

# VIRGINIA STANDARDS OF ACCREDITATION

**T**he revisions to the Standards of Accreditation (SOA) express the Board of Education’s vision of continuous improvement for all schools and for student outcomes aligned with the expectations of higher education and employers.

## Impact on Schools School Accountability

The revised SOA provides a more comprehensive view of school quality and expands accountability beyond pass rates on Standards of Learning (SOL) tests and high school graduation and completion. Under the revised standards:

- Schools receive credit for students who are making progress in English and/or mathematics and are on a trajectory towards reaching proficiency. By recognizing growth, the revised accreditation standards provide a more balanced evaluation of schools serving at-risk students. Under the previous accreditation system, these schools were subject to being perceived as “failing” even if most students were making progress toward proficiency.
- Schools receive credit for English-language learners making progress towards English proficiency.
- Schools are evaluated on their success in narrowing achievement gaps in English and mathematics. Under the previous accreditation system, high overall performance could mask underperformance of certain student groups.
- Schools are evaluated on their success in reducing absenteeism and lowering dropout rates.
- High schools — effective in 2021-2022 — will be expected to meet goals for increasing participation and achievement in advanced programs, career and technical education, and work-based and service-based learning.

## School-Quality Indicators

The revised standards measure performance on multiple school-quality indicators, not just on overall student achievement on state tests. School-quality indicators provide information on overall student achievement, achievement gaps and student engagement.

Elementary and middle schools are evaluated on the following indicators under the new accountability system:

- Overall proficiency and growth in English reading/writing achievement (including progress of English learners toward English-language proficiency)
- Overall proficiency and growth in mathematics
- Overall proficiency in science
- English achievement gaps among student groups
- Mathematics achievement gaps among student groups
- Absenteeism

High schools are evaluated on the following school-quality indicators under the new SOA:

- Overall proficiency in English reading/writing and progress of English learners toward English-language proficiency
- Overall proficiency in mathematics
- Overall proficiency in science
- English achievement gaps among student groups
- Mathematics achievement gaps among student groups
- Graduation and Completion Index
- Dropout rate
- Absenteeism
- College, career and civic readiness (effective 2021-2022)

### School Quality Indicators: Achievement of All Students

Indicator	Level One	Level Two	Level Three
<b>English Combined Rate</b>	At least 75% OR 10% decrease in failure if previously Level Two	66-74% OR 10% reduction in failure if previous rate 50-65%	65% or lower OR Level Two for more than four consecutive years
<b>Math Combined Rate (Elementary and Middle)</b>	At least 70% OR 10% decrease in failure if previously Level Two	66-69% OR 10% reduction in failure if previous rate 50-65%	65% or lower OR Level Two for more than four consecutive years
<b>Math Pass Rate (High Schools)</b>	At least 70% OR 10% decrease in failure if previously Level Two	66-69% OR 10% reduction in failure if previous rate 50-65%	65% or lower OR Level Two for more than four consecutive years
<b>Science Pass Rate</b>	At least 70% OR 10% decrease in failure if previously Level Two	66-69% OR 10% reduction in failure if previous rate 50-65%	65% or lower OR Level Two for more than four consecutive years

## School Quality Indicators: Achievement Gaps

Indicator	Level One	Level Two	Level Three
English Achievement Gaps	No more than one student group at Level Two in English	Two or more student groups at Level Two in English; no more than one at Level Three	Two or more student groups at Level Three in English
Math Achievement Gaps	No more than one student group at Level Two in Math	Two or more student groups at Level Two in Math; no more than one at Level Three	Two or more student groups at Level Three in Math

Performance on each school-quality indicator is rated at one of three levels: Level One (meets or exceeds the state standard for the indicator or making adequate improvement), Level Two (near the standard or making sufficient progress) or Level Three (below the standard).

