

**Office of the Secretary of Education
Interim Report July 2014 – November 2014
Standards of Learning Innovation Committee
Full Report**



Background

Legislation (House Bill 930 and Senate Bill 306) in the 2014 General Assembly amended [§ 22.1-253.13:3.C](#) of the *Code of Virginia* to eliminate several Standards of Learning (SOL) tests, including: **Grade 3 History, Grade 3 Science, Grade 5 Writing, United States History to 1865** and **United States History: 1865 to the Present**.

The legislation was signed by Governor Terence R. McAuliffe on April 4, 2014 and represented a bipartisan effort to reduce the number of high-stakes SOL exams for elementary and middle school students. The legislation required that each local school board certify that it had administered annual alternative assessments consistent with Virginia Board of Education guidelines to students in grades three through eight in each SOL subject area in which the SOL assessment was eliminated. Finally, the legislation established the Standards of Learning Innovation Committee (the Committee). The Committee is charged to look broadly at reforming Virginia's current system and to think creatively about the future of SOLs, assessments, and accountability. The legislative mandate is as follows:

“The Secretary of Education, upon receiving recommendations for appointments from the Virginia Parent Teacher Association, Virginia Education Association, Virginia School Boards Association, Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals, Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals, Virginia Association of School Superintendents, Virginia State Reading Association, Virginia School Counselor Association, and Virginia Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, shall establish and appoint members from each of the specified groups to the Standards of Learning Innovation Committee (Committee).

The Committee shall also include (i) four members of the Virginia House of Delegates, appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates; (ii) two members of the Virginia Senate, appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules on the recommendation of the Chair of the Senate Committee on Education and Health; at least one (iii) parent of a currently enrolled public school student, (iv) public elementary school teacher, (v) public secondary school teacher, (vi) public secondary school guidance counselor, (vii) school board member, (viii) public school principal, (ix) division superintendent, (x) curriculum and instruction specialist, (xi) higher education faculty member, (xii) business representative, and such other stakeholders as the Secretary deems appropriate. Members of the Committee should reflect geographic diversity and rural and urban school systems as far as practicable.

The Superintendent of Public Instruction, the President of the Board of Education or his designee, and the Secretary of Education or his designee shall serve ex officio. All other members shall be appointed for terms of two years. The Committee, under the direction of the Secretary, shall periodically make recommendations to the Board of Education and the General Assembly on (a) the Standards of Learning assessments, (b) authentic individual student growth measures, (c) alignment between the Standards of Learning and assessments and the School Performance Report Card, and (d) ideas on innovative teaching in the classroom.”

(Code of Virginia § [22.1-253.13:10](#))

After a review of stakeholder recommendations, applications, and nominations received from members of the public, the Committee members were selected by Virginia Secretary of Education Anne Holton. Governor McAuliffe announced the appointments on June 30, 2014, and the Committee members were appointed for a 2-year term.

Committee membership includes five teachers, four school board members, four superintendents, three parent representatives, two higher education partners, and a host of other education stakeholders. The Committee also has regional diversity with twelve members from Northern Virginia, nine from Central Virginia, seven from Hampton Roads, four from West Central Virginia, two from the Valley, one from Southside, one from Southwest Virginia, and one from Eastern Virginia. The members of the Committee are as follows: Grace Chung Becker, Dr. Shawnrell Blackwell, Kelly Booz, Jeffrey Bourne, Terri Breeden, Dabney Carr, Dr. Jared Cotton, Karen Cross, Veronica Donahue, Dr. Jenny Sue Flannagan, Deborah Frazier, Sarah Gross, Meg Gruber, Dr. Roger Hathaway, Lillie Jessie, Dr. Tarannum Lateef, Dr. Susan Magliaro, Dr. Brian Matney, Laurie McCullough, Dr. Stewart Roberson, Dr. Alan Seibert, Karen Thomsen, Dr. Christine Walther-Thomas, Jeion Ward, Dr. William White, Wade Whitehead, Benjamin Williams, Sanford Williams, and Renee Zando.

