



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

DATE: April 27, 2023
TO: Division Superintendents
FROM: Dr. Lisa Coons, Superintendent of Public Instruction
SUBJECT: **New Standards of Learning Science Tests Assessing the 2018 Science Standards of Learning**

The new Standards of Learning (SOL) science tests for grade 5, grade 8, and end-of-course Biology are being administered for the first time in spring 2023. These tests are based on the new science SOL adopted by the Virginia Board of Education (Board) in 2018. While the Board typically adopts new cut scores for SOL tests that are based on revised standards, the state board of education is also reviewing the accreditation system in preparation for revision. Therefore, the same achievement requirements for students to be considered “proficient” or “advanced” that were used for the previously administered science tests will be applied to the grade 5, grade 8, and end-of-course Biology tests administered in spring 2023. Please be aware that because these are newly developed tests, the statistical procedure of post-equating will be required to ensure that the level of achievement for students to be considered proficient or advanced on the new science tests is consistent with expectations on the previously administered tests. Equating cannot occur until a sufficient number of students have tested so school divisions testing early in the spring 2023 testing window may experience a slight delay in the receipt of scores.

As a reminder, the Virginia Department of Education will be convening committees in fall 2023 to recommend cut scores to the Board on the mathematics and reading SOL tests currently being administered. Action by the Board to adopt updated scores for these tests is anticipated in April 2024 with the implementation of the new cut scores delayed until the 2024-2025 school year. It is possible a similar process of convening committees to recommend cut scores on the new science tests will occur with a similar schedule for adoption and implementation.

For questions regarding this information, please contact student assessment staff at (804) 225-2102 or Student_Assessment@doe.virginia.gov.

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