




# Earning a Diploma in Virginia

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION

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## Expectations, Accountability & Resources

The Virginia Board of Education is conducting a comprehensive review of state educational standards and policies to ensure that all children in the commonwealth have access to public schools that pursue academic excellence and continuous improvement while preparing their students for success. Go to [Educational Initiatives](#) for more information about the board's work and to learn how you can be a part of the discussion.

## Back-to-School Message

Superintendent of Public Instruction Steven R. Staples welcomes teachers back to the classroom in his 2016-2017 back-to-school message.



## Teachers on the Estuary

Elementary and middle school teachers from around the state participated in Teachers on the Estuary (TOTE) for three days in August. The TOTE workshop, sponsored by VDOE and led by the Chesapeake Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, introduces activities and knowledge about the Chesapeake Bay and its estuaries that teachers can take back to their classrooms. TOTE supports the [Chesapeake 2000 Agreement](#) to protect and preserve the Chesapeake Bay's ecosystem. [More information about Bay programs...](#)



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- Also See:
- Virginia Secretary of Education
- Virginia's Community Colleges
- State Council of Higher Education for Virginia

# Currently

- **Advanced Studies Diploma-**
  - Standard and Verified Credits: effective with first-time ninth graders in 2003-2004 through 2010-2011--SC= 24, V= 9;
  - Standard and Verified Credits: effective with first-time ninth graders in 2011-2012 and beyond--SC= 26, V= 9
- **Standard Diploma-**
  - Standard and Verified Credits: effective with first-time ninth graders in 2003-2004 through 2010-2011--SC= 22, V=6
  - Standard and Verified Credits: effective with first-time ninth graders in 2011-2012 and beyond-- SC= 22, V= 6
- **Modified Standard Diploma-**
  - Standard and Verified Credits: effective with first-time ninth graders in 2003-2004 through 2010-2011--SC= 20, V= 0; **Rolled into the Standard Diploma effective with first-time ninth graders in 2013-2014**
- **Applied Studies Diploma-**
  - Students meet IEP requirements and do not meet requirements for other diplomas



# Applied Studies Diploma Overview

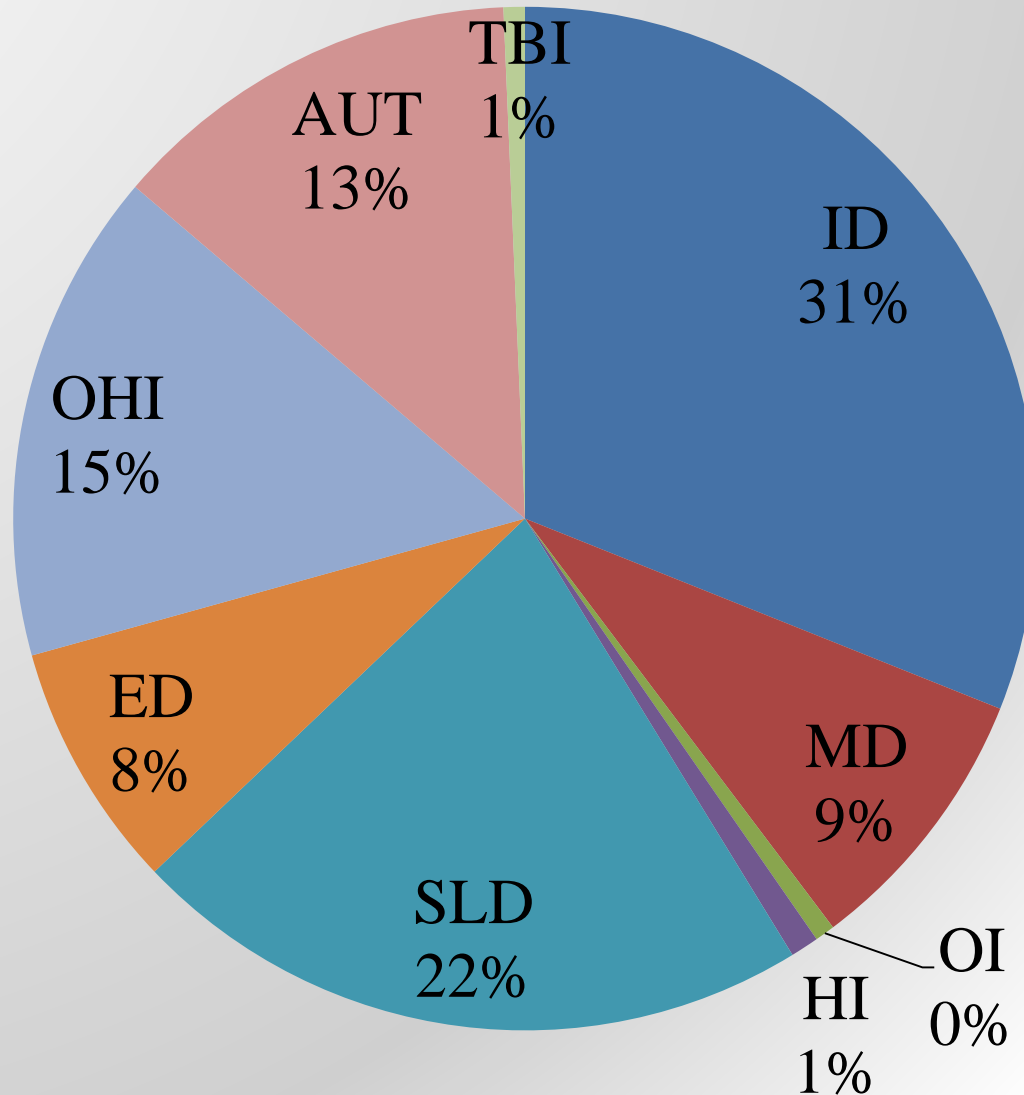
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# Background

