

# **Procedures for Participation of Students with Disabilities in Virginia's Accountability System**

*Including Participation Criteria and Testing Accommodations*

A Guide for Educators and Parents

November 2011  
Virginia Department of Education

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# **Procedures for Participation of Students with Disabilities in Virginia's Accountability System**

## **Introduction**

It is the intent of the Commonwealth of Virginia to include *all* students with disabilities in the assessment component of Virginia's accountability system. The federal regulations under Section 504 of the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973*, as amended, and Regulations Governing Special Education Programs for Children with Disabilities in Virginia at 8 vac 20-81-20 (#4) (corresponding *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, at 20 USC § 1412(a) 16 (A)*, Virginians with Disabilities Act, Section 51.5-40 *et seq.* of the Code of Virginia, require that individuals with disabilities be given equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from the policies and procedures customarily granted to all individuals.

The purpose of this document is to provide a resource for educators and parents regarding the state assessment system and how students with disabilities are provided access. This document includes two sections. Part I provides participation information by describing each assessment program and guidelines for determining eligibility for students with disabilities, and Part II addresses the process for selecting and using allowed assessment accommodations.

# **Procedures for Participation of Students with Disabilities in Virginia's Accountability System**

## **Part 1: Guidelines for Assessment Participation**

Students with disabilities in the Commonwealth of Virginia include identified students under the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004* [IDEA '04] P. L. 108-446 and under Section 504 of the *Rehabilitation Act* of 1973, as amended. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA 2004) regulations require that all students with disabilities participate in the state's accountability system. More specifically, students with disabilities are expected to participate in all content area assessments that are available to students without disabilities. Students with disabilities may participate in the Standards of Learning (SOL) assessments either with or without accommodations, the Virginia Grade Level Alternative (VGLA), the Virginia Substitute Evaluation Program (VSEP), the Virginia Modified Achievement Standards Test (VMAST), or the Virginia Alternate Assessment Program (VAAP).

### **I. Description of Assessment Programs**

#### **A. Standards of Learning (SOL) Assessment Program**

The SOL in the content areas of English, mathematics, science, history/social science are intended to set reasonable targets and expectations for what teachers are expected to teach and students are expected to learn. SOL assessments for these content areas inform parents and teachers about what students are learning in relation to the SOL and hold schools accountable for teaching the SOL content. SOL. Students with disabilities may participate in SOL assessments with or without accommodations.

#### **B. Virginia Grade Level Alternative (VGLA)**

The VGLA is available as an alternative to the SOL tests and is designed for students whose disabilities prevent them from accessing SOL content area assessments due to the format of the test. It is available for students with disabilities in grades 3 through 8 in the content areas of reading, writing, science, and history/social science. Students with an identified disability eligible under IDEA 2004 or Section 504 who meet the VGLA guidelines for participation may be assessed through the VGLA. Eligible students compile a collection of work samples, called a Collection of Evidence (COE), to demonstrate performance on grade level content as presented in the SOL test blueprints. Decisions about participation in VGLA are made on a test-by-test and individual basis.

### **C. Virginia Substitute Evaluation Program (VSEP)**

The VSEP is an alternative assessment based on grade level achievement standards. It provides students whose disabilities prevent them from accessing the SOL test(s) in a content area due to the multiple choice and technology enhanced formats, with the opportunity to participate in state assessments. It is available for students for SOL end-of-course tests and/or for the certification for literacy and/or numeracy for the Modified Standard Diploma. In addition, under specific circumstances, the VSEP is also available to a small number of eligible students in grades 3 – 8 in mathematics. Only students with an identified disability eligible under IDEA or Section 504, who meet the VSEP guidelines for participation, may be assessed through the VSEP. Students will compile a collection of work samples, called a Course Work Compilation (CWC), to demonstrate performance on all SOL in the test blueprint for the assessed course. Decisions about participation in VSEP are made on a test-by-test and individual basis.

### **D. Virginia Modified Achievement Standards Test (VMAST)**

The VMAST is an alternate assessment based on modified achievement standards in which research-based supports and simplifications are applied to existing online test items to make them more accessible to eligible students with disabilities. Eligible students are instructed in grade level content but are not likely to achieve proficiency in the same time frame as their non-disabled peers. Students participating in VMAST do not receive a modified curriculum; the achievement expectations are modified. Only students with an identified disability under IDEA 2004 who meet the eligibility criteria may be assessed through VMAST. Federal requirements do not allow students with disabilities identified under Section 504 to participate.

The VMAST will be implemented over a two year period. VMAST mathematics assessments will be implemented in grades 3- 8 and Algebra I beginning in spring 2012 followed by the VMAST reading assessments for grades 3-8 and End-of-Course Reading in spring 2013. Eligibility for VMAST must be determined separately for mathematics and reading.

### **E. Virginia Alternate Assessment Program (VAAP)**

The VAAP is an alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards and is specifically designed to evaluate the achievement of students with significant cognitive disabilities. The VAAP is available to students in grades 3 through 8 and high school who are working on academic standards that have been reduced in complexity and depth. These academic standards are called Aligned Standards of Learning (ASOL) and are available in reading, writing, mathematics, science and history/social science. Only students with significant cognitive disabilities who are eligible under IDEA 2004 and who meet the VAAP guidelines for participation may be assessed through the VAAP. Students with disabilities served by 504 Plans are not eligible for VAAP. Students will compile a collection of work samples, or COE to demonstrate achievement on the ASOL. Students who participate in the VAAP participate in all content areas; participation decisions are made on an individual basis.

## **II. Determination of How Students with Disabilities Participate in Virginia’s Accountability System**

For all students with disabilities identified under IDEA 2004, the IEP Team determines how the student will participate in the accountability system. For students identified under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, the 504 Committee determines how the student will participate.

A student’s IEP must specify the student’s participation in the state accountability system as follows:

- participation in the SOL test with no accommodations;<sup>1</sup>
- participation in the SOL test with accommodations;
- participation in the VGLA or VSEP;
- participation in the VMAST
- participation in VAAP;

If the IEP Team determines that the student must participate in the VGLA, VSEP, VMAST, or VAAP instead of the SOL test, a statement that addresses the following must be included in the IEP:

- Why the student cannot participate in the regular assessment;
- Why the particular assessment selected is appropriate for the student, including that the child meets the criteria for the alternate assessment; and
- How the child’s participation in VGLA, VSEP, VMAST, or VAAP will impact the child’s promotion, graduation with a modified standard, standard, or advanced studies diploma; or other matters.

A student’s 504 Plan must specify the student’s participation in the state accountability system as follows:

- participation in the SOL test with no accommodations;<sup>1</sup>
- participation in the SOL test with accommodations;
- participation in the VGLA or VSEP.

## **III. Role of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team** *(For students identified under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004)*

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<sup>1</sup>The Board of Education has approved a number of substitute tests that students may take to earn verified credits towards graduation. The Board has also approved a schedule of career and technical examinations for licensure or certification that may be substituted for SOL tests to earn student-selected verified credits.

For all students with disabilities identified under IDEA 2004, the IEP ensures that they receive an appropriate education. The IEP process also ensures that each student's parent(s)<sup>2</sup> or surrogate parent(s) is an active participant of the IEP Team. The IEP Team makes decisions about participation in each of the assessments and the need for and selection of accommodations. These decisions should be made during the IEP Team meeting that precedes the assessment administration. If the decisions about participation in Virginia's accountability system are not reflected on the current IEP, an IEP meeting must be held to address and document these issues on the IEP prior to the test administration. The ramifications of these decisions made by the IEP Team must be clearly explained to and understood by all IEP Team members including the student's parent(s) and the student, if appropriate. Additionally, the parent(s) and student must be provided with an explanation of their procedural safeguards and due process rights.

#### **IV. Role of the 504 Committee**

*(For students identified under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended and do not have an IEP)*

Each school division is required to determine appropriate educational programs for all students with disabilities who qualify under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, by convening a knowledgeable group to evaluate and determine program needs. Therefore, decisions about the participation in each of the assessments, the need for, and selection of accommodations are the responsibility of a 504 Committee. Each student's parent, legal guardian or surrogate parent must be a participant in these decisions. These decisions should be made during the 504 Committee meeting which precedes the assessment administration. If the decisions were not made at this time, an additional 504 Committee meeting must be held to address these issues prior to the test administration. The ramifications of the decision must be clearly explained to and understood by all 504 Committee members including the student's parent, legal guardian, or surrogate parent and the student, if appropriate.

#### **V. Procedures for Determining Participation**

When determining participation in Virginia's Accountability System, all students with disabilities first must be considered for participation in the SOL assessments. Generally decisions about how a student with a disability will be tested should be made independently for each content area. The IEP Team or 504 Committee should consider the following assessment options.

