

RICHMOND CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS



DEBORAH JEWELL-SHERMAN, Ed.D.
SUPERINTENDENT

June 12, 2008

Mr. John Eisenberg
Division of Special Education and Student Services
Virginia Department of Education
PO Box 2120
Richmond, Virginia 23218-2120

Dear Mr. Eisenberg:

This letter is to request an exception for to the one percent cap for the number of proficient and advance proficient scores on the Virginia Alternate Assessment Program (VAAP) for Richmond Public Schools. Our division has a unique demographic that has caused a higher number of students with significant cognitive disabilities.

Based upon the 2005 three year census there are approximately 10,000 school age students that are not enrolled in Richmond Public Schools (RPS). This would make the number of students in RPS approximately 34,650 instead of the September 30, 2007 student membership of 23,771. RPS's special education December 1, 2007 is 4622. This equates to 19.4 % of the RPS fall student membership. This would be 13.3% of the anticipated membership based upon the school census.

Additionally, students with disabilities tend to remain in RPS for there entire educational career and do not attend private schools or are home schooled thus inflating the percentage of students with disabilities in RPS.

Additionally, using upon the state fall student membership and the December 1, 2007 counts, at the state level the percentage of students with disabilities that are in grades 3rd -8th and 11th is 13.5% while in RPS the percentage is 21.7%. Also, students with mental retardation, severe disabilities, multiple disabilities, autism and developmental delay represent 4.8% of the RPS student population in grades 3rd -8th and 11th while at the state level it is only 1.9%. Students with significant cognitive disabilities are a part of this group of students.

Additionally, the percentage of RPS students in these testing grades with mental retardation, severe disabilities and multiple disabilities is greater than the state's percentages. (Table below)

"The Capital Choice in Public Education"

Disability	RPS %	State %
Mental Retardation Multiple Disabilities Severe Disability	3.8	1.2

Thus the our percentages of students with disabilities that includes students with significant cognitive disabilities is higher than the state percentages.

Additionally from the table below the number of VAAPs participants since 2006 has decreased by 22.4%. This has been done through staff development and working with schools to ensure that IEP teams are following the VDOE VAAP participation guidance document.

Disability	2006	2007	2008
Autism	31	42	39
Orthopedic Impairment	2	2	0
Developmental Delay	4	10	12
Hearing Impairment	1	3	0
Speech Language Impairment	1	3	0
Traumatic Brain Injury	2	1	2
Mental Retardation	379	299	265
Multiple Disabilities	18	26	29
Severe Disability	15	14	15
Emotional Disturbance	9	2	0
Learning Disability	19	29	8
Other Health Impairment	23	23	21
Totals	504	454	391

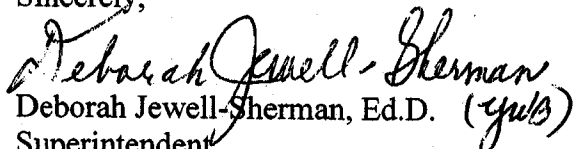
Finally, you can see, in the identified disabilities categories below not all students in any one category participate in the VAAP and that individual decisions are made by IEP teams. These students are participating in the VGLA or SOL assessments.

Disability	2008 VAAP Participants	2007 December 1 Count Grades 3-8,11
Autism	39	52
Developmental Delay	12	59
Traumatic Brain Injury	2	7
Mental Retardation	265	380
Multiple Disabilities	29	54
Learning Disability	8	1129
Other Health Impairment	21	311

Based upon this data, Richmond Public Schools is requesting a waiver of the one percent cap because our division has a unique demographic that has caused a higher number of students with significant cognitive disabilities. If you have any questions please contact Harley A. Tomey, III, Director of Exceptional Education and Student Services at 804-780-7911 or htomey@richmond.k12.va.us.

Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,


Deborah Jewell-Sherman, Ed.D. (yuls)
Superintendent

Cc Harley A. Tomey, III



**VIRGINIA ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT PROGRAM (VAAP):
REQUEST FOR EXCEPTION TO THE 1% CAP FOR
ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS (AYP) FOR THE 2008 ADMINISTRATION**

NAME OF SCHOOL DIVISION Richmond Public Schools	NAME OF DIVISION SUPERINTENDENT Dr. Deborah Jewell-Sherman
SUPERINTENDENT ADDRESS 301 N. 9th St. Richmond 23219	SUPERINTENDENT PHONE NUMBER (804)780-7700
SUPERINTENDENT E-MAIL ADDRESS djewell@richmond.k12.va.us	

Your division may complete this form to request an exception to the one percent cap on the projected number of proficient or advanced scores on the VAAP that may be included in AYP determinations. The one percent cap is determined by dividing the number of VAAP proficient/advanced scores by the number of students at each tested grade level. The number of students at the tested grade level is determined by the division's total September 30th fall membership for grades 3-8 and 11. The one percent cap applies only at the division and state levels, not for individual schools.

