

A PEATC

Do You Know....



Factsheet for Virginia's Parents

Preparing Your Child with a Disability for 3rd Grade SOL Tests

What are Virginia's Standards of Learning (SOLs)?

The SOLs are the **standards for achievement** for students in grades K-12 in English, math, science, history/social science, technology, fine arts, foreign language, health and physical education, and driver education. Sometimes you will hear SOLs referred to as the general education curriculum.

The SOL curriculum establishes the specific **knowledge and skills** students must possess to meet the standards for graduation with a Regular or Advanced Studies Diploma. **SOL Testing begins in third grade.**

Students with disabilities are expected to participate in the SOL curriculum and the SOL tests unless their **Individualized Education Program (IEP)** requires an **alternate or modified curriculum**. This extremely limited number of students would participate in the Virginia Alternate Assessment Program (VAAP) instead.

Making the Right Choice for Your Child

Making the decision about **keeping your child with a disability in the general education curriculum**, i.e., the Standards of Learning is an important one. Parents and the IEP team should consider the decision carefully.

Sometimes, parents will feel at an early age that their child is not able to participate in the SOLs or the SOL tests and that it will cause stress to the child. However, it is not always possible to predict the future, and **removing the child from the SOL curriculum prematurely can affect their future**. While parents may be told that they can change their minds and move their child back into the SOL curriculum later, it really is **impossible** in most cases to do so. The child will be too far behind to catch up and will not be able to obtain that Standard or Advanced Diploma. For more general information on SOLs see PEATC's Resource Document: [Virginia Standards of Learning](#).

What's Important About 3rd Grade?

SOL tests take place in **Grades 3-8 and high school**. In Grade 3, students are tested only in reading and mathematics. During grades 3-8, students are also required to take **Growth Assessments** to measure learning growth (progress)

References/Resources

[Virginia Standards of Learning \(SOLs\) for Students with Disabilities - A Resource Document \(peatc.org\)](#)

[Code of Virginia- Student Achievement Expectations](#)

[VDOE - Participation in the Virginia Assessment Program](#)

[VDOE-Standards of Learning- Testing](#)

[VDOE-Growth Assessments](#)



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in reading and math throughout the school year. Growth assessments are developed and administered **locally**, unlike the SOL tests which is the **statewide assessment system**. Participating in the Growth Assessments will help your child prepare for the SOL tests. Both Growth Assessments and SOL tests are administered **online** unless a student has a documented need to use paper/pencil format. If a student with an IEP needs **accommodations** to participate in SOL testing, those must be listed in the IEP and used in the classroom.

While SOL testing will be brand new for your third grader, do not be fearful as your worry may transmit to your child. In the early grades, passing SOL tests is not required for a student to **move to the next grade**. So, it is not necessary to make a **decision to remove a child from the SOL curriculum** unless the IEP team determines that the student will not be able to participate in the general curriculum even with accommodations.

Preparing your Third Grader for SOL Tests

- Preparing your child for their third grade SOL test is the same as preparing for any other test. Let your child know it is an **opportunity** for them to show what they have learned and **not to worry** if they don't know all the answers.
- **Being familiar with the standards** will help you decide the types of resources you need to help your child prepare.
- **Establish a study routine**, just like you have a homework routine, and try to **make it fun**. The less you show worry or stress, the less stressed your child will be. When they are older, end-of-course SOL testing will have more importance, but if they **get used to the process at an early age**, they will be prepared for the later years when passing the SOL tests is required for graduation.
- **Ask your child's teacher**, what they are doing to prepare your child for the SOL tests and see if you can implement those strategies at home.
- The Virginia Department of Education releases **practice tests** from the previous year that can be helpful and make your child feel **more confident** on test day. There are also **commercial products and resources** that can help if you feel your child needs additional practice or preparation.

Testing Process

The **online tests** for Grades 3-8 in reading and math are **computer adaptive**.

That means that the tests **customized to your child's response**. If the student answers **correctly**, the next question will be more challenging. If they answer **incorrectly**, the next question will be easier.

This will help your child **feel more successful** during the test and will **identify their strengths and weaknesses** moving forward.

Virginia allows **students in elementary and middle school who do not pass the SOL tests by a certain margin to retake the test before the end of the school year**. Retesting is available when a student receives a score between 375 and 399 where 400 is passing. Parents can request a retest, or they can refuse a retest opportunity for their child.

PEATC's mission focuses on building positive futures for Virginia's children by working collaboratively with families, schools, and communities to improve opportunities for excellence in education and success in school and community life. For more information about us, please contact:

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