##### **A. Standards of Learning (SOL) Assessment Program**

The vast majority of students with disabilities participate in Virginia's assessment program by taking SOL tests with or without accommodations. These students are working on grade level SOL content and are able to demonstrate their individual achievement through the regular assessment. These students may require instructional and assessment

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<sup>2</sup>See the Regulations Governing Special Education Programs for Children with Disabilities in Virginia for the definition of parent for a child with a disability. The parental rights transfer to the student when he/she reaches the age of majority (18 in Virginia) unless certain procedures specified in regulations have been followed.



accommodations to access instruction and content and to demonstrate their skills and knowledge of grade level SOL. Please see Part 2 of this document for detailed information on the selection and use of testing accommodations for SOL assessments. Questions about whether accommodations not listed are permissible for a specific assessment should be directed to the School Test Coordinator or the Division Director of Testing.

## **B. Virginia Grade Level Alternative (VGLA)**

In considering possible participation in the VGLA, IEP Team/504 Committee members, as appropriate, need to be sure that all possible SOL test accommodations have been examined within the student's program to provide access to content and assessment within the specific SOL course.

Typical characteristics of a student with a disability recommended for the VGLA include the following:

- enrolled in a grade from 3 through 8
- has an IEP/504 Plan or one is being developed
- has a disability that results in an inability to demonstrate knowledge and skill on multiple-choice or technology-enhanced items, even when accommodations are provided
- demonstrates work on SOL that is at grade level

VGLA participation eligibility criteria requires the IEP Team/504 Committee to examine how the student accesses instruction and content and demonstrates the knowledge and skills learned in the general education course being considered for the VGLA. To assist IEP Teams and 504 Committees in determining if a student is eligible for the VGLA for a specific content area, the Participation Criteria form (Appendix A) provides an examination of the student's performance on work samples primarily in multiple-choice formats compared with alternate formats. At least three work samples using a multiple-choice format and three work samples using alternate formats must be reviewed. Both the work samples in the multiple choice format and work samples in alternate formats should address the same SOL skill or concept so that student performance can be directly compared and thoroughly reviewed. If the VGLA is selected, the IEP Team or 504 Committee is required to provide a justification statement based upon the review of work samples and other educational data to describe why the student requires the alternative assessment.

Consideration for participation in the VGLA is by grade-level and course. The VGLA is available for eligible students with disabilities by grade level and subject area content as follows:

**Grade 3** – Reading, Science, and History/Social Science

**Grade 4** – Reading

**Grade 5** – Reading, Writing, and Science

**Grade 6** – Reading

**Grade 7** – Reading

**Grade 8** – Reading, Writing, and Science

**Content Specific History** – Virginia Studies, United States History to 1865 (US History I), United States History: 1865 to the Present (US History II), and Civics & Economics. The grade level that students receive instruction in this content varies.

For details regarding the implementation of the VGLA refer to the *VGLA Implementation Manual* available on the Virginia Department of Education Website at:

[http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/alternative\\_assessments/vgla\\_va\\_grade\\_level\\_alt/index.shtml](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/alternative_assessments/vgla_va_grade_level_alt/index.shtml)

### **C. Virginia Substitute Evaluation Program (VSEP)**

Participation in the VSEP should only be considered after SOL participation has been discussed and all possible accommodations have been fully examined. Using current and historical data such as evaluations, school records, parent/teacher input, medical data, IEP Team/504 Committee must identify the population of students with disabilities who are unable to access the SOL tests even with accommodations.

Determining participation in VSEP is a two-pronged process beginning with the completion and submission of the *Intent to Participate* form by the IEP Team or 504 Committee. A Sample *Intent to Participate* form is provided in Appendix B. After division level approval of the *Intent to Participate* form has been obtained by the building principal, the Division Director of Testing (DDOT), and the Director of Special Education, the form must be submitted to the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) for review. The purpose of the VDOE review is to determine if the IEP Team/504 Committee has selected an appropriate VSEP participant by adhering to the VSEP participation criteria and by providing a reasonable justification based on the student’s disability, performance, and use of accommodations.

The second prong of the process includes the completion and submission of the *Evaluation Plan/Worksheet* by the student’s teacher(s) for local review and approval. The *Evaluation Plan/Worksheet* explains how the student will demonstrate individual achievement of each SOL addressed in the test blueprint. It must address the assessment products and the methods that are planned for the CWC over the duration of the course and must reflect a complete demonstration of the skills and knowledge related to the standards addressed in the test blueprint. Consideration must also be given to the depth of knowledge that is expected of the student for the SOL to be defended. An Evaluation Plan should be unique and individualized for the student considering:

- the student’s disability;
- how the student accesses SOL content;
- how the student demonstrates skills and knowledge; and
- specific assessment methods or products for each SOL stem and bullet.

The Evaluation Plan/Worksheet forms for each content area are available online at:

[http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/alternative\\_assessments/vsep\\_va\\_substitute\\_eval\\_prog/index.shtml](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/alternative_assessments/vsep_va_substitute_eval_prog/index.shtml)

VSEP is available in the following course/content areas:

### **End-of-Course content areas**

- English: Writing
- English: Reading
- Algebra I
- Algebra II
- Geometry
- Earth Science
- Biology
- Chemistry
- Virginia and United States History
- World History I
- World History II
- World Geography

### **Grade 8 content areas required for the Modified Standard Diploma**

- Reading (literacy assessment)
- Mathematics (numeracy assessment)

### **Virginia Substitute Evaluation Program (VSEP) for Grades 3-8 *Mathematics* (Special Circumstances)**

A small number of eligible students with disabilities in grades 3-8 who are unable to access SOL *Mathematics* assessments may be permitted to submit a CWC to demonstrate knowledge of mathematics content. Typically students eligible to submit CWCs have experienced a new disability, rapid deterioration of sensory functions, or a unique disability that prevents the student from accessing the SOL assessment even with allowed testing accommodations. Procedures for requesting this special participation include completing and submitting to the VDOE the *Special Permission Request* form located online at:

[http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/alternative\\_assessments/vsep\\_va\\_substitute\\_eval\\_prog/index.shtml](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/alternative_assessments/vsep_va_substitute_eval_prog/index.shtml)

The Evaluation Plan/Worksheets for each grade level are available online at:

[http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/alternative\\_assessments/vsep\\_va\\_substitute\\_eval\\_prog/index.shtml](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/alternative_assessments/vsep_va_substitute_eval_prog/index.shtml)

For details regarding the implementation of the VSEP refer to the *VSEP Implementation Manual* available on the Virginia Department of Education Website at:

[http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/alternative\\_assessments/vsep\\_va\\_substitute\\_eval\\_prog/index.shtml](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/alternative_assessments/vsep_va_substitute_eval_prog/index.shtml)

### **D. Virginia Modified Achievement Standards Test (VMAST)**

Typical students appropriate for the VMAST may exhibit some or all of the learner characteristics below.

- Works at a slower pace
- Has deficits in factual knowledge
- Has difficulties engaging with materials
- Benefits from differentiated instruction and additional instructional time

- Requires a high level of support
- May have below grade level reading ability
- May have retention or memory deficits

In addition to considering learning characteristics, IEP teams must also gather important student information such as:

- Student Grade Level or Course Enrollment
- Instructional Content
- Disability
- Accommodations
- Instructional Supports and/or Strategies Provided
- Timeframe Expected for Learning Instructional Content
- Assessment Performance

To assist IEP Teams in selecting the appropriate students for VMAST, the *Participation Criteria* form (Appendix C) guides the team through the consideration of each criteria and the required supporting documentation. Additional information and resources regarding the VMAST are available on the Virginia Department of Education Website at:

[http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/alternative\\_assessments/vmast\\_va\\_mod\\_achievement\\_stds\\_test/index.shtml](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/alternative_assessments/vmast_va_mod_achievement_stds_test/index.shtml)

#### **E. Virginia Alternate Assessment Program (VAAP)**

In considering possible participation in the VAAP, IEP Team members need to be sure that all possible SOL test accommodations and other alternative assessments such as the VGLA, VSEP, and VMAST have been examined within the student's program to provide access to state assessments.

A student recommended for the VAAP may exhibit some or all of the following learning characteristics:

- Communication difficulties
- Uneven learning patterns in all domains
- Multiple disabling conditions along with an intellectual disability
- Motor impairments
- Difficulty learning new tasks and maintaining skills
- Individualized methods of accessing information

The VAAP participation criteria form located in Appendix D is designed to guide IEP Teams in identifying the population of students with significant cognitive disabilities who are unable to be assessed using the SOL tests even with accommodations or the VGLA, VSEP, or VMAST assessments. A guidance document summarizing available research on significant

cognitive disabilities is available at [http://ttaonline.org/staff/assessment/vaap/resource\\_files/Guidance\\_Significant\\_Cognitive\\_Disabilities-2009.pdf](http://ttaonline.org/staff/assessment/vaap/resource_files/Guidance_Significant_Cognitive_Disabilities-2009.pdf) as a resource to IEP Teams. When considering students for the VAAP, IEP Teams are advised to consider information such as, but not limited to, educational evaluations, psychological reports, teacher observations, etc.

