



#135-22

**Commonwealth of Virginia
Virginia Department of Education
Superintendent's Memo #135-22**

DATE: June 24, 2022
TO: Division Superintendents
FROM: Jillian Balow, Superintendent of Public Instruction
SUBJECT: **Assessment Updates in Grade 3-8 Reading and Mathematics for 2022-2023**

As communicated in [Superintendent's Memo #221-21](#), legislation passed in the 2021 Virginia General Assembly ([HB2027](#) and [SB1357](#)) required the implementation of “through-year” or “growth” assessments beginning in fall 2021 for reading and mathematics in grades 3-8. To ensure that the growth assessments administered for this purpose are aligned to the Standards of Learning (SOL), the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) developed shorter computer adaptive tests (CAT) using existing SOL test items. The growth assessments administered in fall 2021 were based on content from the student’s previous grade level. For example, students enrolled in grade 5 mathematics in fall 2021 completed fall growth assessments based on grade 4 mathematics.

Beginning with the second year of implementation (2022-2023) and beyond, the legislation requires that the grades 3-8 reading and mathematics growth assessments be administered to students once in the fall and once in the winter (mid-year) during the school year. In addition to the growth assessments, the SOL tests for grade 3-8 reading and mathematics will continue to be administered.

Content Measured by the Growth Assessments Beginning in 2022-2023

Unlike the fall 2021 fall growth assessments that focused on content from the student's previous grade level, beginning with the 2022-2023 school year, the fall and winter growth assessments will focus primarily on content from the student's current grade level. For example a student taking grade 5 mathematics in 2022-2023 will be administered a growth assessment that focuses primarily on grade 5 mathematics content. However, in compliance with the 2021 legislation, the CAT algorithm has been configured so that the student might be administered some items from below or above the current grade level depending on the student's responses to the on-grade-level content items. For example, students taking the grade 5 mathematics growth assessment will primarily be administered grade 5 test items; however, depending on the student's responses to the on-grade-level test items, the student may also be administered some grade 4 test items or some grade 6 test items.

There are several exceptions to the potential administration of off-grade level test items. One exception is that the grade 8 reading and mathematics growth assessments will only include items assessing SOL content that is at or below the 8th grade level since there are no above grade level items available in the current CAT item banks. Additionally, in fall 2022, items that measure grade 2 SOL content are being field tested with students. Because these items are being tried out with students, they will not count toward the student's score. Therefore, the items for grade 3 reading and mathematics growth assessments that count toward the student's score will only include items that assess content at or above the 3rd grade level. Finally, a student who meets the criteria for a paper test will only be administered test items that assess SOL content aligned with the student's grade level.

Changes to the SOL Tests for Grades 3-8 Reading and Mathematics

As required by the 2021 legislation, beginning in spring 2023, the grades 3-8 reading and mathematics computer adaptive SOL tests may also include off-grade-level content. Each test will primarily include test items that assess content at the student's grade level; however, based on the student's responses to the on-grade-level items during the test, the student may also be administered some items that assess content that is below or above the student's grade level. Student's proficiency levels, and thus their pass/fail status, on the SOL tests will be determined by their responses to on-grade-level items only. However, if off-grade items

are administered, the student's responses to those items will be reflected in the vertical scale score that is used in determining the student's growth. Once again, the grade 8 reading and mathematics computer adaptive SOL tests will only deliver items at or below grade level and students who meet the criteria for a paper test will only be administered test items that assess SOL content aligned with the grade level of the test. Items measuring grade 2 SOL content will not be administered to students taking the grade 3 reading or mathematics SOL tests in spring 2023. Additional information regarding the spring 2023 SOL tests, including updated grades 3-8 reading and mathematics SOL test blueprints, will be provided at a later date.

Growth Assessment Test Blueprints

In preparation for the second year of implementation of the growth assessments, new test blueprints for the grades 3-8 reading and mathematics growth assessments have been developed. The test blueprints indicate the SOL that will be addressed by each test and the number of test items that will be included by reporting category and for the test as a whole. The new growth assessment test blueprints are available online on the [Growth Assessments webpage](#) on the VDOE website.

One Day Testing and Removal of Section Breaks and Seal Codes

Beginning in fall 2022, the grade 3-5 reading and mathematics growth assessments and the spring 2023 SOL tests are to be administered in one day. The section breaks and seal codes previously included in the online grades 3-5 reading and mathematics assessments are being removed. A multiple test session accommodation using a paper test will remain available to a student with a disability who requires this accommodation as documented by the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team/504 committee.

With the removal of section breaks in the reading and mathematics growth assessments and the spring 2023 SOL tests, a separate "no calculator section" and "calculator section" will not exist in the mathematics tests. Instead, in all grades 3-8 mathematics growth assessments and spring 2023 SOL tests, students will be provided with access to the appropriate Desmos Virginia calculator in the toolbar of the online testing software (TestNav) for those test items where a calculator can be used. The Desmos Virginia calculator will not appear in the toolbar

for those test items where a calculator cannot be used. Note that the grades 6 and 7 mathematics SOL tests for fall 2022 only will have the “no calculator” and “calculator” sections.

For a student who meets the criteria for a paper test, a “no calculator section” will be followed by a “calculator section” during which the student will need access to the appropriate online Desmos Virginia calculator.

Mathematics Formula Sheets and Mathematics Tools

In preparation for the implementation of grades 3-8 reading and mathematics growth assessments and SOL assessments where students may be administered test items that assess content below or above their current grade level, a new Middle School Mathematics Formula Sheet has been developed. The formula sheet contains formulas from grades 6-8 mathematics that students may use in solving mathematics problems. This new formula sheet replaces the current formula sheets which are available by grade level. Beginning with the fall 2022 grades 5-8 growth assessments and the spring 2023 SOL tests, the new Middle School Mathematics Formula Sheet will appear as an exhibit in an online mathematics test when a student receives a test item at the grade level that allows a formula sheet. Note that no change in the formula sheet will occur in the fall 2022 grades 6-8 SOL tests; the grade-specific formula sheet will appear in the exhibit window.

Teachers are encouraged to use this new formula sheet throughout the school year during instruction. The new Middle School Mathematics Formula Sheet is available on the [Mathematics Assessment Resources webpage](#) and the [SOL Test Administration and Development: Ancillary Test Materials webpage](#) on the VDOE website. The formula sheet will appear as an exhibit in an online mathematics test when a student receives a test item at the grade level that allows a formula sheet.

In addition to the appropriate Desmos Virginia calculator appearing in the toolbar of the online testing software when a calculator can be used on the test item, additional mathematics tools (e.g., protractor) will appear on a student’s testing toolbar when the student receives a test item that is based on the grade level and SOL where the tool would usually be available.

For more information

Additional training and information regarding these assessment changes will be provided to school division staff. If you have questions about this information, please contact student assessment staff at Student_Assessment@doe.virginia.gov or (804) 225-2102.

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