

**Virginia Department of Education  
 Summary of Findings for Local Review of  
 2008-2009 Virginia Grade Level Alternative (VGLA)  
 Participation Rates**

*Directions: Complete each section of this document and return by April 30, 2010 to jeff.phenicie@doe.virginia.gov*

**Section I: School Division Information**

School Division Richmond City Public Schools

Division Code 123

**Review Team Members**

Name	Position
Harley A. Tomey III	Director of Exceptional Education and Student Services
Michelle Boyd	Secondary Coordinator, Instruction Exceptional Education
Juanita Nicholson	Elementary Coordinator, Instruction Exceptional Education
Gloria Woody	Instructional Specialist, Exceptional Education
Cheryl Mangum	Instructional Specialist, Exceptional Education

**Division Contact Person**

*Provide the name and contact information for the person VDOE can direct questions regarding the information in this document*

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Division Superintendent's Signature

*William A. Oakley*  
*Chief Academic Officer*

Date *May 4, 2010*

**Section II: Selection of Schools**

*Directions: Review the school level data files and select schools that will be the focus of the local review. Provide a brief rationale stating why each school was selected. Copy this page as needed.*

School: **Albert Hill Middle School**

Code: 480

*Rationale:* Albert Hill was selected to participate in the local review because they had a high VGLA participation rate in reading, at the middle school level, within the division which was above the state average. VGLA reading participation rate – 53.4%

School: **Thomas Henderson Middle School**

Code: 470

*Rationale:* Henderson was selected to participate in the local review because they had a high VGLA participation rate in reading, at the middle school level, within the division which was above the state average. VGLA reading participation rate – 49.7%

School: **Lucille Brown Middle School**

Code: 3102

*Rationale:* Brown was selected to participate in the local review because they had a high VGLA participation rate in reading, at the middle school level, within the division which was above the state average. VGLA reading participation rate – 58.9%

School: **Overby-Sheppard Elementary**

Code: 130

*Rationale:* Overby-Sheppard was selected to participate in the local review because they had a high VGLA participation rate in reading, at the elementary school level, within the division which was above the state average. VGLA reading participation rate – 66.7%

School: **George Mason Elementary**

Code: 290

*Rationale:* George Mason was selected to participate in the local review because they had a high VGLA participation rate in reading, at the elementary school level, within the division which was above the state average. VGLA reading participation rate – 72.4%

School: **Bellevue Elementary School**

Code: 100

*Rationale:* Bellevue was selected to participate in the local review because they had a high VGLA participation rate in reading, at the elementary school level, within the division which was above the state average. VGLA reading participation rate – 67.8%

### **Section III: Student Level Data File Review**

*Directions: Examine the student level data files for each school selected and describe any patterns of concern in VGLA participation (i.e. content areas selected, disability categories). Briefly discuss any division or school factors that may have contributed to the pattern of VGLA participation observed. All schools selected in Section II must be addressed in this section. Copy this page as needed.*

#### **School: Albert Hill Middle School**

##### Description of concerns

The following trend was identified regarding assessment participation of students with disabilities at Albert Hill Middle School during the 2008-2009 test administration

- All students with intellectual disabilities participated in the VGLA or VAAP in all content areas.

##### Contributing division or school factors

Based on information obtained from teacher and administrator interviews, the VGLA participation was high because of student deficits in reading and mathematics and other challenges that impact school readiness. Staff developments have, and will continue to be held to increase capacity of persons serving on IEP and 504 teams on making decisions and criteria used to determine a student's eligibility to participation in the alternative assessments.

#### **School: Thomas Henderson Middle School**

##### Description of concerns

The following trend was identified regarding assessment participation of students with disabilities at Henderson Middle School during the 2008-09 test administration.

- All but one student with intellectual disabilities participated in VAAP or VGLA in all content areas.

##### Contributing division or school factors

Based on information obtained from teacher and administrator interviews, the VGLA participation within the school was high because of student deficits in literacy. Staff developments have, and will continue to be held to increase capacity of persons serving on IEP and 504 teams on the criteria used to determine a student's eligibility to participate in an alternative assessment.

#### **School: Lucille Brown Middle School**

##### Description of concerns

The following trend was identified regarding assessment participation of students with disabilities at Lucille Brown Middle School during the 2008-09 test administration.

- Almost all of students with disabilities who are identified as having an emotional disability, other health impairment, specific learning disability, or intellectual disabilities (with the exception of four) participated in either the VGLA in both reading and math or SOL in both reading and math.

##### Contributing division or school factors

Based on the information obtained from teacher interviews, the overall VGLA participation within the school was high because persons believe that students with disabilities will do better on the VGLA as opposed to the SOL multiple-choice test. Staff developments have, and will continue to be held to increase capacity of persons serving on IEP and 504 teams on the criteria used to determine a student's eligibility to participate in an alternative assessment.

**School: Overby-Sheppard Elementary School**

Description of concerns

There were no identified patterns of students who were identified to participate in the SOL and VGLA in the content areas except that all students identified as having an emotional disability participated only in the VGLA.

