

Standardized Testing

Homeschoolers who have filed a Notice of Intent to Provide Home Instruction form with the school division must show **proof of progress in language arts and math** at the end of that school year, either by any nationally normed **standardized test*** or by another **evaluation** that, in the judgment of the superintendent, shows adequate progress.

“Another evaluation” can include an evaluation of the student's work which may be based on a portfolio of work and personal interview or other diagnostic testing, and is then subject to the approval of the local superintendent. This is usually provided by a certified teacher, but this is not a legal requirement. Names of evaluators are available upon request or from your state or local organization (recommendation will depend upon the needs of your child).

Testing/proof of progress is **not required** for students who were **not yet six years of age as of Sept. 30** of the beginning of the school year. If you are teaching under the religious exemption provision or under the certified tutor portion of the compulsory attendance statute, testing is not required. You are also not required by law to provide any information other than the child's name, test administered, and basic composite scores for language arts and math only (copy of results is fine). In other words, you do not have to declare what test you plan to use, where you are getting it, or who is administering it.

Local school divisions sometimes offer standardized testing free of charge at the local public schools. In this case, the local school needs to know early in the year that you will be testing there so they can order the correct number of tests (they order very early). Your test results will go directly to the local public school if you choose to test with the public school. Most school divisions no longer offer this because they do not administer nationally normed standardized tests, but Virginia SOL tests, which we do not/ may not take.

Scores are due to the division superintendent's office by **August 1**. Be sure to order your tests in time to receive the scores back before the deadline. Check with the company for the expected turnaround time (for example, some testing sources are swamped in May and have 7-week turnarounds then, but April or June may be 2-week turnaround times). Remember to test early enough to re-test if you would like to.

Virginia superintendents generally require the **stanine** (“standard nine”) **or percentile** ranking in language arts and in math (or the basic composite score); you may delete any other scores on the page; keep the intact original for your files. Students generally have been considered to “pass” if they score at or above the 23rd percentile or the fourth stanine; if your test provider gives scores in grade equivalents, you may need to specifically request stanine or percentile scores. Homeschooling parents submitting test scores below those cut-offs may be required to show a program for remediation for the next school year and be considered to continue homeschooling that next year on a probationary basis.

If you are removing a child from a conventional school setting, I highly recommend administering one of the regular standardized tests (see below) as a baseline for your records, unless he has very recently taken the test in school and you have the results available. Homeschoolers may not take the SOL testing or Literacy Passport tests unless they are testing with the school for entrance into the public school system.

The most **commonly used tests** are the California Achievement Test (CAT), Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS), Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) and the Stanford Achievement Test (Stanford 9 or 10 or SAT, not to be confused with the College Board SAT). At this writing, the ITBS and SAT-9/10 seem to be available privately only through BJU Testing Service (see McGuffey for grades 1-3). For more information, see HEAV's *Virginia Homeschool Manual* (804-278-9200; also in many support group and public libraries). More information is also available at www.heav.org; click on Testing.

Some sources of testing materials:

Bayside Testing Service (Offers IQ tests, CAT, CTBS; prices vary by test and week of year, but are reasonable.) Anyone who can read and follow directions may administer the tests. 1-800-723-3057

Bob Jones University Press (ITBS, Stanford 9, Stanford 10, and several others; about \$35-40). Tester must have a bachelor's degree to qualify as a tester, unless she is state certified to teach in a conventional school; she must also complete a one-time application/agreement with BJU. Order can no longer be placed by telephone. The SAT-9 must be administered by a "qualified" test giver (someone who has viewed their training video and is on BJU's list; see our list below); your support group may own a copy of the BJU training video – check with your leader. Tester must send copy of 4-year degree/state certification to keep on file with BJU. 1-800-845-5731. *NOTE: The Stanford 10 may be given as a non-timed test.*

Christian Liberty Academy (CAT, about \$25) Anyone who can read and follow directions may administer the tests. 1-847-259-4444 or www.homeschool.org

McGuffey Christian Academy (Stanford 7; Stanford 9 available for gr 1-3, \$35) Anyone may administer this test (see above). 1-706-782-7709 or www.McGuffeyAcademy.com

Seton Home Study (CAT short version, \$25) Anyone who can read/ follow directions may administer the tests. 1-540-636-9990

*Revised April 2006 to reflect Virginia legislative changes effective July 2006. As of early 2008, there is legislation pending that would further clarify the options of "other evaluations or assessments." Check with your local group or HEAV after the General Assembly session closes.

NOTHING IN THIS DOCUMENT SHOULD BE CONSIDERED LEGAL ADVICE.

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