

Seat Time Flexibility in Virginia

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Overview

- Overview of Seat Time
- Virginia's Policy Journey
- State Support for Local Innovations
- Seat Time Flexibility Models
- School Examples
- Discussion



What is Seat Time?



Seat Time, or the "Carnegie Unit" uses time as a proxy for learning to determine how students earn credit for completing a course of study based on how much time students spend directly with a teacher.

Continues to impact almost every aspect of schooling:

- How schools are organized
- Bell schedules
- How assessments work
- What is assessed

Virginia's Policy Evolution

2015: HB1675 / SB 982 enacted which permitted school divisions to waive the requirement that a student receives 140 clock hours of instruction to earn a standard unit of credit in specific circumstances.

2016: Board of Education issued guidance to divisions on implementation

2023: Board of Education issued a related Standards of Quality Prescription

2024: HB 1477 enacted which authorizes the Board of Education to provide local school boards maximum flexibility to waive clock hour requirements through alternative instructional time models.

2025: Revised Board of Education Guidance, VDOE Action Tool Kit, and Trainings and Workshops to support Divisions

State Support for Local Innovations

- Statewide Listening Sessions in 2024 and 2025
- [Board of Education Guidance Local Alternative Paths to Standard Credits \(Revised 2025\)](#)
- [VDOE Seat Time Flexibility Action Kit \(2025\)](#)
- [Trainings and Implementation Workshops with Division leaders](#)



Seat Time Flexibility Models

- **Model 1: Alternative Hours:** Introduces flexibility for times when students are learning.
- **Model 2: Course Innovations:** Create flexibility in the amount of time students have to demonstrate mastery. (e.g., accelerated coursework or additional hours where needed).
- **Model 3: Flexible Learning Settings:** Provide options for where students learn and earn credits.
- **Model 4: Blended Courses:** Provide options for combinations of subjects students can learn in courses that blend two or more related subjects.
- **Model 5: Emerging Local Practices:** This model recognizes other innovative instructional approaches that fall outside of the other four categories; or that blend components of more than one model.

Elementary School Examples

Elementary School:

- **Model 1: Alternative Hours:** Extended learning time for certain content areas based on local data (i.e. Student Performance and Support Framework data indicated a need for extended time beyond the bell.)
- **Model 4: Blended Courses:** Music and Art courses intertwined to deepen student understanding and connections in preparation for middle school coursework.



Secondary Examples

Middle School:

- **Model 2: Course Innovations:** Competency-based learning models. An academic framework where student progression is based on demonstrated mastery of a specific skill and clear learning competencies.

High School:

- **Model 3: Flexible Learning Setting:** Theatre Arts students achieve mastery of SOL objectives by participating in a professional theatrical production as part of the cast/crew and demonstrate mastery through a portfolio of experiences gained.
- **Model 4: Blended Courses:** Blended English 10 and co-enrolled with U.S. History; double-blocked course that reflects on the history and literature of the United States (requires SOL testing in English and History); Blended World History with AP Art History (requires SOL testing.)
- **Model 3: Flexible Learning Setting and Model 5: Local Practices:** Locally developed course with real-world connections and partnerships with universities, other schools, and/or community and business leaders

World Language Examples

Innovation Model	World Language Example	Credit Method
Model 1: Alternative Hours	Spanish for Healthcare offered through evening telehealth simulations and weekend language labs. Students earn credit by demonstrating proficiency via ACTFL-aligned assessments.	Proficiency-based credit
Model 2: Course Innovations	Accelerated French Culinary Arts course where students complete mastery in half the time, freeing hours for hands-on kitchen internships.	Competency-based mastery
Model 3: Flexible Learning Settings	Vietnamese language credit earned through work-based learning at a community health clinic, combined with virtual reflection sessions.	WBL + proficiency assessment
Model 4: Blended Courses	Mandarin for Business integrated with Economics & Personal Finance in a dual-credit course, including project-based global trade simulations.	Dual enrollment + blended mastery
Model 5: Emerging Local Practices	ASL integrated into Public Safety pathway with virtual reality emergency response simulations and community interpreter shadowing.	Innovative blended model

Division Highlight: Balanced Calendar in Hopewell City Schools



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-w3fDmQUOgk>

Division Highlight: Bio Fit Course in Virginia Beach Public Schools



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KR6Q1xTnxAI>

Discussion and Questions

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