

**Presentation to House
Appropriations Committee
Regarding Reporting Errors for
the Virginia Alternate
Assessment Program**

September 16, 2013

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Overview of Presentation

- **Background on Virginia Alternate Assessment Program**
- **Report of Issue**
- **Results of Investigation and Impact of Error on Students and Schools**
- **Corrective Action Plan**
- **Status of Testing Program and Planned Enhancements**

Background on Virginia Alternate Assessment Program

- **The Virginia Alternate Assessment Program (VAAP) is required by the federal No Child Left Behind Act and is intended for students with significant cognitive disabilities who cannot take the Standards of Learning (SOL) tests even with accommodations.**
- **VAAP is an evidence-based assessment in which teachers submit student work samples in a “Collection of Evidence.”**
- **Work samples are based on the student’s attainment of the Aligned Standards of Learning.**

Background on Virginia Alternate Assessment Program

- **The Aligned Standards of Learning are based on the SOL content standards but have been reduced in depth and complexity.**
- **The work samples in the Collections of Evidence are scored by trained scorers using a rubric. The numeric scores are then converted to performance levels (fail, proficient, advanced) based on cut scores adopted by the Virginia Board of Education.**

Background on Virginia Alternate Assessment Program

- In 2012-2013, new Aligned Standards of Learning in reading, writing, mathematics, and science were implemented.
- Because of the changes in the content measured by VAAP, the Virginia Board of Education had to adopt new cut scores for the performance levels of proficient and advanced. The Board adopted new cut scores on June 27, 2013.



Report of Issue

- **On July 22, 2013, VAAP scores were provided to school divisions for download via a secure portal.**
- **On July 29, 2013, a school division pulled a VAAP file from the Pearson system as part of routine data analysis.**
- **When the July 29 file was compared to a file pulled from the system the week of July 22, 2013, as part of the analysis, school division staff identified discrepancies in the performance levels (fail, pass, advanced) reported for some students.**

Report of Issue

- **School division staff reported the discrepancies to Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) staff on July 29, 2013.**
- **VDOE staff contacted Pearson immediately and asked for an investigation.**

Results of Investigation

- **Pearson’s investigation showed that the correct “look-up” table used to convert the VAAP scores to performance levels (e.g., fail, proficient, advanced) was not loaded into the Pearson system following the Board meeting.**
- **Because of this error, during the week of July 22, 2013, incorrect performance levels were reported for some students who had participated in VAAP.**

Results of Investigation

- **On July 28, 2013, an updated table that converted VAAP scores to performance levels was loaded to the reporting system as part of the routine processes that occur at the end of a test administration.**
- **This table reflected the correct score- to - performance level conversion and resulted in correct performance levels being reported for VAAP beginning on July 28, 2013.**

Student/Parent Impact

- **20 out of 132 divisions reported that incorrect VAAP reports were sent home to parents**
 - **369 students originally received reports indicating passing (either proficient or advanced) and should have been failing**
 - **632 students originally received reports indicating a performance level of advanced and should have been reported as proficient**

Division/ School Impact

- **4,354 VAAP Students were impacted**
 - **1,656 students were originally reported as passing (either proficient or advanced) and should have been reported as fail**
 - **2,698 students were originally reported as advanced and should have been reported as proficient**

Contact with School Divisions

- **On July 30, 2013, Pearson supplied a list of impacted students with corrected performance level information to each division**
- **Between August 7 and August 9, 2013, Pearson supplied corrected student reports for all divisions who had sent the incorrect reports home to parents.**

Contact with School Divisions

- **Pearson also prepared letters explaining the situation for Superintendents, Principals, Parents, and Division Directors of Testing.**
- **Parents who had received score reports with incorrect VAAP performance levels were provided with a Pearson contact to call if they had additional questions.**

Corrective Action Plan

- **Analyze the software system for reporting**
 - reduce the need for manual intervention
- **Eliminate the use of placeholder data in production**
- **Review software quality testing methods to identify and correct deficiencies**
- **Contract PricewaterhouseCoopers to conduct a 3rd party quality review of all software systems for VAAP**

Financial Compensation

- **VAAP reporting error not addressed specifically by the Liquidated Damages statements in the existing contract**
- **Pearson has agreed to provide Virginia with \$300,000 worth of services as compensation**

