

Guidelines for Local Alternative Assessments

September 2026



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Purpose of the Guidelines

In 2014, based on [Chapter 585 \(2014 Acts of Assembly\)](#) and the elimination of some of the *Standards of Learning* tests in lieu of local alternative assessments, the Board of Education adopted *Guidelines on Local Alternative Assessments*, and has provided updates in 2014, 2016, 2019, 2021, and 2023, necessitated by legislation or regulations. The intent of these guidelines is to:

- Clarify expectations for school divisions in administering local alternative assessments;
- Inform the implementation and sharing of high-quality assessments;
- Help assess the need for ongoing professional development; and
- Provide multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate competencies as directed by recent legislation ([Chapter 103 \(2026 Acts of Assembly\)](#)).

The use of mandatory local alternative assessments and the expanded use of permissive local alternative assessments should be viewed as an opportunity to provide new and innovative opportunities for students to demonstrate their knowledge in alignment with the *Standards of Learning*.

These guidelines seek to ensure flexibility for local school divisions while simultaneously ensuring that students are proficient in the knowledge and skills expected by the *Standards*.

Consistent with prior resources, these guidelines continue to recommend that school divisions use the integrated reading and writing (IRW) component with the grade 5 *Standards of Learning* (SOL) Reading test to fulfill the requirement that school divisions administer a local assessment of grade 5 writing.

These guidelines also continue to emphasize the use of the *Virginia Quality Criteria Review Tool for Performance Assessments* (located in the appendix) and require the use of common rubrics developed by the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) to provide consistent achievement expectations for Virginia students.

To support consistency of implementation, school divisions are required to adhere to the test security guidelines in this document and to locally develop a Test Security Agreement form for personnel who administer and score local alternative assessments. More information on test security is featured throughout the *Guidelines*.

As another measure of providing consistency, the VDOE staff will conduct site visits, “desk reviews,” or audits in a sample of school divisions implementing mandatory local alternative assessments and permissive local alternative assessments. Review teams will

include staff from the Assessment and Instruction offices to provide feedback on Balanced Assessment Plans, Verified Credit Plans, assessments, test security processes, training materials, and other supports provided to teachers for implementation of local alternative assessments. Feedback will include recommendations for improvements, as necessary, to strengthen local division practices for alternative assessments.

Background

Local alternative assessments began with Chapter 585 (2014 Acts of Assembly) which eliminated the following *Standards of Learning* (SOL) assessments: Grade 3 Science, Grade 3 History, Grade 5 Writing, United States History to 1865, and United States History: 1865 to the Present. The legislation required school divisions to administer alternative assessments, consistent with Virginia Board of Education guidelines, to students in grades three through eight in each subject area in which SOL assessments were eliminated by the legislation.

Per the *Code of Virginia* [§ 22.1-253.13:3\(F.1.a. \(2\)\)](#), school divisions each year are required to demonstrate compliance in administering an alternative assessment in accordance with Board guidelines:

Each school board shall annually certify that it has provided instruction in and administered and graded a mandatory local alternative assessment for each *Standards of Learning* subject area in which a *Standards of Learning* assessment is not available for administration during the school year in accordance with this subdivision and Board guidelines and best practices.

The 2017 *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia* permitted local school divisions to award a verified credit in writing to a student who “meets the criteria for the receipt of a verified credit in English (writing) by demonstrating mastery of the content of the associated course on an authentic performance assessment, that complies with guidelines adopted by the board.” In 2018, the Board adopted *Guidelines for Use of Local Performance Assessments to Verify Credits in Writing* to support school divisions who choose to award verified credits using local authentic performance assessments.

Based on the 2020 and 2021 Virginia General Assembly’s Appropriations Act (Chapter 1289, 2020 Acts of Assembly), the Board revised its *Guidance Document Governing Certain Provisions of the Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia*, 8VAC20-131-110 *Standard and Verified Units of Credit: Locally awarded Verified Credit* to allow for the use of performance assessments to verify credits in History and Social Science, which required the “successful completion of assessments that include

state-developed performance assessments scored locally in accordance with Board guidelines using state-developed rubrics.” This guidance supported local school divisions that exercised the option of using state-developed performance assessments, in conjunction with other local assessments, to determine if a student has earned a locally awarded verified credit in history and social science.

In 2023, the Board revised its *Guidelines for Local Alternative Assessments for 2023-2024 and Beyond* as it adopted the recommendation that school divisions use the integrated reading and writing (IRW) assessment items administered as part of the Grade 5 Reading SOL test to meet the assessment requirements for Grade 5 Writing.

Most recently, legislation from the 2026 session ([Chapter 103 \(2026 Acts of Assembly\)](#)) made significant revisions to local alternative assessments by defining and categorizing them as mandatory or permissive, expanding the use of permissive local alternative assessments, and outlining specific requirements for their content, scoring, and administration. This legislation also requires that the Board of Education develop and make available best practices for grading and scoring mandatory and permissive local alternative assessments, so school boards can adopt policies for implementation.

While the content areas for mandatory local alternative assessments have not changed, four subject areas were added to permissive local alternative assessments, as indicated in the table below:

Table of Mandatory and Permissive Local Alternative Assessments

Mandatory Local Alternative Assessments	Permissive Local Alternative Assessments
• Grade 3 Science • Grade 3 History • United States History to 1865 • United States History: 1865 to the Present. • Grade 5 Writing^ ^This requirement met through administration of the Integrated Reading and Writing (IRW) component of the Grade 5 Reading SOL test.	• End-of-Course (EOC) World Geography • EOC World History I • EOC World History II • EOC Virginia & U.S. History • EOC Writing • Virginia Studies* • Civics & Economics* • EOC Earth Science* • EOC Chemistry*

*Added based on [Chapter 103 \(2026 Acts of Assembly\)](#)

In accordance with [Chapter 103 \(2026 Acts of Assembly\)](#), these *Guidelines for Local Alternative Assessments* replace prior guidance from the Board and revise content to align

to the latest *Standards of Learning* in Science (2018), English (2024), and History and Social Science (2023) for the administration and best practices for grading and scoring mandatory and permissive local alternative assessments, and the use of awarding verified credits. The guidelines acknowledge that the legislation provides school divisions with the opportunity to immediately implement permissive local alternative assessments in expanded subject areas. As such, the guidelines proposed for the 2026-2027 year provide school divisions flexibility where allowable but also recognize that this may be a new practice for many school divisions. The Board will review the guidelines after the 2026-2027 school year and may revise them based on the experiences of the first year of implementation.

Updates to the Guidelines for 2026-2027

Previously, guidance on local alternative assessments was divided into three documents: 1) Guidelines for Local Alternative Assessments: 2023-2024; 2) Guidelines for the Use of Local Performance Assessments to Verify Credit in Writing; and 3) Guidelines for Locally Awarded Verified Credits in History and Social Science. These updated Guidelines for Local Alternative Assessments integrate all three documents into a single document. Recent legislation ([Chapter 103 \(2026 Acts of Assembly\)](#)) necessitates other updates that are abbreviated below but described in more detail throughout these guidelines.

- Providing definitions for local alternative assessments, mandatory and permissive local alternative assessments, and performance assessment.
- Establishing criteria for test content and use of formative and summative assessment.
- Establishing test security guidelines for administration and scoring.
- Determining timelines for test administration for students in grades 7-12.
- Supporting school board decision-making to select *Standards of Learning* tests or permissive local alternative assessments.
- Reporting results for mandatory and permissive local alternative assessments on a 100-point scale.
- Reporting results for permissive local alternative assessments at the division and school level.
- Establishing new rubrics in Science and History and Social Science based on feedback and new *Standards of Learning*.
- Providing references to updated support materials in Writing, Science, and History and Social Science.
- Providing information on permissive local alternative assessments for new content areas and the procedures to award verified credits.

Certification That Content Has Been Taught and Assessments Administered

Per the *Code of Virginia § 22.1-253.13:3(F.1.a. (2))*, school divisions each year are required to demonstrate compliance in administering an alternative assessment in accordance with Board guidelines:

Each school board shall annually certify that it has provided instruction in and administered and graded a mandatory local alternative assessment for each *Standards of Learning* subject area in which a *Standards of Learning* assessment is not available for administration during the school year in accordance with this subdivision and Board guidelines and best practices.

Local school boards and division superintendents will continue to certify through the annual Standards of Quality compliance assurance that instruction has been provided and mandatory local alternative assessments measuring the SOL and adhering to the Board's guidelines administered in the following subject areas:

- Grade 3 History,
- Grade 3 Science,
- United States History to 1865, and
- United States History: 1865 to the Present.

While school divisions may choose to continue to administer a local alternative assessment in grade 5 writing, use of the integrated reading and writing (IRW) component of the Grade 5 SOL Reading Assessment to fulfill the requirement is recommended.

If a school division is found to be non-compliant with its certification that it met all applicable requirements for local alternative assessments, it will be notified and asked to develop a corrective action plan.

Definition of Local Alternative Assessments

Guidelines for implementation may differ based on the type of local alternative assessment, whether mandatory or permissive, which is why these definitions from *Code of Virginia § 22.1-253.13:3(F.1.a. (2))* are critical in establishing and communicating expectations for implementation.

Local alternative assessment:

- (i) an assessment that measures content and skills within a specific *Standards of Learning* subject area that is accepted by institutions of higher education as a

measure of college readiness, including Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, or Cambridge assessments, or

(ii) any mandatory local alternative assessment developed, administered, and scored by a local school board, that is approved by the Board as aligned with the rigor of *Standards of Learning* content, assessments, and the Board's definition of proficiency for any *Standards of Learning* subject area.

"Local alternative assessment" includes any mandatory local alternative assessment and any permissive local alternative assessment.

Mandatory local alternative assessment: any local alternative assessment that each local school board is required to develop, administer, and score, consistent with Board guidelines, for any *Standards of Learning* subject area in which a *Standards of Learning* assessment is not currently available or administered on a statewide basis. "Mandatory local alternative assessment" includes any performance assessment implemented by a local school board as a part of its local alternative assessment plan in accordance with Department guidelines.

Permissive local alternative assessment: any local alternative assessment that a local school board may, consistent with Board guidelines and in accordance with the provisions of this section, develop, administer, and score in lieu of any *Standards of Learning* assessment that is otherwise administered on a statewide basis but the administration of which is not necessary to meet federal accountability requirements.

Performance assessment: an assessment that is approved by the Board as aligned with both the rigor of the content of the *Standards of Learning* and the Board's definition of proficiency and is scored using a set rubric or set of criteria and that is designed to measure subject-matter proficiency by requiring students to demonstrate learning acquisition and apply content, skills, and processes in the applicable subject area through performing an assessment or creating a project.

Expectations for Implementation for the 2026-2027 School Year and Beyond

The *Code of Virginia* § [22.1-253.13:3 \(F.1. a.\(2\)\)](#) establishes the criteria for the design, test administration, and scoring of both mandatory and permissive local alternative assessments. These *Guidelines* satisfy the requirements established by code and are addressed in different sections of this document in relation to development, administration, scoring, and reporting.

§ [22.1-253.13:3 \(F.1. a.\(2\)\)](#)

Each school board shall ensure that each mandatory and permissive local alternative assessment administered

- (i) permits the use of formative learning experiences or assessments that are designed to build student understanding toward the applicable summative performance assessment administered, provided that any materials used during any such summative performative assessment are limited to sources and student-created artifacts from formative learning experiences that are*
 - (a) the student's own work,*
 - (b) not drafts or outlines of the final product, and*
 - (c) not teacher-provided writing scaffolds that directly address the summative assessment*
- (ii) meets any applicable authenticity and integrity requirements, including by ensuring that each summative performance assessment used for purposes relating to scoring, accountability, or verified credits is completed in a supervised, secure setting, including through the use of digital security measures such as lockdown browser, to verify ownership and prevent the use of unapproved materials or unauthorized assistance.*

Each school board shall ensure that any teacher who participates in grading mandatory or permissive local alternative assessments administered for any course to earn verified credits shall not grade any assessment completed by a student that such teacher taught in any class or subject area during that school year.

Such guidelines shall

- (a) incorporate options for age-appropriate, authentic performance assessments and portfolios with rubrics and other methodologies designed to ensure that students are making adequate academic progress in the subject area and that the Standards of Learning content is being taught;*
- (b) permit and encourage integrated assessments that include multiple subject areas;*
- (c) establish criteria for mandatory local alternative assessments, including the core content, concepts, and skills that shall be prioritized on each such assessment and specific parameters for any performance assessment administered by a school board in accordance with this subdivision, relating to the structure and format of and content and items that shall be included in such assessments;*

- (d) *include a comprehensive grading rubric for each mandatory local alternative assessment that*
 - (a) *clearly defines student performance objectives and achievement targets,*
 - (b) *provides scoring criteria that emphasize student performance and subject-matter proficiency, and*
 - (c) *for any performance assessment, includes criteria and student performance objectives designed to emphasize a student's performance and subject-matter proficiency as demonstrated through completion of the tested assessments in ways that are authentic to the academic discipline; and*
- (e) *emphasize collaboration between teachers to administer and substantiate the assessments and the professional development of teachers to enable them to make the best use of mandatory local alternative assessments.*

School divisions are required to implement performance assessments as part of their local alternative assessment plans. Local alternative assessment plans include the Balanced Assessment Plan provided in the *Guidelines*, along with other resources such as the *Virginia Quality Criteria Review Tool for Performance Assessments* and Verified Credit Plans (if electing to use permissive local alternative assessments for verified credits), that are *needed* for the planning, development, implementation, administration, scoring and reporting of local alternative assessments. Continued use of the *Virginia Quality Criteria Review Tool for Performance Assessments* (See appendix) during the development of new performance assessments and/or the revision of existing assessments is expected to ensure that all students have access to quality assessments aligned to the Standards of Learning for the respective content area.

If a school division would like the Department to review and provide feedback on the alignment of local alternative assessments to the rigor of the Standards of Learning, they should contact the Department to seek review and feedback of their Balanced Assessment Plan and their use of the *Quality Criteria Review Tool* and accompanying evidence. It is suggested that, at a minimum, divisions seek feedback on their Balanced Assessment Plan from a content expert separate from the developer of the assessment, which could include a partner division for peer-to-peer feedback. Seeking feedback on the rigor, alignment, standards coverage, and scoring practices of a given local alternative assessment and the division's use of the *Virginia Quality Criteria Review Tool* can build confidence that the local alternative assessment is a valid, reliable tool and that student success on local alternative assessments is a comparable alternative to the corresponding SOL assessment, where applicable. School divisions will continue to refine local alternative assessment plans that

describe how performance assessments that are designed to inform instruction are being implemented.

School divisions are required to develop Balanced Assessment Plans for each course in which mandatory local alternative assessments are administered and to continue to utilize resources provided by VDOE that promote consistency across the Commonwealth for Grade 3 History, Grade 3 Science, Grade 5 Writing (only for those divisions that do not use the integrated reading and writing, IRW, component of the Grade 5 SOL Reading Test to meet the assessment requirements for Grade 5 Writing), United States History to 1865, and United States History: 1865 to the Present. Beginning in 2026-2027, school divisions implementing permissive local alternative assessments in Virginia Studies or Civics & Economics will develop Balanced Assessment Plans. Balanced Assessment Plans detail the various types of local alternative assessments used to measure the skills and content included in the SOL for each course. These plans are to indicate a variety of assessment types, including performance assessments. Beginning with the 2026-2027 school year, a required template for Balanced Assessment Plans is provided in the appendix of these guidelines. More information on Balanced Assessment Plans is available in the appendix.

The development and selection of the local assessments within Balanced Assessment Plans are left to the discretion of the school division; however, assessments administered should be designed to provide feedback to students, parents, families, and caregivers, and teachers regarding the extent to which the student has demonstrated mastery in the content and skills included in the SOL covered and should demonstrate continued progress in implementing performance assessments as part of a balanced local assessment system.