Additionally, four members of the House of Delegates were appointed by the Speaker of the House: Delegates Thomas A. Greason, Roxann Robinson, Jim LeMunyon, and Rob Krupicka. Two members of the Senate were appointed by the President of the Senate: Senators John Miller and Creigh Deeds. Dr. Steven Staples, Virginia Superintendent of Public Instruction; Christian Braunlich, President of the Board of Education; and the Secretary of Education, Anne Holton serve as ex-officio members. Committee member biographies can be found in Appendix A.

The Committee is chaired by Dr. Stewart Roberson, Chairman and President/CEO of Moseley Architects and former Hanover County Superintendent. The Committee is divided into two subcommittees – Elementary and Secondary. The Elementary Subcommittee is chaired by Deborah Frazier, Principal of Harrison Road Elementary School in Spotsylvania County. The Secondary Subcommittee is chaired by Dr. Alan Seibert, Superintendent of Salem City Public Schools.

The full Committee met three times in 2014 (July 15, September 30, and November 6), with the subcommittees each meeting on three additional occasions (August 19, October 14, and October 16). At Committee meetings, members learned about the national and international landscape of reform, the history of Virginia's assessment and accountability system, the impact of federal requirements and Virginia's waivers, and heard from local practitioners. Committee members also sought comment from members of the public, including a Google Hangout conducted by Secretary Holton and six Committee members to receive feedback from students.

Committee members also spent time at each meeting discussing priorities and possible goals. Based on those discussions, themes emerged and the group focused on a number of desired

outcomes. The initial themes and outcomes were further refined to become a vision statement, principle statements, and interim recommendations.

The Committee agreed upon four general statements of principle, representing what the Committee hopes to accomplish. Each principle has corresponding interim recommendations (totaling 12), representing how the Committee hopes to achieve each principle. The statements of principle and interim recommendations were approved unanimously by the Committee on November 6, 2014.

These twelve recommendations represent the initial work of the Committee. Work will continue in 2015 and beyond, and other recommendations will be forthcoming.

A glossary of terms has been provided in Appendix B for reference and convenience. Existing Requirements referenced in several of the recommendations have been provided in Appendix C.

Committee's Vision Statement

The Standards of Learning Innovation Committee is guided by a commitment to inspire, engage, and personalize learning for every student in the Commonwealth. The Committee's focus is to ensure Virginia has an accountability system that is fair, balanced, and supportive of this vision as the Commonwealth prepares our students for success beyond their high school years.

Committee's Beliefs

- **Accountability plays a crucial role in ensuring educational success.**
- **The current accountability and assessment systems have supported greater consistency in teaching the core curriculum and have improved student performance over time.**
- **Students need and deserve an education that capitalizes on their curiosity and natural desire to learn so that each student is prepared for responsible citizenship and success in the world beyond school.**
- **Recruiting and retaining world-class educators is critical to providing students with a high quality education that instills in them a love of learning and prepares them for success beyond school.**
- **Improvements to Virginia's assessment and accountability systems, including potential further reductions in state-mandated testing, provide the opportunity to promote innovative and creative teaching that enhances student learning but retains the benefits of accountability.**

Statements of Principle and Interim Recommendations

Statement of Principle I: The state accountability system should acknowledge the progress of schools toward meeting the accreditation benchmarks and should recognize individual student growth. (Additional information on Existing Requirements can be found in Appendix C).

