

HB585 Work Group on the Future of Assessment

Meeting 2

April 27, 2023

Agenda & Meeting Objectives

1. HB 585 Work Group
2. Defining the Challenge
3. National Landscape
4. Best Practices: Summative Assessments
5. Q&A Panel: States Leading in Assessment Innovation
6. Next Steps

Meeting 2 Objectives

Understand the national landscape and best practices, as context for Virginia's assessment system

Consider how national best practices and innovations do or do not address the challenges with the VA assessment system

Introductions

Aimee Rogstad Guidera, Secretary of Education, Office of the Governor

Dr. Lisa Coons, Superintendent of Public Instruction

McKenzie Snow, Deputy Secretary of Education, Office of the Governor

Kimberly Richey, Deputy Superintendent of the Division of School Quality, Instruction, and Performance, Virginia Department of Education

Shelley Loving-Ryder, Assistant Superintendent of Student Assessment, Accountability & ESEA Programs, Virginia Department of Education

Sarah Susbury, Director, Office of Student Assessment, Virginia Department of Education

Supported by **Watershed Advisors**:

- Jessica Baghian, President
- Jill Pinsky, Managing Director
- Jamie Dollinger, Director
- Sara McClafferty, Senior Analyst

Housekeeping & Meeting Norms



Please mute your microphone



If possible, turn on your video



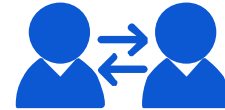
Two ways to participate: (1) Type via chat, (2) Unmute to share



Parking Lot: Jot ideas for future consideration in the Zoom chat



This meeting will be recorded



Be ready for small group discussion

House Rules & Shared Values

House Rules

- Make space, take space
- Assume the best
- Speak from an “I” perspective
- Be open to learning and taking risks

Shared Values

- We are committed to utilizing evidence and data to support development of a best-in-class assessment system that meets the needs of Virginia’s students, families, and educators.
- We believe that all assessments should be fair, rigorous, and aligned to Virginia’s vision for what every student should know and be able to do.
- We understand that assessments can serve different purposes, and that assessment data is a valuable tool to help students learn.

Guiding Principles

1. **The North Star is high expectations for every student.** Proficiency definitions will be set by benchmarking against the demands of Virginia employers and higher education, as well as against states who have the most rigorous definitions of proficiency in the nation.
2. **Proficiency definitions and cut scores** should reflect skills, knowledge, and competencies needed by grade to be on track for postsecondary success.
3. Student academic growth and proficiency are both vital measures, but the system must **prioritize getting every student to proficiency.**
4. **Actionable information regarding student educational outcomes is critical for students, teachers, parents, and policymakers** so that they can use timely data to improve outcomes as quickly as possible.
5. **Schools identified as low performing need effective and strategic support and resources** to make meaningful improvements.
6. **Virginia deserves best-in-class, aligned assessment and accountability systems.**

HB 585 Purpose & Objectives

Purpose. Recommend changes to the statewide summative assessments and develop a plan for implementation of the revised assessments.

HB 585 Required Considerations. The Secretary of Education and the Virginia Superintendent of Public Instruction shall convene and consult a work group, which shall consider:

- 1) Best practices and **innovations in summative assessments** of proficiency from across the nation;
- 2) Alternative **approaches to current and new assessment items**, including subject areas and methods of grading such items;
- 3) Assessment items that include **open-ended questions, long-form writing**, and other tasks, with student responses scored by the Department according to statewide scoring rubrics;
- 4) Plan for **pilot implementation of such assessment items** prior to the 2027-2028 school year as necessary to determine the validity of such items;
- 5) The **process for the development of a bank** of vetted sample assessment items that include a comprehensive representation of knowledge and skills being assessed;
- 6) The **legislative and regulatory changes and funding** necessary to implement alternative approaches considered by the work group;
- 7) The effectiveness of **assessments for students with disabilities**, including the Virginia Alternate Assessment Program for those students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, and the use of those assessments to improve and individualize instruction; and
- 8) A proposed **timeline for implementation** of such new assessments, giving consideration to implementation prior to the 2027-2028 school year.

Work Group Timeline

Meeting 1 March

Understand the purpose of state assessments generally

Understand how Virginia's state assessment system works currently

Consider the challenges with Virginia's current assessment system

Meeting 2 April

Understand the national landscape and best practices, as context for Virginia's assessment system

Consider how national best practices and innovations do or do not address the challenges with the VA assessment system

Meeting 3 May

Understand Virginia's assessment system currently, contrasted with the national landscape

Define goals and objectives for the future of VA assessments

Meeting 4 July

Weigh in on initial recommendations

Review a preliminary timeline for piloting and implementation

Understand the legislative and regulatory changes needed, if relevant

Meeting 5 August

Consider final recommendations, including the timeline for implementation

*Based on the recommendations developed by this Work Group, VDOE will submit its initial plan for the implementation of Virginia's revised summative assessment to the General Assembly by **November 1, 2023**.*

Defining the Challenge

Breakout Room Instructions

1. You will be automatically assigned to a breakout group.
2. In your group, discuss the draft language for your assigned challenge. Use the [Jamboard](#) to suggest edits to the proposed language. (10 min)
 - Challenge 1: Alan, Kris, Kristy, Wendy (Sara, McKenzie, Supt. Coons)
 - Challenge 2: Amber, Jamie S., Rebekah, Thomas (Jill, Kim)
 - Challenge 3: Amy, Grace, Karen, Mychael, Susan (Shelley, Sec. Guidera)
 - Challenge 4: Jenna, Matt, Sheryl, Tracy (Jamie D., Sarah S.)
3. Following the group activity, everyone will have time to review the draft language for the remaining three challenges. Use the pen tool to add a checkmark on anything that resonates with you. (4 min)

Challenge 1

Initial:

The requirements for proficiency on Virginia's statewide summative assessment have been set too low. At the same time, Virginia students are falling behind students in other states.

Revised:

*The requirements for proficiency on Virginia's statewide summative assessment **do not align with what students need to prepare for college and career.** At the same time, Virginia students are falling behind students in other states.*

Work Group Feedback

"The statewide summative assessment system needs an overhaul."

"By embracing this challenge, Virginia can foster an educational environment that supports the growth and success of all students."

"I might offer, 'Do not align with what students need to know to prepare for college and career.'"

Challenge 2

Initial:

Students have limited opportunities to demonstrate critical thinking through rigorous item types (e.g., writing, constructed response). Current assessments are disconnected from the rigorous thinking teachers ask them to do in the classroom.

Revised:

*Students have limited opportunities to demonstrate critical thinking through rigorous item types (e.g., writing, constructed response). **Assessments should be more closely aligned to the knowledge and skills students will need to be successful in each subsequent grade and, ultimately, beyond graduation.***

Work Group Feedback

"If the rigor of the [current] tests are not what we're looking for, then we first need to address the rigor in the standards."

"Aligning assessments with the higher-order thinking activities found in classroom instruction can better reflect and support students' intellectual growth."

Challenge 3

Initial:

Assessment result reports, though detailed, may not be user-friendly. It is paramount that both educators and families have access to actionable information and are supported in understanding and acting on student test results. Teachers need training to leverage assessment results to inform instruction and to support individual students.

Revised:

*Assessment result reports, though detailed, may not be user-friendly. It is paramount that both educators and families have access to **clear, actionable information. Families should be supported in understanding and acting on their student's results.** Teachers need training to leverage assessment results to inform instruction and to support individual students.*

Work Group Feedback

"Although assessment reports are comprehensive, their complexity can hinder comprehension."

"I think the 'actionable information' needs to be stronger. Parents are just flummoxed by the reports they get."

"Result reports need to be overhauled in favor of actionable reporting on student proficiency in real time."