Unlike VGLA, VSEP, and VMAST, eligibility for VAAP is not considered on a test-by-test basis. If a student is eligible for VAAP, he or she will participate in VAAP for all content areas. Students participating in the VAAP *must* be enrolled in grades 3 through 8 or high school. Students in grades 3 through 8 are required to submit a Collection of Evidence (COE) for all content areas assessed at their grade level. Students in high school are required to submit a COE including the content areas of reading, writing, mathematics, science, and history/social science by the end of their grade 11 school year or on a schedule determined by the local school division.

For details regarding the implementation of the VAAP refer to the *VAAP Implementation Manual* available on the Virginia Department of Education Website at: [http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/alternative\\_assessments/vaap\\_va\\_alt\\_assessment\\_prog/index.shtml](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/alternative_assessments/vaap_va_alt_assessment_prog/index.shtml)

If the student fails to meet one of the criteria for participation for the alternate/alternative assessments, the student must participate in the SOL assessment program with or without accommodations.

## F. Procedures for Determining Participation Chart

When determining how the student will be tested on a state assessment, the IEP Team or 504 Committee should consider the following options:

Characteristics of Student Performance	Recommended Participation for Standards of Learning Test
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### OPTION 1

<p><b><i>If the student</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) is able to demonstrate knowledge and skills on a test that primarily uses a multiple choice format, either with or without accommodations;</li> </ul> <p><b><i>and</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>b) is working on Standards of Learning at grade level</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>Then</i></b></p> <p>the student should take the Standards of Learning test, either with or without accommodations.</p>
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Characteristics of Student Performance	Recommended Participation for Virginia Grade Level Alternative
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### OPTION 2

<p><b><i>If the student</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) is enrolled in grades 3 through 8,</li> </ul> <p><b><i>and</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>b) has an IEP/504 Plan (or one is being developed),</li> </ul> <p><b><i>and</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>c) has a result of a disability, is unable to demonstrate knowledge and skills on a multiple-choice or technology-enhanced items, even with accommodations,</li> </ul> <p><b><i>and</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>d) is working on Standards of Learning that are at grade level,</li> </ul> <p><b><i>and</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>e) can demonstrate individual achievement of Standards of Learning content through means other than multiple-choice formats,</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>Then</i></b></p> <p>the student should participate in the Virginia Grade Level Alternative.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> <i>The Virginia Grade Level Alternative is not available in mathematics beginning in 2011-2012 and will not be available in reading beginning in 2012-2013.</i></p>
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Characteristics of Student Performance

Recommended Participation for Virginia Substitute Evaluation Program

OPTION 3

*If the student*

- a) has an IEP/504 Plan (or one is being developed) and is enrolled in a course with a Standards of Learning end-of-course test,  
**or**
- b) is pursuing a Modified Standard Diploma and seeking certification for having met literacy and/or numeracy requirements  
**and**
- c) has a result of a disability, is unable to demonstrate knowledge and skills on a multiple-choice or technology-enhanced items, even with accommodations,

**Then**

the student should participate in the Virginia Substitute Evaluation Program.

Characteristics of Student Performance

Recommended Participation for Virginia Modified Achievement Standards Test

OPTION 4

*If the student*

- a) is enrolled in grades 3 through 8 mathematics or Algebra I  
**and**
- b) has a standards-based IEP (or one is being developed),  
**and**
- c) is working on Standards of Learning that are at grade level, but is not likely to achieve proficiency in the same time frame as non-disabled peers,  
**and**
- c) is able to demonstrate knowledge and skills on a test that primarily uses a multiple choice format, either with or without accommodations;

**Then**

the student should participate in the Virginia Modified Achievement Standards Test.

**Note:** *The Virginia Modified Achievement Standards Tests will be available in grades 3-8 mathematics and Algebra I beginning in 2011-2012 and will be available in grade 3-8 reading and End-of-Course Reading in 2012-2013.*

OPTION 5

*If the student*

- a) has an IEP (or one is being developed),  
*and*
- b) demonstrates significant cognitive disabilities,  
*and*
- c) requires intensive, frequent, and individualized instruction in a variety of settings to show interaction and achievement,  
*and*
- d) is working toward educational goals other than those prescribed for a Modified Standard, Standard, or Advanced Studies Diploma

*Then*

the student should participate in the Virginia Alternate Assessment Program.



## **VI. Non-Participation of Students with Disabilities in the Virginia Assessment Program**

Neither the IEP Team nor the 504 Committee can make decisions for non-participation in state assessments. If the parent requests non-participation in a particular SOL assessment, an IEP Team or 504 Committee must convene to explain the consequences associated with non-participation. For grade 3 through 8 consequences may include:

- teachers, parents and the student will not receive information on student progress contained in the assessment score reports; and
- the student may not have an opportunity to experience an assessment in the content area prior to taking assessments required for graduation.

If the parent decides on non-participation in the Virginia assessment program, the decision will be considered a refusal to participate and the student, the school, and the school division will receive a score of 0 for that test. Documentation indicating that the consequences of the decision have been fully explained to and understood by the parent, guardian, surrogate or student must be attached to or become part of the student's IEP or 504 Plan.

Students with disabilities who are enrolled in courses with end-of-course SOL assessments must take the relevant end-of-course assessments. Students who are auditing a course or being instructed in only part of the content and therefore not enrolled do not take the SOL end-of-course assessment. In such cases, the course title and code should reflect the instruction being provided to the student.

## **Part 2: Testing Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

Testing accommodations are changes in the administration of an assessment in terms of how the test is presented or how the student responds to it. Categories of testing accommodations include time/scheduling, setting, presentation, and response. Although accommodations do not change the construct intended to be measured by the assessment or the meaning of the resulting scores, they do provide equity and serve to level the playing field for students with disabilities. When used appropriately, accommodations reduce or even eliminate the effects of a student's disability without reducing learning expectations or providing advantage.

Accommodations may not alter, explain, simplify, paraphrase, or eliminate any test item, reading passage, writing prompt, or answer option. Further, accommodations may not provide verbal or other clues or suggestions that hint at or give away the correct response to the student. Any accommodations based solely on the potential to enhance performance beyond providing equal access are considered inappropriate.

Accommodations provided to a student should be the same for classroom instruction, classroom assessments, and state assessments. Although, accommodations for instruction and assessment are integrally intertwined, it is critical to note that some accommodations may be appropriate for instructional use, yet inappropriate for use on state assessments.

Accommodations should adhere to the following principles:

- Accommodations should enable students to participate more fully in instruction and assessments and to better demonstrate their knowledge and skills.
- Accommodations must be based upon individual student need and not upon the category of disability, level of instruction, or program setting.
- Accommodations must be justified and documented in the student's IEP or 504 Plan.
- Accommodations should be aligned with and part of daily instruction.
- Accommodations should not be introduced for the first time during the administration of a state assessment.
- Accommodations should foster and facilitate independence for students, not dependence.
- Only accommodations listed in the *Virginia Standards of Learning Assessments Test Implementation Manuals* or approved by the Virginia Department of Education may be used on tests that are a part of the Virginia assessment program.

## **I. A Four Step Process for the Selection and Use of Assessment Accommodations**

### Step 1: Expect Students with Disabilities to Achieve Grade-Level Academic Content Standards

With the focus of legislation aimed at accountability and the inclusion of all students comes the drive to ensure equal access to grade-level content standards. Providing effective accommodations during instruction and assessments is critical to achieving this important goal.

### Step 2: Select Accommodations for Instruction

To assure students with disabilities are engaged in grade level instruction and assessments, every IEP Team or 504 Committee member must be knowledgeable about the SOL and the assessment component of Virginia's accountability system. Effective decision-making about the provision of appropriate accommodations begins with making good instructional decisions. In turn, making appropriate instructional decisions is facilitated by gathering and reviewing information about the student's disability and present level of performance in relation to the SOL. In essence, the process of making decisions about accommodations is one in which members of the IEP Team or 504 Committee attempt to 'level the playing field' so that students with disabilities can participate in the general education curriculum.

It is critical for students with disabilities to understand their disabilities and learn self-advocacy strategies for success in school and throughout life. The more a student is involved in the selection process, the more likely the accommodations will be used, especially as the student reaches adolescence and the desire to be more independent increases. Self-advocacy skills become critical as students learn which accommodations are most helpful for them.