School divisions administering permissive local alternative assessments for verified credits will complete verified credit plans rather than Balanced Assessment Plans.

Use of Integrated Assessments

The *Code of Virginia* (§ [22.1-253.13:3](#)) encourages integrated assessments that include multiple subject areas. For example, a local assessment might address content from both Grade 3 History and Grade 3 Science. If such assessments are used, the results should include information about the extent to which the student has demonstrated proficiency in each specific set of SOL covered.

Rubrics

School divisions are to use the common rubrics provided by VDOE when scoring student responses to performance assessments and performance assessments in classrooms where an SOL assessment has been replaced by local alternative assessments. Updated

rubrics for each content area are available on the [VDOE website](#). Additionally, school divisions are expected to continue to provide opportunities for cross-scoring student responses to performance assessments within schools and across schools within the school division. Professional learning opportunities related to scoring and the application of the common rubrics will be provided by VDOE to maximize the opportunity for classroom teachers to participate in these events.

When developing a mandatory or permissive local alternative assessment, districts should document how the quality ratings in the *Virginia Quality Criteria Review Tool* across evaluators will be aggregated, including the division's method and rationale for producing the 0–100 point score and any determination that the student passed the assessment and demonstrated grade-level mastery of the relevant Standards of Learning.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

School divisions should be aware of the following requirement found in Section 300.160(c)(1) of the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*:

A State (or, in the case of a district-wide assessment, an LEA) must develop and implement alternate assessments and guidelines for the participation of children with disabilities in alternate assessments for those children who cannot participate in regular assessments, even with accommodations, as indicated in their respective IEPs, as provided in paragraph (a) of this section.

If school divisions choose to meet the local alternative assessment requirements using division-wide assessments, an alternate assessment for students with disabilities who cannot participate in regular division assessments even with accommodations must be provided.

Testing accommodations for a student should be provided based upon accommodations for classroom summative assessments, as documented in the student's current Individualized Education Program (IEP), Section 504 Plan, or English Learner Participation Plan. Accommodations that provide inappropriate assistance or prevent a student from independently demonstrating proficiency are not permitted.

Test Selection and Administration

Per *Code of Virginia* § [22.1-253.13:3 \(F. a\)](#), if a school board elects to administer a permissive local alternative assessment in a specific *Standards of Learning* subject area to students in a specific grade level, then it shall be required to administer such assessment to each student receiving instruction in that subject area at that grade level provided throughout the division. Local alternative assessments as defined in the *Code of Virginia* §

[22.1-253.13:3 \(L\)](#) include Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, Cambridge, or College Level Examination Program examinations. School divisions may elect to administer these assessments in coordination with permissive local alternative assessments.

In addition, any school board may submit to the Board a request for an exemption from such requirement, to be granted by the Board on a case-by-case basis and for good cause shown, to administer to a particular student an available *Standards of Learning* assessment in a specific subject area and at a specific grade level for which the school board has elected to administer to each other student a permissive local alternative assessment.

The Board shall not grant any exemption to a school board under this subdivision that would result in the school board's administration of an end-of-course *Standards of Learning* assessment to more than five percent of the students receiving instruction in a specific subject area at a specific grade level for the applicable assessment administration period.

On an annual basis, school divisions will be asked to notify VDOE if they choose to administer permissive local alternative assessments.

Testing Frequency

School divisions need to ensure in their Balanced Assessment Plans that each *Standards of Learning* subject area does not exceed one assessment per academic quarter, or a total of four assessments per year, as prescribed by the *Code of Virginia* § [22.1-253.13.3.F.1.a.5](#):

5. Except in the case of students who are children with disabilities, as that term is defined in § [22.1-213](#), who participate in an alternative method of Standards of Learning assessment administration or who participate in alternate assessments through the Virginia Alternative Assessment program pursuant to subdivision C 5, for the purpose of maximizing instructional time, the frequency of assessment administration for any assessment administered pursuant to the provisions of this section, including any Standards of Learning assessment, mandatory local alternative assessment administered in accordance with subdivision 1 a (2), or permissive local alternative assessment administered in accordance with subdivision 3 b, or any combination thereof, for each Standards of Learning subject area in a single school year shall not exceed one such assessment per academic quarter, or a total of four assessments per year. The provisions of this subdivision shall not apply to (i) any Advanced Placement examination, College Level Examination Program examination, or International Baccalaureate examination or

any other national norm-referenced achievement test; (ii) any assessment retaken pursuant to subdivision 3 c; or (iii) any performance assessment.

Testing Window

Mandatory and permissive local alternative assessments may be administered using different testing windows.

1. Mandatory local alternative assessments may be administered throughout the school year. In addition, the permissive local alternative assessment in Virginia Studies may also be administered throughout the school year.
2. Permissive local alternative assessments in grades 7-12, however, must have the final part of any such end-of-course assessment administered no earlier than two weeks prior to the last day of the applicable course of instruction, grade level, or academic quarter or semester.

Flexibility in the timing of test administration is provided in these areas:

- Students who are children with disabilities, as that term is defined in § [22.1-213](#), who participate in an alternative method of *Standards of Learning* assessment administration, or who participate in an alternate assessment through the Virginia Alternate Assessment Program;
- Any such assessment administered to high school seniors during the academic quarter or semester during which they will graduate;
- Any assessment administered to students in grades seven and eight that is designed to be administered over a period of more than one day if, after making reasonable efforts to complete the administration of such assessment in two weeks, additional time to complete the administration of such assessment is necessary, provided that the total time for the administration of any such assessment shall not exceed three weeks;
- Students who are transferring to a public school within the applicable school division or other reason deemed appropriate by the school board, and who need to take any such assessment in order to earn a verified credit; and
- When an irregularity, as defined by the Board, occurs during the administration of any particular assessment and the Board, upon request of the applicable school board, approves the administration of the assessment on another date.

Test Security

[Chapter 103](#) (2026 Acts of Assembly) includes provisions to ensure test integrity and security are maintained through the development of the performance assessment and administration and scoring of local alternative assessments:

Each school board shall ensure that each mandatory and permissive local alternative assessment administered

- (i) permits the use of formative learning experiences or assessments that are designed to build student understanding toward the applicable summative performance assessment administered, provided that any materials used during any such summative performative assessment are limited to sources and student-created artifacts from formative learning experiences that are*
 - (a) the student's own work,*
 - (b) not drafts or outlines of the final product, and*
 - (c) not teacher-provided writing scaffolds that directly address the summative assessment*
- (ii) meets any applicable authenticity and integrity requirements, including by ensuring that each summative performance assessment used for purposes relating to scoring, accountability, or verified credits is completed in a supervised, secure setting, including through the use of digital security measures such as lockdown browser, to verify ownership and prevent the use of unapproved materials or unauthorized assistance.*

Each school board shall ensure that any teacher who participates in grading mandatory or permissive local alternative assessments administered for any course to earn verified credits shall not grade any assessment completed by a student that such teacher taught in any class or subject area during that school year.

The *Code of Virginia* (§ 22.1–19.1 Action for violations related to secure mandatory tests and § 22.1–292.1 Violations related to secure mandatory tests) describes test security procedures and potential consequences for violations to include the suspension or revocation of an administrative or teaching license and/or a civil penalty for each violation. In accordance with the *Code of Virginia*, the VDOE provides detailed test security guidelines through implementation manuals and a *School Division Personnel Test Security Agreement* for staff with access to a test in the Virginia Assessment Program. School divisions electing to administer permissive local alternative assessments are required to develop a local test security agreement for staff to sign to ensure provisions of the *Code* and these *Guidelines* are communicated with staff and followed.

A portion of the test security procedures are provided below, and the full agreement and legislation are provided in the appendix.

Virginia Assessment Program

School Division Personnel Test Security Agreement

The *School Division Personnel Test Security Agreement* that follows should be read and understood by all school division personnel. All individuals who may be exposed to secure test items and those involved in the administration of the Virginia Assessment Program (VAP) tests (including, but not limited to, Examiners, Proctors, Interpreters, and Scribes) **MUST** read, understand, and agree to adhere to the following:

1. Students must never be exposed to unreleased (secure)¹ test items (except while completing an official VAP test attempt) or exposed to answers to secure test items. **Using secure test items in any form (including reworded test items) at any time is a violation of test security.** If in doubt whether test items are secure, contact your Division Director of Testing for assistance.
2. All persons are prohibited from providing students with answers to secure test items, suggesting how to respond to secure test items, or influencing student responses to secure test items. Prohibited actions include, but are not limited to, the following: providing clues or hints, providing reminders of content or testing strategies, prompting students to correct or check/recheck specific responses, permitting access to curricular materials² (e.g., textbooks, notes, review materials, bulletin boards, posters, charts, maps, timelines, etc.), or using voice inflection, facial gestures, pointing, gesturing, tapping, or other actions to indicate a response or accuracy of a student's response.
3. Examiners should be in possession of secure test materials only on the day they are administering a test, or in accordance with the procedures for advanced access to a test, and only for the specific test being administered. For the paper EOC *Writing* test only, Examiners are not permitted to open sealed packages of prompts more than 30 minutes before the administration of the short-paper component.
4. Reading or reviewing any part of a secure test (e.g., test items, answer options, passages, pictures, diagrams, charts, maps, etc.) before, during, or after the test administration is a violation of test security unless an Examiner is reading the test items as part of an accommodation (e.g., read-aloud, interpretation/transliteration, etc.) or is reviewing the test items in preparation for providing that accommodation.
5. Any Login IDs and passwords issued for the administration of VAP tests are secure and must remain confidential.
6. Logging into or navigating throughout a secure online test by anyone except the student whose name appears on the Student Testing Ticket is a violation of test security³. Any

exceptions to this must first be authorized by the Virginia Department of Education through the Division Director of Testing.

7. Capturing ALL OR ANY PART of a secure test is a violation of test security. Prohibited actions include, but are not limited to, copying, photographing, recording, outlining, or summarizing test content or details regarding the secure test content. Any exceptions to this must first be authorized by the Virginia Department of Education through the Division Director of Testing.

8. All VAP tests must be administered strictly in accordance with the instructions provided in the VAP test manuals. This includes, but is not limited to, adhering to procedures for the handling, distribution and use of test materials and test manipulatives, adhering to specific requirements associated with test accommodations (e.g., read-aloud accommodation, dictation to scribe, etc.), and reading all test directions to students exactly as written. VAP test directions must not be paraphrased, altered, or expanded without prior authorization from the Virginia Department of Education through the Division Director of Testing unless the *Examiner's Manual* allows flexibility in providing specific directions.

9. Sample items are included at the beginning of each VAP test and are the only items on the test that may be used with students to review, as directed in the *Examiner's Manual*, test item format and procedures for indicating responses. Students should also be provided with opportunities prior to the day of their test administration to become familiar with VAP test item formats and how to indicate responses. Resources such as SOL Practice Items are available for these purposes on the Virginia Department of Education website.

10. All persons are prohibited from attempting to formally or informally score secure VAP tests or individual test items. Prohibited actions include, but are not limited to, creating an answer key, reviewing or scoring a student's test item response or responses, reviewing or scoring student scratch paper, or tracking student performance on test items⁴.

11. All persons are prohibited from altering, in any manner, student responses to secure test items. Prohibited actions include, but are not limited to, erasing or deleting student responses, changing student responses, or providing responses to items left unanswered or partially unanswered.

¹VAP test items remain secure before, during, and after all test administrations until such time that the Virginia Department of Education publishes the test item on its website as released. The end of a test administration does NOT indicate secure VAP test items are released.²For Virginia Alternate Assessment Program tests, it is unnecessary to cover or remove curricular materials from classroom walls.

³ Examiner's administering assessments for the Virginia Alternate Assessment Program are permitted to sign in, navigate, and respond to items based on the needs of the individual student being assessed and in accordance with the procedures in the *Examiner's Manual*.

⁴Examiner’s administering assessments for the Virginia Alternate Assessment Program are permitted to record student responses on the Examiner’s Copy of the test to track student advancement through the test and to enter item responses at a later date in TestNav in accordance with the procedures in the *Examiner’s Manual*.

Permissive Local Alternative Assessment for Verified Credit

As defined the *Code of Virginia* ([§ 22.1-253.13:3 L](#)), permissive local alternative assessments are any local alternative assessment that a local school board may, consistent with Board guidelines and in accordance with the provisions of this section, develop, administer, and score in lieu of any *Standards of Learning* assessment that is otherwise administered on a statewide basis but the administration of which is not necessary to meet federal accountability requirements.

Permissive local alternative assessments include those that can be used to award verified credit:

- End-of-Course (EOC) Writing
- EOC World Geography
- EOC World History and Geography to 1500 A.D.
- EOC World History and Geography: 1500 A.D. to the Present
- EOC Virginia and United States History
- EOC Earth Science
- EOC Chemistry

The *Virginia Standards of Accreditation* ([8VAC20-132-110](#)) define standard and verified credit needed for graduation requirements. A “verified unit of credit” or “verified credit” is a credit awarded for a course in which a student earns a standard unit of credit and meets assessment criteria, such as achieving a passing score on a corresponding SOL test, achieving a passing score on a Board-approved substitute test, meeting criteria for a locally awarded verified credit, or demonstrating mastery on performance assessment in writing.

In describing the use of permissive local alternative assessments for verified credits, the *Code of Virginia* ([§ 22.1-253.13:3 F. 2. a.](#)) states that “any student who receives a passing score on a permissive local alternative assessment administered pursuant to subdivision 3 b in lieu of any end-of-course *Standards of Learning* assessment corresponding to any graduation requirement shall be deemed to meet the applicable graduation requirement.”

Beginning in school year 2026-2027, permissive local alternative assessments for verified credits in Writing, History and Social Science, and Science will be reported by school divisions as verified credits through an end-of-year data collection that is distinguished from locally awarded verified credits.

Additional information on the guidelines for scoring, reporting, and awarding verified credits in each content area is within the Writing, History and Social Science, and Science sections.

General Best Practices for Scoring Mandatory Local Alternative Assessments

The following best practices are recommended when scoring mandatory local alternative assessments.

- Train and score in small groups to build cohesion.
- Use the Scoring Calibration Protocol to build understanding of the rubric and help readers become consistent in applying the rubric when scoring student responses.
 - The [Scoring Calibration Protocol](#) is provided by VDOE as an example.
 - Staying focused on the rubric criteria is key for building interrater reliability. A scoring calibration protocol provides a structured process for building this consistency.
- Recalibrate frequently to “re-anchor” to the scoring criteria in the rubric. Each new scoring session should begin with calibration, and recalibration activities should be a planned part during extended scoring sessions.
- Avoid reader bias. Readers must stay focused on the rubric. The rubric determines the scoring criteria.
 - Reader bias refers to the personal factors or preferences that may influence a reader’s perception of a student’s response but have no basis in the rubric. Examples of factors that affect some readers include:
 - Appearance of response
 - Length of response
 - Repetition of response (tiring)
 - Offensive or disturbing content or point of view
 - Writer’s personality, tone, maturity level
 - Reactions to style (use of first person, lack of formal thesis statement)

- Confirm consistency among scorers.
 - It is best practice to implement a methodology for confirming consistency among scorers during each scoring event.
 - School divisions should consider “double” scoring a certain percentage of assessment responses to the extent possible.
 - Each reader should be unaware of the other reader’s scores.
 - After each reader has scored the response, the scores should be compared and differences, if any, should be discussed to determine how the rubrics are being applied differently.
 - Responses with non-adjacent scores should be scored by a third “expert” reader to resolve the issue.
 - Scorers who exhibit inconsistency benefit from additional training that includes score sharing and discussion (see Scoring Calibration Protocol) with an “expert” reader.

