

## **Virginia Alternate Assessment Program (VAAP)**

### **2021-2022 VAAP Survey: Division Directors of Testing and Special Education Directors, Teachers, & Parents**

#### **Summer 2022**

**Abstract:** The following report describes the purpose, participants, methods, and results of surveys the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) sent to three stakeholder groups in Virginia—Division Directors of Testing and Special Education Directors, Teachers, & Parents—and a follow-up virtual focus group after the implementation of the new Virginia Alternate Assessment Program (VAAP) for academic year 2021-2022. The surveys were sent to members of each stakeholder group in early July 2022, after the VAAP testing window had closed. The report is organized by stakeholder group and offers evidence around meeting statutory and regulatory requirements as detailed in *A State's Guide to the U.S. Department of Education's Assessment Peer Review Process* — federal guidance designed to assist states in successfully negotiating federal peer review of their statewide assessment systems. Specifically, this report offers evidence towards meeting Critical Element 1.5: Meaningful Consultation in the Development of Challenging State Standards and Assessments.

## Directors

### Summary of Participants & Results

Division Directors of Testing and Special Education Directors:  $n = 100$

Recorded Date: 07-07-2022 - 08-15-2022

### Survey Participants

In the summer of 2022, VDOE personnel recruited 100 Division Directors of Testing (DDOT) and Special Education (SPED) Directors from at least 73 divisions to provide feedback on their preparation for and implementation of the 2022 Virginia Alternate Assessment Program (VAAP). Of the 100 respondents: 59 were DDOT, 39 were SPED Directors, 1 was an Assessment Specialist, and 1 was an Assessment Resource teacher.

### Survey Method and Data Collection

VDOE, through the Office of Teaching, Learning & Assessment, designed the short survey to gather feedback on the preparation for and implementation of the 2021-2022 Virginia Alternate Assessment Program (VAAP) to assist the VDOE staff with future VAAP implementation. The survey consisted of a combination of selected-response and constructed-response (i.e., open-ended) items phrased as statements or questions on four main topics (1) *VAAP Responsibilities*, (2) *School Division VAAP Preparation and Implementation*, (3) *VAAP Resources*, and (4) *Suggestions for Changes regarding VAAP in 2022-2023*. The survey was conducted securely via Google Forms. Participants had the option at the end of the survey to provide their name and email address for VDOE to follow-up if they had questions or desired additional information regarding responses.

Below, we present the survey and associated results organized by topic and in the order that prompts were presented to study participants. Representative quotes are included in their original (unedited) form, and when applicable, grouped based on patterns of constructive/critical comments and recommendations. For example, open-ended responses that were overly general have been removed.

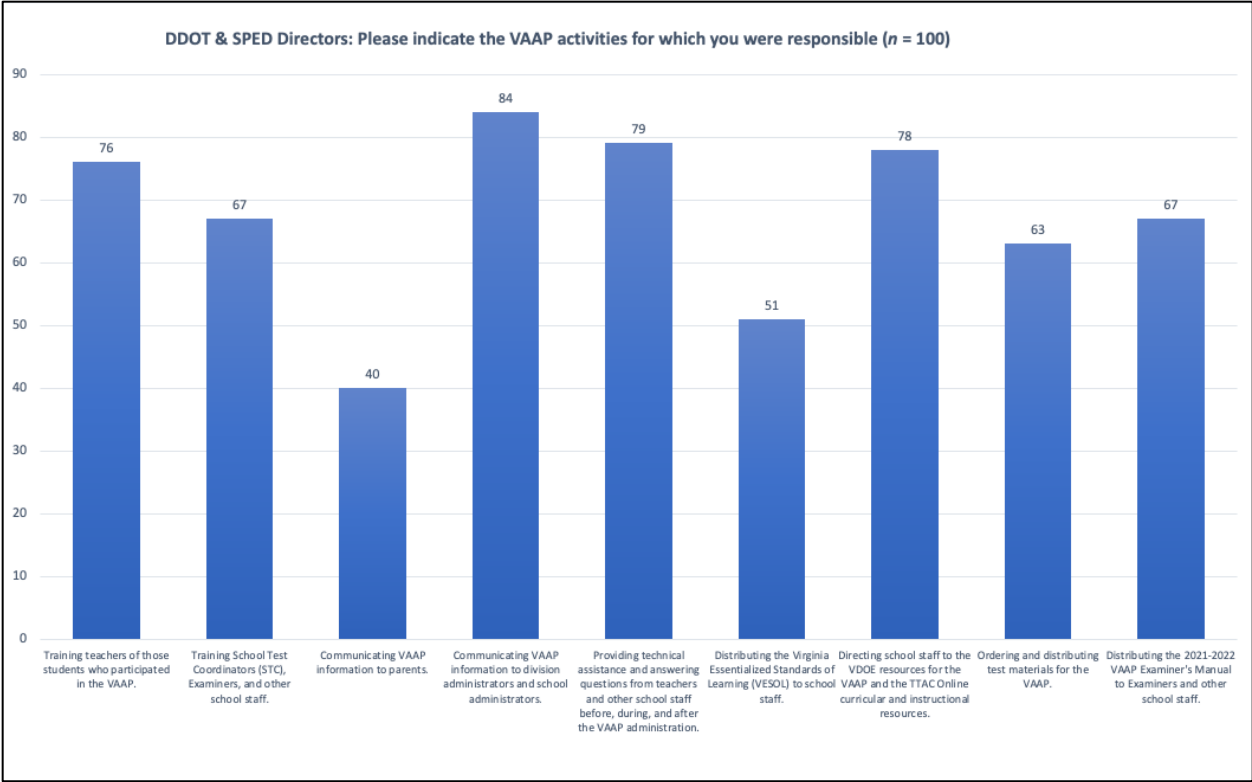
## Survey for Division Directors of Testing and Special Education Directors: Results

Purpose: The purpose of this survey is to gain your feedback regarding the 2021-2022 VAAP. Please complete this survey based on your preparation for and implementation of the VAAP. Your feedback will assist Virginia Department of Education staff with future VAAP implementation. Thank you for taking the time to provide us with your feedback today.

*Note: Questions 1 and 2 asked survey participants to list their school division position and school division name, respectively.*

### **Topic 1: VAAP Responsibilities**

Question Text	Response	Response Counts (%)
Q3 - Please indicate the VAAP activities for which you were responsible: (check all that apply)	Training teachers of those students who participated in the VAAP.	<i>n</i> = 76 (76%)
	Training School Test Coordinators (STC), Examiners, and other school staff.	<i>n</i> = 67 (67%)
	Communicating VAAP information to parents.	<i>n</i> = 40 (40%)
	Communicating VAAP information to division administrators and school administrators.	<i>n</i> = 84 (84%)
	Providing technical assistance and answering questions from teachers and other school staff before, during, and after the VAAP administration.	<i>n</i> = 79 (79%)
	Distributing the Virginia Essentialized Standards of Learning (VESOL) to school staff.	<i>n</i> = 51 (51%)
	Directing school staff to the VDOE resources for the VAAP and the TTAC Online curricular and instructional resources.	<i>n</i> = 78 (78%)
	Ordering and distributing test materials for the VAAP.	<i>n</i> = 63 (63%)
	Distributing the 2021-2022 VAAP Examiner's Manual to Examiners and other school staff.	<i>n</i> = 67 (67%)



**Topic 2: School Division VAAP Preparation and Implementation**

<b>Question Text</b>	<b>Response Counts (%)</b>
<b>Q4</b> - VDOE Training Modules: Were teachers and other school staff in your division required to view the VAAP training modules provided by the VDOE?	Yes = 91 (91%) No = 1 (1%) Other = 7 (7%) Missing = 1 (1%)

**Other Responses**

- Highly encouraged
- This preparation item was not covered by the DDOT
- Teachers were required to participate in local training based off of the VDOE training
- Nearly all did.
- While they were not required, they were highly encouraged to view them.
- VAAP teachers were required or to work with a partner who attended
- Teachers were required to watch division mandated modules which included large portions of the VDOE modules; most teachers watched both the division modules and the state modules.

