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## Virginia Board of Education, Business Meeting, Thursday, December 11, 2025

Date Thursday, December 11, 2025  
Place Virginia Board of Education (Virginia Department of Education), Richmond, Virginia  
Length 7h 2m (video)

- Official meeting video (VDOE, YouTube): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JAhuCdIyK9Y>
- Board of Education meetings, agendas and minutes (VDOE): <https://www.doe.virginia.gov/state-board-data-funding/virginia-board-of-education>

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Speech-to-text: whisper.cpp, model large-v3-turbo. Produced 2026-10-22. Each paragraph starts with its time [HH:MM:SS] in the meeting video.

[00:23:51] good morning it is 9 a.m and i'll now call this meeting to order as is customary for this board we'll begin our meeting with the moment of silence followed by the pledge of allegiance

[00:24:33] okay um just to take care of a couple of items i'll note that i have approved the remote participation of Ms. Ashton and Mr. Hansen per Code Section 2.2-3708.3B of the Code of Virginia because their principal residence is more than 60 miles from the meeting location.

[00:24:59] We'll move on to approval of the agenda. We need to strike item D from the agenda. Is there a motion to approve the amended agenda? So moved. Second. Dr. Ackerman. Aye. Mr. Green.

[00:25:16] Aye. Ms. McPherson? Aye. Ms. Kilgore? Aye. Mr. Monk? Aye. And chair votes aye. Okay. Staff has provided the members of the board with draft minutes before the meeting. Is there a motion to approve the minutes as presented to the board?

[00:25:33] So move. Second. Dr. Ackerman? Aye. Mr. Green? Aye. Ms. McPherson? Aye. Ms. Kilgore? Aye. Mr. Monk? Aye. And chair votes aye. The board always appreciates being able to feature special and more wonderful arts programs from across the commonwealth by having our students perform in our meetings and this meeting as you can all see we have some very special performers i got to hear them a little bit as they were practicing this morning and i gotta tell y'all you do things that i can't do and i'm not

[00:26:10] sure in my lifetime i'm ever going to be able to do these things maybe if i really really work hard but you guys are truly amazing and i am so excited for everyone in the room and everyone who's listening on and watching online to witness this amazing performance that we are about to see today. I got really excited yesterday when I saw your teacher bringing in your harps because I was like that's what usually I don't find out until the day of our meeting what our special arts feature is going to be and yesterday I got a little bit of a taste and so I've been so excited

[00:26:48] all night long to hear how you all just grace us with your beautiful music. So thank you for being here, and I'll do a more formal introduction. This is our Richmond Public Schools HAARP program. Richmond Public Schools has had a long-standing HAARP program that began in the late 1960s, making it one of the few publicly funded HAARP programs in the United States. That's pretty amazing we current they currently offer harp instruction at seven richmond public elementary schools under the direction of please help me can a can i forman also in attendance this morning is

[00:27:28] richmond public schools coordinator of k-12 arts education christy joe adams and k-12 fine arts instructional specialist joltz studer the four students performing in our meeting today are from mary mumford and lois harrison jones elementary schools three began playing last year just last year this is amazing y'all and one started just three months ago they will be performing music selections titled skaters waltz and everyone's happy song so i am so excited to introduce you all and have you come up the board is going to come down so that we can see you watch your

[00:28:06] performance and as also is customary for the board we often have some other

[00:36:38] recognitions during the beginning of our meeting and so at this time I'd like for dr. Ackerman to please provide us with a proclamation by virtue of the authority vested in the Constitution of Virginia in the governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia there is hereby officially recognized whereas Virginia is proud of its legacy as the first state in the nation to mandate K-12 computer science standards, computational thinking, and coding as essential literacies for all students, and whereas Virginia's 2024 K-12 computer science standards of learning are among the first in a nation to embed artificial

[00:37:15] intelligence literacy, ensuring students are prepared to be responsible consumers, innovative creators, and engaged citizens, and whereas the Virginia Department of Education affirms the the importance of foundational computer science concepts in grades K through eight, integrates them from across core disciplines and continues to expand pathways for secondary students, underscoring the critical role of computer science and education in equipping learners and disciplinary knowledge, critical thinking, creativity, resilience, and adaptability to thrive throughout the lives.

[00:37:48] And whereas the Commonwealth of Virginia recognized the regional partnerships, expanded work-based learning, and post-secondary and secondary partnerships expand professional development high quality instructional resources project-based learning opportunities and advanced learning opportunities for educators and students across the commonwealth through the advancing computer science education grant and whereas the commonwealth of virginia is committed to computer science education by ensuring all students have meaningful access to opportunities as reflected in the commuting computing in the commonwealth dashboard which identifies pathways

[00:38:23] and opportunities for the secondary students and whereas preparing a workforce to support the commonwealth requires access to high quality education in emerging emerging fields such as artificial intelligence data science cyber security achieved through collaboration collaborative and coordinated

efforts across education business and community partners and whereas the commonwealth at Virginia has developed lab schools to harness partnerships with industry higher higher education in k-12 with some models aimed at increasing exposure and experience in applied computer

[00:39:02] science account outside the school walls and whereas computer science education week officially starts the nomination window for the 2025-2026 computer science educator of the year award during which parents, students, and educators can nominate across the Commonwealth for their contribution commitment to computer science and education. Whereas Computer Science Week in Virginia will highlight the Virginia Department of Education's partnership with Code of VA through the Computer Science Digital Summit, supporting educator professional learning and

[00:39:39] advancing the vision of CS Ready schools across the Commonwealth. And whereas the week of December 9th is designated as Computer Science Education Week in honor of Grace Hopper, the pioneering American computer scientist, mathematician, and United States Navy Rear Admiral whose groundbreaking work laid the foundation for modern computing.

[00:40:04] Whereas during Computer Science Education Week, all students, educators, schools, and communities are encouraged to join in celebrating, engaging, and learning activities that implement computer science. Now therefore I, Glenn Youngkin, do hereby recognize December 8th through 12th 2025 as computer science education week in our Commonwealth of Virginia and I call this

[00:40:30] observance to the attention of all of our citizens. It is my privilege to recognize Dr. Deb Crawford as Virginia's computer science educator of the year. Across our commonwealth computer science has become a cornerstone of preparing students for the future. Virginia was among the first states to adopt K through 12 computer science standards, and we continue to lead the nation in ensuring that every child, whether in a rural

[00:41:07] community or an urban center, has the opportunity to build skills that will serve them for life. Dr. Crawford has been at the forefront of this movement. In 2019, she founded the Shenandoah Valley Computer Science Regional Partnership, bringing together school divisions, universities, and community partners to expand access to computer science education.

[00:41:30] Through her leadership, thousands of teachers have been trained to integrate the computational thinking into their classrooms, and students across the valley now have pathways into advanced courses, reach opportunities, research opportunities, and STEM careers.

[00:41:46] Her work has increased enrollment in high school computer science electives statewide, built sustainable teacher capacity through endorsement programs and professional learning, created innovative opportunities such as student research projects, CS and STEM experiences in elementary and middle schools, and now the Lab School for Data Science and Computer Applications.

[00:42:10] Dr. Deb Crawford's vision and collaboration embody the spirit of Virginia's commitment to computer science education. She has helped ensure that our students are not just consumers of technology, but creators, innovators, and leaders in the digital age. Please join me in congratulating Deb Crawford, Virginia's Computer Science Educator of the Year. If you'd come

[00:42:35] forward i need to read the plaque also virginia department of education 2024 2025 computer science

[00:42:57] educator of the year dr deborah crawford administration and counselors okay um thank you miss kilgore uh now we move to the public comment section of our meeting as stated in the board's board's bylaws it's the pleasure of the board to accept public comment on all matters related to public education in Virginia. Before we begin our public comment today, I'd like to share a few

[00:43:34] comments about the manner in which public comment will be conducted. I ask that you model professionalism, dignity, and respect for others as you share your thoughts today. When you begin, please provide your name, role, or affiliation, and where you live in Virginia. All remarks must be directed at the chair, not to any other individual. Speakers will have three minutes to share their remarks you'll notice there's a timer over on the computer screen with three minutes in green at one minute the screen will turn yellow the screen will turn red when your

[00:44:09] time is up at that point please close your remarks promptly speakers may provide copies of their comments to mr joe crook joe is the department's regulatory and board coordinator all written comments received during public comment will be collected and provided to the board as soon as possible after public comment. You may also email a copy of your remarks to the board at boe@doe.virginia.gov and with that I will begin with Yuko Stack

[00:44:41] followed by Scott Braebrand. My name is Yuko Stack. I'm from Gainesville, Virginia. I'm

[00:45:16] speaking today as someone who has seen how our system is failing autistic children, especially those with hypersensitivity and those who mask their struggles just to survive the school day. We say our schools are inclusive, but for many autistic kids, the classroom is a battlefield. Too loud, too bright, too unpredictable. School environment must be controlled for these children before we talk about their education. They hide their

[00:45:50] pain because they've learned that showing it leads to punishment or misunderstanding. They are praised for doing fine while they are quietly falling apart. My daughter masked her pain so well and at only six, she said she didn't want to exist. No six-year-old child should ever reach that point. These children are not broken. They are exhausted from living in the world that refuses to meet them halfway. If a child is masking, that is not a sign of success. It's a red flag.

[00:46:29] And their parents, they are fighting every day for the basics, evaluations, accommodations, a little understanding, on top of taking care of special needs kids. They spend sleepless night writing emails, attending meetings, and begging for support that the law already promises.

[00:46:48] They don't give up because they don't care. They give up because they are out of strength. They've been fighting alone for too long. IEPs and 504 plans exist to protect these children, but too often they are vague, ignored, or forgotten.

[00:47:09] Support depends not on child's needs, but on luck. Where you live, who your teacher is, and how loudly your parents can fight. This isn't a parenting problem. It's a systemic problem. We are forcing autistic children to adapt to a system that refuses to adapt to them.

[00:47:30] We are burning out the very families who should be embraced, not blamed. It's time to stop ignoring this truth. Autistic kids deserve understanding, not compliance. Families deserve partners, not battles.

[00:47:46] And school must learn to see how child behind the masking. They need alternative learning environment other than public schools to meet their needs. This is not just about education. It's about justice, dignity, and humanity.

[00:48:04] And change must start now. Thank you. Scott Braebrand, followed by Jeff Girvin. Good morning.

[00:48:21] President Creasy, Superintendent Gullickson, and members of the Board of Education. My name is Scott Braebrand. executive director for VAS, the Virginia Association of School Superintendents. I live in Lynchburg, Virginia and on behalf of the school superintendents in the state we respectfully submit the following feedback around today's agenda.

[00:48:38] First on the SOL proficiency implementation plan we strongly appreciate the designation of the 25-26 school year as a planning year and the total four-year phase-in approach and we look forward to working very closely with Superintendent Gullickson and the VDOE for the remainder of the school year to ensure its successful implementation. Around high school implementation we respectfully still ask the board to consider extending the existing proficiency and graduation requirements for all students currently in high school who are already enrolled in high school. The requirements in place when students enter ninth grade should be honored through graduation. We're also

[00:49:17] concerned about the proposed change in the agenda shared today with the locally awarded verified credit option from a fixed scaled score to now a score within 25 points of the conditional standard of error measurement without having additional data modeling and impact analysis of students ability to secure this verified credit option and meet graduation requirements. Regarding the state's new performance and support framework results shared this week, we appreciate the opportunity to build on the hard work that everybody has done that went into those results. We appreciate you taking the time to

[00:49:53] Superintendent Glockston and VDOE to verify the student and school data behind the framework, and we ask if there are any remaining errors in the data found either by VDOE or school divisions that they be updated promptly to ensure accuracy and transparency in our communities. School divisions also received the federally identified school designations last week, later than ever before, and we remain concerned about schools being lowered in their performance category solely due to the federal identification, which is not required by federal law. We do support a way to formally communicate to our parents and communities at schools federally identified that they were

[00:50:31] federally identified without this double jeopardy provision. Finally we want to partner with you as VDOE develops the revised student assessment form that will be shared with parents this spring as well as work with you around concerns raised around advanced coursework, expedited retakes, the performance category rounding and adding social studies history to the accountability system without additional input from educational stakeholders. We thank you for your engagement with us and so many others and we look forward to continued partnership with you on this important work. Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays, and

[00:51:06] Happy New Year. Thank you. Jeff Girvin followed by Christopher Matthews. Good morning board. Thank you. I just want to start by thanking you all for your time and service to the to the state. I did have some prepared things I was going to say but actually the young students teachable moment I I just I was moved by that performance because it hits hard at what I'm speaking against basically which is adding the social studies to the accountability and not that I don't

[00:51:43] want socialize be accountable because I do in fact when it was removed about seven or so years ago I actually wrote the board asking them not to remove the you know the the accountability because we need to be accountable but it was just the testing mode was not did not work for social studies and the reason I bring up the students today and their performance is they let you learn by doing right performance they they practice doing that and that's how they were able to be that way we heard one was had only been doing it for three months and they sounded pretty good right they collaborate they critically work together I mean they were very well in sync and that's what we're trying to

[00:52:20] do in social studies we are trying to let kids do social science right the inquiry design model get students to actually engage together collaboratively critically thinking being innovative they work together as a team and also it so it brings out all those things that businesses want colleges want the workforce demands just giving them a multiple-choice assessment and I know we have there's possibility putting in some simulation test questions those are not rigorous right that's not rigor the rigor is the students actually doing

[00:52:56] social science using source material doing the work that social scientists do and again it's profile of a graduate it's everything that we want to see our students do I listened to the the board yesterday and I was pleased to hear most of you talk about we want to see the individual student right it's ethical to do what's right in my my school division Prince William County where I'm the supervisor of history and social science sorry I should have said that in the beginning our superintendent always starts with what is it good for for students. And the changes to ESSA for social studies is not good for students. It is actually

[00:53:32] taking us backward. It's not letting them grow and expand and really get into what we want to see. And again, I was happy to hear you all talk about seeing individuals, letting special ed students, L students, and things like that. This process actually lets those students thrive, and it gives teachers the opportunity to see students, every individual student, and how they are performing.

[00:53:56] as in an SOL assessment test does not do that okay it you know they they might guess at a question and then and they get 50% of those questions right we say that's proficient whereas in the IDM model the students have to perform and the teachers get to work with them throughout the throughout the course of that year and the best part about is we're trying to make this be k-12 and it would be a program study thank you Christopher Matthews followed by LaWanda

[00:54:25] travis christopher matthews here lawanda travis good morning president creasy and school board members my name is lawanda travis i'm from king and queen county public schools um i start off unfortunately with um giving note well not notification letting you all know that i had to formally file a complaint against our school board with the local sheriff as well as the u.s

[00:55:02] department of education i did send a couple of members my complaint and this is in reference to the equality of our school system as well as misappropriation of funds from our school system was not something i wanted to do but to protect our children and to make sure that they are getting the quality of education we do what we need to do um excuse me i'm kind of hoarse this morning there have been several instances of misappropriation and i probably won't say it here because that's something that i have provided in an email for you all also i'll

[00:55:41] and make sure I send that, but there is a level of accountability, and when you can't get it at your local level, we come to the state to try to get you all to help us to enforce that, and my question would

be, how do we get you all to assist us? I have written a few letters. I've also, like I said, I did it with the sheriff and the U.S. Department education but there is the children are suffering and everybody in the United States is afforded a free and a free and equality education I'm saying it

[00:56:21] backwards but as a service member for you the United States Army I've been in probably seven different locations and this is probably the second school board I've actually had to do a complaint on to fight for students equality in education my next unfortunate don't want to do it but i have to uh complaint and lawsuit will be educational malpractice we have a high retention rate and the students are not getting quality

[00:56:57] teachers and we need your assistance with this so i would like to see if i can get some assistance with this from the state as well as the department of education they have finally sent me an email so I have to take a look at that but thank you for listening and I appreciate everything you do

[00:57:14] Kristen Herring followed by Eric Ducey good morning President Creasy and members of the board thank you for taking the time to listen to my comments today and for the work that you do my

[00:57:50] name is Kristen Herring and I'm here today as a parent of two daughters in Virginia public schools to share my concerns over the Virginia SOLs SOL tests students are the ones most directly impacted by the SOL test, and yet they have no voice in these conversations. Their lived experiences provide insight into the pressure and anxiety that comes with these tests, and for some, the dream's broken for those who are incorrectly defined and limited by them. My question for you today is, are you truly listening to these voices? And further, are you considering what lessons the

[00:58:29] SOL tests are unintentionally teaching our children? With our students' education experience being so centered on test performance what are students learning about success failure and intelligence and how do these lessons shape their self-identity and their future potential when my daughter found out i was coming to speak here today she asked me to tell you about how she cannot pass the sol tests no matter how hard she tries she asked me to tell you how hard she has worked every year for the past eight years and how this makes her feel i wonder if you have

[00:59:06] considered how it feels to watch your child, a child who does well in class and is active in extracurricular activities and actually loves school, reach test time and start to break under the pressure. She's always upbeat, excited to do well, follows the rules and gives it 110% only to get her results and be dealt with another failing score. The state reports come home showing her years of progress, listing fail after fail. Every time this breaks even the most resilient spirit and my daughter is resilient. But no matter what we say to

[00:59:42] her about at home about these tests, as a junior in high school she now believes things like I'm not very smart, I'll never do well on tests, and I just don't get things the way other people do. These are the things that the SOLs have taught my daughter. How many others have learned the same incorrect things about themselves? Additionally, she worries about graduating. She worries about how she will accomplish her goals and have the kind of future she wants. How can a single set of tests becomes something that doesn't support her growth and future opportunities but instead acts as a barricade to block her from them. The cost of failure here carries much too

[01:00:22] high a price. This small subgroup of students who are otherwise successful yet unable to pass the SOLs cannot be an acceptable loss to the system. I pray that when you make decisions on the SOL test

you will think of my daughter and the many other students that she represents. They are much more than a cut score on a report. These are real stories of real students whose very identities and futures are being vastly impacted. Thank you again. Thank you. Eric Douche followed by Sam

[01:00:55] Futrell. Thank you. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed amendments to the Virginia ESSA consolidation state plan that would add history and social studies as an accountability indicator. My name is Eric Douche, and I am the K-12 social studies and science coordinator in Falls Church City and the legislative liaison for the Virginia Social Studies Leaders Consultation. I urge the board to pause adoption of these amendments and instead engage educators, parents, students, and social studies experts in designing a better commonwealth-based accountability

[01:01:35] system in history and social sciences. To date, stakeholder engagement in social studies has been limited, and social studies leaders have not been meaningfully consulted on how the proposal would effect instruction, locally awarded verified credit, or the permissive local alternative assessment. Well-designed performance-based social studies assessment is not hypothetical. It's already happening in Virginia through the locally awarded verified credit process, the emerging PLAAs, as well as other states such as Kansas. These approaches are more rigorous and provide more accurate picture of what students know and can do than a single multiple choice test. They do not replace core content. They require richer content

[01:02:14] learning as students use historical knowledge to investigate sources, make connections and apply learning in authentic context. This aligns with what we already value in programs like the IB Diploma Program and written response components of the AP exams. Because ESSA does not require history of social studies testing, using social studies SOL as an accountability indicator would effectively turn an optional test into a de facto state-wide requirement and undercut the flexibility preserved in HB 1957 for divisions to use performance-based assessments instead of an additional SOL test. It also risks

[01:02:51] increasing testing for students who have already demonstrated competency through performance-based pathways. I respectfully ask the board to pause this amendment and work with stakeholders to create a truly Commonwealth based accountability system in social studies that honors HB 1957 and centers authentic performance-based assessment rather than another high-stakes assessment. Thank you. Sam Futrell followed by Danielle Graham. Good morning My name is Sam Futrell. I am the Master Teacher for the Strategic Cultural Partnerships Office

[01:03:28] at William & Mary and the President for the Virginia Council for the Social Studies. I'm here today to speak against the passage of Amendment 9 to Virginia's Consolidated Plan. I will begin by saying that it was difficult to write my statement this morning because the language of Amendment 9 was not posted to the Virginia Department of Education's minutes prior to this meeting. It is critical, especially in a process such as this, that we remain transparent and with our stakeholders like the outstanding educators who make up our council over the past few weeks we have surveyed our membership about assessment practices in virginia and over 80

[01:04:03] have indicated that they want hb 1957 to be upheld as it stands and over 70 are against standardized tests replacing inquiry-based assessments as a measure of student achievement in virginia the profile of a virginia graduate looks at the students who graduate from our public schools through four lenses of excellence content knowledge workplace skills community and civic responsibility and career planning a standardized test can only assess one of those pillars content knowledge now let's be clear

content knowledge is critical a strong understanding of content knowledge likely would have prevented the standards debacle that occurred two years ago

[01:04:43] under the administration who is currently celebrating itself in the library's foyer right now in which the former superintendent called indigenous people america's first immigrants and left dr martin luther king jr off of a draft of virginia's standards entirely and is now posed with this amendment to make holocaust education optional but content knowledge is just one aspect of what we are looking for in a virginia graduate a single high-stakes test cannot assess students civic and community engagement or their career planning and it cannot assess a student's workplace skills because those pillars require us to center the humanity of

[01:05:22] our graduates and that's what social studies inquiry does best it centers our collective humanity and it asks our students not just to understand history but to think critically about the past that they have inherited so that they might create a better future i urge the board to pause in their adoption of amendment 9 and to consult with stakeholders like the virginia Council for the Social Studies, the Virginia Social Studies Leaders Consortium, and the Social Studies leaders within the Department of Education before any changes are made to HB 1557. Our students and our teachers are counting on you. Thank you for your time.