General Best Practices for Scoring Permissive Local Alternative Assessments

Local school divisions should develop processes for administering, scoring, and reporting permissive local alternative assessments in each allowable content area. Please see the section “Reporting to Students, Parents, Families, and Caregivers” for more detailed information.

The following are general best practices in addition to those outlined for specific content areas.

- The [*Virginia Quality Criteria Review Tool for Performance Assessments*](#) should be used to develop or to inform revisions of existing performance assessments.
- Scoring:
 - Ensure that any teacher who taught the student during the school year is not permitted to score a student’s response(s) when the student needs verified credit for graduation.
 - Use common rubrics, as required, to promote consistency in achievement expectations.

- Implement a scoring calibration protocol to establish norms and consistency in application of the rubrics. The [Scoring Calibration Protocol](#) is provided by VDOE as an example.
- Incorporate recalibration activities during scoring events and extended scoring sessions. Each scoring session should begin with a scoring calibration activity.
- Recognize and avoid reader bias. Reader bias refers to the personal factors or preferences that may influence a reader’s perception of a student’s response but have no basis in the rubric. Readers must stay focused on the rubric. The rubric determines the scoring criteria. Examples of factors that affect some readers include:
 - Appearance of response
 - Length of response
 - Repetition of response (tiring)
 - Offensive or disturbing content or point of view
 - Writer’s personality, tone, maturity level
 - Reactions to style (use of first person, lack of formal thesis statement)
- Score each response by two independent readers who are unaware of the score(s) assigned by one another, to the extent possible, and then compare the scores to confirm consistency (same or adjacent scores).
 - If it is not feasible for each response to be scored by two readers, it is recommended that a percentage of responses be scored by two independent readers.
 - When two scorers are used, adopt a reconciliation process to address nonadjacent scores.
- Incorporate quality control activities to confirm consistency among scorers throughout a scoring window. If a scorer is inconsistent, provide additional training that includes score sharing and discussion (see Scoring Calibration Protocol) with an “expert” reader.
- Focus on using permissive local assessment results to inform instruction during the year.
- Focus on communicating student performance on permissive local alternative assessment to families and caregivers, including information about progress toward verified credit requirements.

Professional Development Considerations

The current capacity of educators to design and implement assessments that are intended to inform instruction varies across the Commonwealth. School divisions are encouraged to evaluate the capacity and experience of their educators in implementing and interpreting the results of such assessments and further encouraged to use this information when designing professional development to build educator capacity. Professional development that promotes the collaboration of educators within and across grades is strongly recommended. School divisions are encouraged to incorporate the resources and materials shared on the [Performance Assessments and Local Alternative Assessments web page](#) into local professional development.

As divisions plan the professional learning needs of educators, considerations should be given to the following:

- Development and implementation of [Balanced Assessment Plans](#) in areas where mandatory local alternative assessments or permissive local alternative assessments in courses not eligible for verified credit will be implemented in the division;
- Development and implementation of [Verified Credit Plans](#) in areas where permissive local alternative assessments in courses eligible for verified credit will be implemented in the division;
- Maintaining rigor in local alternative assessments that is comparable to the rigor of a state SOL assessment when locally designing alternative assessments;
- Integrity in administering and scoring locally developed alternative assessments;
- Use of the [Virginia Quality Criteria Review Tool for Performance Assessments](#) when developing local performance assessments or evaluating existing performance assessments to ensure alignment to standards in both rigor and content; and
- Use of content-specific details and parameters to drive training needs.

In addition to planning for professional development in implementing mandatory and permissive local alternative assessments, divisions will need to document and monitor teachers who score assessments for submission of professional development points for the renewal of a teaching license based on the *Code of Virginia* (§ 22.1-253.13:3. C. 8).

Permit any teacher providing instruction in a Standards of Learning subject area who scores any such Standards of Learning assessments to earn professional development points toward renewal of his license for his time spent scoring such assessments.

Reporting to Students, Parents, Families, and Caregivers

School divisions are required to provide students and their parents, families, and caregivers with information regarding the outcome of each local alternative assessment administered. The format for this reporting is to be determined by the local school division. However, per the Standards of Quality § 22.1 -253.13.3.D.9, both mandatory and permissive local alternative assessments must be reported on a 100-point scale following scoring guidance based on the content area. Based on the respective rubric, the total score earned on a performance assessment should be calculated as a fraction showing the total number of points earned over the total number of points possible and as the percent equivalent to this fraction. When reporting scores on local alternative assessments, it is best practice not only to report the score but also to provide a copy of the rubric, a description of the performance assessment, the *Standards of Learning* assessed, and the student's response. School divisions are expected to report scores or grades on local alternative assessments but are not expected to report achievement levels associated with the scores achieved on SOL tests (e.g., Pass/Advanced, Pass/Proficient, Fail/Does Not Meet, etc.).

Reporting on Permissive Local Alternative Assessments

School divisions administering permissive local alternative assessments must publicly report the results of permissive local performance assessments as a passage rate at the division and school level alongside data on statewide SOL assessments. In addition, school divisions administering permissive local alternative assessments for verified credits must also report the percent of students earning a verified credit from each of the permissive local alternative assessments (EOC Writing, EOC World Geography, EOC World History and Geography to 1500 A.D., EOC World History and Geography: 1500 A.D. to the Present, EOC Virginia and United States History, EOC Earth Science, and EOC Chemistry).

[Chapter 103](#) (2026 Acts of Assembly), now § 22.1-253.13:3, established the use of permissive local alternative assessments for verified credits in lieu of any statewide end-of-course assessment that is not necessary to meet federal requirements. Beginning in school year 2026-2027, to improve data collection and reporting, verified credits earned through permissive local alternative assessments will be collected on the end-of-year data collection that is distinguished from locally awarded verified credits. The Department will also collect data from divisions to determine the volume of permissive local alternative assessments administered statewide, by subject area and assessment.

Content Specific Information and Resources

Below are the content areas for mandatory and permissive local alternative assessments. Each content area includes a description and the criteria and best practices for test design, administration and scoring.

English: Writing

Mandatory Local Alternative Assessments

Legislation in 2014 eliminated the Grade 5 Writing *Standards of Learning* assessment. This legislation required the use of local alternative assessments, consistent with Virginia Board of Education guidelines, in place of these assessments.

In 2023, the Board revised its *Guidelines for Local Alternative Assessments for 2023-2024 and Beyond* as it adopted the recommendation that school divisions use the integrated reading and writing (IRW) assessment items administered as part of the Grade 5 Reading SOL test to meet the assessment requirements for Grade 5 Writing.

School divisions are encouraged to continue using the Integrated Reading and Writing (IRW) SOL test to fulfill the local alternative assessment requirement of the Grade 5 Writing *Standards of Learning* content.

Rubrics for Scoring

The Upper Elementary Scoring Rubrics are used to score responses to the Integrated Reading and Writing (IRW) component of the Grade 5 Reading SOL test. Educators are encouraged to use the Understand Scoring application to practice scoring and view exemplar responses and corresponding annotations. Understand Scoring may be used with students to illustrate score points and build understanding of the rubrics and success criteria. The Grade 5 Writing Instruction Performance Outcomes resource provides rubrics for use with students during instruction. These rubrics are structured differently than the focused holistic Upper Elementary Scoring Rubrics used for scoring.

More information and Resources

Additional information and resources for mandatory local alternative assessments in Grade 5 Writing, including scoring rubrics, sample writing assessments, and professional development, can be found on the [VDOE website](#).

Permissive Local Alternative Assessments

Background: The 2017 *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia* permitted local school divisions to award a verified credit in writing to a student who “meets the criteria for the receipt of a verified credit in English (writing) by

demonstrating mastery of the content of the associated course on an authentic performance assessment, that complies with guidelines adopted by the board.” In 2018, the Board adopted *Guidelines for Use of Local Performance Assessments to Verify Credits in Writing* to support school divisions who choose to award verified credits using local authentic performance assessments.

Starting in the 2026-2027 school year, as described in the [Test Selection and Administration](#) section, per *Code of Virginia* § [22.1-253.13:3 \(F. a\)](#), if a school board elects to administer a permissive local alternative assessment in a specific *Standards of Learning* subject area to students in a specific grade level, then it must administer the permissive local alternative assessment to each student receiving instruction in that subject area at that grade level provided throughout the division.

Permissive local alternative assessments are allowed for the following writing course.

- EOC Writing

Writing Specific Guidelines

The collection of student evidence should occur in Grade 9 English, Grade 10 English, and Grade 11 English courses since the English *Standards of Learning* for these three grade levels are assessed in the EOC Writing SOL test. Divisions should establish processes to ensure the following guidelines are met when using permissive local alternative assessments for EOC Writing which will be used to determine a student’s achievement of a verified credit for graduation.

- Teachers used as scorers shall not score their own students’ writing samples.
- The division is required to follow and document inter-rater reliability procedures:
 - at least 15% of responses are scored independently by two scorers. Teachers shall not score their own students' responses;
 - implement a scoring calibration protocol before scoring and procedures for re-calibration during a scoring window or extended session; and
 - adopt a reconciliation process when scorers disagree.
- School divisions should consider the following in administering and scoring local performance assessments used to verify credits in writing:
 - Verified Credit Plan: End-of-Course Writing
 - Common Rubric for High School Writing Samples (rubrics to be used during instruction)
 - High School Writing Scoring Rubrics (rubrics to be used for scoring)
 - Sample Writing Assessments that could be used for the Collection of Evidence to Verify Credits in Writing

- Procedures for Determining if Verified Credit is Awarded
- Performance Level Descriptors
- Evaluating the Collection of Evidence to Verify Credit for graduation in writing
 - Locally appointed panel determines proficiency level demonstrated using performance level descriptors (PLD) and exemplar Collections of Evidence and Annotations
 - The scores on individual writing samples and the PLD determination are independent, as there is no numerical score on the rubric that correlates with a Pass/Proficient or Pass/Advanced performance level from the PLDs.
- Desk reviews or audits may be conducted for quality assurance.
- Student performance is reported locally as with non-local alternative assessment data.
- Permissive Local Alternative Assessments used to verify credits in writing use the following tools.
 - [Understand Scoring](#) - Online application to assist teachers in preparing students for SOL Writing tests, permissive local alternative assessments in writing, and the IRW component of the Reading SOL tests.
 - Verification Sets in the Local HS section of Understand Scoring are used to qualify educators to score permissive local alternative assessments that will be used to verify credit in writing.
 - Understand Scoring provides educators with information about scoring writing assessments using Virginia's scoring rubrics. It includes Practice Sets, the rubrics and anchor papers that illustrate each score point on the composing/written expression and usage/mechanics domains, and Verification Sets.
 - [Understand Scoring Presentation](#) - This resource presentation may be used by school divisions to assist with local training for scoring using Virginia's writing rubrics.

[Virginia Board of Education Guidelines for the Use of Local Performance Assessments to Verify Credits in Writing: Implementation Support](#)

In September 2018, the Virginia Board of Education approved *Guidelines for the Use of Local Performance Assessments to Verify Credits in Writing*. To support implementation, additional guidance for administering and scoring local performance assessments used to verify credits in writing has been developed to assist school divisions that have chosen this option. This information is intended to be used in conjunction with the *Guidelines*.

Standards of Learning (SOL) Coverage

Any collection of evidence evaluated for verified credit must include at least one persuasive, one analytic, and one argumentative writing sample that, in total, cover the writing and research strands included in the 2024 English SOL for grades 9–11.

Evaluation of Performance Assessments

Assessments developed to elicit student writing samples that will contribute to bodies of evidence used to award verified credit must be evaluated using the *Virginia Quality Criteria Review Tool for Performance Assessments* available in the appendix. To ensure students have access to high-quality writing assessments for the body of evidence, local staff should develop or modify writing assessments based on the Quality Criteria Review Tool. [Sample writing assessments](#) that could be modified for use are available on the VDOE website. The prompts included in the list of EOC Writing Prompts, available on the VDOE website, were developed for the short-paper component of the EOC Writing SOL test rather than a local performance assessment; these prompts would require modification based on the Quality Criteria Review Tool in order to be appropriate assessments for the local performance assessment.

Completion of Writing Samples

Any writing sample included in a student’s collection of evidence to be scored for a verified credit must have been completed independently by the student while in the school environment. Students should not be provided with assistance from any person or material that would prevent them from independently demonstrating proficiency. Composing a draft prior to the performance assessment and using written teacher/peer feedback while completing the performance assessment are examples of assistance that prevent students from independently demonstrating proficiency.

School division staff responsible for supervising or monitoring students during the completion of permissive local alternative assessments in writing are required to sign and adhere to a locally developed *Test Security Agreement* similar to that used for SOL testing, as these local assessments are being administered in lieu of SOL tests. The VDOE *School Division Personnel Test Security Agreement* is provided in the appendix as a reference.

Testing Conditions

School divisions must determine the processes and procedures they will use to ensure that the *Guidelines* and expectations for the local performance assessments used to verify credits in writing are followed with fidelity, including that students are not being provided assistance or working outside the school environment. School division staff responsible for implementing permissive local alternative assessments in writing are required to 1) sign and adhere to a locally-developed *Test Security Agreement* similar to that used for SOL

testing; and 2) read the legislation passed by the Virginia General Assembly (§ 22.1–19.1 Action for violations related to secure mandatory tests and § 22.1–292.1 Violations related to secure mandatory tests) regarding the repercussions of violating test security, as these local assessments are being administered in lieu of SOL tests.

Testing conditions for performance assessments will vary, and conditions will be different than traditional, standardized *Standards of Learning* (SOL) testing conditions. For instance, it is not expected that students complete each writing sample within a single class period; however, the school division and individual school staff will determine what conditions will best ensure that students complete their writing samples independently while at school and under the supervision of school personnel.

Appropriate Ancillary Materials

During completion of the writing sample, students should be provided with their writing assessment and any ancillary materials that are necessary and appropriate for completing the assessment. For example, students may have access to previously completed research or annotated reading passages as well as the VDOE [writer's checklist](#), common and/or scoring rubrics, dictionaries, or spellcheck.

Using ancillary materials that provide inappropriate assistance is not permitted and may prevent a student from independently demonstrating proficiency. Examples of ancillary materials that provide inappropriate assistance include, but are not limited to, drafts, written teacher feedback on student notes or research, handouts that describe how to structure specific sentences or organize papers, etc.

Students with disabilities and English learners should be provided additional supports only if the supports specific to the local performance assessment to verify credits in writing are documented as testing accommodations.

Research

The research process is not evaluated using the writing rubrics, so it may be completed in a collaborative setting or with teacher guidance. However, if students are demonstrating their ability to effectively apply research for this assessment, they must independently embed into their writing the information gathered during the research process.

Scoring Student Writing Samples

Each writing sample to be included in the collection of evidence used to verify a credit in writing must be scored by a trained and qualified scorer using the [High School Writing Scoring Rubrics](#). The High School Writing Scoring Rubrics support a focused holistic scoring model. Focused holistic scoring is the evaluation of writing proficiency based on specific elements or domains of writing. The writer is judged in each domain independent

of the other. Each student response receives two scores, one for each of the writing domains identified: Composing/Written Expression and Usage/Mechanics. Each domain is scored holistically. The score reflects the reader's overall impression of each of the domains. The scorers weigh the student's relative strengths or weaknesses in each of the two domains and then assign a score point for each domain that most accurately describes the attributes of the paper. Therefore, each paper receives a separate score for Composing/Written Expression and for Usage/Mechanics.

