

# Virginia Board of Education Agenda Item



Agenda Item: E

Date: June 25, 2015

<b>Title</b>	Final Review of Proposal to Enact Special Provision in the <i>Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia</i> (8VAC20-131-280E) Related to Use of Test Scores in Calculating Accreditation Ratings Effective with the 2015-2016 School Year		
<b>Presenter</b>	Dr. Cynthia Cave, Assistant Superintendent, Division of Policy and Communications		
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**Purpose of Presentation:**

Action required by state or federal law or regulation.

**Previous Review or Action:**

Previous review and action. Specify date and action taken below:  
First Review May 28, 2015

**Action Requested:**

Final review: Action requested at this meeting.

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

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

**Background Information and Statutory Authority:**

Goal 1: Accountability for Student Learning

Considering an adjustment in the calculation of the accreditation ratings for 2015-2016 to ameliorate the loss of the Standards of Learning (SOL) tests eliminated by the 2014 Acts of the Assembly will support accountability for student learning.

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. School divisions have expressed concern about the impact

their elimination will have on the accreditation ratings for 2015-2016. While the Board is considering changes to the *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia* (SOA) that would recognize improvements in the pass rates for schools as well as student growth, these new ratings will not be available for the 2015-2016 accreditation cycle. This means that while the accreditation ratings have not changed, the number of tests used to calculate the ratings has changed considerably.

The Board does have the authority under the *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia* (SOA) to alter the inclusions and exclusions from the accreditation calculations by providing adequate notice to local school boards.

*The Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia* (8VAC20-131-280E) provide the following authority:

The Board of Education may adopt special provisions related to the administration and use of any Virginia assessment program test in a content area. The Board of Education may adopt special provisions related to the administration and use of the graduation and completion index, as prescribed by the board. The Board of Education may also alter the inclusions and exclusions from the accreditation calculations by providing adequate notice to local school boards. The board may add new tests or discontinue the use of existing tests in the Virginia Assessment Program by providing adequate notice to local school boards.

**Summary of Important Issues:**

Based on the SOA requirements, currently schools are accredited primarily on the percentage of students passing the Virginia assessment program tests in the four core academic areas administered in the school. The accreditation ratings are based on a trailing three-year average that includes the current year scores and the scores from the two most recent years in each applicable academic area, or on the current year's scores, whichever is higher. In order to ameliorate the impact of the SOL tests eliminated by the 2014 Acts of the Assembly, the Board is asked to consider using a four-year average in calculating the accreditation pass rates for those areas in which SOL tests have been eliminated: English, science and history/social science for elementary schools and history/social science for middle schools. This change would provide an additional year in which the eliminated tests are included in the accreditation calculations and would be applicable to the accreditation ratings only until new accreditation ratings are approved by the Board.

**Impact on Fiscal and Human Resources:**

Costs to adjust the calculations for the accreditation ratings will be absorbed by the Department of Education's existing resources.

**Timetable for Further Review/Action:**

Upon action by the Board school divisions will be notified of the change in the accreditation calculations and Department staff will begin the necessary work needed to include the four-year average in the accreditation calculations as described in the proposal.

**Superintendent's Recommendation:**

The Superintendent of Public Instruction recommends that the Board of Education approve the proposal to use a four-year average in addition to the three-year average and the current year average in those areas in which SOL tests have been eliminated: English, science and history/social science for elementary schools and history/social science for middle schools effective with the accreditation ratings for the 2015-2016 school year and continuing until such time as new accreditation ratings are effective.

**Rationale:**

Approving the proposal to use a four-year average in addition to the three-year average and the current year average in those areas in which SOL tests have been eliminated: English, science and history/social science for elementary schools and history/social science for middle schools at the June 25, 2015, meeting will allow Department staff sufficient time to adjust the accreditation calculations before accreditation ratings are released.