

Virginia Alternate Assessment Program Status Report

Steering Committee and Subcommittee Accomplishments

A steering committee was formed in January of 2000 to provide input to the Internal Team at the Department of Education regarding the development of assessment and scoring procedures for the alternate assessment process. This committee consisted of participants from the original committee that developed the performance indicators, as well as a number of new individuals. A complete listing of steering committee members is provided in Appendix A.

Participants on the steering committee served on one of three subcommittees that addressed assessment methods, performance indicators and delivery practices, and communication and training. Major accomplishments of the steering committee and subcommittees during their February, March, and June 2000, meetings include the following:

- ✎ A philosophy statement (Appendix B) was developed to articulate the committee's beliefs about the alternate assessment process.
- ✎ Participation criteria (Appendix C) were written to define the ages at which students will participate in the alternate assessment process and the criteria IEP teams will use to determine student eligibility for the alternate assessment process.
- ✎ Each subcommittee recommended activities related to their area that needed to be completed. These recommendations were reviewed by the Department of Education and were used as the basis for creating an overall "Development Plan" for the assessment.
- ✎ A "Q & A Document" (Appendix D) developed by the Department of Education in response to questions from the field about the alternate assessment process was presented to the steering committee for review and feedback. This document was distributed to division directors of testing and special education directors.
- ✎ The committee reviewed assessment strategies employed by other states and selected those strategies that they thought should be considered in Virginia.
- ✎ The committee reviewed and provided feedback on a draft scoring rubric for the assessment and an integrated standards document developed by the Department of Education.
- ✎ Field test training manuals from other states were reviewed and recommendations were made regarding the components for Virginia's field test training manual.
- ✎ The committee scored collections of evidence from the field test.
- ✎ The committee provided input regarding the statewide training model that will address the training needs of school staff as well as parents/caregivers.

Description of the Collection of Evidence and Scoring Rubric

The assessment strategy developed for the alternate assessment process is termed a “Collection of Evidence” (COE). For each student who participates in the alternate assessment, a COE will be submitted that consists of the following elements:

- Table of Contents
- Letter to the Reviewer (sample of student communication system)
- IEP at a Glance
- Student Schedule
- Four Completed Entry Cover Sheets
- Four Entries Referencing the Standards of Learning (one each in the areas of English, Math, Science/Technology, and History/Social Sciences/Vocational Studies)
- Student Demographics
- Parent Validation Letter or Parent Survey

Each completed COE will be scored according to five dimensions. These dimensions include:

1. Performance (student performance on IEP objectives that address the standards)
2. Linkage to the standards (degree to which student work samples evidence the standards)
3. Variety of settings and social interactions (degree to which student participates in integrated settings and extent of social interactions)
4. Contexts (degree to which activities are functional and skills are embedded across the student’s day)
5. Independence (level of prompting required for the student to participate in the targeted activity).

These elements of the scoring rubric will be used to score each entry that addresses the Standards of Learning. According to the scoring rubric, each student will receive a rating of progressing, competent, or generalized on each of the five elements for each entry submitted.

Description of the Field-Test Process

The assessment strategies and scoring rubric were field tested with 65 special education teachers from across the Commonwealth of Virginia representing each of the eight superintendent’s regions. Field test participants attended a meeting on April 4-5 to receive training on the field test process. During the months of April and May, each participant completed a Collection of Evidence for 1-2 students on their caseload. These teachers generated a total of 68 Collections of Evidence. Technical assistance was provided to the participants throughout the field test. A complete listing of field test sites is provided in Appendix E.

On June 2, 2000, the field test participants reconvened to collect feedback on the alternate assessment process and impact on IEP development and program planning. In addition to giving feedback, the teachers checked the five scoring rubric dimensions for clarity and necessity using

actual field test samples. The field test feedback and scoring responses will be used to revise materials for fall 2000 training.

