



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education

October 31, 2014

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: Steven R. Staples, Superintendent of Public Instruction

SUBJECT: Updated Process and Nomination Form for Additional Substitute Tests for Verified Credit for Standards of Learning (SOL) Tests

The Standards for Accrediting Public Schools at 8VAC20-131-110 permit the Virginia Board of Education to approve "substitute" tests for the purpose of awarding verified credit. The approved tests must meet the following criteria:

1. The test must be standardized and graded independently of the school or school division in which the test is given;
2. The test must be knowledge based;
3. The test must be administered on a multistate or international basis, or administered as part of another state's accountability assessment program; and
4. To be counted in a specific academic area, the test must measure content that incorporates or exceeds the SOL content in the course for which verified credit is given.

The Board will set the score that must be achieved to earn a verified unit of credit on the additional test options.

The Department of Education accepts nominations from school divisions for tests to substitute for the SOL end-of-course tests. Such nominations will be made by the division superintendent to the Superintendent of Public Instruction. The purpose of this memo is to update the process for approval and the nomination form that were originally announced in [Superintendent's Memo No. 73](#), May 11, 2001.

An updated nomination form for substitute tests for verified credit(s) is attached. Please send completed nomination forms with any additional documentation annually by February 15 via e-mail to student_assessment@doe.virginia.gov. School divisions may submit nominations past the deadline if extenuating circumstances so demand.

Timeline for Approval: The Department will review and recommend substitute tests for verified credit(s) on an annual basis. Nominations received annually by February 15 will be presented to the Board of Education for approval prior to the following school year.

Process for Approval: The process of approving tests nominated as substitutes shall be as follows:

1. Review by the Division of Instruction. The purpose of this review is to determine the degree to which the content basis of the nominated test matches the SOL test for which it is nominated as a substitute. The criteria outlined in the Standards of Accreditation will also be applied. Substitute tests determined to have a moderate or high correlation will continue through the approval process.
2. Review by the Division of Assessment and School Improvement Related to Technical Qualities. The Division of Assessment and School Improvement will review the tests forwarded from the Division of Instruction with regard to the technical aspects of the tests' construction. Typical guidelines for test development will be used in this review. Tests deemed to have sufficient technical merit will move forward in the approval process.
3. Establishing Score Points for Pass/Proficient and Advanced/Proficient or Advanced/College Path (where applicable). The Division of Student Assessment and School Improvement will convene teacher committees that will be tasked with the responsibility of reviewing the proposed substitute tests and recommending the score points that will be used to establish the Pass/Proficient and Pass/Advanced Proficient or Advanced/College Path (where applicable) ratings for verified credit(s).
4. Review and Approval by the Virginia Board of Education. Division of Student Assessment and School Improvement will forward the recommendations of the teacher committees with accompanying background materials to the Board of Education.
5. Communications to the School Divisions. Upon the action of the Board of Education, the Department of Education will convey, via a Superintendent's Memo, to the local school divisions, the availability of additional substitute tests.

SRS/SLR/JWH/cd

Attachment:

- A. [Nomination Form for Substitute Tests for Verified Credit](#) (Word)