



**#242-21**

**Commonwealth of Virginia  
Virginia Department of Education  
Superintendent's Memo #242-21**

DATE: August 27, 2021  
TO: Division Superintendents  
FROM: James F. Lane, Ed.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction  
SUBJECT: **History/Social Science and Writing Assessments for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities**

As previously announced in [Superintendent's Memo # 033-21](#), eligible students with significant cognitive disabilities in grades 3-8 and high school will be assessed in reading, mathematics, and science through the new **Virginia Alternate Assessment Program (VAAP)** beginning in the 2021-2022 school year. Test items contained in the new VAAP are based on the *Virginia Essentialized Standards of Learning (VESOL)*, the academic content standards derived from the *Standards of Learning* in reading, mathematics, and science that have been reduced in depth, breadth, and complexity. Because history/social science and writing are not addressed in the VESOL and the new VAAP does not include items that cover content in these subject areas, eligible students with disabilities will be assessed in history/social science and writing using collections of evidence that demonstrate student achievement on the existing *Aligned Standards of Learning (ASOL)*.

Specifically, history/social science collections of evidence are required for eligible students with significant cognitive disabilities in the grade levels that Virginia Studies and Civics and Economics are assessed in the school division for students without disabilities. Writing collections of evidence are required for students with significant cognitive disabilities in grade 8. Students at the high school level with significant cognitive disabilities are not required to submit collections of evidence for history/social science or writing since the high

school state assessments in these subject areas are used to meet diploma requirements for students pursuing a standard or advanced studies diploma. Students participating in VAAP generally pursue an Applied Studies diploma.

In history/social science and writing, school divisions will be responsible for collecting student work, scoring collections of evidence using the existing VAAP scoring rubric and addendum, and reporting student performance to parents. Student scores will not be entered into PearsonAccess<sup>next</sup> or reported to the Virginia Department of Education. History/social science and writing scores will not be subject to audit. The *History/Social Science and Writing ASOL*, VAAP scoring rubric, and other resources are [available online on the VAAP webpage](#).

Student scores on VAAP reading, mathematics, and science will be used in federal and state accountability calculations; however, the history and writing scores on students' collections of evidence will not be used for this purpose.

### For more information

For more information regarding history and writing assessments for students with significant cognitive disabilities, you may contact the Office of Student Assessment at (804) 225-2102 or [Student\\_Assessment@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:Student_Assessment@doe.virginia.gov).

JFL/SLR/as