

Virginia Literacy Act 4-8

Frequently Asked Questions



As divisions are planning for the 2025-2026 school year, and year two of VLA implementation to include the legislative expansion through grade eight, the Virginia Department of Education encourages divisions to utilize this Frequently Asked Questions document for guidance when determining next steps for students, families, educators, and community stakeholders.

Student Reading Plans

Q: What is the purpose of the Student Reading Plan and how should goals be written?

A: Goal statements in Student Reading Plans must describe the anticipated outcome the student is expected to reach by the end of the school year. The goals in Student Reading Plans should be attainable and ambitious to support students reaching grade level expectations as early as possible. See [Division Student Reading Plan Guidance](#) and [Practitioner Student Reading Plan Guidance](#) documents for further clarification.

Q: Will sample reading plans be included for 4-8—including sample goals?

A: We anticipate sample Reading Plans for Grades 4-8 will be released.

Q: If a student misses the VALLSS 4-8 assessment window, can they have a Student Reading Plan without VALLSS data?

A: Yes, students who fail the SOL with a Fail/Basic or Fail/Below Basic score will be required to have a Student Reading Plan outlining appropriate interventions. Teachers will use SOL assessment reports, VALLSS reports, and other sources of data to create the Student Reading Plans.

Q: Is the Student Reading Plan (SRP) a legal document? How should they be stored?

A: Yes, the Student Reading Plan is a legal document. However, the platform selected for developing student reading plans remains a local division decision. Student Reading Plans should remain as a part of the student's cumulative records and should be maintained based on the division's retention processes.

Q: Will the student reading plans be for the entire year in Grades 6-8?

A: Yes, student reading plans are developed for the full academic year. Updates and changes may be made as students make progress in their literacy development. New plans are made annually as plans are developed utilizing currently available data (i.e. SOL scores, fall VALLLS data).

Q: Should supplemental resources be listed on a Student Reading Plan, or should only intervention materials be listed?

A: All materials utilized to support the student's literacy growth should be indicated on the student reading plan.

Q: Since students will not be VALLSS tested at the end of the year, when should progress monitoring goals end?

A: Student Reading Plans remain in place for the entire academic year. It is best practice for progress monitoring to be an ongoing component of a student's intervention plan. Decisions regarding Student Reading Plans will be determined based on the End of Year Reading SOL assessment. Student Reading Plans should remain as a part of the student's cumulative records and should be maintained based on the division's retention processes.

Q: Based on this information in the Student Reading Plan Guidance document, do we still invite parents to participate in the creation of their student's reading plan? The VLA requires that "the parent of each student shall receive notice before services begin and a copy of the student reading plan."

A: Per the Code of Virginia, parents of students who require a student reading plan need to have the opportunity to participate in the development of the student reading plan. Parents must receive notice and a copy of the student reading plan before intervention services begin. The parent of each student who receives reading intervention services pursuant to subdivision 1 shall receive notice of and have the opportunity to participate in the development of the student reading plan.

"In accordance with § 22.1-215.2, the parent of each student shall receive notice before services begin and a copy of the student reading plan."

Q: When is a Student Reading Plan (SRP) required? If a division chooses to provide intervention to a student who passed the SOL, is that student required to have an SRP?

A: Any student who receives intervention services will require a Student Reading Plan (SRP). The SRP for Grades 4-8 is currently in development, however, like the SRP template for grades K-3, the plan will target Virginia Literacy Act 4-8 (Updated 8/25/2025) | FAQ

the specific needs of the student. Students who score in the Fail/Basic or Fail/Below Basic range on the end of year Standards of Learning assessment for reading will have individual student reading plans to support their literacy intervention and development.

Q: Is there a deadline for divisions to have Student Reading Plans completed for the 2025-2026 SY?

A: It is a local division decision to ensure Student Reading Plans are written in a timely manner. Student families are required to receive a copy of their child’s student reading plan before intervention services start.

