To Whom It May Concern:

Our group, RVA Opt Out, consists of concerned parents, teachers, and community members in Richmond, VA. We have met to discuss our concerns about the Virginia Standards of Learning Tests and the increasing standardization of education in our state and nation. We feel that the parents of students in elementary school through high school should have the option to “opt out” their children from these tests if they feel the assessments are not in the best interest of the student.

As it stands now, a student that “opts out” of the SOL test is not penalized for not taking the test. However, the school that the student attends will be penalized, as the student’s score will be recorded as a “0”. We feel that by recording the scores of these students as such, school administrators will attempt to dissuade parents and students from attempting to opt out of the SOL tests.

It is our feeling that, when reporting SOL scores, the Virginia Department of Education should provide a separate recording category of “opted out” for students who have opted out of the assessment. This way, the scores of the school will not be affected by the decision of a concerned parent or student. This will also allow the Virginia Department of Education to track the number of parents who choose this option for their children, so that the state is informed when making future educational policy.

We are not a group who wishes to punish or hurt teachers or public schools in any way, but rather hope to bring creative and comprehensive education back into classrooms so that our children forever have the love of learning.

We sincerely wish that the VDOE would consider an “opt out” recording category for our schools so that everyone can make informed decisions about education.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,