<b>Question Text</b>	<b>Response Counts (%)</b>
<b>Q5</b> - Student Test Plans: Were teachers in your division required to develop Student Test Plans for each VAAP participant?	Yes = 84 (84%) No = 9 (9%) Other = 6 (6%) Missing = 1 (1%)

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***Other Responses***

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- our guidance document requires a test plan
- not required but highly advisable, most did them.
- uncertain
- Schools were required to create school test plans that outlined the administration of the VAAP at each school.

<b>Question Text</b>	<b>Response Counts (%)</b>
<b>Q6</b> - Practice Items: Were teachers in your division required to use the VAAP practice items with students?	Yes = 80 (80%) No = 4 (4%) Other = 15 (15%) Missing = 1 (1%)

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#### ***Other Responses***

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- we did not have a student test this administration
- Unsure
- This preparation item was not covered by the DDOT
- Strongly suggested and supported
- This was not a requirement, but teachers were strongly encouraged to use the practice items.
- Strongly suggested...
- They were not required but all of them used the practice items
- uncertain
- The teachers were made aware that the practice items were available on the VDOE website but they were not required to use the items.
- It was highly recommended that schools/teachers use the VAAP practice items with students prior to testing.
- It was suggested; not sure if it was required.

Question Text	Response Counts (%)
<b>Q7</b> - VESOL: How did teachers and other instructional staff in your division access the VESOL? (check all that apply)	Directed to the VDOE website. = 87 (87%) Printed copies were distributed. = 45 (45%) Posted to the school division website. = 8 (8%)

***Note:** Percentages do not add to 100% because respondents could select all options that apply.*

#### **Other Responses**

- Designated Google Classrooms
- Digital Copy
- Division teacher training meetings
- Electronic copy
- emailed a link as well
- I am unsure - this was handled by the services to exceptional children department
- Linked in division training documents
- Linked in division training documents.
- Links to VESOL/VAAP resources were posted in a Schoology course
- Links were shared in additional resources that were created for teachers.
- Meeting to discuss
- Not sure. This was communicated through our Special Services department.
- Place on staff google group folder for teachers with VAAP students.
- Some VSEOL information sent to them by email
- TestNav App and TTAC website
- This has not been done as of yet
- ttaonline.org resources
- uncertain
- Watched webinars together



Question Text	Response Counts (%)
<b>Q8</b> - Test Implementation Manual: How did school staff in your division access the 2021-2022 VAAP Test Implementation Manual? (check all that apply)	Printed copies were distributed. = 90 (90%) Directed to the VDOE website. = 60 (60%)

***Note:** Percentages do not add to 100% because respondents could select all options that apply.*

#### **Other Responses**

- Designated Google Classrooms
- did not have a student test this administration
- Electronic copy
- Google folder created and shared.
- Internal LMS Resource Site for VAAP
- Linked in division testing SharePoint Site
- Linked on division testing SharePoint site.
- Place on staff google group folder for teachers with VAAP students.
- Unsure
- Viewed online together

<b>Question Text</b>	<b>Response Counts (%)</b>
<b>Q9</b> - VAAP Examiner's Manual: How did Examiners in your division access the 2021-2022 VAAP Examiner's Manual? (check all that apply)	Printed copies were distributed. = 93 (93%) Directed to the VDOE website. = 53 (53%)

***Note:** Percentages do not add to 100% because respondents could select all options that apply.*

#### ***Other Responses***

- Designated Google Classrooms
- Electronic Copy
- Internal LMS Resource Site for VAAP
- N/A
- Unsure

Question Text	Response Counts (%)
<b>Q10</b> - Advanced Access: Who was responsible for providing advanced access of VAAP test forms to teachers in your division when appropriate? (check all that apply)	School Test Coordinator (STC) = 60 (60%) Division Director of Testing (DDOT) = 48 (48%) DDOT designee = 12 (12%)

***Note:** Percentages do not add to 100% because respondents could select all options that apply.*

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#### **Other Responses**

- Advanced access was not provided to teachers, supervisors only.
- Coordinator of Special Education
- DDOT2
- Direct of Special Programs
- for Private Day Schools
- Im not sure what this is?
- Lead Teacher/STC at Private Day School
- N/A
- No advanced access was given to teachers.

<b>Question Text</b>	<b>Response Counts (%)</b>
<b>Q11</b> - Advanced Access: Who was responsible for monitoring the teachers in your division who had advanced access to VAAP test items? (check all that apply)	STC = 62 (62%) DDOT = 42 (42%) DDOT Designee = 11 (11%)

***Note:** Percentages do not add to 100% because respondents could select all options that apply.*

#### ***Other Responses***

- Advanced access was not provided to teachers, supervisors only.
- Coordinator of Special Education
- DDOT2
- Director of Special Programs
- District Supervisor of Special Education
- I don't believe we had any advanced access??
- Lead Teacher at PDS
- Lead Teacher/STC at Private Day School
- N/A
- No advanced access was given to teachers.
- SPED Coordinator

Question Text	Response Counts (%)
<b>Q12</b> - Advanced Access: How was test security handled in your division during advanced access of the VAAP test forms?	**see quotes, below

**Comments:**

- The materials were given back to STC each night and locked up within the testing material areas. The materials were signed in and out to specific teachers.
- No one required advanced access this year.
- STCs maintained secure check in and out procedures with affidavits being completed DDOT took care of this.
- VAAP test security training was provided to all staff involved prior to testing-- DDOT met with teachers and provided VAAP materials-- signed appropriate materials-- kept locked, etc.
- We did not need to use advanced access this year.
- When a teacher accessed VAAP test forms in advance, there was always another adult present
- Exactly like SOL secure documents
- Division DDOT/School Test Coordinator
- DDOT held testing materials in a secure location until the day of testing.
- We did not request advanced access of the VAAP forms.
- DDOT followed the student Plans and the directions specified in the TIM
- The teachers were given the information to use when they had time to test. Most of the teachers did not receive any of the testing information until the second week of May and High School teachers received testing information the first week of June. They were unable to follow the test plan due to the divisions late testing windows.
- Test transmittal documents were used to track the giving and receiving of each test between the teacher and STC.
- The division's Director of Testing and Evaluation handles all secured test forms.
- CCPS Testing Coordinator directed all protocols for security of test items.

Question Text	Response Counts (%)
<b>Q13</b> - Examiner's Supplement for Assessing Students with Visual Impairments: Did your division access any of these documents and were they beneficial to teachers and students?	**see quotes, below

***Note:** Although this was an open-ended question, about 45% of responses indicated No or Not applicable and about 11% of responses indicated Yes.*

**Positive Comments:**

- yes and yes
- Yes; teachers found them beneficial
- Yes, the two teachers that required access felt the documents were helpful and easy to use.
- DDOT followed the student Plans and the directions specified in the TIM
- We provided each teacher with a copy of the document. It was handy to have for reference.
- Yes, they were accessed and beneficial to teachers and students. Schools received them via secured interoffice shipping and returned them upon completion of the VAAP.

**Constructive and/or critical comments/recommendations:**

- No. We did enlarge answer choice cards and/or enlarged the screen on their computer.
- Due to order fulfillment delay, by several months, we were unable to test our one student who qualified.
- A ready-made large print test would be beneficial.
- Our school division accessed these materials, but found the verbal guidance to be insufficient. Students who are blind but cannot read Braille were not provided sufficient information via the script.

