

ACCOUNTABILITY TERMINOLOGY

Academic review - A process for helping schools and school divisions identify and analyze instructional and organizational factors affecting student achievement

Academic review team - A team that conducts an academic review

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

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

Achievement gap - Differences in academic performance among student groups

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

AYP - Adequate Yearly Progress represents the minimum level of improvement that schools and school divisions must achieve each year as required by ESEA.

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

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

AMO - Annual Measurable Objectives are the minimum required percentages of students determined to be proficient in each content area

Assessment - A test or other method for measuring achievement

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

Corrective action plan - A plan outlining methods to improve teaching, administration or curriculum that a school or school division classified as "in improvement" undertakes to improve student achievement

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

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

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

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

Graduation rate - Virginia calculates three graduation "rates" for accountability purposes:

- The Virginia On-Time Graduation Rate is the percentage of students who graduate with a Board of Education-approved diploma within four years of entering high school.
- The Federal Graduation Indicator is the percentage of students who graduate with a Standard or Advanced Studies Diploma. It is used in calculating AYP ratings of high schools, school divisions and the commonwealth.
- The Graduation and Completion Index will be used — beginning in 2011-2012 (based on 2010-2011 results) — to determine the accreditation ratings of high schools.

Inclusion - The practice of placing students with disabilities in regular classrooms

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

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

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

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

NCLB - See "ESEA"

Other academic indicator - For AYP calculations, in addition to meeting reading and mathematics objectives, elementary and middle schools must also meet benchmarks for attendance, science, writing or history, and high schools, school divisions and the state must also meet an objective for graduation. These

additional objectives are known as other academic indicators. Prior to the beginning of the school year, school divisions must declare whether they will use attendance, science, writing or history as the other academic indicator for elementary and middle schools.

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

Provisionally Accredited-Graduation Rate - A high school or combined school with a graduating class receives a “provisionally accredited-graduation rate” rating if students achieve adjusted pass rates of 70 percent or more in all four content areas and a Graduation and Completion Index of 80-84 points.

Public school choice - See “Transfer Option”

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

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

Safe harbor - A provision for making AYP intended for schools and school divisions that are making progress in raising student achievement but not yet meeting target goals for AYP

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

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

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

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

- For AYP purposes, AP and IB tests are counted in the same way as all other state assessments.
- For accreditation, all board-approved substitute assessments are included.

Supplemental educational services - Students in a Title I school in year two of improvement are eligible to receive tutoring or supplemental educational services. Parents can choose the appropriate services for their child from a list of state-approved providers. The school division must pay for the services.

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

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

Transfer option - Also referred to as “Public School Choice.” Title I schools identified as needing improvement have to provide the option for students to transfer within the division to a school that has made AYP. The school division is required to provide transportation to those students.

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

VGLA - The Virginia Grade Level Alternative is available for some students with disabilities and LEP students in grades 3-8 as an alternative assessment for SOL testing. Students who qualify to participate in the VGLA are required to demonstrate grade-level achievement through a collection of student work in the content area. Eligible LEP students are those at level 1 or level 2 of English language proficiency. The VGLA will be replaced by a new online test beginning with mathematics in 2011-2012 and reading in 2012-2013.

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