

Dear Families,

FCPS' mission is to support student success in school and in life. In our rapidly-changing, global society, the way students learn and the manner in which they are assessed must evolve in order to meet this goal. In today's world where knowledge is just a click away, it is important to go beyond simply assessing what students know to having students demonstrate what they can do with what they know. By engaging in this learning and assessment process, students develop important content knowledge and growth in Portrait of a Graduate skills. These research-based skills support students as productive members of a global community and in the workforce of the future. Learn more by visiting the Portrait of a Graduate webpage (<https://www.fcps.edu/about-fcps/portrait-graduate>).

Impact on FCPS and state assessment policy

Since 2014, the Virginia Department of Education has increasingly implemented assessments that support an approach where students are required to apply knowledge and skills. Local Alternative Assessments (LAAs) and performance-based assessments (PBAs) have been adopted in place of certain Standards of Learning (SOL) tests as part of this shift. Currently, FCPS uses LAAs in place of SOL tests in Grade 3 Science, Grade 3 Social Studies, Grade 4 Virginia Studies, Grade 5 Writing, Grade 6 U.S. History I, Grade 7 U.S. History II, Grade 8 Civics and Economics, and Grade 8 Writing. Visit the LAA and PBA public webpage (<https://www.fcps.edu/node/45043>) to learn more.

As a student enrolled in one or more of the above courses, **your child will participate in at least one performance-based assessment (PBA) as part of state guidelines for LAAs.** A PBA requires students to perform a task or create a product using their acquired knowledge and skills. PBAs/LAAs:

- Invite students to learn in ways that are student-centered and culturally responsive, going beyond memorizing surface-level facts to thinking critically about the content and making real-world connections,
- Provide opportunities for on-going support and feedback to students from teachers based on the progress they demonstrate within the task,
- Require students to respond to a challenge and apply what they've learned,
- Assess and score student work/creations using a rubric that describes the criteria for success.

Talking with your child

There are many ways to support your child with PBAs/LAAs.

- Encourage your child to embrace the role of a creator.
- Ask your child to share their thinking about what they are creating.
- Reinforce that PBAs/LAAs are primarily about the process, and not the product. There is no one right answer — rather, it's a chance for students to show what they are able to do with their knowledge and skills.
- PBAs/LAAs are graded/scored using a common rubric. Encourage your child to use the rubric as a tool for guiding their work and progress.