“In accordance with § 22.1-215.2, the parent of each student shall receive notice before services begin and a copy of the student reading plan.”

Q: Is there a requirement around students that we additionally test with VALLSS? If we test a student who passed the SOL, but the other data tells us that student may need support, we will likely choose to test them. If the VALLSS screener results indicate the need for support, are we REQUIRED to write an SRP for that student?

A: Any student who receives intervention services will require a Student Reading Plan (SRP). The SRP for Grades 4-8 will target the specific needs of the student. Students who score in the Fail/Basic or Fail/Below Basic range on the end of year Standards of Learning assessment for reading will have individual student reading plans to support their literacy intervention and development.

Q: Is there any guidance on Student Reading Plans and intervention for students in alternative setting/out-of-divisions placements?

A: Per the Virginia Literacy Act, Student Reading Plans and intervention criteria are required for all students who receive intervention, regardless of their setting. This may include virtual students, alternative placement students for discipline reasons, or students placed in specialty schools. For specific questions regarding special education services please reach out to Spedinstruction@doe.virginia.gov.

Q: The 4-8 SRP template that was released last week has different fields than the K-3 template. The system we are using, VA IEP, is not planning on creating a separate form within their platform. Is it ok if the categories/labels of necessary information are the same as K-3 (goals and objectives) instead of “targeted goals and instructional targets?”

A: Divisions may complete Student Reading Plans in other formats/platforms as long as they meet the minimum requirements to satisfy the VLA. Student Reading Plans must include the following sections

- Student Information
- Area(s) of Identified Need
- Targeted Reading Goal(s)
- Goal Statement(s)
- Objectives
- Progress Monitoring Plan
- Target Intervention Details
- Narrative for Student Progress and Next Steps
- Additional Considerations for Reading Intervention Services
- Family Resources

Q: We understand that we can choose to administer the VALLSS to students who passed the Reading SOL or to students who are new to VA without SOL data. If we choose to administer the VALLSS to those types of students and they perform in the "adequate" range/show no need for intervention, are we still required to provide them with a SRP because we chose to give them the VALLSS? In other words, does administering the VALLSS to anyone automatically necessitate an SRP?

A: In Grades 4-8, students who score in the Fail/Basic or Fail/Below Basic range on the end of year Standards of Learning (SOL) assessment for reading (grades 3-7 in the current school year) will have individual Student Reading Plans for the entirety of the school year.

VALLSS 4-8

Q: Who would be required to take VALLSS in grades 4-8?

A: Students who score in the Fail/Basic or Fail/Below Basic range on the end of year Standards of Learning assessment for reading (grades 3-7 in the current school year) will be screened using the VALLSS 4-8 screener in the fall of the following school year. These students will also have individual student reading plans to support their literacy intervention and development.

Q: How should schools address situations in which current students did not take the SOL test for a variety of circumstances? For example, if a 4-8th grade student had a "parent refusal" on their reading SOL from the previous school year.

A: While this list is not exhaustive, teachers should look at a body of evidence to determine if this screening would be beneficial to a specific individual. This body of evidence could include standardized Virginia Literacy Act 4-8 (Updated 8/25/2025) | FAQ

assessments from other states, curriculum-based assessments, other content area SOL tests or content assessments, indicators from additional screeners, results from MTSS progress monitoring, child study findings, records from the previous year, parent requests, etc.

Students assigned a test status (indicating the assessment was not attempted for various reasons). While this list is not exhaustive, teachers should look at a body of evidence to determine if a reading plan and/or screening would be beneficial to the specific individual. This body of evidence could include standardized assessments from other states, curriculum-based assessments, other content area SOL tests or content assessments, indicators from additional screeners, results from MTSS progress monitoring, child study findings, records from the previous year, parent requests, etc.

Q: Should students that failed the Reading SOL but passed the retake be given VALLSS?