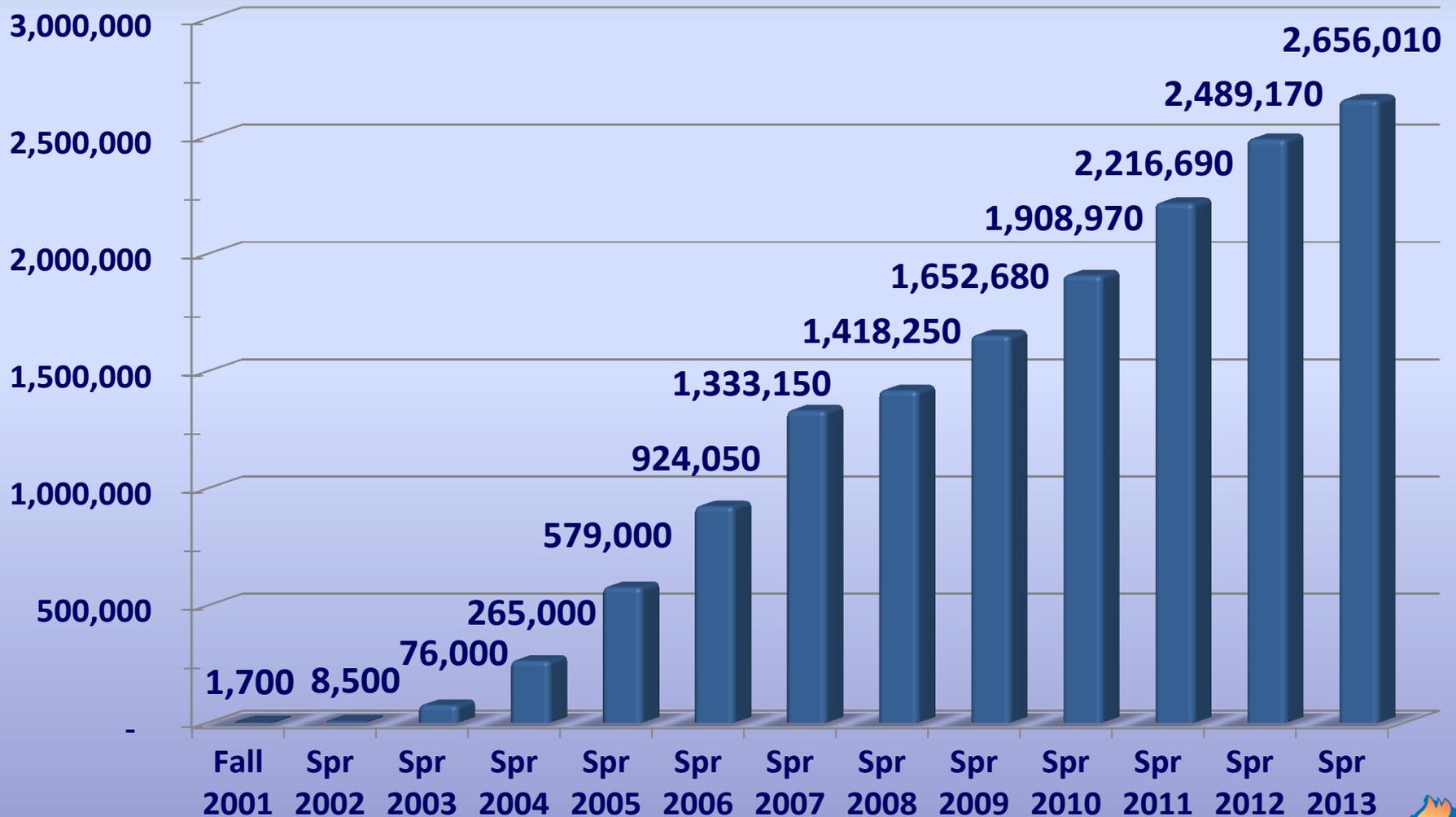
Status of Testing Program and Planned Enhancements

September 16, 2013



Virginia's Online SOL Assessments :

Number of Online Non-Writing Tests Completed by Administration



Changes to Testing Program

- **New tests reflect increased rigor of new Standards of Learning (SOL)**
- **Implementation of Technology-Enhanced items in Mathematics, Reading, Writing and Science**
 - **Increases opportunity to assess higher order thinking skills**
 - **Allows assessments to more closely mirror instruction**
- **Students compose short papers associated with the SOL writing tests on the computer instead of using paper and pencil.**