It is required that at least 15% of responses be scored independently by two scorers. It is best practice that all papers are read by two readers, with the student's score for each domain being the total of the score assigned by both readers. The Composing/Written Expression score is counted twice, and the Usage/Mechanics score is counted once in calculating the total score. Therefore, in the total score of the student's writing sample, the Composing/Written Expression score counts 2/3 and the Usage/Mechanics score counts 1/3. For example, in the Composing/Written Expression domain, if Reader A scores the student's paper a 3 and Reader B scores the student's paper a 2, the student's weighted score in the Composing/Written Expression domain is 10 (5 points, counted twice).

[Understand Scoring](#) is a web-based application that is provided for use by Virginia educators and is used to train and qualify scorers.

Per ([Chapter 103 \(2026 Acts of Assembly\)](#)), any teacher who participates in grading permissive local alternative assessments for writing for students who need to earn verified credits shall not score or grade any assessment completed by a student that such teacher taught in any class or subject area during that school year. Teachers who do not qualify as scorers should not be permitted to assign scores independently; if used as scorers, they are to be paired with qualified scorers, or a qualified scorer may check their scores (§ 22.1-253.13:3. F. 1. A. (2)).

School divisions are encouraged to incorporate quality control activities throughout the scoring window to prevent scorers from drifting away from the scoring standards established by the training materials within Understand Scoring. These activities are especially important if the scoring event spans multiple days or multiple sessions. For example, if training and qualifying of scorers occurs more than a few days before the scoring window, it is recommended that scorers requalify and/or recalibrate immediately before scoring student samples. Similarly, if a scoring event occurs over multiple days, recalibration at the beginning of each scoring session is best practice to ensure the rubric is applied fairly and consistently to all writing samples.

Divisions are required to develop a scoring protocol that includes how to resolve nonadjacent scores and procedures for re-calibration during a scoring window or extended scoring session. Divisions will determine when and how often training will occur. Qualifying to score is required annually. Divisions will determine when and how often writing assessments will be scored using the High School Writing Scoring Rubrics. It is best practice to train and qualify scorers at a time near the scoring window and to open the scoring window at a time near the end of the testing window, regardless of the number of testing and scoring windows the division chooses.

The “Learn About Scoring” page within Understand Scoring provides additional details and considerations for local school divisions.

Use of Instructional Rubric

As explained earlier, the High School Writing Scoring Rubric supports a holistic scoring model and is used to score writing samples used for verified credit body of evidence. In addition to this rubric, the [Common Rubric for High School Writing Samples](#) is provided as an instructional tool. The Common Rubric for High School Writing Samples rubric may be used during classroom instruction to provide students with constructive feedback as part of the writing process and as *preparation* for completing the writing samples used for verified credit. The format and detail of the Common Rubric for High School Writing Samples provide students with precise, focused feedback on how to improve their writing outside of the performance assessments. For example, in this rubric, composing and written expression are separated to support the provision of more specific feedback to students in these domains.

After the appropriate writing instruction, students complete their performance assessments independently. If a student’s work sample does not meet expectations, a teacher might use that sample alongside the Common Rubric for High School Writing Samples to provide feedback and continued instruction. Any feedback provided that is then used by the student to edit or improve the draft would mean the student is not completing the sample independently; as such, writing samples that have been revised after receiving feedback would not be included in the collection of evidence used to verify a credit in writing.

The student may instead complete another assessment on a similar or different topic. The new assessment could be related to the research or background work the student completed so the student can utilize previously compiled research or information, but it must not be the original assessment.

Determining if a Verified Credit Should Be Awarded

Although individual writing samples will be scored according to the High School Writing Scoring Rubrics, the student's final collection of evidence is evaluated during a separate process using the EOC Writing Performance Level Descriptors (PLDs), which describe levels of achievement in high school writing: advanced, proficient, or does not meet the standard (fails). The *Code of Virginia* (§ 22.1-253.13:3 F. 2. a.) states, "any student who receives a passing score on a permissive local alternative assessment administered pursuant to subdivision 3 b in lieu of any end-of-course *Standards of Learning* assessment corresponding to any graduation requirement shall be deemed to meet the applicable graduation requirement." Therefore, students whose scores on the writing samples are considered passing would be awarded verified credit. The Performance Level Descriptors would then be used to determine the proficiency level demonstrated by the overall collection of evidence.

The rubric scores on individual writing samples and the PLD determination are independent, as there is no numerical score on the rubric that correlates with a Pass/Proficient or Pass/Advanced performance level from the PLDs.

School divisions should develop a protocol for identifying, training, and qualifying the panel that will evaluate the collections of evidence. Additionally, it is best practice to determine an appeals process that will be followed should the need arise.

Students' collections of evidence should be retained for five years after the end of the academic year in which they were evaluated to determine if verified credit is awarded. The format of these records (e.g., electronic or paper) is up to the locality. At the conclusion of the retention period, confidential destruction is required.

Students with disabilities and English learners should be provided additional supports only if the supports specific to the local performance assessment to verify credits in writing are documented as testing accommodations.

More information and Resources

Additional information and resources for permissive local alternative assessments in End of Course Writing, including rubrics and professional development can be found on the [VDOE website](https://doe.virginia.gov).

History and Social Science

Mandatory Local Alternative Assessments and Permissive Local Alternative Assessments Not for Verified Credit

Legislation in 2014 eliminated the Grade 3 History, United States History to 1865, and the United States History: 1865 to the Present *Standards of Learning* assessments. This legislation required the use of local alternative assessments, consistent with Virginia Board of Education guidelines, in place of these assessments.

Each school board must annually certify that it has provided instruction in and administered and graded a mandatory local alternative assessment for each *Standards of Learning* subject area in which a *Standards of Learning* assessment is not available for administration during the school year in accordance with state law, Board guidelines, and best practices.

In 2026, [Chapter 103](#) (2026 Acts of Assembly) made significant revisions to local alternative assessments by defining and categorizing them as mandatory or permissive, expanding the use of permissive local alternative assessments, and outlining specific requirements for the content, scoring, and administration of local alternative assessments. The legislation also requires the Board of Education to develop and make available best practices for grading and scoring mandatory and permissive local alternative assessments, so school boards can adopt policies for implementation.

Permissive local alternative assessments not for verified credit include:

- Virginia Studies
- Civics & Economics

School divisions may implement permissive local alternative assessments in lieu of the *Standards of Learning* assessments in Virginia Studies and Civics and Economics, as these SOL assessments are administered on a statewide basis but are not necessary to meet federal accountability requirements. Each school board, after administering such permissive local alternative assessments, must annually certify that it has provided instruction in the applicable SOL subject area and developed and administered permissive local alternative assessments in accordance with state law and Board guidelines.

School divisions develop Balanced Assessment Plans for mandatory local alternative assessments in History and Social Science and for permissive local alternative assessments in courses not eligible for verified credit.

State-developed performance assessment samples will be available for school divisions to use as models for developing local performance assessments in Virginia Studies and in

Civics and Economics, or for use with students, to support consistency in alignment to the content and rigor of the standards and in expectations for student achievement. School divisions developing performance assessments to be used as permissive local alternative assessments in Virginia Studies and in Civics and Economics must use and adhere to expectations described in the *Virginia Quality Criteria Review Tool for Performance Assessments*. Additionally, divisions must ensure performance assessments are designed to elicit the content and skills described in the appropriate state-provided, common rubric.

Rubrics for Scoring

To support consistency in achievement expectations within and among Virginia public schools, performance assessments administered by local school divisions, either as mandatory local alternative assessments or as permissive local alternative assessments in courses not eligible for verified credit, must be scored using state-provided common rubrics. The rubrics are to be used as written.

For 2026-2027, the Department will provide a draft *Elementary School Common Rubric for History and Social Science* to be used to score local alternative assessment responses in Grade 3 History and in Virginia Studies courses. Additionally, a draft *Middle School Common Rubric for History and Social Science* will be provided to be used to school local alternative assessment responses in United States History to 1865, United States History: 1865 to the Present, and Civics & Economics.

Educators using the rubrics during the 2026-2027 school year are invited to submit questions, provide feedback, or suggest revisions no later than November 25, 2026, using the Elementary School Common Rubric for HSS Feedback Form and Middle School Common Rubric for HSS Feedback Form. The rubrics will be finalized and “DRAFT” removed before the beginning of the 2027-2028 school year.

More Information and Resources

Additional information and resources for local alternative assessments in History and Social Science, including rubrics and professional development, can be found on the [VDOE website](#).

Permissive Local Alternative Assessments for Verified Credit

Based on the 2020 and 2021 Virginia General Assembly’s Appropriations Act (Chapter 1289, 2020 Acts of Assembly), the Board revised its Guidance Document Governing Certain Provisions of the *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia*, 8VAC20-131-110 *Standard and Verified Units of Credit: Locally Awarded Verified Credit* to allow for the use of performance assessments to verify credits in History and Social Science, which required the “successful completion of assessments that include

state-developed performance assessments scored locally in accordance with Board guidelines using state-developed rubrics” as an option for earning verified credit in history/social science. This guidance supported local school divisions exercising the option of using state-developed performance assessments, in conjunction with other local assessments, to determine if a student earned a locally awarded verified credit in history and social science.

In 2026, [Chapter 103](#) (2026 Acts of Assembly) made significant revisions to local alternative assessments by defining and categorizing them as mandatory or permissive, expanding the use of permissive local alternative assessments, and outlining specific requirements for the content, scoring, and administration of local alternative assessments including when awarding verified credits. The legislation also requires the Board of Education to develop and make available best practices for grading and scoring mandatory and permissive local alternative assessments, so school boards can adopt policies for implementation.

Starting in the 2026-2027 school year, as described in the [Test Selection and Administration](#) section, per *Code of Virginia* § [22.1-253.13:3 \(F. a\)](#), if a school board elects to administer a permissive local alternative assessment in a specific *Standards of Learning* subject area to students in a specific grade level, then it must administer the permissive local alternative assessment to each student receiving instruction in that subject area at that grade level provided throughout the division.

As described in the section on permissive local alternative assessment for verified credits, beginning in school year 2026-2027, Writing, History and Social Science, and Science permissive local alternative assessments for verified credits will be reported by school divisions as verified credits through the an end-of-year data collection that is distinguished from locally awarded verified credits.

Permissive local alternative assessments for verified credit are allowed for the following History and Social Science courses.

- EOC World Geography
- EOC World History and Geography to 1500 A.D.
- EOC World History and Geography: 1500 A.D. to the Present
- EOC Virginia and United States History

Guidelines for Permissive Local Alternative Assessments in End-of-Course History and Social Science

- A panel comprised of at least three people will examine the collection of evidence and determine if verified credit should be awarded. The student's teacher is not permitted to serve on this panel.
- The local review panel will review a collection of evidence that provides information on the student's mastery of the standards, competencies, and objectives of the entire course. A student's collection of evidence reviewed by the local panel must include:
 - The student's responses to state-developed performance assessments from the majority of the different historical eras or categories included in the SOL, each completely independently by the student while under the supervision of school personnel within the school environment. The student's responses to the state-developed performance assessments must each be scored in accordance with these guidelines using the applicable state-developed common rubric; AND
 - A variety of local assessments covering the remaining SOL content for the entire course, each completed by the student independently. Local assessments included in the collection of evidence should be graded or scored prior to review by the local panel.
- Based on the evidence reviewed, the local review panel may award the verified credit, deny the verified credit, suggest participation in a remedial program and retesting, or make additional academic assignments as deemed appropriate prior to determining whether to award the verified credit.
- School divisions should develop a protocol for identifying, training, and qualifying the panel that will evaluate the collection of evidence. A student's teacher of record is not permitted to serve on this review panel. Additionally, it is best practice to determine an appeals process that will be followed, should the need arise.
- The panel's evaluation is a separate process from scoring. Legislation enacted in 2026 states, "any student who receives a passing score on a permissive local alternative assessment administered pursuant to subdivision 3 b in lieu of any end-of-course *Standards of Learning* assessment corresponding to any graduation requirement shall be deemed to meet the applicable graduation requirement." Thus, a student whose scores on the permissive local alternative assessments are considered passing would be awarded verified credit.

- Students' collections of evidence should be retained for five years after the end of the academic year in which they were evaluated to determine if verified credit is awarded. The format of these records (e.g., electronic or paper) is up to the locality. At the conclusion of the retention period, confidential destruction is required.
- Student performance is reported locally as with non-local alternative assessment data.

State-Developed Performance Assessments and State-Developed Rubrics

School divisions choosing permissive local alternative assessments in End-of-Course History and Social Science must administer state-developed performance assessments provided by the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) and use state-developed common rubrics to score these performance assessments locally.

- State-developed performance assessments measure achievement in the core expectations and skills in the current Board-approved *History and Social Science* SOL. At least three and no more than four of these permissive local alternative assessments are to be administered during the course. Additional evidence of content mastery is measured through locally developed assessments. The inclusion of these additional assessments in the collection of evidence helps provide confirmation of achievement across the content standards within the course.
- Per the *Code of Virginia* § [22.1-253.13:3 \(F. 2. a.\)](#) “any student who receives a passing score on a permissive local alternative assessment administered pursuant to subdivision 3 b in lieu of any end-of-course *Standards of Learning* assessment corresponding to any graduation requirement shall be deemed to meet the applicable graduation requirement.”

Per *Code of Virginia* § [22.1-253.13:3 \(F. a.\)](#), if a school board elects to administer a permissive local alternative assessment in a specific *Standards of Learning* subject area to students in a specific grade level, then it shall be required to administer such assessment to each student receiving instruction in that subject area at that grade level provided throughout the division.

Standards of Learning Coverage

School divisions that choose to use state-developed performance assessments to award verified credit in history and social science must also administer additional local assessments in order to cover the SOL included in the entire course. These local assessments are not required to be performance assessments and should include a variety of assessment types. The 2023 *History and Social Science* SOL are organized into historical

eras or content categories, and state-developed performance assessments will be provided for each of these eras or categories.

Completion of State-Developed Performance Assessments and Locally Developed Assessments Used to Award Verified Credits

All state-developed performance assessments and locally developed assessments that become part of the evidence evaluated to determine if a verified credit in history and social science is awarded must be completed independently by the student while at school and under the supervision of school personnel. Students should not be provided with assistance from any person or material that would prevent them from independently demonstrating proficiency. Composing a draft prior to the performance assessment and using written teacher or peer feedback while completing the performance assessment are examples of assistance that prevent students from independently demonstrating proficiency. School division staff responsible for supervising or monitoring students during the completion of permissive local alternative assessments in History and Social Science are required to sign and adhere to a locally-developed *Test Security Agreement* similar to that used for SOL testing, as these local assessments are being administered in lieu of SOL tests.

A collection of evidence used to award verified credits must include not only a student's response to a state-developed performance assessment for the majority of the different historical eras or categories included in the course, but also a variety of local assessments that measure the remaining SOL covered in the entire course. The student's mastery of the core expectations will be demonstrated through the student's responses to state-developed performance assessments for a majority of the different historical eras or categories included in the SOL for the entire course, and the student's understanding of the essential knowledge defined by the content standards in the SOL for the entire course will be demonstrated through other local assessments administered to the student. Thus, the completed collection of evidence that will be used to award verified credit in history and social science will be composed of the student's responses to state-developed performance assessments from a majority of the different historical eras or categories included in the course and a variety of local assessments that cover the content SOL that are not measured in the state-developed assessments completed by the student.

Testing Conditions

School divisions must determine the processes and procedures they will use to ensure that the *Guidelines* and expectations for the permissive local alternative assessments used to verify credits in History and Social Science are followed with fidelity, including that students are not being provided assistance or working outside the school environment.

School division staff responsible for implementing permissive local alternative assessments in History and Social Science are required to 1) sign and adhere to a locally-developed *Test Security Agreement* similar to that used for SOL testing; and 2) read the legislation passed by the Virginia General Assembly (§ 22.1–19.1 Action for violations related to secure mandatory tests and § 22.1–292.1 Violations related to secure mandatory tests) regarding the repercussions of violating test security, as these local assessments are being administered in lieu of SOL tests.