[01:06:00] Danielle Graham followed by Andy Seibel. Good morning President Creasy, Superintendent Gullickson, and members of the board. Thank you for the opportunity to address you today. My name is Danielle Graham, President of the Virginia Social Studies Leaders Consortium.

[01:06:18] We offer this comment with respect, but also with serious concern about the accuracy of information that has been presented and the process being used to include social studies in the accountability plan. It has now been a month since the plan was last presented, and in that time, there haven't been any efforts to gather feedback from those who lead social studies education across the Commonwealth.

[01:06:36] Instead, the only feedback session held was primarily facilitated by Pearson and focused solely on their performance assessments, not on the accountability plan. The Department's remarks at the last meeting suggesting limited data on performance assessments were simply inaccurate. Virginia has more than 10 years of data from the local alternative assessment process across the Commonwealth, four years of high school data from performance assessments used for locally awarded verified credits by nearly 50% of districts, and data from districts of innovation implementing performance assessments in Virginia studies and civics.

[01:07:08] These inaccuracies raise serious concerns and make it even more clear that the VDOE has not engaged with Virginia's experts. I also want to note that aspects of this proposal conflict with House Bill 1557, which prevents mandatory testing in areas not required by federal law, and protects local flexibility in course sequencing.

[01:07:26] The proposal to count world geography as advanced coursework would limit that flexibility and effectively relegate world history courses to electives. This would eliminate essential learning on the rise of totalitarian regimes, the spread of democratic ideals following the American Revolution, the global consequences of communism in Eastern Europe and Asia, and the conflicts and peace efforts that have shaped U.S. foreign policy and national security. At a time when anti-Semitic incidents are at historic

highs, significantly reducing students' exposure to the Holocaust and Jewish history, among other world history topics, is deeply troubling. I want to be clear. VFSLC is not opposed to accountability,

[01:08:03] but accountability must be grounded in accurate information, authentic stakeholder engagement, and sound educational practice. We urge the board to pause and adopt two solutions that would strengthen accountability while respecting state laws and meeting the needs of students in their communities. First, allow divisions to use either SOL tests or performance assessments as part of the accountability system, in alignment with House Bill 1957, and to meet the needs of their students. And two, provide divisions flexibility in determining what courses count as advanced coursework so they can meet the needs of their communities while preparing students for life beyond K-12 education. These steps would strengthen the accountability plan without diminishing the richness, rigor, and relevance of social studies education

[01:08:42] for Virginia's students. Thank you for your time and for your commitment to

[01:08:46] Virginia students. Andy Seibel followed by Dan Zacharias. It's Andy here. Dan Zacharias followed by Katie Hellebush. Good morning, Madam President, members of the board. I'm Dan Zacharias, director of the Old Dominion Association of Church Schools, and I just want to comment briefly about agenda item I for your meeting today, the first and final review of removal of outdated guidance document on the 131. I'll abbreviate the numbers, the old standards of accreditation.

[01:09:42] We understand the need to remove the old guidance document, but we feel like this occasion is Provides us with an opportunity just to remind you of something of interest to our schools 20 years ago. Well, first of all just for background I in my association we have Christian schools that are accredited and non accredited so I have the responsibility and the privilege of representing both interests and 20 years ago, I stood before this board and requested some language

[01:10:19] Regarding credit transfer from a non-accredited private school to a public school We didn't seek a guarantee of transfer, but we were just asking for some common-sense decision-making parameters and that request went well at the time the board however did not put the new language into the SOA itself they decided to put it into the guidance document which you will be of course by of necessity eliminating today that language was then adopted in

[01:10:55] 2006 19 years ago and since then it has served our students very well and prevented a lot of problems we've been quietly following the adoption of the new SOA paying particular attention to 8 VAC 20-132-60D and we're grateful to see that the new SOA as did the former SOA expressly states that public schools are not prohibited from accepting credit from non-accredited private schools in the same way that they're not prohibited from accepting credit from non

[01:11:31] accredited public schools I've had a good chat with mr. Chapman yesterday and And he tells me possibly there'll be a new guidance document developed, and so we look forward to monitoring that process and participating in public comment in that process.

[01:11:47] Thank you for your service to our Commonwealth and for taking the time to hear our perspective, and I wish all of you and your families a Merry Christmas. Katie Hellebush, followed by Harris Wheeler. Hello, and good morning.

[01:12:06] My name is Katie Hellebush. I'm the Executive Director of the Virginia Nursery and Landscape Association. On behalf of Virginia's top agriculture and forestry industry, I am representing VNLA as well

as the Virginia Agribusiness Council, Virginia Golf Course Superintendents Association, Virginia Forestry Association, Virginia Farm Bureau, and Virginia Turkgrass Council today.

[01:12:29] We are coming to express our support for preserving and strengthening state-approved coursework and certification programs in Virginia's high schools for agriculture education, horticulturist, landscape professionals, pesticide applicators, and turfgrass managers. These certifications provide meaningful, career-ready skills for students while meeting the real needs across Virginia's agriculture, forestry, environmental, horticulture, and all green industry sectors. This coursework and certification tracks give students direct access to industry-recognized credentials before graduation and support the

[01:13:06] labor needs across the Commonwealth. Virginia employers consistently report shortages of those having received agriculture and horticultural coursework as well as trained applicators, grounds professionals, and horticultural specialists. Coursework and certification programs in high schools, community colleges, and two-year programs at institutions of higher education all together assist in closing this gap, ensuring students can step into skilled, well-paid, immediately jobs after completing their education Virginia has been a leader in this space

[01:13:39] and we want to continue to serve as a leader for these reasons we respectfully urge the board at a minimum to convene a stakeholder workgroup to review the agriculture and horticulture certifications and the rationale for any proposed certifications elimination the agriculture industry is the number one in the industry in the Commonwealth we would hope the Board of Education would pause implementation of this proposal I believe it's agenda F on your agenda before eliminating years of work in partnership with school systems across

[01:14:16] the Commonwealth and I understand there's been a new list that was released yesterday I have not had a chance to look at that but I thank you for your time and wanted to share a brief email from a student that I received you could not attend so this is a statement from Milagros Taurus who She was a sophomore at Virginia State University and she's a former Chesterfield Technical

[01:14:54] Career Center student. And she says, "Through the urban agricultural program, I built connections with industry professionals whom I still remain in contact with today. Because of the certification pathway and hands-on training provided, I earned an internship that was projected to become a full-time position, an opportunity I would not have had otherwise.

[01:15:16] of my peers in programs such as electrical hvac and carpentry were able to secure employment directly because their certification demonstrated readiness and credibility eliminating these certifications can you just forward that to the board i'm sorry your time's expired thank you very much i didn't see the red harris wheeler followed by elizabeth duncan good morning i'm harris wheeler and i appreciate this opportunity my background has been in horticulture for

[01:15:53] over 40 years but i'll just say this first miss hillabush spoke before i did and she really made it easy for me thank you some of the comments i want to make she covered it so i just want to add to what she said first of all i want to comment uh i'm grateful for what we heard in the music earlier today i was a music major in college and so people asked me how did you get in

[01:16:25] horticulture i said well it was an accident i say that to say yes we must expose our kids We must offer them many opportunities, many pathways to be successful.

[01:16:41] As a high school senior, my grades were F in science, F in history, F in algebra, and F in English. Not good.

[01:16:58] Fast forward, I finished a major university on a Dean's List. Now, how did that happen? Well, I learned some things along the way about education. We must integrate theory with practical application.

[01:17:17] And that's what was missing. And that's not the end of the story. I ended up teaching as a teacher. Here's someone who by flunked out of high school and loved it.

[01:17:33] And so I want to ask you to consider or continue the dialogue with the certifications that you are considering to eliminate and allow the industry to take a closer look at what you're proposing.

[01:17:54] My 41 years in this industry, starting off as a lawn care operator, to a supervisor in the city of Richmond, to working for the Richmond Redevelopment Housing Authority, and finally as an educator, I have many certifications, but hands-on is extremely important.

[01:18:10] I just ask for continued dialogue. Please put a pause on maybe some of the decisions you're making. I thank you for your time. Elizabeth Duncan, followed by Jessica Choon. Elizabeth Duncan, Jessica Choon.

[01:18:36] Good morning, members of the board. My name is Jessica Chun, Middle School Social Studies Specialist for Fairfax County Public Schools. I'm here to address critical concerns regarding the proposal to offer World Geography as an option for advanced coursework in middle school and its negative impacts on our course progression and staffing in FCPS.

[01:18:59] We advocate for local divisions to be allowed to determine which advanced course would make most sense for their students. The proposal, depending on the interpretation, is deeply problematic. If World Geography is solely offered in grade 8 for the 27-28 school year, this year's FCPS 6th grade students will not take civics and economics during their middle school journey.

[01:19:23] This is unacceptable. Civics education is vital for preparing students to be well-informed participants in our democracy. Additionally, if world geography replaces civics in FCPS, we may lose our local grade five course on ancient world cultures, which we believe builds the foundation for students to understand how ancient societies shaped modern government, science, technology, and culture, and teaches global perspective to support equity, diversity, and cultural responsiveness in our schools and beyond.

[01:19:58] Although the World Geography course does not replace high school world history courses, granting graduation credit in middle school could change pathways for graduation. These students may not want to take four years of social studies in high school choosing to opt out of a world history course.

[01:20:16] This significantly reduces instruction crucial for understanding our diverse world, including the identity and history of the Jewish community. At a time of rising anti-Semitic incidents in our schools, we cannot afford to diminish this essential learning.

[01:20:32] These course shifts also create significant staffing, hiring, and licensure instability across K-12 FCPS. The human and financial resources needed for new curriculum materials, ongoing professional development, training, and coaching for teachers would be difficult considering recent budget constraints.

[01:20:53] We believe that geography is most meaningful when integrated within history and civics, providing a central context. We urge the board to reconsider these proposals. Our students deserve a

robust and integrated curriculum to be successful during their time in our schools and futures.

[01:21:11] Thank you for your time. Jennifer Brown followed by Dr. Girard. Good morning.

[01:21:26] My name is Jennifer Brown and I'm an educational specialist for elementary social studies in Fairfax County Public Schools. I very much appreciate the opportunity to speak on behalf of Fairfax County Public Schools regarding the proposed ESSA amendment that would add a traditional multiple-choice social studies test as the single federal accountability measure. As the largest school division in the Commonwealth, FCPS has a very deep interest in preserving the significant progress that we have made over the past decade to broaden our assessment practices beyond high-stakes testing, as affirmed by House Bill 1957, which

[01:22:06] supports local flexibility through permissive local alternative assessments. This change was introduced without public notice and does contradict Virginia's bipartisan vision for flexibility in history and social science assessment.

[01:22:22] As a consequence of this proposed change, high-stakes SOL testing for Virginia Studies, Civics in economics and VA U.S. history would move us backwards to a one-size-fits-all test which would diminish the quality of instruction and reduce opportunities for students to demonstrate deeper understanding of critical content in history and social science. Educational leaders across the Commonwealth know that high-stakes multiple-choice tests prioritize surface-level content coverage and it narrows instruction often discouraging the

[01:23:01] critical skills HB 1957 was designed to strengthen. FCPS students have benefited greatly from the use of performance-based assessments as local alternative assessments. These assessments have prioritized deep inquiry-based learning, has allowed our students to construct their own understandings, explore their worldviews, and develop critical thinking skills that transfer beyond the classroom.

[01:23:29] Our instruction now focuses on fostering productive, thoughtful citizens of our commonwealth, our nation, and the world, which cannot be done through high-stakes multiple-choice testing. We very respectfully urge the board to pause or reject this amendment.

[01:23:47] We must instead work transparently with educators and our communities to develop an accountability indicator that aligns with Virginia's vision for rigorous inquiry-based learning and upholds the flexibility provided by HB 1957. Thank you so much for your time. Dr. Gerard, followed by Damon Graham.

[01:24:16] Hello, I'm Dr. Jai Gerard. I'm the Director of Education and Workforce Development with the Virginia Restaurant Lodging and Travel Association agenda. Removing this credential from the approved list would create a substantive disadvantage for students enrolled in our state's culinary arts programs and by extension for the employers and communities who rely on well-prepared hospitality workforce. The certification is not an optional credential within our industry. It's a statutory requirement. Under Virginia

[01:24:53] food regulations, every food service establishment must have at least one certified food protection manager on duty during all hours of operation. Students who graduate with the certification in hand are immediately employable, able to step into the kitchens, food service operations without delay and positioned to fill a critical regulatory role that every business must satisfy the national data underscores how central and expected this credential is each year over 50 000 students across the united

states take this test whereas in Virginia less than one percent of our students are currently completing it as many CTE administrators are pressuring teachers to

[01:25:29] restrict who is allowed to take the test and only give it to those that they consider to be a guarantee pass. This practice is fundamentally misaligned with CTE's mission and disproportionately affects students who would benefit most from earning a nationally recognized industry-required credential. Virginia is not an outlier in treating the food protection manager credential as a high value outcome for high school students. That being said, all of the states that are near us as well as 30 other ones require this as part of their credential list for high school students. Career and technical education exists to equip students with industry-aligned skills, portable credentials, and real-world

[01:26:06] experiences that translate directly into workforce readiness. Removing a nationally required industry-validated certification undermines that purpose. Serve Safe is the most widely adopted food safety manager certification in the country, built on the FDA food code standards and accepted across all 50 states. It's trusted by our national brands, independent operators, institutional food programs, and corporate hospitality employers. Retaining the certification also ensures that students maintain a significant competitive advantage in the job market regardless of their long-term plans for some of them culinary arts is a lifelong vocation while others are

[01:26:44] simply using it as a means to get by until their next opportunity comes along or so that they can pay for schools many of our students come from rural economically diverse or workforce centered communities and they depend on the current technical education to open doors for them serve safe offers precisely that a portable industry validated credential demonstrating mastery of essential food safety competencies.

[01:27:05] These skills protect public health, reduce operational risk and uphold the core mission of the CTE programs that students are prepared for real world high value employment. Eliminating the serve safe food manager certification does not reduce the burden, it reduces opportunity.

[01:27:20] I would also like to urge the board to consider adding in the serve safe food handler certification for next year's approved credential list, as all students should have basic food safety skills before serving food to others. Thank you. Damon Graham, followed by Mark McAuliffe.

[01:27:38] Good morning, members of the board. My name is Damon Graham, and I'm a 14-year-old student at Independence High School in Lyon County. I'm grateful for the chance to be here today and participate in the civic process I've learned about in school. I did take a standardized test in civics, and my teacher made the class meaningful with projects, discussions, and activities that helped me understand how government works.

[01:27:58] But I know from friends that this isn't everybody's experience. When a high-stakes test is looming, some classes shift away from writing and real thinking to just memorizing facts. I worry on adding a new high-stakes test to social studies that the accountability system will make the problem even bigger.

[01:28:17] Right now, I'm taking world history, and our performance assessments actually help me understand events, cultures, and choices, not just recall dates. World history matters to me deeply. I've been lucky enough to have visited three of the seven wonders of the world, among other places, and those history, those experiences made history feel alive. That's why I'm especially concerned about any

accountability changes that could devalue or weaken world history. I understand that adding world geography as an advanced coursework indicator might unintentionally reduce attention to world history in the graduation pathway. I believe world history should stay a required part of graduation because every student deserves to learn how societies develop and

[01:28:56] interact across time. I also want to speak about the importance of learning and understanding Jewish history. I've personally been the target of anti-Semitism, and that makes me even more committed to understanding and sharing the long history of the Jewish people, their achievements, their struggles, and the dangers of hatred. These lessons cannot be captured by multiple choice questions. They require writing, reflection, and thoughtful discussion. Please protect the inquiry-based, writing-focused social studies education that helps students become informed, empathetic citizens, and keep world history strong and required for all students. Thank you for

[01:29:29] listening. Mark McAuliffe, followed by James Pugh. Good morning, and thank you for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Mark McAuliffe, and I'm here on behalf of Cross Creek Nursery and Landscaping, a company that has been part of the Commonwealth of Virginia since 1974. Over the past 50 years, we've grown from a small local business into a full-service green industry organization.

[01:30:06] Altogether, we provide year-round employment for more than 215 individuals. In addition to my work at Cross Creek. I also serve on the board of the VNLA, one of the largest and most engaged landscape associations in the country. In that role, I see firsthand the opportunities and obstacles facing our industry statewide, not just in our own community. Recent changes in immigration policy have reduced the available labor pool at the very moment. Demand for landscaping, horticulture, and growing services continue to rise. Our industry is expanding and need for well-trained workers with strong foundational certifications is greater than

[01:30:45] ever. These credentials open doors to meaningful long-term careers that our industry truly depends on. We want to build that workforce here locally. We want to train and mentor the next generation, but that becomes far more difficult if the programs designed to prepare students for their careers are reduced or eliminated. Not every student plans to attend college, and that is not a shortcoming it is simply a different and equally valuable path career and technical education programs in horticulture give students a sense of direction and purpose they introduce them the real opportunities in landscape design

[01:31:23] nursery operations and equipment operations these certifications also help shift the perception that work involving hands-on skilled labor is somehow less respectable in reality these careers require knowledge professionalism and technical skill certification programs reinforce that message and allow students to take pride in the work they do from an employer standpoint certifications also play a critical role in career development they provide clear measurable benchmarks that allow businesses like ours to reward employees

[01:31:58] for the growth whether through pay increases bonuses or expanded responsibilities certifications help us build a culture advancement and give employees a tangible pathway to improve their skills, and earning potential. When these programs are strong, students enter the workforce already equipped with credentials that make them more competitive and more confident. As a business person, I am always supportive of thoughtful efficiencies, consolidating, streamlining, or auditing programs to

ensure that they are delivering value in that is both reasonable and responsible. Establishing a listening group, bringing together educators, industry partners,

[01:32:37] and community stakeholders is is an approach i would fully support it provides a constructive path to approving these programs while still preserving opportunities they create for students thank you for listening thank you james pew followed by neely minton james pew neely minton good morning president creasy superintendent gullickson and members of the board i am neely minton k-12 social studies coordinator for albemarle county schools

[01:33:16] and a half-Jewish American. Since 2020, our division has used inquiry-based instruction tied to local alternative assessments in every course and every grade level K through 12. In each unit, students make evidence-based claims to answer compelling questions aligned with primary sources and content standards.

[01:33:37] These assessments are scored, often mass scored and double scored, using the VDOE common rubric. Our division tracks data looking at overall performance achievement gaps and growth over time after public comment i'm going to submit k-12 examples of student work for your review virginia is already excelling in the work that states like kansas and kentucky are now advancing yet instead of upholding the work that hb 1957 codifies this board proposes an amendment that would penalize divisions for choosing the permissive local alternative assessment pathway that the law allows i ask you one

[01:34:17] How can the board hold divisions accountable for SOL tests that HB1957 says divisions are not required to give? Two, if HB1957 directs the board to create guardrails and rubrics so that divisions can successfully give alternative assessments in lieu of SOL tests, why does the ESSA amendment penalize divisions for following the law?

