BATH COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Understanding Virginia's NEW SOL CUT SCORES

What Bath County Families Need to Know

Virginia is raising expectations for student achievement on Standards of Learning (SOL) assessments in reading and mathematics. Beginning in the **2026–2027** school year, new SOL cut scores will be phased in over several years. Here's what you need to know.

What is an SOL Cut Score?

An SOL cut score is the minimum score a student must earn to reach a particular performance level on a state assessment. In the past, a score of 400 generally represented the Pass/Proficient level.

Beginning in 2026–27, new cut scores will be introduced for reading and mathematics assessments. A score of 400 will no longer be considered Pass/Proficient on most affected reading and math SOL tests.

Why Are the Cut Scores Changing?

Virginia has updated its reading and mathematics standards to establish clearer, more rigorous expectations for what students should know and be able to do. The new cut scores are designed to better align SOL performance levels with those **expectations and provide a clearer picture of student learning and readiness for future success.**

The New Performance Levels

During the transition, Virginia will use a temporary performance level called **Pass/Approaching** on reading and mathematics assessments.

Fail/Below Basic or Fail/Does Not Meet	Significant difficulty demonstrating the expected knowledge and skills.
Fail/Basic	Some understanding but has not met the applicable passing standard.
Pass/Approaching	Approaching the more rigorous proficiency standard. During the transition period, this counts as passing for school accountability and applicable high school verified-credit purposes.
Pass/Proficient	Demonstrates proficiency in the knowledge and skills expected by Virginia's standards
Pass/Advanced	Demonstrates advanced understanding of the content and skills

Not every assessment uses all five levels. The labels and passing requirements depend on the assessment and phase of implementation. It's also important to understand that Pass/Approaching is not the same as Pass/Proficient. Students at the Proficient and Advanced levels have demonstrated mastery of the more rigorous standards.

How Will the Changes Be Phased In?

Virginia is implementing the new cut scores gradually **over four school years.**

- **2026–2027** — First phase of new cut scores begins on affected reading and math assessments.
- **2027–2028** — Next phase of the transition continues.
- **2028–2029** — The temporary Pass/Approaching level remains in use.
- **2029–2030** — New cut scores are fully implemented, and the temporary Pass/Approaching level is phased out.

End-of-Course Reading follows a different timeline.

The changes apply to math across all grade levels (including Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II). Reading changes apply to elementary and middle school and certain high school assessments. Science, writing, and social studies SOL cut scores are not part of this transition. Previously earned passing scores and verified credits are protected.

What Does This Mean for Bath County Students?

Families may notice changes in how reading and math SOL results are classified. A change in a reported performance level does not, by itself, tell the entire story of a student's learning.

We will continue to provide strong instruction meaningful assessment, early identification of learning needs, and support for students and teachers.

Our goal is to help every student develop the knowledge and skills needed for success — whether their next step is college, a career, military service, or another path.

How Can Parents Support Their Children?

Families can:

- ✔ Encourage regular reading and math practice at home.
- ✔ Talk with your child about what they are learning and where they feel confident.
- ✔ Stay in touch with teachers about progress and support needs.
- ✔ Review your child's SOL Parent Report with the school, including the specific skills and content areas identified.
- ✔ Reassure your child that assessments are one way to measure learning — growth, effort, and support matter.

Where Can I Learn More?

For official information about the new cut scores, phase-in schedule, performance levels, and resources for families, visit the Virginia Department of Education:

Raising Expectations (vdoe.virginia.gov)

For resources to help your child learn at home and understand SOL reports, visit the VDOE Parent and Caregiver Assessment Resources page.

Working Together for Student Success

At Bath County Public Schools, we believe every student deserves the opportunity to reach their potential.