Five Interim Recommendations Correspond with Principle I:

1. Recommend that the Board of Education and the General Assembly revise the Standards of Accreditation to add accreditation ratings which 1) recognize the progress of schools that do not meet the accreditation benchmarks but have significantly improved their pass rates, and which 2) recognize schools that did not meet accreditation benchmarks but have demonstrated significant growth for the majority of students. For example, schools that have not met the 70% or 75% pass rate benchmark required for full accreditation but have demonstrated significant improvement in their pass rates might be rated as “provisionally accredited—significant progress demonstrated.” Schools that have not improved their overall pass rates but have demonstrated growth on the statewide reading and/or mathematics tests for a majority of their students might receive a rating of: “provisionally accredited—significant student growth.” The Board of Education should develop guidelines to ensure clarity and consistency.
2. Recommend that the General Assembly and the Board of Education add to the Standards of Accreditation an appeals process for schools that are 1) not fully accredited, 2) do not demonstrate significant improvement in their pass rates, and 3) do not demonstrate significant growth on the state assessments for their students. Such an appeals process would allow schools that do not achieve one of these three ratings but meet other criteria as defined by the Board of Education to appeal their rating. The Board of Education should develop guidelines on eligible schools and acceptable evidence.
3. Recommend that Board of Education revise the Standards of Accreditation to provide flexibility in how often schools are accredited. Schools might be accredited annually, every three years, or every five years based on their past accreditation status. Schools that do not achieve full accreditation would be permitted to request that their accreditation rating be recalculated the following year. Pass rates on the state-mandated tests would continue to be posted annually on the School Performance Report Card.
4. Recommend that the Governor and the General Assembly support funding to provide students with opportunities for on demand testing, additional opportunities for retests, and additional opportunities to demonstrate growth from the beginning of the school year to the end. This effort may include continued movement toward a Computer Adaptive Testing (CAT) format. (Additional information on Computer Adaptive Testing can be found in Appendix C).

5. Recommend that the Governor and the General Assembly support funding to provide opportunities for students in elementary and middle school levels who have failed an SOL test but came close to meeting the benchmark, to retake the test during the same test administration. Such opportunities would be provided as an option for students and parents; students would not be required to retake a failed test.

Statement of Principle II: Alternative opportunities for students to demonstrate college and career readiness in order to meet graduation requirements should be provided. Doing so will foster innovation and creativity in the classroom and better align students' skills with workforce needs. (Additional information on Existing Requirements can be found in Appendix C).

Two Interim Recommendations Correspond with Principle II:

6. Recommend that the Governor and the General Assembly support legislation and funding to provide incentives for local school divisions to 1) identify alternative ways for students to accrue standard credits outside of the traditional seat time requirements and 2) to identify additional opportunities to earn verified credits beyond passing an end-of-course SOL test or a board-approved substitute test. Recommend that the Board of Education establish guidelines to ensure that students learn the content and skills included in the Standards of Learning.
7. Recommend that the Board of Education expand the availability of locally awarded verified credits to students in subjects where SOL tests are not mandated by federal requirements. School divisions would be permitted to award verified credits to any student who has demonstrated proficiency in the content through an alternative assessment.

Statement of Principle III: As the Standards of Learning are revised, they should reflect the nature and complexity of the knowledge and skills needed for students to participate in the global community. The implementation timeline should allow sufficient time for the incorporation of new content and skills into the curriculum before their inclusion in the state tests used for accountability. (Additional information on Existing Requirements can be found in Appendix C).

Three Interim Recommendations Correspond with Principle III:

8. Recommend that the Board of Education consider revisions to the Standards of Learning that give attention to the skills deemed important for success in college, career, and citizenship. Such a focus suggests that content standards will be fewer and deeper and will reflect increased emphasis on essential skills in areas such as communication, problem solving, and critical and creative thinking at the high levels needed for success beyond school. The revision process for the Standards of Learning should also include opportunities for input from business, institutes of higher education, and citizens to ensure that the revised standards include the knowledge and skills that are most important and relevant to students' future success.

9. Recommend to the Board of Education that the revision schedule for the Standards of Learning be structured so that school divisions have sufficient time to incorporate new content and skills into the curriculum before it is included on the state assessments.
10. Recommend that the Board of Education and the Department of Education consider the inclusion of interdisciplinary assessments as new tests measuring the revised Standards of Learning are developed.