Scoring Student Responses to State-Developed Performance Assessments

Completed state-developed performance assessments must be scored using the applicable state-developed common secondary rubric by scorers who have been trained on the application of the rubric. The state-developed common secondary rubrics are to be used as written. Core Expectations will be scored for every state-developed assessment. Assessment-specific skills that are scored will vary by assessment; however, the language in the state-developed common secondary rubric that corresponds to the assessment-specific skills measured by the state-developed performance assessment a student has completed may not be altered.

Per the *Code*, ((§ 22.1-253.13:3. F. 1. A. (2))), any teacher who participates in grading permissive local alternative assessments for students who need to earn verified credit in history and social science cannot score or grade any assessment completed by a student that such teacher taught in any class or subject area during that school year.

The division is required to follow and document inter-rater reliability procedures:

- at least 15% of responses are scored independently by two scorers. Teachers shall not score their own students' responses;
- implement a scoring calibration protocol before scoring and procedures for re-calibration during a scoring window or extended session; and
- adopt a reconciliation process when scorers disagree.

For 2026-2027, the Department will provide a draft High School Common Rubric for History and Social Science (2023 SOL) divisions may use to score permissive local alternative assessments in EOC World Geography, EOC World History and Geography to 1500 A.D., EOC World History and Geography: 1500 A.D. to the Present, and EOC Virginia and United States History. Feedback from educators using these rubrics will be collected through November 25, 2026, and used to finalize the rubrics prior to the 2027-2028 school year.

During the time period when this rubric is considered a draft, responses to performance assessments for students needing a verified credit for graduation should be scored using

the vetted, previously established rubrics for EOC History and Social Science courses. The History and Social Science State-Developed Common Rubric: Upper Secondary should be used when locally scoring student responses to performance assessments in Virginia and U.S. History. The History and Social Science State-Developed Common Rubric: Early Secondary should be used when locally scoring student responses to performance assessments in World History I, World History II, and World Geography.

Annual Notification and Verified Credit Plans

Starting in the 2026-2027 school year, as described in the [Test Selection and Administration](#) section, per *Code of Virginia* § [22.1-253.13:3 \(F. a\)](#), if a school board elects to administer a permissive local alternative assessment in a specific *Standards of Learning* subject area to students in a specific grade level, then it must administer the permissive local alternative assessment to each student receiving instruction in that subject area at that grade level provided throughout the division. On an annual basis, school divisions will be asked to notify VDOE if they choose to use permissive local alternative assessments to award verified credit in high school History and Social Science courses.

School divisions choosing this route must prepare Verified Credit Plans that describe how the collection of assessments reviewed by the local panel will meet the requirements included in these guidelines. This form is in the appendix of these guidelines. Verified Credit Plans for History and Social Science will be subject to periodic review or audit by the VDOE staff on behalf of the Board of Education. Information gathered during the reviews or audits will be used to provide technical assistance to school divisions and may be shared in summary form with the Board.

More Information and Resources

Additional information and resources for local alternative assessments in History and Social Science, including rubrics and professional development, can be found on the [VDOE website](#).

Science

Mandatory Local Alternative Assessments

Legislation in 2014 eliminated the Grade 3 Science *Standards of Learning* assessments. This legislation required the use of local alternative assessments, consistent with the Virginia Board of Education guidelines, in place of these assessments.

Each school board must annually certify that it has provided instruction in and administered and graded a mandatory local alternative assessment for each *Standards of Learning* subject area in which a *Standards of Learning* assessment is not available for

administration during the school year in accordance with state law and Board guidelines and best practices.

School divisions develop Balanced Assessment Plans for mandatory local alternative assessments in Grade 3 Science.

Rubrics for Scoring

To support consistency in achievement expectations within and among Virginia public schools, performance assessments administered by local school divisions as mandatory local alternative assessments are to be scored using state-provided common rubrics. The rubrics are to be used as written.

For 2026-2027, the Department will provide a draft Grade 3 Scientific and Engineering Practices (SEP) Rubric. This rubric replaces the former Grade 3-5 Science Investigation Common Rubric and the Grade 3-5 Design Challenge Common Rubric. Educators using the rubrics during the 2026-2027 school year are invited to submit questions, provide feedback, or suggest revisions no later than November 25, 2026. The rubric will be finalized and “DRAFT” removed before the beginning of the 2027-2028 school year.

More information and Resources

Additional information and resources for mandatory local alternative assessments in Grade 3 Science, including rubrics and professional development can be found on the [VDOE website](#).

Permissive Local Alternative Assessments for Verified Credits

In 2026, [Chapter 103](#) (2026 Acts of Assembly) made significant revisions to local alternative assessments by defining and categorizing them as mandatory or permissive, expanding the use of permissive local alternative assessments, and outlining specific requirements for their content, scoring, and administration. This legislation also requires that the Board of Education develop and make available best practices for grading and scoring mandatory and permissive local alternative assessments, so school boards can adopt policies for implementation. As described in the [Test Selection and Administration](#) section, per *Code of Virginia* § [22.1-253.13:3 \(F. a\)](#), if a school board elects to administer a permissive local alternative assessment in a specific *Standards of Learning* subject area to students in a specific grade level, then it shall be required to administer such assessment to each student receiving instruction in that subject area at that grade level provided throughout the division.

Permissive local alternative assessments are allowed for the following science courses.

- EOC Earth Science*

- EOC Chemistry*

*Added in 2026-2027 based on [Chapter 103](#) (2026 Acts of Assembly).

Standards of Learning Coverage

School divisions that choose to use permissive local alternative assessments to award verified credit in science must also administer additional local assessments in order to cover the SOL included in the entire course. These local assessments are not required to be performance assessments and should include a variety of assessment types. The 2018 Science *Standards of Learning* are organized into Reporting Categories described in the [SOL test blueprints](#).

State-developed performance assessment samples will be provided for school divisions to use as models for developing local performance assessments, or for use with students, to support consistency in alignment to the content and rigor of the standards and in expectations for student achievement. School divisions developing performance assessments to be used as permissive local alternative assessments in science must use and adhere to expectations described in the *Virginia Quality Criteria Review Tool for Performance Assessments*. For 2026-2027, the Department will provide a draft High School Science Common Rubric to be used to score local alternative assessment responses in Chemistry and Earth Science.

Completion of Permissive Local Alternative Assessments Used to Award Verified Credits in Science

All responses to permissive local alternative assessments and locally developed assessments that will become part of the evidence evaluated to determine if a verified credit in science is awarded must be completed independently by the student while at school and under the supervision of school personnel. Students should not be provided with assistance from any person or material that would prevent them from independently demonstrating proficiency. Composing a draft prior to the performance assessment and using written teacher or peer feedback while completing the performance assessment are examples of assistance that prevent students from independently demonstrating proficiency. School division staff responsible for supervising or monitoring students during the completion of permissive local alternative assessments in science are required to sign and adhere to a locally developed *Personnel Test Security Agreement* similar to that used for SOL testing, as these local assessments are being administered in lieu of SOL tests.

A collection of evidence used to award verified credit must include 1) at least three but no more than four responses to performance assessments measuring content from different reporting categories described in the test blueprints for the course; and 2) a variety of local

assessments that measure the remaining SOL covered in the entire course. The student's mastery of the skills of the discipline will be demonstrated through the student's responses to performance assessments measuring content from different reporting categories included in the SOL for the entire course, and the student's understanding of the essential knowledge defined by the content standards in the SOL for the entire course will be demonstrated through the responses to the performance assessments combined with other local assessments administered to the student. Thus, the completed collection of evidence that will be used to award verified credit science will be composed of the student's responses to performance assessments from different reporting categories included in the course and a variety of local assessments that, together, cover the same content included in the SOL test blueprint.

Testing Conditions

School divisions must determine the processes and procedures they will use to ensure that the *Guidelines* and expectations for permissive local alternative assessments used to verify credits in science are followed with fidelity, including that students are not being provided assistance or working outside the school environment. School division staff responsible for implementing permissive local alternative assessments in science are required to 1) sign and adhere to a locally-developed *Test Security Agreement* similar to that used for SOL testing; and 2) read the legislation passed by the Virginia General Assembly (§ 22.1–19.1 Action for violations related to secure mandatory tests and § 22.1–292.1 Violations related to secure mandatory tests) regarding the repercussions of violating test security, as these local assessments are being administered in lieu of SOL tests.

Scoring Permissive Local Alternative Assessments in Science

Completed performance assessments must be scored using the applicable state-developed common rubric by scorers who have been trained on the application of the rubric. The state-developed common rubric must be used as written. The Scientific and Engineering Practices will be scored for every performance assessment. Assessment-specific content to be scored will vary by assessment; however, the language in the state-developed common high school rubric that corresponds to the content measured by the performance assessment a student has completed may not be altered.

Any teacher who participates in grading permissive local alternative assessments for students who need to earn verified credit in science shall not score or grade any assessment completed by a student that such teacher taught in any class or subject area during that school year.

The division is required to follow and document inter-rater reliability procedures:

- at least 15% of responses are scored independently by two scorers. Teachers shall not score their own students' responses;
- implement a scoring calibration protocol before scoring and procedures for re-calibration during a scoring window or extended session; and
- adopt a reconciliation process when scorers disagree.

For 2026-2027, the Department will provide a draft VDOE High School Science Common Rubric to be used to score permissive local alternative assessments. Feedback from educators using these rubrics will be collected through November 25, 2026, and used to finalize the rubric prior to the 2027-2028 school year.

Determining if a Verified Credit Should be Awarded

- A panel comprised of at least three people will examine the collection of evidence and determine if verified credit should be awarded. The student's teacher is not permitted to serve on this panel.
- School divisions should develop a protocol for identifying, training, and qualifying the panel that will evaluate the collection of evidence. A student's teacher of record is not permitted to serve on this review panel. Additionally, it is best practice to determine an appeals process that will be followed, should the need arise.
- The panel's evaluation is a separate process from scoring. Legislation enacted in 2026 states, "any student who receives a passing score on a permissive local alternative assessment administered pursuant to subdivision 3 b in lieu of any end-of-course *Standards of Learning* assessment corresponding to any graduation requirement shall be deemed to meet the applicable graduation requirement." Thus, a student whose scores on the permissive local alternative assessments are considered passing would be awarded verified credit.
- Students' collections of evidence should be retained for five years after the end of the academic year in which they were evaluated to determine if verified credit is awarded. The format of these records (e.g., electronic or paper) is up to the locality. At the conclusion of the retention period, confidential destruction is required.
- Student performance is reported locally as with non-local alternative assessment data.

Annual Notification and Verified Credit Plans

Starting in the 2026-2027 school year, as described in the [Test Selection and Administration](#) section, per *Code of Virginia* § [22.1-253.13:3 \(F. a\)](#), if a school board elects to administer a permissive local alternative assessment in a specific *Standards of Learning* subject area to students in a specific grade level, then it must administer the permissive local alternative assessment to each student receiving instruction in that subject area at

that grade level provided throughout the division. On an annual basis, school divisions will be asked to notify VDOE if they choose to use permissive local alternative assessments to award verified credit in high school science courses.

School divisions choosing this route must prepare Verified Credit Plans that describe how the collection of assessments reviewed by the local panel will meet the requirements included in these guidelines. This form is in the Appendix of these Guidelines. Verified Credit Plans for Science will be subject to periodic review or audit by the VDOE staff on behalf of the Board of Education. Information gathered during the reviews or audits will be used to provide technical assistance to school divisions and may be shared in summary form with the Board.

More information and Resources

Additional information and resources for permissive local alternative assessments in EOC Earth Science and EOC Chemistry, including rubrics and professional development can be found on the [VDOE website](#).

Documentation and Reporting to the Virginia Department of Education for All Mandatory and Permissive Local Alternative Assessments

VDOE staff will conduct annual site visits, “desk reviews,” or audits in a sample of school divisions implementing mandatory local alternative assessments and permissive local alternative assessments. As a part of these “desk reviews” or audits, documents including but not limited to the Balanced Assessment Plan or Verified Credit Plan will be examined and school division staff interviewed either by webinar or by telephone. The purpose of these reviews will be to determine how local school divisions are verifying that the content is being taught, to determine the types of alternative assessments that are being administered, to identify exemplars of performance assessments that may be shared with other school divisions, and to assist teachers, schools, and school divisions in strengthening their own alternative performance assessments. The reviews will help Department staff to identify “best practices” for sharing with other Virginia school divisions.

Balanced Assessment Plans for mandatory local alternative assessments and Verified Credit Plans for permissive local alternative assessments will continue to be included in the “desk review” or audit process. Materials retained at the division for possible review should include:

- 1) Balanced Assessment Plan for each of the replaced SOL assessments;
- 2) Verified Credit Plan for each course in which permissive local alternative assessments are administered in lieu of the SOL assessments;
- 3) Copies of assessments administered, including performance assessments;
- 4) Division-specific material used to train teachers; and
- 5) Samples of student responses representing each of the various score points of the rubric.

School divisions are to retain these documents for one year after the end of the academic year, as outlined in the [Records Retention and Disposition Schedule, General Schedule No.GS-21](#) (Series 000236, 000240). The VDOE will not require the retention of individual student work beyond the student work samples that demonstrate division scoring.

Appendix of Resources and Forms

Balanced Assessment Plans

This section is to provide support for school divisions in the development and implementation of Balanced Assessment Plans that adhere to these guidelines.

Requirements

Balanced Assessment Plans are to be developed for mandatory local alternative assessments and for permissive local alternative assessments in courses not eligible for verified credit. These plans should reflect a move toward balanced assessment to inform instruction, must include performance assessments, and must indicate that content is being taught and assessed in each of the strands and/or reporting categories in these courses. The school division may develop separate Balanced Assessment Plans for each of these courses or one Balanced Assessment Plan that addresses each of these areas.

Table of Mandatory and Permissive Local Alternative Assessments Addressed in Balanced Assessment Plans

Mandatory Local Alternative Assessments	Permissive Local Alternative Assessments
• Grade 3 Science • Grade 3 History • United States History to 1865 • United States History: 1865 to the Present. • Grade 5 Writing^ ^This requirement met through administration of the Integrated Reading and Writing (IRW) component of the Grade 5 Reading SOL test.	• Virginia Studies* • Civics & Economics* *Added based on Chapter 103 (2026 Acts of Assembly)

The development of Balanced Assessment Plans should be a collaborative effort as division leaders, content experts, and teachers look at the existing testing program across disciplines, target gaps and redundancy in current assessments, and develop a comprehensive assessment plan that uses a variety of assessments to determine content and skills mastery. School divisions must develop a system-wide plan for all schools to follow based on these *Guidelines*.

Balanced Assessment Plans should indicate the types of local alternative assessments (e.g., formative, diagnostic, summative) that will be used to measure students' mastery of the content and skills in the *Standards of Learning* (SOL) for each entire course. Balanced Assessment Plans are expected to describe the full variety of assessment and item formats (e.g., multiple-choice, short answer, performance assessments) that will be used as local alternative assessments. For example, a Balanced Assessment Plan may indicate that a constructed response performance assessment will serve as the local alternative assessment for one unit of instruction, as this type of assessment best allows students to demonstrate skills and content knowledge for that unit of instruction. The same Balanced Assessment Plan may also indicate that other skills and content knowledge, within the same reporting category or strand as that unit of instruction, are best measured through local alternative assessments composed of multiple-choice and short answer questions.

Detailed documentation of the daily formative assessment practices and strategies used during classroom instruction is not required, but the division's plan for supporting the effective use of ongoing formative assessment should be described. Evidence of opportunities for students to demonstrate acquisition of Virginia's 5 C's (critical thinking, creative thinking, communication, collaboration and citizenship) is encouraged.