- July 1, 2015
  - Name Changed to “Applied Studies Diploma”
  - Criteria remains the same
    - complete the requirements of their individualized education programs (IEPs) and meet certain requirements prescribed by the Board pursuant to regulations, but do not meet the requirements for any named diploma, shall be awarded *Applied Studies* diplomas by local school boards

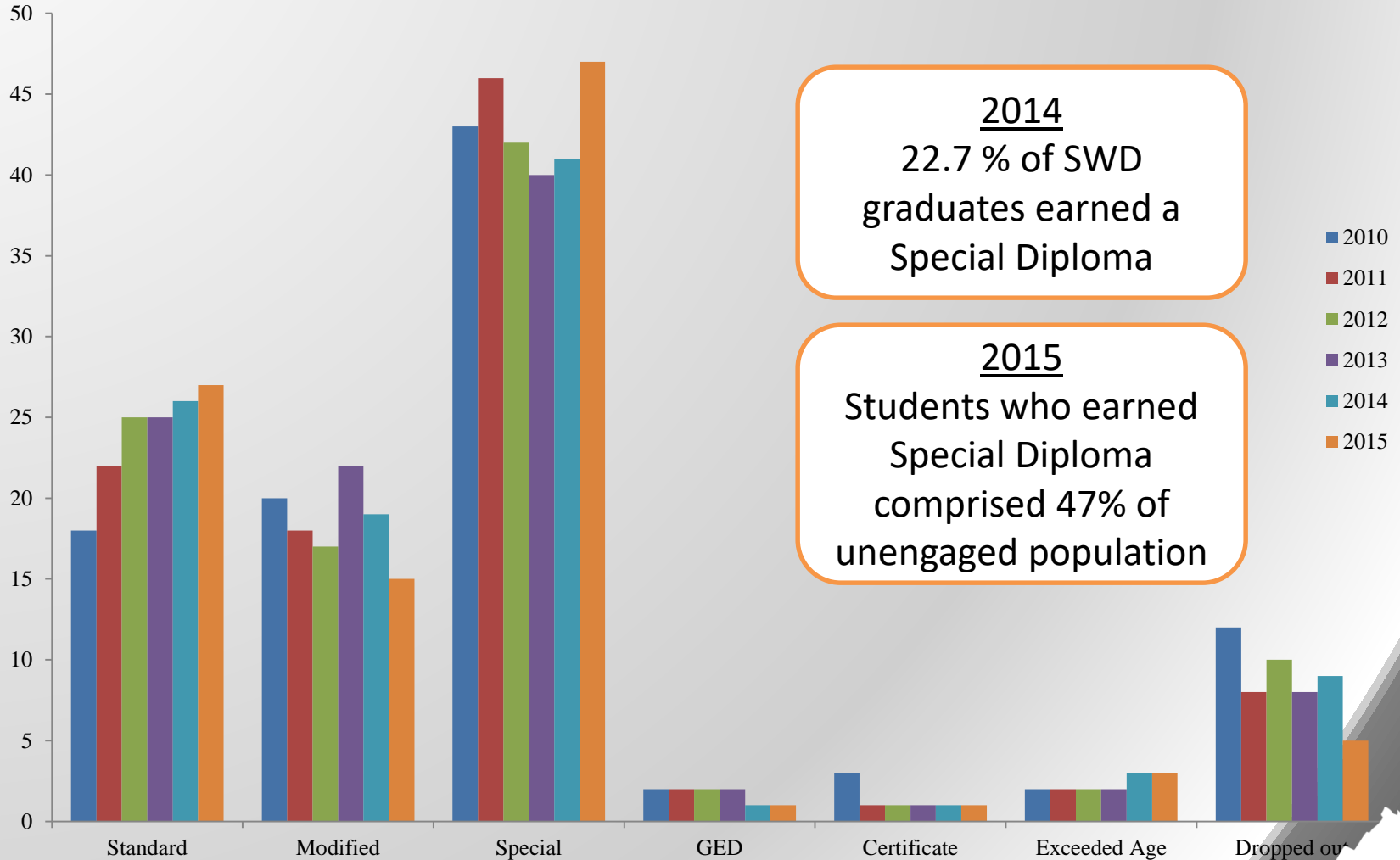
# Special Diploma by Disability Category 2014-2015

