SOL Information Packet
2016 - 2017
Welcome!!

Thank you for coming to our SOL Information Night. This meeting will provide you with the information to best help you and your child prepare for the State of Virginia’s SOL (Standards of Learning) tests.

Presented by the 4th Grade Team:

- Mrs. Julia Jewett
- Mrs. Jennifer Thiessen
- Mrs. Colleen Sallee
- Mrs. Victoria Polk
- Ms. Kelly Prendergast

If you have any questions or concerns that are not addressed at tonight’s meeting, please feel free to email the above teachers at their LCPS email address (firstname.lastname@lcps.org).

Tonight’s Agenda

Part 1 (6:00 – 6:25) – All grade levels meet in GYM

Part 2 (6:30 – 7:00) – Grade levels meet separately

- 3rd Grade = Gym
- 4th Grade = Library
- 5th Grade = Cafeteria

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Introduction

What does SOL stand for?

SOL stands for “Standards of Learning.” The SOLs provide an outline of basic knowledge that Virginia school children are taught and are expected to know as they progress from kindergarten through twelfth grade.

What are the SOL Tests?

The SOL tests are standardized tests given in grades 3, 4, 5, 8, and high school. These tests have been developed to measure your child’s progress in specific material he or she is being taught.

- **Third grade**: Reading and Math
- **Fourth grade**: Math, Reading, and Virginia History
- **Fifth grade**: Math, Reading, and Science

When are the SOL tests?

All grades will have the SOL tests during the month of May. All classes have one to test per week, depending on content. The 4th grade testing schedule is planned as follows:

- **Reading SOL** ➔ **Wednesday, May 10, 2017**
- **VA Studies SOL** ➔ **Thursday, May 18, 2017**
- **Math SOL** ➔ **Tuesday, May 23, 2017**

It is *extremely important* that your child be in school every day during testing!

What material do the SOL tests cover?

The SOL tests are cumulative, meaning it covers material from all of the standards addressed in Kindergarten through their current grade. The only content exception is 4th Grade’s Virginia History test.

** Please see the Virginia Department of Education website (given below) for more information about the SOL standards and content.**

What has recently changed about the SOL tests?

- In an attempt to increase the rigor of the SOL tests, the Virginia Department of Education has incorporated Technology Enhanced Items (TEIs) into the math, reading, and content tests.
- TEI questions may ask your student to:
  - Type in an answer
  - Create a graph
  - Complete a table or graphic organizer
  - Choose multiple answers
  - Sort concepts with drag and drop
- Computer Adaptive Test (CAT)
  - Computer Adaptive Testing (CAT) is part of the Virginia Department of Education’s continuing efforts to improve the testing experience for students.
  - A CAT is an assessment that is customized for every student.
  - How a student responds to a question determines the difficulty of the next item. A correct response leads to a more difficult item, while an incorrect response results in the selection of a less difficult item for the student.
  - Students can’t go back to previous answers (except questions pertaining to the same reading passage).

Examples from previous 4th Grade SOL Math tests:

Directions: Click on the box to choose each statement you want to select. You must select all correct statements.

Identify each true statement.

- $\frac{3}{12} > \frac{1}{4}$
- $\frac{3}{4} < \frac{5}{8}$
- $\frac{7}{10} > \frac{5}{12}$
- $\frac{3}{8} < \frac{1}{2}$
- $\frac{2}{3} > \frac{2}{5}$
- $\frac{1}{3} < \frac{2}{10}$

Find the product of 173 and 7.
Identify each situation that uses the best measurement option.

- The scale shows that Josh weighs 50 ounces.
- Marcus eats 50 kilograms of potato chips for lunch.
- The dog weighs in at 50 pounds at the vet's office.
- Samantha eats 50 grams of raisins for lunch.

Examples from previous Reading SOL tests:

Read this sentence.

Trina is often late for work because she takes a long time looking for her misplaced keys.

In which word does mis- mean the same as it does in misplaced?