A: Students who pass with a retake are considered a pass and are not required to take the VALLSS 4-8 assessment. However, schools should consider the student's comprehensive body of evidence (i.e. curriculum-based assessments, other content area assessments, indicators from additional screeners, results from MTSS processes, teacher input, and/or parent request) and could determine that screening may be beneficial.

Q: Does a child take the VALLSS if they are new to Virginia?

A: Students who are new to Virginia in grades 4-8 should take the VALLSS unless there is evidence through student records that demonstrates the student is at or above grade level proficiency (i.e. enrolled in advanced courses or proficient reading scores on standardized assessments).

Q: Can a division opt to give VALLSS to all students?

A: VALLSS: 4-8 may be administered to students who are not required to participate. The decisions to administer VALLSS: 4-8 to students who are not required to participate will be a school level decision. Parents may also request that their child be screened, regardless of the student's SOL score.

Q: With VLA moving to 6-8, do all middle school reading specialists need to be certified reading specialists to oversee Student Reading Plans?

A: A reading specialist, in collaboration with the teacher of any student who receives reading intervention services, shall develop, oversee implementation of, and monitor student progress on a student reading plan.

School divisions may employ certified reading specialists or educators who have successfully completed the Reading Specialist microcredential course. Any add-on endorsement that results from completion of such microcredential program shall be provisional for a period of five years.

Reading specialists are SOQ funded. Division literacy leaders should collaborate with division finance personnel to determine how many reading specialists are needed at the secondary level to meet the 1:1100 requirement of the Virginia Literacy Act.

Q: What is the expectation for EL students (or any grade 4-8 student) who arrives outside of the testing time?

A: Students who arrive outside of the testing window can be screened during the mid-year window. Teachers may administer VALLSS: 4-8 to students who are not required to participate. The decision to administer VALLSS: 4-8 to students who are not required to participate will be a school level decision. Parents may also request that their child be screened, regardless of the student's SOL score.

Q: If a student was exempt from the reading SOL the year before (due to being designated as recently arrived), can they be exempt from VALLSS until after the first Virginia Reading SOL?

A: No, VALLSS is considered a screener, not a state assessment and exemptions apply only to standardized testing. As it is a requirement through VLA to screen, the division cannot make the call to not screen students. This would need to be a parent optout if a parent chooses not to have their child screened. Students who are new to Virginia in grades 4-8 should take the VALLSS unless there is evidence through student records that demonstrates the student is at or above grade level proficiency (i.e. enrolled in advanced courses or proficient reading scores on standardized assessments).

Q: Do exceptional learners who are no longer eligible to participate in the VAAP and have taken and failed the reading SOL have to be screen with the VALLSS?

A: Students who score in the Fail/Basic or Fail/Below Basic range on the end of year Standards of Learning assessment for reading (grades 3-7 in the current school year) will be screened using the VALLSS 4-8 screener in the fall of the following school year. These students will also have individual student reading plans to support their literacy intervention and development.

Q: What will the specific criteria be to determine whether a grade 4-8 student needs to take the mid-year VALLSS screening?

A: Students with Fail/Basic or Fail/Below Basic SOL scores will take VALLSS: 4-8 in the mid-year window. Students who take VALLSS: 4-8 in the beginning of the year who did not fail the SOL will have the option to be assessed mid-year but it will not be required.

Intervention Services

Q: Is an intervention course for grades 4-8 required? Will the 4-8 intervention services be required to take place outside of the core time?

A: The intervention course is not a required part of the VLA legislation. The language offers the option of the additional intervention course, outside of the required Standards of Learning English course, to address intervention needs in grades 6-8. Intervention should occur outside of SOL required English instructional time; however local school divisions have the flexibility to determine scheduling and processes for that intervention.

Q: How should schools meet the requirement for intervention as required for by the VLA for grades 4-8?