Total Graduates (all categories) = 9813



# Postsecondary Engagement

Percent of Students Unengaged by Manner of Exit



2014  
22.7 % of SWD graduates earned a Special Diploma

2015  
Students who earned Special Diploma comprised 47% of unengaged population



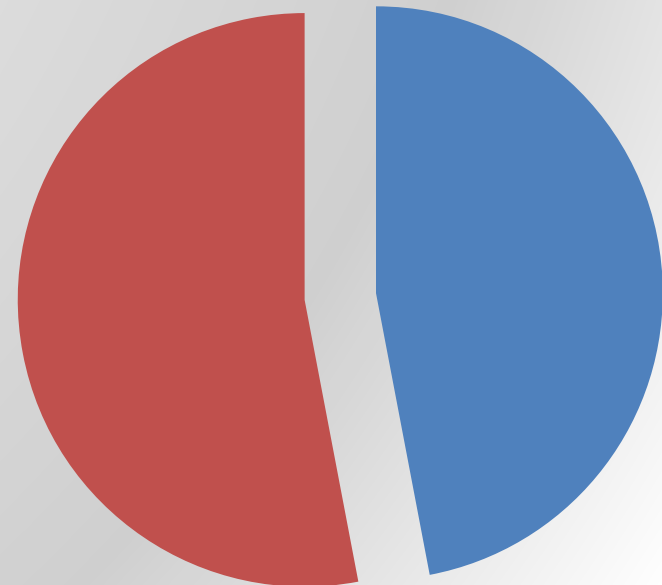
# Unengaged Proportions (SWD)