- The proficient and advanced scores on the VAAP are projected to be more than one percent of fall membership in the grades tested; therefore, **our division is seeking an exception to the one percent cap.**

This total is expected to exceed the one percent cap for the following reasons: *(check all those that apply and provide complete explanations/data for each.)*

- Because our school division has a very small total student population a few students have a significant impact on the percentages. *Please attach an explanation and provide supporting data.*
- A special program or programs exist in our division that has drawn large numbers of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. Examples include Intermediate Care Facilities or other licensed residential/day programs. Regional programs and State Operated Programs do not qualify under this exception. *Please attach an explanation and provide supporting data.*
- Our division has a disproportionately high number of foster care parents or adoptive parents of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. *Please attach an explanation and provide supporting data.*
- A local military base includes our school division on their list of compassionate assignments, and a significant number of service members have children with significant cognitive disabilities who are enrolled in our school division. *Please attach an explanation and provide supporting data.*

Attachment A for Administrative Superintendent's Memo No. 12

- Our division has a unique demographic anomaly that has caused a higher number of students with significant cognitive disabilities. *Please attach an explanation and provide supporting data.*

Please Note: School divisions requesting an exception based upon demographic anomalies may be subject to an on-site review of policies, procedures, student record data, and other information

I am requesting an exception to the one percent cap for students who participated in the VAAP.

Deborah Jewell-Sherman
Superintendent

(ywb)

6/13/2008
Date

Please mail, fax or e-mail the completed form and attachments by May 16, 2008:

John Eisenberg – john.eisenberg@doe.virginia.gov
Phone (804) 225-2711 * Fax (804) 371-8796
Virginia Department of Education
Office of Special Education Instructional Services
P.O. Box 2120 – Richmond, VA 23218-2120



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
P. O. Box 2120
Richmond, Virginia 23218-2120

BILLY K. CANNADAY, JR., Ed.D.
Superintendent of Public Instruction

Office: (804) 225-2023
Fax: (804) 371-2099

July 28, 2008

Dr. Deborah Jewell-Sherman, Superintendent
Richmond City Schools
301 N. 9th Street, 17th Floor
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Dr. Jewell-Sherman:

The purpose of this letter is to respond to your request for an exception to the one percent cap for the 2007-2008 Virginia Alternate Assessment Program (VAAP). A three member review team examined your division's supporting documentation and determined that the data did not meet the conditions set forth in SUPTS. MEMO NO. 12 dated April 18, 2008. Therefore, your request is not approved. Please see the exception review sheet attached that outlines the rating scale and comments by reviewers.

Please note that the number of your proficient VAAP scores exceeding your division's one percent cap must be reassigned from proficient to failing for the purposes of calculating AYP. Initial guidance on the reassignment process was provided at a statewide training on March 11, 2008, but additional directions on the reassignment process will be forthcoming once VAAP audits are completed. Please contact John Eisenberg at (804) 225-2711 or by e-mail at john.eisenberg@doe.virginia.gov with any additional questions.

Sincerely,

Billy K. Cannaday, Jr.

BKCJr/JE

VAAP 1% Exception Review Sheet

Name of Reviewer:	John Eisenberg, Sharon Siler, Jeff Phenece	Date:	7/15/08
Name of Division:	Richmond City		
Reasons Division is Seeking Exception (check all that apply)			
<input type="checkbox"/>	Small N	<input type="checkbox"/>	Special Program
<input type="checkbox"/>	Foster Care or Adoptive Parents	<input type="checkbox"/>	Local Military Base
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Unique Demographic Anomaly		

Rating Scale:

1. Data supplied by the division supports their request for an exception. No further data is needed and an exception should be provided
2. Data supplied by the division is questionable and additional data is required before an exception is granted.
3. Data supplied by the division is not sufficient and a site review is recommended before an exception is granted.
4. Data supplied by the division is not sufficient and an exception should be denied.

Reviewers Rating:	4
<p>Comments:</p> <p>The division's request for an exception to the 1% cap is denied. Data provided does not support the presence of a Unique Demographic Anomaly. It is suggested that the division review policies, procedures, practices and training related to the identification of students with Mental Retardation.</p>	