A: In grades 4-8, local school divisions may determine how schools meet the additional instruction time for intervention. There is not a time requirement for intervention instruction as there is with grades kindergarten through grade three through the [Early Intervention Reading Initiative](#). Local intervention decisions will depend on the master schedule, staffing, resources available, and individual student's needs. School divisions have flexibility and can use a combination of any of the options included below to ensure that students receive literacy intervention. This is an opportunity for middle school grade level teams to collaborate and determine the best interventions and supports for students.

Intervention may include the following services for the student:

- instruction from a reading specialist, trained aide, computer-based reading tutorial program, or classroom teacher with support from an aide,
- extended instructional time in the school day or school year,
- additional literacy course, outside of the required SOL English course, that provides the specific evidence-based literacy instruction identified in the student's reading plan (optional for grades 6-8).

Q: Is there guidance on students opting out of intervention?

A: The VLA (§ 22.1-215.2) requires that the parent of each student shall receive notice before intervention services begin and a copy of the student reading plan. Local school divisions may establish additional communication and protocols regarding division-level decisions around participation in intervention. The Virginia Department of Education has developed [guidance language](#) for divisions to use when creating this process.

Q: What would we tell parents if they refuse to have their child tested or refuse intervention services? Can parents of students in grades K-8 who require reading

plans choose to opt their child out of both the reading plan creation and subsequent intervention services?

A: If parents/guardians want to refuse VALLSS screening, divisions should provide information on the benefits of screening. Divisions should have a documented refusal process for testing and instruction, including how refusal requests are maintained by the division. Divisions should follow the procedure if parents/guardians wish to refuse their child's participation in any of the following: Virginia Language & Literacy Screening System (VALLSS) screening, Student Reading Plans (SRPs), and/or intervention services. Parent/Guardian Refusal of VALLSS/SRP/Intervention Services.

Q: How would an opt out process work for intervention in middle school if intervention will take place in a separate class and schools have a 10-day drop/add policy?

A: The VLA (§ 22.1-215.2) requires that the parent of each student shall receive notice before intervention services begin and a copy of the student reading plan.

Local school divisions may establish additional communication and protocols regarding division-level decisions around participation in intervention. The Virginia Department of Education has developed [guidance language](#) for divisions to use when creating this process.

Q: How much intervention is required for students with a student reading plan in Grades 4-8?

A: Divisions may offer, as indicated in the VLA, a literacy course in addition to the required SOL English course. Outside of this, divisions may determine the intervention time based on need and a variety of student data. This will look similar to current intervention programs that schools offer through multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS). For example, a student with only one identified area of need would need less intervention time than a student with multiple identified needs.

Q: Is there any guidance on how middle school students exit intervention with consideration of the VLA? Is there an expected goal a student should meet before they can exit out of intervention?

A: Local school divisions can determine the criteria for students to exit intervention services in Grades 4-8. Divisions should consider their current MTSS progress monitoring practices along with a body of evidence using student data to support this decision-making process.

Divisions should also consider that Reading SOL assessments are used to determine Student Reading Plans for the next year and should ensure that students have the resources and support needed to do their best on the end of the year assessment.

Q: What counts as intervention services? Is anything outside of school hours still considered intervention? We are looking for clarification on what "intervention services" mandate a SRP.

A: Local intervention decisions will depend on the master schedule, staffing, resources available, and individual student's needs. School divisions have flexibility and can use a combination of any of the options included below to ensure that students receive literacy intervention. This is an opportunity for middle school grade level teams to collaborate and determine the best interventions and supports for students.

Intervention may include (but is not limited to) the following services for the student:

- instruction from a reading specialist, trained aide, computer-based reading tutorial program, or classroom teacher with support from an aide,
- extended instructional time in the school day or school year,
- additional literacy course, outside of the required SOL English course, that provides the specific evidence-based literacy instruction identified in the student's reading plan (optional for grades 6-8).

Resources

Q: For Grades 6-8, are school divisions required to have a supplemental and intervention resource?