2014 Graduates



■ Applied Studies Diploma ■ Other

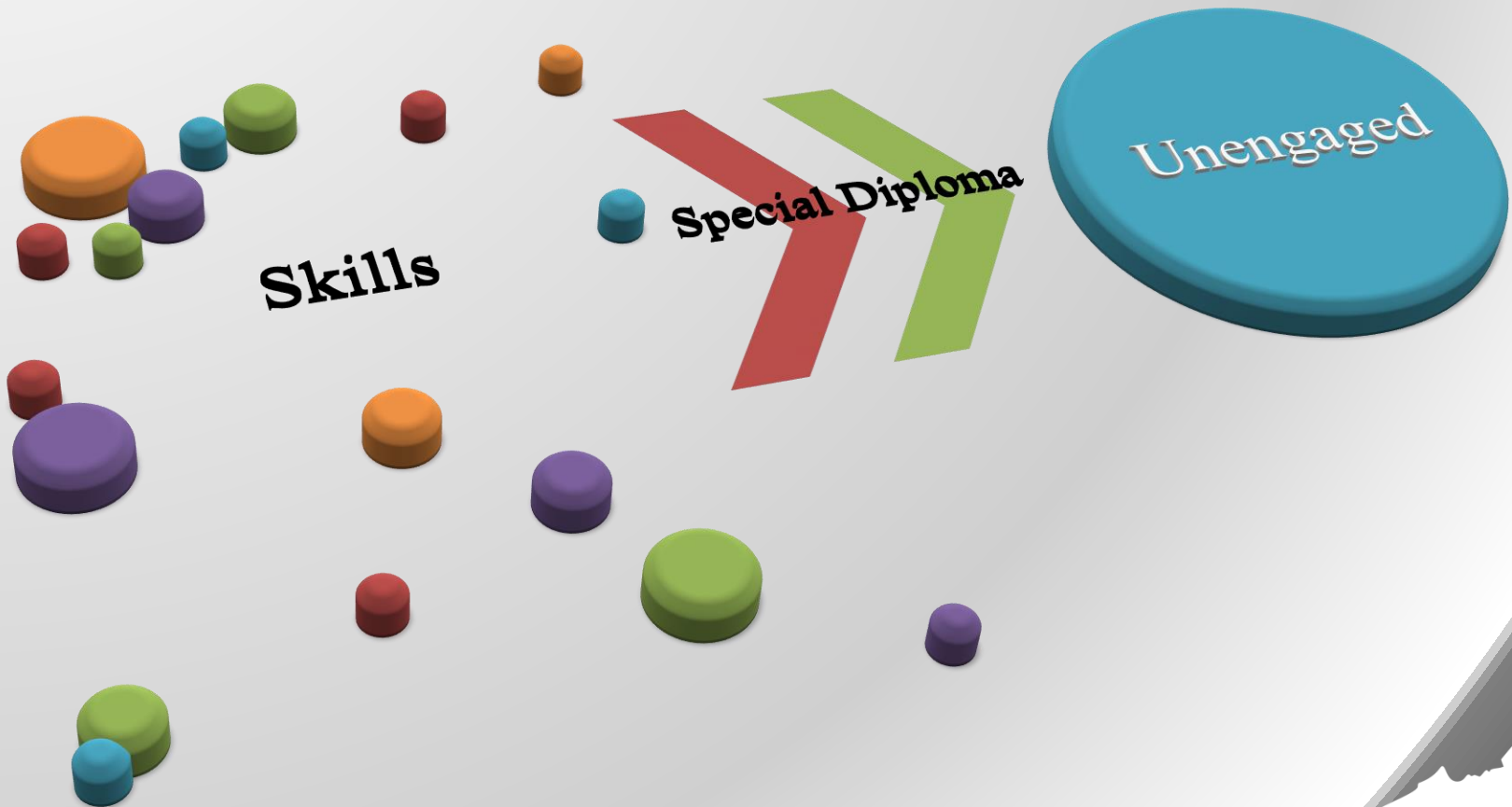
2015 Unengaged



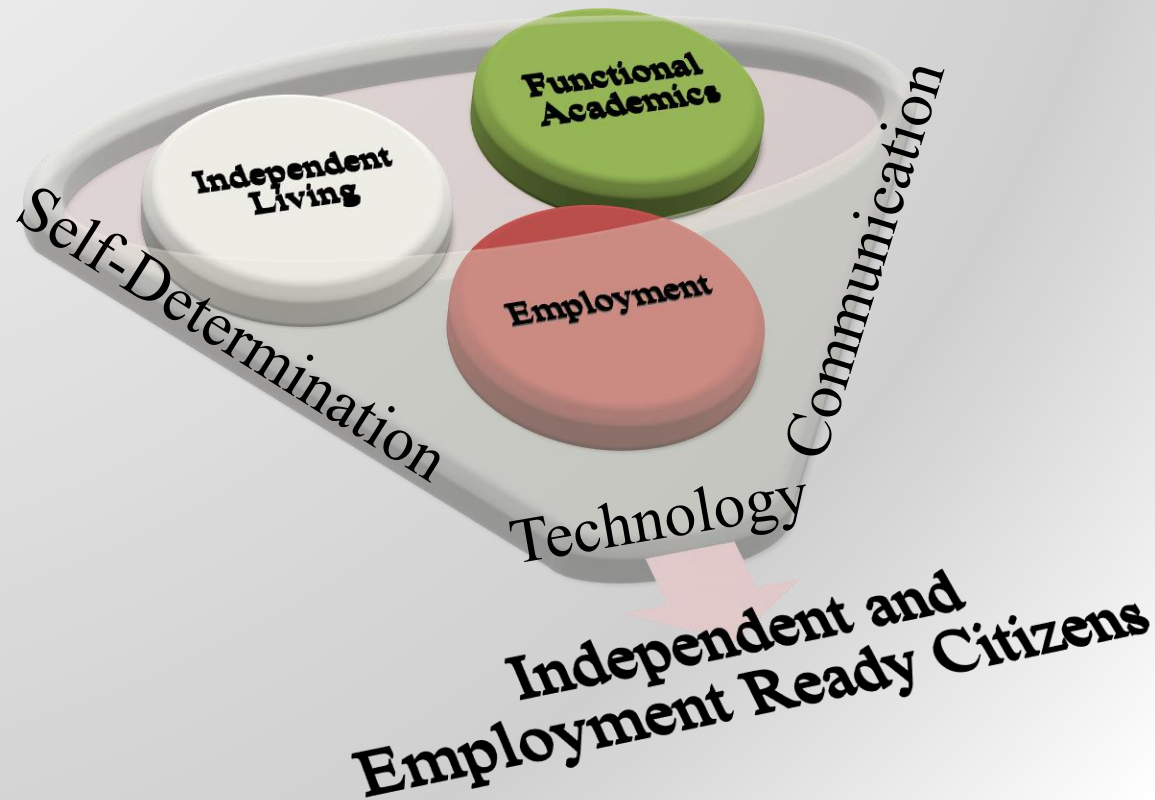
■ Applied Studies Diploma ■ Other



# Currently



# How can we focus efforts?



# Purpose

- To provide state-wide guidance to IEP teams to develop goals and objectives that will
  - supplement instruction on state standards (Virginia Standards of Learning or Aligned Standards of Learning);
  - provide the student with instruction that directly address deficits leading to their post-secondary goals;
  - provide a mechanism for linking skills back to state standards.

# Purpose

- To improve communication of skills and provide a common planning resource
  - between teachers/ grade levels;
  - between school divisions;
  - from the student to employers, post-secondary education institutions, vocational training, etc.

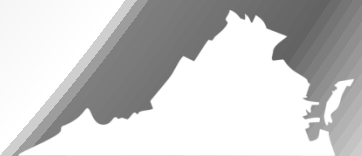
# Purpose

- To facilitate open and transparent conversations within the IEP team to
  - increase student participation and motivation;
  - inform parents/ guardians/ advocates of critical skills;
  - assist with long-term planning beginning as the student enters transition age

