

# Appendix A

## Definitions

(A1) Definitions for Minority Achievement Evaluation Pages 1 – 3

# Definitions

**Achievement Gap:** The achievement gap refers to differences in performance in educational measures among groups of students as defined by race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or other demographic factors.

**ACT:** The ACT is a national college admissions and placement test.

**Advanced Placement (AP):** The AP program is an intensive program of college level curricula and examinations developed by the College Board that provides high school students with an opportunity to earn college credit at participating colleges and universities across the country. The AP program offers students an opportunity to develop their academic strengths through rigorous curricula and challenging national examinations and exposes them to academic experiences usually reserved for college students.

**Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS):** The CLASS is a classroom observation tool developed at the University of Virginia's Curry School of Education. It aims to provide a common lens and language focused on classroom interactions that encourage student learning. The CLASS tool organizes teacher-student interactions into four broad domains: Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, Instructional Support, and Student Engagement.

**Community Satisfaction Survey:** The biannual Community Satisfaction Survey (CSS) provides a district-level snapshot of issues including school climate, instructional support, and cultural competence. Respondents include students, staff, parents, and community members, and questions are aligned with the Site-Based Survey, which is administered in alternating years.

**Cultural Competence:** Cultural competence is a set of attitudes, skills, behaviors, and policies that enable organizations and staff to work effectively in cross-cultural situations. It reflects the ability to acquire and use knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, practices and communication patterns of others to improve services, strengthen programs, and increase community participation. Simply stated, cultural competence is the level of knowledge-based skills required to work effectively with persons from particular groups.

**End-of-Course (EOC) SOL Test:** EOC SOL tests assess student mastery of the standards associated with the corresponding secondary coursework. Students who earn passing scores receive a verified credit towards their high school graduation requirements.

**International Baccalaureate (IB):** International Baccalaureate (IB) is an academic program licensed by the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) that, upon successful completion, results in the awarding of a high school degree. The curriculum emphasizes the importance of international awareness and responsible citizenship for students.

**Minority Achievement Coordinator:** The Minority Achievement Coordinator is a fulltime or part-time position at one elementary school and all comprehensive secondary schools. Coordinators work under the direction of the Office of Minority Achievement to address the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students and to design and implement activities that support student achievement.

**Minority Achievement Program - Program:** Within the Minority Achievement Program, programs are defined as regular opportunities with participation based on specific criteria. Examples include affinity groups, transition groups, and courses for which students receive elective credits.

**Minority Achievement Program - Service:** Within the Minority Achievement Program, services are defined as activities where participation is optional, may be offered over time, or may be singular events. Examples include field trips, summer opportunities, awards, scholarships, or opportunities offered by organizations within the community.

**SAT:** The SAT is a national college admissions and placement test.

**Self-Advocacy Skills:** Self-advocacy is defined as “An individual’s ability to effectively communicate, convey, negotiate, or assert his or her own interests, desires, needs, and rights. It involves making informed decisions and taking responsibility for those decisions.” (VanReusen et al., 1994). One of the goals of the Minority Achievement Program is to foster self-advocacy skills among students.

**Site-Based Survey:** The biannual Site-Based Survey (SBS) is designed to provide school-level feedback from students, teachers, and parents on issues including school climate, instructional support, and cultural competence. Questions are aligned with the Community Satisfaction Survey, which is administered in alternating years.

**Standards of Learning (SOLs):** The SOLs are the Virginia Board of Education's curriculum objectives that describe the commonwealth's expectations for student learning and achievement by subject for grades K–12.

**Strategic Plan:** APS develops six-year strategic plans with staff and community involvement to identify focus areas for school system improvement.