

**Virginia Alternate Assessment Program (VAAP)
Teacher Review & Validation Study: VESOL Development & Validation
Teacher Evaluation Survey
Fall 2020
Summary of Participants & Results**

Educators: $n = 27$

Response Rate: 100%

Completion Rate: 100%

Recorded Dates: 10-28-20 to 10-30-20

Survey Participants

In early September, VDOE personnel recruited teachers to represent all eight regions of Virginia, and dozens of school divisions, with a total of 27 participating in the training and essentialization and linkage review process. Teachers held a variety of current positions, with all of them teaching in classrooms serving SWSCD or generic special education. All teachers had considerable experience teaching SWSCD, with 17 teachers having over 10 years of experience ($M = 13.96$ years; *Median* = 13 years; *Range* = 3 to 28 years). Most teachers taught across multiple grades and content areas, including in elementary, middle school, and/or high school settings in reading and language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies over the past couple of years. All 27 teachers had at least one bachelor's degree in education, special education, or education-related field; 17 teachers also had master's degrees. All 27 teachers had certificates and/or endorsements in specific disabilities (emotional, intellectual, autism, specific learning) and grade levels (early education, elementary, middle school, and/or high school). Five teachers also had an administrative and/or supervision endorsement. Of the 27 teachers, the vast majority were females ($n = 24$) and white ($n = 23$), with three teachers identifying as Black or African American and one as Asian, and no teachers indicating they were of Hispanic ethnicity. Teachers' personal statements highlighted expertise in teaching academic content to students with significant cognitive disabilities, with many emphasizing development and use of adapted curriculum, behavioral supports, and embedded functional life skills (see Appendix 3.A.1 — *Appendix3A1_VAAP_SPEDStudyParticipants.pdf*).

Survey Method and Data Collection

We designed the short survey to gather feedback from educators who participated in the Virginia Essentialized Standards of Learning (VESOL) Teacher Review & Validation Study on the quality of training, support, and design. The survey consisted of four selected-response prompts, each with dichotomous response options, and three constructed-response/open-ended prompts designed to elicit constructive feedback associated with each selected-response prompt. A fourth constructed-response/open-ended prompt at the end of the survey asked participating educators to give any additional comments about their experience as part of the study. The survey was conducted securely via the University of Oregon's Qualtrics Survey Software (<https://oregon.qualtrics.com>), with all responses collected and stored anonymously to encourage honesty and constructive/critical feedback from participating educators.

Below, we present the survey and associated results organized in the order that prompts were presented to study participants. Representative quotes are included and grouped based on patterns of constructive/critical comments and recommendations. For example, open-ended responses that were overly general have been removed. Synthesis of responses are presented in the annual technical report.

Survey and Results

Welcome: Thank you for participating in the Teacher Review & Validation Study! The ratings and feedback you provided will help us improve the Virginia Essentialized Standards of Learning (VESOL) for students with significant cognitive disabilities as part of the ongoing development and validation process.

Directions: To complete participation in the study, please take this short evaluation survey. The survey should take you about 5 minutes to complete and your responses are anonymous. The multiple-choice prompts are required. You may also give additional context and recommendations in the text boxes provided, with only the final prompt being required. Your responses will help improve the ongoing review and validation process.

Question Text	Response Counts (%)
Q2 – Rate the training you received for completing your review assignments.	Adequate = 26 (96%) Inadequate = 1 (4%)
Q3 – Rate the support you received for completing your review assignments (e.g., key concepts and takeaways documents, resources in DIR, follow-up emails and Zoom meetings).	Adequate = 26 (96%) Inadequate = 1 (4%)
Q4 – Please give any recommendations for improving the training and/or support you received.	**see quotes, below

Training-related comments (see Q2):

More explanation on this would be beneficial. Also ensuring they understand how to rate the VESOL and the LMH separately. Also I think initially there was a lack of explanation on how the assessment will work that may have impacted the way some thought about the LMH.