Challenge 4

Initial:

Virginia students take multiple assessments, both those required by the state and those required by divisions or schools. *Students and educators deserve coherence and usability to minimize unnecessary testing.*

Revised:

Virginia students take multiple assessments, *including the summative and growth tests* required by the state, and other tests required by divisions or schools. *Students and educators deserve a coherent system of assessments to minimize unnecessary testing.*

Work Group Feedback

"'Usability' doesn't mean much to me. I want a system that informs parents, students, and teachers about a student's progress throughout the year."

"It is vital to streamline these tests, ensuring clarity and usability, in order to minimize the burden of excessive testing for both students and educators."

"We need to specifically address the student 'growth' assessments here. Some divisions have dispensed with extremely useful local assessments..."

National Landscape



The Nation's Report Card: Key Considerations for Virginia

HB 585 Virginia's Future of Assessment Work Group Meeting

Lesley Muldoon

April 27, 2023

The National Assessment Governing Board sets policy for The Nation's Report Card.

The Governing Board:

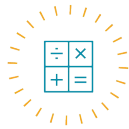
- **Created by Congress** in 1988 to oversee the Nation's Report Card
- **Independent** and **nonpartisan**
- With the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), protects NAEP as “**gold standard**” assessment of academic achievement in the U.S.

NAEP Achievement Levels

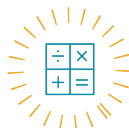
The Nation's Report Card is intentionally set to be the **goal** of what students should know.



NAEP Basic – partial mastery of prerequisite knowledge and skills that are fundamental for performance at the *NAEP Proficient* level.



NAEP Proficient – demonstrated competency over challenging material, including subject-matter knowledge, application of such knowledge to real world situations, and analytical skills. *NAEP Proficient* does not signify being on grade level.



NAEP Advanced – superior performance beyond *NAEP Proficient*.

Achievement Level Examples: Grade 4 Reading

29%

NAEP Basic – Determine the relevant meaning of familiar words using context from a section of an informational text.

24%

NAEP Proficient – Provide an opinion using relevant information from the text.

9%

NAEP Advanced – Distinguish the theme of a text.

Achievement Level Examples: Grade 4 Math

39%

NAEP Basic – Locate whole numbers on a number line.

29%

NAEP Proficient – Add and subtract multi-digit whole numbers, fractions, and decimals in single and multi-step problems.

8%

NAEP Advanced – Understand and be able to use inverse operations and simple ratios.

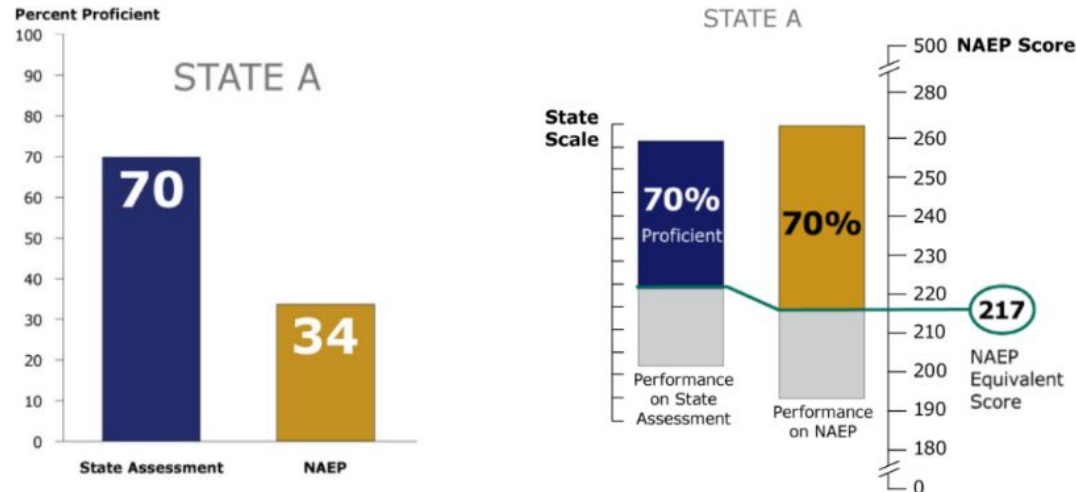


VIRGINIA PROFICIENCY STANDARDS AND NAEP ACHIEVEMENT LEVELS

Comparing State Proficiency Standards and NAEP Achievement Levels

NCES can compare the relative rigor of state proficiency standards and NAEP achievement levels. Most recently, they compared state tests relative to 2019 NAEP results.

Example of Identifying a NAEP Scale Score Equivalent to a State's Proficient Standard

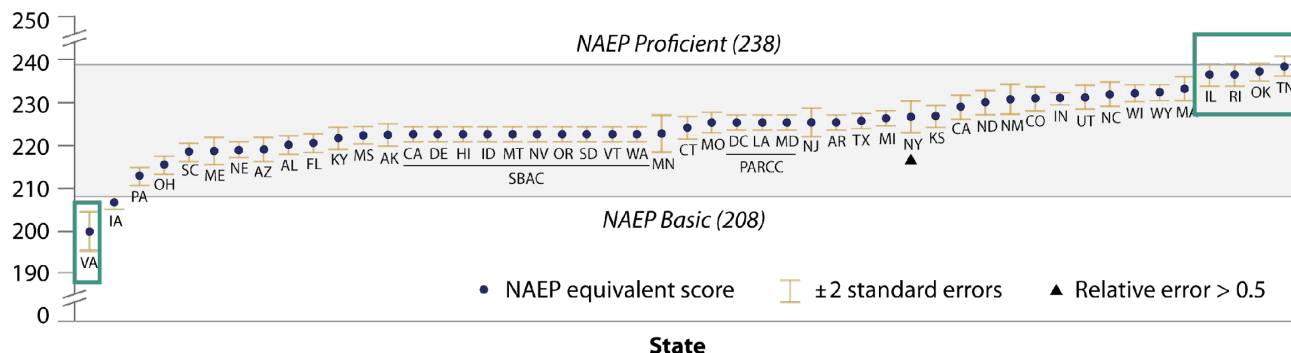


Source: 2019 Report on State Proficiency Standards: Mapping State Proficiency Standards Onto the NAEP Scales: Results From the 2019 NAEP Reading and Mathematics Assessments, Taslima Rahman, PhD, NCES, July 2021

Virginia Proficiency Compared to NAEP: Grade 4 Reading

In 2019, Virginia had the **lowest** equivalent score in reading, placing the state's proficiency bar at a level **below NAEP Basic**.

NAEP equivalent score

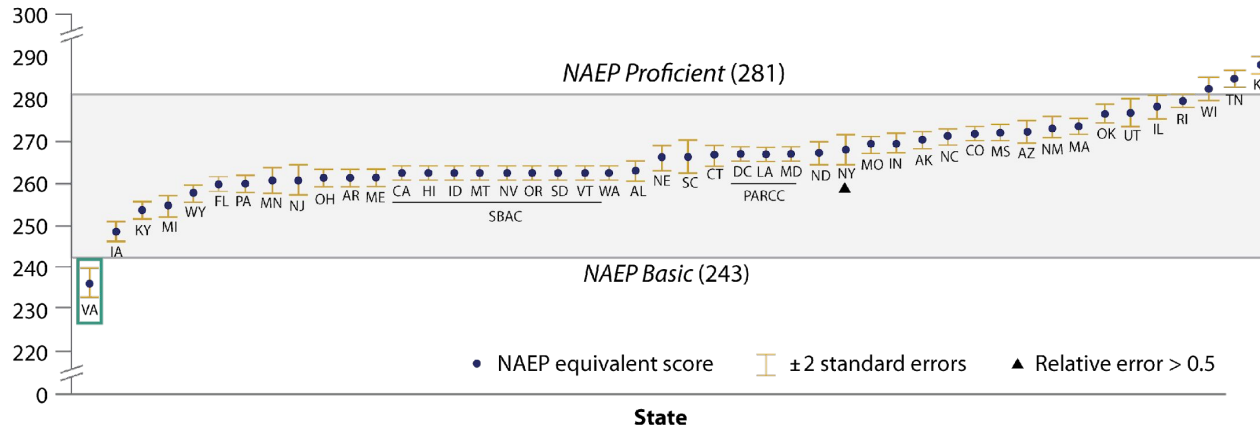


Source: 2019 Report on State Proficiency Standards: Mapping State Proficiency Standards Onto the NAEP Scales: Results From the 2019 NAEP Reading and Mathematics Assessments, Taslima Rahman, PhD, NCES, July 2021

Virginia Proficiency Compared to NAEP: Grade 8 Reading

In 2019, Virginia had the **lowest** equivalent score in grade 8 reading, placing the state's proficiency bar at a level **below NAEP Basic**.

