



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

BOARD OF EDUCATION

P.O. BOX 2120

RICHMOND, VA 23218-2120

January 13, 2016

Delegate R. Steven Landes, Chairman
House Committee on Education
General Assembly Building, Room 947
Capitol Square
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Senator Stephen D. Newman, Chairman
Senate Committee on Education and Health
General Assembly Building, Room 621
Capitol Square
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Dear Chairman Landes and Chairman Newman:

I am pleased to inform you of the progress that the Board of Education and the Department of Education (VDOE) have made toward implementing the provisions of HB 2318, which was approved by the 2015 General Assembly with a delayed effective date of July 1, 2016.

HB 2318 amended § 22.1-253.13:4 of the *Code of Virginia* to require the Board of Education – for the purposes of the Standards of Accreditation – to use a graduation rate that excludes any student who fails to graduate because he or she is in the custody of the Department of Corrections, the Department of Juvenile Justice, or local law enforcement. HB 2318 further required that this data be made available to the public.

Finally, the bill required the Board of Education to report to the chairmen of the House Committee on Education and the Senate Committee on Education and Health on the Board's progress towards updating its formula for collecting, analyzing, and reporting high school graduation and dropout data no later than December 1, 2015.

First, in a fast-track regulatory action approved by the Board in July 2015, the Board amended the Regulations Establishing the Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia to specify that, for the purposes of the Standards of Accreditation, the Board must use a graduation rate that excludes any student who fails to graduate because he or she is in the custody of the Department of Corrections, the Department of Juvenile Justice, or local law enforcement. These changes became effective on October 8, 2015.

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Because the Graduation and Completion Index (GCI) adopted by the Board in 2009 already excluded any student who fails to graduate because he or she is in the custody of the Department of Corrections, the Department of Juvenile Justice, or local law enforcement, no changes were required to the formula for calculating the graduation rate. Graduation rates for School Accreditation are available to the public on the Virginia Department of Education's web site and in the online School Report Cards.

You will find enclosed a document that provides additional information about the Graduation and Completion Index and its use as an accreditation factor for high schools. If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Cynthia A. Cave, assistant superintendent for policy and communications, at 804-225-2092 or Cynthia.Cave@doe.virginia.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Billy K. Cannaday Jr.", written in a cursive style.

Billy K. Cannaday Jr.
President, Virginia Board of Education

cc:
Delegate Robert D. Orrock, Sr.
General Assembly Building, Room 701
Capitol Square
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Graduation and Completion Index – Accreditation Factor for High Schools

Accreditation ratings for high schools include a Graduation and Completion Index (GCI). This accountability measure was approved by the Virginia Board of Education in 2009. The GCI calculation awards full credit for students who earn a Board of Education-approved diploma and partial credit for other outcomes, as displayed in the table below.

The GCI calculation comprises students in the cohort of expected on-time graduates (students in the graduating class's ninth-grade cohort) plus students transferring in, minus students transferring out, deceased students, and students who fail to graduate because they are in the custody of the Department of Corrections, the Department of Juvenile Justice, or local law enforcement. Those students who are not included in one of the preceding categories (i.e., students carried over from previous cohorts) are also included in the index, as are students committed to twenty-four regional and local juvenile detention homes in Virginia.

A student earning a diploma who entered ninth grade for the first time five years ago is an example of a carryover student. Carryover students are included in annual GCI calculations until they graduate or otherwise leave school. Students with disabilities and limited-English proficient students are included in the GCI calculation when they earn a diploma, GED or certificate of completion; drop out or otherwise exit high school; or are no longer eligible for free public education services.

OUTCOME	POINT VALUE
Board-Recognized Diploma	100
GED	75
Still in School	70
Certificate of Program Completion	25
Dropout	0

The weighted index points are totaled and then divided by the sum of cohort students and carryover students who earned a credential or stayed in school, plus all cohort and carryover students who dropped out or left school without earning a credential. In the following example, the 80 students in a school earn a total of 7,155 points and achieve a GCI of 89.

OUTCOME	CALCULATION		RESULTS
	# of students	Point value	# of students x Point value
Diplomas	66	100	6,600
GEDs	3	75	225
Certificates of Completion	2	25	50
Students still in school	4	70	280
Dropouts	5	0	0
TOTALS	80		7,155
GCI: $7,155 \div 80 = 89$			