The language used in the directions for completing the assignments was full of educational jargon. Even though it's language we are familiar with... simply from earning our degrees and certs....it still makes processing more difficult than it needs to be. Y'all are in the higher educational setting and you're doing some serious [work] that involves grants and whatnot...so I get it...you gotta sound pro, but it's a lot for overworked folk living through what feels like the end of the world. You gave plenty of follow up Q&A opportunities so that was great. BUT you wouldn't have needed so much had the language been simpler.

I think it was great! Shawn was very quick to respond to any questions! The only suggestion I have is during the 1st training to let the people reviewing know that the SOLs (or whatever standards) may be covered through several VESOLs (or whatever standards). This was not clear to me so I rated some lower and then had to go back and change them after seeing it was addressed through a different VESOL.

Support-related comments (see Q3):

Felt that my thoughts and feelings were not taken into consideration until the last session and then the info I put on the spreadsheet was not even reviewed; it was a big gut wrenching to see that other groups review the feedback and goals

I think if we could have a session where you can meet with the group you are working with to discuss that might be nice.

It would have been helpful to have the VESOL questions available when we were asked to review our answers before our October 28th meeting. The Excel spreadsheet was helpful, but I felt as if though I need the VESOL's too.

I think it would have been beneficial to talk to each other between Round 1 and 2 and then again after Round 2.

The team responded immediately with support for any questions I had. They were extremely helpful!

I think many teachers seemed to not understand the difference between linkage and alignment before completing the first round so

I was very confused about what was wanted for our final meeting. I'm not sure that was fully communicated.

Having hard copies of the VESOL's, L, M, H, and Standard SOL would be helpful - maybe we just need to cut and paste to create this. It would have been easier to reference when going back and forth.

Question Text	Response Counts (%)
Q5 – Rate the usefulness of the Distributed Item Review (DIR) for reviewing and rating the Virginia Essentialized Standards of Learning (VESOL).	Useful = 26 (96%) Not Useful = 1 (4%)
Q6 – Please give any recommendations for improving the usefulness of the DIR.	**see quotes, below

Helpful-related comments:

It was helpful and it allowed me to see the other teacher's comments.

It was easy to use and understandable.

Email contact one-to-one really helped! Zoom was harder than in person, but we can't help that now!

Needed additional information/support-related comments:

I sometimes found it challenging to go between the excel documents and the DIR.

Provide teachers with all of the answers from round one and not just the ones they disagreed on since we have to rerate everything. The two reviews of the same VESOL's was helpful but the spreadsheet was very hard to follow the first time.

Dumb down the language. Use visuals...maybe even short videos. Even though we're educated, our processing is being shaped by the world around us. We get our information these days visually in short bits.

It was helpful however, more precise explanation of the item review.

Question Text	Response Counts (%)
Q7 – Rate the overall quality of the Teacher Review & Validation Study.	Adequate = 26 (96%) Inadequate = 1 (4%)
Q8 – Please give any recommendations for improving the quality of the standard review process.	**see quotes, below

Desire for additional access/discussion with colleagues:

I would like to have been able to meet with the colleagues in my group to discuss their answer choices after we received feedback on our DIR assignments.

I would have appreciated more discussion with my colleagues as we started to review the standards. Overall, I thought the team and committee work was effective, but I wonder if we would have been more focused to have further discussion throughout the process.

The work y'all are doing is essential. You've been available if needed. Aside from some tweaks needed it was great.

Longer time between virtual sessions to collaborate with team members and prepare between sessions.

General comments/recommendations:

The recommendations for improving would still be using more teacher friendly language with the standards and be aware of some of the students' accommodations.

I appreciated the week given for each step and the user-friendly aspect of DIR.

It was great to work at our own pace and then come together as a group in the end. I think working as a group helped us to really understand where each of us were coming from. It would have been helpful to have more information on each person involved in regards to what they teach which would help us to understand their thinking process when we are not working directly with one another.