Next Steps

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|---|--|--------------------------|
| ☞ | Develop Training Materials for Teachers & Parents | Summer 2000 |
| ☞ | Conduct Training for DOE Tas, T-TACs, and Trainers | Summer 2000 |
| ☞ | Conduct Statewide Training for Teachers & Parents | Sept. 11 – Oct. 18 |
| ☞ | Collect Student Evidence for Collections | Oct. 19 – March 19, 2001 |
| ☞ | Submit Collections of Evidence | March 20, 2001 |
| ☞ | Conduct Benchmarking Session | April 2001 |
| ☞ | Score Collections of Evidence | April – May 2001 |
| ☞ | Report to Schools | June 2001 |

Alternate Assessment Steering Committee Members

| NAME | REPRESENTATION | DIVISION |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Carl Anderson | Special Education Teacher | Greensville |
| Trish Angle | Special Education Teacher | Chesterfield |
| Clint Bennett | University Professor | James Madison University |
| Elin Doval | Parent | Henrico |
| Merilee Fox | State Operated Program Representative | Eastern State Hospital |
| Pam Higginbotham | Special Education Teacher | Giles |
| Sally Hudson | Special Education Teacher/Parent | Spotsylvania |
| Kitty Mann | Parent | Norfolk |
| Robert Mitchell | Special Education Director | Virginia Beach |
| Maria Raynes | Training and Technical Assistance | James Madison University |
| Emily Riddick | Transition Specialist | Chesapeake |
| Judy Rowe | Special Education Teacher | Montgomery |
| Virginia Santiago | School Psychologist | Fairfax |
| Judy Sorrell | Regional Program Director | Shenandoah Valley |
| Tom Smith | Assistant Superintendent | Fluvanna |
| Karen Tompkins | Private Program | Grafton |
| Barbara Tucker | General Education Teacher | Hanover |
| Alice Waddell | Building Principal | Rockbridge |
| Kathleen Wills | Assessment Coordinator | Arlington |

Department of Education Representatives (Internal Team Members):

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| Cam Harris | Assessment and Reporting |
| Doug Cox | Special Education and Student Services |
| Gordon Trump | Assessment and Reporting |
| Shelley Loving-Ryder | Assessment and Reporting |
| Pat Burgess | Assessment and Reporting |
| Sharon Siler | Special Education and Student Services |
| Pat Abrams | Special Education and Student Services |
| Charles Finley | Accountability |
| David Crossley | Policy |

Purpose & Philosophy

The purpose of the Virginia Alternate Assessment Program is to capture and evaluate the performance of students who have traditionally been exempted from statewide testing programs (Standards of Learning, Literacy Passport, Stanford Nine). Amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 97) reflect the intent to extend educational accountability and reform to all students, including those with severe disabilities. Even though these students represent a relatively small portion of the overall school population, the Virginia Alternate Assessment Program was developed with the belief that these students are a part of our accountability system and that the evaluation of their achievement represents an important component of our quest towards high standards.

The Virginia Alternate Assessment Program (VAAP) is being developed using the following statements as guiding principles.

1. The alternate assessment is designed for students who are pursuing a functional curriculum regardless of their education placement (e.g., general education classroom, special education classroom, hospital, homebound, private school, state-operated program).
2. Decisions about participation in the alternate assessment are made collaboratively by the IEP team and are reviewed at least annually.
3. Students participating in the alternate assessment have access to the general curriculum and to instruction in integrated school and community settings.
4. Student achievement will be based on multiple sources of data.
5. Assessment must yield reliable and valid information that leads directly to student learning and improved instruction.
6. The alternate assessment will follow nondiscriminatory practices and will be sensitive to issues of cultural competence.
7. Student achievement on the performance indicators and access to the delivery practices are viewed as equally important in improving the student's quality of life and preparing the student for employment and independent living.
8. The alternate assessment will parallel the general assessment as far as possible.
9. Schools will be accountable and have high expectations for all students.

**GUIDELINES FOR PARTICIPATION
VIRGINIA ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT PROGRAM (VAAP)**

Student Name _____ Date of Birth _____

School/Division _____ Date _____

A completed alternate assessment shall be submitted for students participating in the Virginia Alternate Assessment Program (VAAP) at the elementary, middle school and high school levels. Alternate assessments shall be completed as follows:

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| Elementary I | No later than the school year in which the student is 8 years old on or before September 30. |
| Elementary II | No later than the school year in which the student is 10 years old on or before September 30. |
| Middle School | No later than the school year in which the student is 13 years old on or before September 30. |
| High School | One year prior to the student's exit year. |

Directions

The IEP team determines participation in alternate assessment. Team members must consider current and historical documentation (to be noted on page 2). Documentation may include, but is not limited to, evaluation data, school records, parent/teacher observations, anecdotal notes, previous IEPs, etc. The following reasons alone are not sufficient for decision making:

- ▲ Poor attendance;
- ▲ English as a Second Language;
- ▲ Social, cultural, and economic differences;
- ▲ Disruptive behavior;
- ▲ Student's reading level;
- ▲ Expectations or poor performance;
- ▲ Amount of time receiving special education services;
- ▲ Low achievement in general education;
- ▲ Categorical disabilities labels;
- ▲ Level of intelligence; or
- ▲ Place where the student receives services.