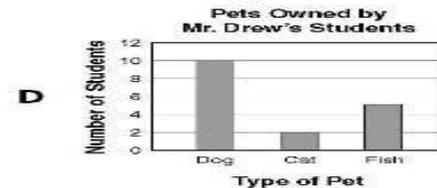
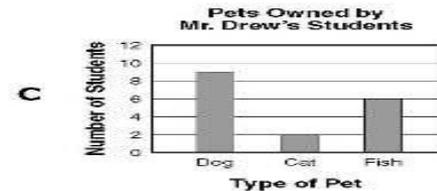
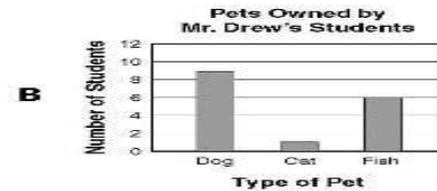
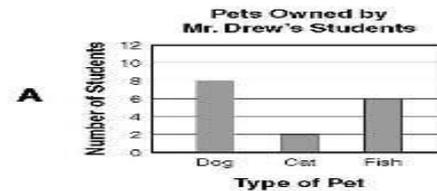
Sample Item based on 2001 Mathematics SOL

- 41 Each student in Mr. Drew's class owns one pet. This table shows the number of students who own different pets.

Pets Owned by Mr. Drew's Students

Type of Pet	Number of Students
Dog	9
Cat	2
Fish	6

Which bar graph correctly represents these data?



Sample Technology-Enhanced Item Based on 2009 SOL

John doe
Grade3 Practice Items(2009 Math SOL) X Exit

Help

Directions: Click on a location above each bar to show the bar height.

This tally chart shows the number of pictures four students collected for art class.

Student	Number of Pictures
Nancy	
Bryan	
Kristen	
Ricardo	

Create a bar graph to show the data in the tally chart.

Student	Number of Pictures
Nancy	4
Bryan	3
Kristen	7
Ricardo	8

Flag for Review

Question 14 of 35
Section 1

Section Review

Previous Next

Future Enhancements

- **Studies looking at administration of online tests on handheld “tablets.”**
- **Study to explore the feasibility of using “automated” scoring for the short paper students write as part of the SOL writing test**
- **Study of online accessibility features for visually impaired students**
- **Pilot of computer adaptive testing**

Overview of Computer Adaptive Testing

Current Testing System

- **All students taking a particular test (grade 7 mathematics) take one of several versions**
- **Test forms are constructed by testing contractor staff and reviewed by Department staff and by committees of educators**
- **All students must demonstrate the same level of achievement to be considered proficient or advanced regardless of the version of the test they take**

Computer Adaptive Testing (CAT)

- **All students must still demonstrate the same level of achievement to be considered proficient or advanced**
- **However, instead of each student responding to the same test items contained in a particular version of the test, the computer customizes the items administered to the individual student**

CAT

- **In CAT, the computer scores the student's responses to a test item and selects the next item based on the student's response**
- **CAT is iterative in that the process of choosing questions, scoring responses, and selecting new items is repeated throughout the test**

Advantages of CAT

- **Improved security since students in the same test session are responding to different items.**
- **May provide increased opportunities for retests**
- **Efficient and secure mechanism for online delivery**
 - **Can use flexible administration windows**
 - **Simplifies form construction process**
 - **May allow for shorter testing times**

Advantages of CAT

- **Increased precision of measurement, especially for high-performing and struggling students**
- **May improve student motivation because content is administered at a more engaging level of difficulty, especially for struggling students**
- **Well-suited for measuring growth**

CAT Pilot

- **Pilots planned for:**
 - **January 2014 for grade 7 mathematics**
 - **May/June 2014 for grade 8 reading**
- **Results of pilot will inform decision to move forward with the use of CAT for operational testing**

Future of CAT

- **At its April 2013 meeting, the Virginia Board of Education authorized VDOE to move forward with transitioning to CAT.**
- **If the CAT pilots are successful and sufficient funding is available, VDOE hopes to administer some SOL tests via CAT in fall 2014 with additional tests added in 2015-2016 and beyond.**