



**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA  
Department of Education**

April 28, 2017

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: Steven R. Staples, Superintendent of Public Instruction

**SUBJECT: Update on the Implementation of Local Alternative Assessments**

On October 27, 2016, the Virginia Board of Education adopted the *Local Alternative Assessment Guidelines for 2016-2017 through 2018-2019* as communicated in [Superintendent's Memo #284-16](#). As the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) prepares to strengthen its resources and support for innovative practices in our school divisions, this memo addresses the elements of the guidelines as they relate to performance-based assessments. The VDOE plans to assist in further implementation of performance-based assessments while supporting the changes in instructional methodologies that are required to connect learning to real-world experiences. These resources and training will be beneficial as school divisions engage in innovative work that will provide relevant opportunities for students to demonstrate their knowledge of the curriculum in areas of removed Standards of Learning (SOL) assessments as well as other content areas.

**Virginia Department of Education – Performance-based Assessment**

**GOALS:**

- Ensure all students are college, career, and future ready (see [Profile of a Virginia Graduate](#)).
- Ensure all students in the Commonwealth have access to a variety of instruction and assessment strategies that;
  - target skills and knowledge that are relevant,
  - support assessment for and as learning,
  - model learning by doing,
  - engage students in meaningful tasks, and
  - link curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
- Build capacity of all educators in assessment literacy.
- Provide time and resources for educators to develop meaningful teaching, learning, and assessment skills.
- Support all school divisions in reaching “USE” and “ACCOUNT” stages on the [Virginia Framework for Local Alternative Assessment Implementation](#).

**What: Supporting the Journey**

**VDOE will:**

- Establish an [Assessment Literacy Glossary](#);
- Provide the Virginia Quality Criterion Tool for Performance Assessment (available by June 1, 2017);
- Provide online resources, to include videos and documents, to deepen understanding of the definition and use of performance-based assessment;

- Provide a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document, with regular updates, to address the needs of Virginia practitioners; and
- Provide professional development that will model the use of the Virginia Quality Criterion Tool for Performance Assessment and the use of scoring rubrics designed to support consistency in instruction and assessment. A calendar outlining professional development to support performance-based assessments will be available by July 2017.

## **When: Timeline 2017-2020**

### **Summer 2017**

- VDOE will work with points of contact (identified by region) to collect sample assessments in the areas of the five removed SOL assessments to begin the review and feedback process.

### **2017-2018 School Year**

- VDOE will expand upon the Virginia Criterion Tool for Performance Assessment at multiple face-to-face and online workshops and offer professional learning opportunities through partnerships with other education organizations.
- School divisions will continue to use the Virginia Framework for Local Alternative Assessment Implementation to guide implementation.

### **Summer 2018**

- Every school division (3 staff per division) will participate in professional development regarding the Virginia Quality Criterion Tool for Performance Assessment and the use of rubric scoring. The train-the-trainer model will be used to support school divisions leading this effort locally. The processes could be used for performance assessments at the region, school division, school, or teacher team levels within the areas of the removed SOL assessments and other K-12 content area.

### **Summer 2019 and Summer 2020**

- VDOE will provide the forum to assist school divisions in the review of performance-based assessments and the use of scoring rubrics.

## **Data Collection**

In response to questions regarding the documentation of local alternative assessments, all school divisions should continue to document the teaching and assessment of standards in the five removed SOL assessment areas. In summer 2017, the VDOE review process will consist of collecting sample assessments that come from the work supported by the VDOE regional Alternative Assessment Assistance Incentive Grants ([Superintendent's Memo 292-14](#)). Collection during the 2017-2018 school year will be focused on the areas of the five removed SOL assessments. Points of contact for the regional grants have been notified and will work within their region to collect and submit assessments and associated materials. During the 2017-2018 school year, samples and feedback will be posted as models to help school divisions in reaching the "USE" and "ACCOUNT" stages on the Virginia Framework for Local Alternative Assessment Implementation.

Future communications regarding this initiative will be forthcoming from Kim P. Dockery, Performance Assessment Coordinator, Virginia Department of Education. For additional information please see the [Local Alternative Assessment page](#) or contact Kim P. Dockery at [Kim.Dockery@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:Kim.Dockery@doe.virginia.gov).

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