



#236-21

**Commonwealth of Virginia
Virginia Department of Education
Superintendent's Memo #236-21**

DATE: August 20, 2021
TO: Division Superintendents
FROM: James F. Lane, Ed.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction
SUBJECT: **Changes to Certain Accreditation Indicators Related to the COVID-19
Pandemic and 2021 General Assembly Action**

As you are aware, the Superintendent of Public Instruction exercised emergency authority granted by the Virginia General Assembly to waive accreditation ratings for both the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 accreditation years. The calculation of school accreditation will resume with the 2022-2023 ratings based on data from 2021-2022.

At the July 22, 2021 meeting, the Virginia Board of Education approved several changes to the accreditation indicators. To mitigate the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the accreditation ratings for 2022-2023, the Board delayed the implementation of the College, Career, and Civic Readiness Indicator (CCCRI) by one year so that the first implementation of the CCCRI will be in the 2023-2024 accreditation year.

In addition to the delay in the CCCRI, the Board also modified the previously approved methodology for measuring year-to-year growth on the Standards of Learning (SOL) tests in response to 2021 action of the Virginia General Assembly. During the 2021 session, the General Assembly passed [House Bill 2027](#) that requires the implementation of "through-year" growth assessments in reading and mathematics for grades 3-8. These assessments will be administered beginning in fall 2021 with a winter assessment added to the fall assessment in 2022-2023. This legislation also modifies how growth on the SOL test is determined by

allowing for the calculation of growth within a school year. As a reminder, growth is a component of the combined rate used in the Academic Achievement Indicators for mathematics and English as well as the Academic Achievement Gap Indicators used in the accreditation ratings.

In 2021-2022, students in grades 3-8 will be administered a reading and mathematics assessment at the beginning of the school year. The result of this fall 2021 assessment will be compared to the student's spring 2022 SOL assessment score to determine growth. In this initial transition year, the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) plans to also compare a student's spring 2021 SOL assessment in these subjects to their spring 2022 SOL test score. The school will be given the best result between these two growth determinations to be included in the combined rate for 2022-2023 accreditation ratings.

At the July 22, 2021 meeting, VDOE staff also alerted the Board to their plans to exclude data from the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years in multi-year accreditation calculations as described below:

1. When determining performance levels for each indicator, the Standards of Accreditation allow the performance level to be determined from either a current year rate or a three-year rate. Due to incomplete data in the 2019-2020 school year because of school closures and the potential for atypical results from the 2020-2021 school year because of the pandemic, the VDOE plans to combine data from the 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2021-2022 school years to calculate the three-year rates used to determine accreditation indicator performance levels in the 2022-2023 accreditation year.
2. Schools can receive a higher performance level for indicators if the data demonstrate a specified improvement within that indicator from the previous year. Improvement criteria for performance level increases will compare data from the 2018-2019 school year to that of the 2021-2022 school year.
3. Finally, if an indicator remains at a Level 2 or Level 3 for more than four consecutive years, the indicator receives a Level 3 rating. The accreditation years used for this designation will not include the waived 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 accreditation years.

Additional details about the implementation of changes to the multi-year accreditation calculations will be provided as they become available.

For more information

Questions about changes to the accreditation indicators may be sent to the Accountability Office at accountability@doe.virginia.gov.

JFL/SLR/as