Question Text	Response Counts (%)
<b>Q14</b> - Monitoring: How were VAAP test sessions monitored in your schools? (check all that apply)	On-site observations took place for some test administrations. = 73 (73%) Post-administration discussions occurred with Examiners. = 53 (53%)

***Note:** Percentages do not add to 100% because respondents could select all options that apply.*

#### **Other Responses**

- DDOT did spot check of session statuses throughout testing window
- All sessions had an examiner and proctor
- All sessions were proctored and, in some cases, proctored and recorded.
- All test sessions required both an examiner and proctor at all times. Transmittal forms were used in the same nature as SOL testing.
- At discretion of STC
- DDOT and STC onsite monitoring all testing
- DDOT and/or Coordinator of Special Services was on site for every test administration.
- Director of Special Programs and/or STC monitored as needed.
- N/A
- On-site observations took place for all test administrations.
- Proctor and Recorder
- proctored during the session
- Proctors
- Site Coordinators
- STCs had primary responsibility
- Test session were set up
- The same as any other SOL with one-on-one testing accommodations.
- The STC monitored VAAP sessions in Pearson daily and on-site physical observations took place for some test administrations. The school division testing specialist overseeing VAAP monitored sessions in PearsonAccessnext daily.
- they were not monitored

### **Topic 3: VAAP Resources**

**Q15** - Please respond to indicate how helpful you found each entry in the table below as a resource:

	<b>Response Counts (%)</b>
2021-2022 VAAP Examiner's Manual	Very Helpful = 59 (59%) Helpful = 37 (37%) Somewhat Helpful = 0 (0%) Not Helpful = 0 (0%) Did Not Use = 1 (1%) Missing = 3 (3%)
2021-2022 VAAP Test Implementation Manual	Very Helpful = 60 (60%) Helpful = 33 (33%) Somewhat Helpful = 3 (3%) Not Helpful = 0 (0%) Did Not Use = 1 (1%) Missing = 3 (3%)
TTAC Online Instructional Resources for VAAP	Very Helpful = 41 (41%) Helpful = 26 (26%) Somewhat Helpful = 18 (18%) Not Helpful = 0 (0%) Did Not Use = 13 (13%) Missing = 2 (2%)
VAAP Parent FAQ	Very Helpful = 35 (35%) Helpful = 31 (31%) Somewhat Helpful = 16 (16%) Not Helpful = 0 (0%) Did Not Use = 14 (14%) Missing = 4 (4%)
VAAP Parent Video	Very Helpful = 29 (29%) Helpful = 23 (23%) Somewhat Helpful = 21 (21%) Not Helpful = 1 (1%) Did Not Use = 22 (22%) Missing = 4 (4%)
VAAP Practice Items	Very Helpful = 73 (73%) Helpful = 20 (20%) Somewhat Helpful = 2 (2%) Not Helpful = 0 (0%) Did Not Use = 2 (2%) Missing = 3 (3%)



**Q15** - Please respond to indicate how helpful you found each entry in the table below as a resource:

**Response Counts (%)**

**Q15 (cont)** - Please respond to indicate how helpful you found each entry in the table below as a resource:

**Response Counts (%)**

VAAP Teacher FAQ

Very Helpful = 48 (48%)  
Helpful = 38 (38%)  
Somewhat Helpful = 8 (8%)  
Not Helpful = 1 (1%)  
Did Not Use = 4 (4%)  
Missing = 1 (1%)

VAAP Test Blueprints

Very Helpful = 60 (60%)  
Helpful = 28 (28%)  
Somewhat Helpful = 7 (7%)  
Not Helpful = 0 (0%)  
Did Not Use = 2 (2%)  
Missing = 3 (3%)

VAAP Test Plan Template

Very Helpful = 63 (63%)  
Helpful = 23 (23%)  
Somewhat Helpful = 10 (10%)  
Not Helpful = 1 (1%)  
Did Not Use = 1 (1%)  
Missing = 2 (2%)

VAAP Training Modules

Very Helpful = 74 (74%)  
Helpful = 19 (19%)  
Somewhat Helpful = 6 (6%)  
Not Helpful = 0 (0%)  
Did Not Use = 0 (0%)  
Missing = 1 (1%)

Question Text	Response Counts (%)
<b>Q16</b> - Please describe any suggestions you have for additional resources to assist with implementing the VAAP (instructional or assessment resources).	**see quotes, below

**Positive Comments:**

- None at this time.
- The resources the VDOE made available were sufficient for our needs.

**Constructive and/or critical comments/recommendations:**

- This is hard to determine without score results. Quicker results if possible.
- provide say directions or suggestions for examiners and proctors in the Examiner's Manual; require the student's name be written on the test booklet and examiner's copy; make the manuals front side only, so that schools who are making choice cards don't have to use multiple booklets
- The resources that were already provided were amazing! Thank you!! Adding a place for the student's name on the student booklets would be helpful. The videos of administering the assessment are very helpful. Modeling is always good!
- More practice problems for students as well as opportunities for them to practice logging in.
- We would like to have additional resources on VAAP scoring.
- Please only print single sided copies of VAAP booklets. We had to order large amounts of booklets to offset the double sided copies.
- One condensed training module that is updated for teachers and one for admins would be great.
- Work Bank to pull variety of lesson/worksheets/projects per VESOL for teachers to use.
- spiral bound test administration for a paper test
- Having the VAAP TIMs separate from the regular SOL testing manual would be helpful. It got to be confusing as VAAP instructions would run into or be right next to VAP SOL instructions.
- The PAN was new to most teachers and while experienced STCs were familiar with platform, there were so many \exceptions\ that it became unwieldy at times. The TIM, being combined, was difficult to follow for just VAAP purposes. Information about the exceptions for VAAP were sprinkled. I much prefer a separate TIM like Writing has. Our division required transcription review for paper-pencil administrations, and this was

difficult to manage. TestNav is not intuitive and again, these teachers were new to the system. Despite including slides and instructions on how to save and exit the test, we had teachers submit and then had to call to have the test unsubmitted. I liked being able to upload test sessions for the entire division for VAAP but then I must have done something wrong because I could only see the sessions in the individual schools. Would love more training in this area. Our Specialized Instruction staff said that the parent videos and resources were not helpful. We had a record number of refusals this year and this may be a contributing factor.

- Additional guidance on VAAP Local Alternative Assessments.
- Having a designated place to write the student name on the VAAP test booklet and on the examiner pages in the booklet would be very beneficial.
- Have materials as early as possible for implementation; receive scores in a timely manner
- Keep modules available to schools on VDOE website
- The VAAP implementation manual needs to be separated from the SOL manual. The manual was difficult to navigate and unclear at times when VAAP information seemed to conflict or slightly differ from SOL information. Also, some of the VAAP accommodations and testing conditions did not provide explicit language and examples, which made it unclear what level of modification was allowed. There should be various explicit examples of how each accommodation or testing condition can look in the test environment, especially for use of pictorial language and alternate representation of response options. Additionally, a resource for parents that explains the shift in VAAP from portfolio to online test and why certain subjects still use the portfolio-style assessment would be helpful.

#### **Topic 4: Suggestions for Changes regarding VAAP in 2022-2023**

<b>Question Text</b>	<b>Response Counts (%)</b>
<b>Q17</b> - Based on your experience in 2021-2022, what changes will you make in your division with using the VESOLs for instruction and in implementing the VAAP in spring 2023?	**see quotes, below

#### **Comments:**

- Continue in same form as this year
- Not really sure until we see how our students did.
- ensure all teachers have the resources they need to teach the VESOLS
- I think just becoming more familiar with the logistics of taking the actual test will be the most helpful area.
- We are going to begin with monthly VESOL review sessions in the fall 2022 to provide greater support for our teachers.
- Additional trainings regarding VESOLS
- We have created an individual plan for each student to make sure all VESOLS are covered in the 2022-2023 school year.
- I think our teachers will be better prepared to access and plan around the VESOLs this year. We will do more professional development at the beginning of the year to ensure that they understand how to move the instruction through the VESOLs appropriately.
- We are looking forward to having all subjects tested in this format.
- Revamping of some pacing based on the VESOLs.
- Teachers were having to create brand new curriculums without much guidance. This is extremely difficult when teaching multiple grade levels (ex. middle school 6-8) with students on various academic levels. The math VESOLs were the most difficult.
- The VAAP Administration was smoother than anticipated. We will continue to require our teachers to create test plans for their students. We will also make sure that our students have ample practice with the test items prior to testing.
- The fact that we have the VESOLs at the beginning of the school year instead of having to wait for them in October will be a huge change.
- Teachers will receive training on how to align the Unique Learning System with the VESOLs and how to create an effective Student Test Plan. We will post the VESOLs to the division website.

- More explicit examples will be provided as to what is permitted for various testing conditions and accommodations, such as alternate representation of response options. Information on testing conditions needs to be provided to instructional staff early in the school year so they can practice these conditions with their students in a more consistent manner. Various changes will most likely be implemented around the timeline of the division testing window, irregularity and participation expectations, and transcription of student answers.
- We will continue practicing on the computer and incorporate more of the TTAC resources into the pacing guides.

**Question Text****Response Counts (%)**

**Q18** - Do you have suggestions for additional ways for the VDOE to communicate information about the VAAP?

\*\*see quotes, below

**Positive Comments:**

- I believe that the communication was good.
- None
- Current practices are effective
- Communication has been great!