Statement of Principle IV: The state accountability system should allow for a balance between alternative assessments and the existing assessments that comprise the state assessment system, allowing for flexibility within school districts.

Two Interim Recommendations Correspond with Principle IV:

11. Recommend that the Governor and General Assembly support funding for initiatives at the local level that demonstrate the use of effective authentic and/or alternative measures of student growth and achievement. Funding should be included for professional development and for increased capacity at the Virginia Department of Education in order to provide technical assistance to local school divisions and should provide opportunities for collaboration between local school divisions and Virginia's institutes of higher education.
12. Recommend that the Board of Education and the Department of Education identify and disseminate best practices in the use of authentic and/or alternative assessments by local school divisions.

Appendix A

Committee Members Bios

*designates ex officio members



Grace Chung Becker

Grace Chung Becker of Fairfax is a parent of students attending Fairfax County Public Schools. Today, she is president of the Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology’s Parent Teacher Association.



Dr. Shawnrell Blackwell

Dr. Shawnrell Blackwell of Chester is the Director of School Improvement for the Petersburg City Public School system.



Christian Braunlich*

Chris Braunlich was elected president of the Virginia Board of Education in March 2014.



Kelly Booz

Kelly Booz was elected to the Alexandria City School Board in 2012, and presently works as the Director of Partnerships for Share my Lesson and the American Federation of Teachers.



Jeff Bourne

Jeff Bourne is a member of the Richmond City School Board. He works as Deputy Attorney General for transportation, real estate, and land use and construction litigation.



Susanna Burgos

Susanna Burgos is a Spanish teacher in Newport News Public Schools.



Dr. Terri Breeden

Dr. Terri Breeden was recently appointed assistant superintendent of instruction for Loudoun County Public Schools, prior to which she worked for 8 years in Fairfax County.



Dabney Carr

Dabney Carr has worked for Troutman Sanders LLP since 1989, and is currently a partner in their litigation section.



Dr. Jared Cotton

Dr. Jared Cotton was appointed superintendent of Henry County Public Schools in 2011.

Not
Pictured.

Karen Cross

Karen Cross is a teacher in Washington County Public Schools at Virginia Middle School in Bristol, Virginia.



Senator Creigh Deeds

Senator Creigh Deeds represents the 25th Senate District, from the city of Charlottesville stretching to the border of West Virginia. Senator Deeds was first elected to the House of Delegates in 1991.



Dr. Kim Paddison Dockery

Dr. Kim Dockery has worked as an assistant superintendent at Fairfax County Public Schools since 2008, working in the Department of Special Services.



Veronica Donahue

Veronica Donahue is the Foreign Language department chair for Essex High School and an Adjunct Professor in Rappahannock Community College.



Dr. Jenny Sue Flannagan

Dr. Jenny Sue Flannagan has worked as the Director of the Martinson Center for Mathematics and Science for Regent University since 2007.



Deborah Frazier

Deborah Frazier serves as principal of Harrison Road Elementary in Spotsylvania County Public Schools.



Delegate Tag Greason

Delegate Tag Greason has been a member of the Virginia House of Delegates representing the 32nd District since January 2010, and serves on the Education Committee, where he helped pass House Bill 930 for SOL Reform.



Sarah Gross

Sarah Gross is a parent of two children in Richmond City Public Schools. She is president of the Albert H. Hill Middle School Parent Teacher Association, and is the chair of the Legislation/Education Committee for the Virginia Parent Teacher Association.



Meg Gruber

Meg Gruber is an Earth Science teacher in Prince William, Virginia. She also works as president of the Virginia Education Association.



Dr. Roger Hathaway

Dr. Roger Hathaway is the Head of the NASA Langley Office of Education.



Secretary Anne Holton*

In 2008 Anne Holton worked with the Virginia Foundation for Community College Education to establish the Great Expectations program. She later served as the Program's Director in 2013. She now serves as Governor McAuliffe's Secretary of Education.



