

BATH COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD

AGENDA ITEM: INFORMATION { X }                      ACTION {    }                      CLOSED MEETING {    }

**SUBJECT:**                      SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT - PRESENTATIONS/REPORTS

Preliminary Accreditation Report

**BACKGROUND:**                      Mr. Lancaster will provide preliminary 2012-2013 state accreditation results based on 2011-2012 SOL assessment results.

The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) has established a preliminary timeline for the release of student achievement on 2011-2012 state assessments, 2012-2013 federal accountability reports, state accreditation ratings, cohort reports and graduation rates to school divisions and the public. The timeline follows.

Each school will develop and implement improvement plans for the 2012-2013 school year.

2012 ASSESSMENT and ACCOUNTABILITY TIMELINE  
(Note: Dates in the timeline are preliminary and subject to change.)

July 12: Graduation & Completion Index (GCI — for use with Accreditation), Federal Graduation Indicator (FGI — for use in federal accountability reports) and Virginia On-Time Graduation Rate (VOTGR) reports available in the Cohort Graduation application through the VDOE Single Sign On for Web Systems (SSWS) portal. Reports will be incomplete until the End-of-Year and Summer Student Record Collections (SRC) are complete for your school division. To obtain a login and password, contact the SSWS account manager in your school division. A list of SSWS account managers is attached for your convenience.

July 20: Superintendent's Memo posted on details on the federal accountability appeals process — including the process for "small n schools." (Appeals must be filed by division superintendents no later than Tuesday, September 4.)

July 23: Anticipated release of federal Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) in reading (benchmarks based on 2010-2011 achievement) and mathematics (benchmarks based on 2011-2012 achievement).

July 23-27: SSWS application open for reassigning Virginia Alternate Assessment Program (VAAP) and Virginia Modified Achievement Standards Test (VMAST) scores for divisions that surpassed the 1-percent cap on proficient VAAP scores and 2-percent cap on VMAST mathematics scores for inclusion in federal accountability reporting.

July 27: Preliminary 2012-2013 SOL Accreditation ratings available to divisions through SSWS on Friday, July 27 for all divisions. Ratings for schools with a twelfth grade will include the Graduation/Completion Index benchmark. Please protect student privacy by exercising care in sharing data from these reports.

July 30: Deadline for requests to designate a school's federal accountability status as "to be determined" (TBD), pending review of submitted corrections to student-level data; deadline for requests to designate a school's accreditation status as TBD for schools seeking conditional accreditation. (See contacts below.)

August 3: Preliminary 2012-2013 federal accountability reports available to all divisions through SSWS. The information in detailed preliminary federal accountability reports could lead to personal identification of individual students. Please protect student privacy by exercising care in sharing data from these reports. Data corrections must be made by August 20.

August 13: Federal accountability report data refreshed on Mondays weekly, with the final pre-public release refresh Tuesday, September 4.

August 14: VDOE news release on statewide, division and school "all-student" pass rates on 2011-2012 state assessments with focus on mathematics.

- August 20: Deadline for data corrections.
- September 4: Federal accountability report appeals due (See contacts below.)
- September 4: Final, pre-public release federal accountability report data refresh.
- September 7: Deadline for signed verification reports for the End-of-Year and the Summer SRC so that GCI data can be verified by local school divisions in time for 2012 Accreditation.
- September 12: VDOE news release on federal accountability reports, including schools identified as priority and focus schools. Concurrent with the distribution of the news release, the department will update school, division and state report cards and related summary data on the VDOE Web site.
- September 20: Cohort Graduation online Data Correction tool closes.
- September 21: Final, pre-public release refresh of Accreditation data.
- September 26: VDOE issues news release on 2012-2013 Accreditation ratings. Concurrently, the department will post updated school report cards and related summary data on the VDOE Web site. The status of conditionally accredited schools (not including new schools) and schools seeking conditional accreditation for the first time will be reported as TBD pending action by the Board of Education on Thursday, October 25. Updated school report cards and related summary information will be posted following the board meeting. Requests for TBD accreditation status for schools seeking conditional accreditation are due on July 30. (See contacts below.)
- October 9: VDOE issues news release on VOTGR and cohort dropout rates.

August 1, 2012

## **Educators applaud No Child Left Behind waiver**

### **Teacher evaluations a concern under new standards**

by [Holly Hobbs](#) Staff writer (FairfaxTimes.com)

Reforms to the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 are allowing states greater flexibility to meet federal education standards by waiving benchmark testing requirements of previous years.

Locally, educators said the waivers show a change in attitude about labels given to schools.

“It’s a good thing. It’s the first sign of a culture change,” said Terri Breeden, Fairfax County Public Schools’ assistant superintendent for professional learning and accountability. “We’re getting away from labels like failing schools and really looking at student learning.”