**Constructive and/or critical comments/recommendations:**

- Posting of videos trainings for DDOT to share.
- I like having recorded webinars to be able to refer back too. I also appreciate getting the PowerPoints ahead of time so it can be used for taking notes.
- regular webinars
- Maybe a parent portal like the one for Grades 3-8 Reading & Math SOLs
- Shorter/more concise videos for training - For example short video of 2-3 minutes on using practice items, video on logging in, video on troubleshooting. These short videos with titles can help to only watch videos (spend time on) the specific items needed instead of watching hour-long videos on the entire process to find out one piece of info.
- Communicate earlier if possible.
- In person training sessions at each division
- Continued training on the content and implementation strategies is needed.
- More specifics for scoring and reporting for parents.
- Provide communication and resources as soon as possible.

**Question Text****Response Counts (%)**

**Q19** - What additional information or guidance should the VDOE consider providing in the future for the VAAP?

\*\*see quotes, below

**Comments — Test Design, Administration, and Accommodation/Modification Resources:**

- get rid of portfolios for other subjects
- Possibly clearer guidance on which students should be eligible for the \read aloud\ accommodation and additional examples of appropriate/inappropriate alternate response representations.
- In the manual please include directions for examiners & STCs for what to do when students shut down, refuse to continue testing, etc.
- Training on alternative ways to test students the visual/hearing disabilities.
- Plans to include VAAP reports in the Parent Portal, material return for VAAP, particularly for the Alternate Representation of Response option, and if/when VAAP will be included in the accreditation growth model.
- Can there be a vertical scale score for VAAP so that growth can be measured?
- Feedback from some teachers was that the test format was not equitable to all students. Some students learn best with visuals, cut and paste pictures, hands on learning. They felt the assessments were created for students who can sit for paper pencil/computer tests. Perhaps more training on real life ways testing conditions and accommodations could be utilized to create a more equitable assessment experience. While examples were provided, I think it would have been extremely beneficial for teachers to be able to see some of these things in practice via video.
- Provide answer choices on cards for both the online and paper pencil test. There were some answer choices that could not be redone onto cards given the topic or complexity of the answer.
- Regarding the return of VAAP testing materials (student/examiner copy, division-printed large print copies, alternate responses/choice cards), please consider allowing the school division to maintain the large print copies and alternate response/choice cards and destroy using the one-year retention policy. This would remove the burden of a larger school division to organize, pack and ship to Pearson.

**Comments — Test Results and Use Resources:**

- Guidance and information on test results and what they mean.
- Receive results so that information can be delivered to parents prior to the school year ending

- VDOE could produce videos with closed captions that can be translated to model how the test is given to students, explain how scoring works, and discuss score reporting for both instructional staff and families.

#### **Comments — Training and Professional Development Resources:**

- Additional in person training
- Continued support to divisions with resources to share with division staff
- Federal accountability was covered in the modules. The requirement for testing needs to be emphasized to all parties.
- Continuation of training support.

#### **Comments — Curricular and Instructional Resources:**

- Lessons and examples for specific VESOLs.
- Differentiated sessions in which teachers can learn to plan VESOL's for the year. Unlike their general education peers, the vast majority of Virginia adapted curriculum teachers are planning for multiple grade levels (often 5 grade levels and sometimes more).
- Consider releasing the VAAP Examiner's Manual in July/August, or just earlier than January so that training can be conducted at the start of the school year. This would ensure teachers are better prepared for teaching VESOLs and using the VAAP practice tests during the school year. Having the VAAP information at the start of the school year may reduce anxiety teachers feel with administering the VAAP.

#### **Comments — Family and Student Supports:**

- Handling unique situations like homebased, homebound, or online learners.

#### **Comments — General Positive / Constructive:**

- Guidance is thorough!
- I think the implementation of this new \online\ method went very well and all trainings were totally adequate.



Question Text	Response Counts (%)
<b>Q20</b> - What suggestions do you have for the types of training the VDOE could provide regarding the implementation of the VAAP in 2022-2023?	**see quotes, below

**Positive Comments:**

- Recorded webinars are perfect!
- Current practices are effective

**Constructive and/or critical comments/recommendations:**

- A training for principals - short quick video - would be helpful. I had to break it down and give them a simple chart about the requirements at each grade level. The chart comparing old and new VAAP was too much - I just had to give them the grade level breakdown of the new VAAP and local assessments.
- More online trainings for teachers that begin earlier in the year.
- More videos for examiners, proctors, and testing coordinators
- Additional training on accommodations and their implications.
- Synchronous and asynchronous training is helpful. The practice administration videos were helpful but could be expanded for administrators and STCs.
- Using the VESOLs in instruction, Practical Application: Combining VESOLS and Life Skills-
- On-line training is very difficult, in-person offering would be wonderful.
- More in depth training on allowable use of alternate representation of response could be helpful including what is allowed and not allowed.
- Keep access to VDOE videos for us to use in training. It was nice to do both async and sync training with staff. It allowed us to focus more on their questions than just to talk through the needs for the assessment.
- VDOE could provide specific training on accommodations and testing conditions. If divisions have the opportunity to submit questions before VDOE develops this training, that would allow VDOE to create a FAQ and examples/scenarios to outline the flexibility allowed with each accommodation or testing condition. Also, in future VDOE examiner training, emphasis should be placed on the importance of students participating in the entirety of the assessment (whenever possible) and outline examples of situations where discontinuing the test should be considered.

## Educators

### Summary of Participants & Results

Educators:  $n = 218$

Recorded Date: 06-27-2022 - 08-16-2022

### Survey Participants

In the summer of 2022, VDOE personnel recruited 218 Virginia educators from at least 77 divisions to provide feedback on their preparation for and implementation of the 2022 Virginia Alternate Assessment Program (VAAP). Of the 218 respondents: 80 were elementary school teachers, 75 were middle school teachers, 64 were high school teachers, and there was one each of an administrator, assistive technology specialist, coordinator of special education/school psychologist, instructional specialist, intellectual disabilities teacher in a self-contained elementary classroom, school counseling director, school testing coordinator, special education elementary educator, and special education supervisor.

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Below, we present the survey and associated results organized by topic and in the order that prompts were presented to study participants. Representative quotes are included in their original (unedited) form, and when applicable, grouped based on patterns of constructive/critical comments and recommendations. For example, open-ended responses that were overly general have been removed.

## Survey for Educators: Results

Purpose: The purpose of this survey is to gain feedback from Virginia educators on the 2021-2022 VAAP. Please complete this survey based on your preparation for and implementation of the VAAP. Your feedback will assist Virginia Department of Education staff with future VAAP implementation. Thank you for taking the time to provide us with your feedback today.

### **Topic 1: VAAP Teacher Preparation**

*Note: Questions 1 and 2 asked survey participants to list their school division position and school division name, respectively.*

<b>Q3 - Please indicate 'Yes' or 'No' to each statement below:</b>	<b>Response Counts (%)</b>
I participated in and/or viewed the VDOE Training Modules for the VAAP.	Yes = 209 (96%) No = 7 (3%) Missing = 2 (1%)
I participated in school division VAAP training.	Yes = 195 (89%) No = 23 (11%) Missing = 0 (0%)
I received VAAP information and updates from my school or division.	Yes = 211 (97%) No = 7 (3%) Missing = 0 (0%)
I used the VAAP webpage on the VDOE website.	Yes = 201 (92%) No = 14 (6%) Missing = 3 (1%)
I used the Virginia Essentialized Standards of Learning (VESOL) during instruction.	Yes = 201 (92%) No = 17 (8%) Missing = 0 (0%)
I used VESOL instructional resources provided by TTAC Online.	Yes = 154 (71%) No = 64 (29%) Missing = 0 (0%)

Question Text	Response Counts (%)
Q4 - Please describe any other tools used to help prepare for and implement the VAAP.	**see quotes, below

**Comments:**

- VDOE website
- RCPS trainings
- I also used the SOL curriculum framework to assist teachers with instructional information needed to teach the VESOL standards.
- Practice items for each VESOL
- Teacher Pay Teacher Materials, Materials Collected for previous VAAPs, Gen Ed colleagues
- Collaboration with co-workers.
- I attended the TTAC small group meetings and used ULS to support my students.
- I took part in the Teacher Validation study in the Fall of 2020. I was excited to administer a test that was going to be meaningful and relevant. I enjoyed the study and talking with other educators about the roadblocks the regular VAAP presented. I also took part in online trainings and modules, but I did not find them very helpful. It seemed like the county was not prepared to release the test, so our instructors were not well versed in how to administer the VAAP. We did not receive ANY help with how to teach the actual concepts in the VAAP.
- I utilized the online practice test to have my students practice the new format. I created practice examples
- Simple worksheets with lots of pictures, videos from Discovery Education, VAmedia, and Youtube. Use of manipulatives and lots of practice.
- IXL, Moby Max, teacher created modules, worksheets, hands on activities, projects, experiments, data collection, presentations,
- I honestly felt like the resources on TTAC weren't that helpful. I spent many hours researching each VESOL online to try to find material or having to create my own.
- I used the VESOL resources provided by TTAC and the VESOL resources found on the VDOE website such as the standards and their crosswalk. I also used Teacher Pay Teacher resources prepared for specific VESOL standards and spoke with teachers around the state implementing the same VESOL standards to share resources.