- Opt 1: misbehave
- Opt 2: miserable
- Opt 3: mission
- Opt 4: mister
- Opt 5: mischief
- Opt 6: missle

Complete this Venn diagram.

Jamal

- Has a hard time saving money
- Spends money on snacks
- Leaves his money under his bed
- Explains where the money has gone

Jamal's Mom

- Understands how hard it is to save money
- Explains where the money has gone
- Forgets where the money was placed
- Spends money on snacks
**In-Class Review**

In addition to basic curriculum, we use a variety of resources and strategies in preparation for the SOL tests. Our objective is to make sure the students not only learn factual information but also are able to read questions carefully and use strategies to help them choose the best answers. Some of the activities we do include:

- **Time on the computer:** In order to get students ready to take a test on the computer, we have been practicing all year long on programs such as Power School and benchmark tests on computers. Students will also get regular practice with skills such as reading questions on a screen, using the tools, and completing Technology Enhanced Items (TEIs).

- **Test Questions:** On all tests this year we have tried to phrase multiple-choice questions similarly to how they will appear on the SOL tests. This includes tricky questions that use the words “not” and “except”, multiple answer questions, and critical thinking responses.

- **Daily Reading Review:** This is a book that we work through during the week to expose students to different types of text. Some classes take a “quiz” as a review of the material covered in that week’s questions. They are a great study resource, as they provide regular multiple-choice practice using 4th grade reading skills.

- **SOL Jeopardy:** We play a lot of SOL review games, but Jeopardy is a student favorite! There are many versions of SOL Jeopardy that you can find online and use at home as well. Or, you can get really creative and make your own!

- **Test Strategies:** We regularly teach various strategies that the students can use to help them analyze what the questions are asking and help to eliminate incorrect answers. Fourth grade teachers will also be having a specific test strategy unit in the upcoming weeks before SOLs.
Test Taking Tips

Preparing at Home

- Use the online websites listed on the 4th Grade SOL Resource page! There are many helpful and fun websites here that will help your student to practice and review all concepts. This is something they could do easily every night!
- Review correct work, tests/quizzes, and packets throughout the year.
- Minimize stressful feelings with a lot of practice, patience, concentration, and positive encouragement.

On Test Days

- Get a good night's sleep the night before.
- Have a great, healthy breakfast.
- Keep a positive attitude! 😊
- Wear comfortable clothing and dress in layers.
- Try your best!
- Bring (several) good books for after you have completed the test

During the Test

- Read all of the directions.
- Pick out important words or directions in the questions using the highlighter tool on the test.
- Read all answer choices. Twice.
- Cross out answers you know don't belong ("Slash the trash!")
- Ask yourself, “Does my choice best answer this question?”
- Use ‘scratch’ paper and correctly transfer answers to the computer.
- Double check your work before clicking ‘next’.
- Make sure the correct answer is selected on the screen before moving onto the next question.
At Home Review

- **Online Practice:** All of our favorite websites are listed on the 4th grade Madison’s Trust website: [http://GOO.GL/nBpm7f](http://GOO.GL/nBpm7f).

- **Fast Fact Contest:** After reviewing material, have a 5 minute contest. Write down as many facts as you can remember in 5 minutes.

- **Flashcards:** Write facts on one side and answers on the other. Great idea for reviewing on-the-go! There are many sites that allow you to create flashcards online, as well as traditional flashcards.

- **Library Books:** Check out library books related to SOL topics. Read them together or take turns reading aloud to each other.

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**Alternative Ways to Practice Math Facts**

(This is in addition to the online resources provided)

- **Flashcards:** store-bought or homemade (have your child make them him or herself for extra practice). Great way to review on-the-go! Some websites will also allow you to create digital flashcards (www.flashcardmachine.com)

- **Make a List:** list the facts for each “family” (e.g. 2 x 0 = 0, 2 x 1 = 2, 2 x 2 = 4, etc.)

- **Xtra Math Website – FREE!**

- **Sing a Song:** make up your own! There are also CDs available for purchase in different stores and online with premade songs.

