- persons required by court order to participate in the testing program.

Under no circumstances will anyone under the age of 16 be eligible for the testing program.

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.

b. 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.

In order to be eligible for a General Achievement Diploma, an individual must meet one of the following criteria:

- be at least 18 years old and not enrolled in public school;
- not otherwise be subject to Virginia's compulsory school attendance requirements.

In order to be awarded a General Achievement Diploma, candidates must earn a total of twenty standard units of credit including the following:

- four standard units of credit in English;
- three standard units of credit in mathematics;
- two standard units of credit in science;
- two standard units of credit in history and social sciences; and
- nine standard units of credit in electives.

The required standard units of credit may be earned by enrolling in:

- a public school if the candidate meets the age requirements;
- a community college or other institution of higher education;
- an adult high school program; or
- correspondence, distance learning, and online courses.

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

c. General Educational Development (GED) Certificates

GED certificates may be issued to individuals who:

- are at least 18 years of age and not enrolled in a public or private high school; and
- 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.

Revised: June 17, 2010
March 14, 2013, effective July 1, 2013