The Virginia Department of Education said the waivers allowed public schools and school systems to get away from “arbitrary” and “unrealistic” benchmarks created under No Child Left Behind, which was a major education reform as part of the reauthorization by the George W. Bush administration of the Education and Secondary Education Act of 1965.

Under the previous No Child Left Behind rules, public schools and school systems were required to meet a percentage of pass rates on standardized tests. This pass rate escalated each year, with the goal of reaching 100 percent proficiency in math and reading by the 2013-2014 school year. Known as Adequate Yearly Progress, pass/fail ratings were part of the federal gauge that marks the percent of academic progress within a school. Progress is tracked through Standards of Learning exams given each year.

AYP reports released last summer by the state showed a dramatic dive in the number of schools who met benchmarks compared with the previous year. Under the 2010-11 school year proficiency requirements, 61 percent — or 1,129 of the 1,839 public schools in the state — failed to meet benchmarks. Similarly, while 15 school divisions statewide had failed to meet benchmarks during the 2009-10 school year, under the 2010-11 school year only four of the state’s 132 school divisions were able to meet AYP.

AYP reports are usually released in August.

Virginia educators, who were required to give Standards of Learning exams each year, said ever-increasing benchmarks have ensured that a greater number of schools will be

labeled as failing each year. Meanwhile, schools are seeing teachers focusing more and more on testing skills than curriculum, educators said.

“Virginia schools and school divisions can now focus their energy and resources on implementing the state Board of Education’s rigorous new content standards and assessments without contending with outdated and often counter-productive federal requirements and rules,” said state Superintendent of Public Instruction Patricia I. Wright in a released statement.

In exchange for flexibility granted under the waiver, states agreed to raise academic standards, improve accountability and reform teacher evaluations to boost educators’ effectiveness, according to Fairfax County Public Schools.

The waiver is good for two years and strikes AYP, replacing it with benchmarks aimed at narrowing proficiency gaps among demographic subgroups such as students with disabilities, English language learners, black and Hispanic children. So, instead of requiring that overall student achievement within a school or school system meet an annual benchmark regardless of previous achievement, yearly goals will be set to reduce failure rates in reading and math by 50 percent overall and within each subgroup within six years.

As of July 19, the Obama administration had granted waivers to 32 states and the District of Columbia. Virginia received its waiver in June. Thirteen states and Puerto Rico have yet to request a waiver, including: Alabama, Alaska, Hawaii, Maine, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, Texas, Vermont (which withdrew its request), West Virginia and Wyoming.

“I don’t think it’s going to affect us very much as far as the new benchmarks,” Breeden said. “But I think the new teachers’ evaluations will impact us.”

The Virginia Department of Education set a July 1, 2012, deadline for school systems to create a new teacher evaluation process. The Fairfax County School Board recently approved the allocation of \$2 million toward training teachers and evaluators on the new evaluation system, as well as hiring four positions to direct and coordinate the new evaluation system.

The state’s Virginia Teacher Evaluation Work Group, made of education advocacy group leaders, educators and state officials, reviewed the current teacher evaluation standards, which were submitted and approved by the Board of Education April 28, 2011. While the new evaluation standards kept the six existing standards on professionalism and planning, it added student academic progress.

“The bar is much higher with the new instrument than it was under the old instrument,” said Fairfax Education Association President Michael Hairston, who served as a member of the work group.



“What was the recommendation became a requirement late in the game,” Hairston said of the inclusion of student academic progress in teacher evaluations. “Forty percent of teacher evaluations will be tied to the students’ achievement. We thought it would be better at closer to 20 percent ... There are many unanswered questions, which is why we advocated for a pilot for this [new evaluation process]. They decided to go full throttle on this.”

## 2012-2013 SCHOOL YEAR

**V**irginia's accountability system supports teaching and learning by setting rigorous academic standards — known as the Standards of Learning (SOL) — and through annual assessments of student achievement.

A school's state accreditation rating reflects overall achievement in the four core academic areas of English, history/social science, mathematics and science. In addition, high schools must meet a minimum benchmark for graduation and completion. Schools in which students meet or exceed all achievement objectives established by the Virginia Board of Education are rated as Fully Accredited.

The federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) requires states to establish annual measurable objectives (AMOs) for raising overall reading and mathematics achievement and the achievement of student subgroups.

Virginia, under ESEA flexibility waivers granted on June 29, 2012, has established AMOs designed to reduce proficiency gaps between high- and low-performing schools within six years.

The commonwealth no longer issues Adequate Yearly Progress ratings but does report on the performance of schools and student subgroups in meeting the AMOs.