NAEP equivalent score

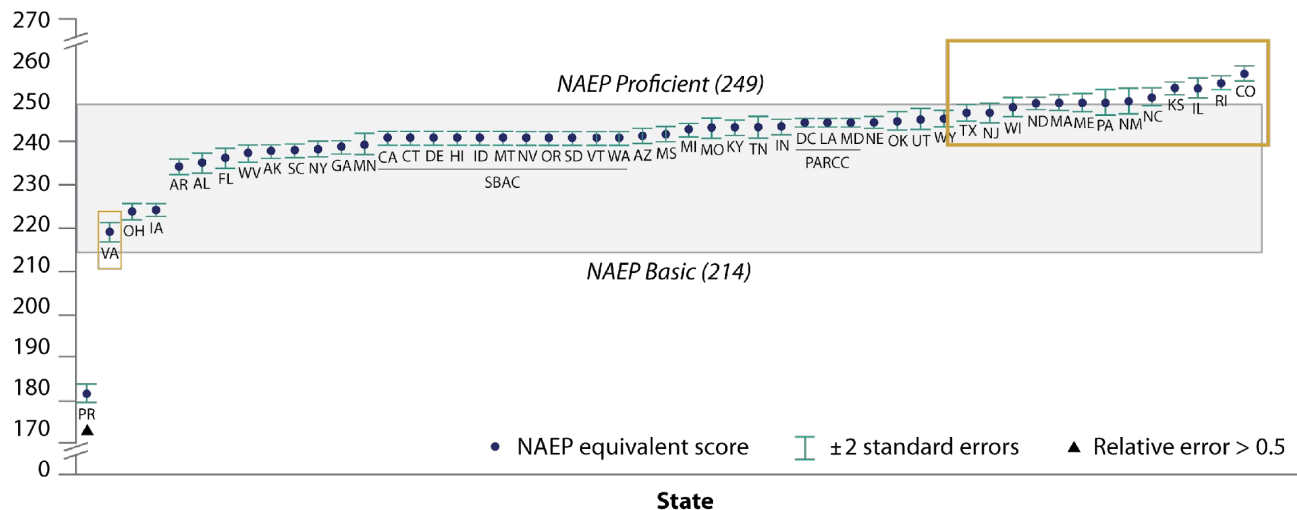


Source: 2019 Report on State Proficiency Standards: Mapping State Proficiency Standards Onto the NAEP Scales: Results From the 2019 NAEP Reading and Mathematics Assessments, Taslima Rahman, PhD, NCES, July 2021

Virginia Proficiency Compared to NAEP: Grade 4 Math

In 2019, Virginia had the **second lowest** equivalent score in math after Puerto Rico, putting the state's proficiency bar at *NAEP Basic*.

NAEP equivalent score



Source: 2019 Report on State Proficiency Standards: Mapping State Proficiency Standards Onto the NAEP Scales: Results From the 2019 NAEP Reading and Mathematics Assessments, Taslima Rahman, PhD, NCES, July 2021



HOW STATES HAVE USED THE NATION'S REPORT CARD

Massachusetts



State-Level Reforms

- Increased state funding, improved teacher evaluation, improved state standards, added the 10th grade MCAS assessment, and expanded school choice
- Built a broad coalition of support across a Republican governor and Democratic legislature

The Result

- The first state to score “first” in all four tested grades and subjects on NAEP and remain “first” across many administrations of the assessment
- By 2000, narrowed the gap between Black and White students on NAEP
- Increased state SAT scores for 13 consecutive years

In Recent Years

- Adopted new standards and changed the MCAS
- Saw NAEP scores fall between 2011 and 2017

Mississippi

State-Level Reforms

- Increased academic standards, adopted a new rigorous state assessment, led a statewide focus on literacy (including third grade retention assessment and statewide professional development for teachers), and used NAEP to measure progress and growth

The Work

- In 2005, there was a **71-point gap** between the percentage of fourth graders identified as proficient or above on the state's reading assessment and the percentage who scored *NAEP Proficient* or above
- The state used NAEP frameworks to mirror expectations between the state assessment and NAEP when developing its new assessment

The Result

- Mississippi was one of the leaders in score improvement in fourth grade reading between 2005 and 2017
- While Mississippi students still score below the national average, NAEP achievement improved across grades and subjects until the pandemic
- The state saw a **67-point decrease** in the proficiency score gap between its state assessment and NAEP

Tennessee

State-Level Reforms

- Increased academic standards, aligned curriculum, overhauled state assessments, improved teacher evaluation

The Work

- Compared NAEP results with the state's data on student performance. In 2007, 87% of 8th graders were proficient or above in math on the state assessment compared with 23% who scored *NAEP Proficient* or above.

The Result

- Tennessee students saw growth on NAEP from 2011-2015, becoming the **fastest improving state**
- From 2009-2015, the proportion of Black students scoring at or above *NAEP Proficient* increased by **13 percent**
- On the state TCAP, there was a decline in proficiency rates the first year the more rigorous assessment was given, but proficiency increased in every tested subject in the following years



KEY CONSIDERATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Assessment Considerations

- Ground assessments in strong content that reflects knowledge and skills needed after K-12
- Use different types of items to tap into conceptual understanding and to apply knowledge and skills in new contexts
- Establish achievement levels that are meaningful to stakeholders, especially families

Assessment Considerations

- Align achievement levels to what students need to be prepared
- Report and communicate results in multiple and accessible ways with a sense of what your various stakeholders need and want to know
- Balance long-term trends with refreshed assessment items



COMING SOON!

The Nation's Report Card: U.S. History and Civics

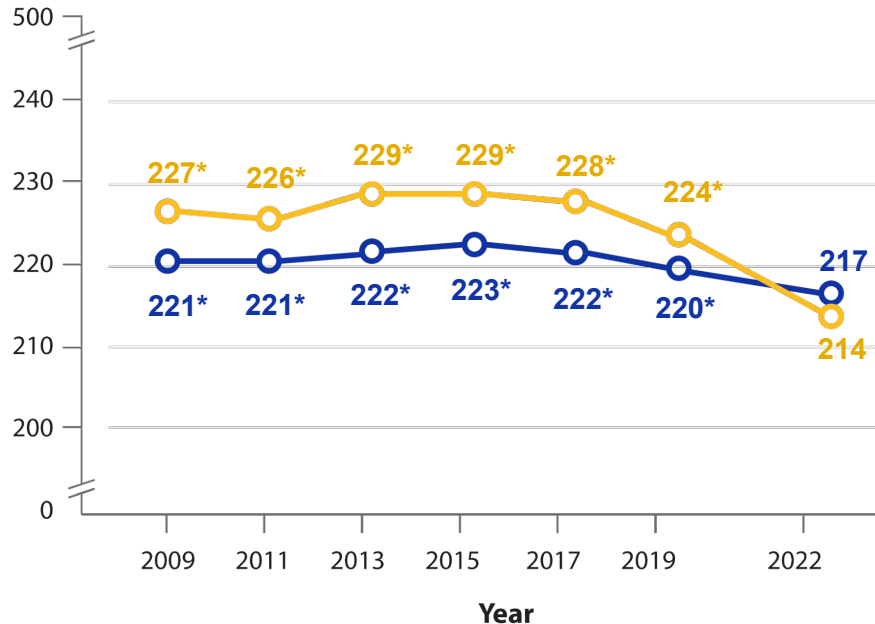
- National results for grade 8
- May 3, 2023
- Register for the livestream: <https://www.nagb.gov/>