Lillie Jessie

Lillie Jessie was elected to the Prince William County School Board in 2012. She has worked as a teacher, Title I supervisor, and principal in Prince William County Schools.



Delegate Rob Krupicka

Delegate Rob Krupicka was elected to the House of Delegates from the 45th District in September 2012. In his time in the General Assembly, Delegate Krupicka helped pass House Bill 930 for SOL reform.



Dr. Tarannum Lateef

Dr. Tarannum Lateef is an assistant professor of the Neurology and Pediatrics Departments at the Children’s National Medical Center and George Washington School of Medicine in Washington. She also works as a research collaborator in the Division of Genetic Epidemiology at the National Institutes of Health.



Delegate Jim LeMunyon

Delegate Jim LeMunyon was first elected to the Virginia House of Delegates in November 2009, representing the 67th district. He serves on the Education committee, and is a Deputy Whip.



Dr. Susan Magliaro

Dr. Susan Magliaro is the Director of VT-STEM at Virginia Tech, she also works as a Professor of Educational Psychology.



Dr. Brian Matney

Dr. Brian Matney is the principal at Landstown High School in Virginia Beach, and currently serves as president-elect of the Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals.



Dr. Laurie McCullough

Dr. McCullough has worked in Virginia Public Schools for many years. She currently serves as the Executive Director for the Virginia Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.



Senator John Miller

Senator John Miller was first elected to the Senate of Virginia from the 1st District in 2007 and serves on the Education and Health committee.



Dr. Stewart Roberson

Dr. Stewart Roberson is the Chairman and President/CEO of Moseley Architects in Richmond, VA. He was previously the Superintendent for Hanover County Public Schools.



Delegate Roxann Robinson

Delegate Roxanne Robinson serves the 27th District in Virginia. She has owned her own successful small business in optometry for over 25 years.



Dr. Alan Seibert

Dr. Alan Seibert was appointed to serve as Salem’s Division Superintendent in 2006, and before that was principal at South Salem Elementary.



Dr. Steve Staples*

Dr. Steven R. Staples was appointed Virginia’s 24th Superintendent of Public Instruction by Governor Terry McAuliffe in 2014. Prior to this appointment, Dr. Staples served as the executive director of the Virginia Association of School Superintendents, and was a faculty member at the College of William & Mary from 2008-2012.



Karen Thomsen

Karen Thomsen began working as principal for Linville-Edom Elementary School in Harrisonburg in 2004, and has worked in education as teacher and principal since 1979.



Dr. Christine Walther-Thomas

Dr. Christine Walther-Thomas is the Dean of Virginia Commonwealth University’s School of Education. Dr. Walther-Thomas has worked at the University of Kansas, the University of Utah, and the College of William & Mary.



Delegate Jeion Ward

Delegate Jeion Ward is a retired teacher from Hampton, Virginia, and currently serves as the president of the Hampton Federation of Teachers as well as serving as a member representing the 92nd District in the Virginia General Assembly.



Dr. William White

Dr. Bill White began his service in education with Colonial Williamsburg. In 2011, White was named the Vice President for Productions, Publications, and Learning Ventures for the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.



Wade Whitehead

Wade is a elementary school teacher at Crystal Spring Elementary School in Roanoke, Virginia. Wade is also the Founder and President of The Teachers of Promise Foundation, which identifies and recognizes the best prospective teachers in America.

Not
Pictured.

Benjamin Williams

Benjamin Williams is the Associate Director of Testing and Remediation for Roanoke County Public Schools, and serves as Chairman of the Region VI Directors of Testing Group.



Sanford Williams

Sanford Williams is a member of Manassas City School Board, and also serves as Special Counsel to the Federal Communications Commission.



Renee Zando

Renee Zando is a school counseling director in Henrico County Public Schools, and has served as a board member for the Virginia School Counselor Association since July 2010.