A: The VLA requires "each local school board shall provide a program of literacy instruction that is aligned with science-based reading research and provides evidenced-based literacy instruction to students in kindergarten through grade 8." While the VLA only requires divisions to select intervention materials for Grades 6-8, divisions may choose to adopt supplemental materials as well. All adopted materials must be from the Board-approved list for intervention and supplemental materials.

Q: Do school divisions have to include the 6th-8th core program on the Division Literacy Plan and does it have to be one of the state approved programs?

A: School divisions are not required to adopt a core curriculum for grades 6-8. Divisions may select textbooks from the [Board-approved list](#). The Code of Virginia permits local school boards to use textbooks not approved by the VBOE. If a local school board opts to use a textbook not approved by the Board of Education, a local textbook review process should be conducted that includes components similar to the state level review. [The Guidelines for Local Textbook Approval](#) provide additional information.

Q: Will students who qualify for the Virginia Alternative Assessment Program in grades 6-8 be permitted to utilize core, supplemental, and intervention materials from the approved K-5 lists in middle school?

A: Students who qualify for the Virginia Alternative Assessment Program in Grades 6-8 should utilize the instructional materials that align with the goals set forth in their Individualized Education Plan. This could include the use of K-5 materials that address the areas of need for literacy development.

Q: Will the Virginia Grade K-12 English Language Arts Walkthrough Protocol and the Virginia Kindergarten-Grade 3 Foundational Skills Walkthrough Protocol still be a relevant data collection tool for the 25-26 school year?

A: Yes, training on these tools will be available in Fall, 2025. This was a pilot in certain school divisions in 2024-2025 and future training opportunities will expand to additional divisions in the 25-26 school year.

Q: If we have chosen a knowledge base curriculum and parents want alternate book choices, is it still considered HQIM if we follow the same processes and procedures, but switch out a book title? Assuming we chose a book that has the same quantitative and qualitative levels.

A: School divisions will follow their current school division policies regarding parent choice for instructional materials if a title from the HQIM needs to be replaced.

Q: Will grade 4-8 have a walk thru like K-3? If so, what is the criteria for the walk thru for 4-8? Also, will there be a checklist for administrators and reading specialists to use?

A: VDOE has plans to provide a K-12 walkthrough tool to the field this fall.

Q: For summer school, are teachers required to use only materials from the approved core, supplemental and Intervention Lists?

A: If a student is in summer school to make up a grade level course that requires approved core curriculum, approved core curriculum should be used. Additional materials may be used in enrichment settings.

Teacher Training

Q: How do we know which teachers have completed the EBLI training if they're coming from another school district? For example, we are trying to register teachers for 25-26 SY for EBLI training but some are saying they've already completed the training in a different district. How do we get this information?

A: School divisions can use the educators' certificate of completion from the Canvas courses to verify their completion of the professional learning requirement.

Q: Do long-term subs need to complete the canvas course requirements?

A: No. School divisions should direct them to the VALUE series and provide local school division supports to ensure student needs and requirements of the legislation are met.

Q: Can you share more about the K-12 walkthrough tool? What is it for? Are we required to use it? Will there be any training on it?

A: The VDOE will be providing a K-12 walkthrough tool this fall. It will be an optional tool for schools and school divisions to use as they observe literacy instruction. VDOE will provide training on the tool.

Q: When can I register new teachers in canvas modules?

A: A spreadsheet has been created for division leaders to identify the teachers and reading specialists who need to enroll in VLP Canvas Courses. In the spreadsheet, divisions are only required to complete columns A-D which contains the information necessary for VLP to register teachers for Canvas. This spreadsheet should be submitted to the University of Virginia via SWSS Dropbox. Divisions may continue to submit additional individuals on new spreadsheets during the first week (1st – 7th) of each month as new employees are hired.

Please reach out to Kimberly Bavis – Senior Instructional Technology Specialist from VLP to additional information. If you encounter challenges with the spreadsheet beyond technical issues, contact VLP at literacy@virginia.edu.