VIRGINIA PERFORMANCE ON THE NATION'S REPORT CARD

Virginia Average Scale Scores, All Students: Grade 4 Reading

Average Scale Scores



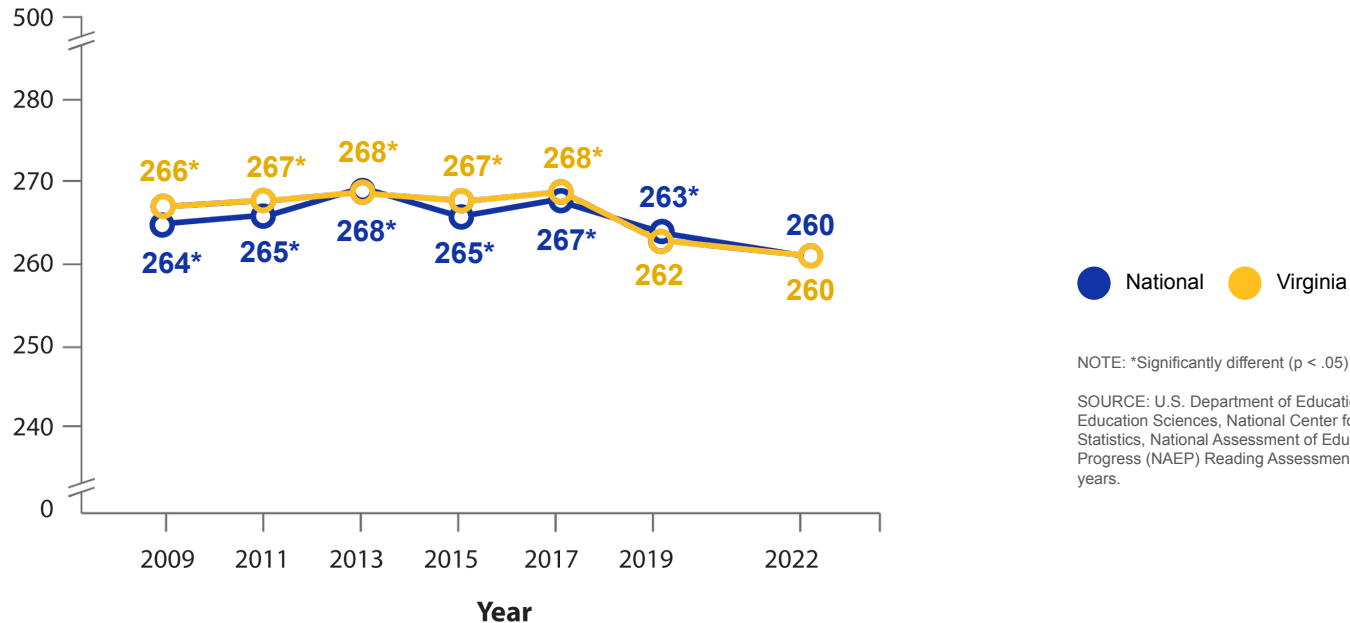
● National ● Virginia

NOTE: *Significantly different ($p < .05$) from 2022

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Reading Assessments, multiple years.

Virginia Average Scale Scores, All Students: Grade 8 Reading

Average Scale Scores

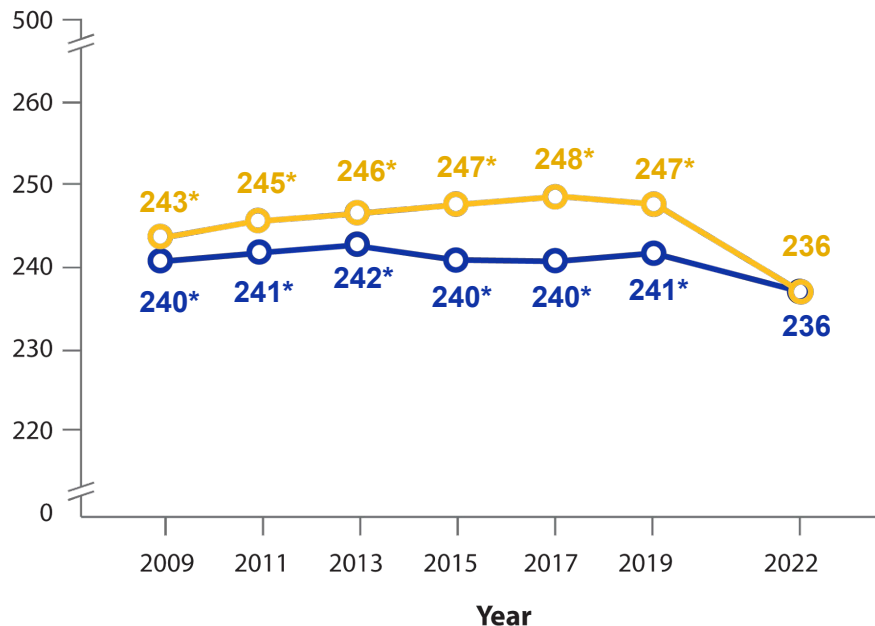


NOTE: *Significantly different ($p < .05$) from 2022.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Reading Assessments, multiple years.

Virginia Average Scale Scores, All Students: Grade 4 Math

Average Scale Scores



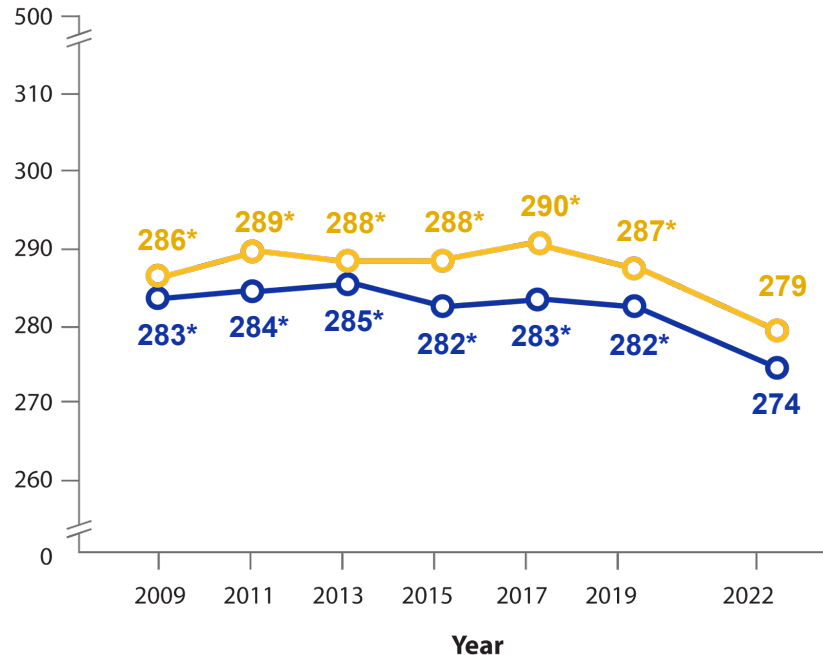
● National ● Virginia

NOTE: *Significantly different ($p < .05$) from 2022.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), Mathematics Assessments, multiple years.

