



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education

DATE: July 14, 2017
TO: Division Superintendents
FROM: Steven R. Staples, Superintendent of Public Instruction
SUBJECT: **Elimination of the Virginia Grade Level Alternative (VGLA) Reading Assessment under the Requirements of the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA)**

The *Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015* (ESSA) was signed into law in December 2015. ESSA amends the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965* (ESEA), and replaces the previous amendment, the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB).

Section 1111(b)(2)(B)(i) of ESSA clarifies that a state must administer the same assessments to measure the achievement of all public elementary and secondary school students in the state with the exception of alternate assessments aligned with alternate academic achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities as authorized by ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(D). Accordingly, a State may no longer administer an alternate assessment aligned with grade-level achievement standards.

To comply with these ESSA requirements stated above, the Virginia Grade Level Alternative (VGLA) Reading assessment will no longer be administered to students after the 2016-2017 school year. Beginning in the 2017-2018 school year, English Learner (EL) students will be expected to participate in the Standards of Learning (SOL) Reading assessments.

As a reminder, SOL testing may be discontinued for EL students who struggle with reading the test items after the student has responded to five items (not including the sample items). Students who answer at least five items will be counted as participants in the Reading test for purposes of federal accountability. The Standards of Accreditation (SOA) adjustment remains available for students who are currently classified as EL and have been enrolled in a Virginia public school for fewer than 11 semesters, as does the one-time exemption in Reading for recently arrived EL students in grades 3 through 8.

If you have questions, please contact student assessment staff at student_assessment@doe.virginia.gov or (804) 225-2102.

SRS/SLR/cd