Contributing division or school factors

Teachers and staff interviewed stated that they determine eligibility for participation in the VGLA by examining the whole child, weekly assessments, benchmarks, and classroom assessments. Some of the factors staff indicated that contribute to high VGLA participation rates included poor literacy skills, transient population, challenging student behavior, and student demographics. Staff believes the RPS 2009-10 VGLA Participation Criteria Addendum Form is helpful in making consistent decisions about participation in the VGLA. There is still a need for continued staff development at the building level to assist IEP teams/504 teams in the decision-making process relative to the VGLA.

**School: George Mason Elementary School**

Description of concerns

In general there were no patterns relative to grade, disability, content area, sex or race for students with disabilities who were identified to participate in the SOL and VGLA. However, it was noted that all students except one identified as having a developmental disability participated only in the VGLA in all content areas.

Contributing division or school factors

Interview of staff and teachers indicated that the IEP or 504 team looks at the whole child, benchmark assessments, PALS, and academic performance when determining eligibility to participate in the VGLA. Factors staff identified as possible reasons for the high participation rate in the VGLA included lack of parental involvement in child's education, student behavior, and poor academic performance. There is still a need for continued staff development at the building level to assist IEP teams/504 teams in the decision-making process for participation in the VGLA.

**School: Bellevue Elementary School**

Description of concerns

The review of the data indicated that most students either participated in the SOL for all content areas or the VGLA in all content areas. All students with an identified intellectual disability participated only in the VAAP and most students identified as have a learning disability or other health impairment participated in the VGLA.

Contributing division or school factors

Interviews with staff and teachers indicated that they consider the whole student, a variety of assessments, student work samples, and the inability of the student to perform at grade level when determining VGLA participation. Some of the factors that may contribute to the high VGLA participation rate included lack of parental involvement, the number of students with disabilities, and students' socio-economic status. There is still a need for staff development at the building level to assist IEP teams/504 teams in the decision-making process for participation in the VAAP and VGLA.

**Section IV: IEP/504 plan Review**

*Directions: Randomly select 10 or more students with disabilities from each of selected schools. Review each student's 2008-2009 IEPs (or 504 plan) using the checklist provided and summarize your finding for each selected school. All schools selected in Section II must be addressed in this section. Copy this page as needed.*

**School: Albert Hill Middle School**

**Number of IEPs Reviewed: 10**

**IEP/504 Plan Review Findings**

After a review of ten student records at Albert Hill Middle School, the following strengths and needs were identified regarding VGLA participation:

*Relative Strengths:*

- The VGLA participation criteria form was attached to the IEP and for the VGLA assessment section completed on the IEP
- The VGLA participation criteria form and/or VGLA assessment section on the IEP was completed and "YES" was indicated for each question
- Documentation that the VGLA participation criteria was followed for each content area

*Needs:*

- Documentation that data sources or work samples were used to support the decision to place students in the VGLA
- Documentation in the Present Level of Performance that the student is likely to be able to complete assignments based on grade level content.

**School: Thomas Henderson Middle School**

**Number of IEPs Reviewed: 10**

**IEP/504 Plan Review Findings**

After a review of ten student records at Thomas Henderson Middle School, the following strengths and needs were identified regarding VGLA participation:

*Relative Strengths:*

- The VGLA participation criteria form was attached to the IEP and for the VGLA assessment section completed on the IEP
- The VGLA participation criteria form and/or VGLA assessment section on the IEP was completed and "YES" was indicated for each question

*Needs:*

- Documentation that the VGLA participation criteria was followed for each content area
- Documentation that data sources or work samples were used to support the decision to place students in the VGLA
- Documentation in the Present Level of Performance that the student is likely to be able to complete assignments based on grade level content

**School: Lucille Brown Middle School**

**Number of IEPs Reviewed: 10**

**IEP/504 Plan Review Findings**

After a review of ten student records at Lucille Brown Middle School, the following strengths and needs were identified regarding VGLA participation:

*Relative Strengths:*

- The VGLA participation criteria form was attached to the IEP and for the VGLA assessment section completed on the IEP
- The VGLA participation criteria form and/or VGLA assessment section on the IEP was completed and "YES" was indicated for each question
- Documentation that the VGLA participation criteria was followed for each content area.