- networking via social media to other middle school teachers in Virginia
- Coordinating with Administration and consulting teacher was helpful to supporting students and scheduling test times.
- I had to meet with general education Math teachers to develop plans for teaching quite a few of the Math standards, as many of these had not been included in my past 16 years of teaching.
- The tools provided were sufficient for the first year.

## **Topic 2: VAAP Resources**

**Q5** - Please respond to indicate how helpful you found each entry in the table below as a resource:

	<b>Response Counts (%)</b>
2021-2022 VAAP Examiner's Manual	Very Helpful = 78 (36%) Helpful = 98 (45%) Somewhat Helpful = 23 (11%) Not Helpful = 8 (4%) Did Not Use = 10 (5%) Missing = 1 (0%)
TTAC Online VESOL Instructional Resources for VAAP	Very Helpful = 53 (24%) Helpful = 75 (34%) Somewhat Helpful = 39 (18%) Not Helpful = 11 (5%) Did Not Use = 37 (17%) Missing = 3 (1%)
VAAP Parent FAQ	Very Helpful = 15 (7%) Helpful = 47 (22%) Somewhat Helpful = 41 (19%) Not Helpful = 9 (4%) Did Not Use = 102 (47%) Missing = 4 (2%)
VAAP Parent Video	Very Helpful = 13 (6%) Helpful = 39 (18%) Somewhat Helpful = 38 (17%) Not Helpful = 13 (6%) Did Not Use = 111 (51%) Missing = 4 (2%)
VAAP Practice Items	Very Helpful = 102 (47%) Helpful = 63 (29%) Somewhat Helpful = 30 (14%) Not Helpful = 8 (4%) Did Not Use = 14 (6%) Missing = 1 (0%)
VAAP Teacher FAQ	Very Helpful = 44 (20%) Helpful = 83 (38%) Somewhat Helpful = 54 (25%) Not Helpful = 2 (1%) Did Not Use = 32 (15%) Missing = 3 (1%)

**Q5 (cont)** - Please respond to indicate how helpful you found each entry in the table below as a resource:

	<b>Response Counts (%)</b>
VAAP Test Blueprints	Very Helpful = 57 (26%) Helpful = 83 (38%) Somewhat Helpful = 41 (19%) Not Helpful = 12 (6%) Did Not Use = 23 (11%) Missing = 2 (1%)
VAAP Test Plan Template	Very Helpful = 64 (29%) Helpful = 76 (35%) Somewhat Helpful = 42 (19%) Not Helpful = 15 (7%) Did Not Use = 19 (9%) Missing = 2 (1%)
VAAP Training Modules	Very Helpful = 65 (30%) Helpful = 90 (41%) Somewhat Helpful = 48 (22%) Not Helpful = 9 (4%) Did Not Use = 5 (2%) Missing = 1 (0%)

<b>Question Text</b>	<b>Response Counts (%)</b>
<b>Q6</b> - Please describe any suggestions you have for additional resources to assist with implementing the VAAP (instructional or assessment resources).	**see quotes, below

**Comments — Curricular and Instructional Resources:**

- Support with interpreting the VESOLs, resources to instruct a variety of instructional levels for students accessing the VESOLs, curriculum maps to aid in pacing of instruction
- More information on VESOLs. Seems like a lot more info on what was supposed to be on test than what was actually on it. These students cannot retain that much information. Math was too hard for these students.
- Terminology and clarification about the complexity continuum.
- Instructional resources for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities would be useful, especially for students with limited or no verbal communication and who are functioning on a pre-school to low elementary academic level while in high school.
- Curriculum. I currently have no curriculum and have to buy my own things.
- Math was extremely difficult for my students
- Teachers need real examples and lessons on how to teach some of the concepts. The math is very difficult, and we need materials and actual examples as to how to instruct students with moderate and severe cognitive and/or physical disabilities. We should have had the opportunity to work WITH county experts on VSEOL in person and with our kids to guide us in how to teach certain concepts. We felt very \thrown to the wolves\ and with littler direct guidance.
- Use of videos like YouTube or Brain Pop to introduce units in science or history. Units or themes from Teachers Pay Teachers for instruction and hands on activities for science and history.
- As a high school teacher, there were very few resources for high school science provided.

**Comments — Test Administration and Accommodation/Modification Resources:**

- I would've enjoyed having more explanation on the adapted materials we could use to better assist our students when administering the test. I was confused with what was allowed to be used in order to modify the test to make the students more successful.
- Additional practice items, by content, by levels
- more practice opportunities for students to use as independently as possible. I made a lot of practice items but it would have been helpful to have more provided



- More practice questions.
- I would like to see the VAAP examiners module be discussed more during workshops or training sessions. The VDOE website was helpful for practice items and content requirements but implementing the test was gray.
- Let Administrators know the importance of allowing for time implementing all the resources given to teachers to help our students be successful.
- Readily available touchscreen computers to access the tests. Using a regular mouse or the touchpad mouse is very difficult for my students.
- Many of my students are legally blind or significantly visually impaired. The tests were not geared toward these students or for teachers of these students. Manipulatives were allowed but we couldn't have the test ahead of time. So that was not helpful.
- state prepared kits with 3D items for students who are blind or visually impaired
- It was very difficult and time consuming to adapt every single question for every student. All of my students use PECS and have visual impairments, so each question had to be adapted for their communication and vision needs. It would be helpful if there was a version that already had pictures for the choices, or teachers were given more time to adapt the test. I had very little time to prepare the tests, assess my students, complete necessary paperwork (IEPs, etc.), teach, develop curriculum, and complete the other duties I have as a teacher.
- I felt like the modules videos were long and confusing and made it seem way more complicated than it turned out to be.

#### **Comments — Collaboration and Professional Development:**

- I would love to see a collaboration among other educators in my region (6) to develop activities to use in the classroom so everyone is not trying to \invent the wheel\. I envision educators grouped by levels (elementary, middle, high school) collaborating to create age-appropriate activities per core area being assessed. I am not a classroom teacher but am responsible for training our special education teachers in my district.
- It was helpful doing the Google meet and talking with other teachers. It would have been better if not during school hours but we made it work.
- A program developed for teachers by teachers to share and promote VESOL instructional ideas.