The IEP Team has the responsibility to determine and document that the student meets **ALL** of the following criteria by circling "yes" for each of the statements. If team members determine that the student **DOES NOT MEET** a specific criterion, "no" should be circled. This indicates the student is not a candidate for alternate assessment and should be considered for appropriate participation in the Standards of Learning Assessment.

Complete Section 1 for **ALL** students (elementary, middle school, and high school) for whom alternate assessment is being considered. Complete Section 1 **AND** 2 for students who are in middle schools or high schools. Attach additional pages, if necessary.

Section 1 (Complete for all Students)

- Y N The student has a current IEP.
- Y N The student demonstrates significant cognitive impairments and adaptive skills deficits that prevent completion of curriculum based on the Standards of Learning (SOL) even with program and testing accommodations.
- Y N The student's present level of performance indicates the need for extensive direct instruction and/or intervention in a life skills curriculum that may include personal management, recreation and leisure, school and community, vocational, functional academics, communication, social competence, and motor skills to accomplish the application and transfer of life skills.
- Y N The student requires intensive, frequent, and individualized instruction in a variety of settings to show progress and acquire, maintain, or generalize life and/or functional academic skills.

Section 2 (Complete for students in the eighth grade through high school)

- Y N The student is working toward educational goals other than those prescribed for a standard or advanced studies diploma program.

Section 3 (Complete for students who meet criteria listed above)

The IEP team members agree that _____ meets the participation criteria stated above for the VAAP for the _____ school year and will not participate in other statewide assessments. This participation decision will be stated on the IEP and is supported by the current and historical data found on the following documents:

Supporting Documentation:

| Position/Representing | Signature | Date |
|-----------------------|-----------|------|
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**Questions and Answers
About the Virginia Alternate Assessment Program**

1. *Who is developing the Virginia Alternate Assessment Program?*

The Virginia Alternate Assessment Program is a project that is shared by the Division of Assessment and Reporting and the Division of Instruction's, Office of Special Education and Student Services. Staff members from each division have direct responsibility for ongoing program development. Department personnel are supported by a steering committee composed of stakeholders from across the state who represent each of the eight superintendent's regions. Persons on the steering committee include teachers, parents, special education directors, principals, division directors of testing, technical assistance providers, university faculty, private school administrators, and staff member of state-operated programs.

The Department is also supported by the Virginia Institute for Developmental Disabilities (VIDD), the Mid-South Regional Resource Center (MSRRC), and the Inclusive Large Scale Standards and Assessment (ILSSA). VIDD is a university-affiliated program located at Virginia Commonwealth University. MSRRC and ILSSA are associated with the Human Development Institute, which is a university-affiliated program at the University of Kentucky. These programs will provide support, research, and technical expertise for the development of the Virginia Alternate Assessment Program.

2. *What is the schedule of activities for development?*

The following broad timeframes are projected:

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|-----------------------|---|
| Spring 2000 | Selection of Assessment Strategies |
| | Field testing of Assessment Strategies |
| Summer 2000 | Scoring of Submissions from field test sites |
| | Development of training materials |
| Fall 2000 | Statewide training for teachers |
| Fall 2000-Spring 2001 | Collection of alternate assessment data by teachers |
| Spring 2001 | Submission of data for statewide scoring |
| | Scoring of data |
| Summer 2001 | Results reported to school divisions |

3. *When will the Virginia Alternate Assessment Program be implemented in school divisions?*

The Virginia Alternate Assessment Program will be implemented in school divisions in the 2000-2001 school year.

4. *What will the Virginia Alternate Assessment Program evaluate?*

Students participating in the Virginia Alternate Assessment will be assessed in the four content areas (English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and History/Social Science). The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997 mandated that every child shows progress in the general education curriculum. Student performance on IEP goals linked to Standards of Learning and performance indicators in a variety of settings and context will be evidence in a collection of work. Student achievement demonstrated in the Collection of Evidence will be individually reviewed and scored.