Appendix B

A Glossary of Assessment Terms

Accountability systems – The mechanisms used (generally by states) to evaluate the performance of their education systems. In recent years, accountability systems have increasingly used the school as the unit for monitoring and intervention, based largely on the scores of each school’s students on a set of standardized tests.

Alternative (or alternate) assessment – Alternative assessments are used primarily to determine what students can and cannot *do*, in contrast to what they do or do not *know*. In other words, an alternative assessment measures applied proficiency more than it measures knowledge. There are multiple types of alternative assessments, of which performance assessment is one.

Authentic assessment – An alternative assessment in which students perform a real-world task. The more authentic an assessment task is, the more closely it approximates the way a similar task would be done in a setting outside the classroom (a workplace or community, for example).

Balanced assessment system – An assessment system that employs multiple types of assessments so that:

- (1) Achievement and growth are taken into account;
- (2) Assessments are matched to learning goals (both core content mastery and skills for success in the modern world); and
- (3) The need for accountability measures is met, but not at the expense of meaningful information that informs classroom instruction.

Computer-adaptive assessment – A test in which a computer program customizes the test for each student based on how the student responds to the test questions.

Higher-order thinking – A category of thinking skills that increases the cognitive load, requiring students to go beyond understanding content and replicating skills. Students employing higher-order thinking may make connections, solve problems different from those given in classroom examples, and use content to reach and justify conclusions. Examples of activities that require higher-order thinking are (1) analyzing the usefulness of information, (2) providing evidence to support conclusions, (3) creative thinking and design, and (4) determining implications and consequences.

Integrated or interdisciplinary assessment – An assessment that measures student performance on content and/or skills across content areas.

Performance assessment – A type of alternative assessment in which students demonstrate the use of their acquired knowledge and skill. A performance assessment may include a written

component, but generally focuses primarily on the student's demonstration of a specified task. Performance assessments are typically scored using rubrics (see Rubrics), which explicitly describe levels of performance and designate which levels meet standards.

Personalized learning - An approach in which students' individualized learning needs are the primary consideration in making instructional decisions.

Reliability – The consistency or stability of test performance. Tests must be constructed and administered so that measurement error (for example, from ambiguous scoring, unclear questions/directions, or environmental factors) is minimized.

Rubric – A description of the criteria for success and levels of achievement for a task. Rubrics are used during instruction to help students maximize and improve the quality of their work, and as scoring tools for multiple types of alternative assessments (see Performance Assessment).

Validity – The degree to which an assessment actually measures the learning it is intended to measure. Assessment designers use tools – both design and statistical tools- to maximize and collect evidence of assessment validity.

Appendix C

Existing Requirements

Statement of Principle I:

Schools are currently accredited based on whether the school’s pass rates on the state assessments meet the accreditation benchmarks: 75% for English (pass rate includes both reading and writing tests) and 70% for mathematics, history, and science. High schools must also meet benchmarks on the Graduation and Completion Index. As described in the Standards of Accreditation (SOA) (8VAC20-131-300 C.1., Accreditation ratings defined), a school will be fully accredited if it meets the following criteria:

c. With tests administered beginning in the academic year 2012-2013 for the accreditation ratings awarded for school year 2013-2014 and beyond, a school will be rated Fully Accredited when its eligible students meet the pass rate of 75% in English and the pass rate of 70% in mathematics, science, and history and social science.

Additionally, each school with a graduating class shall achieve a minimum of 85 percentage points on the Board of Education's graduation and completion index, as described in 8VAC20-131-280 B 2, to be rated Fully Accredited.

d. For accreditation purposes, the pass rate will be calculated as single rates for each of the four core academic areas by combining all scores of all tests administered in each subject area.

In the current system, accreditation ratings provide “extra credit” for “remediation recovery.” This process recognizes the efforts of schools that successfully remediate students who fail the SOL tests in reading and mathematics in the previous school year but pass the tests during the current year. The scores of “remediation recovery” students are counted twice in the calculation of the accreditation pass rate—once for the current year and a second time in recognition of the student’s successful remediation.