[01:34:40] Three, how can divisions that currently offer world geography in high school also offer it in middle school without changing the grade levels at which Virginia studies and civics are taught how does a fixed course sequence not violate HB 1957 which allows for course sequence flexibility for if schools are to just add geography without adjusting their course sequence what comes off the middle middle school master schedule how should divisions find the staff materials and instructional minutes needed for a course that currently has no place in

[01:35:14] the day five my jewish ancestors were victims in the holocaust if world history 2 becomes an elective how will the board ensure that all students learn jewish history six if you said claims that we must have two years of data in order to bring alternative assessments into the accountability framework why push this amendment now why nullify a state law to take us back to traditional high stakes test and test prep instruction why not wait till we can include local alternative assessments in accountability virginia stands at the forefront of national leadership in inquiry-based innovative

[01:35:52] instruction and assessment our students are clearly benefiting from this work please do not take us backward i urge you to reconsider the essa amendment and remove all items related to history and social science thank you are there other members of the public here today that would like to speak if so you can go to the microphone if not i will if not i will close the public comment period

[01:36:25] and what i will ask for now is that we take about a five minute break

[01:36:33] thank you okay we are ready to move on we have item a

[01:48:38] on the consent agenda is there a motion to waive first review and approve the item on the consent agenda. So moved. Second. Dr. Ackerman. Aye. Mr. Green. Aye. Dr. Northern. Aye. Is Mr. Hansen on or Miss Ashton? No. Miss McPherson. Aye. Miss Kilgore. Aye. Mr. Monk. Aye. And chair votes aye. Okay we are going to take yesterday's items first that we did not conclude before we

[01:49:12] move to item b so on your agenda today those are listed as item what is it o and n am i right n and o items n and o are going to be before item b since we didn't finish those yesterday so that means we will begin with um miss booker dwyer on item n please

[01:49:40] Madam President, before you begin, can I give a kudos out to, since we're in the city of Richmond, I just wanted to highlight we've got a literacy coach at Fairfield Court Elementary School that was named the 2026 Teacher of the Year.

[01:49:57] Just wanted to recognize her for those, Tiffany Snead. Thank you. Good morning, members of the board.

[01:50:20] I am joined today with our Deputy Superintendent, Stacey Longus. And so we are going to co-present to provide some updates, some recommendations for updates to the Memorandum of Understanding. At the last board meeting, we provided the historical background, a comprehensive overview of the Memorandum of Understanding school divisions.

[01:50:44] Slide two gives that overview and that recap of what a Memorandum of Understanding school division is. And what is required is that there's this formal agreement between the Board of Education and the local school board that defines all the responsibilities to improve student outcomes.

[01:51:07] And the MOU is informed by the outcome of a division-level review. And so at the last board meeting, we were charged with coming back with some recommendations. And as a reminder, on slide three, school divisions are identified for MOU status based off of a couple of key criteria.

[01:51:29] Number one, if 40% of the schools in the division are identified for comprehensive support and improvement or additional targeted support and improvement. So now that we have our outcomes from our school performance framework release, we will be going through that and identifying those MOU school divisions that are based off of the comprehensive support and improvement schools and additional targeted support and improvement schools. They can also be identified if 10 or more schools are identified as comprehensive support and improvement. MOU divisions, they must complete a division level review and the outcomes

[01:52:07] of that review informs content in the MOU and this is required by code. I put a hyperlink to the code And just a snapshot of some of those requirements that this division level review, a resource allocation review must be conducted.

[01:52:25] The outcomes of that and recommendations will come back before the board. It will be presented from the department. And then there's a specified time frame that the board must enter into the MOU with that local school board.

[01:52:41] and the local school board must submit a corrective action plan for approval by this board. One of the items that came up at our last board meeting was the idea of securing a third party to conduct this division level review and so where our recommendation is to do just that is to secure a third party through

the RFP process to conduct this division level review. However this is dependent on available funds and so um so we'll be prepared to go either way if the department

[01:53:15] staff had um have to do the division level review or if we have the funding to release that rfp and get a third party the next slide goes over additional recommended supports some of these supports are identified in the code already but they're not explicit and so they're very general So we want to, in the MOU, to be very specific with what will be required so that we can hold our parties accountable.

[01:53:47] One of the first things we want to implement is monthly financial support sessions. And Deputy Superintendent Longus is going to speak to the need as to why that is needed. I think many of the times that our school divisions that are under the MOU, there are everlasting impacts on the financial side.

[01:54:10] so if we can help support from the finance side and be able to to be their partner and work through things and concerns that they have then we can better provide everyone a good framework but then also good feedback so that we can move forward together and so i would like to implement this we've got to think through the logistics of it because the budget and finance team hasn't been involved in this in the past. And so figuring out the logistics behind it. But I support us being a partner in this process to ensure that we're moving in the right direction.

[01:54:51] Thank you. The second recommendation is to exercise that option to add someone to their state board, a non-voting member. But board governance, this is essential for ensuring those schools are improving. So having someone from the state be a part of their board, not voting on things, but really being immersed in that board governance work is going to be support. It's going to be essential for ensuring that division is moving in the right direction. The third bullet, this is also written into the code, but it just says there will be regular updates. And we don't really know what regular means. And so we want to

[01:55:31] define when we say regular, what do we mean? And so we want quarterly progress reports to the local school boards in this holds the the superintendent and the the leaders publicly accountable for improving those schools and so it's on the public record and we would identify some key things that would need to be shared such as their improvement goals the implementation status of their corrective action plan student performance data and any next steps and and so we want to ensure that that data is regularly shared with their local school board

[01:56:08] and in a public setting so that the parents can they can see it they can understand it and then reports to come to the virginia board annually to provide the detailed progress towards improvement goals implementation status corrective action plans and student performance data and so they they would come to the board to share the status of their work and the board and once again this is another public opportunity for the entire community to hear and for the board to directly

[01:56:40] ask questions and see how they how the division is progressing the next slide is it is focused on this continued approval of key hires so before a division can hire a superintendent or some other leadership roles, it first comes to the department for review. And we would like to continue that practice. And then the next two bullets I'm going to let our budget person speak to around the

[01:57:13] pre-approval of financial transactions. So the next one would be a recommendation that we would have some pre-approvals on financial transactions over a \$10,000 threshold. We're seeing where things are being done from the grant level and then they're not in the application so then they're denied so

if we're on the front end of it to help assist the divisions on decisions from the front end we can ensure that we're using the dollars most useful for the students of the divisions and then on

[01:57:50] the next bullet is talking about continuing providing technical assistance on grant programs so the example that I'd like to like talk through and I believe you all have handouts is we started meeting with Petersburg as an example with walking through some of our some of their areas in which we really needed to see a little bit of growth and to ensure that they could use their funding before the deadlines and so we met with them with

[01:58:23] in partner with MOU team of with the OSI team and we sat down with them and kind of talked through where our concerns were gave them some real true steps to start making progress and then we followed up on two weeks later with some progress that had been done and so we'd like to continue to do this we've done this with other school divisions outside of the MOU area and have seen great progress and it's a partnership. My ESCA coordinators are amazing at working with with the specialist in their in their

[01:59:01] areas really getting into the weeds with the the people that are actually doing the work and trying to motivate us motivate us all to work together to partner and to move it in the right direction so we can use the money in the proper ways. And the great thing about this it really allows the school division to maximize every dollar for students they can learn more about braiding the funds and doing some innovative things at deputy longest team they know all the rules and so they'll make sure that you can take advantage of

[01:59:38] all the different opportunities to maximize these funds the next slide is that we want to have some targeted support sessions and so so this would be key professional learning experiences coaching mentoring but this will be done in collaboration with the school division what we have seen from other states that have gone in and have supported school divisions in this manner you have to build the capacity of the central office team in order to sustain the work so when we look at for instance Massachusetts they did some

[02:00:15] great school turnaround the problem was once the school turned around The state had a hard time pulling out because they hadn't built the capacity of a team to keep it going without state intervention.

[02:00:31] And so we don't want to do that. So we want to make sure that we are working in close partnership with the division. We also want to ensure that we are not duplicating efforts. So I can speak to another state where the state provided leadership coaches and the division provided leadership coaches.

[02:00:48] And there were two coaches going to see each principal plus their principal supervisor. And sometimes the coaches were not saying the same thing to the principal and the principal supervisor may not have said the same thing to the principal that the coaches were. So it created more confusion. And so to ensure that we are not duplicating efforts or putting too much help on a principal, we will work with the division to plan out any type of professional learning experience.

[02:01:14] And we will make sure that their teams are thoroughly included so that it can sustain after the state leaves. And one of the things when we were speaking with some of the superintendents who are currently under MOU, having this clear exit criteria.

[02:01:34] When you read the MOU, sometimes it's not clear, well, how exactly do I get out of this? And so we want to make sure it's super clear, this is how you will exit. We also want to make sure that it's really

clear who's doing what, when.

[02:01:50] That was another thing that came up, and sometimes the roles between the school board and the superintendent were getting mixed up, and so that was preventing progress. And so we just want to make sure that those roles are clearly identified and that they're not in conflict with the superintendent's contract.

[02:02:09] So we just want to make sure that we're attending to all of those legal matters. and then we want to ensure and hold the school division accountable for communicating and providing options for parents and students we want to make sure that parents are aware if there are tutoring programs or if there are opportunities that a child could take advantage of to improve their learning that the parents they are aware they know how to get their child involved to really doubling down on that on the communication with parents and students clearly defining that escalation ladder so we want to ensure that progress

[02:02:44] continues and that it's not being stalled or going in the opposite direction and so we need to clearly define what happens when the progress stops or what happens if the progress is going in reverse what are those clear actions that need to occur and then creating an amendment clause and once again just being very clear about how the how we go about amendments so if there's a need to change an improvement strategy there's already a process built in to do that and so with next steps we have not publicly released any MOU divisions we

[02:03:23] are going through that data now and so that so with the next steps would be if new divisions are identified to enter that MOU status then that MOU it will be we will craft it make sure that we're working with the board to craft it based on the outcomes of the division level review and the non-negotiables that the board has identified. If an existing MOU division, if they are identified through this accountability system, then we would amend their current MOU. So we would go through that MOU, make some significant

[02:03:58] amendments to revise it. And then if divisions are based off of this accountability system, if they can exit mou divisions and then then we will work with the board to to go about looking at their mou and seeing how we can begin to sunset that so we are going to we are preparing for the division level review process and once again that is identifying funding sources if we are going to do that third party or if we are going to go move forward with a department team leading it and then

[02:04:34] then we're planning for support sessions so once we identify those MOU school divisions we want to initiate support we don't want to wait there so so we are looking forward to that so at this time we'll stop to take any questions if there's any other recommendations you want to see we would we would love to hear from you thank you just want to support the recommendation around some of that operation side of things I know many of our MOU conversations around academics and that definitely is the priority but when we think about ensuring that those opportunities are available in the academic side that

[02:05:14] operations piece is so valuable so I know previously maybe not as much focus on that so we just want to commend the staff deputy superintendent longest and team around some of these priorities that they're putting in place and so just thank you for that and fully support those initiatives as well as the local school board all for local control but they're definitely in terms of governance I think there's some opportunities there and so having state participants there would be helpful as well so thanks for the work on this

[02:06:00] it was a practice my understanding from my team I've only been here since April it was occurring a few years ago and it was not continued and I don't know the the background behind that. When we say a few years ago are we talking pre pandemic? I think with changes in administration I think it it was in place through the lane administration I don't know when it stopped. Okay thank you. Dr. Northern. Can you talk to me a little bit about this escalation ladder

[02:06:39] because it's tricky right because in many ways this has been the problem before right we haven't really known what to do when the progress stalls or nothing happens and so anyway any thinking about that yes so with this escalation ladder we know that there could be several contributing factors to progress being stalled and the trend that we have noticed in some of our school divisions where it's stalled the most is that the change in leadership it's the the um the lack of alignment between the the division leader and the school board and so we would want to put in some

[02:07:18] clear those clear checkpoints where if progress is being stalled there needs to be some account some accountability around that so we would need to look into why it's being stalled and then what would what we would need to do to help them to to right size or to turn that around and so we would map out a whole plan around that or what do you want more specifics am I answering your question yeah I think so I guess I'm just trying to figure out our other options right like you know can we you know I don't I don't know how we can how heavy-handed we can get I guess is honestly what

[02:07:58] I'm trying to get at under our authority and what that might look like. But I understand that maybe that's not all planned out, but I would just encourage you all to think carefully about that escalation ladder because I worry, right, that we can do all these things and still not see any movement, and then what?

[02:08:18] You know, we can – so, anyway, I think we need both sticks and carrots. And so that's, I guess, what I'm addressing. Anyone else? So a couple of questions here. I want to make sure, because I don't see it here, that we are very clear that we will not be waiving under any circumstances meetings between the local school board, the superintendent of the local school division, and the board president, the board of education president.

[02:08:52] And in fact, I actually would like to see under bullet number three provide quarterly progress reports to the local school board and then the annual report. I almost think something around there needs to be, I think there needs to be a higher mechanism here for accountability because, you know, for whatever reason, at this point, there have been little to no meetings that were required other than a transition in leadership in the school division.

[02:09:27] and by that I mean the leadership at the very top, which is the school superintendent, I think there need to be more meetings between the board president and the board vice president and the local school board and the superintendent.

[02:09:45] So I would venture to say that it would be more effective to have quarterly meetings with that core group in order for the board leadership to provide the remainder of the full Board of Education with some more background.

[02:10:04] I do think, too, that regular updates on MOU status and progress from department staff is critical. We are the drivers in this, and we need to be made aware more clearly, more frequently, what is

going on so that we're actually progressing. I mean, what was it last month or in our previous, one of our two previous meetings, we had a presentation and we saw the timeline

[02:10:41] and the length of time that so many of our school divisions that are currently in MOU have been in MOU and or left for a brief period of time and have returned in an even longer MOU status i mean guys at the end of the day i see it as just as much the responsibility of the board of education to get those school divisions out of that status and progress towards where they need to be to be effectively handling the business that they have to handle every day so i want us

[02:11:17] to think very deeply and broadly about how we can get that that job done anyone else have comments here. Okay. Thank you. Thank you very much. We'll add those recommendations. Thanks. Thank you.

[02:11:34] Okay. So now we will go to item O. We can hold for 30 seconds, please. One second. Good morning,

[02:12:43] President Carisi, members of the board, and Superintendent Gullickson. My name again is Dwayne McClure, Deputy Superintendent of the Division of Innovation, Student Pathways and Opportunity. And today we bring you the latest update pertaining to the strengthening careers in Technical Education for the 21st Century Act, also known as the Perkins V. Before I begin, I would be remiss if I didn't share some updates with you. As you may know, the Virginia Department of Education, in collaboration with the Virginia Community College System, VCCS, and with support of the Virginia Office of Economics, Educational Economics, known

[02:13:22] as VOE has identified kind of a current updated list of industry recognized credentials that we presented to the board for review. Before moving forward, I would like to acknowledge all of the great energy around the CTE industry recognized credentials, and we appreciate your input and welcome more input. In partnership with the CTE team in my division, I will be launching more stakeholder engagement with the industry in the very near future. So please be on the lookout for

[02:13:57] that. So I would like to request that we do a review today for the CTE credentials and we come back to you in January with more update from the industry. Hopefully that's pleasing for you and for everyone that's listening and that did receive and view the new credentials list, we'll be back to the board in January for final review and board approval. The industry recognized credential list will be submitted to the Board Regulatory Town Hall for a 30-day public comment period pursuant to the administrative process. And if you have

[02:14:33] any questions, please contact the Office of Student Pathways and Opportunity and you can do that at [cte@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:cte@doe.virginia.gov). Please, we welcome all input and there will be more opportunities for community engagement. So now back to regular business. We will begin with the update to the Perkins 5 plan. So if we begin on slide two for those of you who are following along. I would also like to acknowledge that Mr.

[02:15:05] Anthony Williams, Dr. Anthony Williams, our director of CTE, is joining us virtually and he'll be answering your Q&As this afternoon. He's currently and his team are receiving some excellent support and education at the Association for Career and Technical Education Conference in Tennessee. So moving to slide two, the Perkins Plan is a document that outlines our use of federal funds to develop high-quality

CTE programs, to align education with workforce needs, to improve student achievement, and to create pathways for high school and post-secondary

[02:15:40] education and career. For slide three, the state plan has four components and is intended to set goals, strategies, and accountable measures for CTE programs in middle and high school, post-secondary, and correctional institutions. Slide four, the budget includes a federal grant award of over 32 million and how we support these program administrations with the leadership activities and our local education agencies to provide our 131 school divisions, 23 Virginia community

[02:16:18] colleges, Virginia community school systems, college systems, and the Department of Correction and Department of Juvenile Justice. Slide four outdates the Perkins V accountability which requires states and sub recipients to set measurable goals for student outcomes like graduation, technical skills attainment, their credential and grad, excuse me, credential and degree completion and post-program placement using this data to ensure the

[02:16:53] effectiveness of the Perkins 5 plan. Slide 6 shows our state CTE program administration and leadership activities are designed to one develop and revise our procurement of CTE curricula that aligns to industry and academic standards. Also supporting participation in work-based learning, entertainment, and post-secondary recognized credentials. Providing professional development opportunities for CTE teachers, faculty, and administrators.

[02:17:22] providing resources to support career exploration and academic and career planning, and also providing students with non-traditional fields in current and emerging professions. If you look at all across the CTE, if you look at slide 7, you will also be able to see across the CTE program areas. Slide 8 outlines our CTE preparation for SY 24-25 including over 270,000 students enrolled

[02:18:01] in middle and high school CTE courses. We also have had over 686,000 students participating in one or more course during the school year. Slide 9 outlines our CTE program impact continuing with over 48,608 students were identified as CTE completers. CTE completers are students who have completed a sequence of CTE courses and the requirements of high school graduation. Of the 31,913 students who responded

[02:18:40] to the completer follow-up survey, we found that 96.35 percent successively transitioned to a post-secondary education, employment, or the military. 84.2% earned at least one CTE credential, 32.18% participated in at least one work-based learning experience, and 96.5% attained at least 80% of their competencies of the sequence.

[02:19:17] Slide 10, Perkins V, Sections 113, requires each eligible agency with input for eligible sub-recipients to establish state-determined performance measures.

[02:19:33] Slide 11 gives these states determined targets, including graduation rates, academic achievement, and post-graduation success. We are required to establish these in order to measure progress and to ensure that career and technical education programs meet the needs of students and employers.

[02:19:54] The bold indicates includes areas of performance that will be modified for school year 26-27 due to unanticipated circumstances. If unanticipated circumstances arise related to the improvement in the data or measurement approaches, the VDOE must revise the state-determined levels of performance.

[02:20:16] We have also added an optional state-determined performance indicator that captures the CTE completers that are participating in youth registered apprenticeships. On slide 12, the next step of this proposed process will include a 60-day public comment period of the Perkins 5 State Plan that will be publicly available in the coming weeks. And during this period, we will host two virtual public hearing meetings to receive additional input pertaining to the Perkins 5

[02:20:48] state plan. Notification of these public meetings will be released via the Virginia updated newsletter and the CTU memorandum in the coming weeks. At this time, I now welcome your feedback and our questions, and Dr. Williams will be joining as well. Are there any questions? Mr. Monk? I appreciate it. Thank you, and I appreciate the update and the work that's gone into it. Mainly just some feedback or thoughts in the development of the plan moving forward. What I'm hearing from the

[02:21:25] field is a desire to ensure that staff are able and ready to go out into the field so thinking about maybe some opportunities I don't know what resource allocation might look like through the Perkins plan to make that a reality if there's any funds necessary to do that similarly with professional development I know many of our pathways have professional development opportunities but ways that the department could either engage with existing professional or support new professional development might be some resources here within the plan to be able to do that and then would be interested I'm a big fan of our

[02:22:04] career and technical student organizations and the work that they do I know there's some great states thinking about Georgia and Florida and some other models out there and think we've got great work being done currently but definitely as we look into this plan some differentiation of resources could take us to that next level and so we'd love to have a conversation around how we can ensure that Perkins plan resources are really going directly to those CTSOs and impacting students from a statewide perspective because my experience has been a few dollars and those areas really can go a long way so those are kind of three big categories that I think could help us with

[02:22:44] resource allocation there within Perkins other questions here dr. Northern I'll I'll just share publicly the comment I shared with you last month and just my continuing just eyes wide open in terms of the types of industry-recognized credentials that kids are getting and how we are incentivizing those.

[02:23:06] And just a general feedback that what we are seeing in other states, again, is that the vast majority of these industry-recognized credentials are in Microsoft Office, Word, OSHA, you know, safety guidelines.

[02:23:22] And I'm not saying those aren't useful, but I'm saying when we have, you know, other states are seeing upwards of 80 percent of their IRCs in these two not as useful IRCs in terms of, you know, being able to get a high wage or, you know, middle income wage at least job out of the door.

[02:23:41] So I just want us to be conscious that we want to go into this thing, setting up the guardrails correctly and making sure that we are incentivizing, you know, kids going into a variety of different fields and not just kind of getting IRCs and some of these low-hanging fruit, I guess is what I'll call it.

[02:24:01] Correct. Appreciate that. Other questions or comments here? Okay. Thank you very much. Okay. So that moves us to item B, and we will go back to Ms. Booker Dwyer.