Schools must develop and implement improvement plans to raise the achievement of student subgroups not meeting annual objectives. Low-performing schools identified as Priority and Focus schools are subject to specific interventions.

Revised July 2012

## Accreditation

### High Standards for Learning & Achievement

School accreditation ratings reflect student achievement on SOL tests and other approved assessments in the four core academic areas of English, history/social science, mathematics and science. Ratings are based on the achievement of students on tests taken during the previous academic year or may reflect a three-year average of achievement. Schools receive one of the following ratings:

#### Fully Accredited

Elementary schools are Fully Accredited if students achieve all of the following pass rates:

- ◆ English — 75 percent or higher, grades 3-5
- ◆ Mathematics — 70 percent or higher, grades 3-5
- ◆ Science — 70 percent or higher in grade 5 and 50 percent or higher in grade 3
- ◆ History — 70 percent or higher in Virginia Studies (grade 4 or 5) and 50 percent or higher in grade 3

Middle schools are Fully Accredited if students achieve pass rates of 70 percent or higher in all four content areas.

High schools are Fully Accredited if students achieve pass rates of 70 percent or more in all four content areas and attain a point value of 85 or greater based on the Graduation and Completion Index (GCI).

#### Flexibility for High-Performing Schools

Virginia's accountability system allows schools that maintain pass rates of 95 percent or greater in all four core academic areas for two consecutive years to apply for a waiver from annual accreditation. Schools awarded waivers are rated as Fully Accredited for a three-year period.

### Provisionally Accredited-Graduation Rate

A high school or combined school with a graduating class is Provisionally Accredited-Graduation Rate if students achieve adjusted pass rates of 70 percent or more in all four content areas and a GCI from 81 to 84 points. Schools with a rating of Provisionally Accredited-Graduation Rate are subject to an academic review. Elementary and middle schools are not eligible for provisional accreditation.

### Accredited with Warning

A school receives an Accredited with Warning rating if its adjusted pass rates for the four core subjects are below the achievement levels required for full accreditation. Schools that receive this rating undergo academic reviews and are required to adopt and implement school improvement plans. Schools that are warned in English and/or

## Graduation & Completion Index

The GCI calculation comprises students in the cohort of expected on-time graduates (students who were first-time ninth graders four years ago, plus transfers in and minus transfers out) and students carried over from previous cohorts. 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 total number 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 Completions	2	25	50
Students still in school	4	70	280
Dropouts	5	0	0
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>80</b>		<b>7,155</b>
	<b>GCI: <math>7,155 \div 80 = 89</math></b>		

A GCI of at least 85 is required for full accreditation. High schools are eligible for a rating of Provisionally Accredited-Graduation Rate until 2015-2016, as shown in the following table.

PROVISIONAL ACCREDITATION BENCHMARKS		
Academic Year	Accreditation Year	Point Value
2011-2012	2012-2013	81
2012-2013	2013-2014	82
2013-2014	2014-2015	83
2014-2015	2015-2016	84

Schools earning a rating of Provisionally Accredited-Graduation Rate must undergo an academic review. Provisionally Accredited Graduation Rate will not be awarded after 2015-2016. High schools earning a GCI less than the provisional benchmark for the year are rated as Accredited with Warning.

Beginning in accreditation year 2016-2017, high schools with a GCI of less than 85 will be Accredited with Warning.

mathematics are also required to adopt instructional programs proven by research to be effective in raising achievement in these subjects. A school may hold this rating for no more than three consecutive years.

In addition, high schools earning a GCI less than the provisional benchmark for the year are rated as Accredited with Warning.

## Accreditation Denied

A school is rated Accreditation Denied if it fails to meet the requirements for full accreditation for four consecutive years.

Any school denied accreditation must provide parents and other interested parties the following:

- ◆ Written notice of the school's accreditation rating within 30 calendar days of the announcement of the rating by the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE);
- ◆ A copy of the school division's proposed corrective action plan describing the steps to be taken to raise achievement to state standards — including a timeline for implementation — to improve the school's accreditation rating; and
- ◆ An opportunity to comment on the division's proposed corrective action plan prior to its adoption and the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the local school board and the Board of Education.

The local school board — within 45 days of receiving notice of the status — must submit to the Board of Education the proposed corrective action plan. The Board of Education will consider the proposal and develop a memorandum of understanding with the local school board, which must be implemented by November 1. The local school board must submit status reports detailing the implementation of actions prescribed in the memorandum of understanding; and the principal, division superintendent and local school board chairman may be required to appear before the Board of Education to present status reports.

