

- C. Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the Board may provide for the issuance of a provisional license, valid for a period not to exceed three years, to any person who does not meet the requirements of this section or any other requirement for licensure imposed by law.

On June 22, 2005, the Board of Education approved the recommendation of *The Special Committee of the Board of Education to Study and Make Recommendations Relative to Teacher Licensure Assessment* and prescribed the following professional teacher's examinations for initial licensure in Virginia: (1) Literacy and Communication Skills Assessment; (2) Praxis II (content assessment); and (3) if applicable, the Virginia Reading Assessment.

Summary of Major Elements:

An award was granted to National Evaluation Systems, Inc., to develop the Virginia Communication and Literacy Assessment. The VCLA is composed of two areas—reading and writing. Each area is assessed by a separate subtest—a reading subtest and a writing subtest. The reading subtest contains multiple-choice items. The writing subtest contains multiple-choice items and two writing assignments—a written summary and a written composition.

The **reading** subtest assesses the following:

- Understanding of the meaning of words and phrases;
- Understanding the main idea and supporting details in written material;
- Analyzing the relationship among ideas in written material;
- Using critical-reasoning skills to evaluate written material; and
- Applying skills for summarizing, outlining, and visually representing written materials and for interpreting information presented in graphic form.

The **writing** subtest assesses the following:

- Understanding the influence of purpose and audience in written communication;
- Applying principles of unity, focus, and development in writing; principles of organizing in writing; principles of sentence and paragraph construction in writing; and correct usage in Standard English;
- Applying knowledge of mechanical conventions in Standard English;
- Improving ineffective writing by analyzing and revising sentences containing problems related to grammar and usage, construction, and mechanics;
- Producing a written summary of a given informational or persuasive passage; and
- Preparing a developed composition on a given topic using language consistent with a given audience and purpose.

The **reading** subtest contains 40 multiple-choice items of which 35 are scored. The **writing** subtest contains 46 multiple-choice and short-answer items of which 41 are scored. Additionally, two writing assignments are required including: (1) a written summary, and (2) a written composition.

The VCLA is **not** a timed test; however, the test must be completed during the four-hour test session. An individual may choose to take both the reading and writing or one subtest during a test session.

The first administration of the test was held January 7, 2006, and the following data provides information regarding the test takers:

Number of Test Takers:	607
Number of Test Takers Holding Licenses (provisional or special education conditional):	147
Number of Test Takers with Failing Scores for Praxis I:	200*
Number of Test Takers with Passing Scores for Praxis I:	114*

**reflects score reports submitted to the Department of Education*

A Validation and Standard-Setting Study was conducted on January 20, 2006. The study was facilitated by staff from the National Evaluation Systems, Inc. The focus of the VCLA validation study, that included Virginia classroom teachers, institutions of higher education representatives, and administrators, was to establish the degree to which the content measured by the tests was directly related to the knowledge and skills required for an initial teacher’s license in the state. Virginia educators served on the content review committee for the test. This committee was responsible for reviewing and validating the content of the test using the Test Blueprint (an outline of topics to be tested) and test/item specifications; review and validation of test items; review of scoring procedures and guidelines for constructed-response items; and selection of marker responses. The Bias Committee had the responsibility of reviewing and preventing bias within the Test Blueprint and the test items.

Standard-Setting Results

The results of the standard-setting study may be summarized as follows:

Test	Number of Correct Items	Passing Percentage Based on Test Takers from First Test Administration
Reading	26 of 35	72%
Writing	29 of 41 multiple choice and short-answer 29 of 40 points on writing assignments	41%

Advisory Board on Teacher Education and Licensure (ABTEL) Recommendation

The advisory board approved a motion at its meeting on February 6, 2006, recommending a first series of cut scores for the VCLA as shown in the following chart. With the advisory board’s recommendation an individual may satisfy the test requirement by meeting the individual scores on the reading and writing subtests (235 scaled score) or meeting the composite scaled score of 470. The score range for each subtest is from 100 to 300. Further, ABTEL recommended that the cut scores be re-examined and, if necessary, adjusted in 2008, using the two full years of VCLA test data.

Test	Number of Correct Items	Passing Percentage Based on Test Takers from First Test Administration
Reading	23 of 35	86%
Writing	26 of 41 multiple choice and short-answer 26 of 40 points on writing assignments	64%

The recommendation from ABTEL takes into account one standard error of measurement.

The Advisory Board on Teacher Education and Licensure made its recommendations based on the following considerations:

- (1) Phase in the first series of cut scores at a lower rate and review the scores after two years based on test data results;
- (2) VCLA is a new test only used in Virginia, thereby prohibiting the opportunity to review test data from other states;
- (3) Test data from the first administration (January 7, 2006) may not be representative of the various groups who will be required to take the test; and
- (4) Colleges and universities and other providers of teacher education programs may need to adjust their curricula to focus on the objectives of the test.

Superintendent's Recommendation:

The Acting Superintendent of Public Instruction recommends that the Board of Education approve the Advisory Board on Teacher Education and Licensure's recommendation of requiring individual scores of 235 (scaled score) on the reading and writing subtests or meeting the composite scaled score of 470 for the Virginia Communication and Literacy Assessment (VCLA).

Impact on Resources: Test takers will pay the testing fees.

Timetable for Further Review/Action: N/A