Considerations

Format

Beginning in the 2026-2027 school year, a template is provided for the Balanced Assessment Plan to promote consistency and clarity in expectations for school divisions. When a Balanced Assessment Plan is requested by the Department for review, this template must be used.

Assessment Inventory

The Assessment Inventory Tool is a sample that school divisions may use to evaluate current assessment systems and is the final page of this section. This tool is a useful resource for central office and school-based teams of educators, providing a systematic

approach to review the assessments being administered and inform assessment decisions. Use of this Assessment Inventory Tool is not required; however, use of an assessment review process is encouraged to obtain a comprehensive picture of the assessment system currently in place. Analyzing the results of a completed assessment inventory can be helpful in making deliberate decisions about the continued use of each assessment administered to students in each course or content area.

School divisions are encouraged to use a team approach to consider the results of the Assessment Inventory and to make intentional and purposeful decisions about each assessment administered. The inventory may serve to 1) identify assessments that do not effectively serve the intended purpose; 2) ensure that each assessment provides useful data that justifies the loss of instructional time required for its administration; 3) identify redundancies where assessments should be considered for elimination; and 4) identify gaps where measures are needed for certain content or skills. The results of this decision-making process can then inform the division's Balanced Assessment Plan.

Reporting to Students, Parents, Families, and Caregivers

School divisions provide students and parents or guardians information regarding the outcome of each local alternative assessment administered. The format for this reporting is to be determined by the local school division. When reporting scores on performance assessments, it is best practice not only to report the score but also to provide a copy of the rubric, a description of the performance assessment, the *Standards of Learning* assessed, and the student's response. School divisions are expected to report scores or grades but are not expected to report achievement levels associated with the scores achieved on SOL tests (e.g., Pass/Advanced, Pass/Proficient, Fail/Does Not Meet, etc.). Examples of formats for reporting based on samples shared by school divisions are included in the "Local Alternative Assessments: Reporting to Parents and Reminders for Scoring" presentation posted on the [Performance Assessments and Local Alternative Assessments](#) webpage.

Records Retention, Revision, and Virginia Department of Education Review

Records Retention

Balanced Assessment Plans should be maintained for one year after the end of the academic year in which the plans were developed.

Revision

Balanced Assessment Plans are written for a particular school year; as such, annual review and revision are required. It is best practice to adopt a long-range approach with annual

updates that promote continuous and targeted improvement of purposeful, balanced assessment practices.

Virginia Department of Education Review

VDOE staff from the Office of Instruction and the Office of Student Assessment will conduct annual site visits, “desk reviews, or audits in a sample of school divisions representing each of the eight Superintendent’s Regions. These evaluations of site visits, “desk reviews,” or audits will help VDOE staff identify best practices for sharing with other Virginia school divisions. Additionally, these reviews will be used to determine how local school divisions are verifying that the content is being taught and assessed, to determine the types of local alternative assessments that are being administered, to identify exemplars of performance assessments that may be shared with other school divisions, and to assist teachers, schools, and school divisions in strengthening their own local performance assessments and Balanced Assessment Plans.

During these reviews or audits, VDOE staff will examine the Balanced Assessment Plan for one or more content areas for mandatory local alternative assessments and permissive local alternative assessments; copies of each of the mandatory or permissive local alternative assessments administered, including but not limited to performance assessments; documentation of the use of the *Virginia Quality Criteria Review Tool for Performance Assessments* during the development or selection of performance assessments; materials used by the school division to train teachers in the administration and scoring of these local assessments and documentation supporting inter-rater reliability; and samples of student responses representing each of the various score points of the state common rubric. School divisions selected for these desk reviews will be notified by the Office of Student Assessment, and directions for submitting materials for review will be provided at that time. As part of the “desk review” or audit process, school division staff who have assisted with the development of the Balanced Assessment Plan(s) and who oversee instruction for the associated content area(s) will be interviewed either by webinar or by telephone.

Assessment Inventory

Name of Assessment	.	.	.	.	.	.
Type of Assessment	.	.	.	.	.	.
Intended Purpose	.	.	.	.	.	.
Grade Level(s)	.	.	.	.	.	.
Frequency & Time of Year	.	.	.	.	.	.
Standard(s) addressed	.	.	.	.	.	.
Information or Data Provided	.	.	.	.	.	.
Audience for Results	.	.	.	.	.	.

Balanced Assessment Plan Template



Each school division must develop a Balanced Assessment Plan that describes how the school division will meet the requirements included in the *Guidelines for Local Alternative Assessments* that includes mandatory local alternative assessments (Grade 3 History, Grade 3 Science, United States History to 1865, and United States History: 1865 to the Present*). School divisions must also develop a Balanced Assessment Plan when electing to implement permissive local alternative assessments in lieu of administering the *Standards of Learning* assessments in courses not eligible for verified credit (Virginia Studies and Civics & Economics). This information is subject to review by Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) staff and must be maintained on file in the school division in accordance with the regulations for record retention established by the Library of Virginia. When requested by the VDOE, the information must be submitted using this form.

*A Balanced Assessment Plan is not required for Grade 5 Writing when a division uses Integrated Reading and Writing (IRW) to fulfill the mandatory local alternative assessment requirement.

Questions regarding this information may be directed to student assessment staff by email at student_assessment@doe.virginia.gov or by telephone at (804) 225-2102.

School Division Information

Division Code (nnn): Click or tap here to enter text.

Division Name: Click or tap here to enter text.

School Year

Example (202X-202X): Click or tap here to enter text.

Subject Area(s) and Course(s) Included in the Balanced Assessment Plan

Subject Area (e.g., History): Click or tap here to enter text.

Course and Grade Level (e.g., Virginia Studies, grade 4): Click or tap here to enter text.

Balanced Assessment Plan Contact Persons:

The primary and alternate contact persons should have access to the Balanced Assessment Plan and be able to address questions from VDOE staff. As the school division designee responsible for the administration of assessments needed to meet graduation requirements, the Division Director of Testing (DDOT) is expected to be either the primary or alternate contact person.

Primary Balanced Assessment Plan Contact Person

First and Last Name: Click or tap here to enter text.

Position: Click or tap here to enter text.

Email: Click or tap here to enter text.

Alternate Balanced Assessment Plan Contact Person

First and Last Name: Click or tap here to enter text.

Position: Click or tap here to enter text.

Email: Click or tap here to enter text.

Directions for Completing the Content of the Plan:

In each section below, describe how the elements of the school division's Balanced Assessment Plan meets the requirements outlined in the *Guidelines for Local Alternative Assessments* and associated implementation support documents.

Standards of Learning (SOL) Coverage:

List each division-wide common mandatory or permissive local alternative assessment (LAA) to be administered, the SOL included in each assessment, and the types of items included in each assessment. Samples are provided in rows two and three. Use “tab” to add new rows to the table.

Assessment Topic	SOL Included	Type(s) of Assessment Items	Timeline for Assessment
<i>Physical Geography of Virginia</i>	<i>VS.1a-c</i>	<i>Quiz – multiple choice and fill-in-the-blank</i>	<i>First quarter</i>
<i>How do we know what we know about Virginia's Indigenous nations past and present?</i>	<i>Skills: VS.a,b,c,d Content SOL: VS.2a-e, VS.1a-c</i>	<i>performance assessment</i>	<i>First quarter PLAA #1</i>

Additional information may be added to the text-entry box if needed.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Evaluation of Performance Assessments:

Provide sufficient detail to describe the local processes used to develop and evaluate performance assessments, in accordance with the *Virginia Quality Criteria Review Tool for Performance Assessment*, including which personnel will participate and when and how this will occur. Describe how division staff will ensure that previously used assessments remain aligned to current standards and can be scored using the state-provided common rubric. Assessments should be accessible and appropriate for all students and meet current needs. Best practices include offering student choice; developing supplementary or alternate tasks for second opportunities and make-ups that allow students to use the same information sources; collaborating across school divisions; and involving a broad spectrum of teachers and division-level instruction and assessment staff in the development of new tasks and revision of existing tasks.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Professional Development for Teachers: Developing and Implementing Performance Assessments

Describe the professional development provided for teachers developing local alternative assessments, including but not limited to performance assessments. Describe how participants are selected and how the school division will monitor participation in this professional development.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Completion of Performance Assessments and Test Security:

Provide details such as local requirements to ensure performance assessments are completed under appropriate testing conditions, including but not limited to a description of the training that will be provided to teachers to include proper test security and adherence to the *Guidelines*, how testing conditions that do not meet the *Guidelines* will be reported and addressed, how students will access these assessments, how school divisions will ensure students complete the assessments independently and without access to artificial intelligence, and so forth. Include who is responsible for developing and

implementing the professional development sessions and how implementation of the Balanced Assessment Plan will be monitored.

Note: Specific accommodations necessary for students with disabilities or English learners to access these assessments should be documented for individual students but are not included within the Balanced Assessment Plan. Note that some accommodations not permissible during SOL testing may be allowable for all students completing performance assessments (e.g., providing blank graphic organizers, completing the assessment over multiple days). Accommodations that advantage students with content-specific support are not permitted.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Scoring Student Responses to Performance Assessments:

Include details such as when and how scorers will be trained and how participation in training will be documented and monitored; who will conduct this training and maintain the associated documentation; local scoring protocols, including maintaining student anonymity during the scoring process; the local process for calibration to ensure scorers remain anchored to the rubrics; the process to address nonadjacent scores; and how disturbing content will be addressed. Plans for implementing a scoring calibration protocol before scoring and procedures for re-calibration during a scoring window or extended session and adopting a reconciliation process when scorers disagree are required.

The local process for appealing the score on a performance assessment should be described, and the process and timeline for providing information to students and families on student achievement should be included.

It is best practice but not required that each response is scored by two readers independently, without knowledge of the scores assigned by one another. If each response is not scored by two readers, it is recommended that a percentage of responses be scored by two readers. The following best practices will support inter-rater reliability:

- 1) at least 15% of responses are scored independently by two scorers. Teachers shall not score their own students' responses.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Collecting Sets of Scored Responses to Performance Assessments:

School divisions are to establish a system for collecting samples of scored responses representing each score point on the common rubric from teachers that may be used to develop local training sets. School divisions have the discretion to determine how and when this will occur during the year. Describe the local process for this collection.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Reporting Performance to Students and Families:

Per [\(Chapter 103 \(2026 Acts of Assembly\)\)](#), performance assessments must be reported on a 100-point scale. Based on the respective rubric, the total score earned on a performance assessment should be calculated as a fraction showing the total number of points earned over the total number of points possible and as the percent equivalent to this fraction. Describe how these results will be provided to students, families, and caregivers and provide any division expectations for consistency among the schools.

It is best practice to provide the student's response and the rubric showing the scores earned for each trait when reporting performance to students and families.

Note: School divisions are to publicly report the results of permissive local performance assessments as a passage rate at the division and school level and include the comparable statewide assessment.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Additional Considerations:

Include details for logistical factors that have been considered such as local record keeping processes and storage of scored student samples; local monitoring processes; human and fiscal resources needed; technology needs; ensuring that all students have been assessed; processes for opportunities with new/alternate tasks and make-up tasks; and processes for working with outside placement facilities to determine the most appropriate assessment method and ensure students are assessed.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Virginia Quality Criteria Review Tool for Performance Assessments

Revised: August 2026

This document, developed in 2019 and updated in 2026, details a set of criteria for the development of performance assessments that measure the application of content knowledge and skills. The criteria are designed to support comparability in rigor and quality across the state.

Briefly, the seven criteria include:

- 1: *Standards of Learning/Intended Learning Outcomes*
- 2: Authenticity
- 3: Language Use for Expressing Reasoning
- 4: Success Criteria for Students
- 5: Student Directions, Prompt, and Resources/Materials
- 6: Accessibility
- 7: Feasibility

Every performance assessment considered for use by a school division should be evaluated against the criteria described in the Virginia Quality Criteria Review Tool for Performance Assessments. If an assessment does not meet the described requirements, adjustments should be made to address each criterion not met prior to implementation. While it is not expected that a task include all of the deeper learning competencies listed in criterion 1C (i.e., mastering rigorous academic content; learning how to think critically and solve problems; working collaboratively; communicating effectively; directing one's own learning; and developing an academic mindset), a quality task should provide the opportunity to demonstrate one or more of these competencies.

School divisions are encouraged to use this tool to support the development of new performance assessments and to inform the creation of instructional tasks that promote student conceptual understanding and build the skills necessary for success on the performance assessment. If an assessment does not fully meet the expectations outlined for a given criterion, the accompanying evidence or rationale should be used to revise and strengthen the assessment prior to its implementation with students.

Virginia Quality Criteria Review Tool for Performance Assessments

Revised: August 2026

Criterion 1: *Standards of Learning*/Intended Learning Outcomes

The rubric for the quality rating is as follows: 0-No Evidence; 1-Limited Evidence; 2-Partial Evidence; 3-Full Evidence.

#	Description	Quality Rating	Evidence or Rationale
1A	The intended learning outcome(s) described by the performance assessment and evaluated by the discipline rubric fully align to the content and rigor of the Virginia <i>Standards of Learning</i> (SOL). <i>This expectation is non-negotiable.</i> • Performance assessment components, resources, and materials are developmentally appropriate for target students. • Student products align to SOL and elicit the disciplinary skills reflected in the VDOE discipline or task rubric.		
1B	The performance assessment goes beyond simple recall, eliciting evidence of complex student thinking and depth of knowledge. The performance assessment requires students to analyze, evaluate, synthesize, and/or apply evidence through disciplinary or cross-disciplinary practices and/or transferable skills. <i>This expectation is non-negotiable.</i>		
1C	The performance assessment provides an opportunity for students to develop and demonstrate (even if not explicitly assessed): • Deeper learning competencies, defined as mastering rigorous academic content; learning how to think critically and solve problems; working		

#	Description	Quality Rating	Evidence or Rationale
	collaboratively; communicating effectively; directing one's own learning; and developing an academic mindset.		

Criterion 2: Authenticity

The rubric for the quality rating is as follows: 0-No Evidence; 1-Limited Evidence; 2-Partial Evidence; 3-Full Evidence.

#	Description	Quality Rating	Evidence or Rationale
2	The performance assessment is authentic along the dimensions: • The performance assessment's topic, context (scenario), materials (e.g., information sources, data, data visualizations, etc.), products, purpose/audience (i.e., what students are asked to do and for whom) are relevant to the real-world students' grade level. • The performance assessment is relevant to the students and community, students' interests, and/or future careers. • The performance assessment asks students to do work authentic to the discipline, what adult practitioners of the discipline do, including analyzing evidence, interpreting sources or data, constructing arguments or claims, developing and interpreting models, and communicating conclusions The performance assessment may also provide opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate: • Life-Ready competencies included in School Performance and Support Framework and defined by the Profile of a Virginia Graduate as content		

#	Description	Quality Rating	Evidence or Rationale
	knowledge, career planning, workplace skills, and community and civic responsibility; • Technology-related competencies; • Integration of intended learning outcomes from two or more subjects.		

Criterion 3: Communication of Reasoning and Justification

The rubric for the quality rating is as follows: 0-No Evidence; 1-Limited Evidence; 2-Partial Evidence; 3-Full Evidence.

#	Description	Quality Rating	Evidence or Rationale
3A	The performance assessment supports academic and disciplinary language use and development, requiring students to communicate reasoning and/or justification. • Multiple means of expression and language production may be provided (e.g., written response, language media production, oral language, etc.). • Students should engage in evidence-based communication about content (e.g., constructing claims or arguments using evidence from information sources) through writing, speaking, presentation or other appropriate disciplinary formats. • Linguistic scaffolds to support acquisition and development of academic and disciplinary language, while maintaining rigor, are included in the performance assessment (e.g., visuals, blank graphic organizers, structured peer interaction, oral rehearsal opportunities, chunked directions, multilingual resources, etc.).		