5. ***What assessment options are being considered?***

The Department of Education is considering collecting a variety of components that would be referred to as a Collection of Evidence. Information from surrounding states suggest that a Collection of Evidence may be the best way to gather information on the achievement of students who are diverse in age and ability.

The Collection of Evidence may include IEP goals and objectives, information obtained from parents, the student's resume, the student's schedule, and subject area entries that reflect student achievement through direct observation reports, student work samples, data charts, performance event results, pictures, and/or video and audio tapes. These assessment options will be field tested by 65 teachers across the state from April – June 2000. Information from the field test will be used to make final decisions on the components that will be required in the Collection of Evidence.

6. ***How will alternate assessment data be collected?***

Teachers of students who meet the VAAP participation criteria will gather components for each student's Collection of Evidence. Data may include the results of surveys, interviews, and observations, data sheets, student work samples, pictures, audiotapes, videotapes, etc. These components will be gathered starting in October 2000 and continue through April 2001. In April 2001 the data will be organized into a Collection of Evidence and submitted to the Department of Education for scoring and the reporting of results. The details of this process are being developed.

7. ***Will the data collection process be flexible enough to individualize the process?***

The data collection process will be standardized in the sense that teachers will start and complete the process within a specified time frame. The bodies of evidence will also be submitted during dates pre-determined by the Department of Education. It is likely that the Department of Education will require certain components for all students participating in the VAAP and allow other components to be selected from a list of options.

8. ***What scoring techniques will be used?***

The Department of Education is in the process of developing a scoring rubric that will focus on student performance. By design a rubric will provide an evaluator with a consistent set of standards by which each Collection of Evidence can be reviewed and scored. The rubric that is currently in development and that will be used during field testing will assess student performance in English, mathematics, history, and science as evidenced by:

- Performance of IEP activities correctly
- Performance of IEP activities that show access to and progress in the general curriculum
- Performance of IEP activities in a variety of settings with social interactions
- Performance of IEP activities in a functional context; and
- Performance of IEP activities independently.

Procedures will be developed to ensure the reliability of the application of the scoring procedures.

9. ***How will performance be determined?***

One of the philosophical statements that serves as a guiding principle for the development of the alternate assessment is that it will parallel the general assessment to

the greatest extent possible. In the SOL assessment, a student's performance is evaluated using the following terminology: Did Not Pass, Pass Proficient, and Pass Advanced. With this in mind, the Department of Education is considering using these terms to score English, mathematics, history, and science entries in the alternate assessment. The scoring process that is under development applies a numerical value for student performance evaluated as "progressing," "competent," or "generalized." In turn the numerical value will be used to determine cut-scores that will be used to represent the categories: Did Not Pass, Pass Proficient, and Pass Advanced.

10. *How will the alternate assessment score count towards school accreditation?*

The proposed revision of the Standards of Accreditation clearly states the intentions of the state Board of Education to include the results of the alternate assessment in the accreditation of schools. The board, however, has not determined the specifics.

11. *How will school divisions decide which students participate in the alternate assessment?*

Participation in the Virginia Alternate Assessment Program is determined on an individual basis by the IEP team. IEP teams will use the participation criteria for the VAAP that was developed by the Steering Committee. The IEP decision must be based on current and historical data and be made on an annual basis.

12. *May a student participate in the both SOL assessment and the alternate assessment?*

No. Participation options for students do not include participation in both the SOL assessment and the alternate assessment during the same school year. Because the decision to participate in the alternate assessment is an annual decision, it is possible that a student could participate in the SOL during one test administration year and the alternate assessment during another test administration year, or vice versa. This decision will rest with the IEP team, which would have the access to current and historical data in making this decision.

13. *How will consistency of participation be ensured among school divisions?*

The Department of Education will monitor the participation rate and may develop a system to determine possible discrepancies.

14. *At what grade levels will the Alternate Assessment be given?*

The alternate assessment will be given at the following times:

- No later than the school year in which the student is 8 years old on or before September 30;
- No later than the school year in which the student is 10 years old on or before September 30;
- No later than the school year in which the student is 13 years old on or before September 30; and
- One year prior to the student's exit year.