**Topic 3: VAAP Student Preparation and Implementation**

<b>Question Text</b>	<b>Response Counts (%)</b>
<b>Q7</b> - Please indicate the number of VAAP participants you were responsible for teaching.	1 to 5 = 142 (65%) 6 to 10 = 58 (27%) 11 to 15 = 5 (2%) 15 or more = 1 (0%) Missing = 12 (6%)

<b>Q8 - Please indicate 'Yes' or 'No' to each statement below:</b>	<b>Response Counts (%)</b>
I developed Student Test Plans for my students participating in the VAAP.	Yes = 182 (83%) No = 34 (16%) Missing = 2 (1%)
I understand the differences between VAAP testing conditions and VAAP accommodations.	Yes = 202 (93%) No = 14 (6%) Missing = 2 (1%)
I used the VAAP practice items with my students participating in the VAAP.	Yes = 189 (87%) No = 27 (12%) Missing = 2 (1%)
VAAP accommodations were provided and documented in students' IEPs.	Yes = 206 (94%) No = 10 (5%) Missing = 2 (1%)

**Q9** - Identify the number of students to complete each statement below:

	<b>Response Counts (%)</b>
I had advanced access to the VAAP test(s) to prepare student materials for:	0 students = 84 (39%) 1 to 5 students = 110 (50%) 6 to 10 students = 19 (9%) 10 or more students = 3 (1%) Missing = 2 (1%)
I served as a VAAP Examiner for:	0 students = 35 (16%) 1 to 5 students = 137 (63%) 6 to 10 students = 39 (18%) 10 or more students = 5 (2%) Missing = 2 (1%)
I served as a VAAP Proctor for:	0 students = 122 (56%) 1 to 5 students = 70 (32%) 6 to 10 students = 14 (6%) 10 or more students = 2 (1%) Missing = 10 (5%)

#### **Topic 4: Suggestions for Changes Regarding VAAP in 2022-2023**

<b>Question Text</b>	<b>Response Counts (%)</b>
<b>Q10</b> - Based on your experience in 2021-2022, what changes will you make in using the VESOLs for instruction and in implementing the VAAP in spring 2023?	**see quotes, below

#### **Comments — Resources:**

- I would I'm hoping to develop curriculum maps to aid in pacing of instruction.
- like to be able to provide more adapted materials and visuals for my students.
- More materials for the VAAP would be ideal. Having more time for teachers to understand and complete the testing with students.
- We are waiting on test scores to return and then will determine an appropriate course of action. My district has discussed collaborating between educators but want to see which areas our students struggled the most. As far as lessons and activities, the teachers mostly struggled with mathematics as many of the VESOLs were way above our students ability level.
- There simply needs to be REAL teaching and lesson examples and materials for us to teach these concepts. We are responsible for coming up with most of our instructional materials throughout the year, but we need examples and guidance for teaching and testing some of these higher level concepts (such as solving inequalities). I am a bit disappointed in the accessibility and relevance of some of the VESOLS.

#### **Comments — Communication:**

- Information from the state to the local level was bleak to say the least.

#### **Comments — Standards and Test Design, Administration, and Accommodations:**

- more practice items
- needed to use paper tests
- Decrease the number of items on the tests. 35 multiple choice options are to many. Decrease the level of the math VAAPs. The test was impossible for students who do not know or can identify numbers. Trying to figure out the area or perimeter was impossible and stressed and frustrated my students.
- Make the books look significantly different from the handbook for the SOLs. I had the entire test left in my mailbox.

- I know one thing we will practice this year is focusing on when to pick up the calculator. I had a few students who would select an answer without using the calculator and we didn't feel like we could prompt the student to remember to use the calculator.
- I will not change my instruction because it is not best practice for my visually impaired students with multiple disabilities to be handed black and white pictures with no text to read aloud like you want me to present to them at test time. Shamefully unaccommodating test for students with vision impairment.
- Several of my SPED colleagues and I did notice that the answers to many of the multiple choice questions were C. Many of my students tend to choose the last answer choice that they hear, so when they chose C and were correct, it did not necessarily indicate knowledge of that content/information. I would suggest the correct answers be more randomized.
- Add SS/Science to online version

**Comments — Instruction and Professional Development:**

- The SWD we teach are so different- even those with the same disabilities. Each child needs their own learning plan and curriculum. I will fine-tune the standards, units and themes I use applicable to each level. I may adjust the way I ask students' questions during the school year so they are similar to the way the VESOLS are worded, so they are more familiar and 'normal' to them.
- I would dedicate a time during my teaching time (throughout the school year) to prepare my student's test taking skills/strategies.
- More planning time to work on VAAP goals.

**Question Text****Response Counts (%)**

**Q11** - Do you have suggestions for additional ways for the VDOE to communicate information about the VAAP? \*\*see quotes, below

**Comments:**

- provide quarterly updates; training materials, suggestions for teaching
- Having teachers sign up for updates from VDOE possibly through Teacher Direct
- Have an actual in person training not online version.
- I was communicated with effectively
- Monthly webinars or cohorts
- The more the better. Perhaps an open FAQ page where you can ask questions. a search button for specific topics
- Send info directly to the teachers and not to the school/division coordinators. Information did not always get to me and I found out about CoLa's and other resources through other teachers.
- VDOE did well communicating to teachers, however some parents had difficulty getting information unless it came through me.
- Keep on repeating info! Modules were great!
- TTAC provided very good communication during the new testing process. Many opportunities to learn and view relevant information was easily found on the TTAC website.
- Create modules to be read with quiz questions at the end that must be answered correctly in order to have completed it. The questions should focus on the most important details.
- Maybe differentiate trainings and information for different levels and tests rather than clumping them all together.
- Perhaps you could expand Frequently Asked Questions into a blog where educators could share questions, concerns, and solutions to issues that may have risen during this first administration of the online VAAP.
- The VDOE did an outstanding job communicating the information about VAAP this past school year. Having the practice test items were extremely helpful. With all of the information that was provided, I was able to have clear understanding of VAAP implementation and assessment.

- Contact the Instructional Coordinators in each school directly.
- I think the VDOE needs to inform parents of exactly what their child is taking and explain why they have to take these test. I have parents that are unhappy with their student taking these test a thing that can not measure the abilities of their children. Their child was upset, confused and nervous about taking the test.
- VAAP information needs to be provided in a more succinct manner, with less review of of past practices and more current information pertaining to the newest form of VAAP (VESOL). Many of the modules were very redundant.



Question Text	Response Counts (%)
<b>Q12</b> - What additional information, guidance, and/or training should the VDOE consider providing in the future for the VAAP?	**see quotes, below

**Comments — Curricula and Instruction and Accommodations:**

- We need resources created for us. We do not need more training. The general ed teachers have resources already created for them in textbooks and by the district. Many of us like myself have to take time to create the teaching materials and the practice assessments as well as teach, write IEPs, do re-evaluation testing, write lesson plans, attend all meetings and trainings, etc. We are stressed to the maximum capacity. Therefore having resources readily available would ease the burden.
- many of the questions, specifically math, were not taught to the students and they had no idea how to answer the questions. A curriculum guide would be helpful.
- curriculum maps and resources connected to each standard
- Make sure that the instruction on the accommodations that can be used is clear and makes sense.
- How to adapt for visually impaired or legally blind students

**Comments — Test Design and Administration:**

- Some content was very appropriate for our learners, other content was far too rigorous for some of our learners, yet every student had to answer 35 questions, regardless of individualized skill level. One size/method/content does not fit all. Additionally, in our district, we still had to complete VAAP binders for writing and history concurrently with the computerized administration. Trying to balance that while individually assessing 6 students across all content areas was incredibly time consuming and challenging in the midst of staffing issues.
- More sample videos of how to administer the test using the test booklet and how to record responses.
- I believe many questions on the exams should be worded differently. Many students with autism respond better to commands rather than wh- questions. I strongly believe this should be revisited.
- I think they should think about having the tests done at different times throughout the year. Students have a hard enough time remembering the information that is taught at the beginning of the year and holding on to it till the end of the year.
- Color photos on the online test

- It would be helpful if there were already adapted versions of the test for teachers to get if their student has one of the testing accommodations. Also, it would be helpful if there were more resources on TTAC and ones that were appropriate for a variety of populations.

#### **Comments — Training and Professional Development:**

- More frequent learning opportunities over the summer
- more guidance for students with severe cognitive disabilities with little to no mode of communication
- Add videos to training showing elementary age students taking assessments. Not high school only
- In person training
- Get back to in person trainings. There is too much of a feeling of isolation and disconnect among staff. Especially new staff members who need to build professional relationships both in their division and outside their division.
- The VAAP training modules were very informative.
- The training was adequate.
- Training was more than sufficient

#### **Comments — Collaboration and Networking:**

- I think it is helpful to be able to network with people teaching the same level (elementary, middle, high) throughout the state, and especially within the same county.

## Parents

### Summary of Participants & Results

Educators:  $n = 36$

Recorded Date: 07-08-2022 - 08-15-2022

### Survey Participants

In the summer of 2022, VDOE personnel recruited 36 Virginia parents of elementary, middle, and high school students from at least 18 divisions to provide feedback on their preparation for and implementation of the 2022 Virginia Alternate Assessment Program (VAAP).

