



**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA  
Department of Education**

July 1, 2016

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: Steven R. Staples, Superintendent of Public Instruction

**SUBJECT: Use of Substitute Test Data in Accountability Rating Calculations**

As permitted by the Standards for Accrediting Public Schools ([8VAC20-131-110](#)) and as referenced in [Superintendent's Memo No. 298-14](#), the Virginia Board of Education has approved various substitute tests for the purpose of awarding verified credit to students. The results of substitute tests also are used in the calculation of state accreditation ratings, and the results of certain substitute tests (i.e., approved Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate tests in the content areas of reading and mathematics only) are used in the calculation of federal accountability ratings. Only those substitute tests approved by the United States Department of Education may be used in the calculation of the federal accountability ratings.

At the request of school divisions, the Virginia Department of Education is changing when assessment results from approved substitute tests will be included in the calculation of state accreditation. Previously, the use of substitute test results in both state and federal accountability ratings has lagged one year. For example, the substitute test data used for the 2015-2016 accreditation ratings were from tests administered in the 2013-2014 school year. Under the revised system, substitute test results reported to the Virginia Department of Education will be used with the current year's assessment data when calculating state accreditation ratings. Beginning with the state accreditation ratings for the 2016-2017 school year that are based on the 2015-2016 assessment results, substitute test data from substitute tests administered in the 2015-2016 school year will be included in the state accreditation calculations. The use of substitute test data in federal accountability will continue to lag one year.

It should be noted that a one-time result of this change is that state accreditation ratings for the 2016-2017 school year will include substitute test data from both the 2014-2015 school year and the 2015-2016 school year. In subsequent years, state accreditation ratings will include substitute test data only from the current year.

School divisions will be notified when the Substitute Test application in the Single Sign-On for Web Services (SSWS) portal is open and available to enter substitute test data. School divisions must submit the substitute test data by the required deadline or the data will not be included in the accreditation ratings. To report substitute test data to the Virginia Department of Education for inclusion in accountability ratings, a properly coded Standards of Learning (SOL) test record first must be submitted by the end of the spring SOL test administration for the school year in which the substitute test was administered.

For questions regarding the Substitute Test application in SSWS, please contact Education Information Management (EIM) staff at [resultshelp@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:resultshelp@doe.virginia.gov). For questions about coding SOL test records to report a substitute test, please contact student assessment staff at [student\\_assessment@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:student_assessment@doe.virginia.gov) or (804) 225-2102.

