# Superintendent’s Memo #046-20

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**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA   
Department of Education**

DATE: February 21, 2020

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: James F. Lane, Ed.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction

## SUBJECT: Updated Information on Federal Participation Calculations for High School Mathematics

A number of school divisions have asked for clarification regarding the federal participation requirement for high school mathematics under the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA).

Under ESSA, students must be tested in reading and mathematics annually in grades 3-8 and once in high school (grades 9-12). For science, students must be tested once in the elementary grades, 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).

The U.S. Department of Education (USED) required Virginia to select one end-of-course test in each subject area to be used for federal accountability for high schools. Virginia selected Algebra I as the high school mathematics test, Biology as the high school science test, and the end-of-course reading test for high school reading. Under Virginia’s approved ESSA state plan, students who pass the Algebra I SOL test in middle school can use a score from the Geometry or Algebra II SOL test to meet the high school participation requirement in mathematics. Additionally, Virginia was granted a waiver so that students who pass the Algebra I SOL test and **attempt** the Geometry and Algebra II SOL tests in middle school can use an SAT, ACT, AP, or IB test score in mathematics to meet the federal participation requirement. Please note this is a clarification of [Superintendent’s Memo 299-18](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/administrators/superintendents_memos/2018/299-18.docx), which indicated a student must *pass* all end-of-course SOL mathematics tests in middle school to use this allowance from the USED. In the current participation calculations, students who passed the Algebra I SOL test and **attempted** the Geometry and Algebra II SOL tests in middle school were permitted to use an SAT, ACT, AP, or IB test score in mathematics to meet the federal participation requirement. While no change is needed in the participation calculation, Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) staff are issuing this memorandum to update the information previously provided.

Schools that do not meet the 95 percent participation rate in reading and/or mathematics must develop a plan including strategies for meeting participation requirements. As the 2019 graduation cohort participation data were being reviewed for inclusion in these plans, several divisions contacted the VDOE with questions about how the federal participation rate for high school mathematics is calculated. In particular, clarification regarding students who transfer from an out-of-state or private school prior to September 30 of their 9th grade year with an Algebra I course credit equivalent was requested. Previously, these students were counted as non-participants in federal accountability unless they took the Algebra I SOL test in high school. The VDOE staff examined this information and, beginning with the 2020 graduation cohort, has developed procedures to evaluate these students’ enrollment history to better align with the intention of federal law. Details regarding this new method of identifying a participant may be found in the fourth bullet below.

Students in the current Federal Graduation Indicator (FGI) cohort will be identified as participants for the federal accountability calculations in the 2019-2020 school year according to the participation rules below.

* Students who have a valid attempt of the Algebra I SOL test or VAAP test while in grade 9-12. This includes students who retested during the summer between their 8th and 9th grade year if 1) the student was identified as a 9th grader in the test record and 2) the score was assigned to the high school the student would be attending as a 9th grader.
* Students who passed the Algebra I SOL test in middle school and attempted an additional mathematics SOL test in grades 9-12 (Geometry or Algebra II).
* Students who passed the Algebra I SOL test and attempted the Geometry and Algebra II SOL tests in middle school, and attempted a federally approved substitute test while in grades 9-12 (i.e., AP, IB, SAT or ACT).
* Students who were not enrolled in a Virginia public school during their 8th grade year but enrolled in a Virginia public school prior to September 30 of their 9th grade year and attempted the Geometry or Algebra II SOL test in grades 9-12 with no evidence of an Algebra I SOL attempt. Since Algebra I is a pre-requisite for Geometry or Algebra II, this rule assumes that the student passed an Algebra I course prior to enrollment in the Virginia public school. This is a new inclusion rule that will be implemented for the first time with data from the 2019-2020 graduation cohort and used for federal accountability ratings for the 2020-2021 school year.

Additionally, students who transfer in to a school from a non-Virginia public school after September 30 of their 9th grade year and do not take the Algebra I SOL test or VAAP in grades 9-12 will be removed from the participation calculation.

Students who do not meet any of the conditions above will be considered non-participants for the federal mathematics participation calculation.

If you have additional questions or concerns about the federal participation rate, please contact [Accountability@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:Accountability@doe.virginia.gov) or (804) 225-2102.

JFL/jm