- **Speed Game:**
  - Use a worksheet and cut apart the facts.
  - Spread the facts out face up.
  - Time for two minutes to see how many matches can be made.
  - Facts leftover are the ones to be practiced.
Frequently Asked Questions

How long are testing sessions?

Testing sessions are scheduled to begin first thing in the morning. The tests are untimed and students will be allowed as much time as they need to complete the test.

What happens if my child takes longer than the time scheduled?

Students who are not complete with their test at the end of the testing window, they will be moved to another testing site within the school to complete their test. If they are still not finished at the end of the day (2:30 PM), parents will be notified via a phone call that their child is still working on their test and will need to be picked up from school when they finish and submit their test.

Will my child be allowed to leave once a testing session has started?

Your child will be given periodic “breaks” throughout the session (standing up, stretching), but no, they are not allowed to leave the room once the test has started (except in the case of an emergency). We make sure all students get a bathroom break prior to the testing session to avoid having to leave during the test.

Will my child be allowed breaks during the tests?

See previous question.

What if my child misses an SOL due to illness?

We will do our best to reschedule your child’s exam at the next available time/day, when a proctor is available.

Are the students allowed scratch paper during the tests?

Yes, students are provided unlimited scratch paper during the tests and are encouraged to use it. We teach them strategies to help them use the scratch paper efficiently. Once a student is done with their test and submits their answers, all scratch paper is collected and turned in with the testing materials.

What happens after my child completes a test?

Once a student is complete with their exam, submits their answers, and turns in all scratch work, they are given the option to draw, rest their head, or read any book of their choice while waiting for the rest of the students to complete their exam. They are not allowed to leave their seat or the testing room for any reason, other than emergencies.
Once a majority of the students are complete, we will go on with our day and begin preparing for the next scheduled SOL. Any students not completed will be moved to another testing room to finish (See earlier question).

**How soon can I expect my student's results after the tests?**

Typically, results are sent home with final report cards. If scores are received by Madison’s Trust after report cards have been sent, they will be mailed directly to your address on record with the school.

**Can my student take SOLs early if I am planning a vacation during the SOL testing window?**

No. We strongly discourage families from taking vacations during this time.

The Commonwealth holds each school accountable for students to take the tests in each subject area. A low participation rate can negatively impact the school’s accreditation. We greatly encourage all students to take the tests and save vacations or trips until after the tests are completed.

**How are the SOL dates determined?**

The testing window is set by the state of Virginia, narrowed by LCPS and then each school decides their specific testing schedule with regards to grade levels and subjects being tested.

**Why are the tests important to my child?**

1. Test taking is a life-long skill and students are being taught early on the importance of knowing how to prepare for and take significant tests throughout their life.
2. The tests are an assessment piece used to measure your student’s success in a certain subject area.
3. Successful testing leads to success in our school community.

**Will the tests be a grade in Phoenix?**

No.

**Does my child need to pass his/her SOLs to be promoted to the next grade level?**

A failing grade will not inhibit promotion to the next grade, however a failing score will be a factor in considering academic grouping, remediation, and possible retention discussions in the future.
Are retakes available if my child fails?

Starting in 2015, the State of Virginia began allowing students to retest at the elementary level.

Permission slips are sent home to all students and are expected to be returned prior to all testing. There is no penalty for opting out of the retake, but the student can benefit by possibly earning a higher or passing score.

Students must meet the following criteria to be eligible for a retake:

- Currently the child is passing the subject AND
- Scores within the “retest window” (375-399) OR
- The student failed the test due to extenuating circumstances OR
- The student failed to sit for the SOL test for legitimate reasons

Eligible students are allowed ONE retest in a subject area. When administration becomes aware of the scores and the students who are eligible, parents are notified and a new testing session is scheduled. (Retest dates are scheduled within a week or two of the original test date and will not be on the same day as another SOL test for that student.)

Students will retake the entire test, not just the sections/questions failed in the subject area. The higher of the two scores will become their final recorded score for the SOL.

What is a passing grade for the SOL?

400 – Pass

500 – Pass Advanced