

New Virginia Alternate Assessment Program (VAAP)

Frequently Asked Questions from Teachers

The new VAAP will be an online assessment in reading, mathematics, and science for eligible students with significant cognitive disabilities in grades 3 through 8 and high school. The first administration of the new VAAP will be the spring of 2022.

1. What is the difference between the old VAAP and the new VAAP?

The old VAAP was a portfolio design assessment in which students submitted Collections of Evidence in the assessed content areas. Student evidence for the old VAAP was collected throughout the school year and then scored by school division staff in a local scoring event. The new VAAP will be a summative assessment for reading, mathematics, and science that will be administered during the spring and scored online. Although the new VAAP is an online test, students will not be expected to interact directly with the computer if they are unable to do so. If needed they may be provided with a paper copy of the test questions and test examiners will have the flexibility to enter student responses in the online system.

2. Is the new VAAP a computer adaptive test?

No, the new VAAP is not a computer adaptive test. The new VAAP is composed of multiple-choice items of varying complexity, beginning with easier items, and progressing to more complex items. Each item will offer three answer options.

3. Who can participate in the new VAAP?

The Virginia Alternate Assessment Program (VAAP) is available to eligible students with significant cognitive disabilities in grades 3 through 8 and high school who are working on academic standards reduced in depth, breadth, and complexity. Eligibility is determined by the student's IEP team using the [VAAP Participation Criteria](#). The current Participation Criteria will continue to be used by IEP teams to determine eligibility for participation in the new VAAP. Students with disabilities served by 504 Plans are not eligible to participate in VAAP.

4. Will the Aligned Standards of Learning (ASOL) be used in the new VAAP?

No. The ASOL will not be used in the new VAAP. They will be replaced by the Virginia Essentialized Standards of Learning (VESOL) which are new academic standards for grades 3-8 and high school in reading, mathematics, and science. The VESOL were created using a process called Essentialization developed by Behavioral Research and Teaching (BRT) at the University of Oregon. The essentialization process reduced the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL) in depth, breadth, and complexity to make them accessible, relevant, and appropriate for students with significant cognitive disabilities. Virginia Department of Education staff and special education teachers from across the Commonwealth participated in this effort.

5. Will teachers be able to select the VESOL on which the student is assessed in the new VAAP?

No. Teachers will not select the VESOL assessed in the new VAAP, or the test items presented to the student.

6. How will the new VAAP accommodate the diverse needs of test-takers?

It is anticipated that most, if not all students will be tested individually. Individual testing will allow the greatest flexibility possible for the use of presentation and response accommodations to meet each student's unique needs. In addition to providing individual accommodations, all test items for the new VAAP are based on principles of universal design and a variety of supports are embedded such as read-aloud, pictures and information provided to the student by the teacher to help the student focus and remember important content.

7. How will history and writing be accessed, since the new VAAP only assesses reading, mathematics, and science?

Federal accountability is based on state assessments in reading, mathematics, and science and consequently the new VAAP only includes these three content areas. State level accountability and accreditation include reading, mathematics, and science as well as writing. Discussions are currently underway to determine the best way to assess history/social science and writing for students with significant cognitive disabilities. Additional information will be forthcoming.