All schools must have a multiyear improvement plan. Depending on the level of the indicator, the following actions are required:

**LEVEL ONE** — Continue to monitor data associated with the indicator and review multi-year plan.

**LEVEL TWO** — Revise multiyear improvement plan and implement revisions to improve performance on the indicator.

**LEVEL THREE** — Implement a corrective action plan to improve performance on the indicator following an academic review (or other appropriate review) conducted by the Virginia Department of Education.

The revised SOA prescribes that all schools and divisions — after conducting a comprehensive needs assessment — develop a multiyear plan that will be reviewed annually. The plan should include actions for all performance levels to support continuous improvement for all schools on each school-quality indicator.

## School Quality Indicators: Student Engagement

Indicator	Level One	Level Two	Level Three
Graduation and Completion Index (High Schools)	At least 88 OR 2.5% increase if previously Level Two	81-87 OR 2.5% increase if previously Level Three	80 or lower OR Level Two for more than four consecutive years
Dropout Rate (High Schools)	0-6% OR 10% decrease if previously Level Two	7-9% OR 10% decrease if previously Level Three	10% or higher OR Level Two for more than four consecutive years
Chronic Absenteeism	0-15% OR 10% decrease if previously Level Two	16-24% OR 10% decrease if previously Level Three	25% or higher OR Level Two for more than four consecutive years
College, Career and Civic Readiness (High Schools)	At least 85%	71-84%	70% or lower OR Level Two for more than four consecutive years

# SOL Performance Levels and Growth

Because students are assessed annually in English reading and mathematics in grades 3-8, it is possible to compare year-to-year performance. A non-passing student is considered to have demonstrated sufficient growth to be included in the combined rate if the student improved by at least one performance level, as illustrated by the examples shown in the following charts.

## Mathematics SOL Performance Levels Showing Growth

Test	Below Basic		Basic		Proficient		Advanced	
	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High
Grade 3	0-305	306-330	331-365	366-399	400-433	434-499	500-511	512-600
Grade 4	0-310	311-330	331-369	370-399	400-437	438-499	500-514	515-600
Grade 5	0-312	313-335	336-370	371-399	400-436	437-499	500-514	515-600
Grade 6	0-331	332-349	350-377	378-399	400-437	438-499	500-508	509-600
Grade 7	0-303	304-328	329-367	368-399	400-430	431-499	500-514	515-600
Grade 8	0-323	324-340	341-376	377-399	400-427	428-499	500-507	508-600

## Reading SOL Performance Levels Showing Growth

Test	Below Basic		Basic		Proficient		Advanced	
	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High
Grade 3	0-280	281-309	310-361	362-399	400-438	439-499	500-511	512-600
Grade 4	0-277	278-302	303-359	360-399	400-438	439-499	500-512	513-600
Grade 5	0-270	271-294	295-360	361-399	400-438	439-499	500-512	513-600
Grade 6	0-291	292-316	317-364	365-399	400-440	441-499	500-511	512-600
Grade 7	0-291	292-314	315-365	366-399	400-440	441-499	500-511	512-600
Grade 8	0-293	294-316	317-366	367-399	400-438	439-499	500-507	508-600

# Achievement of All Students


When possible, school-quality indicators for English and mathematics express proficiency and growth through a combined rate that provides equal credit for students who passed SOL tests in the content area and for students who didn't pass but met or exceeded progress benchmarks. Ratings are based on performance during the most recent year or on a three-year average.

## English


- The combined rate for English for elementary and middle schools includes students who passed SOL tests in reading or writing and students who didn't pass but showed growth, including English learners who made progress toward English proficiency.
- The combined rate for English for high schools includes students who pass SOL tests in reading or writing and English learners who made progress toward English proficiency.

**SAMPLE School Quality Indicator: English High Schools**

10 students take assessment:



With the following results:





6 Students Pass (blue)      4 Students Fail  
3 English Learners Show Progress (purple)

To determine the combined rate:

**Add together** the number of students who passed  
**AND** the number of English Learners who showed progress

[ 6 Pass (blue) + 3 English Learners Show Progress (purple) = 9 ]

**THEN**  
**Divide** by total number of test takers (10)


**Which Yields: 90% Combined Rate**

## Mathematics


- The combined rate for math for elementary and middle schools includes students who passed SOL tests in math and students who didn't pass but showed growth.
- Math indicators for high schools are based on the percentage of students passing SOL tests in Algebra I, Geometry and Algebra II.