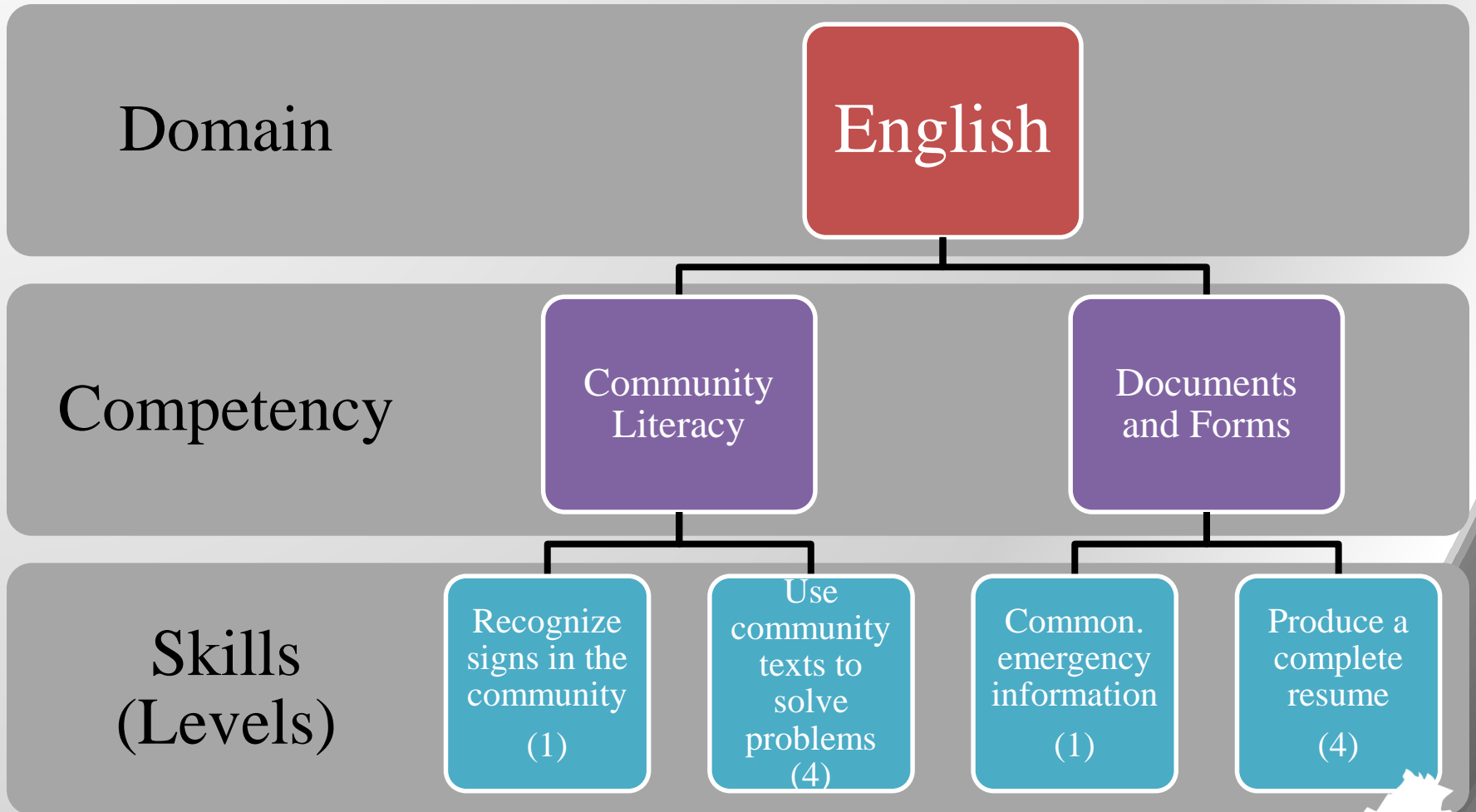
# What it is not

- A replacement for state-wide assessment
  - Students continue participation in SOL, VAAP, etc.
- A list of every skill that students will need
- Prescriptive

# THE CURRICULUM MAP



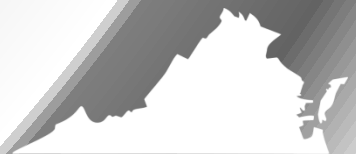
# Organization





# Competencies

- A combination of skills, abilities, and knowledge needed to perform a specific task
  - identified based upon their relevance and application in workforce and community
  - Aligned with Workplace Readiness Skills for the Commonwealth



# Skills

- Statement of expected learner achievement upon exiting the school program at graduation or at age 22
  - 837 total skills
  - Not exhaustive list
  - Starting point for creating IEP goals and objectives
  - Teaching strategies and activities are tailored to students' strengths and interests

# Levels

- address the depth of understanding and application within each competency

Level 1- Recognize and Recall

Level 2- Identify and Comprehend

Level 3- Interpret and Understand

Level 4- Apply and Generalize



# English Competencies

- Self Selected Reading/Reading as leisure
- Community Literacy
- Comprehension
- Written Correspondence
- Composition
- Documents and Forms

87 Skills

# Math Competencies

- Time, Task, and Resource Management
- Data Sense
- Mathematical Reasoning
- Geometric and Spatial Reasoning
- Measurement
- Money Management
- Ratios and Proportions