### Step 3: Select Accommodations for Assessment

Testing accommodations should be considered and discussed individually for each assessment required for the student's grade level or course. They should not be broadly assigned across all assessments. Only accommodations needed by the student, due to the disability, to access the assessment should be selected. Providing accommodations that are not required by the student to access the test may actually interfere with student performance and adversely impact student achievement as measured by assessments. IEP Teams and 504 Committees must consider the following:

- Whether the recommended accommodations are necessary for access to the assessment process;
- Previous experience with and usefulness of the recommendation accommodations; and
- Whether or not the recommended accommodations affect the integrity or security of the assessment.

When selecting accommodations for state assessments for a student, it is important to determine which accommodations are allowed for the assessment being considered. A chart listing allowed assessment accommodations is provided on p. 16 of this document. The use of non-approved accommodations may result in a testing irregularity and the invalidation of a student's score. Accommodations not listed in the *Virginia Standards of Learning Assessments Test Implementation Manuals* may not be used for SOL testing without prior approval from VDOE.

#### Step 4: Administer Accommodations during Instruction and Assessment

Plan how and when the student will learn to use each new accommodation. Be certain there is ample time to learn to use instructional and assessment accommodations before the state assessments are administered. The student must be provided the selected accommodations during instructional periods that necessitate their use. Accommodations may not be used solely during assessments.

##### Planning for Test Day

Once decisions have been made about providing accommodations to meet individual student needs, the logistics of providing the accommodations during SOL assessments must be mapped out. It is important to engage the appropriate personnel to plan the logistics and provisions of assessment accommodations on test day.

School Test Coordinators are responsible for the overall conduct of the assessment administration and should be involved in the planning and coordination of accommodations. Prior to the day of a test, the School Test Coordinator should ensure certain test examiners and proctors know what accommodations each student will be using and how to administer them properly.

Virginia regulations specify practices to assure test security and the standardized and ethical administration of assessments. Test examiners, proctors, and all staff involved in test administration must adhere to these regulations and practices. Providing a student with an accommodation not documented on the student's IEP or 504 Plan or failing to provide an accommodation during a state assessment constitutes a test irregularity which may result in invalidation of the student's score and necessitate re-testing. Refer to the *Virginia Standards of Learning Assessments Test Implementation Manuals* for specific information about testing irregularities.

## II. Allowed Assessment Accommodations

### Classifications of Accommodations

Accommodations are commonly placed in the four categories noted below:

<p><b>Timing/Scheduling Accommodations</b></p> <p>Adjust the scheduling of a test:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• time of day</li> <li>• breaks during test</li> <li>• multiple test sessions *</li> <li>• order of tests administration</li> </ul>	<p><b>Setting Accommodations</b></p> <p>Adjust the place in which the testing normally occurs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• individual testing (one-on-one)</li> <li>• special lighting</li> <li>• adaptive or special furniture</li> <li>• test administered in locations with minimal distractions</li> <li>• hospital/home/non-school setting</li> </ul>
<p><b>Presentation Accommodations</b></p> <p>Adjusts the presentation of test material and/or test directions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• visual aids (e.g. magnifying glass, large monitor, screen magnifier, graphic organizers, templates, masks or markers to maintain place)</li> <li>• amplification equipment (e.g., hearing aid, auditory trainer, whisper phone)</li> <li>• large-print *</li> <li>• Braille *</li> <li>• Plain English version</li> <li>• reading directions to students</li> <li>• written directions to accompany oral directions</li> <li>• reading of test items aloud *</li> <li>• audio version of test items *</li> <li>• interpreting/transliterating directions (e.g., sign language, cued speech) *</li> <li>• interpreting/transliterating test items (e.g., sign language, cued speech) *</li> </ul>	<p><b>Response Accommodations</b></p> <p>Adjust the manner in which students respond to or answer test items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• enlarged copy of the answer document*</li> <li>• student marks test booklet, student responds verbally, points, uses augmentative device with auditory output, or indicates an answer and Examiner/Proctor marks answer document or clicks answer online *</li> <li>• communication board, pictorial presentation</li> <li>• Braille *</li> <li>• word processor, typewriter or augmentative communication device *</li> <li>• spelling aids (spell checker, spelling dictionary)*</li> <li>• dictation using a recording device (only for pre-writing activity to record response for the short-paper component of the <i>Writing</i> test)</li> <li>• dictation to a scribe (short-paper component of the <i>Writing</i> test only) *</li> <li>• word prediction software (short-paper component of the <i>Writing</i> test only)*</li> <li>• calculator or arithmetic tables*</li> <li>• math aids (e.g., abacus, number line, colored shapes, fraction circles)*</li> <li>• calculator with additional functions*</li> </ul>

**NOTE:** Follow special procedures as outlined on the following pages for each of the accommodations marked with an asterisk (\*).

The following accommodations are available for the paper/pencil format of the test only. Contact the Division Director of Testing for additional information.

- Multiple sessions
- Large-Print tests
- Increased size of answer circles
- Braille tests
- Communication board
- Response by word processor, Braille
- Augmentative communication device

## Timing/Scheduling Accommodation

- **Multiple Test Sessions (Accommodation Code 1)**

The SOL tests are not timed. However, some students may be unable to concentrate for a long period of time or may have short attention spans. For such students, it may be advisable to divide the test into segments that may be administered over one or more than one school day. Students who have the accommodation of multiple test sessions must be administered a paper/pencil test. If the test is to be administered in sections over more than one school day, care must be taken to ensure that students are exposed to only those test items in the section that they are currently attempting. Previously completed items and items not yet accessed may be sealed to prevent accidental exposure to the student.

The short-paper component of the *English Writing* assessment must be administered within one school day; however, the student may be given multiple breaks under secure conditions. The student must be monitored by school personnel at all times and should not be allowed to discuss the test with anyone or have access to educational materials. The session should be scheduled for a period long enough to accommodate the needs of the student.

## Presentation Accommodations

All students should be familiar with the test format before attempting the test. Familiarity with the test format is best provided as part of regular instruction well in advance of the actual test administration.

- **Visual Aids (Accommodation Code 4)**

Visual aids can include aids for visually impaired students such as projecting onto a large screen or smart board, the use of a close circuit television (CCTV), electronic magnification, magnifying glass, a large monitor or a screen magnifier. Visual aids include templates or masks that allow a student to see one word, sentence, or line of print at a time, and markers that allow the student to maintain their place. Graphic organizers are included within this accommodation code. Graphic organizers must be blank, containing no directions, words, letters, numbers, or text of any kind.

- **Large Print (Accommodation Code 6)**

A copy of the large-print tests will be provided in regular print to Test Examiners or Proctors working with large-print readers.

- **Braille (Accommodation Code 9)**

A copy of the Braille tests will be provided in regular print to Test Examiners or Proctors working with Braille readers.

- **Guidance for Using the Online Audio Accommodation for Students with Disabilities**

In the past school divisions have been told that students should not use accommodations during testing unless they used the same accommodation during classroom instruction and assessments. Since it would be very difficult for school divisions to provide an online audio accommodation during instruction, the guidelines below have been established to provide clarification as to the circumstances under

which a student could be provided with an online audio accommodation during testing.

- The IEP Team or 504 Committee must determine whether the read-aloud accommodation administered by a test examiner or the online audio accommodation is the more appropriate accommodation delivery method for online testing. It is particularly important that the parent agrees to the delivery method and that the decision is clearly documented in the IEP or 504 Plan.
  - The online audio accommodation on the SOL test may be provided to students who typically have a read-aloud accommodation during instruction or to those who use audiocassettes or text readers in the classroom.
  - If the IEP Team or 504 Committee determine that the online audio accommodation is the more appropriate accommodation, the student should have practice with audio e-PAT (Electronic Practice Assessment Tools) or the audio training test available in PearsonAccess Training Center.
- **Reading of Test Items Aloud - Information for all Assessments**

When reading the tests aloud, the Test Examiner must be careful not to lead the student by intonation or to repeat any part of the test which is not specifically requested by the student. In particular, care must be taken to describe graphics without leading the student to the correct response. The audio version provides a recorded version of the test directions and test items. The Test Examiner who reads the tests aloud should consult the audio version for the standard technique to reading the material. An online, regular print, large print, or Braille copy of the test should be used in conjunction with reading the test aloud in order to provide the student multi-sensory stimulation. Test items must be read in English. For more detailed information, refer to the *Virginia Standards of Learning Assessments Guidelines for Administering the Read-Aloud Accommodation* at:

[www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/participation/guidelines\\_read\\_aloud.pdf](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/participation/guidelines_read_aloud.pdf)

All read-aloud administrations must be recorded or proctored. If the session is recorded, the audio record of the entire testing session must be retained on file and secured in the office of the Division Director of Testing until scores are received and verified. If proctored, the Test Examiner and Proctor must verify in writing that the test administration was conducted according to standardized procedures. This written verification must be retained on file in the office of the Division Director of Testing until scores are received and verified. For detailed information regarding the requirements for recording test sessions refer to the *Guidelines for Recording a Test Session* located in the appendix of any *Test Implementation Manual* and in any *Examiner's Manual*.