Additionally, in any school division where one-third or more of the schools have been denied accreditation, the local school board is required to evaluate the division superintendent and submit a copy of the evaluation to the Board of Education by December 1. The Board of Education may take action — as permitted by the Standards of Quality — against the local school board due to the failure of the local board to maintain accredited schools.

## Conditionally Accredited

There are two types of Conditionally Accredited schools:

- ◆ **Conditionally Accredited-New** is awarded for a one-year period to a new school — comprising students who previously attended one or more existing schools — to provide the opportunity to evaluate the performance of students on SOL tests and other statewide assessments.
- ◆ **Conditionally Accredited-Reconstituted** is awarded to a school that fails to meet full accreditation requirements for four consecutive years and as an alternative to a memorandum of understanding, receives permission from the Board of Education to reconstitute. A reconstituted school reverts to Accreditation-Denied status if it fails to meet full accreditation requirements within the agreed-upon term, or if it fails to have its annual application for conditional accreditation renewed.



## ACCREDITATION BENCHMARKS

(Adjusted Pass Rates)

Subject	Grade 3	Grade 4-5	Grades 6-12
English	75%	75%	70%
Mathematics	70%	70%	70%
Science	50%	70%	70%
History	50%	70%	70%

*NOTE: Ratings for the 2012-2013 school year are based on achievement during 2011-2012 or on average achievement during the three most recent school years. Beginning with tests administered in 2012-2013, the minimum pass rate for English will rise to 75 percent for all grades and the pass rates for the other three core areas — at all grade levels — will be 70 percent.*

## ACCREDITATION ADJUSTMENTS

A school's accreditation rating may reflect adjustments to pass rates resulting from successful remediation efforts and for the allowable exclusion of some limited-English proficient (LEP) students and transfer students.

### Remediation & Retesting

Virginia's accountability system recognizes successful remediation programs that help students achieve minimum proficiency standards in reading and mathematics in all tested grades. A school is credited for successful remedial instruction when a student — who failed a particular content-area assessment during the previous year — subsequently passes the content-area test. If a student fails a test required for graduation and successfully retests during the same school year, the result of the first test is not included in the accreditation calculation.

### Limited-English Proficient Students

The scores of LEP students (also known as English language learners or ELL students) enrolled in Virginia public schools fewer than 11 semesters may be excluded from accreditation calculations. While all LEP students are expected to participate in the state assessment program, a school-based committee determines the level of participation of each LEP student. In kindergarten through grade 8, the school-based committee may grant the student a one-time exemption from testing in writing (in grades 5 or 8), science (in grade 3 only) and history/social science (once during grades 3-8).

### Transfer Students

The scores of students transferring within a Virginia school division are included in the calculation of accreditation ratings. Students transferring into a school from another Virginia school division, another state, a private school or who have been home schooled are expected to take the assessments for the content areas in which they received instruction. Under limited circumstances as described in Board of Education regulations, the failing scores of some transfer students may be excluded from the accreditation calculation.

## Virginia & ESEA

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) — known since 2001 as No Child Left Behind (NCLB) — requires states to set annual measurable objectives for increasing student achievement to ensure that all children have an opportunity to obtain a high-quality education.

Under the provisions of the two-year flexibility waiver granted by US Department of Education on June 29, 2012, the Board of Education has set new annual measurable objectives (AMOs) for raising achievement in the commonwealth's lowest-performing schools. These new annual objectives in reading and mathematics replace the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) targets schools were previously required to meet.

The AMOs were determined using a formula based on the federal law and student-achievement data from the state's assessment program. Annual mathematics benchmarks are based on achievement during 2011-2012 on the commonwealth's rigorous new mathematics tests. Reading benchmarks for the first year of flexibility are based on achievement on 2010-2011 state assessments. Reading AMOs will be reset next year based on the performance of students during 2012-2013 on tests reflecting the increased rigor of the 2010 English standards.

Separate AMOs have been set for student subgroups, including new Proficiency Gap Groups comprising students who historically have had difficulty meeting the commonwealth's achievement standards:

- ◆ **Proficiency Gap Group 1** — Students with disabilities, limited-English proficient (LEP) students and economically disadvantaged students, regardless of race and ethnicity (unduplicated)
- ◆ **Proficiency Gap Group 2** — African-American students, not of Hispanic origin, including those also counted in Proficiency Gap Group 1
- ◆ **Proficiency Gap Group 3** — Hispanic students, of one or more races, including those also counted in Proficiency Gap Group 1

The benchmarks are set with the goal of reducing by half the proficiency gaps in reading and mathematics between the lowest- and highest-

## ANNUAL MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES

AMOs were set in the following manner:

- ◆ Schools were ranked by overall and subgroup achievement in reading and mathematics.
- ◆ Starting with the lowest-performing school, the school representing 20 percent of students tested statewide and the school representing 90 percent of students tested statewide were identified. This process was repeated for each subject and subgroup.
- ◆ For each subject and subgroup, the pass rate of the school at the 20th percentile of tested students was subtracted from the pass rate of the school representing the 90th percentile of tested students.
- ◆ The difference for each subject and subgroup was divided by two to identify the six-year goal for reducing the proficiency gap by half.
- ◆ AMOs are set for achieving the goal of reducing proficiency gaps by half within six years.

