

New VDOE Brochure Explains Diploma Requirements

The Virginia Department of Education this week is distributing more than 389,000 brochures to help high school students understand diploma requirements that apply to the graduating classes of 2007 and subsequent years. The brochures include student-friendly presentations on meeting the requirements for the Standard Diploma and the Advanced Studies Diploma as well as information about incentives for students to earn college credit before graduating.

"I encourage students and parents to read the brochure carefully and talk with their school counselor so they fully understand the commonwealth's high expectations for learning and achievement," said Superintendent of Public Instruction Billy K. Cannaday Jr.

"The information is presented in a simple, straightforward manner," said Brian Bills, a member of the Board of Education's Student Advisory Committee who reviewed the brochure. "All the questions I could think of were addressed."

The brochure, *Virginia Graduation Requirements 2007 and Beyond*, describes the standard and verified credits students must earn to be awarded a diploma. A student earns a standard credit by successfully completing a required or elective course. A verified credit is awarded if the student passes a corresponding Standards of Learning (SOL) test or a substitute assessment approved by the Board of Education. Twenty-two standard credits and six verified credits are required for a Standard Diploma. Twenty-four standard credits and nine verified credits are required for an Advanced Studies Diploma.

Students in the class of 2007 are the first required to earn at least one verified credit in mathematics, history/social science, and science in addition to English reading and writing to graduate with a Standard Diploma. During a transition period covering the classes of 2004, 2005, and 2006, students were required to pass tests in English reading and writing, and pass four tests in subjects of their own choosing to earn a Standard Diploma. The transition period did not apply to students seeking an Advanced Studies Diploma.

The brochures are being shipped to the commonwealth's 326 high schools, combined schools, and alternative secondary schools in sufficient quantities to provide a brochure to every freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior. The brochure also is available for downloading from the Virginia Department of Education Web site (www.doe.virginia.gov).