Progress toward meeting the accreditation benchmarks as indicated by improving pass rates was a part of the accreditation system in the past. For example, the 2006 revision of the Standards of Accreditation included an accreditation rating called “Accreditation Withheld/Improving School Near Accreditation.” The 2006 Standards of Accreditation included the following information about this rating.

“A school that has never met the requirements to be rated Fully Accredited by the academic year ending in 2006 and subject to being awarded a rating of Accreditation Denied may apply to the board for this accreditation designation for 2006-2007.

To be eligible, the school must meet each of the following criteria:

With assessments administered in 2005-2006 at least 70% of its students must have passed the applicable English SOL tests except at third and fifth grade where the requirement is 75%.

With assessments administered in 2005-2006, a combined pass rate of 60% of its students must have passed the Virginia assessment program tests in the other three core academic areas.

In each academic area in which the pass rate is below the rate required to be rated Fully Accredited, the school's pass rate must have increased by at least 25 percentage points as compared to the pass rates on tests taken during the academic year ending in 1999.

This rating shall not be awarded after the 2006-2007 academic year.

However, the current accreditation system does not include a rating that recognizes a school for improving its pass rates even though the required benchmarks to meet full accreditation have not been met. Additionally, there is currently no recognition for schools in which the majority of students has made significant progress during the school year but did not pass the state tests. Finally, unlike the federal accountability system, there is currently no process in place for school divisions to appeal a school’s accreditation rating even if it meets certain criteria.

Recommendation 4:

Computer Adaptive Testing customizes the test for each individual student based on the accuracy of the student’s responses to the test questions as the test is administered. This is different from the traditional assessment format in which all students taking a particular test are administered one of several versions of that test. Computer adaptive testing may allow for more “on demand” testing since the need to wait for the development of new versions of the tests each year is eliminated. In addition, with CAT it may be possible to allow students to test early in the school year and again later in the year to measure the amount of growth the student has made during the year. More information about Computer Adaptive Testing may be found at <http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/index.shtml>

Statement of Principle II:

Currently students must accrue both standard and verified credits to earn a diploma. Students earn standard credits by passing the course (e.g., Algebra I). In the current SOA a standard credit is defined as follows:

"Standard unit of credit" or "standard credit" means credit awarded for a course in which the student successfully completes 140 clock hours of instruction and the requirements of the course. Local school boards may develop alternatives to the requirement for 140 clock hours of instruction as provided for in 8VAC20-131-110.

Students earn verified credits by passing the course and the corresponding end-of-course test or a substitute test approved by the Board of Education. A list of the approved Board-approved substitute tests may be found at:

http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/substitute_tests/index.shtml

The SOA also permit school divisions to provide “locally awarded verified credits” to students who meet certain criteria. The SOA provides the following guidance regarding locally awarded verified credits.

Students who do not pass Standards of Learning tests in science or history and social science may receive locally awarded verified credits from the local school board in accordance with criteria established in guidelines adopted by the Board of Education.

Additional criteria included in the guidance document for the SOA is provided below:

To be eligible to earn locally awarded verified credits in science, or history/social science under this guidance, a student must:

- Pass the high school course,
- Score within a 375-399 scale score range on any administration of the Standards of Learning after taking the test at least twice, and Demonstrate achievement in the academic content through an appeal process administered at the local level.

The Board of Education requires that local school boards adopt policies to govern procedures used to award local verified credit.

Statement of Principle III:

The Standards of Learning are reviewed, and potentially revised, every seven years. The Standards of Learning review schedule may be found at

http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/assessment_committees/review_schedule.pdf

Tests that measure the revised SOL in the content areas that are part of the state assessment program are typically administered three years later. For example, revised history Standards of

Learning will be adopted by the Board of Education in early 2015. New tests measuring the revised history standards will be administered for the first time in the 2017-2018 school year.