## Reading Annual Measurable Objectives

Accountability Year	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018
Assessment Year	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017
All Students	85					
Proficiency Gap Group 1	76					
Proficiency Gap Group 2 ( <i>Black Students</i> )	76					
Proficiency Gap Group 3 ( <i>Hispanic Students</i> )	80					
Students with Disabilities	59					
LEP students	76					
Economically Disadvantaged Students	76					
Asian Students	92					
White Students	90					

**Reading AMOs for accountability years 2013-2014 through 2017-2018 will be calculated based on achievement on revised Reading SOL tests administered during 2012-2013**

## Mathematics Annual Measurable Objectives

Accountability Year	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018
Assessment Year	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017
All Students	61	64	66	68	70	73
Proficiency Gap Group 1	47	49	52	54	56	58
Proficiency Gap Group 2 ( <i>Black Students</i> )	45	48	50	52	54	57
Proficiency Gap Group 3 ( <i>Hispanic Students</i> )	52	55	57	60	62	65
Students with Disabilities	33	36	39	42	45	49
LEP students	39	42	45	48	51	54
Economically Disadvantaged Students	47	50	52	54	56	59
Asian Students	82	83	85	86	88	89
White Students	68	70	72	74	76	78

performing schools — overall and for each subgroup and proficiency gap group — within six years.

### Reporting and Accountability

Under the flexibility waiver, information on schools and school divisions meeting and not meeting the new, annual federal benchmarks for raising achievement and narrowing achievement gaps is reported in August on the VDOE website. Schools and school divisions, however, no longer receive Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) ratings.

School and division report cards will indicate whether subgroups and proficiency gap groups met AMOs in reading and mathematics. In addition, report cards for divisions and high schools show whether the annual ESEA objective for graduation — known as the Federal Graduation Indicator — was met. The graduation indicator is met if 80 percent or more students graduate in four, five or six years with a Standard Diploma or Advanced Studies Diploma.

All public schools — including schools that do not receive Title I funds under the ESEA — must develop and implement improvement plans to raise the achievement of student subgroups not meeting the annual benchmarks.

The following must use a web-based, school-improvement tool approved by VDOE for assessing, planning, implementing and monitoring progress:

- ◆ Title I schools (not identified as focus or priority schools) not meeting one or more AMO targets or participation rates
- ◆ All schools (including non-Title I schools) not earning full state accreditation

Title I high schools not meeting the Federal Graduation Indicator rate must use the Virginia Early Warning System (VEWS) to identify students at risk of dropping out or not graduating on time with a Standard or Advanced Studies Diploma and to develop and implement a plan for improvement.

### Division Accountability

School divisions also are expected to meet the 95-percent participation rate requirement and AMOs in reading and mathematics for all student subgroups.

### Priority, Focus & Reward Schools

Priority and focus schools are subject to state-approved and monitored school-improvement interventions. Priority and focus schools, however, are not subject to previous NCLB improvement sanctions, such as having to provide public school choice or private tutoring.

Five percent of Virginia's Title I schools (36) are identified as priority schools based on overall reading and mathematics achievement and graduation rates in the case of high schools. Schools meeting one or more of the following criteria are identified as priority schools:

- ◆ Title I schools and other schools receiving federal School Improvement Grant (SIG) funds and identified as a Tier I or Tier II school
- ◆ Title I high schools with a federal graduation indicator of 60 percent or less for two or more of the most recent consecutive years
- ◆ Title I schools that fail to test 95 percent of students overall and in all subgroups in reading and mathematics for three consecutive years

- ◆ Title I schools in which overall achievement in reading and/or mathematics does not meet annual benchmarks — as needed to identify a number of schools equivalent to five percent of the state’s Title I schools.

Priority schools must engage a state-approved turnaround partner to help implement a school-improvement model meeting state and federal requirements.

Ten percent of Virginia’s Title I schools (72) are identified as focus schools based on reading and mathematics achievement of students in the three proficiency gap groups.

Focus schools must employ a state-approved coach to help the division develop, implement and monitor intervention strategies to improve the performance of students at risk of not meeting achievement standards or dropping out of school.