- **Read-Aloud Accommodation on *Mathematics, Science, History/Social Science, and Writing* (Accommodation Code 10)**

The read-aloud accommodation for *Mathematics, Science, History/Social Science, and Writing* assessments is allowed for students with disabilities as specified in the IEP or 504 Plan. Special attention must be given to the IEP or 504 Plan for specific accommodations regarding reading the test aloud. For example, a student's accommodation may require the entire test to be read orally or may require having words, questions, or sentences read orally only when requested by the student.

### **Read-Aloud Accommodation on the *Reading* Assessment (Accommodation Code 14)**

The read-aloud accommodation on the statewide *Reading* assessments is allowed only for students with a visual impairment, including blindness, and those students with a specific disability that severely limits or prevents them from decoding text at any level of difficulty as determined by a diagnostic tool or instrument that was administered by a qualified professional. Students with disabilities who are simply having difficulty reading text and/or are reading below grade-level are not allowed the read-aloud accommodation on the statewide *Reading* assessments.

If the read-aloud accommodation for the reading test is provided for students with disabilities who have not been determined as eligible by the school division according to the criteria stated above, the read-aloud will be considered a non-standard accommodation and the student will be considered a non-participant in the calculation of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). In this situation, code the student's test with accommodation codes 14 and B. The read-aloud session must be recorded and/or proctored by a second staff member.

- **Audio Accommodation on *Mathematics, Science, History/Social Science, and Writing* (Accommodation Code 11)**

The audio accommodation for *Mathematics, Science, History/Social Science, and Writing* assessments is allowed for students with disabilities as specified in the IEP or 504 Plan. The student should have instructional experience with audio, such as using audio versions of textbooks or recorded class lectures. Unless the student has experience with using audio, this accommodation may cause more difficulty than assistance. The audio must be used in conjunction with a printed test (either regular or large-print) or a Braille test and must be in English.

- **Audio Accommodation on the *Reading* Assessment (Accommodation Code 15)**

The audio accommodation on the statewide *Reading* assessments is allowed only for students with a visual impairment, including blindness, and those students with a specific disability that severely limits or prevents them from decoding text at any level of difficulty as determined by a diagnostic tool or instrument that was administered by a qualified professional. Students with disabilities who are simply having difficulty reading text and/or are reading below grade-level are not allowed the audio accommodation on the statewide *Reading* assessments.

If the audio accommodation for the reading test is used for students with disabilities who have not been determined as eligible by the school division according to the criteria stated above, the audio will be considered a non-standard accommodation and the student will be considered a non-participant in the calculation of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). In this situation, code the student's test with accommodation codes 15 and B.

- **Using Audio Recordings that Accompany Braille, Large-Print, and Regular-Print Versions of the Test**

Only use the audio recording accompanying the Braille and/or large-print test forms/prompts if the student has use of audio as an accommodation on her/his current IEP or 504 Plan.

Before test administration, check audio players to be sure they will work correctly



during test administration. Check the labels of the audio recordings to see that the subject area and test form number match the Braille, large-print, or regular-print test booklets.

**Students may pause or stop a recording as necessary during the test to follow its contents and keep up with the narration.** So that students may stop the recording as they need to, it is best to have an individual recording and audio player for each student using an audio version.

In each set of specific directions for administering a subject area test, look for the directions that will indicate exactly when to begin playing an audio recording. The Test Examiner must follow directions and read aloud specific directions to the student for audio tests.

- **Interpreting/Transliterating Test Items (e.g., sign language, cued speech)—  
Information for all Assessments**

Students who are deaf or have a hearing impairment may have test items interpreted/transliterated directly from assessments (paper or online formats) or from items read to the student by Test Examiners. The student's IEP Team or 504 Committee should determine the best method to provide students with hearing impairments or deafness access to assessment items.

Interpreters/transliterators must be very careful so as not to lead the student to a correct answer by facial expression or by repeating any part of the test which is not specifically requested by the student. It is also important for the interpreter/transliterator to read each item before interpreting or transliterating to ensure that the correct response is not inadvertently disclosed. An interpreted/transliterated administration must be proctored or video recorded. The Test Examiner and the Proctor must verify in writing that the test administration was conducted according to standardized procedures. This written verification shall be retained on file in the office of the Division Director of Testing until the scores are received and verified.

Interpreters for paper/pencil and online tests must also sign the *School Division Personnel Test Security Agreement (Including Examiners/Proctors)*.

- **Interpreting/Transliterating Directions (e.g., sign language, cued speech)  
(accommodation code is not required)**

Testing sessions for students who are deaf or have a hearing impairment and who normally communicate in sign language or using cued speech may include a qualified interpreter or transliterator for test directions or to interpret/transliterate questions answered by the Test Examiner. (The interpreter's role and code of ethics prohibits answering questions directly). The Test Examiner must be present for the testing session and must read the test directions aloud as presented in the *Examiner's Manual* so that they can be interpreted/transliterated. Student questions must be directed to the Test Examiner and answered by him or her, and the interpreter/transliterator will communicate the response. The interpreter/transliterator should also communicate sample test items that are read aloud as part of the test directions.

- **Interpreting/Transliterating Accommodation on *Mathematics, Science, History/Social Science, and Writing* (Accommodation Code 12)**

The interpreting/transliterating accommodation for *Mathematics, Science, History/Social Science, and Writing* assessments is allowed for students who are deaf or have hearing impairments as specified in the IEP or 504 Plan. The test items may be items interpreted/transliterated directly from assessments (paper or online formats) or from items read to the student by Test Examiners. The student's IEP Team or 504 Committee should determine the best method to provide students with hearing impairments or deafness access to assessment items.

- **Interpreting/Transliterating Accommodation on the *Reading Test* (Accommodation Code 16)**

Students who are deaf or have a hearing impairment may be considered by school divisions for the interpreting/transliterating accommodation on the state reading tests because of difficulty hearing phonemes, which is a part of the decoding process. Eligibility must be determined by a diagnostic tool or instrument administered by a qualified professional. If a student who is deaf or hearing impaired is found eligible for the interpreting/transliterating accommodation because his/her hearing impairment severely limits the ability to decode text, the test would be administered through an interpreter if that student uses sign language as his/her primary method of communicating. The interpreter should sign without providing the student with answers. The interpreter should be videotaped while interpreting the test or proctored by appropriate school personnel.

If the student does not use an interpreter, but depends on speech reading in addition to audition for comprehension, the read-aloud accommodation should be done face-to-face and recorded on audiotape.

## **Response Accommodations**

It is important to remember that even when accommodations are provided, all responses on the assessments should be the student's response, not one interpreted by others.

- **Enlarged Copy of Answer Document (Accommodation Code 8)**

If the student marks responses on an enlarged copy of the answer document (accommodation code 8), the student's responses must be transcribed to the regular answer document by a school official. The regular answer document and the enlarged copy of the answer document must be verified by a second school official to ensure that no errors in the transcription occurred. The enlarged copy of the answer document shall be retained on file and secured in the office of the Division Director of Testing until the scores are received and verified. **Note:** It is the school division's responsibility to provide the enlarged answer document for the student.

- **Student Marks Test Booklet, Responds Verbally, Points, or Indicates a Response and Examiner/Proctor Transfers Responses to an Answer Document or Selects Student's Choice Online (Accommodation Code 18); or Uses Augmentative Device with Auditory Output (Accommodation Code 22)**

When these accommodations are provided, student responses must be transcribed to the regular answer document or the student's response is selected on the student's computer work station by the examiner. The regular answer document and the

marked test booklet must be verified by a second school official to ensure that no errors in transcription occurred. The student's name should be clearly printed on the test booklet and the booklet returned with all other secure materials to Pearson. If a discrepancy is discovered after the division has returned their secure materials to Pearson, notify assessment staff at the Virginia Department of Education.

If the student responds verbally, the session must be recorded and/or proctored. Students who are unable to respond to test items by marking the regular or an enlarged copy of the answer document or by clicking the answer online, or circling answers in their test booklet may have an Examiner/Proctor record their responses. An audio or video must be made of the exchange or the session may be proctored by a second adult. The audio/video record shall be retained on file and secured in the office of the Division Director of Testing until the scores are received and verified. If the session is proctored, the Proctor must verify in writing that the test administration was conducted according to the standardized procedures (refer to *Guidelines for Recording a Test Session* located in the appendix of any *Test Implementation Manual* and in any *Examiner's Manual*).

