



**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 tested for their knowledge against state standards. The Standards of Learning (SOL) contain the competencies for each grade and subject for all Virginia students. Reading and mathematics tests are given annually in grades 3 through 8. Science, history and social science tests are given in 3rd, 5th, and 8th grades. Students must pass SOL tests in certain high school subjects to earn a regular or advanced studies diploma. There is a clear relationship between high expectations and positive outcomes for students with disabilities. Virginia offers a number of options for helping students learn to high standards and demonstrate that they have mastered the content, despite their disability.

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 SOL exams, do not have to pass them. They must pass the numeracy and literacy competency assessments prescribed by the Board of Education.
- **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.
- **General Achievement Diploma** – for students who are at least age 18, requires certain courses and passing the General Equivalency Diploma exam.

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.

Schools must provide students with a summary of academic achievement and functional performance when they graduate or “age out” of school. The summary is important for documenting college accommodations and eligibility for other programs and services after high school. It is important to work with the school to prepare this document and check with colleges and programs about whether the information is adequate to provide needed services, supports and modifications BEFORE leaving high school.



Helpful Websites

PEATC's Virginia NEXT STEPS Transition Program

<http://www.nextsteps.peatc.org/>

Virginia Department of Education – Transition Home page

<http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/sped/transition/>

Transition of Students With Disabilities To Postsecondary Education: A Guide for High School Educators

<http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/transitionguide.html>

Students with Disabilities Preparing for Postsecondary Education: Know Your Rights and Responsibilities

<http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/transition.html>

Standards of Learning

Standards-Driven IEPs and other Virginia IEP Information

<http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/sped/iep.shtml>

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/Assessment/releasedtests.html>

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/home.shtml#Test%20Results>

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



SOL Enhanced Scope and Sequence PLUS

<http://ttaconline.org/>

Created by The Virginia DOE and the Training and Technical Assistance Centers, contains differentiated lessons to deliver SOL-based content instruction to diverse learners, including students with disabilities and/or limited English proficiency.

Graduation

Project Graduation

Virginia Graduation Requirements and Resources

<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. Includes information about the requirements of the Standards of Accreditation for students in Virginia.

Virginia General Achievement Diploma

<http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/suptsmemos/2003/inf123a.pdf>

An alternate diploma for certain young adults who are age 18 or over

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.

The Virginia General Equivalency Diploma

http://diplomaguide.com/articles/The_Virginia_GED.html

Whether a student is considering a GED or is searching for resources, this site can help a student assess what it will take to pass and where to go to find instructional support.

College

Virginia College Quest

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

Resources and planning tools for finding and getting into college.

Virginia's College Guide for Students with Disabilities

<http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/sped/transition/collegeGuide2003.pdf>

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

Assessment	Description	Available to	Grade or Level Available
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	Grades 3-8 and for selected high school courses
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, certain students with Limited English Proficiency (LEP)	Grades 3-8
Virginia Grade Level Alternative (VGLA)	Collection of student work that evidences the grade-level competency according to SOL blueprints.	Students in grades 3-8 whose nature and level of disability prevents them from accessing SOL tests, even with accommodations.	Grades 3-8
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
Virginia Alternate Assessment Program (VAAP)	Collection of student work evidencing achievement in the Aligned Standards of Learning	Available to students meeting the Participation Guidelines	Grades 3-8 and high school



Selected Substitute Tests Available To Students With Disabilities

Assessment	Description	Availability	Grade/Level Administered
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
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
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
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
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
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)