

QUESTIONS Concerning Schools Receiving “Accreditation Denied” Status

August 2014

What does it mean if my child’s school receives an Accreditation Denied rating?

Public schools in Virginia receive an accreditation rating each year based on results of tests given during the previous school year. For example, the accreditation rating for school year 2014-2015 is based on the results of tests given during the 2013-2014 school year.

Schools must meet certain pass rates on the SOL tests to be fully accredited. A school is rated Accreditation Denied if it fails to meet the requirements for full or provisional accreditation for four consecutive years.

If my child’s school is denied accreditation, does that mean my child is not getting a good education?

Accreditation ratings reflect overall achievement within a school, not the performance or learning of individual students. In assessing the quality of the education provided by a school, parents should also consider individual achievement on SOL tests, classroom grades and other measures of learning and performance.

If my child’s school receives an Accreditation Denied rating, what will happen?

The school receiving an Accreditation Denied rating must provide parents of the enrolled students the following:

- Within 30 days, written notice of the school’s accreditation rating
- A copy of the school division’s proposed corrective action plan that includes a timeline for implementation
- An opportunity for public comment on the proposed corrective action plan prior to its adoption

After considering public comment, the school division will finalize the school’s corrective action plan. Then the local school board and the Board of Education (BOE) will sign a memorandum of understanding by November 1.

The memorandum of understanding may include, but is not limited to:

- An educational service delivery and management review approved by the BOE
- Employing an approved turnaround specialist to address conditions preventing educational progress, effectiveness and academic success

In addition to the memorandum of understanding, the local school board will submit periodic status reports – signed by the principal, division superintendent and local school board chairman – to the BOE.

A school division with any schools denied accreditation must submit a report to the BOE by October 1 describing each school’s progress toward meeting the requirements for full accreditation. The BOE will include the information in its annual report to the governor and General Assembly.

If a school division has one-third or more of its schools denied accreditation, the local school board must evaluate

the superintendent and submit a copy of the evaluation to the BOE by December 1. In addition, the BOE may take action against the local school board, as permitted by the Standards of Quality, for failure to maintain accredited schools.

Are there any other options if my child’s school is denied accreditation?

A local school board may choose to close the school, combine the school with a higher performing school in the division or reconstitute the school. Reconstitution may include, but is not limited to, restructuring a school’s governance, instructional program, staff or student population.

If a school is reconstituted, the local school board may apply to the BOE for conditional accreditation. The application must outline specific responses to all areas of deficiency.

A reconstituted, conditionally accredited school will be denied accreditation if it fails to meet the requirements for full accreditation after three years, or if it fails to have its annual application renewed.

Is the staff at my child’s school going to be replaced because of the Accreditation Denied rating?

There may be some personnel changes in your child’s school, but that decision will be made by the local school division. School staffing is the responsibility of the local school board.

What happens if my child’s school closes?

Your child will continue to receive a public school education, but at a different school. Your local school division will be able to tell you where your child will be attending school.

What can I do if I receive notification that my child’s school is denied accreditation?

Talk with your child’s teacher to see what you can do to help increase or maintain your child’s academic level. Attend any meetings held by the PTA, local school officials or division officials concerning your child’s school. Share your comments and concerns with your school officials and local school board.

If my child’s high school is not Fully Accredited, will that impact my child’s ability to get into college?

The accreditation status of a high school does not appear on transcripts that are provided to colleges, universities or employers. Your child’s diploma is recognized as equal to any other Virginia diploma of the same type, regardless of the school’s accreditation status.

Colleges and universities look at a variety of factors such as SAT or ACT results, individual SOL test results, types and rigor of courses taken in high school, grade-point average and class ranking when making acceptance decisions.