- **Braille (Accommodation Code 21)**

Students with blindness or low-vision may use a Braillewriter to respond to the writing prompt/short-paper component of the *English Writing* test or to record responses to multiple-choice questions on the SOL tests. Student responses must be transcribed to the regular answer document by school personnel qualified to read Braille. The regular answer document and Brailled material must be verified by a second school staff member to ensure that no errors in transcription occurred. The Brailled material shall be retained on file and secured in the office of the Division Director of Testing until the scores are received and verified.

- **Word Processor or Typewriter (Accommodation Code 21) or Augmentative Communication Device (Accommodation Code 22)**

These accommodations are available for students who are blind or have visual impairments as well as students who have an orthopedic impairment, a specific learning disability or other disability that interferes with the composing process. It allows these students to use a typewriter, word processor, or augmentative communication device to complete the short-paper component of the SOL *English Writing* test. Only augmentative communication devices which produce student responses verbatim may be used. If the augmentative communication device produces an auditory output, it should be treated as dictation to a scribe. It must be documented that the student uses a typewriter, word processor, or augmentative communication device for his/her written work.

The student's typed or printed response to the writing prompt must be transcribed to the regular answer document by school staff. The regular answer document and student's response must be verified by a second staff member to ensure that no errors in the transcription occurred. The student's response shall be retained on file and secure in the office of the Division Director of Testing until the scores are received and verified. Because the regular administration allows the use of a dictionary, a hand-held "spell checker" or the spell checking capacity of a computer can be used, but the student must not be prompted to use it.

A document stating that the typed or printed response to the writing prompt is entirely the student's work and that no "grammar checker" was used must be signed by the

Test Examiner and Proctor and retained on file in the office of the Division Director of Testing until the scores are received and verified.

- **Spelling Aids (Accommodation Code 23)**

Students with disabilities are allowed to use approved spelling aids on the SOL assessments. Spelling aids include spell checkers and spelling dictionaries. The spelling aid must meet the criteria established by the Virginia Department of Education. The spelling aid must be documented on the student's IEP or 504 Plan as a testing accommodation. Spell checkers may not automatically correct words or provide prompting for spell checking. If the spell checker allows for the selection of a dictionary, a dictionary appropriate to the student's grade level should be selected. Further, if automatic correction, prompting for spelling and/or access to a thesaurus are included, these features must be disabled. A spelling dictionary may be a commercial product as long as there are not hints or clueing included. It should only contain the word lists in alphabetical order. A spelling dictionary could also be a teacher- or student-made personal spelling dictionary with words that the student uses in his or her writing. The spelling dictionary must not contain spelling rules, punctuation rules, words used in sentences, or other clueing.

- **Dictation to a Scribe (Accommodation Code 25)**

***Short paper component of the Writing Assessment only***

The student will dictate in English (or use an augmentative communication device with auditory output) his/her response to the prompt for the short paper component of the *Writing* assessment to a second person (scribe) who will transcribe it. The scribe, who should have experience working with the student, must format, capitalize, and punctuate only as directed by the student. The student is not required to spell each word to the scribe. The scribe's transcription and audio record must be verified by a second school official to ensure that no errors in transcription occurred. The session between the student and scribe must be recorded and/or proctored. If recorded on audio the recording must be given to the Division Director of Testing along with the transcription. If proctored, the Proctor must verify in writing that the test administration was conducted according to standardized procedures. This written verification shall be retained on file in the office of the Division Director of Testing until the scores are received and verified. The scribe's transcription and audio record shall be retained on file and secured in the office of the Division Director of Testing until the established appeal period is over. For more details about recording test sessions, refer to the *Guidelines for Recording a Test Session* located in the appendix of any *Test Implementation Manual* and in any *Examiner's Manual*.

- **Word Prediction Software (Accommodation Code 21)**

***Short Paper component of Writing Test only***

Word prediction/selection software is allowed on the short-paper component of the SOL *Writing* assessments. Word prediction/selection is defined as any software providing a student with a selection of single words from a student-generated single or multiple keystrokes. For example, a student may type into the software the letter "p." The software will provide the student with a list of single words starting with the letter "p" (e.g., "plane," "plain," "put," "part," "please").

It should be noted that word prediction/selection is limited to the software providing selections of single words and not phrases, grammatically appropriate options, or

other unrelated word choices generated by student keystrokes to predict sentence structure.

Software with word prediction/selection must not provide prompting for spell checking, grammar checking, predicting phrases or word choices, and must not make use of a thesaurus.

If the word prediction/selection software allows selection of a dictionary for use by the software, an appropriate dictionary for the student's grade level should be selected.

- **Calculators and Arithmetic Tables (Accommodation Code 26), and Calculator with Additional Functions (Accommodation Code 28)**

Students with disabilities may use calculators and arithmetic tables on sections of the SOL assessments in which a calculator is not allowed and/or calculators with additional functions if the student's IEP Team or 504 Committee determines that a student is eligible based on the calculator accommodation criteria established by the Virginia Department of Education. Arithmetic tables and charts are defined as tools that serve the same function as a simple calculator. Examples include multiplication charts, addition charts, subtraction charts, or division charts. In order to use these tools, students with disabilities must be found eligible by their IEP Team or 504 Committee under the calculator accommodation criteria (Appendix E). If the student is determined eligible, the IEP Team or 504 Committee must document the decision on the student's IEP or 504 Plan and maintain a copy of the completed and signed calculator accommodation criteria form in the student's educational record.

- **Math aids (Accommodation code 19)**

Students with disabilities may use approved math aids on *Mathematics* SOL assessments if the accommodation is documented in the student's IEP or 504 Plan as a testing accommodation. Examples of approved math aids include: number line, colored shapes, and fraction circles. For a complete list of both approved and not approved math aids, refer to the document *Explanation of Testing Accommodations for Students with Disabilities—Math Aids*, available on the Virginia Department of Education Web site at: [www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/participation/index.shtml](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/participation/index.shtml)

- **Transcription of Students' Answers—Information for all Assessments**

**NOTE:** Prior approval must be obtained from the STC to conduct a transcription of students' answers.

The accommodation for transcribing students' test responses onto an answer document is **only** available for students as stated in their IEPs, 504 Plans, LEP Student Assessment Participation Plans, or due to a documented temporary condition.

A student's responses to the multiple-choice and short-paper components must be transcribed to the regular answer document by a school official if the student's answers were:

- recorded on Braille paper or on an enlarged copy of the answer document
- dictated to an Examiner/Proctor and audio recorded
- created using a typewriter, word processor, Braille, augmentative communication device or word prediction software
- marked directly in the test booklet

- indicated by pointing

The transcription must be verified by a second school official to ensure that no errors occurred. Proctors may transcribe or verify the transcription. Other adults in the school can also transcribe responses or verify responses without formal training as a Proctor. However, the same individual should transcribe the entire response. An alert will be triggered if a response appears with more than one individual's handwriting.

**NOTE:** The students' responses must not be altered in any way.

Transcriptions must be completed as soon as possible after the test has been administered. Remember that an answer document is considered to be secure once a student's answers have been recorded on it. Therefore, the answer documents must be kept in locked storage when not in use during an actual testing session.

The documentation of the student's responses (such as an audio/video of the session, output from a Braille or augmentative communication device, enlarged answer documents, etc.) shall be retained on file and secured in the office of the DDOT until scores are received and verified.

## Special Testing Accommodations Codes

Not all accommodations are available or appropriate on every SOL assessment. Refer to the appendices in the *Test Implementation Manual* and /or the specific SOL assessment's *Examiner's Manual* for details regarding the restrictions of availability for the accommodations listed below:

Accommodation code number	Brief Description of Accommodation
1	flexible schedule (includes breaks during test and multiple test sessions). The short-paper component must be administered in one school day. Multiple test sessions are not available for online testing.
4	visual aids (e.g., magnifying glass, large monitor, screen magnifier, templates to show only one item at a time, blank graphic organizer)
5	amplification equipment (e.g., hearing aid, auditory trainer, whisper phone)
6	large-print test
8	increased size of answer circles (e.g., enlarged copy of answer document)
9	Braille test
10	read-aloud: test examiner reads test items in English (except for <i>Reading</i> test). See #14 for read-aloud on the <i>Reading</i> test.
11	Audio version of the test (except for <i>Reading</i> test). See #15 for audio for the <i>Reading</i> test.
12	interpreting (e.g., signing, transliteration) test items (except for <i>Reading</i> test). See #16 for interpreting the <i>Reading</i> test.
13	communication board / pictorial presentation
14	read-aloud on the <i>Reading</i> test: test examiner reads <i>Reading</i> test items in English
15	Audio version of the <i>Reading</i> test
16	interpreting (e.g., signing, transliteration) test items on the <i>Reading</i> test
17	bilingual dictionary (Limited English Proficient (LEP) students only)
18	student marks answers in test booklet, responds verbally, points, or indicates a response
19	math aids (e.g., abacus, number line, colored shapes, fraction circles)
21	respond by word processor, typewriter; Braille, word prediction software
22	augmentative communication device
23	spelling aids (e.g., spell checker, spelling dictionary)
24	dictation using a recording device (pre-writing for the short-paper component of the <i>Writing</i> test only)
25	dictation in English to a scribe (short-paper component of the <i>Writing</i> test only)
26	use of calculator or arithmetic tables for grade 3 (and for grades 4, 5, 6, and 7 on the math computation section of the test that does not allow a calculator) (refer to Appendix E for the Calculator Accommodation eligibility form.)
27	other (must obtain prior approval from VDOE)
28	calculator with additional functions to those routinely supplied to all students (refer to Appendix E for the Calculator Accommodation eligibility form.)
29	English dictionary:—LEP students may use a general English dictionary when a bilingual dictionary in the student's native language is not available, or when specified on the LEP Student Assessment Participation Plan.
A	<i>Plain English Mathematics</i> Test
B	other-nonstandard (for <i>Reading</i> and <i>Mathematics</i> : the student will be considered a non-participant in the calculation of AYP)

### **III. Procedures for Requesting a Special Assessment Accommodation**

A small number of students with disabilities may require accommodations beyond those listed in this document and the *Test Implementation Manual* to access the SOL assessments. A Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) approval is required to administer these accommodations. The Division Director of Testing or his/her designee should complete the *Special Assessment Accommodation Request* form (Appendix F). This form should be completed and submitted to the Office of Test Administration, Scoring, and Reporting at the Virginia Department of Education at least three weeks before the student is scheduled to take an SOL test. This request should be submitted to the Office of Test Administration, Scoring, and Reporting by email at [student\\_assessment@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:student_assessment@doe.virginia.gov).

Each request for a special assessment accommodation will be reviewed individually based upon the need to provide equal access to the SOL test for the student and the need to maintain standardized procedures and test security. Accommodations may be “approved”, “approved with conditions”, or “not approved”. Some accommodations that are approved or approved with conditions may be designated as non-standard accommodations. The Division Director of Testing or his/her designee will be notified as soon as the decision concerning the special assessment accommodation has been made.



## APPENDIX A

### Virginia Grade Level Alternative

<b>Participation Criteria for Students with Disabilities</b>
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**Directions:** The VGLA is an evidence-based grade level alternative to the Standards of Learning (SOL) assessments. To identify appropriate students for the VGLA, a student's IEP team/504 committee must address each section of this form and attach supporting documentation as indicated.

#### Section I: Student Information

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

State Testing Identifier

(STD): \_\_\_\_\_

Current Grade of Enrollment:

\_\_\_\_\_

Content Area

Considered \_\_\_\_\_

#### Section II: School Division Information

School Division Name: \_\_\_\_\_ School Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Course Content Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Section III. Performance Overview** *Review and document that the student cannot access SOL assessments in a multiple-choice format. To make this determination, IEP Teams/504 Committees must document the review of the following information for each content area separately.*

- Three or more student work samples (class work or classroom assessment) from the content area being considered in the multiple-choice format
- Three or more student work samples (class work or classroom assessment) from the content area being considered in alternative formats

**a) List the work samples in the multiple-choice format and describe the student's performance on each work sample. *Work samples must be attached to this document.***

Multiple-Choice Work Sample #1

Multiple-Choice Work Sample #2

Multiple-Choice Work Sample #3

**b) List the work samples in the alternative formats and describe the student's performance on each work sample. *Work samples must be attached to this document.***

Alternative Format Work Sample #1

Alternative Format Work Sample #2

Alternative Format Work Sample #3

**Section IV. *Justification Statement*** *The IEP Team /504 Committee must also provide a justification statement as to why the IEP Team or 504 Committee has determined that the impact of the student's disability prevents access to the SOL assessment even with accommodations. Data should be referenced from the student's educational record including the most recent evaluation information, teacher observations, and classroom and state assessment performance history.*

a) Brief overview of the student's disability

b) Impact of the disability on the student's classroom performance

c) Accommodations that have been used in classroom, division, or state assessments and the impact on the student's performance

**Section V.** *To participate in the Virginia Grade Level Alternative, the student's IEP Team/504 Committee must determine that a student is eligible based on answering the three questions below. A response of "No" for any question indicates that the student is NOT eligible for the VGLA in the content area listed in Section I of this form.*

**1) Does the student have a current IEP/504 Plan or is one being developed?**

Yes       No

**2) Does the student demonstrate his/her individual achievement of the Standards of Learning content by means other than multiple-choice test format?**

Yes       No

**3) As a result of a disability, is the student unable to demonstrate his/her individual achievement on the Standards of Learning test for the assigned course and grade level using available accommodations and/or formats?**

Yes       No

**Signed:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Course Content Teacher

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Special Education Teacher

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Parent

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Building Administrator or Designee

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Other

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Other

## APPENDIX B

### Virginia Substitute Evaluation Program

<b>VSEP Intent to Participate</b>
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This form is available on the Virginia Department of Education Web site at:

[www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/alternative\\_assessments/vsep\\_va\\_substitute\\_eval\\_prog/index.shtml](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/alternative_assessments/vsep_va_substitute_eval_prog/index.shtml)

**Directions:** The IEP Team/504 Committee should complete sections I-V and submit to the Division Director of Testing. A separate *VSEP Intent to Participate* form is required for each subject/course considered.

#### Section I: Student Information

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

State Testing Identifier (STI): \_\_\_\_\_

Current Grade of Enrollment: \_\_\_\_\_ Diploma Program(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Administration:  Fall  Spring

Submission Subject/Course: \_\_\_\_\_

Is this a re-submission?  Yes  No

#### Section II: School Division Information

School Division Name: \_\_\_\_\_ School Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Course Content Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Section III: Qualifying Statements

If “NO” is checked for ANY statement, the student is NOT ELIGIBLE for the Virginia Substitute Evaluation Program.

YES	NO	(Check yes or no for each statement.)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The student has a current IEP or 504 Plan or one is being developed. (Please do not submit the student's IEP/504 Plan.)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The student is enrolled in a course or has passed a course that has a Standards of Learning end-of-course test and/or the student is pursuing a Modified Standard Diploma and seeking certification to meet the literacy and/or numeracy requirements.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	As a result of a disability, the student is <u>unable</u> to demonstrate his/her individual achievement on the Standards of Learning test for the course on grade level using the available accommodations as listed in the <i>Procedures for Participation of Students with Disabilities in Virginia's Accountability System</i> , available on the Virginia Department's of Education's Web site at: <a href="http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/participation/index.shtml">www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/participation/index.shtml</a>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The student's performance, even with accommodations, demonstrates to the IEP team or 504 committee that the student requires a VSEP.

**Section IV: Justification Statement**

Provide a justification statement and reference documentation as to why the IEP Team/504 Committee has determined that the impact of the student’s disability prevents access to the Standards of Learning assessments even with accommodations. Teachers should reference data in the student’s cumulative record including the most recent psychological evaluation, medical reports, learner characteristics, and/or teacher observations. This justification statement should be unique and individualized for the student and include:

a) **Brief overview of the student’s disability**

b) **Impact of the disability on the student’s academic performance**

c) **Accommodations that have been used previously with SOL assessments and impact on the student’s performance**

**Section V: Participants**

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Course Content Teacher

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Special Education Teacher

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Student

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Parent

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Building Administrator or Designee

Submit this form to the Division Director of Testing. The Division Director of Testing and the Director of Special Education will review the form.

This section is to be completed by the Division Director of Testing and the Director of Special Education.

**Section VI: Division Director of Testing and Director of Special Education Review Verification and Registration**

- DDOT and Director of Special Education have reviewed the *VSEP Intent to Participate* completeness and accuracy.
- DDOT has registered the student in PearsonAccess and assigned the VSEP test(s).

Division Director of Testing \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Director of Special Education \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions for Submitting the VSEP Intent to Participate Form**

After the Intent to Participate form has been reviewed and approved by the DDOT and the Special Education Director, the form should be submitted to VDOE through the Single-Sign-on Web System (SWSS) Dropbox located at: <https://plpe.doe.virginia.gov/ssws>.

The process for sending the VSEP Special Permission Request is like addressing and sending an e-mail attachment. Complete the File Information fields within the dropbox application as indicated below.

