

# Virginia Board of Education Agenda Item



Agenda Item: C

Date: September 27, 2012

<b>Title</b>	Final Review of Revised <i>Individual Student Alternative Education Plan (ISAEP) Program Guidelines</i> to conform to HB 1061/SB 489		
<b>Presenter</b>	Mr. Lan W. Neugent, Assistant Superintendent for Technology, Career and Adult Education		
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**Purpose of Presentation:**

Action required by state or federal law or regulation.

**Previous Review or Action:**

Previous review and action. Specify date and action taken below:

Date: March 23, 2000

Action: Approved *Individual Student Alternative Education Plan (ISAEP) Program Guidelines*

Date: February 26, 2003

Action: Approved *Individual Student Alternative Education Plan (ISAEP) Program Guidelines, Revised*

Date: July 26, 2012

Action: First Review of *Individual Student Alternative Education Plan (ISAEP) Program Guidelines, Revised*

**Action Requested:**

Final review: Action requested at this meeting.

**Alignment with Board of Education Goals: Please indicate (X) all that apply:**

	Goal 1: Expanded Opportunities to Learn
	Goal 2: Accountability of Student Learning
	Goal 3: Nurturing Young Learners
x	Goal 4: Strong Literacy and Mathematics Skills
	Goal 5: Highly Qualified and Effective Teachers and Administrators
x	Goal 6: Sound Policies for Student Success
	Goal 7: Safe and Secure Schools
	Other Priority or Initiative. Specify:

**Background Information and Statutory Authority:**

Goal 4: These guidelines address the purpose of the ISAEP program, which is to provide instruction to help students achieve strong literacy and mathematics skills through achievement of their GED®.

Goal 6: Additionally, the guidelines provide sound policies for student success by requiring career guidance counseling, enrollment in a Board of Education-approved career and technical education

credential, counseling on the economic impact of not completing high school, and successful completion of the economics and personal finance course.

The ISAEP program prepares certain secondary students to take the Tests of General Educational Development (GED®) while developing career and technical education skills. The *Individual Student Alternative Education Plan (ISAEP) Program Guidelines* were approved by the Board of Education in 2000 and revised in 2003 to more clearly and succinctly articulate the intent and components of the program.

Section 22.1-254 of the *Code of Virginia* states, in part, the following:

A. Except as otherwise provided in this article, every parent, guardian, or other person in the Commonwealth having control or charge of any child who will have reached the fifth birthday on or before September 30 of any school year and who has not passed the eighteenth birthday shall, during the period of each year the public schools are in session and for the same number of days and hours per day as the public schools, send such child to a public school or to a private, denominational, or parochial school or have such child taught by a tutor or teacher of qualifications prescribed by the Board of Education and approved by the division superintendent, or provide for home instruction of such child as described in § [22.1-254.1](#).

As prescribed in the regulations of the Board of Education, the requirements of this section may also be satisfied by sending a child to an alternative program of study or work/study offered by a public, private, denominational, or parochial school or by a public or private degree-granting institution of higher education. Further, in the case of any five-year-old child who is subject to the provisions of this subsection, the requirements of this section may be alternatively satisfied by sending the child to any public educational pre-kindergarten program, including a Head Start program, or in a private, denominational, or parochial educational pre-kindergarten program.

Instruction in the home of a child or children by the parent, guardian, or other person having control or charge of such child or children shall not be classified or defined as a private, denominational or parochial school.

The requirements of this section shall apply to (i) any child in the custody of the Department of Juvenile Justice or the Department of Corrections who has not passed his eighteenth birthday and (ii) any child whom the division superintendent has required to take a special program of prevention, intervention, or remediation as provided in subsection C of § [22.1-253.13:1](#) and in § [22.1-254.01](#). The requirements of this section shall not apply to (a) any person 16 through 18 years of age who is housed in an adult correctional facility when such person is actively pursuing a general educational development (GED) certificate but is not enrolled in an individual student alternative education plan pursuant to subsection E, and (b) any child who has obtained a high school diploma or its equivalent, a certificate of completion, or a GED certificate, or who has otherwise complied with compulsory school attendance requirements as set forth in this article.

...E. Local school boards may allow the requirements of subsection A to be met under the following conditions:

For a student who is at least 16 years of age, there shall be a meeting of the student, the student's parents, and the principal or his designee of the school in which the student is enrolled in which an individual student alternative education plan shall be developed in conformity with guidelines prescribed by the Board, which plan must include:

- a. Career guidance counseling;
- b. Mandatory enrollment and attendance in a general educational development preparatory program or other alternative education program approved by the local school board with attendance requirements that provide for reporting of student attendance by the chief administrator of such GED preparatory program or approved alternative education program to such principal or his designee;
- c. Mandatory enrollment in a program to earn a Board of Education-approved career and technical education credential, such as the successful completion of an industry certification, a state licensure examination, a national occupational competency assessment, or the Virginia workplace readiness skills assessment;
- d. Successful completion of the course in economics and personal finance required to earn a Board of Education-approved high school diploma;
- e. Counseling on the economic impact of failing to complete high school; and
- f. Procedures for reenrollment to comply with the requirements of subsection A....