194 Skills

# Science Competencies

- Classification
- Ecology
- Chemical Reactions
- Earth and Space Interactions
- Measurement
- Safety
- Science as Inquiry

115 Skills

# History and Social Science Competencies

- Financial Aspects of Government
- Laws and Rules of Good Citizenship
- Map Skills
- Economics
- Interpersonal Skills

97 Skills

# Independent Living Competencies

- Personal Management
- Safety and Health
- Social and Communication
- Mobility
- Recreation and Leisure
- Food Preparation
- Home Living/Management
- Using Services
- Illness Prevention
- Nutrition

222 Skills



# Employment Competencies

- Career Awareness
- Job Seeking Skills
- Social and Communication
- Essential Job Skills/ Job Keeping
- Employability
- Self-Advocacy
- Problem Solving

122 Skills

# Format

Increase in depth of knowledge

Increase in breadth

Competency and Definition	1 Recognize and Recall	2 Identify and Comprehend	3 Interpret and Understand	4 Apply and Generalize
<p><b>Community Literacy</b></p> <p>The student uses literacy skills and an understanding of various community texts to solve problems and meet needs of adult life.</p> <p>WRS:9</p>	<p>Recognize and finds signs in the community.</p> <p>Recognize and finds various community texts (menu, map, label, sign, etc.) when asked.</p>	<p>Identify and responds appropriately to safety signs in the community.</p> <p>Identify a variety of resource texts used in the community &amp; determine situations for using each. Examples may include electronic or printed texts (menu, map, labels, signs, etc.).</p>	<p>Identify a need and the corresponding text that may provide needed information.</p> <p>Identify and locates needed text by function.</p>	<p>Independently fill a need or solves a problem using community texts.</p> <p>Use various resources (online, hardcopy, spoken language) to locate needed information, which may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-finding and using the contact information for a local business</li> <li>-Getting directions to a location</li> <li>-Utilize the menu of a restaurant to make choices based on personal preference and budget</li> <li>-finding times for events (movies, concerts, etc.)</li> <li>-getting a local bus schedule</li> </ul>

# **INSTRUCTIONAL PROTOCOL FOR AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT**

*- Adapted from Jay McTighe, 2016*

# Present the Authentic Performance task as *the* learning goal

- The long term goal is that the individual is able to use the skill in settings where the skill has not been directly taught.
  - understands not only *how* to use the skills,
  - determines *when* using that skill is appropriate.

# Plan backward from the task

- to assess knowledge skills and understandings
- break the skill down into component parts



# Pre-assess student to find out prior knowledge and skills

- What knowledge and skills does the student already possess?
- What areas will require additional instruction?
- What accommodations or modifications are needed?



# Provide direct instruction to develop needed knowledge and skills

- The use of evidence-based practices to provide instruction addressing deficit areas
- What supports and instructional methods have been successful in the past?
- What supports can be utilized to enhance student independence?

# Differentiate as needed

- Incorporate needed accommodations and/or modifications
- Ensure that when accommodations/modifications are utilized in instruction that
  1. there is a plan to fade/modify the level or type of support provided or
  2. that accommodation or modification is tailored to the setting in which the individual will be using the skill



# Provide models for students to emulate

- Creating and sharing rubrics with students that include anchor points
- Provide examples at each level of the rubric

# Engage students in mini-tasks to simulate the demands of the final task

- Creating environments and conditions that are similar to the environments in which the student will be required to perform the task will
  1. help the student learn the skill in a realistic environment
  2. provide strong evidence of the student's ability or inability to perform the task in real life scenarios.

# PLANNING



# Uses for the Curriculum Map

- Assessing student skills (present level)
- Developing a to-do list
- Increasing student engagement
- Guiding conversations in IEP meetings
- Linking with standards
- Guiding lesson plans for all students

# Assessing Student Skills

- Behavioral Observation
  - Structured observation in a real setting
- Performance Sample
  - Quality, quantity, speed
- Situational Assessment
  - Trial basis to try jobs, recreational activities, living situations

# Student Profile Considerations

- Skill acquisition rate
- Needed accommodations/modifications
- Effective instructional practices
- Ability to generalize skills



# Mapping Skills

- Starting with the student's goals, work back through the curriculum map to identify skills
- Develop timeline

# Increasing Student Engagement

- Long term goal setting
- Preferences
- Developing the map
- Tracking progress toward the goal



# Guiding IEP Discussions

- Parent resource
- Student resource
- Provides a common resource to guide work

# Linking with Standards

- Crosswalk is nearly complete
- Help team identify appropriate coursework
- Help school develop new course(s) if needed to address specific skills
- Help teams assess quickly based on courses completed

# Guiding Lesson Plans for All

- Every student needs the skills outlined to be successful
- Reaching into earlier grades
- Keeping a focus on independence
- Profile of a Virginia Graduate



# REPORTING

# Critical Factors

- Ease
- Accuracy
- Consistency
  - Transfer of information

# Performance Accuracy

1. The student's knowledge of the content or skill,
2. The student's skill proficiency,
3. The environments and conditions under which the student is able to display the skill,
4. The student's ability to utilize the skill in new or novel situations, and
5. The number and types of errors made

# Scoring Categories

- **Consistently**
  - thorough understanding or proficiency of content and skills
  - nearly all of the time and across multiple people, settings, and opportunities
  - NO major errors or omissions
- **Usually**
  - general understanding of content or general skill proficiency
  - most of the time, across multiple people, settings, or opportunities
  - few major errors or omissions

# Scoring Categories

- **Sometimes**

- partial understanding of content or partial skill proficiency
- some of the time, across some people, settings, or opportunities.
- The student makes some errors or omissions.