1. **To School Division Field** – Use the drop down menus to select Virginia Department of Education and to select the receiver as Learnard, Cathy.
2. **CC School Division Field** – Use the drop down menus to select Virginia Department of Education and to select the receiver as Dunkley, Chancie.
3. **Subject Field** – Type in Special Permission Request and your school division name.
4. **Select File Field** – Use the drop down menu to select “New”.
5. **File to Upload Field** – Enter the file name, including the full local path, or use the browse button to select the file to be sent.
6. **Click the submit button to send the file to each of the receivers selected.**

Divisions are strongly encouraged to submit their *VSEP Intent to Participate* forms as early as possible.

***VSEP Intent to Participate* Form Submit to VDOE by the due dates listed on the current form.**

**Late submissions** of the *VSEP Intent to Participate* form will be reviewed ONLY if there are extenuating circumstances.

The results the VDOE review will be indicated as “Approved,” “Approved with Conditions,” or “Denied” on the *VSEP Intent to Participate Approval/Denial* form submitted to the DDOT through the SSWS Drop Box.

## APPENDIX C

### Virginia Modified Achievement Standards Test

<b>VMAST Participation Criteria</b>
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**DIRECTIONS:** The VMAST is an online grade level alternate assessment designed for a small group of students with disabilities. Students participating in the VMAST are expected to learn grade level content; however, they may require additional time and a variety of instructional and assessment supports. Students participating in the VMAST do not receive a modified curriculum; the achievement expectations are modified and rigor is reduced by including supports and simplifications that allow participating students to access and demonstrate knowledge of grade level content. Eligibility must be determined separately for mathematics and reading. *VMAST mathematics assessments will be available beginning in 2011-12 and VMAST reading assessments will be available beginning in 2012-2013.*

To identify appropriate students for the VMAST, a student's IEP Team must address each section of this form and attach supporting documentation as indicated. Additionally the IEP must ensure that each participant meets the following criteria:

- Has a current Individualized Education Program (IEP) with standards-based content goals.
- Has a disability which precludes him or her from achieving and progressing commensurate with grade-level expectations.
- Achievement and progress have been evaluated using multiple, objective measures of evidence.
- Supports used for daily instruction and classroom assessment that are clearly documented.

#### Section I: Student Information

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

State Testing Identifier (STI): \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_ Current Grade of Enrollment: \_\_\_\_\_

Content Area/ Course Considered: \_\_\_\_\_

Content Area/ Course Teacher (s) \_\_\_\_\_

#### Disability Category

- *Brief overview of the student's disability*
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- *Impact of the disability on the student's classroom performance*

## Section II: Qualifying Questions and Supporting Documentation

To participate in the VMAST, the student's IEP Team must determine that the student is eligible based on answering the three questions and reviewing the information provided below. A response of "No" for any question or failure to provide supporting documentation indicates that the student is NOT eligible for the VMAST in the content area/course listed in Section I of this form.

### INTENSIVE INDIVIDUALIZED INSTRUCTION

**1. Does the student need significant instructional supports to access grade-level Standards of Learning (SOL) and show progress?**

Yes       No

- *Describe the individualized supports provided to the student to access grade-level SOL content.*
  
- *Describe the amount of time the student has used the individualized supports and the impact on progress.*
  
- *Describe the instructional accommodation (s) provided to the student to access grade-level SOL content.*
  
- *Describe the amount of time the student has used the instructional accommodation(s) and the impact on progress.*
  
- *Describe the specialized program/intervention provided to the student to access grade-level SOL content.*
  
- *Describe the amount of time the student has been instructed using a specialized program/intervention and the impact on progress.*





**STUDENT PERFORMANCE**

**3. Is the student not expected to achieve grade level proficiency within the year?**

Yes       No

- *List the measures used to monitor student progress and performance and to determine that the student is not progressing at the rate expected for the grade level or course.*
  
- *Describe the student's progress and performance demonstrated on each measure listed.*

**Section III: Justification Statement**

*The IEP Team must also provide a justification statement summarizing why the IEP Team has determined that the student is appropriate for the VMAST. The justification cannot be based on any specific categorical label (disability, gender, social, cultural or economic status, excessive or extended absences, beliefs that the student will fail the test, does not need the test for promotion or graduation or the student's behavior).*

**Signed:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
 Course Content Teacher

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
 Special Education Teacher

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
 Parent

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
 Building Administrator or Designee

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other

## APPENDIX D

### Virginia Alternate Assessment Program

<b>VAAP Participation Criteria</b>
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**DIRECTIONS:** To qualify for the Virginia Alternate Assessment Program (VAAP), a student's IEP Team must determine that a student is eligible based on answering the questions below for each content area considered. A response of "No" for any question indicates that the student is **NOT** eligible for the VAAP.

#### Student Information

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

State Testing Identifier (STI): \_\_\_\_\_ Current Grade of Enrollment: \_\_\_\_\_

Diploma Program(s): \_\_\_\_\_

#### School Division Information

School Division Name: \_\_\_\_\_ School Name: \_\_\_\_\_

School Content Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Virginia Alternate Assessment Program Participation Criteria

- 1) Does the student have a current IEP or one that is being developed?  
 Yes     No
- 2) Does the student demonstrate significant cognitive disabilities?  
 Yes     No
- 3) Does the student's present level of performance indicate the need for extensive, direct instruction and/or intervention in a curriculum based on Aligned Standards of Learning? The present level of performance, or student evaluation, may also include personal management, recreation and leisure, school and community, vocational, communication, social competence and/or motor skills.  
 Yes     No
- 4) Does the student require intensive, frequent, and individualized instruction in a variety of settings to show interaction and achievement?  
 Yes     No
- 5) Is the student working toward educational goals other than those prescribed for a Modified Standard Diploma, Standard Diploma, or Advanced Studies Diploma?  
 Yes     No

**NOTE:** Students considered for the VAAP must be enrolled in a grade from 3 through 8 or high school.

#### Signed:

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Special Education Teacher

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Parent

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Building Administrator or Designee

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Other

**APPENDIX E**

**Accommodation Criteria for Students with Disabilities**

<b>Calculator Accommodation</b>
---------------------------------

**STUDENT INFORMATION:**

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ DOB \_\_\_\_\_ STI \_\_\_\_\_  
 Test Administration Date \_\_\_\_\_ Current Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Test: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Course Content Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

The IEP Team /504 Committee is considering the student named above for the calculator accommodation(s) checked below:

- \_\_\_\_ Use of a calculator with additional functions (a calculator other than those routinely supplied to students on the Standards of Learning Mathematics assessments);
- \_\_\_\_ Use of a calculator on sections of the Standards of Learning Mathematics assessments in which a calculator is not allowed. (SOL mathematics tests for grades 3-7)

To qualify for these accommodations, a student’s IEP Team/504 Committee must determine that a student is eligible based the impact of the student’s disability. Please respond to each of the three questions below. A response of “No” to any question indicates that the student is **NOT** eligible for the calculator accommodation. **Note:** This accommodation is not intended for students with disabilities whose skills in performing mathematical calculations are merely below grade level.

- 1) Does the student have a current IEP/504 Plan that documents the student’s disability and the need for a calculator to access the SOL assessment?  
 Yes     No
- 2) Does the student have a specific disability that involves attention to sequence and /or memory (short term, long term, or active working) that severely limits or prevents mathematical calculation at any level of difficulty  
 Yes     No
- 3) As a result of a specific disability, is the student able to perform calculations only with a calculator routinely used in instruction?  
 Yes     No

If the answers to all three questions is Yes, provide a justification statement in the space provided below describing the student’s specific disability, and

the need for a calculator with additional functions in order to access the SOL mathematics assessment.
the need for a calculator on sections of the SOL tests in which a calculator is not allowed.

**IEP Team/504 Committee Members Signatures**

Title	Print Name	Signature	Date

**APPENDIX F**

**Virginia Department of Education  
Division of Student Assessment and School Improvement  
Special Assessment Accommodation Request**

**Date of Request:** \_\_\_\_\_ **School Division:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Requested by:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Position:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Must be completed by DDOT or Designee)

**Content Area:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Grade Level:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date the student will take the test indicated above:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Accommodation Request:**

Please provide the following information:

1. **Is (or will) the accommodation documented on the student's IEP/504 Plan?**  Yes  No
2. **Has this accommodation been used instructionally with the student?**  Yes  No
3. **Provide a clear and concise description of:**
  - Student's disability (Do not include any personally identifiable information about the student.)
  - Description of the accommodation and/or a web address, if appropriate
  - The specific need for the accommodation

**Accommodation Requested:**

Please submit your accommodation request form to the Office of Test Administration, Scoring, and Reporting by email to [student\\_assessment@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:student_assessment@doe.virginia.gov).

To be completed by DOE staff

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 **Approved**       **Approved with Conditions**       **Not Approved**

If approved with conditions, the following will apply:

**Conditions:**