



**#221-21**

**Commonwealth of Virginia  
Virginia Department of Education  
Superintendent's Memo #221-21**

**DATE:** August 13, 2021  
**TO:** Division Superintendents  
**FROM:** James F. Lane, Ed.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction  
**SUBJECT:** **Update on Required Growth Assessments in Grades 3-8 Reading and Mathematics**

Legislation passed in the 2021 Virginia General Assembly ([HB2027](#) and [SB1357](#)) requires the implementation of “through-year” or “growth” assessments in reading and mathematics in grades 3-8. Full implementation of the legislation will occur over a two-year period. The first year of implementation, the 2021-2022 school year, requires the administration of the growth assessments in the fall. The second year of implementation (2022-2023) and beyond will require the administration of fall and winter (mid-year) growth assessments. The new growth assessments will be administered to students enrolled in grades 3-8 reading and mathematics in addition to the normally occurring spring Standards of Learning (SOL) tests in those grades and subjects.

To ensure that the assessments administered for this purpose are aligned to the SOL, the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) is developing shorter computer adaptive tests using existing SOL test items. In this first year of implementation only, the fall growth assessments administered to students enrolled in grades 4-8 reading and mathematics will be based on content from the student’s previous grade level. For example, students enrolled in grade 5 mathematics in fall 2021 will take growth assessments based on grade 4 mathematics content. The online tests for students enrolled in grade 3 in fall 2021 will include grade 3 test items that are primarily focused on content covered by the grade 2 SOL. Using this format in

fall 2021 will assist in the identification of unfinished learning from 2020-2021 due to the pandemic.

Since the announcement of these new assessments, VDOE staff have received a number of inquiries about whether the new growth assessments are required and whether other locally developed or procured assessments may be used in lieu of the state developed growth assessments for state accreditation and federal accountability. Based on the 2021 legislation, school divisions are required to administer the new growth assessments. While school divisions may choose to administer other locally developed or commercial assessments for instructional purposes, the state developed growth assessments must be administered, and scores from those assessments will be used for state accreditation and federal accountability purposes.

Webinars for Division Directors of Testing to address specifics of the administration of the fall 2021 growth assessments are being provided over the next several weeks.

### For more information

If you have questions regarding growth assessments, please contact the student assessment staff at [Student\\_Assessment@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:Student_Assessment@doe.virginia.gov) or (804) 225-2102.

JFL/SLR/as