

Appendix A

Definitions

(A1) Definitions for Science Evaluation

Pages 1–2

Accelerated Classes

Accelerated Classes are defined as courses which are labeled as ‘intensified,’ ‘Advanced Placement (AP),’ or ‘International Baccalaureate (IB)’.

Adjusted Data

To determine accreditation and AYP, allowances are made for certain groups of students (i.e., limited English proficient (LEP) students, transfer students, and students who fail an end-of-course test the first time) to exclude their failing test scores from calculations.

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)

AYP is a measurement defined by United States federal legislation and the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*. It allows the U.S. Department of Education to determine how every state, and every school within a state, is performing academically according to results on their standardized tests.

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 advanced placement, college credit, or both 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 recovered for college students.

Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)

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 three broad domains: Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, and Instructional Support.

Curriculum Framework

A curriculum framework is an organized plan or set of standards or learning outcomes that defines the content to be learned in terms of clear, definable standards of what the student should know and be able to do. The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) has produced a curriculum framework for the state, while localities also write and implement district frameworks.

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.

Formative Assessments

Formative assessment is defined as “...feedback targeted to curriculum benchmarks” (Pollock & Ford, 2009). Such feedback enables teachers to determine to what extent students are learning curriculum objectives. Based on research findings regarding the usefulness of formative assessment, Marzano (2003) recommends implementing “...an assessment system that provides timely feedback on specific knowledge and skills for specific students” (page 39). Also, effective use of formative assessment involves using that feedback for planning and instruction, setting benchmarks for progress,

and monitoring the implementation of the plans with regard to student achievement of the anticipated benchmarks.

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.

Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP)

SIOP is a framework for organizing instruction with the main goals of improving academic content skills and language skills.

Standards of Learning (SOL)

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

Technology Enhanced Items (TEI)

SOL test questions available on online tests that allow students to indicate their responses in ways other than multiple choice in order for them to better demonstrate their critical thinking skills. For example, there are “drag and drop” items that require students to sort, order, classify, or label information. There are also “fill-in-the-blank” items that require students to complete open-ended questions.

Unadjusted Data

Data that includes the scores of all first-time test takers, regardless of their status, is called unadjusted. In determining accreditation and AYP, allowances are made for certain groups of students (i.e., limited English proficient (LEP) students, transfer students, and students who fail an end-of-course test the first time) to exclude their failing test scores from calculations.

Verified Credits

A verified unit of credit is awarded for a course in which the student earns a standard unit of credit and achieves a passing score on a corresponding EOC SOL test or a substitute assessment approved by the Virginia Board of Education. A standard unit of credit is awarded for a course in which the student successfully completes the objectives of the course and the equivalent of 140 clock hours of instruction.

Virginia Junior Academy of Science (VJAS)

A state chapter of the American Academy of Science dedicated to the advancement of science by discovering and encouraging aptitude among Virginia’s middle and high school students. To participate in the annual VJAS Symposium, students must submit their research papers to the academy for review. If selected, they will present their research in front of a panel of judges. Awards are presented to students whose research is recognized as top in their category.