

POSITION STATEMENT

Adopted by Virginia PTA Board of Directors



Virginia
PTA[®]
everychild. onevoice.[®]

STUDENT GROWTH ASSESSMENTS

Virginia PTA believes that high-quality assessments provide valuable information to parents, teachers and school leaders about the growth and achievement of their students. Virginia PTA also believes that no single test, or data point should be the sole determinant of a student's academic or work future, such as graduation, admission, retention or tracking.

Virginia PTA supports a comprehensive assessment system that includes multiple measures of student growth and achievement that reflect the depth and breadth of knowledge and skills that students are expected to acquire, as well as their capacity to perform critical competencies

The Virginia Standards of Learning (SOLs), developed in the mid-1990s, are taken by students in grades 3-12 at the end of the school year to measure student progress according to the Virginia state standards for reading, math, science, social studies and writing. High School students who are enrolled in SOL-associated courses may take the SOL end-of-course (EOC) test if they have not yet met federal participation requirements **or** if they need verified credit for graduation. SOLs provide a way to measure achievement gaps between student subgroups, determine the progress of schools, and identify schools that need assistance. Standards of Learning tests are computer adaptive tests that are customized for every student based on how the student responds to the test questions. SOL test results are generally available within three months of when the test was taken.

The reading, math and science SOLs are used to meet federal requirements for school accreditation. In 2018 the Virginia Board of Education revised school accreditation to include multiple school-quality performance indicators, including a measure of student growth rather than relying solely on end of year student achievement or proficiency measures. SOL tests are, however, still viewed as a high-stake assessment which creates anxiety for students and reduces instruction time as teachers prepare students for the year-end testing.

Many school divisions also purchase and administer Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) or similar testing. These tests are generally administered in reading and math in grades 2-8 in the fall, winter and spring to support differentiated instruction through-out the year.

Virginia PTA supports the development of a state-wide through-year growth assessment system that provides all school divisions with data to monitor student growth while also reducing the testing burden on students and enabling school divisions to meet state and federal standards.

Virginia PTA supports providing students, teachers and parents with real-time assessment data to set personalized student growth goals, provide differentiated instruction based on students' strengths/needs and to monitor students' progress toward their growth goals throughout the year.

Virginia PTA supports professional development and materials that enable teachers to interpret assessment data and identify potential learning gaps as part of new instruction.

Virginia PTA supports increased communication to parents and caregivers regarding how to understand and utilize growth assessments and regular two-way communication about how schools and families can work together to support student achievement.

Virginia PTA supports assessment results being available to students, parents and educators within a month of the assessment.

Virginia PTA supports alternative testing for students who qualify for accommodations under their IDEA Individualized Education Plan and clear communication to parents about the impact of alternative assessments on graduation requirements.

Virginia PTA supports clear communication to parents at the start of the school year and periodically through-out the year about when tests will be administered, the process to opt-out and the impact of opting out as well as re-take options.

Virginia PTA supports options for students to take standardized testing remotely for those enrolled in a distance learning program.

Virginia PTA supports inclusion of information for students within the growth assessment system that establishes an expectation that testing is used as a formative measure to identify areas for growth and support personalized learning opportunities.

Additional Reference: [National PTA Position on Assessments](#)

December 1, 2021: Adopted by the Virginia PTA Board of Directors

Virginia PTA Position Statements are adopted by the Virginia PTA Board of Directors and are official documents based on our mission, research and/or previous resolutions or positions of either Virginia PTA or National PTA. Position Statements outline the opinion, will, or intent of the association to address a current statewide situation or concern that affects children and youth and which requires statewide or national attention and action to address the issue.