Virginia Average Scale Scores, All Students: Grade 8 Math

Average Scale Scores



● National ● Virginia

NOTE: : *Significantly different ($p < .05$) from 2022.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), Mathematics Assessments, multiple years.

Divergent Trends a Growing Concern

- Since 2009, score gaps between lower-performing students and the higher-performing students have widened.
 - for 4th and 8th grade students
 - in reading and math
- This pattern first seen at national level but also seen in many states, including Virginia.

Divergent Trends a Growing Concern

National changes in average and selected percentile scores, by assessment:
2009–2022

		Percentile score					
		Avg.	10th	25th	50th	75th	90th
Mathematics	Grade 4	▼	▼	▼	▼	◆	▲
	Grade 8	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼
Reading	Grade 4	▼	▼	▼	▼	◆	▲
	Grade 8	▼	▼	▼	▼	◆	◆



Score increase



No significant change in 2019



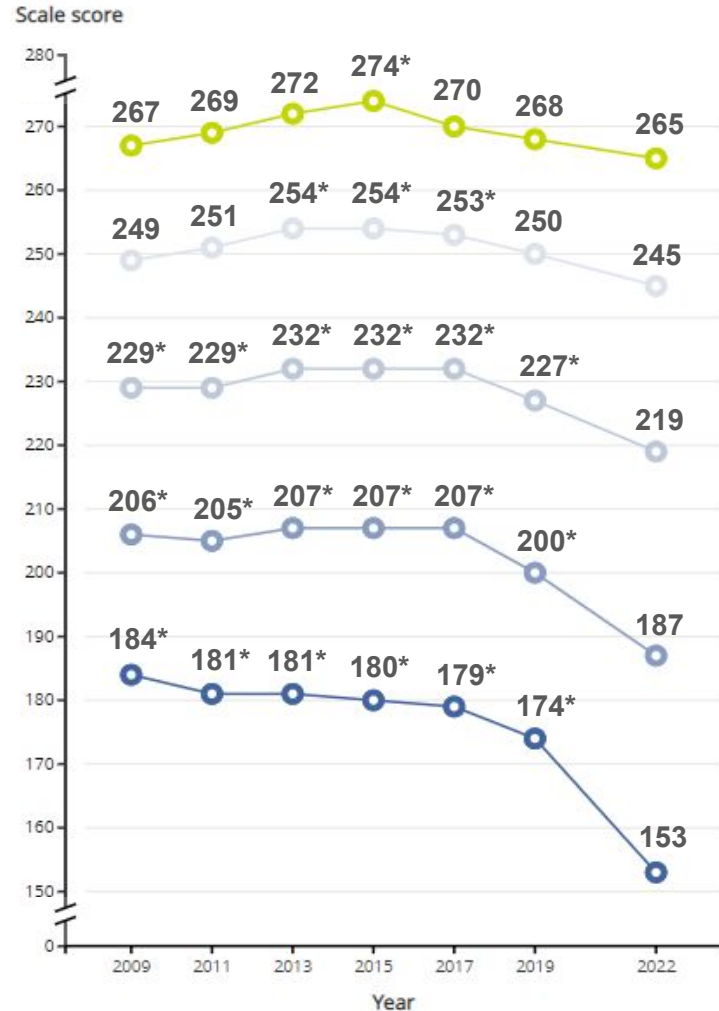
Score decrease

Virginia Performance Across Percentiles, All Students: Grade 4 Reading

- 90th percentile
- 75th percentile
- 50th percentile
- 25th percentile
- 10th percentile

NOTE: *Significantly different ($p < .05$) from 2022.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Reading Assessments, multiple years.

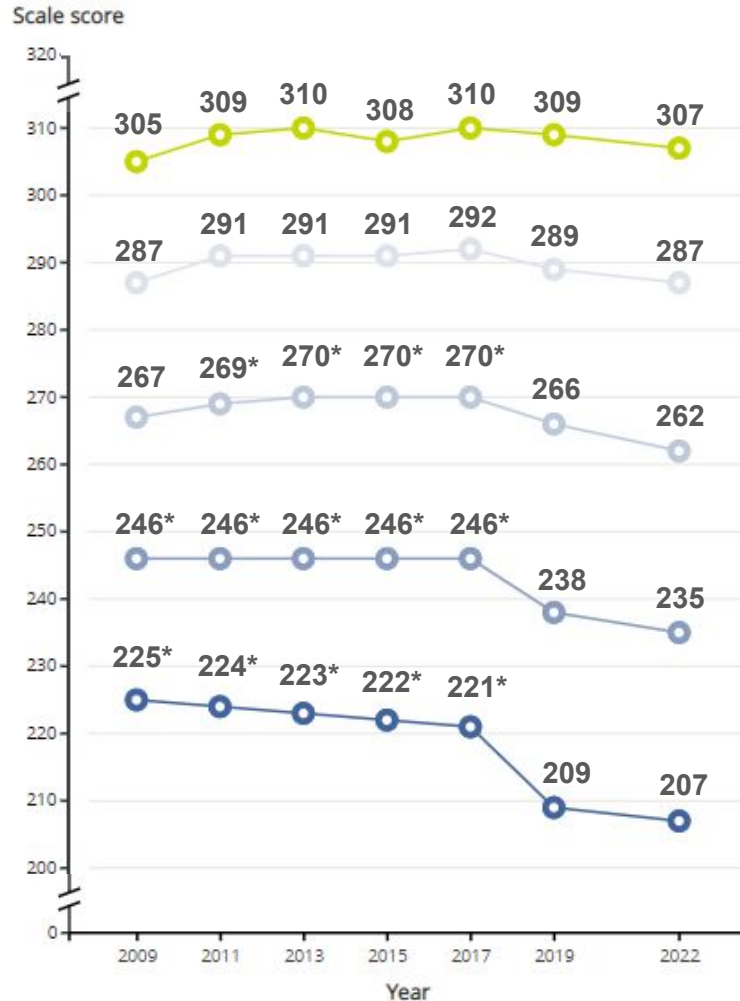


Virginia Performance Across Percentiles, All Students: Grade 8 Reading

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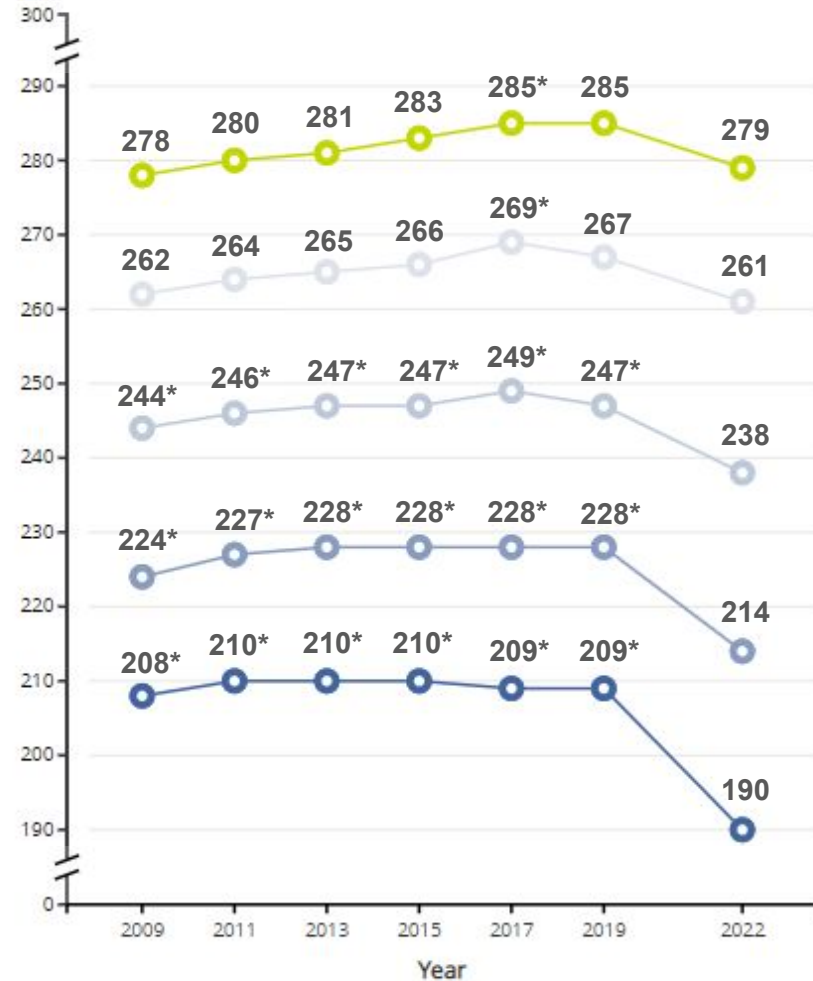
Virginia Performance Across Percentiles, All Students: Grade 4 Math