Criterion 4: Success Criteria for Students

The Virginia Department of Education's Rubrics shall be used to evaluate and score student work for Mandatory and Permissive Local Alternative Assessments.

The rubric for the quality rating is as follows: 0-No Evidence; 1-Limited Evidence; 2-Partial Evidence; 3-Full Evidence.

#	Description	Quality Rating	Evidence or Rationale
4A	The Virginia Department of Education's rubrics shall be used to evaluate and score student work for Mandatory and Permissive Local Alternative Assessments (LAA). The knowledge and skills measured by the performance assessment align to and can be evaluated through the appropriate VDOE rubric. <i>This expectation is non-negotiable.</i>		
4B	<i>Local Performance Assessments or Tasks that are not intended to meet the Mandatory or Permitted Local Alternative Assessment requirements:</i> The performance assessment includes a rubric or other appropriate scoring tools (e.g., checklist, analytic rubric) with scoring dimensions tightly aligned to performance expectations of the intended learning outcomes targeted within the performance assessment. Criteria should include language objectives, if applicable.		
4B	<i>Local Performance Assessments or Tasks that are not intended to meet the Mandatory or Permitted Local Alternative Assessment requirements:</i> The scoring rubric is written clearly and concisely, with audience-friendly language, as appropriate. Language of the scoring tool should describe how a response demonstrates performance expectations so that the tool may be used to provide feedback to students about their work and how it can be improved.		

#	Description	Quality Rating	Evidence or Rationale
4C	Feedback methodology should be used across performance assessments within the course so results on the performance assessment can be used to communicate a consistent set of expectations to students, monitor students' academic growth over time, inform instructional decisions, and communicate student proficiency to others (e.g., parents/guardians). Feedback methodology must clearly indicate the Virginia SOL content and skills measured by the performance assessment.		

Criterion 5: Student Directions, Prompt, and Resources/Materials

The rubric for the quality rating is as follows: 0-No Evidence; 1-Limited Evidence; 2-Partial Evidence; 3-Full Evidence.

#	Description	Quality Rating	Evidence or Rationale
5A	The student-facing task prompt, directions, and resources/materials: - align to the intended learning outcomes, task purpose, success criteria, and how students will demonstrate learning (i.e., the student product will provide evidence of the performance expectations); and - are clear, complete, written in language appropriate to the grade level, and organized for students in an accessible format.		
5B	If the performance assessment is implemented over multiple lessons, a schedule indicating how the performance assessment is implemented across the lessons is included.		
5C	Student-facing prompts and directions should be linguistically accessible while maintaining grade-level rigor and cognitive demand. Resources/materials should include opportunities for understandable, clear input and language support (as noted in criterion 3A).		
5D	The task prompt/directions, topic, context (scenario), and materials/resources are sensitive to the community and do not reflect a discernible political or ideological perspective.		

Criterion 6: Accessibility

The rubric for the quality rating is as follows: 0-No Evidence; 1-Limited Evidence; 2-Partial Evidence; 3-Full Evidence.

#	Description	Quality Rating	Evidence or Rationale
6A	The performance assessment is designed to accommodate the participation of all students. • Directions for teachers identify appropriate accessibility supports, accommodations, or alternatives to facilitate accessibility while maintaining the rigor of the assessments and validity of the intended learning outcomes. • Modifications that fundamentally change the assessment content, rigor, or expectations should not be made. • Directions for teachers should clearly distinguish between accommodations that provide equitable access and scaffolds that support language development. Language proficiency should not prevent students from demonstrating content understanding. For Mandatory and Permissive LAA, accommodations for individual students are determined by the student's Individualized Education Program, Section 504 Plan, or EL Assessment Participation Plan and not identified within the performance task.		
6B	The performance assessment is accessible and allows for differentiating the ways students demonstrate their knowledge such as through the application of principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL). Refer to the National Center on UDL at the Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST).		

#	Description	Quality Rating	Evidence or Rationale
6C	The performance assessment should use appropriate academic and disciplinary language; however, the complexity of that language should not introduce barriers unrelated to the intended learning outcomes.		

Criterion 7: Feasibility

The rubric for the quality rating is as follows: 0-No Evidence; 1-Limited Evidence; 2-Partial Evidence; 3-Full Evidence.

#	Description	Quality Rating	Evidence or Rationale
7A	Resources and materials required by the performance assessment are practical for implementation and easily accessible to teachers.		
7B	The time allotted for implementing the performance assessment is clearly specified and appropriate given the assessment's complexity and the scope of the performance expectations being assessed.		
7C	Information about students' prior learning and how the performance assessment fits within a learning sequence is included.		

Verified Credit Plan: End-of-Course Writing

Each school division using local performance assessments to verify credits in writing must develop a Verified Credit Plan that describes how the school division will meet the requirements included in the Guidelines for Local Alternative Assessments. This information is subject to review by Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) staff and must be maintained on file in the school division in accordance with the regulations for record retention established by the Library of Virginia. When requested by the VDOE, the information must be submitted using this form. Questions regarding this information may be directed to student assessment staff by email at student_assessment@doe.virginia.gov or by telephone at (804) 225-2102.

School Division Information

Division Code (nnn): Click or tap here to enter text.

Division Name: Click or tap here to enter text.

School Year

Example (202X-202X): Click or tap here to enter text.

Verified Credit Plan Contact Persons:

The primary and alternate contact persons should have access to the Verified Credit Plan and be able to address questions from VDOE staff. As the school division designee responsible for the administration of assessments needed to meet graduation requirements, the Division Director of Testing is expected to be either the primary or alternate contact person.

Primary Verified Credit Plan Contact Person

First and Last Name: Click or tap here to enter text.

Position: Click or tap here to enter text.

Email: Click or tap here to enter text.

Alternate Verified Credit Plan Contact Person

First and Last Name: Click or tap here to enter text.

Position: Click or tap here to enter text.

Email: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Directions:

In each section below, describe how the elements of the school division's Verified Credit Plan for End-of-Course (EOC) Writing meet the requirements outlined in the *Guidelines for Local Alternative Assessments* and associated implementation support documents.

Standards of Learning (SOL) Coverage:

Include details such as which grade levels will use performance assessments to verify credits in writing if the division is using an incremental approach to local performance assessment implementation. Indicate the timeline during which specific English *Standards of Learning* for grades 9 through 11 will be addressed, the timeline for collecting persuasive, analytical, and argumentative types of writing and which sample will address the required research component, and the grade level during which the collection of evidence is expected to be complete.

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Evaluation of Performance Tasks:

Provide sufficient detail to describe the local processes used to develop and evaluate tasks, in accordance with the Virginia Quality Criteria Review Tool for Performance Assessment, including which personnel will participate and when and how this will occur. Describe how division staff will ensure that previously used tasks remain accessible and appropriate for all students and meet current needs. Best practices include offering student choice; developing supplementary or alternate tasks for second opportunities and make-ups that allow students to use the same research or literature and annotations; collaborating across school divisions; and involving a broad spectrum of high school English teachers, English department chairs, and division-level instruction and assessment staff in the development of new tasks and revision of existing tasks.

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Completion of Writing Samples:

Include details such as local requirements to ensure that performance assessments are completed under appropriate testing conditions, including but not limited to: description of the training that will be provided to teachers, how testing conditions that do not meet the guidelines will be reported and addressed, and how students will access these assessments.

Collaboration among the primary and secondary contacts for the Verified Credit Plan for EOC Writing, English supervisor and teachers, and technology staff at the division and school levels is a best practice that may enable schools to utilize existing technology applications in new ways to meet security needs. While many divisions approach the completion of writing samples as an “event” (e.g., all writing samples are completed over two consecutive days in all Grade 11 English classrooms), school divisions are encouraged to consider if a more flexible approach to scheduling is possible. For example, a teacher might collect writing samples every Tuesday and Wednesday during October, based on individual student readiness, to have all writing samples collected before the school’s November recalibration and scoring event.

Specific accommodations necessary for students to access these assessments should be documented for individual students but are not included within the Verified Credit Plan. Note that some accommodations are not permissible during SOL testing but may be allowable for all students completing performance assessments (e.g., completing the short paper over multiple days.) Accommodations that advantage students with content-specific support are not permitted.

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Scoring Student Writing Samples:

Include details such as when and how scorers will be trained and how documentation of annual qualification will be monitored; who will conduct this training and maintain the associated documentation; local scoring protocols, including maintaining student anonymity during the scoring process; the local process to ensure scorers remain anchored to the rubrics within Understand Scoring; the process to address nonadjacent scores; and how disturbing content will be addressed. Plans for regular recalibration during a scoring window or scoring event should be included. The local process for appealing the score on a writing sample should be described, and the process and timeline for providing information to students and families on student achievement on writing samples should be included.

It is best practice that each paper is scored by two readers independently, without knowledge of the scores assigned by one another. If each paper will not be scored by two readers, it is recommended that a percentage of papers be scored by two readers.

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Determining if a Verified Credit Should be Awarded and Evaluating the Achievement Level Demonstrated:

School divisions are required to convene a panel to review the collections of evidence against the Performance Level Descriptors (PLDs) when determining if verified credit is awarded and evaluating the achievement level demonstrated by the evidence in the collection. This evaluation is a separate process from scoring. Legislation enacted in 2026 states, “any student who receives a passing score on a permissive local alternative assessment administered pursuant to subdivision 3 b in lieu of any end-of-course *Standards of Learning* assessment corresponding to any graduation requirement shall be deemed to meet the applicable graduation requirement.” Thus, a student whose scores on the writing samples are considered passing would be awarded verified credit.

School divisions must be able to show how the local methodology adopted for evaluating the achievement level is aligned to the PLDs and based on the preponderance of evidence within the writing samples considered. Include details such as the timeline for determining if verified credit will be awarded, the process for training evaluators using the annotated collection of evidence anchor sets in accordance with the resources provided on the [Local High School Performance Assessments: Evaluating Collections of Evidence to Award Verified Credit in Writing](#) webpage, and the local appeals process.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Additional Considerations:

Include details for logistical factors that have been considered such as local record keeping processes and storage of scored collections of evidence; local monitoring processes; human and fiscal resources needed; technology needs; ensuring that all students have been assessed; processes for transfer students; processes for opportunities with new/alternate tasks and make-up tasks; and processes for working with outside placement facilities to determine the most appropriate assessment method. Note that school divisions selected for desk review or audit will provide documentation that includes not only a summary of the number of collections of evidence evaluated and the number of verified credits awarded but also will submit sets of collections of evidence representing each of the achievement levels described in the PLDs.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Verified Credit Plan for End-of-Course History and Social Science



Each school division using permissive local alternative assessments to verify credits in End-of-Course History and Social Science must develop a Verified Credit Plan that describes how the school division will meet the requirements included in the *Guidelines for Local Alternative Assessments*. This information is subject to review by Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) staff and must be maintained on file in the school division in accordance with the regulations for record retention established by the Library of Virginia. When requested by the VDOE, the information must be submitted using this form. Questions regarding this information may be directed to student assessment staff by email at student_assessment@doe.virginia.gov or by telephone at 804-225-2102.

School Division Information

Division Code (nnn): Click or tap here to enter text.

Division Name: Click or tap here to enter text.

School Year

Example (202X-202X): Click or tap here to enter text.

Verified Credit Plan Contact Persons:

The primary and alternate contact persons should have access to the Verified Credit Plan and be able to address questions from VDOE staff. As the school division designee responsible for the administration of assessments needed to meet graduation requirements, the Division Director of Testing is expected to be either the primary or alternate contact person.

Primary Verified Credit Plan Contact Person

First and Last Name: Click or tap here to enter text.

Position: Click or tap here to enter text.

Email: Click or tap here to enter text.

Alternate verified Credit Plan Contact Person

First and Last Name: Click or tap here to enter text.

Position: Click or tap here to enter text.

Email: Click or tap here to enter text.

Directions:

In each section below, describe how the elements of the school division's Verified Credit Plan for End-of-Course (EOC) History and Social Science meet the requirements outlined in the *Guidelines for Local Alternative Assessments* and associated implementation support documents.

Standards of Learning (SOL) Coverage:

Include details for each high school course in which the division will use permissive local alternative assessments to verify a credit in history and social science as allowed by the *Guidelines for Local Alternative Assessments*. Indicate the timeline during which specific state-developed performance tasks will be administered and the SOL measured by each. Ensure that the state-developed performance tasks completed will cover a majority of the different historical eras or categories included in the course. Indicate the timeline for the administration of each local assessment, covering SOL not included in the state-developed performance tasks, to be included in the collection of evidence. The plan should document how the SOL for the entire course have been assessed.

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Completion of State-Developed Performance Tasks:

Include details such as local requirements ensuring summative task responses are completed under appropriate testing conditions, including but not limited to a description of the training that will be provided to teachers, how testing conditions that do not meet the guidelines will be reported and addressed, how students will access these assessments, and how testing conditions will be monitored by the division.

Collaboration among the primary and secondary contacts for the Verified Credit Plan for EOC History and Social Science, History and Social Science supervisor and teachers, and technology staff at the division and school levels is a best practice that may enable schools to utilize existing technology applications in new ways to meet security needs.

While many divisions approach the completion of permissive local alternative assessments as an “event” (e.g., all student responses to summative task prompts are completed over two consecutive days in all Virginia and United States History classrooms), school divisions are encouraged to consider if a more flexible approach to scheduling is possible. For example, a school might collect student responses to one state-developed performance task every Tuesday and Wednesday during October, having each course teacher schedule his/her classes

individually based on needs and readiness and accommodations, so that all responses are collected and ready for scoring at a schoolwide November event.

Specific accommodations necessary for students to access these assessments should be documented for individual students but are not included within the Verified Credit Plan. Note that some accommodations are not permissible during SOL testing but may be allowable for all students completing performance assessments (e.g., completing the response to the summative task over multiple days.) Accommodations that advantage students with content-specific support (e.g., handouts showing students how to organize their response, graphic organizers that lead students through the steps of stating a claim and supporting that claim, a list of information to include in each paragraph of a response, etc.) are not permitted.

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Scoring Responses:

Based on legislation enacted in 2026, any teacher who participates in scoring or grading any permissive local alternative assessment for the purpose of earning verified credit shall not grade any assessment completed by a student the teacher taught in any class or subject area during that school year.

Include details such as when and how scorers will be trained; who will conduct this training and maintain the associated documentation; local scoring protocols, including maintaining student anonymity during the scoring process; the local process to ensure scorers remain anchored to the rubrics; the process to address nonadjacent scores when responses are score twice; and how disturbing content will be addressed. Plans for regular recalibration during a scoring window or scoring event should be included. The local process for appealing the score on a response should be described, and the process and timeline for providing information to students and families on student achievement for these responses should be included.

It is best practice that each paper is scored by two readers independently, without knowledge of the scores assigned by one another. If each paper will not be scored by two readers, it is recommended that a percentage of papers be scored by two readers.

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Determining if a Verified Credit Should be Awarded:

School divisions are required to convene a panel to review collections of evidence as described in the Guidelines for Local Alternative Assessments. This evaluation is a separate process from scoring. Legislation enacted in 2026 states, “any student who receives a passing score on a permissive local alternative assessment administered pursuant to subdivision 3 b in lieu of any

end-of-course *Standards of Learning* assessment corresponding to any graduation requirement shall be deemed to meet the applicable graduation requirement.” Thus, a student whose scores on the responses to permissive local alternative assessments are considered passing would be awarded verified credit.

Include details such as the timeline for determining if verified credit will be awarded; the process for training the local panel; the process for documenting the local panel’s determination and for sharing outcomes with students, teachers, families; and the local appeals process.

