

Virginia's New Annual Reading and Math Objectives What Parents and Advocates Need to Know

On July 24, 2012, the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) released new annual reading and math objectives through 2016-2017 for Virginia public school students. The VDOE is now allowed to establish new annual measurable objectives (AMOs) because it was granted a 2-year waiver from several requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) by the U.S. Dept. of Education (USED).

An **Annual Measurable Objective (AMO)** is the percentage of students within a school that must score proficient on the state assessments in reading or math, also known as the Standards of Learning (SOL) tests. The waiver provided by USED not only allows Virginia to set new AMOs, it also allows Virginia to set *different* AMOs for *different groups of students*, such as Black students, Hispanic students, students with disabilities, and economically disadvantaged students. This is a major departure from previous requirements of NCLB, which required that AMOs be the same for all student groups in order to close the achievement gap.

Virginia has also been allowed to establish new student groups. These new groups, known as "proficiency gap groups" are made up of students who "historically have had difficulty meeting the commonwealth's achievement standards," according to the VDOE press release available at http://www.doe.virginia.gov/news/news_releases/2012/jul24.shtml. Test performance of the new "proficiency gap groups" will be used to identify Virginia's lowest performing Title I schools. These schools, which will total just 108 of the state's 1839 schools (5.9%), will be required to implement school improvement plans. All other schools will only be required to report student performance against the AMOs.

In announcing the new AMOs, VDOE provided only math AMOs, explaining that new reading AMOs will be calculated on the Reading SOL tests administered during the upcoming 2012-2013 school year. Therefore, the public was only provided with new math AMOs for the next six years. The table below shows the math AMOs for the new "proficiency gap groups" as well as all students and other student groups. It also shows the change in the achievement gap between 2012 and 2017 as well as the change in the percentage of students expected to be proficient.

THE FACTS ABOUT VIRGINIA'S NEW MATH AMOs

- Proficiency for all students increases just 12 percentage points (61% to 73%) over six years;
- Achievement gap for Proficiency Gap Group 1 *increases from 14 to 15 over six years*;
- Proficiency for Black students increases just 12 percentage points (45 to 57) over six years, resulting in *no closing of the significant achievement gap between Black students and all students (16 points)*;
- Proficiency for economically disadvantaged students increases just 12 percentage points over six years also resulting in *no change in the achievement gap (14 points)*;
- Proficiency for students with disabilities increases 16 percentage points (33% to 49%), *closing the achievement gap by just 4 points*.

Virginia Mathematics Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs)							
Assessment Year >	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	Change in % of students required to be proficient between 2012-2017
All Students	61	64	66	68	70	73	+12
Proficiency Gap Group 1	47	49	52	54	56	58	+11
↳ Achievement Gap	-14	-15	-14	-14	-14	-15	Change = +1
Proficiency Gap Group 2 (Black Students)	45	48	50	52	54	57	+12
↳ Achievement Gap	-16	-16	-16	-16	-16	-16	Change = 0
Proficiency Gap Group 3 (Hispanic Students)	52	55	57	60	62	65	+13
↳ Achievement Gap	-9	-9	-9	-8	-8	-8	Change = -1
Students with Disabilities	33	36	39	42	45	49	+16
↳ Achievement Gap	-28	-28	-27	-26	-25	-24	Change = -4
ELL Students	39	42	45	48	51	54	+15
↳ Achievement Gap	-22	-22	-21	-20	-19	-19	Change = -3
Economically Disadvantaged Students	47	50	52	54	56	59	+12
↳ Achievement Gap	-14	-14	-14	-14	-14	-14	Change = 0
Asian Students	82	83	85	86	88	89	+7
↳ Achievement Gap	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
White Students	68	70	72	74	76	78	+10
↳ Achievement Gap	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A

NOTES: Proficiency Gap Group 1 combines students who have disabilities, are English Language Learners, or are Economically Disadvantaged
Achievement Gap is the difference between the individual student group and "all students"