**SAMPLE School Quality Indicator: Mathematics Elementary and Middle Schools**

10 students take assessment:



With the following results:





6 Students Pass (blue)      4 Students Fail  
3 Show Growth (orange) & 1 Shows No Growth (pink)

To determine the combined rate:

**Add together** the number of students who passed  
**AND** the number of students who showed growth

[ 6 Pass (blue) + 3 Show Growth (orange) = 9 ]





**THEN**  
**Divide** by total number of test takers (10)


**Which Yields: 90% Combined Rate**

**SAMPLE School Quality Indicator: English Elementary and Middle Schools**

10 students take assessment:



With the following results:





6 Students Pass (blue)      4 Students Fail  
2 Show Growth (orange)  
1 English Learner Shows Progress (purple)  
1 Shows No Growth (pink)

To determine the combined rate:

**Add together** the number of students who passed  
**AND** the number of students who showed growth  
**AND** the number of English Learners who showed progress

[ 6 Pass (blue) + 2 Show Growth (orange) + 1 English Learner Shows Progress (purple) = 9 ]

**THEN**  
**Divide** by total number of test takers (10)

**Which Yields: 90% Combined Rate**

## Science

The school quality indicator for science for all schools is the overall, adjusted pass rate on all science SOL tests administered within the school. Ratings are based on performance during the most recent year or on a three-year average.

## History/Social Science

Under the revised SOA, student achievement in history/social science is no longer a factor in determining a school's accreditation rating.

## Achievement Gaps in English and Mathematics

Ratings on English and mathematics school quality indicators are calculated for the following student groups: Asian, black, economically disadvantaged, English learners, Hispanic, students with disabilities and white. Schools are rated as follows based on the performance of these student groups:

**LEVEL ONE** — No more than one student group at Level Two

**LEVEL TWO** — Two or more student groups at Level Two and no more than one at Level Three

**LEVEL THREE** — Two or more student groups at Level Three

## Student Engagement

### Graduation and Completion Index

The Graduation and Completion Index — which has factored in accreditation ratings for high schools since 2011 — continues as a school quality indicator under the revised Standards of Accreditation. Ratings are based on performance during the most recent year or on a three-year average.

**LEVEL ONE** — Schools with a Graduation and Completion Index of 88 or higher or a 2.5 percent improvement if previously Level Two

**LEVEL TWO** — Schools with a Graduation and Completion Index of 81-87 or a 2.5 percent improvement if previously Level Two

**LEVEL THREE** — Schools with a Graduation and Completion Index of 80 or lower or at Level Two for more than four consecutive years

### Dropout Rate

A high school's four-year, cohort dropout rate is a new school quality indicator under the revised SOA. Ratings are based on performance during the most recent year or on a three-year average.

**LEVEL ONE** — Schools with a dropout rate of 0-6 percent or a 10 percent decrease if previously Level Two

**LEVEL TWO** — Schools with a dropout rate of 7-9 percent or 10 percent decrease if previously Level Three

**LEVEL THREE** — Schools with a dropout rate of 10 percent or higher or at Level Two for more than four consecutive years

## Chronic Absenteeism

Chronic absenteeism is defined as missing 10 percent or more of the school year, regardless of reason. Students receiving homebound instruction are excluded. In the revised SOA, performance on this indicator is rated as follows:

**LEVEL ONE** — Schools with a current year or three-year average overall absenteeism rate of no more than 15 percent (that is, no more than 15 percent of the students missing 10 percent of the school year), or schools that were at Level Two the prior year and decrease the rate by ten percent or more from the prior year

**LEVEL TWO** — Schools not meeting Level-One performance with a current year or three-year average rate of no more than 25 percent, or schools that were at Level Three the prior year and decrease the rate by 10 percent or more from the prior year

**LEVEL THREE** — Schools with a current year or three-year-average chronic-absenteeism rate of 25 percent or more or schools with a Level Two rating for more than four consecutive years

## College, Career and Civic Readiness

The College, Career and Civic Readiness Index will be a school quality indicator for high schools effective with accreditation ratings for the 2021-2022 school year. The index will measure the extent to which students successfully complete advanced coursework, Career and Technical Education coursework and credentialing, and work- and service-based learning.

