



**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA  
Department of Education**

**DATE:** July 14, 2017  
**TO:** Division Superintendents  
**FROM:** Steven R. Staples, Superintendent of Public Instruction  
**SUBJECT: Shorter Version of the Grades 6 through 8 Reading Standards of Learning Tests Administered in a Computer Adaptive Testing Format beginning in Fall 2017**

The purpose of this memorandum is to announce that the Virginia Department of Education will be implementing a passage-based computer adaptive test (CAT) for the online Grade 8 Reading Standards of Learning (SOL) test (regular and audio) beginning with the fall 2017 test administration. The Grades 6 and 7 Reading SOL tests (regular and audio) will be administered in a CAT format beginning in spring 2018. Since computer adaptive tests are customized to each student's ability level, fewer questions can be administered to accurately determine each student's achievement level. Because of this advantage of the CAT format, the computer adaptive version of the test will be approximately 30 percent shorter in total test length than the traditional version.

Due to the implementation of the shorter grades 6 through 8 reading CAT, the [SOL Test Blueprints](#) for grades 6 through 8 reading have been updated. The blueprints contain the number of test items for the computer adaptive version of the online test and the number of items for the traditional version of the test that will be administered in paper/pencil format. The grades 6 through 8 reading CAT will contain 31 operational test items that are scored and 7 field test items, for a total test length of 38 items.

A Middle School Reading CAT Training Test will be available in fall 2017 within the PearsonAccess Training Center. The Middle School Reading CAT Training Test should be used with students so they can practice navigating through a reading CAT prior to the actual test-taking experience. School divisions will be notified when this training test is available.

Questions regarding this information should be directed to student assessment staff at [Student\\_Assessment@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:Student_Assessment@doe.virginia.gov) or (804) 225-2102.

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