Many of the commonwealth’s underperforming schools are already subject to these and similar interventions as a consequence of state accountability provisions and state-established requirements for schools receiving federal SIG funds.

Title I schools that are high achieving or demonstrate significant improvement are recognized as Reward Schools if they earn recognition through one of the following state or federal programs:

- ◆ Virginia Index of Performance
- ◆ National Blue Ribbon School
- ◆ Title I Distinguished School

## Participation in State Assessments

ESEA requires that 95 percent of students overall and in each subgroup participate in state reading and mathematics testing at the school, division and state levels.

The 95-percent participation requirement also applies to the three proficiency gap groups established under Virginia’s approved flexibility plan.

If less than 95 percent of students in a subgroup or proficiency gap group are tested in a subject, then the subgroup or proficiency gap group is not considered to have achieved the AMO — regardless of the students’ pass rate in the subject.

## Subgroup Size & Accountability

A subgroup or proficiency gap group in a school or a division must include at least 50 students for the corresponding annual measurable objective to factor in accountability decisions, including the identification of focus schools. Beginning with tests taken during 2012-2013, the achievement of subgroups and proficiency gap groups of 30 or more students will count.

## Students with Disabilities

Virginia’s special education regulations require students with disabilities to participate in all state assessments. Students with disabilities may take SOL tests (with or without special accommodations), or may be assessed through alternative grade-level tests. Students with significant cognitive disabilities are assessed through an alternate test. ESEA, however, places a one-percent cap on the percentage of test-takers in the state who may be counted as proficient based on the results of alternate assessments and a two-percent cap on the number of

test-takers who may be counted as proficient based on the results of modified achievement standards tests.

## LEP Students

ESEA allows a one-time exemption from testing in reading in grades 3-8 for LEP students who have attended school in the United States for fewer than 12 months. All LEP students must participate in mathematics assessments regardless of when they arrived in the country.

If an LEP student in his or her first year of enrollment is tested, the student is counted as participating in the state assessment program. However, failing mathematics scores of tested LEP students in the first year of enrollment do not count against a school or division.

LEP students at the lowest levels of English proficiency may take an alternative grade-level assessment for reading and a plain-English version of the mathematics SOL test for up to three years.

## Retakes of end-of-course tests

The achievement of students on all retakes of end-of-course assessments in reading and mathematics is included in determining whether AMOs are met. If a student fails a test required for graduation and successfully retakes during the same school year, the first test does not count for accountability purposes.

## Public School Choice & Supplemental Educational Services

Under Virginia’s June 29, 2012, flexibility waiver, school divisions are no longer required to offer public school choice to students in schools identified for improvement. Divisions with students who transferred previously under ESEA/NCLB’s now-waived public school-choice provision must allow these students to remain in their choice schools until completion of the highest grade. Divisions may — but are no longer required — to provide transportation for these students. Divisions with Priority or Focus schools may offer public school choice as an intervention strategy and may use Title I, Part A funds to provide transportation.

Divisions also are no longer required to offer supplemental educational services, or tutoring, to students in schools identified for improvement. Divisions may elect to offer tutoring as an intervention strategy for Priority and Focus schools, and may use Title I, Part A funds to pay for the services.

# ACCOUNTABILITY TERMINOLOGY

**Academic review** – A process for helping schools and school divisions identify and analyze instructional and organizational factors affecting student achievement. More about academic reviews . . .

**Academic review team** – A team that conducts an academic review

**Accreditation Denied** – Accreditation rating given to a school when students achieve adjusted pass rates below those required to earn the fully accredited rating for the current year as well as the preceding three consecutive years

**Accredited with Warning** – Accreditation rating given to a school when students achieve adjusted pass rates below those required to meet the fully accredited rating. The rating includes the subject area(s) in which the school is deficient (for example, accredited with warning in English). A school can receive the accredited with warning classification no more than three consecutive years.

**Achievement gap** – Differences in academic performance among student groups

**Adjusted pass rate** – In calculating accreditation ratings, allowances are made for certain transfer students, students who speak little or no English and students who pass retakes of tests after receiving remedial instruction. These allowances result in adjusted pass rates which are used to determine accreditation ratings.

**AYP** – **Adequate Yearly Progress** represented the minimum level of improvement schools and school divisions were required to achieve under the federal No Child Left Behind Act prior to the issuance of Virginia’s flexibility waiver.

**Alignment** – The correlation between Virginia’s SOL, what is taught in the classroom and what appears on the SOL tests. Curriculum alignment ensures that students are taught the material subject to testing.

