

ACCOUNTABILITY TERMINOLOGY

October 5, 2015

Academic review — A process for helping schools and school divisions identify and analyze instructional and organizational factors affecting student achievement. [More about academic reviews ...](#)

Academic review team — A team that conducts an academic review. [More about Academic Reviews ...](#)

Accreditation Denied — A school is rated Accreditation Denied if it fails to meet the requirements for full or partial accreditation for four consecutive years.

Accredited with Warning — Accreditation rating given to a school prior to 2015 when students achieved adjusted pass rates below those required to meet the Fully Accredited rating.

Achievement gap — Difference in academic performance between 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.

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), the Virginia Modified Achievement Standards Test (VMASST) or the Virginia Grade-Level Alternative (VGLA) in grades 3-8 depending on the content area and nature of the disability. Limited-English Proficient (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. Certain students with disabilities may also meet graduation requirements by taking the VMASST assessments for Algebra I and end-of-course reading. [More about alternate and alternative assessments ...](#)

AMO or AMOs — Annual Measurable Objectives are the minimum required percentages of students determined to be proficient in each content area. [More about Annual Measurable Objectives ...](#)

Assessment — A test or other method for measuring achievement.

Board-recognized diplomas — The Board of Education establishes minimum requirements for the Standard Diploma, Advanced Studies Diploma, Modified Standard Diploma and the Special Diploma. International Baccalaureate Diplomas are regarded as Advanced Studies Diplomas.

Carry over students — A student who remains in high school after completing four or more years.

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 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. [More about ESEA...](#)

Expedited retake — An 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.

Flexibility Waiver — Exemptions from certain provisions of the federal No Child Left Behind Act granted to Virginia by the United States Department of Education. [More about Flexibility Waiver ...](#)

Focus schools — Low-performing Title I schools assigned a state—approved coach to assist in the development and implementation of improvement strategies. [More about Focus schools ...](#)

Fully Accredited — The accreditation rating earned by a school when students achieve an adjusted pass rate of 75 percent in English, 70 percent in mathematics, science and history/social science.

Graduation and Completion Index (see Graduation rate)

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 is used to determine the accreditation ratings of high schools.

[More about graduation diplomas and requirements ...](#)

Inclusion — The practice of placing students with disabilities in regular classrooms.

In improvement — If a Title I school or a school division did not make AYP in the same subject area for two consecutive years, the school or division was considered to be “in improvement” and was 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. [More about Instruction ...](#)

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

Lead turnaround partner — A state-approved vendor with expertise and experience in the development and implementation of successful school reform and improvement strategies.

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. More about [LEP](#); more about [English as a Second Language \(ESL\) instruction](#).

NCLB — See “ESEA”

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.

Partial accreditation or Partially Accredited — Refers to accreditation ratings approved by the Board of Education in 2015 to differentiate schools that are close to achieving full accreditation, or that are making acceptable progress, from those that are not.

Partially Accredited: Approaching Benchmark-Graduation and Completion Index — High schools that have attained the adjusted pass rates required for full accreditation and that are within one point of the GCI required for full accreditation

Partially Accredited: Approaching Benchmark-Pass Rate — Schools that are not Fully

Accredited but that are within two points of the adjusted SOL pass rates required for full accreditation in one or more subject areas

Partially Accredited: Improving School-Graduation and Completion Index — High schools that have attained the adjusted pass rates required for full accreditation and that have improved their GCI by at least one point from the previous year, but that are not within a narrow margin of the GCI required for full accreditation.

Partially Accredited: Improving School-Pass Rate — Schools that are not Fully Accredited, and do not qualify for a rating of Partially Accredited: Approaching Benchmark-Pass Rate, but that are making acceptable progress toward full accreditation

Partially Accredited-Reconstituted School — Schools that fail to meet the requirements for full accreditation for four consecutive years and receive permission from the state Board of Education to reconstitute. A reconstituted school reverts to accreditation-denied status if it fails to meet full accreditation requirements within the agreed-upon term, or if it fails to have its annual application for Partially Accredited-Reconstituted School renewed.

Partially Accredited: Warned School-Graduation and Completion Index — High schools that have achieved the adjusted SOL pass rates required for full accreditation, but that are not within a narrow margin of, nor making acceptable progress toward, achieving the GCI required for full accreditation

Partially Accredited: Warned School-Pass Rate — Schools that are not within a narrow margin of, nor making acceptable progress toward, achieving the adjusted SOL pass rates required for full accreditation

Priority schools — Low-performing schools required to employ a state-approved lead turnaround partner to assist in the development and implementation of reforms and improvement strategies. [More about Priority schools ...](#)

Proficiency Gap Groups — Student subgroups used to identify Focus schools under Virginia’s flexibility waiver.

- Proficiency Gap Group 1 — Students with disabilities, English language learners and economically disadvantaged students, regardless of race and ethnicity (unduplicated)
- Proficiency Gap Group 2 — African-American students, not of Hispanic origin, including those also counted in Proficiency Gap Group 1
- Proficiency Gap Group 3 — Hispanic students, of one or more races, including those also counted in Proficiency Gap Group 1

Provisionally Accredited-Graduation Rate — From 2011-2014, a high school or combined school with a graduating class received a “Provisionally Accredited-Graduation Rate” if students achieved adjusted pass rates of 70 percent or more in all four content areas and a Graduation and Completion Index of 81-84 points.

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.

Reward schools — High-performing Title I schools recognized through the Virginia Index of Performance, National Blue Ribbon School or Title I Distinguished School awards programs.

Safe harbor — A provision of ESEA recognizing acceptable incremental improvement.

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 — The application of rigorous, systemic and objective procedures to obtain reliable and valid knowledge regarding the effectiveness of educational activities and programs.

SOL or SOLs — 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. [More on the Standards of Learning ...](#)

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.

Title I — Federal program designed to help 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. [More about Title I ...](#)

USED — Abbreviation used by VDOE for the [United States Department of Education](#).

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. [More about VAAP ...](#)

VEWS — Virginia Early Warning System used by schools to identify students at risk of not

graduating on time or dropping out. [More about VEWS ...](#)

VGLA — The Virginia Grade Level Alternative is available for students with disabilities and certain LEP students in grades 3-8. It is available for students with disabilities in the content areas of Science, History/Social Science, and Writing. It is available for eligible LEP students in the content area of Reading only. [More about VGLA ...](#)

VMAST — The Virginia Modified Achievement Standards Test is available for students with disabilities who are being instructed in grade-level content but are not likely to achieve proficiency in the same time frame as their non-disabled peers. In the VMAST assessments, research-based supports and simplifications identified by Virginia educators have been applied to certain online reading and mathematics tests to make them more accessible for students with disabilities. [More about VMAST ...](#)

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 testing-related graduation requirements. Students participating in the VSEP are expected to provide evidence of achievement through a compilation of coursework. [More about VSEP ...](#)