- 90th percentile
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- 10th percentile

NOTE: *Significantly different ($p < .05$) from 2022.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Reading Assessments, multiple years.

Scale score



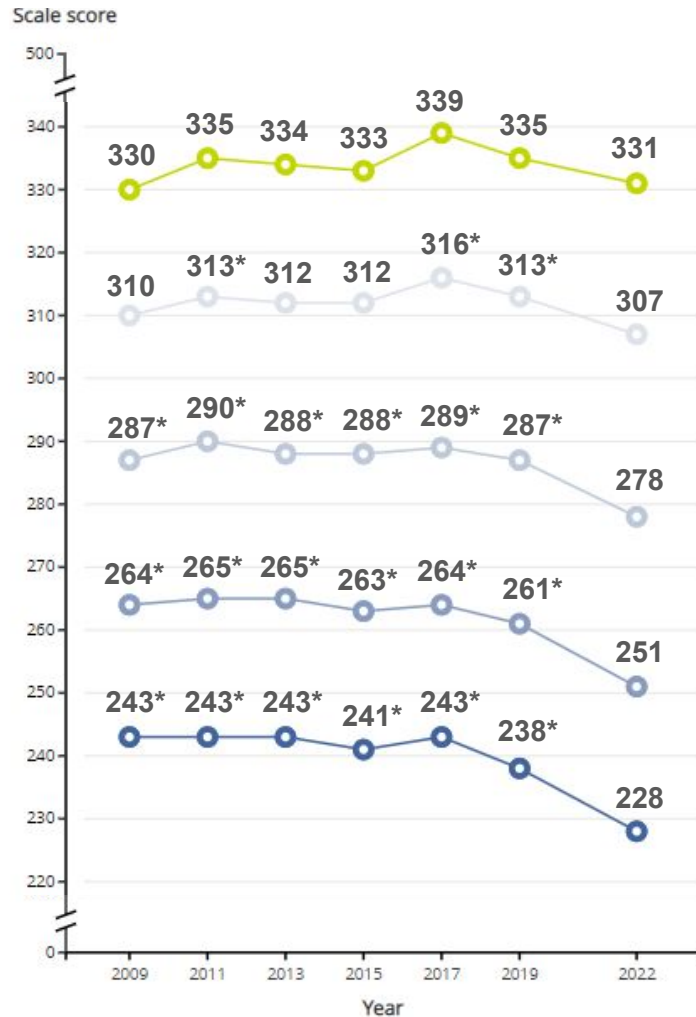
Virginia Performance Across Percentiles, All Students: Grade 8 Math

10th percentile for grade 8 mathematics, by All students [TOTAL for jurisdiction: 2022, 2019, 2017, 2013, 2011, and 2009 Virginia]

- 90th percentile
- 75th percentile
- 50th percentile
- 25th percentile
- 10th percentile

NOTE: *Significantly different ($p < .05$) from 2022.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Reading Assessments, multiple years.



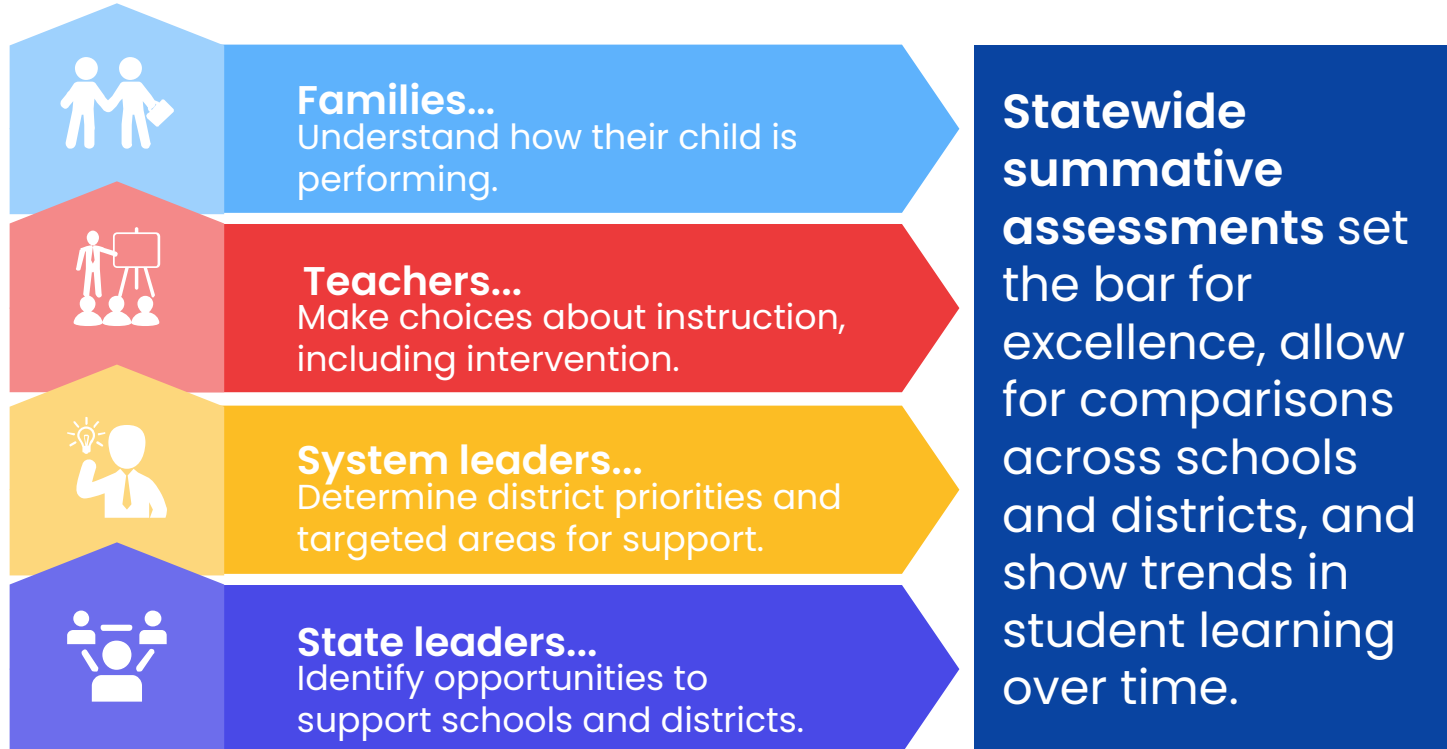


QUESTIONS?

THANK YOU!

