



**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA**  
**Department of Education**

DATE: August 24, 2018

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: James F. Lane, Superintendent of Public Instruction

**SUBJECT: Opportunity to Comment on Virginia's Request for a Waiver from Certain Requirements of the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA) – High School Assessments**

The Virginia Department of Education is seeking input on a waiver request from certain statutory requirements under the [\*Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 \(ESSA\)\*](#). If granted, the waiver request would provide flexibility to meet high school assessment requirements in the areas of reading, mathematics, and science.

Under Section 1111(b)(2)(B)(i)(I) of ESSA, all students in grades three through eight and in high school must take the same state-approved reading, mathematics, and science tests to meet the assessment participation requirement. The U.S. Department of Education provided feedback during the ESSA approval and assessment peer review processes that required the Department to select a single high school test for each of these subjects for federal accountability. Based on statewide participation rates, End-of-Course (EOC) Reading, EOC Algebra I, and EOC Biology were selected. (Please note that under ESSA science pass and participation rates are required for federal reporting purposes only and do not impact the identification of schools for support and improvement. All EOC science assessments continue to be reported on the School Quality Profiles as the science pass rate.)

In a previously approved waiver request, Virginia was granted permission to allow students who pass all EOC mathematics tests prior to their ninth grade year to take a substitute mathematics test (AP, IB, SAT, or ACT) to meet the participation requirement. The substitute test will count towards the school's pass and participation rates. Virginia's proposed waiver request, if granted, would expand this practice to allow additional testing options for high school reading, mathematics, and science. Specifically, the waiver would request the following:

- To allow any EOC mathematics test or certain substitute mathematics tests (AP, IB, SAT, or ACT) to count towards the high school's pass and participation rates for mathematics;
- To allow either the EOC reading or certain substitute English/reading tests (AP, IB, SAT, or ACT) to count towards the high school's pass and participation rates for reading; and
- To allow any EOC science test or certain substitute science tests (AP, IB, SAT, or ACT) to count towards the high school's pass and participation rates for science.

The Virginia Department of Education welcomes comments on this waiver request. Comments may be submitted electronically by Friday, September 21, 2018, to [ESSA@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:ESSA@doe.virginia.gov). Comments may also be presented in person during the Board of Education Business Meeting, which will convene on Thursday, September 20, 2018 at 9:00 a.m. in the Jefferson Conference Room, 22<sup>nd</sup> floor, James Monroe Building, 101 N. 14<sup>th</sup> Street, Richmond, Virginia. Speakers intending to present comment are encouraged to contact Sonya Broady, Secretary, Office of Board Relations, at [sonya.broadly@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:sonya.broadly@doe.virginia.gov) to be placed on the speaker list.

Questions regarding Virginia's [ESSA State Plan](#) may be submitted to [ESSA@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:ESSA@doe.virginia.gov).

Should USED approve Virginia's request to allow additional substitute tests for reading and science in federal accountability, additional information about the use of these tests will be provided to school divisions as soon as it is available.

JFL/lis

Links:

- [Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 \(ESSA\)](#)
- [Virginia's ESSA State Plan](#)