- **Not Yet**

- The student demonstrates emerging to developing skills but is unable to complete critical components.



# Levels of Support

- Understanding the need for additional support
- Differentiation between teacher directed and student directed/accessed support
- IEP team planning
  - Addition of new skills
  - Focus on fading supports

# Levels of Supports

- **Independent (3)**
  - use supports such as graphic organizers, checklists, timers, etc.
  - student is able to recognize the need for, initiate the use of, and independently utilize the support.
- **Some Support (2)**
  - external assistance or support to complete some portions of a skill or task, or
  - require support to access their accommodations they should be considered needed “some support”.
- **Full Support (1)**
  - unable to complete the critical components of a particular skill without external support

# Independence

- When the presence of an authority figure or adult is required for the student to be successful, the IEP team should consider instructional practices and supports that reduce dependence on an additional person

# RESOURCES



# Predictors (NTACT)

- Empirically linked to improved outcomes
- Customizable
- Used to develop, expand, evaluate transition programs
- Help IEP team develop goals and service delivery options

Predictor/Outcomes	Education	Employment	Independent Living
Career Awareness	X	X	
Community Experiences		X	
Exit Exam Requirements/ High School Diploma Status		X	
Goal-Setting	X	X	
Inclusion in General Education	X	X	X
Interagency Collaboration	X	X	
Occupational Courses	X	X	
Paid Employment/ Work Experience	X	X	X
Parental Expectations	X	X	X
Parental Involvement		X	
Program of Study		X	
Self-Advocacy/ Self-Determination	X	X	
Self-Care/ Independent Living	X	X	X
Social Skills	X	X	
Student Support	X	X	X
Transition Program	X	X	
Travel Skills		X	
Vocation Education	X	X	
Work Study		X	
Youth <sup>10/22/2015</sup> Autonomy/Decision-Making	X	X	

# Predictor Resources

- [Ohio Employment First Transition Framework Evidence Based Predictors Tool](#)
  - Definitions and examples
  - Team discussion questions
  - Examples of how to use
  - Links to additional resources

- Questions or concerns? Please contact:

Daniel Irwin

[daniel.irwin@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:daniel.irwin@doe.virginia.gov)

804-371-7421

- Bulletins -

[http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/graduation/other\\_diploma.shtml](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/graduation/other_diploma.shtml)



# Standard Diploma and Credit Accommodations

While credit accommodations provide alternate pathways and flexibility, students receiving accommodations must earn the 22 standard credits and six verified credits required to graduate with a Standard Diploma. In contrast, only 20 standard credits and 0 verified credits are required for the Modified Standard Diploma.

<b>Comparison of Credit Requirements: Standard Diploma vs. Modified Standard Diploma</b>				
<b>Subject or Course</b>	<b>Standard Diploma</b>		<b>Modified Standard Diploma</b>	
	<b>Standard Credits</b>	<b>Verified Credits</b>	<b>Standard Credits</b>	<b>Verified Credits</b>
English	4	2	4	0
Mathematics	3	1	3	0
Laboratory Science	3	1	2	0
History & Social Sciences	3	1	2	0
Health & Physical Education	2	0	2	0
Foreign Language, Fine Arts or Career & Technical Education	2	0	1	0
Economics and Personal Finance	1	0	0	0
Electives	4	0	6	0
Student-Selected Test	0	1	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>0</b>
Board-approved career or industry credential	<b>Required</b>		<b>Not Required</b>	
Virtual course	<b>Required</b>		<b>Not Required</b>	

Credit accommodations are not available for the Advanced Studies Diploma.

# CREDIT ACCOMMODATIONS

Credit accommodations provide pathways for students with disabilities to earn the standard and verified credits required to graduate with a Standard Diploma. Students must be eligible for the credit accommodation they are seeking.

- VMAST
- Locally Awarded Verified Credit
- Instruction/Coursework Offerings

# Substitute Tests- ALL students are eligible

- The Board of Education has approved a number of substitute tests that students may take to earn verified credits toward graduation.
- Listing of current Substitute Tests for Verified Credit  
[http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/substitute\\_tests/substitute\\_tests\\_verified\\_credit\\_2014-15.pdf](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/substitute_tests/substitute_tests_verified_credit_2014-15.pdf)
- The Board of Education may from time to time approve additional tests that are recommended by the Superintendent of Public Instruction for the purpose of awarding verified credit.