[02:24:36] Good morning again. And so today I am presenting the final review of the proficiency implementation plan.

[02:24:52] And just as a grounding, when we go to slide two, just to remind us how we got here and why we're doing this, we know that raising expectations for proficiency, it's good for Virginia students. We want to make sure that they are prepared to enter careers, to enroll in post-secondary institutions, or enlist in the military and be successful.

[02:25:16] We have heard from our higher education partners. We've heard from our military representatives and employers about the need for students to demonstrate proficiency. And so by raising the expectations, we are setting that high bar for success that we know all of our students can achieve, especially if they have the right support.

[02:25:39] And then it gives families and educators that deeper insight into where students are doing well and where we can provide additional support for them to grow. And ultimately, it drives excellence in our public schools.

[02:25:55] We saw the outcomes of our school performance and support framework yesterday. And we know that some of our school divisions, they are well on their way. We have some excellent schools who are prepared to meet these expectations. we've also see we also saw pockets of schools that we can strengthen that support and that's exactly what we plan to do on the next slide on slide three raising these expectations it's good for the commonwealth as a whole it's ensuring that we are aligned to national benchmarks and ensuring that our state remains competitive that when our students graduate they are ready to

[02:26:34] enter the that workforce um a virginia university or a military pathway and truly experience success slide four outlines the year-long journey one year and some months and some days where you where the board has received presentations i'm going all the way back to august 28th starting with that standard setting process all the way up until today so we have provided a ton of information not only to the board but also to the community to stakeholders

[02:27:10] keeping everyone engaged along the way some key actions that were taken were the board approving more rigorous standards in math and english language arts and as soon as the board approved those standards our office of instruction team they began releasing supports instructional guides all kind of resources to support our educators in meeting these helping our students meet these more rigorous standards in the spring of 2025 our state our standards of learning assessments they were fully aligned to the more rigorous standards so our students have already experienced

[02:27:48] these assessments and so the the only thing that would be modified is the cut score in september the board unanimously approved the revised cut scores and then last month the board approved to maintain the current cut scores for this year given school divisions maximum time to prepare we discussed how we have engaged over 5 000 virginians and at this point it's really more because we still hear you know from public comments and and we hear from people who talk about the cut scores but over 5 000 virginians help to inform the recommendations that we are

[02:28:27] sharing with you today and and we included a number of different stakeholders which are all listed in bullet point three so it was important that we heard from the education side the workforce side parents of course were very important hearing directly from our principals our teachers and even students provided feedback so our final recommendations for your consideration recommendation one this focuses on that four-year phased-in model the first bullet point affirms the action

[02:29:01] that you took in november of 2025 that should be 2025 not 2026 where this school year is a preparation year there are no changes to the cut scores beginning in the fall of 2026 is when that four-year phased-in model with the new temporary approaching performance level will be implemented and that performance level will be removed at the end of the 2028-2029 school year that approaching performance level it will be included for all of the assessments all

[02:29:38] reading and mathematics assessments including those end of course assessments and it will count as passing until the until it is removed recommendation two also affirms the action taken by the board in november where students who are retaking the standards of learning assessments they are only held accountable for meeting those passing scores that were in effect at the time of their original test attempt so for example if a middle or high school student if they score 380

[02:30:14] on that end of course algebra 1 assessment during this school year the student can retake the assessment using that 400 proficient cut score so we would not have that student retest at the with the revised cut scores and then all of the existing credit accommodations and alternative assessments will remain in effect on slide 10 you would you see the algebra one this is what the phased-in model would look like for algebra one you'll notice that we never change that north star so that proficient where we want every student in the commonwealth to get to that that

[02:30:53] 453 doesn't change advanced cut scores doesn't change the only only place where you see that change is at the approaching and then the basic the approaching gradually increases until it is phased out at the end of the 2029 school year and at the end of that 20 2028 2029 school year and you see the basic adjust accordingly based off of how the approaching level is increasing and then for we we also recognize that the end of course reading assessment it is a unique

[02:31:33] assessment it is not simply assessing students at one point in time it is a test that measures students understanding of content that they learned in grades 9 10 and 11 and so we want to ensure that students who are currently in this learning pathway who are currently taking these courses that that were maintaining the current cut scores for students in grades 9 and 10 on this assessment so that we're not modifying expectations for students who are already partially through this course sequence and then students entering grade

[02:32:10] 9 in the fall of 2026 so they will be just starting that course pathway they will be assessed using the new cut scores so the next slide on slide 12 you'll see the reading end of course assessment phased in model and once again proficient cut scores they don't change after this preparation year advanced cut scores they don't change after this preparation year and you see that gradual increase until it is phased out of that approaching level and then that modification of the basic score to accommodate the phasing out of that

[02:32:46] approaching performance level and so just to recap these two recommendations at the start of next school year 2026 2027 the new cut scores would be implemented for all elementary middle and high school students taking mathematics standards of learning assessment this also includes that end of course assessment so when we look at mathematics every student next year is recommended that they would begin using the new cut scores we will begin using the new cut scores to assess their standards of learning test the new cut

[02:33:25] scores they will be implemented for all elementary middle and grade 9 students taking the reading sol assessment so this speaks to um that with that end of course assessment and starting that

those ninth graders who are entering starting that course sequence to prepare for that end of course reading assessment they would use the new cut scores the current cut scores at that 400 proficiency level will continue to be implemented for the end of course reading assessment for those students who are in grades 10 and 11 to complete their three-part course

[02:34:02] sequence recommendation three affirms with the actions that the board has already taken it protects previously earned verified credits and passing scores so students who have earned those credits students who have passed the test will not need to retest at at the revive with the revised cut scores recommendation four it it's recommending to adjust the scale score range for earning the locally awarded verified credits to within 25 points of the passing score so that

[02:34:37] would replace the scale score range of 375 to 399 which is a 24 point uh range it actually gives an additional point so more students will qualify for a locally verified credit um and so just modifying that to the 25 points.

[02:34:55] Because what we know is implementing the new cut scores, there's different scores for different grades. And so to have a one scale score requirement would not be sufficient to accommodate the different scores for the different tests. So by making it a straight 25 points of the passing score would address all of the assessments.

[02:35:19] And then it's in alignment with the recommendations from our Technical Advisory Council. And there's no changes to the locally awarded verified credit options for students with disabilities. Recommendation five, it maintains accommodations for students, so those credit accommodations, the special permission credit accommodations, all of this just affirms actions that the board has took in November.

[02:35:49] And the last recommendation is about communication. It has been a priority to really strengthen our communication, not just to school divisions and especially principals and teachers, but also to parents. We want to make sure they understand the why we want to make sure that we are equipping our leaders with information that they can help build the understanding of their communities around the new implementation of cut scores. And so we are committed to making sure that we have those strong communication strategies and resources. So we currently

[02:36:25] have some focus groups underway with parents and the outcomes of these focus groups they will inform the revisions not just to the score report but in general though communication materials demonstrating the need for for these higher expectations for our students across Virginia and once again this just affirms actions that the board has taken and what the board has communicated regularly to the department and so our next steps we are continuing to to engage families through these focus groups to inform revisions to these student assessment reports.

[02:37:02] We are working on communication resources to help divisions and school leaders explain the cut scores and the implementation plan. We are, what we want to finalize all of our test specific resources, but this is all pending the board's final action because we need to know the implementation plan so that we can align the supports for testing accordingly.

[02:37:27] We wanna still expand the content specific support for teachers. And so yesterday you saw the list of some professional learning that is happening throughout January and February. So we're gonna continue to do some deep content support and providing that data informed professional learning.

[02:37:45] So we are deep in the data. You saw some of our distinguished schools yesterday and we're looking to learn from them seeing how that can be elevated across the commonwealth and we want to collaborate with division leaders to help us with the communication materials we have not yet started that because we we're waiting on the final action of the board we want to make sure that when we are collaborating with the division leaders that we are using their time wisely and so we so once that once the board takes that final action then we can move forward with truly engaging all of our division leaders

[02:38:21] more deeply in all the messaging and communication materials because then we'll have that clear path forward. So at this time, I'll pause here. - Questions or comments?

[02:38:37] - I've got, y'all are gonna wish I did go down to public comments so you could hold me to three minutes probably. 'Cause I have a lot of comments. First of all, thank you. I know there was a lot of kind of wrestling through very philosophical ideas of how do we do accountability and thinking about the graduation requirements and that we ultimately don't have a dip in graduation rates, right?

[02:39:01] Talked about that yesterday for those who missed it. Some of our colleagues who did this before did it too quickly and they saw that dip in graduation rates. So I wanna just say thank you for being heard and really trying to slow this down and be intentional. But I also wanna spend some time talking to the folks that I keep hearing from.

[02:39:20] My background, special education, if you're just tuning in. So, I mean, there's a lot of stakes in this for the population of students with special needs. But it doesn't stop there for me, 'cause when you have a background in special education, you see all students as individuals. And so we heard from a parent earlier today.

[02:39:36] And so I just wanna kind of voice and put some voice over some of the concerns that we're hearing and how these philosophies kind of are tangled, right? Like that's what makes it so messy. And honestly, it's why we don't change.

[02:39:52] And so I have some enthusiasm around this change around accountability. But we need to untangle some of the things we keep hearing about. So, for example, the high-stakes testing. We all can tell the stories. I could talk about my children. They're young adults. They'd be very mad at me for doing that. So, to help people understand how personal this all means to me, I'll tell my personal story. I did not get the GRE score that you needed to be accepted into UVA. I got my rejection letter. I hired a tutor. I got my points up, still didn't get accepted into UVA, got my rejection letter. And of course, since Currie School's the best school for producing educational leaders,

[02:40:31] I'm picking on people, but I went to the Currie School and knocked on some doors and said, you know, look, I became a principal at 24, now I'm 27, and I think I'm emboldened and smart enough, even though, you know, imagine being a principal at 24, 27. But they actually said, you know what, we're gonna give you conditional acceptance based off my three courses and that is performance assessment right so they took the high stakes they had it it was a requirement and it became performance assessment and so I think we have to I still want to

[02:41:08] move forward but I think we're gonna have to untangle some things as we move forward and I think this plan gives us time to look at things to be able to do that I mentioned in another meeting how you know we talk about differentiated instruction for special education that also means differentiated assessment you can't have one without the other but i want to remind people that differentiated

instruction and differentiated assessment is not rooted in special education it's rooted in gift and education and so i think because of that we run into the issues of what we could address today as a board as graduation requirements and high state testing because a lot of that sits in legislation while also wanting to

[02:41:47] raise the bar for accountability and so there's the kind of untangling right this is where it gets really messy because i really believe in accountability and that's coming later um but you know again just to close on high-stake testing the irony of it is after that 27 year old conversation with uva i never took another high stakes test again in my life to show if i was good at something and we could all relate to that even the education field is changing um that if you you really care that edTPA is something you videotape instead of just that Praxis paper pencil test, right?

[02:42:22] So that field's even recognizing some of those changes that are performance-based assessments. But one other test we still have to take and that's the driver's ed test. But, and that leads into my other thing I wanted to talk about, which is the graduation requirements.

[02:42:38] We need, and I'm gonna request that this board forms a committee that looks at graduation requirements. 'Cause again, this is the tangled mess That I believe this will catapult this change that we much need to have and we need to talk about.

[02:42:55] So, for example, for all this phenomenal work, really it's others, because I'm coming on the tail end and voting on really innovative hard work, right? But for all the hard work, we didn't address things like the workforce needs.

[02:43:12] There is no test for science computation, as an example. we talked about that as a proclamation earlier today um they we don't really do anything to assess artificial intelligence right so graduation requirements are so much bigger than i think what we're talking about for accountability uh and so i think we need to look further into some of those things i mean we all also know the phenomenal athletes artists performers actors they're going to graduate from our schools we're going to be proud to know them but they may struggle in passing an algebra high-stakes test. I do believe, again, I appreciate all the kind of wrestling we do,

[02:43:50] because understanding there are still options, and to get that verified credit for algebra, right? Like, that's the type of things that we need, and more creative thinking we need to have as graduation requirements. But I really kind of just want to, like, I don't, you can't put a pretty bow on it, because it's messy, and I want people to know that when they've come and talked to us about it. We feel, like, I personally feel the concerns around the messy. But accountability, one of my favorite accountability quotes, accountability ties commitment to results.

[02:44:21] Accountability ties commitment to results, which is actually an athlete. Pat Summitt said that, which is kind of ironic when we think about performance assessments, right? But she, basically, we need something in Virginia to tie the commitment of the Department of Education to serving each an individual student.

[02:44:44] And so looking at the growth measures, looking at those things, this gives us the beginnings of something innovative and phenomenal. And then there's time built into it to really look at how is this really going to impact graduation rates? And I thank you for sending me some of that this morning so that I finally got to peek into some of the graduation rates.

[02:45:05] But that's, again, why I feel like we might need a graduation committee that really looks at like now what right now we get the data now we see what's happening how do we take a lot we heard from a lot of our social studies colleagues today how is what they're saying impacted by everything all of this right high state testing graduation requirements and accountability we have to build that bridge but we have to start somewhere or we always just talk about it and never do it and so that's the excitement around the accountability um and and And again, for those who might just be tuning in and haven't heard it, heard me talk about it

[02:45:41] before, I am afraid of going back to where we didn't have any accountability specifically for students with special needs. And I know we've tried over the years different ways to do it. And I've, you know, I've been around long enough that when you could exempt people from these assessments because they're too high stake, my students were exempt, right? Like we just automatically got the exemption. And so when you do that, they're not getting the same resources everybody else but somewhere we have to like this is the beginnings and and much needed accountability work that we now need to like look at high stakes testing graduation requirements it's kind of a

[02:46:19] next phase of this phased in model that i really do love um so thank you i'm sorry if i got on a soapbox i could go another hour i went put on my professor hat for a minute there but i actually skipped things. Mr. Hanson and then Ms. Ashton. Yeah, appreciative I am to the staff and the leadership at the department, starting with Superintendent Gullickson and the rest of the

[02:46:53] team. I just, this has been a long process and President Creasy, I also just want to thank you. We've been kind of side by side for the last three and a half years on this and just really appreciate your steady hand and your leadership and your vision, but also your tenacity and just getting us to this point today.

[02:47:15] So just a couple of thank yous. And I also just want to maybe take a minute of maybe personal privilege, if you will, or just, you know, this has been a tender week for me. My dear friend, Secretary Rod Page, passed away two days ago.

[02:47:32] He was, you know, the first black secretary of education, was the first local superintendent Secretary of Education in our country's history. And I had the honor of being Secretary Page's deputy as right hand during his term as secretary. And, you know, he came in to office based on really his tenure as the superintendent in Houston. And, you know, he had a couple of things that

[02:48:09] just were just kind of sea changing at the time. This is back in the 1990s when he was named superintendent of the year several times nationwide but his focus was on the parents and giving them the transparency that they needed to make the best decisions for their students he was focused on the students and he had high expectations for all students and he was focused on and he also just I love the way he said it's all about the kids and that's really what it's

[02:48:41] And I appreciated his focus on the teachers and provided an opportunity to let the teachers teach and to allow for opportunities for innovation and professionalism to thrive under his stewardship. And for schools, he really focused on accountability and resources to be aligned with that accountability.

[02:49:05] And those four areas of parents, students, teachers, and schools is what he brought to the Department of Education as Secretary in 2001 when we worked on No Child Left Behind and all that went with that over the years.

[02:49:20] And I really feel like to this very day, 24 years later, I just, again, think this comes back to where these templates have been out there for a long time.

[02:49:40] And I just am just very grateful that we are moving forward for the Commonwealth of Virginia at this time to put this framework into place to really help bring transparency to parents, to bring high expectations for kids and to remind everybody it's all about our kids and to also bring the professionalism, the innovation and opportunities to allow teachers to teach.

[02:50:05] And again, to bring the accountability and the respective resources together to make this work and to have the funds targeted to those areas that need it the most. And so I just really am grateful for this opportunity that we have of where we are and where we are in this process.

[02:50:23] and really look forward to 20 years from now being able to look back and just see what this has done to really help the Commonwealth be the place where learning thrives and excellence thrives and to be able to really be able just to look back on this point in time.

[02:50:46] This is a very important time and moment for the Commonwealth. So just thank you, Madam Chair. Ms. Ashton? Yes. First, I had not heard that about Secretary Page, Member Henson, and I am a little bit without words. I can honestly say I would not be here if it were not for Secretary Page.

[02:51:18] His being the first African American Secretary of Education has inspired me every single day since 2000 when he was nominated i did have the pleasure of meeting him as well and uh the impact for me personally and on what i've done over the last 25 years uh it's personal and so um thank you for for raising that but i think um i can't imagine being in any more place at any more time than serving on the state board of education and doing this work and so what i would like to share is

[02:51:55] first i also want to express my deep gratitude for president creasy and superintendent gullickson this board has pushed has challenged has asked questions you all have responded gracefully with detail with information and i think this board also i also want to say thank you too because I think in every juncture, we have had high expectations for ourselves, for our stakeholders, and we've kept our teachers and our leaders and our parents in mind.

[02:52:31] And I particularly want to thank the staff. I think we've raised the bar in terms of engagement and feedback. There's times when we've had to stop and start and go again. And so I just want to express my continued appreciation for the whole team.

[02:52:50] but also to this board because i think there are times when uh each each member brings their perspective whether it's a parent um whether it's special education a teacher i um i'm really bringing just as a person who is on the ground every single day as a principal school leader working with teachers and parents and stakeholders and um there i think three things are really true some things are very complicated and some things are really not that complicated and and i think the point made earlier is that some things need some untangling so that we don't go back

[02:53:28] and and really lose a whole generation of kids students and families who need us the most and so i i can definitely echo that point um but there are some things that are not that complicated um including raising the bar raising the stakes for our students our families our stakeholders because they deserve it and what you know i heard from the staff over these last couple of months and particularly with these very specific recommendations is what i believe is that we

[02:54:01] are acknowledging that that we as virginians are not where we want to be and we've taken some steps back. But we are also having the courage to move us forward and setting higher standards for all of our key stakeholders. And there isn't one stakeholder that's more important than the other.

[02:54:22] We really need everyone to come together. And what I heard in the recommendation and why I stand in support of it is because we are meeting our students and families where they are. One concern I had was the impact of students who are either approaching high school right now or in high school and what I heard over and over again is that we are phasing this in this is not going to go into effect tomorrow that we are raising this standard and that over time we will Virginia will move forward and students and families will have access to great options but more importantly we

[02:55:00] will have the data to um make better decisions um i um you know i think the back and forth around high stakes testing there's it's not that is one that's not simple but it's also uh there are good there's there there are positives and there are negatives and from a personal perspective i i i have a child who was in one school and tested another way and is in another school and tested a different way and it's really hard to get to different levels of information but what i say

[02:55:36] to my child is it's just data it's just feedback you can master anything with the right support and encouragement and i think that is true for all of virginia's kids which is they can master everything and they will rise to the level of expectations of us the adults and so i'll wrap up and say that I am in support of the recommendations, I'm appreciative of the staff, and I believe the phased-in approach does allow us to raise the bar for Virginia, but also to learn along the way and to really ensure that all of Virginia's stakeholders are moving forward.

[02:56:12] So, thank you. Other comments here? Ms. McPherson? Yeah, I'd like to thank the staff, too. First and foremost, President Creasy, Superintendent Goldson, just an amazing job of what you've done to lead this team to where we are and to the staff.

[02:56:37] Really incredible work, hard working work, but you've always risen to the point where you provided us with good data, and that's been important. But I would like to also share my thought about the fact that as we are moving forward, we all now agree that we have to take this step.

[02:56:56] In moving, we don't want to hurt those who may be struggling. So I think this year really gives us an incredible opportunity to fine-tune those places where we think we got it just right, but maybe we need to tweak some things.

[02:57:14] So I like the idea that we could have a committee of the board that deals specifically with looking at graduation rates and potentially some exceptions as the data begins to come in over the period of the year where we're impacting certain students that could be struggling.

[02:57:33] And so I'd like to see the board maybe move in that direction, understanding that we do have this one year where we, once data comes in, we can really drill down and maybe come back and put in some programs or some modifications that are going to treat some of the things.

[02:57:50] I'm concerned about the issue, about the world history as a part of, you know, setting the standard right away and whether we'll need to pause that. So I think the year is going to give us what we need. Other comments here?