**Alternate and alternative assessments** – Students with disabilities may be tested through the Virginia Alternate Assessment Program (VAAP) or the Virginia Grade-Level Alternative (VGLA) in grades 3-8 depending on the nature of the disability. Limited-English Proficient (LEP) students at the lowest levels of English proficiency may also be tested using the VGLA. The Virginia Substitute Evaluation Program (VSEP) provides students with disabilities with an alternative means of meeting the commonwealth’s testing-related graduation requirements. The VGLA will be replaced by a new online test beginning with mathematics in 2011-2012 and reading in 2012-2013. More about alternate and alternative assessments...

**AMO or AMOs** – **Annual Measurable Objectives** are the minimum required percentages of students determined to be proficient in each content area

**Assessment** – A test or other method for measuring achievement

**Board-recognized diplomas** – The Board of Education establishes minimum requirements for the Standard Diploma, Advanced Studies Diploma, Modified Standard Diploma and the Special Diploma. International Baccalaureate Diplomas are regarded as Advanced Studies Diplomas.

**Carry over students** – A student who remains in high school after completing four or more years.

**Conditionally Accredited** – Accreditation rating given to a new school for one year in order to allow for tests to be given. This rating may also be given to a school that is being reconstituted.

**Corrective action plan** – A plan outlining methods to improve teaching, administration or curriculum that a school or school

division classified as “in improvement” undertakes to improve student achievement

**Disaggregated data** – Data sorted by groups of students. Groups include students who are economically disadvantaged, from racial and ethnic groups, have special education needs, or have limited English proficiency.

**ESEA** – Elementary and Secondary Education Act is the primary federal law affecting K-12 education. The most recent reauthorization of the law is also known as the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. More about ESEA...

**Expedited retake** – An end-of-course SOL test taken during the same academic year, and before the next scheduled test administration, by a student who, on his first attempt, scored within 25 points of passing or has exceptional or mitigating circumstances

**Flexibility Waiver** – Exemptions from certain provisions of the federal No Child Left Behind ACT granted to Virginia by the US Department of Education on June 29, 2012.

**Focus schools** – Low-performing Title I schools required to employ a state-approved coach to assist in the development and implementation of improvement strategies.

**Fully Accredited** – The accreditation rating earned by a school when students achieve an adjusted pass rate of 75 percent in third-grade and fifth-grade English, 70 percent in mathematics and 50 percent in third-grade science and history/social science. Otherwise, the student results must meet the adjusted pass rate of 70 percent in each of the four core academic areas – English, mathematics, science and history/social science.

**Graduation and Completion Index** (see Graduation rate)

**Graduation rate** – Virginia calculates three graduation “rates” for accountability purposes:

- The Virginia On-Time Graduation Rate is the percentage of students who graduate with a Board of Education-approved diploma within four years of entering high school.
- The Federal Graduation Indicator is the percentage of students who graduate with a Standard or Advanced Studies Diploma. It is used in calculating AYP ratings of high schools, school divisions and the commonwealth.
- The Graduation and Completion Index is used to determine the accreditation ratings of high schools.

**Inclusion** – The practice of placing students with disabilities in regular classrooms

**In improvement** – If a Title I school or a school division does not make AYP in the same subject area for two consecutive years, the school or division is considered to be “in improvement” and is required under ESEA to take certain actions to raise achievement.

**Instruction** – The methods used to teach students, including lecture, discussion, hands-on activity, exercise, experiment, role-playing, small group work and writing.

**LEA** – **Local Education Agency** is the term used in federal education law to describe a local school division.

**Lead turnaround partner** – A state-approved vendor with expertise and experience in the development and implementation of successful school reform and improvement strategies.

**LEP** – **Limited-English Proficient** refers to students for whom English is a second language and who are not reading or writing English at their grade level.



**NCLB** – See “ESEA”

**Parental involvement** –The participation of parents in regular, two way, meaningful communication involving student learning and school activities. Parental involvement is a component of ESEA.

**Priority schools** – Low-performing schools required to employ a state-approved lead turnaround partner to assist in the development and implementation of reforms and improvement strategies.

**Proficiency Gap Groups** – Student subgroups used to identify Focus schools under Virginia’s 2012 flexibility waiver.

- Proficiency Gap Group 1 – Students with disabilities, English language learners and economically disadvantaged students, regardless of race and ethnicity (unduplicated)
- Proficiency Gap Group 2 – African-American students, not of Hispanic origin, including those also counted in Proficiency Gap Group 1
- Proficiency Gap Group 3 – Hispanic students, of one or more races, including those also counted in Proficiency Gap Group 1

**Provisionally Accredited-Graduation Rate** – A high school or combined school with a graduating class receives a “provisionally accredited-graduation rate” rating if students achieve adjusted pass rates of 70 percent or more in all four content areas and a Graduation and Completion Index of 81-84 points.

