



**Understanding Virginia's
Standards of Learning and Graduation
For Students with Disabilities**

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) require that all students, including those with disabilities, be assessed for their knowledge against state standards. The Standards of Learning (SOL) contain the competencies for each grade and subject approved by the Virginia Board of Education for all Virginia students. Tests are given in 3rd, 5th and 8th grades, and also for end-of-course verified credits in certain high school subjects.

Virginia diploma options include the following:

- **Standard Diploma** – 22 credits including 6 verified credits (including specific courses in English, math, lab science, history and social studies, arts, PE, and electives)
- **Advanced Studies Diploma** – 24 credits including 9 verified credits (including specific courses in English, math, lab science, history and social studies, foreign language, arts, PE, and electives)
- **Modified Standard Diploma** – (for students with disabilities) 20 credits including specific courses in English, math, lab science, history and social studies, arts, PE, and electives. Though students must take the end-of-course exam for those that have verified credits they do not have to pass them. They must pass the 8th grade reading and math SOLs or an equivalent.
- **Special Diploma** - Students with disabilities who complete the requirements of their Individualized Education Program (IEP) and do not meet the requirements for a Standard, Advanced Studies, or Modified Standard Diploma receive a Special Diploma.

Students with disabilities remain eligible for special education through age 22 in Virginia unless they have received a Standard or Advanced Studies Diploma. Many students participate in vocational or technical education programs during or after their four years in high school. It is important to understand Standards of Learning and diploma options in order to successfully use the high school years to prepare for life after graduation.



Helpful Websites

Standards of Learning

Standards of Learning Currently in Effect for Virginia Public Schools

<http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/Superintendent/Sols/home.shtml>

The Standards of Learning for Virginia Public Schools describe the commonwealth's expectations for student learning and achievement in grades K-12 in English, mathematics, science, history/social science, technology, the fine arts, foreign language, health and physical education, and driver education.

Virginia DOE Division of Assessment and Reporting

<http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/Assessment/home.shtml>

Provides information available on accommodations, alternate assessment, and substitute evaluation programs for Virginia students with disabilities.

Standards of Learning: Instruction, Training, and Assessment Resources

<http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/Instruction/sol.html>

Standards of Learning Test Information

<http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/Ne3wHome/soltestinfo/>

Includes test information and released test items.

Virginia's Web-based SOL Technology Initiative

<http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/Technology/soltech/soltech.html>

SOL Passing Rates

<http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/Assessment/2002SOLpassrates.html>

Virginia Department of Education Statewide Passing Rates for Spring 2002 Standards of Learning Tests.

SOL Enhanced Scope and Sequence PLUS

<http://ttaconline.org>

Created by The Virginia Department of Education and the Training and Technical Assistance Centers, this resource has been created to provide teachers across the Commonwealth with differentiated lessons to deliver SOL-based content instruction to a diverse population of learners, including students with disabilities and/or limited English proficiency. Math lessons are currently on the site with English soon to follow.



Graduation

Virginia Graduation Requirements

<http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/Parents/soastude.html>

Requirements of the Standards of Accreditation for students in Virginia.

Project Graduation

<http://www.pen.k12.va.us/2plus4in2004/>

Governor Warner's program to provide information and support to Virginia's youth and families interested in receiving a Virginia high school diploma.

National Center on Education Outcomes

<http://education.umn.edu/nceo/TopicAreas/Graduation/StatesGrad.htm>

Graduation requirements for students with disabilities along with links to State information and other resources.

College

Virtual Advanced Placement School

<http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/Technology/VAPS.html>

A variety of college-level courses, enabling Virginia students to earn college credit regardless of their home high school's ability to offer college-level courses.

Virginia Mentor

<http://www.virginiamentor.org/>

Online resource to help students and their families select a college, apply for admission, and plan to finance higher education in Virginia

The Advocacy Institute

<http://advocacyinstitute.org/>

Useful information on college for students with learning disabilities.

Operation Graduation

<http://www.operationgraduation.com/>

Resources for dealing with everything from homework to addiction and college applications to youth violence.



The Virginia Assessment System for Students with Disabilities At-A-Glance

(From the Virginia Department of Education Revised May 2004)

Assessment	Description	Available to	Grade or Level Available	Additional Information
Standards of Learning Tests	Multiple choice assessments in core content; writing prompt; standard and non-standard accommodations are available	Students with disabilities who have been instructed in the content covered by the assessments	3, 5, 8, and for selected high school courses	Supts. Memo #140 dated October 2002 (Participation of Students with Disabilities in the Virginia Accountability System)
Plain English Math	Covers content covered in math standards with linguistic simplifications using a multiple choice format Note: Test is considered an accommodation.	Students with disabilities who need a simplification of reading load, syntax, and vocabulary. LEP students at levels 1 and 2 of English Proficiency and	3,5, and 8	Testing Memo # 472 dated Jan. 14, 2004
Virginia Substitute Evaluation Program (VSEP)	Collection of student work that evidences the same standards covered in the SOL assessments	Secondary students whose disabilities prevent participation in the SOL assessments, even with accommodations	Selected high school courses	Supts. Memo #1 dated Jan. 3, 2003 Resources and training materials are available at www.pen.k12.va.us
Virginia Alternate Assessment Program (VAAP)	Collection of work evidencing IEP goals that are linked to the Standards	Available to students meeting the Participation Guidelines	3, 5, 8, and 11	Supts. Memo #140 dated October 2002 (Participation of Students with Disabilities in the Virginia Accountability System) Resources and training materials are available at www.pen.k12.va.us



Selected Substitute Tests Available To Students With Disabilities

Assessment	Description	Availability	Grade/Level Administered	Additional Information
WorkKeys: Writing Tests	Locally purchased substitute tests for SOL end-of -course English writing test	Throughout the year with scores available within 2-4 weeks	Secondary level	Supts. Memo # 206 dated Dec. 5, 2003 Test information can be found at www.act.org
WorkKeys: Reading	Locally purchased substitute test that satisfies the literacy requirement for the Modified Standard Diploma	Throughout the year with scores available within 2-4 weeks	Secondary level	Supts. Memo # 53 dated March 5, 2004 Test information can be found at www.act.org
WorkKeys: Math	Locally purchased substitute test that satisfies the numeracy requirement for the Modified Standard Diploma	Throughout the year with scores available within 2-4 weeks	Secondary level	Supts. Memo # 53 dated March 5, 2004 Test information can be found at www.act.org
ACT Reading: EXPLORE	Locally purchased substitute test that satisfies the literacy requirement for the Modified Standard Diploma	Throughout the year with scores available within 2-4 weeks	Secondary level	Supts. Memo # 53 dated March 5, 2004 Test information can be found at www.act.org
ACT: Math EXPLORE	Locally purchased test satisfying the numeracy requirement for the Modified Standard Diploma	Throughout the year with scores available within 2-4 weeks	Secondary level	Supts. Memo # 53 dated March 5, 2004 Test information can be found at www.act.org
SOL Substitutes	An assessment higher than the 8 th grade SOL English & Math tests	Within the SOL testing program	Selected End-of-Course Tests (Algebra I, II, English Reading)	Supts. Memo # 30 dated March 7, 2003

