



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education

April 26, 2013

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: Patricia I. Wright, Superintendent of Public Instruction

SUBJECT: Cut Scores Adopted by the Board of Education for the Grades 3, 5, and 8 Science and Grades 5, 8, and End-of-Course (EOC) Writing Standards of Learning Tests Based on the 2010 Science and English Standards of Learning

On April 25, 2013, the Virginia Board of Education adopted cut scores for the new grades 3, 5, and 8 science and the new grades 5, 8, and end-of-course (EOC) writing tests that measure the 2010 Standards of Learning (SOL). New cut scores, which are expressed in the number of items a student must answer correctly to achieve a certain level of proficiency, were adopted for the achievement levels of *pass/proficient* and *pass/advanced* for the grades 3, 5 and 8 science tests and *pass/proficient* and *pass/advanced* for the grades 5 and 8 writing tests. New cut scores were also adopted for the achievement level of *pass/proficient* and *advanced/college path* for the EOC writing test. A student obtaining the proficiency level of *advanced/college path* on the EOC writing test should have the necessary knowledge and skills for entry into an introductory credit-bearing college writing course with a substantial writing requirement, without prior enrollment in a remedial writing class.

The passing scores for each of the new grades 3, 5, and 8 science tests and for the 5, 8, and EOC writing tests are shown below:

| Test | Pass/Proficient | Pass/Advanced |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Grade 3 Science | 24 out of 40 | 36 out of 40 |
| Grade 5 Science | 24 out of 40 | 35 out of 40 |
| Grade 8 Science | 27 out of 50 | 45 out of 50 |
| Grade 5 Writing | 30 out of 46 | 40 out of 46 |
| Grade 8 Writing | 31 out of 48 | 41 out of 48 |

| Test | Pass/Proficient | Advanced/College Path |
|-----------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| End-of-Course Writing | 33 out of 54 | 46 out of 54 |

These cut scores have been communicated to Pearson, Virginia’s testing contractor, so that the work necessary to implement these cut scores and report the results of the new grades 3, 5, and 8 science tests and the grades 5, 8, and the EOC writing tests administered in spring 2013 can begin. It is important to remember that the cut scores listed above apply only to the test forms that were reviewed by the standard setting committees. Other forms of the grades 3, 5, and 8 science and the grades 5, 8, and the EOC writing test will be statistically equated to the “standard setting” test form to ensure that the same level of achievement is required of all students taking a test for a particular grade level. As a result of the equating process, the number of items a student is required to answer correctly for a particular proficiency level may fluctuate slightly.

In addition, please note that these passing scores are applicable only to the new science and writing tests that measure the full implementation of the 2010 Science and English content standards. Students who took a writing course before spring 2013 and who are now retaking the associated end-of-course test for verified credit will continue to take tests that measure the 2002 English standards. The cut scores on these tests are unaffected by the Board’s action.

If you have questions, please contact the student assessment staff at Student_Assessment@doe.virginia.gov or (804) 225-2102.

PIW/SLR/aw