### Survey Method and Data Collection

VDOE, through the Office of Teaching, Learning & Assessment, designed the short survey to gather feedback on the preparation for and implementation of the 2021-2022 Virginia Alternate Assessment Program (VAAP) to assist the VDOE staff with future VAAP implementation. The survey consisted of a combination of selected-response and constructed-response (i.e., open-ended) items phrased as statements or questions on three main topics (1) *VAAP Communication*, (2) *VAAP Resources*, and (3) *Suggestions for Changes Regarding VAAP in 2022-2023*. The survey was conducted securely via Google Forms. Participants had the option at the end of the survey to provide their name and email address for VDOE to follow-up if they had questions or desired additional information regarding responses.

Below, we present the survey and associated results organized by topic and in the order that prompts were presented to study participants. Representative quotes are included in their original (unedited) form, and when applicable, grouped based on patterns of constructive/critical comments and recommendations. For example, open-ended responses that were overly general have been removed.

## Survey for Parents: Results

Purpose: The purpose of this survey is to gain feedback from Virginia parents on the 2021-2022 VAAP. Please complete this survey based on your experience with the VAAP assessment. Your feedback will assist Virginia Department of Education staff with future VAAP implementation. Thank you for taking the time to provide us with your feedback today.

### Topic 1: VAAP Communication

Question Text	Response Counts (%)
Q4 - How did you learn about the new VAAP assessment and its changes in 2021-2022? (check all that apply)	My student's teacher = 17 (47%) My student's IEP team = 12 (33%) Other parents = 6 (17%) School administrators = 3 (8%) Virginia Department of Education website = 3 (8%)

*Note: Percentages do not add to 100% because respondents could select all options that apply.*

### Other Responses

- ABA therapist
- Didn't hear about the changes
- I didn't know there was a new program
- I never knew about this test
- Parent presentation specifically about VAAP
- Survey
- Through the grapevine. Other Special Education parents. LONG after the fact..

## **Topic 2: VAAP Resources**

**Q5** - A variety of resources were made available on the Virginia Department of Education website regarding the VAAP. Please respond to indicate how helpful you found each entry in the table below as a resource:

	<b>Response Counts (%)</b>
VAAP Parent FAQ	Very Helpful = 5 (14%) Helpful = 2 (6%) Somewhat Helpful = 12 (33%) Not Helpful = 5 (14%) Did Not Use = 11 (31%) Missing = 1 (3%)
VAAP Parent Video	Very Helpful = 2 (6%) Helpful = 4 (11%) Somewhat Helpful = 8 (22%) Not Helpful = 5 (14%) Did Not Use = 15 (42%) Missing = 2 (6%)
VAAP Practice Items	Very Helpful = 4 (11%) Helpful = 5 (14%) Somewhat Helpful = 5 (14%) Not Helpful = 7 (19%) Did Not Use = 13 (36%) Missing = 2 (6%)
VAAP Teacher FAQ	Very Helpful = 4 (11%) Helpful = 4 (11%) Somewhat Helpful = 6 (17%) Not Helpful = 5 (14%) Did Not Use = 15 (42%) Missing = 2 (6%)
VAAP Test Plan Template	Very Helpful = 4 (11%) Helpful = 4 (11%) Somewhat Helpful = 6 (17%) Not Helpful = 8 (22%) Did Not Use = 12 (33%) Missing = 2 (6%)
VAAP Training Modules	Very Helpful = 3 (8%) Helpful = 3 (8%) Somewhat Helpful = 7 (19%) Not Helpful = 7 (19%) Did Not Use = 12 (33%) Missing = 4 (11%)

### **Topic 3: Suggestions for Changes regarding VAAP in 2022-2023**

<b>Question Text</b>	<b>Response Counts (%)</b>
<b>Q6</b> - Do you have suggestions for additional ways for the VDOE to communicate information about the VAAP to parents?	**see quotes, below

#### **Comments — Timeliness and Successfulness of Communication:**

- I think these are great, I just didnt learn the assessment had changed until after the fact.
- I wouldnt have known about this program if it weren't for my kids ABA director/therapist. My kids school didnt even mention it to me, I had to mention it to them.
- Parents typically read MAIL with their child's name on it.
- I knew my son was part of alternative testing when he was in elementary school but had no idea that there was a new program. When I did learn about him ASOL there was no video or FAQ sheet, nothing. It would have been nice to have been informed that there was a change and to maybe know about those resources mentioned above.

#### **Comments — Organization and Content of Communication:**

- The School Divisions should have communications that are targeted specifically for ALL special education students. Often stuff gets buried in other communications. Who would have a CLUE what a VAAP is, if one doesn't have a clue to begin with what it is? If it is something that goes out in Special Education Specific Communications, parents may see something like this and other IMPORTANT information pertinent to our children rather than buried in a disorganized way amongst other communications which have nothing to do with Special Education.
- Sending out mass email with information attached. Maybe send out calls informing parents of programs and such regarding the VAAP.
- Explain it in plain language. I \*still\* don't understand what it all means and I have tried reading all the information provided.
- A letter (translated into appropriate languages) that school teams can mail home, that includes basic information and a QR code linking to relevant resources
- Information overload. More concise. Clearly advertise refusals and/or opt-out materials and rights.

Question Text	Response Counts (%)
<b>Q7</b> - What additional information or guidance should the VDOE consider providing in the future for the VAAP?	**see quotes, below

**Comments:**

- A different test for the most severe students who can not talk and use AAC devices
- How about keeping parents more informed about results and how results are determined?  
How about any communication whatsoever? I feel like I am completely in the dark.
- More practice and curricular resources for teachers
- Why it's used. What it means if students don't pass. Relevant?
- Direct info to parents

**Question Text****Response Counts (%)**

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**Q8** - Do you have questions about the VAAP that you would like to share with the VDOE?

\*\*see quotes, below

**Comments:**

- Each school has a weekly newsletter, the School Division has a weekly newsletter. Why can't Special Education Students (and parents, being that we comprise approximately 13% of the populations across the state) receive specific, targeted information in addition, for special education in addition to other happenings, as our children ARE supposed to have access to other programs and services non-Special Education...
- I have many questions
- Love that this is an option for my kids



## Virtual Focus Group

### Summary of Participants & Results

Division Directors of Testing and Special Education Directors:  $n = 8$

Recorded Date: 08-24-2022

### Focus Group Participants

In the summer of 2022, VDOE personnel recruited eight Division Directors of Testing (DDOT) and Special Education (SPED) Directors from eight regions to provide feedback on the 2022 Virginia Alternate Assessment Program (VAAP). These participants were selected to represent each Superintendent's region and include four Special Education Directors, four Division Directors of Testing, and one Quad 8 school leader.

### Focus Group and Data Collection

The focus group was designed to gather feedback on the 2021-2022 Virginia Alternate Assessment Program (VAAP) to assist the Virginia Department of Education staff with future VAAP implementation. The focus group consisted of eight items on three main topics: (1) *Student Participation and Performance*, (2) *Parents and Instruction*, and (3) *VAAP Administration*. The focus group was conducted via Zoom and facilitated by VDOE staff.

Below, we present the questions and responses organized in the order that they were presented to the participants. Responses were recorded by VDOE personnel and are presented in the order offered by participants and only edited to ensure anonymity.

### **Topic 1: Student Participation and Performance**

#### **1. Did students perform on the VAAP as expected? If not, what differences did you see?**

Person A: Overall, VAAP scores were a bit lower than in previous years. The low scores appeared across all content areas. School division did not anticipate VAAP scores to be low. Division also received a number of parent refusals.

Person B: First year DDOT did not have any expectations. Students performed well. Thirty-eight students, 83 tests, and only 5 students were not proficient.

Person C: Pleasantly surprised at pass rate. The pass rate was slightly lower than in previous years with the collections of evidence. HS mathematics reflected the students as less proficient. The students that scored less than proficient scored one or two points below the proficient cut.

Person D: Division was pleasantly surprised with pass rates. Students did well with the online format of the VAAP test.

Person E: Division was pleasantly surprised with pass rates. Students performed well without any expectations.

Person F: Does not feel this is the best year to determine how students responded to the test. Based on the past three years, getting students acclimated to being back in school, the changes in the learning environment, and lack of resources (staff).

Person G: Student performed better than expected.

