

## BOARD BRIEF

Date: April 9, 2021

BOARD INFORMATION:   X  

MEETING PREPARATION:       

**FROM:** Clinton Page, Ed.S., Chief of Accountability and Research

**THROUGH:** Gregory C. Hutchings, Jr., Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools

**TO:** The Honorable Meagan Alderton, Chair, and  
Members of the Alexandria City School Board

**TOPIC:** Spring SOL Administration Update

**ACPS 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL:**

Goal 2: Instructional Excellence

**SY 2020-2021 FOCUS AREA:**

Focus Area 1: Reopening of School

**FY 2021 BUDGET PRIORITY:**

Outreach to Hispanic Families to Improve Attendance and Graduation

**SUMMARY:**

This brief updates the School Board to current division planning, timelines, and implementation of in-person spring SOL assessments and a new virtual assessment option released in March by VDOE.

**BACKGROUND:**

Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) has been actively collaborating with the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) to meet current state and federal assessment requirements within SY 2020-2021. The spring Standards of Learning (SOL) assessments are still only allowed by VDOE to be administered in-person. The division is working hand-in-hand with VDOE to align in-person assessments with our current hybrid and virtual learning models.

**High School (End-of-Course) Spring SOL Writing**

On April 21 and 22, T.C. Williams High School students enrolled in an English 11 course during the current school year will have the opportunity to take the in-person End-of-Course Writing Standards of Learning (SOL) test. The Writing SOL is only made available by VDOE for in-person administration and fulfills a state requirement for graduation. Parents of these students received communication in March informing them of this assessment and were asked to identify whether their student would be attending school in-person to take the assessments or if they were not based on COVID-19 concerns. Parents responding no to testing this spring were informed of future in-person test opportunities in summer and fall of 2021. Currently, 614

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students, across virtual and hybrid models, are scheduled to take the in-person Writing SOL. On April 21 and 22 students in Grades 9 and 10 will be administered their MAP Growth assessments and Grade 12 students will participate in various synchronous workshops focused on college and career planning and to support them through these processes.

### **Spring SOL Non-Writing Grades 3-12**

The spring SOL Non-Writing assessments will be administered in-person to students in grades 3-8 and secondary students enrolled in high school courses associated with an SOL to meet Virginia graduation requirements. The SOL data will be combined with other ACPS assessments to inform planning for summer learning and the 2021-22 school year. As a reminder, due to the pandemic the VDOE has again waived the State Accreditation System and Ratings based on data collected within the 2020-2021 school year.

ACPS students in the hybrid model will complete the assessments in school and their families will receive the same communication as previous years about the upcoming. This year, the state is allowing students taking grade 3-8 SOLs who are in the 100% virtual learning model to choose between coming into school to take the SOL assessments or arranging to take the new Virginia Remote Student Progress tests at home. The Virginia Remote Student Progress tests are not an SOL, but are designed to measure students' current academic progress in grade 3-8 SOL courses. Families of virtual students in high school courses requiring an SOL to meet graduation requirements were not given a virtual assessment option from VDOE. Communication will go out to all virtual families about their options for testing this spring. Families with virtual students will be asked to complete a survey between April 12-26 to notify ACPS about their selection for their students' assessments and their need for transportation if attending in-person to take the SOL(s).

VDOE has also provided flexibility to divisions to waive the requirement for expedited retakes for grade 3-8 SOLs. Typically, expedited retakes are offered to any student who scores in a range close to meeting proficiency. These students are then re-administered the SOL after receiving additional instructional remediation prior to the close of the school year. ACPS will take advantage of the VDOE flexibility and will not administer expedited retakes to students in grade 3-8 SOLs unless they are requested by the parent

**RECOMMENDATION:** The Superintendent recommends that the School Board review this brief for updated information regarding SOL planning for spring 2021.

### **IMPACT:**

SOL data along with MAP Growth and other data points will assist in informing areas of student strength and need for both individual and division supports needed to recover and reignite from the impacts of the dual pandemic of COVID-19 and systemic racism.

### **CONTACT:**

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