



Loudoun County Public Schools

Department of Pupil Services

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Information for Parents/Guardians Regarding Changes to Assessment Requirements

Loudoun County Public Schools (LCPS) wishes to inform you of recent changes to state and federal legislation that impacts your child's assessment requirements to earn a high school diploma.

[Every Student Succeeds Act \(ESSA, Federal legislation\)](#)

- Under ESSA, students must be tested in reading and mathematics annually in grades 3-8 and once in high school (grades 9-12). In science, students must be tested once in elementary school, once in middle school, and once in high school. Students may meet the [ESSA testing requirements](#) by taking a Standards of Learning (SOL) test, or in the case of students with significant cognitive disabilities, participating in the Virginia Alternate Assessment Program (VAAP).

[2017 Revision to the Standards of Accreditation \(SOA, State legislation\)](#)

- In addition to changes under ESSA, the testing requirements ([8VAC20-131-30](#)) as described in the SOA have also changed for high school students. The requirements for students in kindergarten through grade 8 remain:
“In kindergarten through eighth grade, where the administration of Virginia Assessment Program tests is required by the board, each student shall be expected to take the tests following instruction.”
- Beginning with first-time freshmen for the 2018-19 school year, students only require 5 verified credits to earn a [standard](#) or [advanced studies](#) diploma. This is a reduction from the previous requirement of 6 verified credits to earn a standard diploma and 9 verified credits to earn an advanced studies diploma. While your elementary student will not see any immediate changes to their assessment administration, they will require fewer SOL tests when they enter high school.

The Virginia regulations do not provide an [“opt out policy”](#) for students regarding the Virginia assessments. If parents refuse to have their student participate in one or more of the required Virginia assessments, they should be aware that their student's state assessment score report will reflect a score of “0” for any test that is refused. A refusal will not impact the student's grade or prevent the student from promotion to the next grade or course; however, students who do not take an end-of-course SOL test may be unable to earn the verified credit required for their diploma. Refusals must be made annually, in writing, to the School Test Coordinator.

Additionally, LCPS wishes to inform parents that students observing a religious holiday or participating in a religious practice, such as fasting, during school hours are eligible for a test schedule modification within the LCPS test window. Students will be permitted to test in the morning or afternoon, depending upon their need, and will be allowed to make up a missed test due to absence. Requests for a scheduling modification should be directed to the School Test Coordinator.

Questions about diploma options may be directed to Dr. Tracy Jackson, School Counseling Supervisor at Tracy.Jackson@lcps.org. General questions about division-wide assessment practices may be directed to Leigh Bennett, Supervisor, Assessment Services at Leigh.Bennett@lcps.org. General questions about state and federal accountability may be directed to Scott Meisenzahl, Supervisor, School Improvement at Scott.Meisenzahl@lcps.org.