# VMAST

## (Algebra I and Reading)

- The student must meet of the **following criteria** to be eligible to take the VMAST for verified credit purposes:
  - Student must **pass the high school course**;
  - **Score 374 or below on 2 administrations** of the end-of-course Standards of Learning test (**SOL**) after taking the **test at least twice**;
  - Must earn a **400** on the VMAST; and
  - All eligibility requirements in effect for the 2013-2014 school year.



# Locally Awarded Verified Credits

- VDOE has set **no maximum number** of locally awarded verified credits that a student with a disability may earn towards a standard diploma.
- Local school divisions must ensure that this flexibility to offer locally awarded verified credits
- **Reading, Writing and Math** only applies to students with disabilities who are eligible for credit accommodations as stipulated in each students IEP/504 plan.
- All students may seek verified credits in

# Locally Awarded Verified Credits

- To be eligible to earn locally awarded verified credits a student must:
  - **Pass** the high school course,
  - **Score within a 375-399** scale score range **on any administration** of the Standards of Learning test after **taking the test at least twice**, and
  - **Demonstrate achievement** in the academic content **through an appeal process** administered at the **local level**.
- Contact your division's central office to learn about any additional local level policy regarding locally awarded verified credits.

# Locally Awarded Verified Credits

- Only **scaled scores** from regular End-of-Course **(EOC)** Standards of Learning **(SOL)** assessments may be considered.
- **Alternate/substitute assessments**, such as VMAST and WorkKeys, may not be used to determine if a student can receive a locally awarded verified credit.

# Instruction/Courses

The student must successfully complete:

- English
  - **4** standard credits in English/**1** verified credit each in Reading & Writing
- Mathematics
  - **3** standard credits in mathematics/**1** verified credit in mathematics
- Science
  - **3** standard credits in science (**2** disciplines)/**1** verified credit in science
- History/Social Science
  - **3** standard credits in history and social science that include
    - Virginia and U.S. History;
    - Virginia and U.S. Government; and
    - **1** verified credit in history and social science



# Instruction/Courses

- **Allow parts I and II of certain required courses** to each earn a standard credit towards the total number required in the subject area.
- It is not necessary to create self-contained classes, there are current examples in both general and special education
  - **Student with a Disability**  
Example → Algebra I Part 1=1 standard math credit,  
Algebra I Part 2=1 standard math credit
  - **Student w/out a Disability**  
Example → Algebra I Part 1=1 elective credit  
Algebra I Part 2=1 standard math credit

# Economics and Personal Finance (3120)

- The **Personal Finance (3120)** course has been **revised** to include the 21 **Workplace Readiness Skills (WRS)** for the Commonwealth.
- Will meet Economics and Personal Finance requirement if the student has earned at least **3 standard credits in history and social science**.
  - The economics strand in these courses would be deemed a credit accommodation.
- Upon completion of the revised Personal Finance (3120) course, the student may take the WRS assessment to earn the Board-approved Workplace Readiness Skills for the Commonwealth credential, **must pass the assessment!**
- This approach would **satisfy the graduation requirements for economics and personal finance, history and social sciences, and the industry credential.**
- Superintendent's Memorandum No. 105-13, April 19, 2013.  
[http://www.doe.virginia.gov/administrators/superintendents\\_memos/2013/105-13.shtml](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/administrators/superintendents_memos/2013/105-13.shtml)

# ELIGIBILITY FOR CREDIT ACCOMMODATIONS

- Student must have a current IEP or 504 plan with standards-based content goals.
- Student has a disability that precludes him or her from achieving and progressing commensurate with grade level expectations, but is learning on grade level content.
- Student needs significant instructional supports to access grade level Standards of Learning (SOL) content and to show progress.
- Based on multiple objective measures of past performance, student might not be expected to achieve the required standard and verified units of credit within the standard time frame.

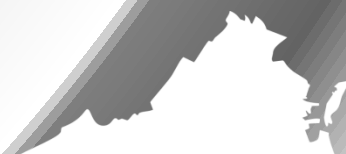
# Who will make the decision?

- The IEP team or 504 committee will determine and document eligibility for credit accommodations.
- The IEP team or 504 committee will determine the specific credit accommodation(s) used and the content area(s) where the credit accommodation will be used.
- The school must secure the informed written consent of the parent/guardian and the age of majority student after a review of the student's academic record and full disclosure of the student's options.

## **NEW**

### **Beginning with students entering ninth grade for the first time in 2016-17**

- Must complete training in Emergency First Aid, CPR, and use of an AED; some students may receive a waiver through the IEP process
- **REMEMBER!**
  - **ASK YOUR SCHOOL COUNSELOR WHICH CLASSES YOUR CHILD MUST TAKE TO FULLFILL THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE STANDARD STUDIES DIPLOMA**



# KEY CONTACTS

## **Office of Special Education Program Improvement**

Marianne Moore: Secondary Transition, (804) 225-2700  
Secondary Transition, Graduation and Credit  
Accommodations, Dropout, Federal Compliance, and  
Post School Outcome

## **Office of Student Services**

Joe Wharff: School Counselors, (804) 225-3370