Best Practices for State Summative Assessments

Ideal State: Actionable Data for Different Uses

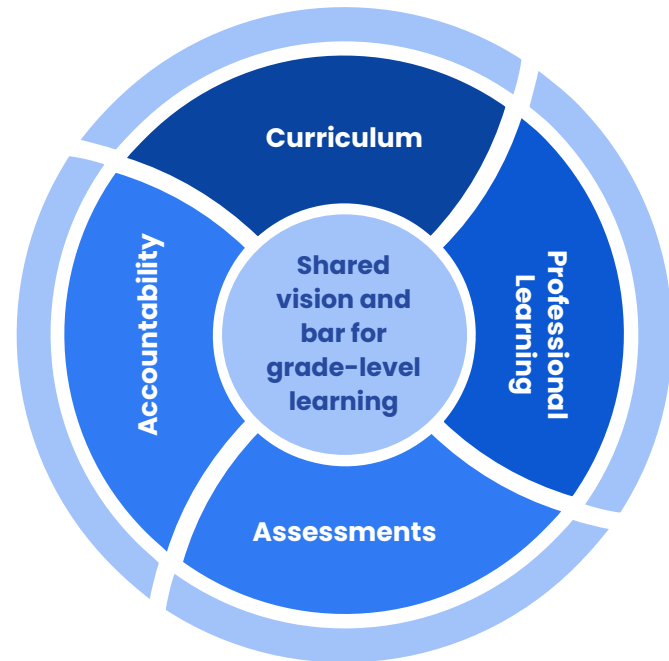


Ideal State: Aligned to Instruction

Statewide summative assessments are most valuable when they provide actionable information that is connected to student learning, educator development, and measurement systems.

Statewide, summative assessments provide educators, families, leaders, and taxpayers with information about student performance, signaling whether a student is meeting grade-level expectations.

To provide actionable data on student performance, summative assessments should align to the state's vision for what it hopes students can achieve.



Q&A Panel: States Leading in Assessment Innovation

Q&A Panel: Panelists

Dana Talley	Robert Curtin	Iris Tian
<p>Chief Academic Officer</p> <p>Lincoln Parish Schools, formerly Louisiana Department of Education</p>	<p>Chief Officer for Data, Assessment, and Accountability</p> <p>Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education</p>	<p>Associate Commissioner</p> <p>Texas Education Agency</p>

Q&A Panel: State Innovations

Louisiana	Massachusetts	Texas
<p>Design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Curriculum-anchored, integrated English Language Arts and Social Studies through-year assessment Math through-year <p>Status</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approved under IADA* Pilot expanding to additional districts in the state Administration of first innovative assessments 	<p>Design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Science and Technology/Engineering assessment with more in-depth, computer-based performance tasks Curriculum-anchored assessment system for classroom-based performance tasks <p>Status</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approved under IADA* Assessments in development Field testing Piloting classroom-based performance tasks to go along with the assessment 	<p>Design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Redesigned end-of-year summative test to better align with effective classroom instruction (STAAR redesign) Optional interim assessments used by 50%+ of districts; results not used for accountability Through-year assessment pilot to study feasibility of replacing end-of-year test and interim assessments with a combined system <p>Status</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bill passed in 2019 Through-year assessment pilot in first year (22-23 school year)

* Under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the [Innovative Assessment Demonstration Authority \(IADA\)](#) allows the U.S. Department of Education to authorize states to test different assessment approaches in a subset of districts for up to seven years.

Next Steps

Work Group Timeline

Meeting 1 March

Understand the purpose of state assessments generally

Understand how Virginia's state assessment system works currently

Consider the challenges with Virginia's current assessment system

Meeting 2 April

Understand the national landscape and best practices, as context for Virginia's assessment system

Consider how national best practices and innovations do or do not address the challenges with the VA assessment system

Meeting 3 May

Understand Virginia's assessment system currently, contrasted with the national landscape

Define goals and objectives for the future of VA assessments

Meeting 4 July

Weigh in on initial recommendations

Review a preliminary timeline for piloting and implementation

Understand the legislative and regulatory changes needed, if relevant

Meeting 5 August

Consider final recommendations, including the timeline for implementation

*Based on the recommendations developed by this Work Group, VDOE will submit its initial plan for the implementation of Virginia's revised summative assessment to the General Assembly by **November 1, 2023**.*

Next Steps

Following this meeting, you will receive a brief exit survey (via e-mail).

- Responses requested by **May 2, 2023**

Before our next meeting, you should expect the following (via e-mail):

- Outreach to schedule 1:1 calls
- Agenda for meeting 3
- Suggested pre-reading

The Work Group will reconvene on Thursday, May 25, 2023 from 9:30am – 11:30am EST. (Note: We have extended the meeting time to two hours to allow for deeper discussion.) In this meeting, we will:

- Understand Virginia's assessment system currently, contrasted with the national landscape
- Define goals and objectives for the future of VA assessments

If you have any questions about the upcoming meeting, please contact Jill Pinsky at jill.pinsky@watershed-advisors.com.

Appendix A:

Work Group Details

Work Group Members

Chairs

Aimee Guidera, Virginia Secretary of Education
Dr. Lisa Coons, Superintendent of Public Instruction

Virginia Board of Education Members

Alan Seibert
Grace Creasey

Division Director of Testing

Tracy LaGatta
Wendy Chandler

Division Leadership

Dr. Thomas Taylor
Dr. Kristy Somerville-Midgette
James Soltis
Amy McClure (VSBA)

School Leadership

Karen Dickenson

Educators

Rebekah Amato

Parent Voices

Mychael Willon
Jenna Alexander

Content Experts

Kristen Amundson
Matt Hurt
Sheryl Lazarus
Dr. Amber Northern
Susan Patrick

Meeting Expectations

Every meeting you should expect the following:

- Ahead of meeting, via e-mail:
 - Outreach to schedule 1:1 calls
 - Agenda for meeting
 - Suggested pre-reading
- In meeting:
 - Recap of previous meeting
 - Focused discussion
 - Closing/next steps

Appendix B: Best Practices in Assessment

CCSSO Criteria for High Quality Assessments

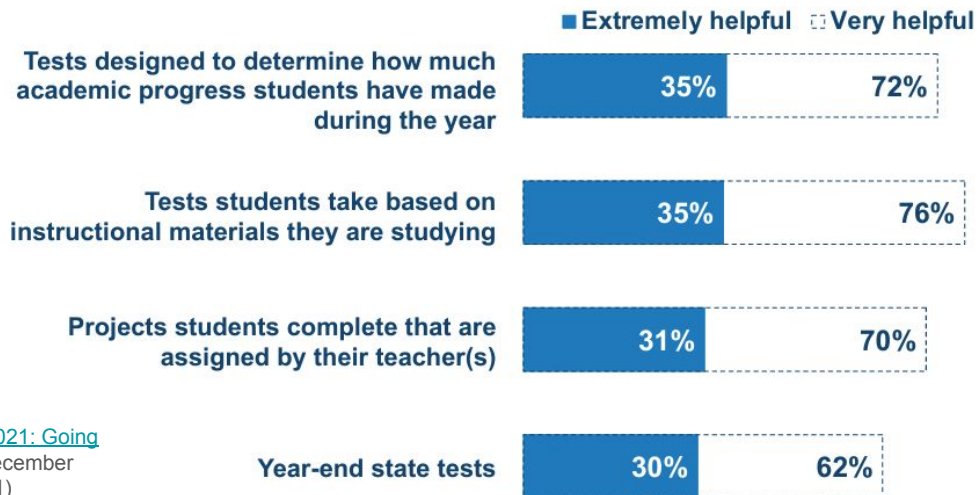
State summative assessments should be aligned to rigorous college- and career-readiness standards, and should be grounded in best practices for assessment development.

