

Virginia Board of Education Agenda Item



Agenda Item: H

Date: July 24, 2014

Title	First Review of Proposed Local Assessment Guidelines Developed in Response to 2014 Acts of Assembly		
Presenter	Mrs. Shelley Loving-Ryder, Assistant Superintendent, Division of Student Assessment and School Improvement		
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Purpose of Presentation:

Action required by state or federal law or regulation.

Previous Review or Action:

No previous review or action.

Action Requested:

Action will be requested at a future meeting. Specify anticipated date below:

Date: September 18, 2014

Action: Final Review

Alignment with Board of Education Goals: Please indicate (X) all that apply:

	Goal 1: Accountability for Student Learning
	Goal 2: Rigorous Standards to Promote College and Career Readiness
X	Goal 3: Expanded Opportunities to Learn
	Goal 4: Nurturing Young Learners
	Goal 5: Highly Qualified and Effective Educators
X	Goal 6: Sound Policies for Student Success
	Goal 7: Safe and Secure Schools
	Other Priority or Initiative. Specify:

Background Information and Statutory Authority:

Goal Three: The approval of the proposed guidelines for local assessments will support expanded opportunities for student learning.

Goal Six: The approval of the proposed guidelines for local assessments will promote sound policies for student success.

The 2014 Acts of Assembly 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. In addition, the legislation requires 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. According to the legislation, the Virginia Board of Education is to develop guidelines that “1) 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; (2) permit and encourage integrated assessments that include multiple subject areas; and (3) 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 alternative assessments.”

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia that §[22.1-253.13:3](#) of the Code of Virginia is amended as follows:

“Each school board shall annually certify that it has provided instruction and administered an alternative assessment, consistent with Board guidelines, to students in grades three through eight in each Standards of Learning subject area in which a Standards of Learning assessment was not administered during the school year. Such guidelines shall (1) 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; (2) permit and encourage integrated assessments that include multiple subject areas; and (3) 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 alternative assessments.”

Over the past several months the Board has heard from numerous organizations regarding the development and implementation of the local assessment guidelines required by this legislation. The following organizations have either presented to the Board’s Accountability Committee or to the full Board.

- Virginia Consortium of Social Studies Specialists and College Educators
- Virginia Association of Science Teachers
- Virginia Association of Teachers of English
- Virginia Council for the Social Studies
- Assessment and Accountability Roundtable
- Virginia Mathematics and Science Coalition

Summary of Important Issues: The proposed guidelines contained in Attachment A were developed using input from the organizations listed above and from other school division personnel. The proposed guidelines acknowledge that the legislation’s timeline provides school divisions with an immediate deadline to implement the local assessments. As such, the guidelines for the 2014-2015 year provide school divisions considerable flexibility. The Board will review the guidelines after the 2014-2015 school year and will likely revise them based on the experiences of the first year of implementation.

Impact on Fiscal and Human Resources:

Costs will be absorbed within the Department of Education’s existing resources.

Timetable for Further Review/Action:

The proposal for the local assessment guidelines is expected to come before the Board of Education for final review on September 18, 2014.

Superintendent's Recommendation:

The Superintendent of Public Instruction recommends that the Board of Education receive the proposed guidelines for first review.

Guidelines for Local Assessments for 2014-2015 Developed in Response to 2014 Acts of Assembly

Background

Legislative Mandate: House Bill 930 and Senate Bill 306

House Bill 930 and Senate Bill 306 (§ 22.1-253.13:3.C of the *Code of Virginia*) eliminated several Standards of Learning (SOL) tests: Grade 3 History, Grade 3 Science, Grade 5 writing, United States History to 1865, and United States History: 1865 to the Present. In addition to eliminating these SOL tests, the legislation required school divisions to administer alternative assessments in each of the content areas where an SOL test was eliminated. Specifically the requirements of the legislation are as follows:

Each school board shall annually certify that it has provided instruction and administered an alternative assessment, consistent with Board guidelines, to students in grades three through eight in each Standards of Learning subject area in which a Standards of Learning assessment was not administered during the school year. Such guidelines shall (1) 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; (2) permit and encourage integrated assessments that include multiple subject areas; and (3) 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 alternative assessments.

Purpose of the Guidelines

Over the past several years there has been increasing concern regarding the amount of testing in local school divisions and the time spent in test preparation activities. The intent of this legislation was to eliminate some of the tests used for accountability and to encourage the greater use of assessments that were designed to inform instruction. While the legislation does not mandate the type of local assessment that should be administered, the intent of the guidelines is to encourage instructionally sensitive assessments.

Revision of the Guidelines

The current version of the guidelines was developed with the understanding that the legislation's timeline provides school divisions with an immediate deadline to implement the local assessments. As such, the guidelines for the 2014-2015 year provide school divisions with considerable flexibility. The Board will review the guidelines after the 2014-2015 school year and will likely revise them based on the experiences of the first year of implementation.

Coverage of SOL

For the 2014-2015 school year, school divisions will be asked to administer assessments that address each strand within the SOL for that content area and grade level (e.g., Force, Motion, and Energy for Grade 3 Science). However, the assessments will not be expected to cover all of the SOL contained in that strand. The requirements for coverage of the SOL may increase in subsequent years as experience in implementing the local assessments statewide is gained.

Certification That Content Has Been Taught and Assessments Administered

Scores from the local assessments will not be reported to the Department of Education. Instead local school boards and division superintendents will certify through the annual Standards of Quality (SOQ) compliance assurance that local alternative assessments measuring the Standards of Learning (SOL) and adhering to the Board's guidelines have been administered. School divisions will be asked to retain 1) documentation that demonstrates that the assessments administered address each strand included in the SOL for that grade and subject, 2) copies of the assessments, and 3) any ancillary materials such as rubrics or sample student responses used to train teachers. During the 2014-2015 school year Department staff will conduct site visits or telephone interviews to determine how local school divisions are verifying that the content is being taught and the types of alternative assessments administered. As part of the site visits or the interviews, some of the documents mentioned above may be reviewed.

Use of Authentic Performance Assessments

As background, performance assessments generally require students to perform a task or create a product that is typically scored using a rubric. Authentic performance assessments often include tasks that mirror those that might occur in a "real-life" situation. While the legislation provides for the use of authentic performance assessments and portfolios, the use of such assessments is not required.

Development or Selection of Assessments

The development and/or selection of the local assessments are left to the discretion of the school division. School divisions may use a combination of several different assessments for each grade and content area to meet the requirement of the legislation, or they may choose a specific test. Assessments used should be designed to provide feedback to parents and teachers regarding the extent to which the student has demonstrated proficiency in the content included in the SOL covered.

Local school divisions may choose to administer the same assessments for particular grade levels and content areas to all students in the division. The use of divisionwide assessments ensures consistency across the division so that the local school board and superintendent can certify that the assessments required by this legislation have been administered. If school divisions choose to allow more flexibility at the school level in selecting the assessments, the school division should prepare a written plan detailing the evidence from each school that will be reviewed by the local school board and superintendent to certify that the requirements of the legislation have been met. Such evidence should include: 1) documentation that

demonstrates that the assessments administered address each strand included in the SOL for that grade and subject, 2) copies of the assessments, and 3) any ancillary materials such as rubrics or sample student responses used to train teachers.

Use of Integrated Assessments

The legislation 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 the content of each specific set of SOL covered.

Use of Local Assessments in State Accreditation or Federal Accountability

The results of the local authentic assessments will not be used to designate state accreditation or federal accountability status.