[02:58:14] Okay. Mr. Monk. I appreciate it and appreciate the opportunity. Obviously, as a new board member, similar to Dr. Ackerman, a lot of work has gone into this. So I want to thank those, whether it be staff and board members current and previous. will say I know that you know that the challenge that we have is we we've for sure want to ensure that students are prepared and equipped to go into the workplace or wherever they may be going in maintaining that rigor but also ensuring that our current resources that have been there whether they be teachers or financially or systems that are in place are adequate to get us to

[02:58:50] where we want to go and so I think this gets us in that position where we're meeting some of those needs on both ends of the spectrum right we don't want to lose a generation of students but we also need to make sure that we're ensuring their success career and otherwise so for me this hits at that right tone of maintaining that academic rigor and high expectations you know we've already got assessments that are improved in terms of the rigor that the engagement there and we've seen students rise to that already and so I'm excited about where our students and teachers and with the help of parents and community stakeholders where we'll be after this.

[02:59:27] So thank you for the work that's been done on this. Other comments here? Just want to make sure that nobody else has anything to say before I kind of close us out with some comments because I'll tell you, I deeply appreciate the comments that my fellow board members have made about the work that's gone into this over the last three and a half years, four years.

[02:59:54] it has been grueling soul soul searching finding just work it has been deeply rewarding because at the end of the day you know as as a classroom teacher myself for 12 years in public two different public school divisions in Virginia my what what I want to see is that every single child that goes through every single classroom in the Commonwealth of Virginia and our public schools is able to come

[03:00:29] out of every teacher's classroom and say, I know that my teacher had the highest expectations for me and knew that I could reach those expectations and showed me by everything that he or she did to support me along the way that that was what they knew that I could do. And so I know from the students that I taught over the years, that they felt that way about me because thankfully they absolutely voice it to me and I am so proud of that. And I want every student in the Commonwealth

[03:01:05] to feel that way every single day that they walk into a classroom. So I would say more deeply that the work that has been done to get us to this day is also work that was grueling for board members that are no longer sitting here and so it is with the deepest gratitude um that and and quite frankly you know the the friends that the friends and the mentors that sat with me here on this dais

[03:01:39] during this entire process have continued to call me and talk through um the challenges that we've faced on the in the months and the years since they've been gone from this board and not only that but the I have to I can't I'd be remiss if I didn't say thank you so much to the stakeholders you know from individual teachers who've called me who've sent me messages who've emailed me who've said I'd really like to have a conversation about x y or z and I've called them and reached out to

[03:02:13] them and spoken to them and we've heard concerns I just want everybody to be clear that this board is tasked with making really hard decisions every single time we sit up here. And fortunately or unfortunately, some things people just don't agree with. And however, the board has to make decisions. And so I would just say that we have gone through this process for the number of years

[03:02:43] that we have extremely deliberately with repeated and deep, deep and genuine desire for stakeholder feedback. And so, and we have taken that feedback and we have run with it. We have changed course and staff can speak to, you know, the endless hours of, you know, discussions and innovation and shifting and accommodating and moving. And guys, education is everybody who is watching this or sitting here in this room with us knows. I'll never forget that one of my professors in my EPP

[03:03:22] said to me grace never forget that education is somewhat cyclical something that is hot today and not tomorrow will be hot again in 20 years and so just remember that we continue to go through these cycles where we learn from the decisions that we make and this is a system that we have learned so much from and we will continue to learn from we will continue to accommodate we will continue to shift but there are decisions that need to be made and so I'm just thankful that we

[03:03:58] have come full circle to this day I'm deeply grateful for every one of you sitting up here today and I'm deeply deeply grateful for those who sat on this dais during this entire process so and and not that doesn't even begin to describe my feelings for how staff has supported all of us along the way. And so our staff has got to be among the best, if not the best in the country. And I think it's really important that all of our stakeholders understand that. I know

[03:04:35] those of us sitting up here know that, but I'm thankful for all of you. So if there are no more comments, Superintendent Collickson, would you like to make any comments? Thank you, President crazy uh and thank you deputy superintendent booker dwyer for this overview uh i will keep it short because the board has covered this uh it is quite a feat this final proposal on this commitment that virginia is making and leading the nation on restoring high expectations for every

[03:05:12] one of our students i am especially grateful for the higher ed community the military and business community who have really come out to say this is essential that our diplomas mean even more and that our students are truly ready and we also saw from earlier this week that so many of our incredible public schools are already delivering on that promise and so we are absolutely prepared with this

[03:05:47] incredible staff that we've built up at the department to support schools and students and teachers even more and so I have the greatest confidence in our agency to come alongside the field to make sure that we can help help those who do not know yet on high expectations and how to get there and also to learn from those who are already getting exemplary results with our students and uh in the classrooms and school-wide across student groups across zip codes there is

[03:06:27] excellence as we said yesterday in every community and this is possible so i feel very prepared with what the motion is moving forward to deliver on our commitment to high expectations for every virginia student okay so if there's nothing further is there a motion to approve the following Number one, a four-year phased-in model with a temporary approaching performance level that is removed at the conclusion of the 28-29 school year. The 25-26 school year will be a preparation year

[03:07:03] and the proficient cut score will remain at 400. At the start of the 26-27 school year, new cut scores will be implemented alongside temporary approaching performance levels. The temporary approaching performance level shall count as passing on all reading and mathematics SOL assessments, which include end-of-course assessments. Number two, students retaking an SOL assessment must meet the passing score in effect at the time of their original test. This includes today's add-on for existing 9th and 10th grade

[03:07:39] students on reading and reading end-of-course at 400 to finish the three-part course sequence. Students entering grade nine in the fall of 2026 will be assessed under the new reading cut scores. Number three, students that have already demonstrated proficiency on a high school end-of-course assessment or earned verified credits, whether in middle or high school, will not be required to retake the assessment or course. Four, to be eligible to earn locally awarded verified credits a student must pass the high school course

[03:08:17] score within 25 points of the passing score on the math and reading SOL tests after taking the test at least twice and demonstrate achievement in the academic content through an appeal process administered at the local level five the board affirms credit accommodations and special permission credit accommodations as voted on in the November 25 board meeting are maintained.

[03:08:44] And number six, release revised student assessment reports in spring of 2026 for parents and school divisions that clearly communicate new proficiency levels and available supports to help students achieve higher expectations.

[03:09:03] This shall include additional communication resources to clearly communicate the new plan. motion but do i have a second second any comments here discussion dr ackerman aye mr green aye mr hanson aye miss mcpherson aye miss kilgore ah miss ashton aye mr monk aye chair votes aye

[03:09:39] and although dr northern is not in the room with us i would just like to make note for the record that she supports this motion okay thank you that motion passes thank you thank you item C

[03:10:02] we'll take item C and then we will take a break for lunch is still morning so good morning President Crecy Superintendent Gullickson and members of this of the board today we're presenting a final review of the draft 2025 expanded high school science standards of learning this marks the culmination of a multi-year process to ensure all board approved science courses have rigorous

[03:10:37] equitable standards since we last brought you this item our team has been working with stakeholders to get feedback on the draft standards as requested by this board our team has worked hard to make connections with state business and workforce leaders you have in your packets a red line version that will show the changes made from the feedback that we have received as well as a clean version to give you an overall look of the final version of the standards being recommended today.

[03:11:07] Public hearings and receive feedback through surveys and conversations with school and division leaders, science teachers, military and business leaders, and community members. BDOA staff also attended meetings with the College and Career Readiness Pathways Leadership Committee and a Perkins V consultation meeting to solicit feedback and to also demonstrate how the draft standards support CTE pathways also. When talking with business leaders, they expressed that the soft skills, which include the science and engineering practices found in standard one for each of the

[03:11:42] content areas of the standards before you, as well as through the Virginia's five C's of creative thinking, critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and citizenship. And just as a reminder that standard one skills and practices are to be taught alongside the remaining standards and not in isolation. Therefore you will not see content specificity in these standards because those skills are to be applied across the board. The format of the standards is modeled after the previously adopted standards of learning for English and history. And I also want

[03:12:17] to note for you that instructional guides are fully underway and will be accompanying these standards once they've been approved. These documents do have a different look and feel to them as they are intended to be used by teachers to understand the standards, see examples of application of the standards, as well as make connections with other content areas. I will now turn it over to Laura Kasdorf. She is the coordinator of science. She has led this process and held conversations with our business partners one-on-one. I would also like to thank all of the teachers, leaders, university partners, and leaders in business, workforce, military, and state government

[03:12:57] who have worked on these standards, provided feedback on them, or acted as a thought partner to develop concepts and content that you see before you today. Laura? So, good morning, President Creasy, Superintendent Gullickson, and members of the board.

[03:13:17] And thank you, Dr. Wallace, for the overview to the process we took to develop and review these standards. I'm going to go into the details of that process for you. So, on slide two, you can see the relevant legislation that requires the board to review and revise the standards of learning at least every seven years.

[03:13:33] This review aligns with that statutory requirement and reflects our commitment to maintaining high expectations for all students. Slide 3 gives the details about the courses addressed by these standards. These expanded standards cover 11 high school science courses that previously lacked board-approved standards.

[03:13:51] The goal is to ensure instructional consistency, equity, and rigor across the Commonwealth. Courses include environmental science, four level 2 courses in biology, four level 2 courses in earth science, chemistry 2, and physics 2. These standards were developed by experienced educators and informed by five years of feedback on existing content guidelines.

[03:14:12] On slide four, you can see the details about activities of the department since the initial review. In July of 2025, the board accepted the draft for first review and opened a 30-day public comment period. In August 2025, eight public hearings were held across the state.

[03:14:28] In September, the VDOE staff revised the standards based on feedback, and we've continued to revise and receive feedback since then. And then today, we present the final version for your approval. We received a range of feedback from educators, businesses, and industry, higher education, and other members of the public.

[03:14:45] The next few slides provide a breakdown of that input. Slide six gives details about the public hearings. Four in-person and four virtual hearings were held. Attendance was modest, but we received eight total public comments through these hearings. And I would like to thank the board members for your support in attending these public hearings.

[03:15:02] As you can see on slide seven, most of our comments came from an online form. In total, we received 48 comments. 29 of those were via an online form, 11 via email, and 8 through public hearings. We also directly contacted 40 organizations requesting their feedback.

[03:15:18] We received responses from 15 of them, including 5 from business and industry and 2 from higher education. We also followed up with organizations that did not respond to our initial requests. Additionally, I attended two meetings with representatives from higher education and business and industry to solicit feedback.

[03:15:35] Slide 8 gives you some details about the content of the comments that were received. Most of the comments that were related to the content of the standards focused on environmental science, astronomy, and anatomy and physiology. And then we also had several comments that were not content-specific.

[03:15:51] Key themes that were not course-specific included support for the scientific and engineering practices, support for emphasis on climate science, and praise for alignment with the profile of a graduate and the five Cs. Business and industry in particular appreciated alignment with the profile of graduate and the five C's.

[03:16:08] There was also general praise for the standards. This is likely because we involved many teachers and leaders in the process of the standards beginning in 2023 and incorporated feedback throughout the process. We also had an advisory board consisting of educators, business and industry, and higher education who provided feedback and insights during this process.

[03:16:28] We received feedback from across the state with the most from Region 4. The roles of people who gave us feedback include 22 K-12 educators, seven higher ed teacher educators, five from business and industry, six community members, three parents, and two students. And I would like to say the student comments were some of the most actionable of any of the comments we received.

[03:16:47] They were very specific, told us what they didn't like and what change they wanted to see. And those came from two students who communicate with me regularly about the standards. So now I'm going to shift to talking about the standards themselves. The standards are organized to clearly reflect both content and practices, as Dr. Wallace mentioned.

[03:17:05] Each course begins with the scientific and engineering practices, that's the first standard in every course, and then it's followed by those content standards. Slide 11 gives details about the guiding principles we use to develop the standards. They are: Reflects accurate and current science content, prepares students for enrollment, enlistment, or employment, they incorporate Virginia context to support science instruction, and they convey high academic expectations for all students.

[03:17:32] The next two slides, 12 and 13, give you details about the scientific and engineering practices, which we refer to as the SEPs. These SEPs are consistent from grades K through 12, but the expectations increase in complexity. These SEPs promote critical thinking, collaboration, and communication, skills valued by employers.

[03:17:52] As Dr. Wallace said, and I want to keep saying it because we can't say it enough to everybody, that the SEPs are the first standard in the course, but they're not meant to be taught in isolation. They are intended to be integrated with content throughout the year. The SEPs, that are consistent through all of our science courses, are asking questions and defining problems, planning and carrying out investigations, interpreting, analyzing and evaluating data, constructing and critiquing conclusions and explanations, developing and using models, and obtaining, evaluating and communicating information.

[03:18:22] Business and industry partners emphasize the importance of soft skills and real-world application. As shown on slide 14, the SEPs directly support workforce readiness and align with the profile graduate. So now I'm going to transition to a focus on the structure and content of the standards. So unlike our 2018 science standards of learning, the SEPs are integrated into each content standard. So we've been telling teachers for years that the SEPs are intended to be integrated, but we haven't shown them what that

looks like. The format of the standards shows them exactly what it looks like. So on slide 15 you can see that each bullet in a standard begins

**[03:18:58]** with an action verb tied to an SEP. The examples that I give you, things like make support and evaluate a claim, develop and use a model, those are not an exhaustive list, but rather the common verbs that appear regularly. So the format of these standards makes it really clear to teachers how they can integrate content and skills.

**[03:19:17]** The next few slides give examples of how the SEPs are integrated into the standards. The examples are taken from a Chemistry 2 course, but there is similar structure to the standards in all 11 of these courses. These examples highlight the clarity and consistency of the new format of the standards.

**[03:19:34]** example standard is about forces of attraction among particles, which is my favorite concept in chemistry, so I picked it. So in the bullets you'll see that all of the SEPs are represented. Students are planning investigations, they're developing using models, they're arguing from evidence. This structure again makes it really clear what students are expected to both know and be able to do about these intermolecular forces. So the specific examples on slide 16 you can see that bullets B and E are connected to the SEPs about asking questions and planning investigations. Slide 17 shows you that bullets A and D are connected to the SEPs about constructing and critiquing conclusions and explanations

**[03:20:14]** and developing using models. And then the last example, slide 18, bullets C, F and G are connected to the SEPs about analyzing data, developing conclusions, and communicating information. So across this standard, students have the opportunity engage in all of the SEPs as they master the content of the standards. So next I'm going to transition to talk about how the science team integrated feedback that we received during the public comment period. The positive feedback we received was mostly related to support for how the SEPs are integrated with content and the vertical articulation with our existing K to

**[03:20:48]** physics standards. Additionally, there was support for our approach to teaching climate science and and climate change. There were requests for more clarity and specificity and some requests for changes to specific content. So I'll walk you through a few examples of how we incorporated feedback.

**[03:21:07]** So on slide 21, which is from environmental science, we clarified language related to non-native versus invasive species. That's the first two changes on that standard. And then we also added in the concept of succession. That's the last change there.

**[03:21:22]** The next example is from physics two, where we made a very minor wording change to improve clarity. And we had lots of those throughout the standards. And then the last example shows that we removed all examples. There were EG statements built in.

**[03:21:38]** We moved all of those to those forthcoming instructional guides because we had been inconsistent about their use. So some standards were really specific and some were kind of vague. So the comments were to try to be more consistent. So we did that by moving all those details to those instructional guides. So we have a plan to support implementation of these standards.

**[03:21:56]** So once the standards are approved, we will post the final versions on our website and communicate via all of our normal channels. We will also host webinars for teachers and leaders about the standards, and we'll have those instructional guides to support the standards. We hope to be able to release those by May.

[03:22:12] So I'm happy to answer any questions that you have. - Any questions or comments on this? Dr. Ackerman? - Yeah, we just thanked the other crew so much. But I did want to thank you all because I did get to be part of the public hearing, and you really took your time to hear from the experts in the field that we need to hear from before voting on things like this.

[03:22:33] And I'm looking at the timeline on slide four, and you can just really see your efforts, so thank you for that. Appreciate it. Other comments? Mr. Monk? I appreciate it. I want to echo Dr. Ackerman's, was not involved in it, but could see the work that's gone into it, and appreciate that.

[03:22:53] Looking at some specifics, just want to make sure that we're specifically around the formation of universe and what those things look like. I know that probably some of that conversation is religious pieces, and so I want to make sure that we're cognizant of that, as well as making sure that the factual science is taught there.

[03:23:12] So I appreciate kind of continued look into what that may look like there. Other comments? Dr. Norther? Yeah, it's been a while since my organization reviewed science standards.

[03:23:30] I'm just curious, if you took a look at those, I'm sitting here trying to Google them and find them, relative to the big picture feedback that you last received from that national level review. Yes, absolutely. Because when we started this process, we were going to do all of our standards, starting in kindergarten and including these.

[03:23:51] So when we were working on what we're calling K to physics, the ones that are the current 2018 standards, we used that feedback to inform the development of those standards, which are just sitting on the shelf, and then also these. And we also looked at standards from other states, which you don't have a lot of for these types of courses, but we looked at college syllabi, the standards for AP courses, things like that, to really make the standards reflect sort of what's happening nationally, too.

[03:24:16] Do you recall the criticisms that you got in the last review? I don't know what's I'm not even sure what what score you receive but one of the for instance one of the main criticisms was a heavy reliance on the next-gen science standards and I recall our science experts thought that they gave it a C+ because they thought that it had too much of a reliance on sort of these overarching and I forgot what they call them but their application yeah concepts versus the content. So it was more skill-based than content-based. So I don't know

[03:24:52] whether you had to, you know, deal with any of that type of feedback or tension. So those skills are called the scientific engineering practices for NGSS and for us. So that's why you'll see we don't just have those as isolated skills, that the way we formatted these standards, it shows specifically how that skill applies to a specific content. So again, they're not intended to be taught in isolation we're showing how these things marry together for teachers yeah that's helpful thank you other comments or questions here okay thank you all with that is there a motion to

[03:25:30] approve that somebody else have a question comment okay sorry is there a motion to approve the 2025 expanded high school science standards of learning to be implemented in 2026 and authorize the virginia department of education to make final clarifying and technical edits so move second Discussion here? Dr. Ackerman? Aye. Mr. Green? Aye. Dr. Northern? Aye. Mr. Hanson? You may not be

[03:26:03] honest. Ms. McPherson? Aye. Ms. Kilgore? Aye. Ms. Ashton? Aye. Mr. Monk? Aye. And chair votes aye.

[03:26:15] Okay we will take a break for lunch now until about 12 35. Are we are we ready? Sorry guys I didn't

[04:15:26] Good. Okay, we are back and we are on item E please. Mr. Gilstrap. Good afternoon President Creasy, Superintendent Gullickson, members of the board. I bring to you today a final review of the NORA for the added special education early childhood add-on endorsement. This went through ABTEL in September with a full recommendation and then last month we brought the first review for you all. It is the will of the superintendent.

[04:16:00] that the Board of Education approved the notice of intended regulatory action to create a special education early childhood add-on endorsement. Are there any questions? I'm open to answers. Any questions on this item? Okay.

[04:16:18] Is there a motion to approve the notice of intended regulatory action to create a special education early childhood add-on endorsement? So moved. Second. Any discussion? Dr. Ackerman? Aye. Mr. Green?

[04:16:34] Aye. Dr. Northern? Aye. Ms. McPherson? Aye. Ms. Kilgore? Aye. Ms. Ashton? Mr. Monk? Aye. Chair votes aye. Thank you. Okay.

[04:17:05] Item F, please. Good afternoon again. Item F, we are doing a final review for the recommendation for the Board of Education to reconstruct the CTE Advisory Committee for the Virginia Board of Education.

[04:17:29] this committee and appointees to reconstruct membership for the CTE Advisory Committee to address the needs of learners and school divisions across the Commonwealth and to provide a future workforce for Virginia. The new revised have been bolded as discussed during our November 13, 2025 Board of Education meeting.

[04:17:51] The following members and categories are recommended. As you can see below the business industry, we're looking at 12 leaders each of the 14 modernized national career clusters for we're adding the cte student organization for one state advisor we're adding four parent individuals from school appointed groups from pta and other support groups we're also adding two community college and two university representatives we're adding two school division superintendents with one from a rural division and we're also

[04:18:31] adding uh one representative from a rural school division for a CTE administrator and we're also adding two members from the Virginia Board of Education. The recommendation is that we the superintendent of instruction recommend that the Board of Education approve this recommendation to reconstruct the CTE advisory committee to ensure the representation of representation across the business industry, career and technical student organizations, parent groups, professional trade organization, post-secondary education, CTE administrators, and actual officer of the VDOE

[04:19:04] representation be approved. This will also help us move forward with our Perkins plan. This will be instrumental in getting this across the hurdle. Mr. Williams is also on virtually. Mr. Williams, do you have anything you would like to share? Dr. Williams? Hearing nothing, I think we are.