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Additional Considerations:

Include details for logistical factors that have been considered such as local record keeping processes and storage of scored collections of evidence; local monitoring processes; human and fiscal resources needed; technology needs; ensuring that all students have been assessed; processes for transfer students; processes for opportunities with new/alternate tasks and make-up tasks; and processes for working with outside placement facilities to determine the most appropriate assessment method. Note that school divisions selected for desk review or audit will provide documentation that includes a summary of the number of collections of evidence evaluated, the number of verified credits awarded and denied, and, when requested, collections of evidence and associated documentation related to the local panel’s determination.

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Verified Credit Plan for End-of-Course Science

Each school division using permissive local alternative assessments to verify credits in End-of-Course Science must develop a Verified Credit Plan that describes how the school division will meet the requirements included in the *Guidelines for Local Alternative Assessments*. This information is subject to review by Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) staff and must be maintained on file in the school division in accordance with the regulations for record retention established by the Library of Virginia. When requested by the VDOE, the information must be submitted using this form. Questions regarding this information may be directed to student assessment staff by email at student_assessment@doe.virginia.gov or by telephone at 804-225-2102.

School Division Information

Division Code (nnn): Click or tap here to enter text.

Division Name: Click or tap here to enter text.

School Year

Example (202X-202X): Click or tap here to enter text.

Verified Credit Plan Contact Persons:

The primary and alternate contact persons should have access to the Verified Credit Plan and be able to address questions from VDOE staff. As the school division designee responsible for the administration of assessments needed to meet graduation requirements, the Division Director of Testing is expected to be either the primary or alternate contact person.

Primary Verified Credit Plan Contact Person

First and Last Name: Click or tap here to enter text.

Position: Click or tap here to enter text.

Email: Click or tap here to enter text.

Alternate verified Credit Plan Contact Person

First and Last Name: Click or tap here to enter text.

Position: Click or tap here to enter text.

Email: Click or tap here to enter text.

Directions:

In each section below, describe how the elements of the school division's Verified Credit Plan for End-of-Course (EOC) Science meet the requirements outlined in the *Guidelines for Local Alternative Assessments* and associated implementation support documents.

Standards of Learning (SOL) Coverage:

Include details for each high school course in which the division will use permissive local alternative assessments to verify a credit in science as allowed by the *Guidelines for Local Alternative Assessments*. Indicate the timeline during which performance tasks will be administered and the SOL measured by each. Ensure that the performance tasks completed will cover a majority of the content in the course. Indicate the timeline for the administration of each local assessment that will be used in the collection of evidence. The plan should document how the SOL for the entire course have been assessed.

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Completion of

Performance Tasks:

Include details such as local requirements ensuring summative task responses are completed under appropriate testing conditions, including but not limited to a description of the training that will be provided to teachers, how testing conditions that do not meet the guidelines will be reported and addressed, how students will access these assessments, and how testing conditions will be monitored by the division.

Collaboration among the primary and secondary contacts for the Verified Credit Plan for EOC Science, Science supervisor and teachers, and technology staff at the division and school levels is a best practice that may enable schools to utilize existing technology applications in new ways to meet security needs.

While many divisions approach the completion of permissive local alternative assessments as an “event” (e.g., all student responses to summative task prompts are completed over two consecutive days in all Earth Science classrooms), school divisions are encouraged to consider if a more flexible approach to scheduling is possible. For example, a school might collect student responses to one performance task every Tuesday and Wednesday during October, having each course teacher schedule his/her classes individually based on needs and readiness and accommodations, so that all responses are collected and ready for scoring at a schoolwide November event.

Specific accommodations necessary for students to access these assessments should be documented for individual students but are not included within the Verified Credit Plan. Note that some accommodations are not permissible during SOL testing but may be allowable for all students completing performance assessments (e.g., completing the response to the summative task over multiple days.) Accommodations that advantage students with content-specific support (e.g., handouts showing students how to organize their response, graphic organizers that lead students through the steps of stating a claim and supporting that claim, a list of information to include in each paragraph of a response, etc.) are not permitted.

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Scoring Responses:

Based on legislation enacted in 2026, any teacher who participates in scoring or grading any permissive local alternative assessment for the purpose of earning verified credit shall not grade any assessment completed by a student the teacher taught in any class or subject area during that school year.

Include details such as when and how scorers will be trained; who will conduct this training and maintain the associated documentation; local scoring protocols, including maintaining student anonymity during the scoring process; the local process to ensure scorers remain anchored to the rubrics; the process to address nonadjacent scores when responses are score twice; and how disturbing content will be addressed. Plans for regular recalibration during a scoring window or scoring event should be included. The local process for appealing the score on a response should be described, and the process and timeline for providing information to students and families on student achievement for these responses should be included.

It is best practice that each paper is scored by two readers independently, without knowledge of the scores assigned by one another. If each paper will not be scored by two readers, it is recommended that a percentage of papers be scored by two readers.

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Determining if a Verified Credit Should be Awarded:

School divisions are required to convene a panel to review collections of evidence as described in the Guidelines for Local Alternative Assessments. This evaluation is a separate process from scoring. Legislation enacted in 2026 states, “any student who receives a passing score on a permissive local alternative assessment administered pursuant to subdivision 3 b in lieu of any end-of-course *Standards of Learning* assessment corresponding to any graduation requirement shall be deemed to meet the applicable graduation requirement.” Thus, a student whose scores

on the responses to permissive local alternative assessments are considered passing would be awarded verified credit.

Include details such as the timeline for determining if verified credit will be awarded; the process for training the local panel; the process for documenting the local panel's determination and for sharing outcomes with students, teachers, families; and the local appeals process.

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Additional Considerations:

Include details for logistical factors that have been considered such as local record keeping processes and storage of scored collections of evidence; local monitoring processes; human and fiscal resources needed; technology needs; ensuring that all students have been assessed; processes for transfer students; processes for opportunities with new/alternate tasks and make-up tasks; and processes for working with outside placement facilities to determine the most appropriate assessment method. Note that school divisions selected for desk review or audit will provide documentation that includes a summary of the number of collections of evidence evaluated, the number of verified credits awarded and denied, and, when requested, collections of evidence and associated documentation related to the local panel's determination.

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Virginia Assessment Program

School Division Personnel Test Security Agreement

The *School Division Personnel Test Security Agreement* that follows should be read and understood by all school division personnel. All individuals who may be exposed to secure test items and those involved in the administration of the Virginia Assessment Program (VAP) tests (including, but not limited to, Examiners, Proctors, Interpreters, and Scribes) **MUST** read, understand, and agree to adhere to the following:

1. Students must never be exposed to unreleased (secure)¹ test items (except while completing an official VAP test attempt) or exposed to answers to secure test items. **Using secure test items in any form (including reworded test items) at any time is a violation of test security.** If in doubt whether test items are secure, contact your Division Director of Testing for assistance.
2. All persons are prohibited from providing students with answers to secure test items, suggesting how to respond to secure test items, or influencing student responses to secure test items. Prohibited actions include, but are not limited to, the following: providing clues or hints, providing reminders of content or testing strategies, prompting students to correct or check/recheck specific responses, permitting access to curricular materials² (e.g., textbooks, notes, review materials, bulletin boards, posters, charts, maps, timelines, etc.), or using voice inflection, facial gestures, pointing, gesturing, tapping, or other actions to indicate a response or accuracy of a student's response.
3. Examiners should be in possession of secure test materials only on the day they are administering a test, or in accordance with the procedures for advanced access to a test, and only for the specific test being administered. For the paper EOC *Writing* test only, Examiners are not permitted to open sealed packages of prompts more than 30 minutes before the administration of the short-paper component.
4. Reading or reviewing any part of a secure test (e.g., test items, answer options, passages, pictures, diagrams, charts, maps, etc.) before, during, or after the test administration is a violation of test security unless an Examiner is reading the test items as part of an accommodation (e.g., read-aloud, interpretation/transliteration, etc.) or is reviewing the test items in preparation for providing that accommodation.
5. Any Login IDs and passwords issued for the administration of VAP tests are secure and must remain confidential.
6. Logging into or navigating throughout a secure online test by anyone except the student whose name appears on the Student Testing Ticket is a violation of test security³. Any

exceptions to this must first be authorized by the Virginia Department of Education through the Division Director of Testing.

7. Capturing ALL OR ANY PART of a secure test is a violation of test security. Prohibited actions include, but are not limited to, copying, photographing, recording, outlining, or summarizing test content or details regarding the secure test content. Any exceptions to this must first be authorized by the Virginia Department of Education through the Division Director of Testing.

8. All VAP tests must be administered strictly in accordance with the instructions provided in the VAP test manuals. This includes, but is not limited to, adhering to procedures for the handling, distribution and use of test materials and test manipulatives, adhering to specific requirements associated with test accommodations (e.g., read-aloud accommodation, dictation to scribe, etc.), and reading all test directions to students exactly as written. VAP test directions must not be paraphrased, altered, or expanded without prior authorization from the Virginia Department of Education through the Division Director of Testing unless the *Examiner's Manual* allows flexibility in providing specific directions.

9. Sample items are included at the beginning of each VAP test and are the only items on the test that may be used with students to review, as directed in the *Examiner's Manual*, test item format and procedures for indicating responses. Students should also be provided with opportunities prior to the day of their test administration to become familiar with VAP test item formats and how to indicate responses. Resources such as SOL Practice Items are available for these purposes on the Virginia Department of Education website.

10. All persons are prohibited from attempting to formally or informally score secure VAP tests or individual test items. Prohibited actions include, but are not limited to, creating an answer key, reviewing or scoring a student's test item response or responses, reviewing or scoring student scratch paper, or tracking student performance on test items⁴.

11. All persons are prohibited from altering, in any manner, student responses to secure test items. Prohibited actions include, but are not limited to, erasing or deleting student responses, changing student responses, or providing responses to items left unanswered or partially unanswered.

¹VAP test items remain secure before, during, and after all test administrations until such time that the Virginia Department of Education publishes the test item on its website as released. The end of a test administration does NOT indicate secure VAP test items are released.²For Virginia Alternate Assessment Program tests, it is unnecessary to cover or remove curricular materials from classroom walls.

³ Examiner's administering assessments for the Virginia Alternate Assessment Program are permitted to sign in, navigate, and respond to items based on the needs of the individual student being assessed and in accordance with the procedures in the *Examiner's Manual*.

⁴ Examiner's administering assessments for the Virginia Alternate Assessment Program are permitted to record student responses on the Examiner's Copy of the test to track student advancement through the test and to enter item responses at a later date in TestNav in accordance with the procedures in the *Examiner's Manual*.

Complete the following for the Virginia Assessment Program test administrations in which you may be participating only if you do not have a *School Division Personnel Test Security Agreement* on file in the school division (check all that apply):

☐ **Fall/Spring/Summer EOC Writing Test Administrations**

☐ **Fall/Spring/Summer Non-Writing Test Administrations**

☐ **Virginia Alternate Assessment Program (VAAP)**

I acknowledge that I will have access to the Virginia Assessment Program (VAP) tests for the purpose of administering a test. I also acknowledge that I have read, understand, and agree to adhere to all elements of the *School Division Personnel Test Security Agreement* and the following:

1. I have read the legislation passed by the Virginia General Assembly (§ 22.1–19.1 Action for violations related to secure mandatory tests and § 22.1–292.1 Violations related to secure mandatory tests).
2. I understand that if test security procedures are not followed, my license may be suspended or revoked and/or I may be assessed a civil penalty for each violation.
3. All known or suspected violations of Virginia Assessment Program test security shall be reported to appropriate school division personnel or to the Virginia Department of Education. To contact the Virginia Department of Education to report a known or suspected violation, call assessment staff at (804) 225-2102, or mail details to Office of Student Assessment, Virginia Department of Education, P.O. Box 2120, Richmond, VA 23218-2120.

Please be sure to sign and return the *School Division Personnel Test Security Agreement* to the appropriate test administrator before participating in any Virginia Assessment Program test administration activities involving secure test materials.

Signed:	Print Name:
Position:	Date:
School:	Division:

Please read legislation passed by the Virginia General Assembly (§ 22.1–19.1 Action for violations related to secure mandatory tests) regarding the repercussions of violating test security.

§ 22.1–19.1. Action for violations related to secure mandatory tests.

A. The Office of the Attorney General, on behalf of the Board of Education, may bring a cause of action in the circuit court having jurisdiction where the person resides or where the act occurred for injunctive relief, civil penalty, or both, against any person who knowingly and willfully commits any of the following acts related to secure mandatory tests required by the Board to be administered to students:

1. Permitting unauthorized access to secure test questions prior to testing;
2. Copying or reproducing all or any portion of any secure test booklet;
3. Divulging the contents of any portion of a secure test;
4. Altering test materials or examinees' responses in any way;
5. Creating or making available answer keys to secure tests;
6. Making a false certification on the test security form established by the Department of Education;
7. Excluding students from testing who are required to be assessed; or
8. Participating in, directing, aiding or abetting, or assisting in any of the acts prohibited in this section.

For the purpose of this subsection, “secure” means an item, question, or test that has not been made publicly available by the Department of Education.

B. Nothing in this section may be construed to prohibit or restrict the reasonable and necessary actions of the Board of Education, Superintendent of Public Instruction, or the Department of Education or their agents or employees engaged in test development or selection, test form construction, standard setting, test scoring, reporting test scores, or any other related activities which, in the judgment of the Superintendent of Public Instruction or Board of Education, are necessary and appropriate.

C. Any person who violates any provisions of this section may be assessed a civil penalty not to exceed \$1,000 for each violation. Furthermore, any person whose administrative or teaching license has been suspended or revoked pursuant to § 22.1-292.1 may be assessed a civil

penalty for the same violation under this section and the reasonable costs of any review or investigation of a violation of test security.

All civil penalties paid to the Commonwealth pursuant to this section shall be deposited into the Literary Fund.

D. For the purpose of this section, “person” shall not mean a student enrolled in a public school.

Please read legislation passed by the Virginia General Assembly (§ 22.1–292.1 Violations related to secure mandatory tests) regarding the repercussions of violating test security.

§ 22.1-292.1. Violations related to secure mandatory tests.

A. The Board of Education may (i) issue a written reprimand to or (ii) suspend or revoke the administrative or teaching license of any holder of a Board-issued administrative or teaching license who knowingly and willfully commits any of the following acts related to secure mandatory tests administered to students as required by this title or by the Board of Education:

1. Giving unauthorized access to secure test questions;
2. Copying or reproducing all or any portion of any secure test booklet;
3. Divulging the contents of any portion of a secure test;
4. Coaching or assisting examinees during testing or altering test materials or examinees’ responses in any way;
5. Making available any answer keys;
6. Failing to follow test security procedures established by the Department of Education;
7. Providing a false certification on any test security form required by the Department of Education;
8. Retaining a copy of secure test questions;
9. Excluding students from testing who are required to be assessed; or
10. Participating in, directing, aiding, assisting in, or encouraging any of the acts prohibited by this section.

For the purposes of this section, “secure test” means an item, question, or test that has not been made publicly available by the Department of Education.

Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit educational personnel from providing input to administrators or other authorized personnel, including school board members and

members of the General Assembly, except when done in a manner that violates test integrity or security regarding the accuracy, clarity, or propriety of test items or test administration procedures.

B. Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit or restrict the reasonable and necessary actions of the Board of Education, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, or the Department of Education in test development or selection, test form construction, standard setting, test scoring and reporting, or any other related activities which, in the judgment of the Superintendent of Public Instruction or the Board of Education, are necessary and appropriate.

C. Any suspension or revocation imposed for the acts enumerated in this section shall be rendered pursuant to Board regulations promulgated pursuant to the Administrative Process Act (§ 2.2-4000 et seq.) and § 22.1-298.1, governing the licensure of teachers.

For additional information on local alternative assessments, contact the Office of Student Assessment at the Virginia Department of Education at student_assessment@doe.virginia.gov

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