## School Accreditation Ratings

The revised SOA simplifies the commonwealth's accountability system by reducing the number of overall accreditation ratings that schools may earn.

Under the new system, schools earn one of the following three ratings:

- **Accredited** — Schools with all school-quality indicators at either Level One or Level Two
- **Accredited with Conditions** — Schools with one or more school-quality indicators at Level Three

- **Accreditation Denied** — Schools that fail to adopt or fully implement required corrective actions to address Level Three school-quality indicators. A school rated as Accreditation Denied may regain state accreditation by demonstrating to the Board of Education that it is fully implementing all required corrective action plans.

<b>SAMPLE SCHOOL: South Middle School</b>		
<b>Achievement</b>	English Combined Rate	<b>Level ONE</b>
	Math Combined Rate	<b>Level ONE</b>
	Science Pass Rate	<b>Level ONE</b>
<b>Achievement</b>	English	<b>Level TWO</b>
<b>Gaps</b>	Math	<b>Level TWO</b>
<b>Student Engagement</b>	Chronic Absenteeism	<b>Level TWO</b>
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>ACCREDITED</b>	

<b>SAMPLE SCHOOL: North High School</b>		
<b>Achievement</b>	English Combined Rate	<b>Level ONE</b>
	Math Pass Rate	<b>Level ONE</b>
	Science Pass Rate	<b>Level ONE</b>
<b>Achievement</b>	English	<b>Level TWO</b>
<b>Gaps</b>	Math	<b>Level THREE</b>
<b>Student Engagement</b>	Chronic Absenteeism	<b>Level TWO</b>
	Graduation & Completion	<b>Level ONE</b>
	Dropout Rate	<b>Level TWO</b>
	College, Career & Civic Readiness	(2021-2022)
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>ACCREDITED WITH CONDITIONS</b>	

## Impact on Students

### Profile of a Virginia Graduate

The revised SOA maintains high expectations for learning in English, math, science and history/social science while reducing the number of SOL tests students must pass to earn a high school diploma. The new standards also implement the “Profile of a Virginia Graduate,” which includes knowledge, skills, attributes and experiences identified by employers, higher education and the Virginia Board of Education as critical for future success in the workplace and in college. These include academic content knowledge, workplace skills, community and civic responsibility and career planning.