*Needs:*

- Documentation that data sources or work samples were used to support the decision to place students in the VGLA
- Documentation in the Present Level of Performance that the student is likely to be able to complete assignments based on grade level content

School: **Overby-Sheppard Elementary School**      Number of IEPs Reviewed: 10

IEP/504 Plan Review Findings

After a review of ten student records at Overby-Sheppard Elementary School, the following strengths and needs were identified regarding VGLA participation:

*Relative Strengths:*

- The VGLA participation criteria form was attached to the IEP and /or the VGLA assessment section completed on the IEP
- The VGLA participation criteria form and/or VGLA assessment section on the IEP was completed and "YES" was indicated for each question
- Documentation that the VGLA participation criteria was followed for each content area.
- Documentation that data sources or work samples were used to support the decision to place students in the VGLA

*Needs:*

- Documentation in the Present Level of Performance that the student is likely to be able to complete assignments based on grade level content

School: **George Mason Elementary School**      Number of IEPs Reviewed 10

IEP/504 Plan Review Findings

After a review of ten student records at George Mason Elementary School, the following strengths and needs were identified regarding VGLA participation:

*Relative Strengths:*

- The VGLA participation criteria form was attached to the IEP and /or the VGLA assessment section completed on the IEP
- The VGLA participation criteria form and/or VGLA assessment section on the IEP was completed and "YES" was indicated for each question

*Needs:*

- Documentation that the VGLA participation criteria was followed for each content area
- Documentation that data sources or work samples were used to support the decision to place students in the VGLA
- Documentation in the Present Level of Performance that the student is likely to be able to complete assignments based on grade level content

School: **Bellevue Elementary**      Number of IEPs Reviewed 10

IEP/504 Plan Review Findings

After a review of ten student records at Bellevue Elementary School, the following needs were identified regarding VGLA participation:

*Relative Strengths*

- Attachment of the VGLA participation criteria form to the IEP and /or the completion of the VGLA assessment section completed on the IEP
- Completion of the VGLA participation criteria form and/or VGLA assessment section on the IEP with "YES" indicated for each question

*Needs:*

- Documentation that the VGLA participation criteria were followed for each content area
- Documentation that data sources or work samples were used to support the decision to place students in the VGLA
- Documentation in the Present Level of Performance that the student is likely to be able to complete assignments based on grade level content

**Section V: Summary Statement**

*Directions: Using the information from Sections I – IV, discuss possible explanations of your division's VGLA 2008-2009 participation rates*

Reading:

The following may have contributed to the 2008-2009 VGLA participation rates in reading in RPS

- Incorporation of differentiated instruction into a majority of classes at various levels where students have a diverse way of learning skills and knowledge and therefore require different methods to demonstrate their understanding of course objectives
- Misconception that an academic deficit may be justification for VGLA participation
- Absence of a requirement to show work samples that show student performance on multiple choice and non-multiple choice assessments at IEP and 504 meetings
- Absence of a *RPS VGLA Participation Criteria Addendum* for the 2008-09 school year (this form was required during the 2009-10 school year and added consistency in the decision making process)

Mathematics

The following may have contributed to the 2008-2009 VGLA participation rates in mathematics in RPS

- Incorporation of differentiated instruction into a majority of classes at various levels where students have a diverse way of learning skills and knowledge and therefore require different methods to demonstrate their understanding of course objectives
- Misconception that an academic deficit may be a justification for VGLA participation
- Absence of a requirement to show work samples that show student performance on multiple choice and non-multiple choice assessments at IEP and 504 meetings
- Absence of a *RPS VGLA Participation Criteria Addendum* for the 2008-09 school year (this form was required during the 2009-10 school year and added consistency in the decision making process)

**Section VI: 2009-2010 VGLA Participation Rates (OPTIONAL)**

*Directions: Calculate your VGLA participation rates for 2009 - 2010 for reading and mathematics. If your anticipated 2009 - 2010 participation rates are lower than your 2008-2009 participation rates, please explain factors that contributed to the decrease. If your anticipated 2009 - 2010 participation rates are higher than your 2008-2009 rates, please explain factors that contributed to the increase*

Anticipated 2009-2010 VGLA Reading Participation Rate 46% (2009-10) (decrease from 52%)

Explanation of decrease/increase in 2009-2010 VGLA Reading Participation Rate

Increased staff development and the implantation of the *RPS VGLA Participation Criteria Addendum 2009-2010*, a required document to assist in the determinations of eligibility for participation in the VGLA, may have contributed to the decreased VGLA participation rate in reading. A summary of the RPS VGLA, VSEP and VAAP 2009-10 process is attached. RPS will continue to conduct record reviews and staff developments this school year and next year to ensure IEP and 504 teams make decisions based upon the new *2010 - 2011 Participation Criteria for Students with Disabilities Form* (attached and implemented May 4, 2010). Individual schools as identified by our record reviews will receive additional staff development.

Anticipated 2009-2010 VGLA Mathematics Participation Rate 40% (2009-10) (decrease from 44%)

Increased staff development and the implantation of the *RPS VGLA Participation Criteria Addendum 2009-2010*, a required document to assist in the determinations of eligibility for participation in the VGLA, may have contributed to the decreased VGLA participation rate in mathematics. A summary of the RPS VGLA, VSEP and VAAP 2009-10 process is attached. RPS will continue to conduct record reviews (fall and spring) and staff developments this school year and next year to ensure IEP and 504 teams make decisions based upon the new *2010 - 2011 Participation Criteria for Students with Disabilities Form* (attached and implemented May 4, 2010). Individual schools as identified by our record reviews will receive additional staff development.