[04:19:35] Comments on this item, Mr. Monk? I'll be very brief, but just want to commend you and thank you for adding these bolded pieces in there. Excited for the council to get to work and think this is a great

addition. Appreciate it. Fearson? Yes, the university partners that category post-secondary education can be community college and universities, both public and private.

[04:20:04] Yes. Other questions? Okay, hearing none. Is there a motion to approve the recommendation to reconstruct the CTE advisory committee by ensuring representation across business and industry career and technical student organizations parent groups professional and trade organizations post-secondary education school division superintendents school division ct administrators ex-officio vdoe representative and an ex-officio

[04:20:36] va cte representative i so move second any discussion dr ackerman aye mr green aye dr Northern. Aye. Mr. Hanson. Miss McPherson. Aye. Miss Kilgore. Aye. Miss Ashton. Mr. Monk. Aye.

[04:20:59] And chair votes aye. As a secondary motion, I would like, well, I probably can do this myself, make Miss Kilgore and Mr. Monk the co-chairs of that committee. I don't need to have a motion for that. Is that correct? Or should I? Yes. Okay. An advisory committee. Okay. Perfect. So as long

[04:21:37] the two of you agree to co-chair this committee I would like to appoint you to do such so I don't need to okay all right thank you so if you two would agree thank you we appreciate it nothing like putting you on the spot right we can hear you I'm sorry dr. Williams do you have

[04:22:07] something you need to say oh okay all right okay um all right item g item g item g we initially started out as a final review however we will just be a review today we will come back to the board in January but this is just a review for the board looking at video ease collaboration with VCCS with the supporter of the Virginia Office of Education Economics have identified a list initial list of identified recognized credentials according to the Association of Career

[04:22:47] technical education, industry-recognized credentials, or sought, are accepted by multiple employers within the industries or sector, involving or accepting preferred or required for screening, hearing, hiring, retention, and advanced purposes, and where appropriate.

[04:23:05] Dr. Williams, anything you would like to share before we move forward, Dr. Williams? So we've added this list for you to look at.

[04:23:30] This is the... Can you all hear me? Go ahead. Go ahead, Anthony, Dr. Williams. We can hear you. Audio check.

[04:23:43] yes we can hear you go ahead he's good go ahead dr williams okay my audio has been restored i could not hear you all so i do apologize so we just started uh item g anything you want to share

[04:24:20] want to share about the process about the feedback and also the updated lists uh sure i do i would like to uh include some details here i'm not sure how far you've already gotten but uh since our board meeting back in november we had the opportunity to reach out to a number of stakeholders in addition to our previous research we did solicit feedback from our association of virginia association of career and technical education administrators of virginia acte and also advanced cte we wanted to ensure that we had regional representation and that we were able to get down

[04:24:59] even to specific school divisions levels to ensure that we were able to collect feedback. That feedback has been provided to you all in attachment two for your review. And we did find that there were some certification opportunities that we did make available that aligned to our proposed criteria.

[04:25:22] And so we do find that that was a success. In addition to that, there's been a lot more feedback in regard to other possible credentials that may be available that would align to that criteria.

[04:25:38] And we do feel that, you know, with us having the opportunity to come back to you all in January, that we would have the opportunity to screen those credentials to ensure alignment with the new criteria. So I guess, firstly, just want to determine if there's any questions or feedback in regard to the criteria that we are proposing.

[04:26:02] Essentially, that is the criteria that we will utilize if approved by you all for screening of our existing credentials and any future credentialing opportunities. President Carizzi, I would also like to add that in partnership with the CTE team, myself, I will be helping support and launching more stakeholder engagement to make sure that we're engaging and getting information from the field where we can come back to you in January to provide a more in-depth list and also more support.

[04:26:34] I will also share that so folks understand why we're going down this track, that our current CTE Perkins V plan expires in June 30th of 2026, and we need to have our new plan up ready to the federal government to ensure that they approve, so it needs to be to them by May 9th.

[04:27:03] So we have to ensure that we get all these ducks in a row, getting all the proper feedback, but ultimately ensuring that we are meeting the needs of industry. Any comments or questions here? Just to be quick, Madam President, I appreciate your work.

[04:27:22] Mr. Monk. Thank you. Appreciate your work on this deputy superintendent and excited to work with you over the next month or so and see where we get. Fast and furious, sir. Anyone else? Okay. So, with that, Mr. Monk, are we okay to move forward with this item, or do we need to move to next month? Is that correct?

[04:27:47] So, we're going to pass. I would request that we move to next month. Okay. So, we will move this item for final review next month. Thank you. Okay. Item H, Ms. Berda.

[04:28:12] Good afternoon, President Creasy, members of the Board, Superintendent Golickson. I am Christina Berta, the Chief Operations Officer for the department. Before you today is the final review and approval of the recommended School Construction Assistance Program Grant Awards.

[04:28:31] Following the adoption of the amended guidelines in September of 2025, which included 13 scoring criteria and their associated points values, an open application period occurred. These guidelines are included in Attachment 1 of your agenda item.

[04:28:47] Several point values were adjusted, and additional components of confirmation from school divisions and CTE regional programs was required that they did not anticipate closure of the facilities that funds were being requested for within the next five years.

[04:29:03] A minimum of 65 points on a 100-point scale is required, and grants are awarded based on rank order project scores, followed by a localities composite index in the event of a tie score. The department conducted an open application period process from October 28, 2025 through November 24, 2025 for school divisions and regional CTE program boards to apply.

[04:29:28] We received 61 grant applications that were submitted from 42 school divisions and one regional CTE program. These applications were reviewed by department staff against the 13 competitive

criteria in the approved guidelines. The projects submitted before you have met the 65-point score requirement and are included in Attachment 2 for consideration.

[04:29:53] Overall, after the evaluation was completed, there were 22 school projects and one regional CTE center that are recommended for approval with the recommended grant awards totaling \$88,511,766.

[04:30:08] dollars as a reminder there was 170 million dollars available for awards in this round those remaining funds will be carried over to the next award cycle which we anticipate will occur in april of 2026 along with the additional 110 million dollars that's available in fiscal year 26 to support these grants it is the recommendation of public instruction that the board waive first review and approve the recommended grant awards for school projects as shown in attachment two that have been reviewed and confirmed by department staff to meet the required 64 points required from the board's approved criteria.

[04:30:45] I'm happy to answer any questions you may have. Does anyone have any questions on this item? Dr. Northern? So just to put a pin in that one comment you made, so they had to certify that they don't anticipate closing within five years.

[04:31:01] I can't imagine anybody, I don't know, that seems like, did they have to provide any evidence of their enrollment trends for the next five years? It wasn't just like a promise kind of thing, right? No, and we actually validated against Weldon Cooper data. Okay. That we agreed and confirmed that what they were reporting and certifying was accurate.

[04:31:18] Okay, very good. Thank you. Anything else? Is there a motion to waive first review and approve the approved recommended grant awards for the school projects as shown in attachment two to the item as presented that have been reviewed and confirmed to meet with required minimum 65 points from the board's approved criteria?

[04:31:44] So moved. Any discussion? Dr. Ackerman? Aye. Mr. Green? Aye. Dr. Northern? Aye. Mr. Hanson? Ms. McPherson? Aye. Ms. Kilgore? Aye. Ms. Ashton? Mr. Monk? Aye. Chair votes aye. Thank you.

[04:32:05] Thank you. Okay. We are without objection going to move item I to our next meeting. There are a few things that need to be worked out on that item. And we are going to skip item J and move to item K, please. Yes, we are. We're just going to do it closer to the end of the meeting.

[04:32:42] good afternoon president creasy superintendent gullickson and board members it's a pleasure to

[04:33:20] be with you this afternoon thanks for helping me get my cardio in i am here to follow up and present for first review item k which are the guidelines for policies on sudden cardiac arrest prevention and response in schools just a reminder to the board that in 2025 the virginia general assembly passed two bills which expanded this k-12 school policy to require each public elementary or your secondary school to develop a cardiac emergency response plan or an athletic emergency action plan that addresses the appropriate use of school personnel to respond to incidents

[04:33:55] involved in an individual who's experiencing sudden cardiac arrest or a similar life-threatening emergency while on school grounds. You all probably remember, we've talked a lot about this topic previously with your guidance issue on heat-related illness that you not only adopted for first review, but you also decide to do final review at the same time. So just reminder that this guidance is really related to that and also you might want to think about having a discussion today about approving this item for first

and final review so that we could update our guidance to school divisions to ensure your continued robust response for student safety the stakeholder group that

[04:34:34] we convene to revise these guidelines unanimously agreed that there should be one document that is available for schools that contains the protocols for both of these plans and so that's why you see that they've been condensed together to really provide a one source documentation for teams to not only develop their own policies but to also develop their own plans that fit both activities during the school day and after the school day where services are being provided to directly to students the guidelines before you are a result of that collaborative effort which included medical professionals health care providers athletic trainers academic leaders school nurses and other

[04:35:11] experts that combine the information for prevention and response into one document these guidelines are designed to protect anyone in the school setting including those attending a school activity or student athletics by providing recommendations that support the development and implementation of effective sudden cardiac arrest preparedness policies and local school divisions through education prompt recognition and appropriate response as well as guidance for performing drills that can help school teams continue to be prepared for these events. The Superintendent of Public Instruction recommends that the Board of Education receive for first and final review the guidelines for policies on sudden cardiac arrest prevention and response in

[04:35:50] schools. Any questions or comments here? As with a previous action, Dr. Hollins, you remember a previous, was it summertime that we did? It was, yes. Or was it springtime?

[04:36:07] Heat-related illness. Yeah. That happened right after the beginning of the school year when we still had football teams outside practicing, if you believe it or not in the heat yeah no that's far from our reach today but yes yes um so if you if you all remember that that item also was up for first review and um we took it as first and final just for the purposes of um enhancing student safety uh so i i would like to entertain a motion to do the same here i'd like to entertain a motion to take first and final review of this item to update the

[04:36:42] guidelines for policies on sudden cardiac arrest. Is there a second? Second. Any discussion? Okay. Dr. Ackerman? Aye. Mr. Green? Aye. Dr. Northern? Aye. Ms. McPherson? Aye. Ms. Kilgore? Aye. Mr. Monk? Aye.

[04:37:03] And chair votes aye. Thank you. Thank you so much, President Creasy. And we'll make sure to get right on that communication plan as you see detailed in the item to make sure that school divisions receive this information as soon as possible. We appreciate the board's robust attention to student safety. I'll now jump to agenda item L, which is first review of the guidelines for selecting parent materials related to student safety concerns. Also, in keeping with fulfilling legislative requirements of this 2025 General Assembly session, there were two bills that were enacted that support and advance the Virginia Department of Education's efforts to keep students safe by ensuring that parents and caregivers receive timely, accurate information

[04:37:41] whenever there is a concern regarding their child's safety related to potential violence towards self or others. As you can see in the boilerplate, recent research indicates that many youth suicides occur impulsively, so reducing or restricting access to highly lethal means can be a crucial step in improving safety and preventing tragic outcomes.

[04:38:00] House Bills 2055 and 2679 amended and updated the Code of Virginia requiring school divisions to update their threat assessment policies to mandate the prompt distribution of applicable safety materials to parents or caregivers when a student is expressing a suicidal ideation or when a student poses a threat of violence or physical harm to self or others.

[04:38:21] These materials must include information on the legal requirements related to safe storage of firearms in the presence of minors. The draft guidelines before you address and provide resources and support to assist schools in this requirement and to provide state-approved suicide prevention materials to school divisions that include guidance on safe firearm storage and limiting access to lethal means.

[04:38:42] These materials are simply intended to facilitate meaningful discussions and should always complement, not replace direct communication with families from our local school divisions. Both of these bills build directly on the department's current suicide prevention guidelines and have been developed in close collaboration and consultation with the Department of Criminal Justice Services Threat Assessment Guidelines that equip parents and caregivers with approved resources to partner with school staff in a shared goal of ensuring student safety.

[04:39:09] These guidelines were created by the department in partnership with the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, the Virginia Department of Health, and the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services. Additionally, as you can see from the materials, school division staff responsible for implementing and overseeing threat assessment policies from five different school divisions served as partners contributing their expertise to the development and review of these guidelines and related materials. To support school divisions in meeting this mandate, the department has developed a web page that offers parents a collection of vetted safety resources. School divisions may direct caregivers to this site, which provides clear guidance and practical tools that

[04:39:47] empower families to take meaningful action while also strengthening the partnership between home and school the superintendent of public instruction recommends that the board of education receive for first review the guidelines for selecting parent materials related to student safety concerns and department staff are happy to answer any questions or concerns or take feedback between this and our next meeting are there any questions on this item today dr ackerman i'm curious if it if this took into account some of the new things we're hearing in regards to ai and self-harm

[04:40:21] that's kind of more recent it's something we never thought of right asking cat gpt how to help with mental health so i'm just curious if that has been addressed because that's probably fairly new it is fairly new dr ackerman but a great point that is definitely at the forefront of many concerned school divisions that we've been hearing from and so as you can see from the guidelines they are are general enough to be responsive to the code language but also the key is really in the resource development around this guidance and so as you can see the webpage is much more flexible and contains a plethora of resources that can also be added to and updated and curated

[04:40:57] by department staff in partnership with experts are there questions or comments here i honestly with all the experts that were i'm sorry go ahead with all the experts that were involved in it and And it being a safety issue, I wonder why we wouldn't consider first and final again.

[04:41:13] I just think it's kind of clunky. Yeah, okay. All right. We expect questions. Please do not hesitate to pass those to the state superintendent, and we will do our best to make sure all of those concerns are addressed. There is a lot here, and we really appreciate your time for feedback.

[04:41:30] Mr. Monk? Thank you, Madam President. Just some thoughts around SRO involvement. I know many of our law enforcement community, from my understanding, are engaged in some of these threat assessment conversations. And so I don't know if there's a need for inclusion in this as well.

[04:41:51] Yeah, thanks for bringing that up because I do think to the greatest degree possible, we need to make sure that we are aligning anything student safety related with what DCJS, Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety, and all of their K-12 resources that, you know, are already there, that we are aligning them, working side by side with them to make sure that we're all singing from the same sheet of music, because I certainly, you know, would not want for

[04:42:23] there to be any misunderstanding or misinterpretation of roles and who plays in what role at what time, so that that's very clearly, you know, outlined there. I think I also at the same time would encourage us to have some conversations with some law enforcement community as well, namely, you know, the chiefs of police, the Virginia Sheriff's Association, so that they are understanding of the action that's being taken here so that they can also provide feedback on, you know, where and where not to be included in any of this guidance.

[04:43:03] That's a great question, and we really appreciate President Creasy's feedback in the early iterations of this document that allowed us to really make sure that partnership with DCJS was prevalent. And so just a kudos, you see Joe Worf is in the audience. Joe and his staff, particularly our coordinator Sarah Baysmore, have done such an amazing job of not only maintaining that really valued partnership, but also answering questions from school divisions and making sure that if there's follow-up with law enforcement, there's really robust guidance there.

[04:43:31] demonstration, our exemplar MOU is a great start, but you're right, having these conversations and continued collaborations is key. And how was that, maybe this is more of a question for not you, but how was that MOU, that exemplar MOU created? So in other words, did you go to local law enforcement agencies and ask for examples from them of what their MOUs currently look like, so on and so forth absolutely as you see this guidance builds upon previous guidance issued by the department both around suicide prevention and awareness as well as threat assessments and both of those guidance documents have been long withstanding with the department

[04:44:10] and so as that exemplar mou came along it was really a great way to have that conversation between local school division leadership and their law enforcement partners as you can imagine this looks different in every community and so the the guidelines try and walk a really fine line of offering as much support um and resources as we can while also deferring to the teams that are working directly with students and families and so i'm anxious to hear as you have more time with this document your feedback and the state superintendent will help to facilitate those additional conversations for us as well and i certainly would encourage you all to continue the communication with dcjs and you know offer yourselves up to be collaborative and maybe the

[04:44:50] school safety the summer school safety forum to be able to discuss this document and how it should be used and exercised in school divisions and perhaps to be able to do some collaborative work within one of those breakout sessions to to talk about you know those specific safety concerns and how school divisions are facing those things that would be a helpful place to do that thank you for for that feedback very much. Ms. McPherson? Quick comment. When we roll this back out after we get

[04:45:26] the, you know, final approval, I do think it is important at that point to re-highlight that this is the passing out of the materials is not taking place of the drills and the involvement by the superintendents with the local programs, especially in light of the fact that we have these idiosyncrasies between divisions in rural areas and urban areas and things like that. I think because I just don't want them to think that just handing it out to parents is good enough. Absolutely. Member McPherson, thank you for that point. You'll see in the guidance multiple times that that key initiative is highlighted. I'd also like to say that this guidance will roll out in advance of our institute

[04:46:05] working directly with school divisions, some of which Joe and his team have identified as priority to receive some of the support, and that'll be a key part of our professional development. Other questions or comments here? Okay, well, thank you for this, and we'll accept it for first review and see you again in January thank you all so much for your time thank you as most of you saw yesterday if you were watching our work session we had a detailed report or from the VACAL chair Mark Levy and he provided his annual report to the State Board of Education for the Virginia Advisory Committee on

[04:46:44] Advanced Learning and so with that the board formally accepts the report provided by the vacal chair and I would like to just take a minute to take about a 10 minute break or so because we need to shift some PowerPoint presentations

[04:47:02] around in preparation for item J thank you we are back and ready to take on

[04:56:04] item J please superintendent Gullickson thank you president Creasy this is a discussion rather than a first review we are very grateful for all of the emails and public comments made this morning so we have our history team amazing history and instruction team as well as our accountability team so we are going to facilitate some additional conversation here with the board make sure we've got all the facts out for the field before anything goes forward so

[04:56:42] just in case anyone's tuning in, this is just a discussion rather than first review. So team, Mr. Jennings, thank you. Good afternoon President Creasey, Superintendent Gullickson and board, and members of the audience, and those of you watching via YouTube. And so today we're going to continue our conversation on Amendment 9 to our state plan. You'll see on slide 2 the outline for our presentation today. We're going to address some misconceptions with some

[04:57:18] facts. We'll talk about stakeholder engagement. We're going to talk about the Virginia's consolidated state plan, sort of its origins, and how it fits. We're going to talk about the proposal of seeking this amendment, where it came from and its purpose, the overview of the proposed revisions, and then the process and timeline for Amendment 9. And so you have here on the next slide, moving now to slide 4, you have a title slide there, but on slide 4, you have the background of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act or ESEA that was signed in 1965. It is the primary federal legislation

[04:57:55] that still governs division school accountability and it really established the federal government's expanded role in public education. Now it's been reauthorized numerous times many of us can remember No Child Left Behind in 2002 and then in 2015 by bipartisan it was signed the Every Student Succeeds Act that was the reauthorization or ESSA and so sometimes people hear ESSA and get confused with ESCA, but it's the reauthorization, and so we'll refer to that today.

[04:58:23] And so on slide five, it's important here when we talk about accountability, the work that the board has done over the past four years, you know, we presented yesterday our school performance

support framework, Virginia now has a cohesive system. Some states still elect to have two systems, many, many states see the benefits of having one system, and it's something that Virginia pursued, and we now have.

[04:58:46] And so with that, you have obviously the requirements of federal, you have, you know, there's some flexibility, some state pieces, but you have one system for reporting and understanding. And so what you see on this slide here on slide six is important. So under ESSA, a state's accountability system, these are requirements, these are non-negotiables.

[04:59:03] They have to have certain outcomes for all students. ESSA is very clear about that. They're very, very clear about all students and specific student groups. Now the specific student groups, that is based on your state and it's based on that population in case you're wondering why the word specific is there.

[04:59:20] So these are the indicators that ESSA requires. The first one is academic achievement. We do that here with reading and mathematics, we're required, science you see as well. Number two, other academic indicator for elementary and secondary schools that are not high schools.

[04:59:37] That is definitely not our language, that is federal language. And here's the intention of that is number three, high schools must measure graduation rates and they must use a four year adjusted cohort. So under the law, they said, well, if high schools use graduation, what are you using for schools that are not high schools?

[04:59:55] So that's number two. Now states had flexibility in this. The large majority of states selected academic growth. Some states did select a history there. You could choose another academic area, but most states did choose growth. It shows growth, and we measure growth in reading and mathematics.

[05:00:12] And so number three, we talked about graduation rates. Number four, progress in achieving English language proficiency. That was in Title III previously, and under ESSA, it moved to Title I. And so we do analyze in our accountability system, it's required to measure how English learners are doing year over year, and so you find that on number four.

