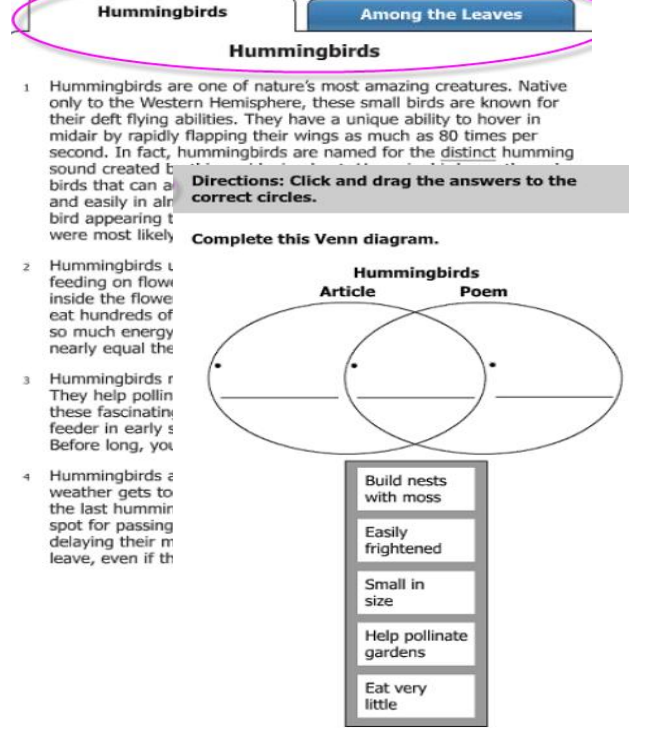


**August 26, 2014 – Standards of Learning (SOL) Assessment Pass Rates**

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**STAUNTON CITY SCHOOLS' SOL PASS RATES**

**Staunton, VA** – The 2013-2014 school year marked the second year of the more rigorous and challenging Reading, Writing, and Science Standards of Learning Assessments and the third year of the revised Mathematics assessments. The table below provides just one example (8th grade Reading) of the changes between the previous and new assessments.

Then	Now
<p>In order to demonstrate Ms. Jackson's involvement in school functions, the letter writer mentions –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A drama performances</li> <li>B speech contests</li> <li>C musical concerts</li> <li>D graduation ceremonies</li> </ul>	 <p>1 Hummingbirds are one of nature's most amazing creatures. Native only to the Western Hemisphere, these small birds are known for their deft flying abilities. They have a unique ability to hover in midair by rapidly flapping their wings as much as 80 times per second. In fact, hummingbirds are named for the distinct humming sound created by their wings. Hummingbirds are the only birds that can fly backwards and easily in air.</p> <p>2 Hummingbirds feed on nectar inside the flowers. They eat hundreds of so much energy nearly equal the energy they expend.</p> <p>3 Hummingbirds help pollinate these fascinating flowers. Before long, you will see the results.</p> <p>4 Hummingbirds weather gets to the last hummingbird spot for passing delaying their migration, even if they are not ready.</p> <p><b>Directions: Click and drag the answers to the correct circles.</b></p> <p><b>Complete this Venn diagram.</b></p> <p><b>Hummingbirds Article</b>      <b>Hummingbirds Poem</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build nests with moss</li> <li>Easily frightened</li> <li>Small in size</li> <li>Help pollinate gardens</li> <li>Eat very little</li> </ul>

Source: VDOE Released (2002) and Practice (2010) Items. (<http://www.doe.virginia.gov/index.shtml>)

Some of the changes that can be noticed from this Reading example include:

- 1) Students no longer choose from solely multiple-choice responses. They now also have "technology-enhanced items", such as the drag and drop item above, where students must determine and place the items that fit into the appropriate blanks.
- 2) Students (beginning in middle school) may have paired passages, two passages about similar content, that they must toggle between in order to answer the question.
- 3) Students answer high-level thinking questions, such as analysis of author's purpose.
- 4) Students read text with increased reading level, particularly for grades 3 - 8.

"The changing assessments and level of 'rigor' have set a new bar for educators and students," comments Director of Assessment and School Improvement, Stephanie Haskins. "Standards that used to exist in upper grade levels have shifted to younger grades, the text complexity and reading level of assessments have increased, and student responses require multiple steps of analysis and application. This shift requires that all schools in Staunton, along with other schools across the commonwealth, foster higher levels of student understanding than ever before."

As the state has raised the bar in education, Staunton City Schools has continued to respond to these new challenges. Highlights of student performance in each of the subject areas include:

- English
  - Reading pass rates at the high school showed an overall pass rate of 91%, with the economically disadvantaged subgroup exceeding the state average by more than 30 percentage points
  - Writing pass rates at the high school showed an overall pass rate of 88%; this rate exceeds the state average by 4%
  - Overall division pass rate remained similar to pass rate from 2012-2013, mirroring the trend at the state level
- Mathematics
  - In elementary schools, grade 5 had a pass rate of 79%, 6 percentage points above the state average, and an increase of 14 percentage points over the past three years
  - In middle school, pass rate for grade 8 mathematics increased by 11 percentage points; 100% of students in Algebra I and Geometry passed the mathematics SOL assessment; 79% of students in Geometry received pass advanced scores
  - In high school, 85% of students in Algebra II received passing scores, with a similar pass rate for white (85%) and black (84%); black performance was 13 percentage points above the state average for Algebra II
- Science
  - Grade 8 middle school science exceeded the state average by 9%, with an overall pass rate of 83%
  - Biology pass rates exceeded state average in all subgroups with an overall pass rate of 88%; Chemistry pass rates exceeded state average in all subgroups with an overall pass rate of 98%
- Social Studies
  - Elementary, Middle, and High School History student pass rates exceed 70%

"We will continue to align all classroom assessments with the increased rigor of the SOLs. This process occurs as teachers work together within their Professional Learning Communities at each school. It is important to keep in mind that teachers do not actually 'see' the SOL tests, so alignment takes place over time as particular questions are released or as practice/sample questions are provided from the VDOE," states Dori Walk, Executive Director of Instruction.