



**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education**

July 15, 2016

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: Steven R. Staples, Superintendent of Public Instruction

SUBJECT: Shorter Version of the Grades 3 through 5 Reading Standards of Learning Tests Administered in a Computer Adaptive Testing Format beginning in Spring 2017

The purpose of this memorandum is to announce that the Virginia Department of Education will be implementing a Computer Adaptive Test (CAT) for all online grades 3 through 5 Reading Standards of Learning (SOL) tests (regular and audio) beginning in the spring 2017 test administration. The online computer adaptive versions of the tests will be shorter than the traditional versions of the grades 3 through 5 reading tests.

Providing a shorter version of the online grades 3 through 5 reading tests in a CAT format is part of Governor McAuliffe's initiative to shorten the length of the reading SOL tests for elementary school students. Since computer adaptive tests are customized to each student's ability level, fewer questions can be administered to accurately determine each student's achievement level. Because of this advantage of the CAT format, the computer adaptive version of the test will be approximately 30 percent shorter in total test length than the traditional version.

Due to the implementation of the shorter grades 3 through 5 reading CAT, the [SOL Test Blueprints](#) for grades 3 through 5 reading have been updated. The blueprints contain the number of test items for the computer adaptive version of the online test and the number of items for the traditional version of the test that will be administered in paper/pencil format. The grades 3 and 4 reading CAT will contain 28 operational test items that are scored and 5 field test items, for a total test length of 33 items. The grade 5 reading CAT will contain 30 operational test items that are scored and 5 field test items, for a total length of 35 items.

An Elementary School Reading CAT Training Test will be available during the 2016-2107 school year within the PearsonAccess Training Center. The Elementary School Reading CAT Training Test should be used with students so they can practice navigating through a reading CAT prior to the actual test-taking experience. School divisions will be notified when this training test is available.

Questions regarding this information should be directed to student assessment staff at Student_Assessment@doe.virginia.gov or (804) 225-2102.

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