### **Summary of Important Issues:**

Legislative changes enacted during the 2012 General Assembly session impact ISAEP programs beginning with the 2012-2013 program year. Beginning July 1, 2012, all students enrolled in an ISAEP program must be enrolled in a program to earn a Board of Education-approved career and technical education credential and successfully complete the course in economics and personal finance required to earn a Board of Education-approved high school diploma in addition to preparing for and taking the GED® Tests. These additional requirements must be successfully completed prior to the students' completion of the ISAEP program. The Virginia Board of Education is charged with development, revision and approval of the guidelines associated with the ISAEP program. These changes are reflected in the proposed *Individual Student Alternative Education Plan (ISAEP) Program Guidelines*. (Attachment A)

### **Impact on Fiscal and Human Resources:**

There is minimal impact on resources.

### **Timetable for Further Review/Action:**

Upon approval by the Board of Education, the revision will be posted to the Department's Web site and notification will be made to school divisions through a Superintendent's Memorandum.

**Superintendent's Recommendation:**

The Superintendent of Public Instruction recommends that the Board of Education accept for final review the attached proposed *Individual Student Alternative Education Plan (ISAE) Program Guidelines*.



**Proposed**

**Individual Student Alternative Education  
Plan (ISAEP) Program Guidelines**

**September 27, 2012**

## **INDIVIDUAL STUDENT ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PLAN (ISAEP) PROGRAM GUIDELINES**

*Virginia School Laws, Section 22.1-254, Compulsory attendance required; excuses and waivers; alternative education program attendance; exemptions from article, 1999,* authorizes local school boards to allow the fulfillment of compulsory attendance requirements by any student who is 16 years of age and for whom an Individual Student Alternative Education Plan (ISAEP) is developed in a meeting between the student, the student's parents, and the principal or designee. The Virginia Board of Education is charged with development of the guidelines associated with the ISAEP program. A student for whom an ISAEP has been granted and who fails to comply with the components of the ISAEP shall be deemed to be in violation of compulsory attendance requirements. Students enrolled with an ISAEP shall be counted in the average daily membership (ADM) of the school.

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School divisions that allow students to fulfill compulsory attendance requirements by granting them an ISAEP must adhere to all guidelines prescribed by the Board of Education. These guidelines

- 1) reflect the legislative intent that created the ISAEP option;
- 2) adhere to the agreement between the Department of Education and the GED<sup>®</sup> Testing Service of the American Council on Education that permits testing of students who are between the ages of 16 and 18 years and enrolled in high school programs; and
- 3) are consistent with Board of Education standards concerning the quality of all publicly funded educational programs.

These guidelines address the specific purpose of the ISAEP program, identify essential elements that school divisions are required to include in each student's ISAEP, and

outline administrative procedures that describe the process from enrollment in an ISAEP program through release from compulsory attendance.

School divisions that accept funds from the Department of Education to support ISAEP programs must provide assurance annually that they will adhere to all Board of Education guidelines. Only those school divisions that have approved ISAEP programs may authorize enrolled students between the ages of 16 and 18 years to take the GED® Tests.

## **Purpose**

The Board of Education believes that the first option for every high school-aged student should be to work towards completing the requirements for a standard or advanced studies diploma. Although every effort should be made to counsel students to remain in high school through graduation, there are circumstances when this is no longer a viable option. In such cases, the Board desires to provide students with a “second opportunity” to exit high school with a well-recognized credential and the knowledge and skills necessary for a successful transition to adulthood, an option more desirable than dropping out of school.

An ISAEP may be developed when the student demonstrates substantial need for an alternative program, meets enrollment criteria, and demonstrates an ability to benefit from the program. The need is determined by a student’s risk of dropping-out of school. A student may qualify to be granted an ISAEP if dropping-out is imminent. A student’s ability to benefit is determined by achieving satisfactory scores, as determined by the Board of Education, on a standardized measure of reading and the Official GED® Practice Test.

## **Program Requirements**

School divisions must include the following elements in each student’s ISAEP:

- 1) career guidance counseling and enrollment in a program to earn a Board of Education-approved career and technical education credential;
- 2) mandatory enrollment in a GED® preparation program or other alternative education program approved by the local school board;
- 3) counseling on the economic impact of failing to complete high school, and
- 4) successful completion of the course in economics and personal finance required to earn a Board of Education-approved high school diploma; and,
- 5) counseling on provisions for re-enrollment in school.

Career guidance and counseling should include a comprehensive career and technical education assessment that can assist students in developing career goals. Students with an ISAEP also must be provided opportunities for career and technical education (CTE) enrollment in a program to earn a Board of Education-approved career and technical education credential. The opportunities may vary from highly structured and

formal CTE programs offered at the high school or regional career and technical education center to paid employment to unpaid internships that prepare an ISAEP student to successfully complete a CTE credential.

