# Superintendent’s Memo #023-21


**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education**

DATE: January 29, 2021

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: James F. Lane, Ed.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction

## SUBJECT: Additional Details Regarding Standards of Learning Testing in Fall 2020 and Spring 2021

The purpose of this memo is to share additional details regarding Standards of Learning (SOL) testing in fall 2020 and spring 2021. As a reminder, [Superintendent’s Memo No. 307-20](https://www.doe.virginia.gov/administrators/superintendents_memos/2020/307-20.docx), November 20, 2020, informed school divisions of a state-level waiver allowing divisions the flexibility to choose to administer local alternative assessments in lieu of administering the required Virginia Studies, Civics and Economics, and Grade 8 Writing SOL tests in the 2020-2021 school year. With no waivers for testing from the United States Department of Education (USED), the administration of the federally mandated SOL assessments is required.

At the request of school divisions impacted by an increase in COVID-19 cases, the Virginia Department of Education is expanding, when possible, the number of days available to administer SOL tests. The schedule changes are detailed below along with other information related to the administration of SOL assessments.

**Test Administration Schedule: Fall 2020 SOL Non-Writing Tests**

The Fall 2020 SOL Non-Writing Test Administration will remain open later than previously scheduled for divisions to administer SOL tests in reading, mathematics, science, and history. The following date (shown in red) has changed to reflect the extension of the Fall 2020 Non-Writing Test Administration:

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| **Fall 2020 SOL Non-Writing Tests** | **Dates** |
| Test Window: | October 26, 2020 - March 5, 2021 |

**Test Administration Schedule: Spring 2021 SOL Writing Tests**

The Spring 2021 SOL Writing Test Administration will open as initially scheduled but the duration of the administration has been extended. The following dates (shown in red) have changed to reflect the extension of the Spring 2021 SOL Writing Test Administration:

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| **Spring 2021 Grade 8 and End-of-Course (EOC) Writing SOL Tests** | **Dates** |
| Paper Test Window1: | March 1 – May 7, 2021 |
| Grade 8 and EOC Online Test Window1: | March 1 – May 7, 2021 |
| Term Graduate 1st Online Test Attempt Window2: | March 1 – March 12, 2021 |
| Term Graduate 2nd Online Test Attempt Window2: | April 5 – May 7, 2021 |

1School divisions are encouraged to identify a three- to four-week window within this window to complete paper and online testing. Flexibility to revise the selected weeks will be provided.

2Term graduate students may complete one attempt in the first window and await the score before a second attempt or may complete both attempts in either window prior to receiving a first attempt score.

**Test Administration Schedule: Spring 2021 SOL Non-Writing Tests**

The Spring 2021 SOL Non-Writing Test Administration will open earlier than previously scheduled for the administration of SOL tests in reading, mathematics, science, and history. Please note, however, that while non-writing SOL tests can be administered to students earlier (shown in red), the SOL test results will not be available until mid-April as initially planned.

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| **Spring 2021 SOL Non-Writing Tests** | **Dates** |
| Test Window1 | March 15 – June 25, 2021 |
| Test Results begin to be Available | April 12, 2021 |

1School divisions are encouraged to identify a three- to four-week window within this window to complete paper and online testing. Flexibility to revise the selected weeks will be provided.

**Additional SOL Test Administration Details**

As local plans are developed and implemented for the administration of SOL tests in fall 2020 and spring 2021, school divisions are reminded that SOL tests are to be administered under secure, standardized testing conditions at school in the presence of school personnel. All local requirements for the use of personal protective equipment and social distancing within the school must also be followed.

In the event a student is scheduled to take one or more SOL tests in fall 2020 and parents refuse to have the student participate or the student refuses to participate in a test due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the school division should offer the opportunity for the student to complete the test in spring 2021. If the student was scheduled to a take an end-of-course SOL test, school division staff are encouraged to communicate with the parents and student regarding the student’s graduation requirements and future plans to attempt to earn the needed verified credit (i.e., future test administrations, a Board of Education-approved substitute test).

If the student does not complete the fall 2020 SOL assessment in spring 2021 or if a student scheduled to test in spring 2021 does not complete the SOL assessment because of a refusal due to COVID-19, then a Testing Status 52 is to be assigned to the test record by the division. Testing Status 52 - Refusal Due to COVID-19, will not result in a score of “0” for the student but rather a “No Score” on the test.

The following test administration options are available as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic for school divisions to consider regarding SOL tests:

* For any SOL test scheduled to be administered in fall 2020, school divisions have the option to defer administering the test until spring 2021. However, if students request to complete their SOL test in fall 2020, those students are to be provided the opportunity to complete the test prior to the end of the fall test administration.
* SOL Writing tests only (fall 2020 and spring 2021): For students with a documented need to complete a paper test, school divisions may plan to administer the short-paper component and the multiple-choice component as needed throughout the division’s test window. This flexibility already exists for Writing tests administered online.
* SOL Writing tests only (fall 2020 and spring 2021): For students taking either online or paper tests, while it is not a best practice to administer both Writing test components on the same day, a school division may if parents agree.

If you have questions regarding this information, please contact student assessment staff at student\_assessment@doe.viginia.gov or (804) 225-2102.

JFL/SLR/as