Question Text	Response Counts (%)
Q9 – Please share any additional comments about your experience as part of the Teacher Review & Validation Study.	**see quotes, below

Positive comments:

Collaboration with colleagues

I feel like I was “heard”. I appreciate the guidance you all gave and that people were there representing the state department. Thank you.

I thought this was a great opportunity, not only to help review the items, but to be able to really discuss some of them in depth. In the elem math, we were able to see a different perspective when we looked over each [other’s] answers. I enjoyed the breakout rooms so we could actually talk about out thoughts and ideas. Thank you!

I appreciated the opportunity to collaborate with other teachers. Lots of good discussion.

I most enjoyed working in the break out groups with the other teachers. It was nice to hear the perspectives others. I was also happy that the videos included a wide range of student abilities. Most of all I am overjoyed that I was able to be a part of this process and that teacher voice has been taken into account to ensure new standards make sense for my students.

This has been a wonderful experience for me. I enjoyed being part of the study, and hope to be selected again. I really liked how everyone worked together, and all ideas (from those who wanted them to be,) were acknowledged. It was professional, yet comfortable.

I am so thankful for this experience. It opened my eyes to the ideas and thoughts of other special educators that teach my population and their feelings about the assessment we already give and the excitement for the one to come in the future.

Including teachers in decision-making process

I liked that I felt our feedback was important. I appreciated the chance to participate in the decision of what testing would look like for our students. Thank you.

I really enjoyed being a part of this! It is something I am invested in and care about!

I enjoyed getting to learn about the VESOL's and where the state is heading in terms of assessment. I think this will streamline assessment and provide both more support and more flexibility for teachers. I feel as if my input was valued.

Thank you for letting me be part of the process. I look forward to further collaboration.

This was helpful in developing functional standards for our students. I felt that as teachers, our voices were heard.

This was a good process and I am hopeful it will benefit the students. I was very impressed by the other teachers participating and by the staff supporting us.

It was great to be involved in this and to be heard from a teacher's standpoint about what the special education population would benefit from.

I have enjoyed this opportunity to participate in this project. The chance to help make changes to the extreme demands that are placed on this population has been very eye opening.

I loved it! I am thankful for the opportunity for teachers to give input as we are the one who will be directly implementing the standards.

I appreciate being a part of this study. So far I like the direction the VESOL is taking and I would love to have input as it progresses.

It was helpful to see the process of determining what questions will be used as well as how they are connected to the SOL.

Constructive and/or critical comments/recommendations:

Study timing and task process

I would have like to have been able to complete this project during the summer. It was a challenge for me to teach and give adequate attention to this very important task while teaching full time.

It was enlightening. I enjoyed being part of the experience- almost wish we had what occurred in session 3 before rescoring disagreed upon standards... I think outcomes may have been different - not as much discrepancies

Clarity of communication and messaging

When all was said and done, I felt the conversations were helpful. However, I felt the direction of the study changed from review of VESOLs to a broader sense of what was integral and [needed] for an assessment of this population of students.

Until today, I felt that the group leading us did not know what was going on and that the goals selected were not close to Virginia's current SOLs. It was almost like the VA leaders were not [talking] to the Oregon group.

Policy implications

No child Left Behind and Common Core destroyed the already failing educational system and this is simply a fresh coat of paint on a failed method of doing things. NONE of the required knowledge will help my students in any way. Our "mission" is to prepare the students for the world and every single second spent re-learning the info, planning, creating the materials for our students who each have their own needs, and teaching is doing a disservice to them, their families, and the community as a whole. What's my non-verbal kid that wears a helmet because of excessive head banging going to do with knowledge of the reasons for westward expansion? or knowing the purpose of a variable in an algebra problem? Sorry, but I have to get that out. All that being said what y'all have done so far is great. You are trying to fix a damaged system and I like where it's headed. I pray that VA agrees and adopts.

Support documents

The spreadsheets with our results were extremely hard to view since the end columns were cut off each page and transferred to the next page, which made tracking the results a visual challenge :)