School divisions must provide GED<sup>®</sup> preparation programs or other alternative education classes that help students prepare for the GED<sup>®</sup> Tests. Enrollment in such programs is mandatory and school divisions are required to maintain attendance records. Although class scheduling and weekly hours of attendance are flexible, school divisions are expected to provide instruction for sufficient length and duration to maximize a student's chance to pass the GED<sup>®</sup> Tests on the first attempt.

ISAEP students and their parents must receive counseling on the impact of failing to complete a traditional high school program. School divisions should ensure that both parents and students are aware of the differences between the high school diplomas authorized by the Board of Education and the GED<sup>®</sup> credential. Documentation of informed consent is required before a student may be granted an ISAEP and should be maintained in the student's school records for the period of time prescribed by law.

ISAEP students must successfully complete the course in economics and personal finance required to earn a Board of Education-approved high school diploma. The course credit may be earned using a variety of instructional delivery methods. Options may include taking a stand-alone course, a self-paced modular version of the course, or a virtual course. This ISAEP requirement also may be met using a certification of competency approach.

Students with an ISAEP may elect to re-enroll in the regular school or other alternative school program for any reason prior to completing their plan. School divisions shall have written procedures that describe the provisions for re-enrollment.

## **Administrative Procedures**

Any student or parent may request an ISAEP. However, school divisions must follow all of the following administrative procedures before a student may be granted an ISAEP.

### **Step One: Initial Principal-Parent-Student (PPS) Meeting**

The purpose of the initial principal-parent-student meeting is to help parents and students understand the following options for fulfilling the compulsory attendance requirement: (1) remaining in the regular school program, (2) enrolling in an alternative educational program, or (3) completing an ISAEP. The principal or designee will provide full disclosure of the relevant aspects of the program, written descriptions of the required program components, a listing of the parties involved in developing and implementing the ISAEP, and complete information regarding an academic and career and technical education assessment. At this initial meeting, parents will sign a consent form to attest that they have received full disclosure regarding the ISAEP program and understand all requirements for each of the options for completing public school.



## Step Two: Student Evaluation/Assessment

The purpose of the student evaluation is to provide the student, the parents, and the principal/designee with the information necessary to determine the program of study that is in the best educational interest of the student. Students planning to fulfill compulsory attendance requirements by completing an ISAEP must first demonstrate that they have the ability to benefit from such a program. School divisions should be familiar with GED<sup>®</sup> preparation and testing accommodations for students with disabilities and include accommodations in the screening process and in the ISAEP. A reading achievement test, the GED<sup>®</sup> Practice Test, and a career and technical education assessment will be conducted to provide the necessary information on which to base decisions. Evaluation results will be used in the development of each student's plan, if he or she qualifies.

The GED<sup>®</sup> test battery is normed on graduating high school seniors throughout the United States. Because the tests measure the outcomes of a traditional high school education, certain levels of competence should be established for entry into the GED<sup>®</sup> preparation/testing option. Both of the following minimum academic achievement criteria must be met for students to be granted an ISAEP:

- Students shall score 7.5 grade equivalent or higher on a recognized standardized measure of reading achievement.
- Students shall score 410 or higher on each of the subtests of the Official GED<sup>®</sup> Practice Test.

## Step Three: Development of the ISAEP (Second Principal-Parent-Student Meeting)

The student, the parents, and the principal/designee are required partners for developing an ISAEP. Other individuals may be invited to participate as needed and as required. The ISAEP will address the needs of the student based on the evaluation results. Each student's plan should be clearly defined and include:

- measurable academic and career and technical education goals and objectives;
- attendance requirements for enrollment in GED<sup>®</sup> preparation classes;
- attendance requirements for enrollment in career and technical education-related classes (e.g., employment, apprenticeship, cooperative learning experiences, paid or unpaid internships, and workplace readiness training);
- methods and time frame for evaluating student's progress;
- procedures to provide parents with regular progress reports, and
- requirements for program completion.

The student, the parents, the principal/designee, and other appropriate individuals are required to sign the initial ISAEP and any subsequent amendments. A student granted an ISAEP is not released from compulsory attendance until the school board deems all elements of a student's plan to be complete, which

includes successfully passing the GED® Tests. Any student who fails to complete the plan and does not return to school shall be deemed to be in violation of compulsory attendance requirements, and appropriate legal actions will be taken.

#### Step Four: Exiting the ISAEP Program

Students can exit the ISAEP program as described below:

- Students can be released from compulsory attendance by the local school board if the student passes the GED® Tests, participated in a CTE program that met ISAEP requirements, and successfully completes the course in economics and personal finance required to earn a Board of Education-approved high school diploma;
- Students can re-enroll in the K-12 program, including regular high school or some other alternative education program approved by the school board; and
- Students can discontinue their involvement in the ISAEP program and drop their enrollment in any recognized educational program. Such action would be a violation of compulsory attendance laws and will result in notifying the courts as appropriate.

School divisions shall report a change in a student's enrollment status to the Department of Education.