- 1. Meet Overall Assessment Goals and Ensure Technical Quality**
 - a. Provide accessibility to all students, including English learners and students with disabilities
 - b. Ensure transparency of test design and expectations
- 2. Align to Standards - English Language Arts/Literacy**
 - a. Assess the content most needed for college and career readiness
 - b. Assess the depth most needed for college and career readiness
- 3. Align to Standards - Mathematics**
 - a. Assess the content most needed for college and career readiness
 - b. Assess the depth most needed for college and career readiness
- 4. Yield Valuable Reports on Student Progress and Performance**
 - a. Focus on student achievement and progress to readiness
 - b. Provide timely data that inform instruction
- 5. Adhere to Best Practices in Test Administration**
 - a. Maintain necessary standardization and ensure test security
- 6. State Specific Criteria (as desired)**
 - a. Require involvement of the state's K-12 educators and institutions of higher education
 - b. Procure a system of aligned assessments, including diagnostic and interim assessments

Student and Family Reporting and Data

According to a nationwide survey of more than 1,400 parents, **families want to understand how their student is doing in school – and they value some types of information more than others.**

How helpful are each of the following to you when it comes to understanding how well your child is performing academically?



Appendix C: Virginia Assessment Results

Student Performance in Virginia

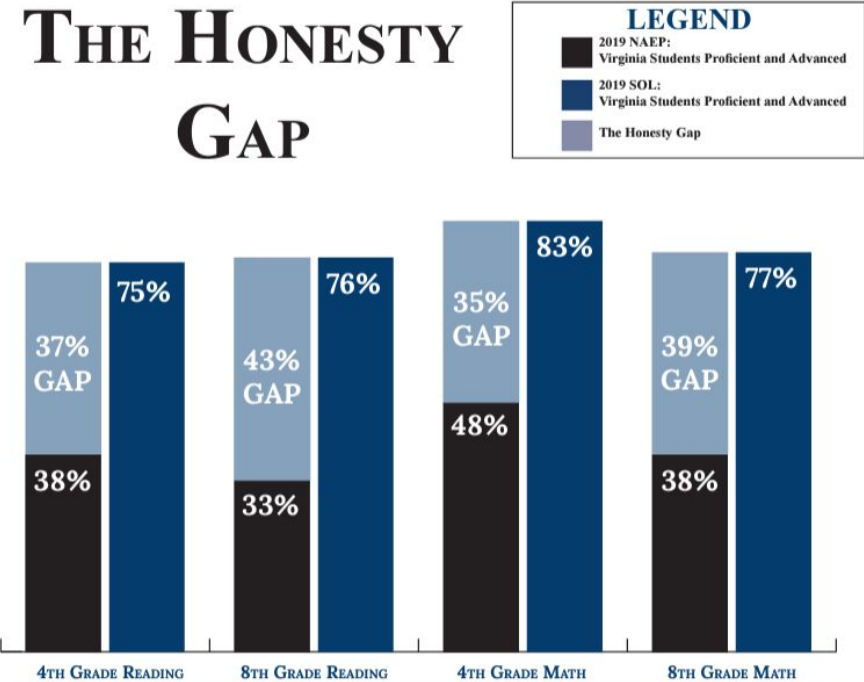
Virginia schools have experienced a widening achievement gap and a recent decline in student performance in comparison with other states.

- Virginia is the only state to define proficiency on its fourth grade reading test below the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) basic level. Virginia **sets the lowest bar in the nation for fourth grade math and eighth grade reading**.
- **The State Board of Education voted to lower the proficiency cut scores**—meaning how many correct answers it takes to demonstrate proficiency—on SOL tests in math and reading in 2019 and 2020.
- **Student achievement declined in the wake of these lower cut scores**, on both state tests and NAEP.
- Pandemic-related **school closures exacerbated the already-present declines** in student achievement.

Virginia's Honesty Gap

Across grades and subjects, Virginia has some of the **lowest proficiency standards in the nation**. A 4th grader who scores Proficient on the SOL reading test would not score Basic (lowest level) on NAEP.

THE HONESTY GAP

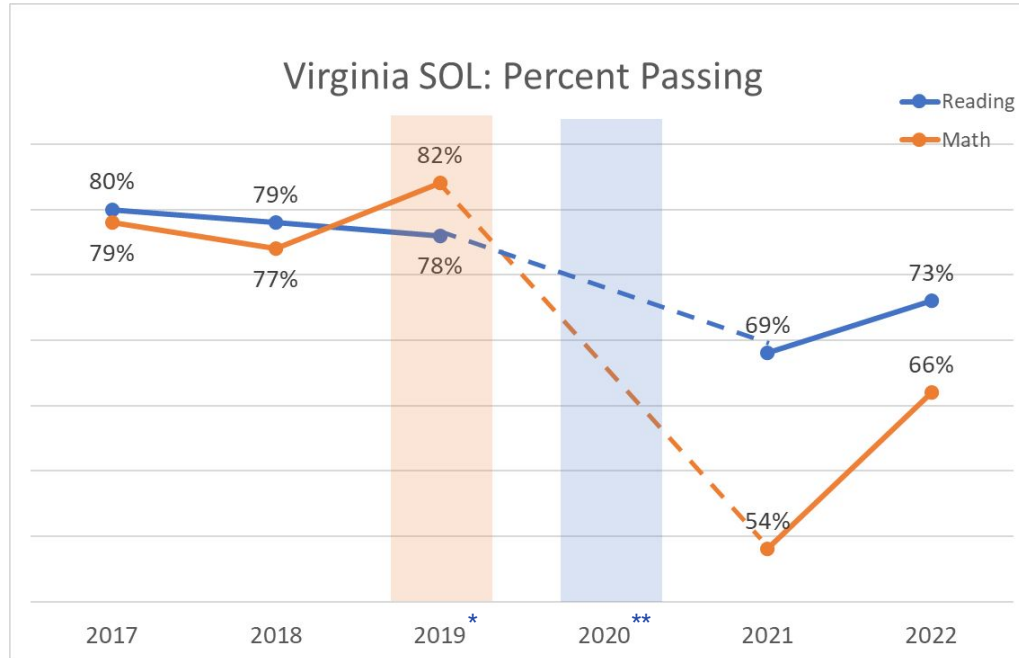


SOL Test Mapped Against NAEP Achievement Levels

Assessment	NAEP Achievement Levels	National Ranking of (State Proficiency Standards)
SOL Reading 4th Grade	Below NAEP Basic	49 of 49
SOL Math 4th Grade	NAEP Basic	50 of 51
8th Grade Reading	Below NAEP Basic	46 of 46
8th Grade Math	Not included in the study	

Lowered Standards and Declining Performance

Student achievement declined significantly following the pandemic, even in the wake of lower proficiency standards.



* Board lowers SOL cut scores in math

** Board lowers SOL cut scores in reading

2022 NAEP Proficiency Declines

Against a consistent metric — NAEP — Virginia results showed declines in both reading and math between 2019 and 2022, and continuous drops in fourth graders' proficiency since 2017.

	2017 NAEP <i>Share of students proficient. or above</i>	2022 NAEP <i>Share of students proficient. or above</i>	Covid-19 Learning Loss
Math Grade 4	50%	38%	-12 point change <i>National ranking: 51 of 51</i>
Math Grade 8	40%	31%	-9 point change <i>National ranking: 34 of 51</i>
Reading Grade 4	43%	32%	-13.6 point change <i>National ranking: 51 of 51</i>
Reading Grade 8	37%	31%	-6 point change <i>National ranking: 30 of 51</i>

A [2015 AIR study](#) found that students scoring “Proficient” on the NAEP math Grade 12 test were estimated have a:

- 75% probability of college completion; and
- 47% probability of labor market success after graduation (i.e., earning more than 200% of the poverty line in the first year after graduation)