



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA  
Department of Education

January 13, 2017

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: Steven R. Staples, Superintendent of Public Instruction

**SUBJECT: Updated Timeline for the Implementation of the 2015 *History and Social Science Standards of Learning***

On March 26, 2015, the Board of Education adopted the revised *History and Social Science Standards of Learning* for public schools in Virginia. These standards represent a significant development in public education in Virginia and focus on the history and social science knowledge and skills all students need for the future. As the Board has established a rich set of history and social science standards,

*Local school boards shall develop and implement a program of instruction for grades K through 12 that is aligned to the Standards of Learning and meets or exceeds the requirements of the Board of Education. The program of instruction shall emphasize . . . essential skills and concepts of citizenship, including knowledge of Virginia history and world and United States history, economics, government, foreign languages, international cultures, health and physical education, environmental issues, and geography necessary for responsible participation in American society and in the international community; (§ 22.1-253.13:1. [↗](#))*

The Board is making changes to redefine high school graduation expectations and transition to the use of locally-developed performance assessments with all history and social science courses. The use of [locally-developed performance assessments](#) provides an opportunity to realign assessment resources and enable the Department of Education to better prepare students to meet the proposed requirements for the [Profile of a Virginia Graduate](#). The use of locally-developed performance assessments provides school divisions flexibility and an opportunity to:

- develop instructional lessons and activities that engage students with the content using the social science skills;
- teach for greater understanding;
- engage in effective collaboration and integration; and
- provide exemplars that lead to deeper understanding and promote historical thinking.

To facilitate the transition to locally developed performance assessments, new end-of-course tests that measure the 2015 *History and Social Science Standards of Learning* will not be developed. In addition, because the changes to the content for Virginia Studies and Civics and Economics are not substantial, new tests for these subjects will not be developed, and tests designed to measure the 2008 Standards will continue to be administered. Based on these decisions, the VDOE will not seek nominations for the item and test review committees for the history and social science courses in summer 2017. In support of the transition, an additional crossover year for implementation of the 2015 revised Standards will be provided. Therefore, the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 *History and Social Science Standards of Learning* assessments will continue to be based on the 2008 *History and Social Science Standards of Learning* through the summer of 2018 test administration. As the Board and VDOE finalize the Profile of a Virginia Graduate, further information will be communicated about History and Social Science assessments, resources, and professional development.

The Virginia Department of Education's goal is for full implementation of the 2015 *History and Social Science Standards of Learning* for schools beginning in the fall of 2018. Recognizing that curriculum alignment efforts require planning, time, staff development, and resources, school divisions should use the additional crossover year to:

- review and align history and social science curricula with the revised standards;
- review current resource materials and correlate them with the revised standards;
- develop new resources, performance tasks, and performance assessments aligned to the revised standards; and
- provide staff development for teachers.

Attachment A contains an integrated timeline of anticipated dates related to instruction, assessment, and instructional materials development. If you have questions about the instructional implementation of the 2015 *History and Social Science Standards of Learning*, please contact Christonya Brown, History and Social Science Coordinator, Office of Humanities and Early Childhood, by email at [Christonya.Brown@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:Christonya.Brown@doe.virginia.gov) or by telephone at (804) 225-2893. If you have questions about the History and Social Science assessments, please contact the student assessment staff by email at [Student\\_Assessment@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:Student_Assessment@doe.virginia.gov) or by telephone at (804) 225-2102.

SRS/CB/vdg

Attachment:

- A. [2015-2019 History and Social Science Standards of Learning Implementation Schedule](#) (PDF)