**Public school choice** – See “Transfer Option”

**Reconstitution** – A process used to initiate a range of accountability actions to improve pupil performance, curriculum and instruction to address deficiencies that caused a school to be rated accreditation denied which may include, but is not limited to, restructuring a school’s governance, instructional program, staff or student population.

**Restructuring/Alternative governance** – For Title I schools that move into year four of school improvement, planning begins for the possibility – the following year – of reopening the school as a charter school, replacing staff relevant to the school’s failure to make progress or turning the management of the school over to a private educational management company with a demonstrated record of effectiveness.

**Reward schools** – High-performing Title I schools recognized through the Virginia Index of Performance, National Blue Ribbon School or Title I Distinguished School awards programs.

**Safe harbor** – A provision of NCLB recognizing acceptable incremental progress toward AYP.

**SEA** – **State Education Agency** refers to the Virginia Board of Education, which is responsible for the general supervision of a state’s public elementary and secondary schools.

**School improvement plan** – Strategies and steps that a school will utilize to raise student achievement. A plan may involve new programs, more assistance for students, new curricula and/or teacher training.

**Scientifically based research** – Research that involves the application of rigorous, systemic and objective procedures to obtain reliable and valid knowledge regarding the effectiveness of educational activities and programs

**Substitute tests** – Virginia allows high school students to use nationally recognized assessments such as Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB) and SAT II subject tests as substitutes for the related SOL tests. All Board of Education-approved substitute tests measure content that incorporates or exceeds the related SOL content.

- For AYP purposes, AP and IB tests are counted in the same

way as all other state assessments.

- For accreditation, all board-approved substitute assessments are included.

**Supplemental educational services** – Prior to 2012-2013, a provision of NCLB allowed students in some low-performing Title I schools to request and receive free tutoring or supplemental educational services.

**SOL – Standards of Learning** for Virginia Public Schools describe the commonwealth’s expectations for student learning and achievement in grades K-12 in English, mathematics, science, history/social science, technology, the fine arts, foreign language, health and physical education and driver education.

**Title I** – Federal program designed to help low-income children who are behind academically or at risk of falling behind. Title I funding is based on the number of low-income children in a school, generally those eligible for free lunch or reduced-fee lunch programs.

**Transfer option** – A provision of NCLB also referred to as “public school choice.” Prior to 2012-2013, students in chronically low-performing Title I schools were entitled to transfers to higher-performing schools within the division.

**USED** – Abbreviation used by VDOE for the United States Department of Education.

**VAAP – The Virginia Alternate Assessment Program** is designed to evaluate the performance of students with significant cognitive disabilities. The VAAP is available to students in grades 3-8 and students in grade 11 who are working on academic standards that have been reduced in complexity and depth. Students participating in the VAAP must compile a collection of work samples to demonstrate performance on the SOL content for which they have received instruction.

**VEWS – Virginia Early Warning System** used by schools to identify students at risk of not graduating on time or dropping out.

**VGLA – The Virginia Grade Level Alternative** is available for students with disabilities and certain LEP students in grades 3-8. It is available for students with disabilities in the content areas of Science, History/Social Science, and Writing. It is available for eligible LEP students in the content area of Reading only.

**VMAST – The Virginia Modified Achievement Standards Test** is available for students with disabilities who are being instructed in grade-level content but are not likely to achieve proficiency in the same time frame as their non-disabled peers. In the VMAST assessments, research-based supports and simplifications identified by Virginia educators have been applied to existing online reading and mathematics items to make them more accessible for students with disabilities.

**VSEP – The Virginia Substitute Evaluation Program** provides students with disabilities who are unable to participate in the regular SOL assessments with an alternative means of meeting the commonwealth’s testing-related graduation requirements. Students participating in the VSEP are expected to provide evidence of achievement through a compilation of coursework.



# QUESTIONS Concerning Schools Receiving “Accreditation Denied” Status

## **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 2012-2013 is based on the results of tests given during the 2011-2012 school year.

Schools receive the rating of accreditation denied when students fail to achieve adjusted pass rates to meet the fully accredited rating for the current year as well as the preceding three 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 is denied accreditation, does that mean the state is going to take over my child’s school?**

Because the state constitution gives local school boards the responsibility of the day-to-day operations of schools within a division, neither the Virginia Department of Education nor the Board of Education can “take over” a public school.

## **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 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 Board of Education
- 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 Board of Education.

A school division with any schools denied accreditation must submit a report to the Board of Education by October 1 describing each school’s progress toward meeting the requirements for full accreditation. The Board of Education 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 Board of Education by December 1. In addition, the Board of Education 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 Board of Education 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 of courses and rigor of courses taken in high school, grade-point average and class ranking when making acceptance decisions.