Person H: 103 tests administered across grades 2-12. 90% pass rate between proficient and advanced. Students performed higher than we expected. Surprised how the students adapted to the online test. Online format of the test matched how students received instruction in the classroom with assistive technology.

**Key Takeaway(s): Five of eight responding participants indicated that student performance was high, and that they were pleasantly surprised by high pass rates. One participant noted the high pass rate but did not have expectations around performance given their first year in DDOT position. One participant indicated that scores were lower than expected across all three content areas. One participant indicated that more years of testing are likely needed to determine how students responded to the new VAAP.**

**2. How many students completed the test online in the TestNav application (independently, with assistance, etc.) versus completing only on paper?**

Person H: Students assessed mostly online, with an easy and smooth transition. Having the flexibility to go back and forth between online and paper was very helpful. Additionally, the flexibility for staff to go back and enter responses online. Will probably have more participate online this year.

Person D: Even split between paper and online administrations. Those who did online were complimentary of how things went.

Person C: 50-50 split between paper and online administration. Staff had concerns about students participating online. After going through this first year staff is now more comfortable with the online presentation and will move more kids to online. Some shifted students to online version after taking first test. Surprised how many sessions students needed to participate.

Person E: 50% of their student to the VAAP assessment online. Teachers were required to give practice tests online and paper to justify how students would take the test-ended up being more taking it online.

Person B: Administered 83 tests-all were paper pencil. Teachers were fearful of the online test and lack of experience with TestNav was very overwhelming. Recorded all 83 sessions. In summer, teacher at middle school indicated she thought they could do it online. Division took away the option of online testing from teachers so they could instruct and not have this burden.

Person H: Teachers adjusted on the fly during testing. Students performed better than what they thought from original tests plans.

**Key Takeaway(s): Three of six responding participants indicated that online/paper VAAP administrations were roughly even. Two indicated that VAAP administrations were mostly online. One indicated that all VAAP administrations were paper.**

**3. What if any criteria were used for discontinuing a student's test? Were examiners required to submit information to document or support their decision to discontinue testing? If documentation was required, was this information maintained by your school division?**

Person B: Our division met with teachers and talked about discontinuing process we wanted them to adhere to. Created a criteria form for staff, if a student was getting fatigued, the examiner needed to determine whether to stop and pick up another day. However, if they couldn't go on for whatever reason the examiner had to complete criteria form with a justification, submit to STC. Justification was submitted and kept on file in the testing office. However, we did not have anyone discontinue-most went back and readjusted plans for testing.

Person G: Teachers were required to use practice items and develop testing plan. Teachers were to use the testing status form to communicate to the STC to discontinue testing and forms were kept and maintained in the testing office.

Person A: Teachers had to notify the STC and justify the reason for discontinuing the test. The reason was shared with central office staff and central office made the final decision to discontinue testing or not.

Person F: Followed the same process as Person B. Conducted training and had a protocol in place if needed to discontinue testing. No one completely discontinued testing.

Person C: Some decisions were changed in real time because examiners saw the opposite of what was documented in the student's testing plans. More sessions were reflected in the test plan than needed. Some students were able to finish in one session. Adjustments were made in real time. Schools appreciated the flexibility.

**Key Takeaway(s): All responding participants indicated there were criteria for discontinuing VAAP tests, that a justification was required, including notifying STC, and that documentation was created and maintained, typically at the central (testing) office. Three responding participants indicated that decisions were considered with respect to a student's testing plan and that administration plans were adjusted in real time based on how students were responding to the new VAAP during testing.**

**4. How were parent refusals managed in your school division (i.e., during IEP team meeting or after experience with the test)?**

Person D: Refusal did not pertain to the format of the test. Most refusal were for standardized testing as a whole.

Person H: Did not see an increase in parent refusals.

Person I: Refusals were from previous years through the IEP and not specific to the format of the VAAP assessment.

Person E: Most refusals were due to 1<sup>st</sup> year back in the building from COVID and not because of the format of the test.

Person B: Same refusals from previous years of standardized testing through the IEP.

**Key Takeaway(s): Refusals did not appear to change based on the new VAAP.**

## **Topic 2: Parents and Instruction**

**5. According to our recent survey results, communication with parents about VAAP appeared to be a challenge. Did your school division implement strategies that you consider effective to communicate VAAP information to parents that might be shared?**

Person C: We sent out a testing letter to explain the new VAAP, VDOE resources and the Division VAAP test window. Case managers were encouraged to reach out to parents by about the test window. A letter was also sent to parents about the VAAP scores, History and Writing scores and a link to the VAAP Parent Survey.

Person I: Letters sent to parents explain the new VAAP assessment. Conducted a ZOOM night in which we did practice items with parents via Zoom. It gave them a chance to see what the test was actually like.

Person B: We sent out letters and case managers brought parents in to show them what the test was like. Parents had mixed reviews about the rigorousness. Case managers also called parents about the VAAP scores. Families really appreciated the increased communication, and some said they had not had as much communication with case managers as they had had with the new VAAP.

**Key Takeaway(s): All three responding participants indicated that their Divisions implemented multifaceted approaches to communicating with parents, including: information shared by mail and via phone conversation, case managers outreach, and webinar information sessions.**

**6. What impact did the VAAP have on the type of instruction students received?**

Person E: Teachers felt like they needed more training on the VESOLs

Person D: Having to teach more content created an issue with the time.

Person I: We had a curriculum specialist who created VESOL sample activities. We also had an emphasis on technology and tried to use it more in instruction. In looking across divisions, I can see that the ones that embraced the use of technology had better scores than the divisions that did not. The same modality that was used in the classroom was used for testing.

Person A: We had more emphasis on the use of technology. We also had a VESOL Boot Camp. Students seem to struggle holding onto information. Could the test be offered in 1st semester and 2<sup>nd</sup> semester? Created content folder for each content area with activities for teachers to share.

Person B: We had more requests about how to teach the VESOL. For example, how do you teach slope. The increased requests were mostly from secondary schools.

Person C: Our secondary specialist provided more support for teachers. Teachers also asked for a community space to share resources. We had that several years ago, but we have brought that back.

**Key Takeaway(s): Teachers needed support, including curricula, lesson plans, and training on how to teach the new alternate standards (VESOL). Two participants indicated that incorporating technology into instruction and in a manner consistent with how the VAAP was administered (online) was helpful.**

### **Topic 3: VAAP Administration**

**7. In the 2021-2022 administration, recording the student's name and responses in the Examiner's copy of the test was recommended as a best practice by VDOE. Going forward should VDOE require the student's name and responses to be recorded in the Examiners copy to prevent loss of student responses?**

Person G: We made colored-coded folders by content area for each student. Booklets and other materials were placed in the folder. A transmittal form was stapled to the front of the folder.

Person B: We used labeled and color-coded folders. Recorded names on everything and organized in one spot for each student.

Person C: Plans to make a shift next year. Putting a line for the student's name may be a good reminder to print the name of materials. Division will be adding labels to student materials next year. This year had STC write the student's names on everything. We had an issue with choice cards. Since the test was copied front and back, 3 booklets were needed for each student who needed choice cards. Could VDOE provide a digital set of cards that divisions could print. Also, the way the student booklets were printed examiners/students had to constantly turn the booklets around.

Person I: We placed labels with student's name on paper pencil tests. Different divisions handle.

Person E: Could we have a Master Examiner's Copy so student responses could be recorded in one document rather than several individual documents.

Person H: We had an irregularity around transcribing. One student's responses were entered for another student. It would have helped had there been a spot for student's name on the materials. Can choice card be similar to WIDA cards

**Key Takeaway(s): Participating Divisions indicated that labeling and organizing VAAP testing materials using the student's name was helpful, and they plan to continue. Three participants indicated that VDOE adding dedicated spot(s) on testing materials for recording student's name would be helpful. Another participant recommended booklets/choice card formatting be revised to ease administration.**



**8. How were Examiner and Student Materials kept together? Please describe the process used in your school division to ensure materials were provided to correct students in the daily transmittal process.**

Person D: We used a check-out and return process with student materials in manila envelope.

Person E: We used a process similar to Division above. We also tried to complete VAAP testing before SOL testing to prevent materials from getting mixed up.

Person I: We purchased file cabinets. Materials were placed in the cabinets and only one person and I had a key.

**Key Takeaway(s): Participating Divisions implemented plans to organize and protect VAAP testing materials.**