

SUPERINTENDENT'S REGULATION 6-4.5 ALTERNATIVE METHODS FOR GRANTING CREDIT

Generally

Qualified students may receive a standard unit of credit without having to meet the 140 clock-hour requirement, which mandates at least 140 hours of actual classroom instruction. This regulation shall not apply to summer session. In addition, this regulation shall not apply to certain Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses that are governed by state licensure requirements. The purpose of this regulation is to identify circumstances under which a student may demonstrate mastery of course content and objectives, and document same, without the student having to satisfy the 140 clock-hour rule.

Guidelines

The Superintendent may waive individual hour requirements for credit-bearing courses when courses are accelerated or when the structure of the course yields completion of course objectives on an alternate timeline. The Superintendent may also waive individual hour requirements for students and/or groups of students enrolled in credit-bearing courses when the student/s have completed course objectives on an alternate or accelerated timeline.

1. A waiver of the 140 clock-hour rule applies to any:
 - a. Course approved by the Virginia Board of Education;
 - b. Career and Technical course (except where state licensure requirements prohibit such waiver); and,
 - c. Local elective course.

2. A local elective course, in turn, must:
 - a. Be approved by the School Board of the Poquoson City Public Schools (PCPS);
 - b. Be included in the PCPS secondary course of study; and,
 - c. Have clearly-defined and publicly-available learning objectives, which are commensurate in scope and detail with state learning standards and competencies.

A. Waiver of the 140 Clock-Hour Rule:

In Poquoson City Public Schools, the rule requiring 140 clock-hours of seat time referenced in Policy 6-4.5 may be waived under certain circumstances. Such circumstances are limited to:

- **Credit Recovery** – Where a student has failed a credit-bearing course, she or he may use this option to repeat the course without having to satisfy the 140 clock-hour requirement.
- **Online Courses** – Students shall be permitted to satisfy the requirements of an online course without having to satisfy the 140 clock-hour requirement.
- **Students with Disabilities** – Students with disabilities who have not demonstrated success with long-term summative assessments and who do not qualify for the VAAP, may use this option if the student's IEP team determines that alternate seat time and assessment options are appropriate.

English Language Learners (EL) – Students with limited English proficiency may elect to waive the 140 clock-hour requirement if the student enrolls after the 20th hour of instruction in any course.

- An Interruption that is Beyond a Student's Control – Students who have had their seat time interrupted by a situation that is beyond their control may request a waiver of the 140 clock-hour rule. This exception is not meant to include a short- or long-term suspension or expulsion, unexcused absences, or other similar circumstances.

B. Limitations

Authorization to exercise a waiver of the 140 clock-hour rule shall be subject to the following limitations:

1. The approval of the school principal is required *prior to* initiating any work in support of the waiver.
 - a. Success criteria to waive the 140 clock-hour requirement for a course are clear, objective, and agreed upon prior to the student initiating any work in support of the waiver.
 - b. Eligibility for prior approval shall include:
 - i. Current and prior academic performance;
 - ii. Student-demonstrated readiness; and/or
 - iii. Recommendations by school staff and/or other knowledgeable adults.
 - c. The total number of standard credits that can be achieved will be based on student need.

The only exception to the prior approval being required for the waiver would be in the case of students' seat time being interrupted as a result of unanticipated school closures resulting in an extended loss of instructional time.

1. The student who is allowed to exercise this option shall demonstrate mastery of the specific objectives and performance requirements that equal or exceed that of students who have received 140 clock-hours of instruction.
2. Evidence of mastery of the pertinent content and skills is:
 - a. Fully documented;
 - b. Retained securely by PCPS either electronically or in hard copy (consistent with student records retention requirements); and,
 - c. Available for review by the Virginia Department of Education, upon request.
3. A process exists for accommodating students with disabilities and students with limited English proficiency (EL).
4. Standard credits achieved via the waiver options shall be accounted for in:
 - a. Class rank;
 - b. Grade point average (GPA);
 - c. Extracurricular eligibility; and,
 - d. High school transcripts.

5. There is a clearly-defined appeal process in place for resolving disputes.
6. The process for pursuing the waiver option is transparent and communicated to parents and the community.

C. Waiver Pathways

PCPS has identified the following waiver pathways:

1. Courses that award a standard unit of credit and have fewer than 140 clock-hours of instruction. PCPS shall maintain documentation that:
 - a. Defines its rationale for the reduction of instructional time; and,
 - b. Sets forth substantive evidence that it provides equivalent instruction with equivalent outcomes based on reduced clock hours.
2. Independent study, work sample portfolio, demonstrated performance, and locally-developed or Standard of Learning (SOL) assessment:
 - a. Evidence must include a comprehensive assemblage of:
 - 1) Media products;
 - 2) Artifacts; and,
 - 3) Performance that demonstrates:
 - i. A student has mastered academically-rigorous material;
 - ii. That meets or exceeds approved learning standards, competencies, or objectives for the course.
 - b. The required content and evaluative criteria for such products shall be:
 - 1) Defined prior to the student initiating any work; and
 - 2) Based on the same objectives as the standard course.
 - c. The assemblage of evidence must be managed by a teacher who is licensed and endorsed in the area of the coursework, with a series of checkpoints that are:
 - 1) Agreed-upon prior to the student initiating any work; and,
 - 2) Identified throughout the timeline specified for completion of the course.
 - d. The school division shall determine whether the aggregate work:
 - 1) Is of commensurate depth and quality as work performed in the traditional secondary classroom; and,
 - 2) Meets the predefined evaluative criteria shared with the student.
 - e. A student must meet a predefined performance level on a locally-developed assessment for the coursework. The locally-developed assessment may include:
 - 1) An oral examination;
 - 2) A performance (recital, concert, etc.);
 - 3) A written test;
 - 4) The applicable Standard of Learning (SOL) assessment; or

- 5) Another objective tool or process that is developed by CCPS.

D. Other Requirements

This regulation shall be reviewed as needed. Among other things, the regulation shall be reviewed for whether or not it:

1. Remains in compliance with the Board of Education Guidelines; and,
2. Includes all categories of eligible students.

E. Compliance and Reporting

PCPS shall annually provide the information that follows to the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE).

By the start of each school year or following unanticipated school closures resulting in an extended loss of instructional time, PCPS shall indicate whether the school division is exercising its option to:

- a. Waive the 140-clock-hour requirement; and,
- b. If so, identify the alternative pathway(s) it will use.

If using the waiver option, the school division shall:

- a. Report on Compliance with the *Standards of Quality* and other requirements for data collection;
- b. Verify that it has a policy in place that meets the required elements set forth in the *Guidelines for Graduation Requirements: Local Alternative Paths to Standard Units of Credit (Alternatives to the 140 Clock-Hour Requirement)*; and,
- c. Identify its expectations for student achievement (and past student performance, if applicable) and that the alternative paths identified are commensurate with 140 clock-hours of instruction or the Standards of Quality.

Legal Reference: §22.1-53.13:4; § 22.1-79.1

Revised: March 5, 2020