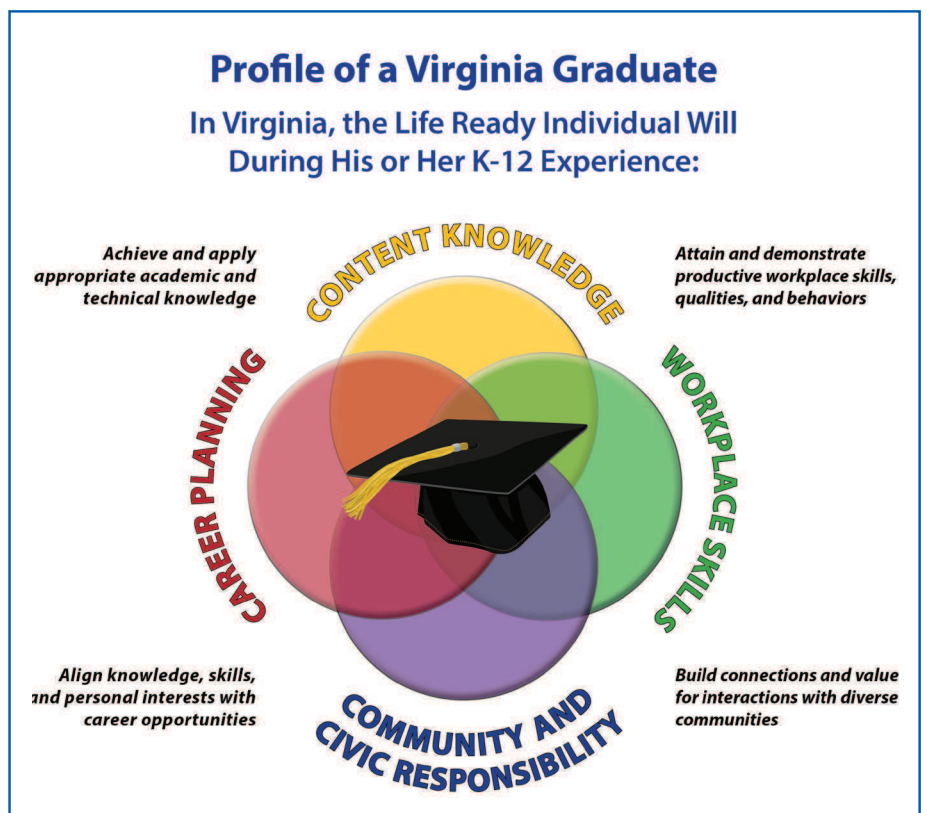
Also embedded within the Profile of a Virginia Graduate is the expectation that students will demonstrate foundational skills in what are known as the “Five C’s”: critical thinking, creative thinking, communication, collaboration and citizenship.

The new graduation requirements place increased emphasis on the practical application of learned skills and content knowledge by expanding the use of performance-based assessments for the awarding of verified credits.

In addition, the career-planning component of the new graduation requirements provides the opportunity for students to learn about employment options aligned with their interests in their own communities and

elsewhere. While there is no specific activity that a student must experience (such as an internship, job-shadowing assignment or participation in a career fair) to graduate, school divisions are required to provide opportunities for students to learn about workplace expectations and career options aligned with their interests in their own communities and elsewhere.

School divisions also must ensure that students understand and demonstrate civic responsibility and community engagement.



## Course Requirements and Verified Credits

The new graduation requirements are effective with students entering the ninth grade in the fall of 2018 (class of 2022).

The number of standard credits for a Standard Diploma remains the same (22), but the number of required verified credits — earned by passing a course in the content area and associated end-of-course assessment — is reduced from six to five (one each in English reading, English writing, mathematics, science and history/social science).

### Standard Diploma (Class of 2022)

Subject	Standard Units of Credit Required	Verified Credits Required
English	4	2
Mathematics	3	1
Science	3	1
History/Social Science	3	1
Health & Physical Education	2	
World Language, Fine Arts or Career & Technical Education	2	
Economics & Personal Finance	1	
Electives	4	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>5</b>

For an Advanced Studies Diploma the number of standard credits remains the same (26), but the number of required verified credits is reduced from nine to five (one each in English reading, English writing, mathematics, science and history/social science).

### Advanced Studies Diploma (Class of 2022)

Subject	Standard Units of Credit Required	Verified Credits Required
English	4	2
Mathematics	4	1
Science	4	1
History/Social Science	4	1
World Language	3	
Health & Physical Education	2	
Fine Arts or Career & Technical Education	1	
Economics & Personal Finance	1	
Electives	3	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>5</b>

Students have additional flexibility in how they can earn verified credits under the new graduation requirements. Students may verify course achievement in the following ways:

- By passing the end-of-course SOL test corresponding with the course or a Board of Education-approved substitute assessment;
- By earning a locally awarded verified credit in English, mathematics, science or history/social science in accordance with criteria established by the Board of Education (a student may earn no more than one locally awarded verified credit); and
- By passing a performance-based assessment in English writing in lieu of the end-of-course SOL test.

In addition, beginning with the class of 2022, all students must either earn a career and technical education credential or complete an Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate or honors course to graduate.

For more information, please visit [www.doe.virginia.gov](http://www.doe.virginia.gov)



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