



The mission of the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) Department of Special Education is to “provide children with disabilities the knowledge and skills they need to live, learn, work, and participate in communities of their choice with the maximum amount of independence as possible.”

VDOE’s “Profile of a Virginia Graduate” includes revised graduation requirements for a standard or advanced diploma in the Commonwealth. The revisions require high school students to demonstrate proficient workplace and citizenship skills. Similarly, students graduating with an applied studies diploma graduate “life ready” by completing the requirements of an individualized education program (IEP), which includes individualized post-secondary transition goals.

Ready

Being “life ready” upon graduation with an applied studies diploma requires thorough and comprehensive planning throughout a student’s school career. The use of [appropriate transition assessments](#), [evidenced-based practices](#) for instruction in the [VDOE standards of learning](#), [aligned standards of learning](#) and [applied studies curriculum map](#), and provision of [work-based learning opportunities](#) inform the ever-evolving transition plan that helps a student achieve post-secondary goals.

SET

VDOE regulations set requirements for transition planning. Before entering secondary school, and no later than the first IEP to be in effect when a child turns 14, measurable [post-secondary goals](#) related to education, employment and independent living must be in place. Students working towards an applied studies diploma will be set for success in realizing their goals if they have well-planned and coordinated [transition services](#) based on their individual strengths and preferences.

GO

Confidence that students are “life ready” to go into the world increases when teachers use [authentic and performance based assessments](#). To do this, teachers anchor lessons and teach skills in real world contexts. They [task analyze](#) critical tasks and deliver [specially designed instruction](#) so that students demonstrate closer and closer approximations of the desired behavior as independently as possible. Highly customizable [rubrics](#) measure both [performance accuracy and levels of support](#) so skill reporting represents students’ highest level of independence as they go into the world.

Links and Sources for More Information

- [Aligned standards of learning](#)
- [Applied studies curriculum map](#)
- [Applied Studies Diploma](#)
- [Evidenced-based practices](#)
- [IEP](#)
- [Levels of support](#)
- [Performance based assessment](#)
- [Post-secondary transition goals \(1\)](#)

- [Post-secondary transition goals \(2\)](#)
- [Profile of a Virginia Graduate](#)
- [Rubrics](#)
- [Task Analysis](#)
- [Transition assessment](#)
- [Transition services](#)
- [VDOE standards of learning](#)
- [Work-based learning opportunities](#)

This news brief is a collaborative effort of the Virginia Department of Education Training and Technical Assistance Centers at George Mason University and James Madison University. This issue was prepared by the staff of the VDOE TTAC at George Mason University. For questions about content, please contact [Karen Berlin](#) and [Geoffrey Weber](#) or call 703-993-4496.

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