[05:00:32] And number five, it is required under federal law, under ESSA, that a state must choose another measure or measures, you can do more than one, and it's called the fifth indicator. You can find the literature on it, school quality or student success indicator. And this is where Virginia did decide they would add history, social science.

[05:00:51] And so it would be part of this fifth indicator. That becomes very important when we look at state law. And so when you see pieces of the state statutes or code where it says unless required by ESSA, By having it here under number five, it becomes required by ESSA, because what you're saying is your accountability system, that is all five of these working together, requires this.

[05:01:14] And so that's the piece of where ESSA said to states, "We're going to give you some flexibility. You need to choose, and then what did you choose?" The other crucial piece of this is if history is selected and it's used as our measure, then you have to follow the other pieces of ESSA, which then tell you you have to have technically sound, valid, reliable assessments.

[05:01:35] And so as we've met with USED and talked through this, and we talked about alternative assessments, they shared with us the pathway to use those under ESSA. But this is where the federal, you

know, you choose this, you have to do this as well. And so history starts having the same requirements that you would find with reading, math, and science.

[05:01:55] And so if the board adopts, if it becomes part of our consolidated state plan, becomes part of federal accountability. That's where all these other requirements come with it. All the data collection, everything we have to submit is part of our accountability system that you heard about yesterday. I just wanted to frame that as far as, again, what federal is and how it works, as far as, especially with our new model that has the two systems together. But again, we have met with USED numerous times, talking through alternative assessments, thinking through, you know, being innovative. So we're currently meeting with a group, an innovative work group.

[05:02:33] We're talking about the redesign of our assessment system, a balanced, coherent system. And we're engaging the field, and there's going to be much more engagement to come. And so we do want to think differently. We want to see what's out there, what's successful, where students are learning and being engaged. And so we also are going to follow federal law. And so we look at the two of those, and we want to hear from USED. And what they shared with us is it's going to be a minimum of two years because we need statewide data on any sort of alternative assessment to make sure it fits the technical requirements under ESSA.

[05:03:04] So I just wanted to share, there's all these layers to it once you bring it in and what's required there. I'm going to turn to my colleagues here, and they're going to speak around history, the inclusion of history in the accountability system and the pieces of instruction. I'll return and talk more about the assessment side of history, and then we'll have conversation around some of the other proposals and some timeline.

[05:03:24] Thank you, Mark, and good afternoon now, everyone, and I have with me Dr. Angela Bird-Wright. She is our Director of Humanities and Overseas History, and then we also have our esteemed Kristonya Brown, well-known across the state as the History Lead, the Coordinator of History for many, many years now, and been through many iterations of our history standards, and so we're thankful that she was able to adjust her schedule and be here with us today.

[05:03:57] Also would like to thank those who spoke this morning and have been sending feedback to our office, our offices, I should say, for clarification. And thank the board for turning points so we could help make some, provide some clarifications on a few things.

[05:04:16] First of all, and then I'm on slide six, if you're following along here or out in the field. Accelerated paths for history and social sciences for middle school students already exist in Virginia schools through local policies. We've come to the board previously.

[05:04:32] We've talked about world geography. We've talked about, and you'll see in our presentation later, that also there's some acceleration paths that offer world history as well in the eighth grade. And so it already exists in the Commonwealth, and it really depends on local resources, what localities have, what resources they have locally, including teachers, right?

[05:04:56] So including those teacher resources that they have at the middle school. Topics, including the Holocaust, are currently addressed in middle school United States history as well as in high school United States history courses. And by no means are we trying to alleviate any history content from being taught.

[05:05:14] When our standards were passed a couple of years ago, our governor, the administration and the board, content specialist. People from all across the field came out and President Greasy you were here you remember we really wanted to make sure we embrace all history in Virginia and so it's covered in multiple areas so our presentation will show you where this is going to be covered in multiple places across our content standards. Our current work in history and social science has been very intentional to obtain, review, evaluate, and vet resources to support existing

[05:05:49] instructional guides from long-standing external partners, including collaboration with, but not limited to, the Asian-American Pacific Islander population, as well as our Jewish communities. We did have some funding that was available for some resources that our Asian-American Pacific Islander population helped to create and curate resources. I believe it was in May that those resources were released. We have been working, you guys know that we've been doing a lot of work around instructional guides. We're going to bring an update to you more in depth in January. But we do want you to know that through this time, we

[05:06:28] have been working with those external stakeholders. Secretary Gadara has been gracious and connected with us, connected us with a lot of external stakeholder partners, our museum partners, partners from other states, specifically around Jewish communities. So we've connected with a variety of external stakeholders.

[05:06:47] to ensure that we are, and even some speakers that have come here have also provided resources to us. So we have been sure to include those partners because as you probably know, there's not a whole lot of history and social sciences, textbooks and resources that are very state specific that speak to state standards.

[05:07:06] And that's just a nationwide thing. Next, all students should have access to accelerated pathways. So you've seen with the math bill over the summer, accelerated math bill that there are pathways existing for math acceleration our office is also looking at and has been looking at not just yesterday and not just this week but over the this semester we have been looking at pathways for history and science that would help advance courses and this helps to remove the ceiling and raise the floor for our students that are ready for that

[05:07:45] or that have an interest in specific content areas. Accelerated pathways likewise are not required for all students. So not all students are going to take accelerated pathways and not all students are going to participate in that and so we're going to show you some of that as we get into the presentation. One point that needs to be very very clear is all school divisions will continue offering accelerated pathways that run parallel to the current course sequences.

[05:08:13] so very explicitly world geography does not have to be taught in eighth grade to every student that would be up to the locality to offer it as an accelerated pathway while still offering whatever that school division typically offers in the middle school for students and so any recommendations for the accountability system would not change that offering of those pathways and so that actually is the next bullet point it is we're not saying all students are required to take world geography in grade 8 and you'll see some examples of where this is different in divisions later in the slide

[05:08:52] deck and finally no recommendation will be made that would require schools and divisions to skip content or course options again with our standards our very rich standards and some of the best in the nation. We've gotten accommodations across the Commonwealth and across the United States about

our rigorous standards. And our state superintendent has been the recipient of a lot of those comments and shared those with us. But people look to Virginia for our rich content and our rich history standards. And so we want to ensure that those stay in the forefront and that

[05:09:27] content is not being skipped or is not being, you know, set to the side for any particular content area and so now i'm going to turn it over to dr bird wright she's going to go through kind of bring us back to the grounding in our state standards and give you kind of an overview of where we'll see some topics along the way as we progress through the content areas thank you dr wallace to president creasy to our superintendent gullickson members of the board and of course to our field so i'm going to share with you all about the guiding principles again dr wallace just shared about the guiding principles that really ground and earth what we're talking

[05:10:06] about here with history and social science so one and you'll see this I'm delineated really clearly for the field but also for you all today and that is we're here our aim here and in Virginia is really to raise our aspirations for history and social science instruction and restoring excellence curiosity and excitement around teaching and learning we've talked about that awakening for students to really explore and discover across the board here in history and so that holds true in the guiding principles. You'll also see that really our history encompasses a broad civilization beyond their neighborhood. We want students to understand that we can move beyond Virginia than the United States,

[05:10:44] but also that humankind has spanned continents and ethnicities and religions, common qualities amongst all of us, right, and celebrating our differences but also understanding what really enriches our society. And then we also talk about the hard history as well you know our standards really provide an unflinching and fact based I'm going to say that again fact based historically accurate coverage of the world the United States and Virginia history I certainly won't read all of those aspects there but you can certainly see it on the slide in our public hand as well about that myriad that whole range

[05:11:20] of various topics that we want to make sure that our children here from our littlest learners all the way to our high schoolers and moving forward for graduation that they're prepared to understand and face but really the takeaway here when we're talking about the guiding principles is really that this is a comprehensive story about the United States and the world in which we live we're preparing every student to understand their rights the opportunities and responsibilities as American citizens and that's really something that we really need to take away with those guiding principles as we move forward just to clearly hit home that message around the organization and the

[05:11:57] prescribed order of our history and social science courses so again these are recommended course grade level sequences this comes directly from our standards the board approved you'll see those and we've even given you the notation there's on page nine we cite this a lot in our office and instruction but page nine in our history and social science standards of learning that were adopted in April 2023 and so this very clear for our localities that you know it's strongly encouraged we encourage you to adopt this particular sequence however it is not required our school boards authorize alternative approaches and ensure that gaps in student learning are to be avoided and so we're going to

[05:12:36] show you some different pathways as we move through this presentation as well to ensure to ensure that but also the key takeaway just like we talked about with the guiding principles is just to remember that school divisions will continue to have autonomy I'll say that again they'll continue to have autonomy to develop course sequence pathways it's really clear for our field to take that away as we're

listening to that organization and how we're moving forward with our history and social science courses in sequence so what we're providing for you next is for you to understand just that content progression that vertical articulation and coherence we talked about this back in March of

[05:13:14] 2025 we came back to you again in May when we were talking through our instructional guides and that rigor coherence and cohesion all the way through with our standards and really looking at ways that we can bring that current understanding forward for our students but also helping them to understand not only where they are here in Virginia but the world so starting in grade three so these are just examples these are broad-based and of course these are cited directly from our standards so we're being very clear and explicit for the field but also it's grounded here in the standards so in grade 3 our grade 3 students learn about the world around them and so the

[05:13:50] standards are organized into four core strands of social science with social studies so that's history geography civics and economics and that allows for students and you notice the different modalities that I think you look at there miss Kilgore the different modalities that students are using which is about reading hearing learning about research and exploring so you see there's different ways that students can approach and teachers can teach and making sure that we do that and I love this part and our team will tell you this often I love the skills continuum because that's a great opportunity and that's embedded in our instructional guides that really show that through line about multiple ways that students can learn the content and our teachers

[05:14:28] can really bring it and and bring it home to them and make it come alive for them as they do that by exploring the lives of people events in the local community Virginia the United States and the world so you can you can see the multiple examples that third graders have the opportunity to learn about China Egypt Rome Greece and Mali and others just so they can understand about maps civics and economics if we move into elementary upper elementary grades five and six so you see that continuation with the United States history one and two so we've just given you some examples here that students have the opportunity to use their skills for history and geography and they you

[05:15:08] notice the verbs that are being used here about analyzing the world questioning discovering having the opportunity to get into those primary sources I love to say that I've been taught well by our history team so they're using those primary sources to dig into and to understand the foundation for America and its ideals and its institutions and then as we move into grade six we talk about relating the history of the United States from Reconstruction all the way to the present to the present so history continues to evolve and continues to move forward and really they pull through with those foundational concepts there so you can see that in grades five and six if we move into civics and

[05:15:47] economics we have a robust civics and economics course and it's the foundational course for Virginia and United States government so you see that through line from civics and economics all the way to government when students typically are in 12th grade for that and so students really understand personal character traits patriotism and respect again grounded in those foundational principles about the Constitution and other documents that are important so now let's get into the conversation about worlds the world courses so world geography that focus of the course is really the study of the world's people and places and we talk about geography but students learning is really

[05:16:26] emphasized on understanding and applying geographic concepts and skills to their daily lives we would move into world history one so that's grounding some work but then we move into world history

one that course really helps our students to explore the historic development of people places and patterns of life from ancient times until 1500 AD this allows them to really dig into and understand and raise questions martial evidence in support of their answers they're engaged in historical thinking and what's been great about our history and social science team when we talk about inquiry based learning and instruction they've done a complete series with wraparound

**[05:17:05]** support both regionally as well as through our webinars in-person support around that line of thinking that helps our students to not only be grounded but our teachers to understand the ways of questioning through skills and tasks to also ground in with our content world history - you'll see that this course requires students to engage in historical thinking as well to raise questions and to engage now into that historical analysis we'd also like to point out Virginia and United States history and so here you will see and we give you a specific example here in understanding not only Virginia United

**[05:17:41]** States history but as we come into specifically understanding and applying social history and social science skills to analyze the United States involvement in World War two we give a specific example with VUS 14f and that allows students to analyze the holocaust beginning with the history and the role of anti-semitism and the persecution of jews the persecution of other targeted groups challenges related to the immigration of jews and so forth one of the other items we want to give you as an example here which is really important we want to hit home for not only you all today but for the field for our educators and that is we strongly address the holocaust anti-semitism

**[05:18:19]** and genocide through our standards of learning we provide related content you can see some examples here. There, of course, there are a myriad of others, but we wanted to point out specific examples with our standards for you. They're explored in Virginia and U.S. History, World History II. There are multiple opportunities for students to learn the content, as well as in examples with civics in our government's courses. We've also provided resources to the field. One of them has been linked there in the presentation as well for you, and that is resources for teaching the Holocaust and Other World Genocide Toolkit. So our History and social science team has also developed that for our educators here in the field.

**[05:18:58]** And then also within our instructional guides, we further delineate that with the understanding of the standards and the skills and practice components that include those supporting questions to guide students' planning. And so Dr. Wallace spoke to this when we were talking about the longstanding relationship that we have with our external partners from multiple communities where the rich history OF MANY ARE CELEBRATED WITHIN OUR STANDARDS AND IT IS IMPERATIVE FOR OUR FIELD TO UNDERSTAND HOW IMPORTANT WE TAKE THAT HERE IN THE STATE OF VIRGINIA. WE WANT TO MAKE SURE THAT OUR STUDENTS ARE EXPOSED TO A RICH AND ROBUST HISTORY AND WE ARE DETERMINED TO DO THAT NOT ONLY THROUGH OUR WORK AS EDUCATORS BUT WE WANT TO ALSO MAKE SURE THAT WE EMPOWER OUR STUDENTS TO

**[05:19:38]** UNDERSTAND AND KNOW THAT WE WANT TO CELEBRATE ALL OF OUR CULTURES AND ETHNICITIES AND OUR RICH differences but also what makes us the same here in Virginia. So we're doing that with our work. We are excited to come back in January to share with you about our instructional guides and the work that our external partners and organizations have been doing to help support that work and certainly led by our history and social science team to do so. So thank you so much for your time. I'm going to turn it right back over to Dr. Wallace. Thank you. Angela always brings the enthusiasm to our team.

[05:20:19] so I would like to just go over a few examples keep in mind these are examples that are posted on their websites so the links are there if you want to check out their course some divisions call them course sequences course program of studies course offerings it just depends on the locality they can be called all different things this particular sequence that Powhatan gave their multiple other classes that they offer to their students but this was one of their accelerated pathways where they offer an integrated United States history in grade 6 and so that would be a US 1 and US 2 kind of combo class and

[05:20:58] then integrated United States history in grade 7 where it's a US 2 and civics and economics course that's where they would take their civics and economics SOL at the end of that course and then for their eighth grade students they offer world history and geography one to 1500 AD and so that's offered either in the middle school or in the high school and so that's just one example of an accelerated pathway already in Virginia. Hampton and Dr. Byrd Wright's children have been able to experience this firsthand. They offer flexibility for US

[05:21:33] 1 and 2 in grade 6 and then civics and economics in grade 7 and then world geography in grade eight and world history in grade nine, world history one in grade nine and world history two in grade 10. So that's an example where you see world geography being used as that accelerated pathway in the eighth grade. And then we'll finish up with the example from Henrico, which I just love their graphic.

[05:21:58] Not sure who does that, but kudos to you with your graphics in Henrico. It was very clear for me to understand that you offer an accelerated US one, excuse me, U.S. History I and Civics and Economics in the grade 6 courses, and then U.S. History II and Civics and Economics in grade 7, and then in grade 8, students can take World History I to 1500 in grade 8, or they can take, and then in those final course sequences, they would take World History II or World Geography, and then, or they could take AP Human Geography.

[05:22:36] So what we really wanted to show here is the opportunities that depend on the locality, depend on the resources across our commonwealth for our students. And so offering accelerated pathways in any content area allows that child not to have less engagement with content, but actually to have more engagement with content that really speaks to whatever they may be doing, following a career college or military pathway, or if they're, you know, following whatever pathway that they're going to choose.

[05:23:08] And so the acceleration helps that instead of hinders that. And so really just want to drive home that, you know, we want this to be opportunities for kids to grow. I think Virginia and this board has really produced a lot of things for seat time flexibility.

[05:23:27] And that seat time flexibility is evident right here in those integrated courses. That's a very well example of seat time flexibility where you are accelerating some of that course material within a content area. And so before I turn it over to Mark, just want to see if there are any questions about the pathways, the history content, anything else that we can provide clarity on.

[05:23:53] He's going to talk about the assessment. Dr. Ackerman. So he's got the assessment. You're just doing content? That was smart. I don't have anything. I've got a general question. yes mr. right so it says i'm sorry miss mcpherson i'm sorry okay that the standards that are presented in the board education recommended grade level sequence i looked at this sequence it says that they're encouraged but they're not required but local school boards that authorize an alternative approach have to ensure that the gaps in student learning are avoided so that's where you see those course sequences that we just talked about where there's some integration of two

[05:24:32] courses and so they're they have to when they design their curriculum that's where they're ensuring that those gaps are not occurring okay they just got to make sure that all of the courses that are in this sequence are covered well they can choose how they offer that sequence so right for example with our with our 2023 standards um virginia studies is typically anyway taught in grades four, but currently some divisions teach Virginia studies over grades four and five instead

[05:25:07] of just in grade four. And so this sequence puts U.S. 1 at grade five, U.S. 2 at grade six, and civics and economics at grade seven. So when the standards were adopted in 2023, this was the recommended but not required course sequence.

[05:25:29] So acceleration, which would be a little different, would be if the division chose to continue with the course sequence where they did a grade four and five Virginia studies, or they could offer local history in grade five. You know, they have that option to offer some local electives also.

[05:25:45] And then they, let's say civics and economics is taught in grade seven. They could teach world geography in grade eight. They could teach world history in grade eight, world history one. And so we see that in those examples that we provided in the packet. Do they have to make a request to the staff for an alternative sequence?

[05:26:10] So that's a great question. It is a local board determination. And so what happens every year about this time of the year, fall-ish, school divisions are going through their program of studies, and they are looking to the state to see what their course sequences need to be, additional courses um you know in that role for example we might have gotten some cte recommendations right and so anytime that a school division or a school wants to offer additional courses that has to be taken before the board of edu the local school board of education not the state board so

[05:26:46] they would take that program of studies course sequence offerings however whatever they terminology whatever they call it they will then um put that before their board their board will review it twice just like you review items twice and then they will look to the community for feedback they will look to parents for feedback certainly students are involved in that process in the beginning to see what their interests are and then the board votes on the local course path and so our board does not vote on that for localities and we would we would that is what

[05:27:22] we want to emphasize would remain the same for localities. Mark? So we're going to now talk about the assessments used in history. We'll take any questions on that and continue. My colleagues may

[05:27:57] need to stay for that just around the content. So we're on slide 20. And so the standards of learning assessments you see there, what the state provides in elementary level, Virginia studies, the middle school level, civics and economics, and then the high school end of course, world geography, world history. You see them all listed there, world history one, world history two, Virginia and U.S. history. So those are the SOLs available that the divisions may elect to use based on, well, you'll see based on what we talk about in a minute.

[05:28:29] In this spring, coming up, there will be new or revised assessments in history and social science. So this past couple years, with the new standards, the 2023 standards you just heard about, they field tested the items, developed new items.

[05:28:46] committees of teachers, educators, division leaders met and reviewed that content to build these assessments and make sure that the assessment items met the rigor of the new history standards

that were adopted in 2023. And so they will become operational this spring. And so on slide 22, you're seeing the new item types in history and social science. Again, these were first field tested previously we have history question sets their cluster items they have a common what they call stimulus which could be an information source a graphic or picture a map and students will have three to five test items about

[05:29:23] that match table grid is another one it's organized for students in a table and students have to select the correct response within each row of the table these frequently involve comparing or classification multiple selects the students have to select more than one correct answer in these items so they They need to get both right or you're looking to see really ranking and then inline choice.

[05:29:46] Students select from our dropdown to complete a statement related to the test item. So it's sort of complete a sentence or complete something where it drops down. The intention here with this is one, to inform both the board, the public with, you know, our assessments and we can, on our DOE website, we have available the practice items you can go and look and see because again, I think, you know, based on your time in school, they're They're not multiple choice.

[05:30:11] There are multiple choice items, but they're not all multiple choice. And so what we want to do, and again, as I mentioned earlier with this innovative work group, is we're thinking through what does good assessment look like that leads to changes in instructional practice.

[05:30:27] And so these are just some of the types that we've involved with educators to develop, to measure, you know, student learning, and specifically these in history. Science also now has cluster items as well. On slide 23 you see the new practice items.

[05:30:43] So currently if you go, you'll see practice items. You can see the ones I just mentioned. And then because of the new tests that will begin in the spring of 2026, soon, very soon, we're going to turn it over. Because right now they need to practice for the test for this fall. And so we didn't want to turn it over too early and they're looking at, they need to be practicing on the standards they're being assessed on.