Alternate Assessment Field Test Participants

| SCHOOL DIVISION | NAME | SCHOOL |
|------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Arlington County | Therese Smith | Taylor Elementary School |
| | Julia Anderson | Ashlawn Elementary School |
| Augusta County | Tammy Johnston | VVTC-ETP Building |
| Brunswick County | Rose Spradley | Totaro Elementary School |
| | Audrey Holloway | J.S. Russell Junior High School |
| | Annie Jones | Brunswick Senior High School |
| Chesapeake City | Reinee Kissinger | Hickory High School |
| Chesterfield County | Debbie Waldrop | Robious Middle School |
| | Mary Molsky | Monacan High School |
| | Mary Jane Richardson | Chesterfield County Schools |
| Dinwiddie County | Brenda Antillon | Southside Elementary School |
| | Wanda Walker | Dinwiddie Middle School |
| | Nellie Kee | Dinwiddie High School |
| Fairfax County | Pat Everill | Poplar Tree Elementary School |
| | Michelle Gesker | Poplar Tree Elementary School |
| | Elizabeth Baker | South Lakes High School |
| | Stacey Guzowski | Kilmer Center |
| Fluvanna County | Jennifer Chipman | Fluvanna High School |
| Franklin County | Christine Abdelhadi | Rocky Mount Elementary School |
| | Linda Jamison | Franklin County High School |
| Frederick County | Patricia Throckmorton | Sherando High School |
| | Theresa Hill | Sherando High School |
| Giles County | Janice Walkup | Giles High School |
| | Christy Gordon | Eastern Elementary/Middle School |
| Halifax County | Martha Brizendine | Cluster Springs Elementary School |
| | Kelly Weatherford | Halifax County Middle School |
| Hanover County | Linda Fielding | Cool Springs Elementary School |
| | Maureen Skinner | Chickahominy Middle School |
| | Leigh Matich-Folds | Patrick Henry High School |
| Harrisonburg City | Gail Reese | Waterman Elementary School |
| Henrico County | Stephanie Kready | Ward Elementary School |
| | Virginia Turner | Short Pump Middle School |
| | Patricia Soloman | VA Randolph Spec. Ed. Center |
| King William County | Debra Gibson | King William High School |
| | Randy Shipman | King William High School |
| Loudoun County | Kathy Collins | Sterling Elementary School |
| | Karen Houtz | Blue Ridge Middle School |
| | Barbara Kabernagle | Loudoun Valley High School |
| Mecklenburg County | Judy Turchetta | Park View Senior High School |
| Newport News City | Nathan Sparks | Crittenden Middle School |

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| Norfolk City | Kim Beverly | Oakwood Elementary School |
| | CaThoma Turner | Oakwood Elementary School |
| | Karen Bohl | Willoughby Elementary School |
| | Rogene Mason | Willard Model School |
| | Deborah Nolan | Willard Model School |
| | Kay Egan | Norfolk City Schools |
| Nottoway County | Joyce Johnson | Nottoway Middle School |
| | Susie Jordan | Nottoway Intermediate School |
| Pittsylvania County | Al Klugh | Chatham Elementary School |
| | Rebecca Spainhour | Blairs Middle School |
| | Marianne Jones | Tunstall High School |
| | Debbie Rosser | Regional Alternative School |
| | Mary Ward | Pittsylvania County Schools |
| Prince Edward County | Doug Deppen | Prince Edward Elementary School |
| Pulaski County | Dana Patton | Critzer Elementary School |
| Richmond City | Linda Hopkins | Amelia Street School |
| | Susan Hawkins | John F. Kennedy High School |
| Rockbridge County | Karen Postin | Natural Bridge Elementary School |
| Spotsylvania County | Adrienne Thomas | Salem Elementary School |
| Tazewell County | Mary Stanley | Richland Middle School |
| | Vickie Coeburn | Tazewell High School |
| Virginia Beach City | Isaac Odibo | Princess Ann High School |
| | Rebecca Montgomery | Princess Ann High School |
| | Regina Carpenter | Princess Ann High School |
| | Mary Davis | Princess Ann High School |
| York County | Brenda Baynham | Bethel Manor Elementary School |
| | Cynthia Shick | Bethel Manor Elementary School |
| Virginia School for the Deaf and Blind | Connie Caldwell | Staunton |