[05:31:04] So we have the 2015 standards and now we're moving to the 2023 standards. So they'll be out in time to practice for the 2026 assessments, and we'll flip over the practice items here pretty soon so school divisions can have students looking at them, practicing with them, and becoming more familiar.

[05:31:22] On slide 24, it's important to have the context, the history, that in 2014, the General Assembly did eliminate some history and social science SOL tests, but the legislation also required that school divisions assess the standards of learning for these courses by administering local alternative assessments and so guidelines were adopted by the board there were requirements around you know the criteria scoring rubrics content all those pieces training by the department working in partnership with teams and committees school division leaders and so you see their link for the public sort of where to find that on our website local alternative assessments

[05:32:00] including performance assessments are scored with common rubrics they are provided by the department and they are required for the following courses you You see their grade three history, U.S. History 1, and U.S. History 2 elementary and middle school level. On our next slide on 25, you see that performance tasks can be used to verify credits in history and social science.

[05:32:21] So the department again provides guidelines that the board did adopt in 2021, and there are resources for school divisions on the appropriate administration of these. So they are to meant to be, well not just meant, they are to be taken just as seriously with the test security as an SOL test.

[05:32:37] There are guidelines in place and scoring rubrics that follow and that need to be adhered to. And you see, again, they're linked on our website. Performance tasks in conjunction with that, the local assessments, and you see the information there that are adopted by the board, allow for world geography, world history one, world history two, and Virginia U.S. history.

[05:32:59] And so you can see, again, the collaboration between the department and the school divisions to develop these. And as you see the bottom note, so 62 school divisions are currently using this pathway to locally verify credits in the 25-26 school year, which is just under 50% of our school divisions.

[05:33:17] Our stakeholder engagement, so this is going to be broad with this statement and what you see here, but in this proposal, Amendment 9, there are a number of items that we're looking to revise. And so we've been engaging, and you see a list of groups there, secondary principals group, elementary principals, school superintendents.

[05:33:37] There's an advisory group, CT conference. I mean, we've been addressing, based on the different topics, and sort of Title III has been important with our recently arrived English learners. I met with the elementary principals on Monday of this week to talk through some of the topics we're talking about today to get their feedback.

[05:33:53] And what we provided for them, you know, some information and want to hear back from them, particular to any of these that impact elementary. And I do want to note that there have been no changes. We've not asked the board to make any changes to accountability.

[05:34:08] There have been no board decisions as far as anything official. It's just been conversation on these topics because of just the nature and the importance of them. And so what you see on slide 27 is we're going to continue these stakeholder engagements. We'll continue with different groups around the different topics, and we'll set up listening sessions and announce those through the Virginia Education Update and the department website.

[05:34:32] We definitely want to engage our stakeholders. decisions impact the field they'll impact you know the day-to-day instruction and the longevity the stability that the school divisions need that our accountability system needs and so we'll set those up again public comment has been received we're receiving public comment but it's not officially opened yet and so I've appreciated through these conversations and today hearing the comments you know really demonstrating that civic engagement students coming and speaking before you and it's just exciting to see that you know the kids are

[05:35:07] watching live how the process works and so very much appreciate that this engagement conversation the collaboration I'm going to stop there because I'm going to start getting into some of the revisions we're going to talk about and you'll see changes to what I share with you last month based on feedback from the field we've met with groups I know some groups or you haven't met with us yet we're working through we're working through uh and it's still in flux and that's what i would say to you that this is not final we're not asking anything of the board today uh this is still being you know discussed and so you'll see some changes here based on feedback from different stakeholders

[05:35:45] when it goes out for public comment we'll bring that to the board as well so that you have a very informed decision so i'll stop there for any comments on history the assessments or anything related and then we'll go into some of the proposed revisions questions or comments dr ackerman so is there a timeline is if this is just for discussion and then there's public comment is there are we working backwards

from a timeline or so that's the last slide and so the last slide is our timeline okay which is moving forward for public comment uh the next slide kind of gets there so what we're doing is and again i'll continue to pause but what we're doing is this

[05:36:24] lives in title one and that's very important to understand as far as federal law because as we We said yesterday, you know, we get comments around the framework, and it seems to be targeting schools, our Title I schools, our students with low socioeconomic status. That, by law, is supposed to happen.

[05:36:40] You're supposed to be putting more resources back into Title I schools. The federal law is designed that way. It says take these Title I dollars and make sure these schools are getting more support. So you're going to see that. The data should show you that. Federal law requires that of us. And so with the timeline, what we're doing is we're reviewing all the titles in our state plan right now.

[05:36:59] So I'm bringing it to you, Title I. We're also reviewing the other titles to make sure they're updated, make sure the data is updated, make sure it's current. And it's good to do that. I mean, you know, the law was passed in 2015. We had a number of revisions. We do amendments, but it's good to update your plan and make sure it's the most accurate.

[05:37:17] And so that is why it has not gone out for public comment yet, is different offices at the department are reviewing their title sections and making sure it's the most accurate. Once that's complete, it will go out for public comment, and we'll come back to the board January 8th and share where we are after public comment, and they've seen the full plan.

[05:37:35] But just in case, sort of the pieces to this. Okay, so after January 8th, or January 8th, we're bringing? You'll see public comment by January 8th. We'll bring you what's available in the public comment period. Thank you. And I really appreciate how you take complicated things and explain it in a way I can understand it.

[05:37:55] And in trying to understand the concerns from the field in what you're presenting, if I'm understanding correctly, they have created an assessment they'd really love for us to consider using. And it seems like to me, based off, let me see what slide I pulled up, slide 35 and 2728 is when history becomes part of the analysis, right?

[05:38:21] am I getting ahead too much ahead okay all right so as I say it seems like we have time to get reliability validity from between now and then but maybe I'm getting too far down the road I'll hold your question just until we get there so you see the sequence but okay it's a great question all right all right Dr. Northern I mean this may piggyback on on Dr. Ackerman's question and I know we talked about this last month but are we going to be getting data on these locally awarded verified credits like how often they're used which districts are using what how they compare to the sol testing because it seems like we've got four

[05:38:56] courses all sols and all eligible for a locally awarded credit and so clearly um we'd love to see right some comparison data relative to the passage rates what types of kids are they how are they using these locally awarded credits is it when you fail the sol three times is it you know what criteria they're using to figure out whether you get a locally awarded verified credit. So I just feel like it was a big black box at least for me and would love some additional data and information as we move forward to you know discussing this in the months ahead. So I will pull up yesterday on one of our slide decks we did provide the data in our

[05:39:33] conversation on proficiency cut scores about how many students and the percent and roughly it was 50 percent of students are using locally awarded verified credits about roughly 47 to 50 percent. I will say to you, there's a nice asterisk on that that needs to be shared, which is we do need to factor in the pandemic, because during COVID, there were some extensions, some waivers that were allowed, and so students may have exercised that versus using a standardized test, but around 50%.

[05:39:59] You do have students that use more than one, so under the regulations, you can use one. Students, special needs, have credit accommodations, and so, but in our data collection, we were looking to see how many students it's reported to us as their final year to see the percentage there. I'll look to do more disaggregation for you and provide that because I heard all your questions there and what we can bring that back to the board as far as the very detailed specifics around that data.

[05:40:23] So we do collect data on what what measure they're using for that locally, that local assessment. Like we have a like it's public what they're using. So we do know the divisions and what they're using as far as the 67 percent of divisions. They turn into us as far as if the student used the locally awarded verified credit.

[05:40:42] That's what we know. We do not receive sort of, we have the scoring rubric, they use our scoring rubric, but we wouldn't be able to tell you this student received X score, this student received this score. It's more if the student passed using that assessment, it's a locally verified credit, and then we know that that's what was used.

[05:40:57] Yeah, and I'm just concerned about the variability, right, all over with these local, like, you know what I mean? Like, you can move from one district to the other, right, and you potentially get a verified credit, but you wouldn't get it if you lived in this district. I mean it's an equity issue here like we think it's providing you know flexibility which it is but we also have to think about you know how it may unfairly penalize students who are in one district versus another and they could not get a verified credit in one district but they can another so it's the same conversation we had with adequate yearly progress years ago that kids could

[05:41:32] move from one state to another they'd meet AYP here and they wouldn't here and we need to kind of look into that. Dr. Ackerman? Because to kind of piggyback that, and this is where, again, I feel like we have to untangle things. I feel like it's harder when we look at academics. I like to think of behavior. That's always, to me, the easiest one that, to your point, you need unified data. So I could pull up on my phone for some schools that I work with, their behavior reports, and I can identify what specific behavior impacts structural time in the classroom from today. I could pull it

[05:42:09] today. To do that, you have to get everybody to be unified on that form, on what data you're going to enter. To really have statewide accountability, you do need those agreements. I think that's where we get lost then and then don't give the flexibility. But if I'm understanding things correctly, I'm hearing from our social studies colleagues that they agree with that and created something that we could agree on across the state that would be a unified measurement that's performance-based. So that's where I think it gets a little different, right? Like, I agree with you when you're talking about local awarded credits. And at some point, we've got to have a standard

[05:42:46] around that for the state to determine where they're going to put their resources. But when we have such an organized group to create something, they've done something different. So I just, like, I feel like those are almost two different things. But anyway, my two cents.

[05:43:03] And I was just going to share, so we, you know, in conversation, you may have heard about House Bill 1957. It's something the board will have a presentation on. And so what will happen is with the 2023 standards and moving forward is there will be a committee and both department and division leaders, staff, educators will be involved in that.

[05:43:23] We'll examine this process, the guidelines for locally awarded verified credits, need to develop criteria based on the new standards, the scoring rubrics, and bring that back to the board for adoption. and so with that you know again the board may decide to change the guidelines from previous and sort of the data collection you're speaking of that's a board decision currently the divisions maintain that data as far as how the students are doing and i know they would be very excited to share you heard some of those comments today that they're very proud of their data and how students are performing but as the state we do not collect that as far as from the individual divisions but the guidelines will need to be updated and bring that back and the board will need to and

[05:44:02] And that's work that we have set for the spring that legislation takes effect July 1st, 2026. Dr. Northern? I mean, my last point here, but it begins to undercut our SOL system. Like, are we in the next year going to, we're at 50% now, we're going to have 60% the next year, 70% the next year?

[05:44:20] Like, are we at one point, are we going to say, like, look, we can't have 90% of divisions, like, just bypassing the SOL and taking something that we don't really know what it is. So I do think, just from my own personal viewpoint, that we need to investigate this a little bit more and potentially put some guardrails around it or some expectations and obviously get a ton of input from the field as well.

[05:44:43] Superintendent Gullickson. Mr. Jennings, can you remind the board about when that House bill goes into effect? Yeah, so July 1st, 2026, that House bill in 1957 goes into effect. So we're going to spend the spring working on pieces of it for full implementation.

[05:45:01] There's another section of the bill that still needs to be passed, again, by General Assembly. But some of the pieces we're talking about have not gone into effect yet. And so that's our plan. We've got plans built up to the spring to work on that and bring it back for you. So all this conversation fits. And that's really what I'd like people to leave with is hopefully a sense of calm, that there's this conversation.

[05:45:21] We will engage stakeholders in how these pieces all fit together, but to be very thoughtful about it. You heard the conversation. Obviously, you took action earlier around the proficiency scores for reading and mathematics. And really, you know, we talk about this in Virginia and working in assessment accountability. You know, sometimes people are like, can you just make it simpler?

[05:45:40] But you do want some complexity because in complexity, you have more pathways for more students have opportunities. And so if you keep it as simple as you can, students don't have as many pathways. And so the locally awarded verified credits a pathway. You know, we do substitute tests as a pathway. And so I hear you completely on the data to see where are students, you know, using this pathway, how many students are on that pathway.

[05:46:01] And so that's certainly something we want to be able to provide to say we have we have a high graduation rate. I mean, you heard yesterday around the 89 percent graduation rate. So our students are having success. Well, how are they getting there? And I hear you, too, about, you know, students move from one division to another. And so certainly want to be able we can disaggregate some more data that we have on the locally awarded verified credits and provide that.

[05:46:22] We are not able to break it down by the content area. And so I did want to share with you, when I said 47%, 50%, that does include reading and math, that students are using that as well. So we do need to think about that. It's not just history. They could be electing ensigns.

[05:46:38] They could be electing other content areas in that as well. Ms. McPherson. Also, as you're mapping it out, would you take a look at the locally awarded credits, both for the students with disabilities and other areas, because in some of the material it says it can be unlimited, and I know we're kind of looking at a much smaller, you know, standard size to look at.

[05:47:07] So I think we ought to just really take a look at how many locally awarded credits are being offered. Obviously, where they need to be offered, they need to be offered. But where they don't need to necessarily be offered, we don't want them to be able to opt out of the proficiency and the accountability that we're trying to set up and we can certainly break that data down it's a great great question other comments okay mr jennings proceed please so on slide uh we're moving here i'm on 28 to sort of frame for you that's actually a picture of our state plan uh the official

[05:47:45] template that's given to us by uscd you see the different titles i referenced earlier and you see some of the areas that are addressed so many of those are title one that's where our accountability lives and what you'll find is some of the other topics in title two increased support for principals revised school improvement approach that you know lives part of their expand opportunities for students some of these other pieces will live in other titles title three making sure we have the most updated information for our English learners title four you look at 21st century that grant that program so the other offices are updating that and we do want to present the whole plan together we don't want to just give you title one we

[05:48:24] It's a consolidated state plan. And so when it goes out for public comment, all of it will be put out there. So again, slide 29, what's the purpose of this? Well, when we adopted the framework, we said we would come back year two and have conversation after implementation.

[05:48:40] We had put in our amendment at that time, it was seven, that we would be submitting another amendment based on the first year data. And then just like we're having conversation now, talking with stakeholders, looking at data, sort of making potential revisions.

[05:48:56] And then as I shared, looking at the other areas, seeing the need to update information based on being 2025 versus when this was begun back in 2015. So I broke this out into sections based on the school year to help hopefully the board and the public and hopefully, again, share where we are.

[05:49:15] So, for this year, for school year 25-26, we are proposing that the mastery index for assessments with three performance levels, it would be a .5 value. Currently it's .75. It fits with the four performance levels, but it's imbalanced when you look at three versus four performance levels.

[05:49:35] Determining growth methodology, we do need a growth methodology for our accountability system. It's one of the indicators we selected. We had been using value added. Our proposal is now progress value tables. Number three is in italics. We do not have to use this this year, but what I'm hearing, and I want public comment on this, is to move the exception for recently arrived English learners to exception B for grades two through eight.

[05:50:00] It allows an extra year of growth. If the board did elect to do that, they would need to know that for this year's testing because this would be a change in practice. Currently, they do not assess reading for a first year English learner, and this would change that so that this year would be baseline data.

[05:50:19] So the school divisions would wanna know that. The last two deal with school improvement. Well, the last one deals with school improvement exit criteria, they both deal with exit criteria, but specifically for the next to last bullet is for our dually identified students who are taking the alternate access test.

[05:50:37] This is the test that measures English language proficiency. We have a committee working on that bring that proposal, the recommendation for students to exit. So what you see on slide 31, just for clarity, you know, is that there are no proposed changes to the accountability system as far as weights, new indicators. That's why there's nothing in red there. It's completely the same, so that this year would maintain as much as the prior year growth. Again, the few things that I mentioned. Now we go to 2627 school year, slide 32. The proposal here is to bring in an indicator for the integrated reading writing assessment would be 5% for

[05:51:17] elementary middle school we've also talked about for 3E readiness to use JROTC also had the privilege of meeting with a group of high school principals and they requested to consider you know if our school can't offer JROTC could we use a comparable class could we use like a leadership class and so that's something we're exploring it have to be in our we have coding systems for our master schedule and make sure it's an appropriate class but that that opens up opportunity for schools. So if you don't offer JROTC but you have another leadership class and you do the ASVAP, you'll see that on the proposal. Calculations, the adjustment to the participation

[05:51:53] plan component, the school is the required action for a plan. And then we really want the public to weigh in on moving high school from a cohort calculation to an annual calculation. That way the data is more aligned, but we really want to hear from the divisions on that. And so next year if these proposals are adopted, you would see one new indicator. You see that on slide 33, and you see the change in the integrated reading and writing being added there for elementary and middle school. The year after that, based on feedback that we've received, is to, you know,

[05:52:30] some of the comments that you even heard today, is to delay. And so, the thought was, we had talked earlier about when should history come into this. And so, this history would not begin until 27-28. and so you see that for school year 27-28 the proposal to bring history into the accountability system at the elementary middle and high school and then also you'll see this a little bit later there's been a revision as we heard from divisions and we do take public feedback very seriously this again is different than what i shared with you last board meeting but we want to provide more flexibility and so the advanced coursework would change and provide flexibility to use earth

[05:53:08] science world geography or world history one in addition to high school math courses and i'll I'll say more about that in just a few slides. And so for that one, UDC on slide 35, the changes in the weights there, history being included there.

[05:53:27] Middle school would bring in civics, and then high school would bring in Virginia U.S. history. Advanced coursework, it's highlighted, but it's still the same 10%, which I'll unpack here in a couple slides. So I know you've seen these before, and we've talked about them, but I definitely want to provide time for conversation.

[05:53:44] But I'll highlight a few things since I was here last. You know, the mastery index, again, consistency balancing on slide 38 using the 0.5 value. Growth, we talked about using progress tables and been receiving great feedback and by great, really thoughtful feedback from the school divisions and

organizations around growth and how to measure students more individually and really honor students moving to levels.

[05:54:12] are students moving to a different performance level. And these calculations do that. Students moving significantly would receive more points. Recently arrived English learners. As you go through there, you'll see, you know, we use all this jargon, but exception B, the bottom line of it, you see the details on slide 45.

[05:54:33] But on 46, you basically see there's a year two built-in growth. And so what that does is says that if students, you know, They test first year baseline the next year. We look to see if they grew. It would not be counted in the mastery component unless they passed.

[05:54:53] Alternate access on 47, our committee's working. We had some delays with the weather, but they're continuing to work on a recommendation for the board on when you would exit, what would be a proficient score to exit based on that assessment and set progress levels.

[05:55:11] school improvement and exit criteria for federally identified schools so these are some updates to what more rigorous intervention means resource allocation we're trying to streamline that updated technical assistance to include our school board members current and aspiring teachers and leaders we want to be clear about exit criteria with the framework we're meeting with school divisions to talk through entrance and exit because if you entered prior to the framework we honor the same methodology and so just to be fair you know compare apples to apples And so we use the same reports, the same calculations so that they're seeing sort of this was the expectation and we're going to hold you to that.

[05:55:49] And then if you enter this year, we're looking for our comprehensive schools to demonstrate progress, you know, in the indicators and also to not be in the lowest 5% if that's how they were identified. Schools that were identified for graduation, they need to be above 67%.

[05:56:07] And so again, you see the weights there. Just want to reemphasize no changes in weights or indicators for this year. When we get into next year, you see the IRW integrated reading writing on slide 52. The proposal, this is an assessment that's been used for a couple years now in the school systems. They've been using it. We've field tested it. We've done range finding to identify sort of score thresholds. We were deciding if it should fit with reading or be its own measurement.

[05:56:35] And the proposal in talking with our technical advisory council, our tech experts from around the nation, was to use it in readiness, to use it separately. And so that's our proposal, but not for this year. This year, we'd collect information, provide information to school divisions.

[05:56:52] We would have a standard setting in the summer, and then we would start to use it starting next year. 3E readiness, you'll see again on slide 55 there, the conversation around this was the only criteria that did not have a 1.25 value, the board has been consistent saying they wanted to talk about JROTC and how it would fit. Slide 56 is our current 3E. And then you see the change on 57 that talks about the ability to use an equivalent leadership course with a B grade in addition to JROTC.

[05:57:30] You see that revision from the last time that I was here. And again, the different ASVAB point values and so you see for 26 27 some of the weight adjustments based on the integrated reading and writing superintendent Gullickson thank you mr.

[05:57:47] Jennings one of the other areas for slide 57 that we're still exploring for data shareability is around some of the the service corps opportunities we know that that is a really viable path for a lot of our graduates whether it's Peace score AmeriCorps America Vista programs where you can do it right out of high school and so we are still working with some of our fellow agency partners on that data collection and viability so we hope to have that information to share with the board I don't know if we can pull it off for January 8th but if that

[05:58:24] is really credible we want to make sure we think it could fit in nicely with the enlistment side just given the threshold for that 1.25 on the competitive nature and leadership skills required it really aligns well with our civic readiness and obviously then creates great pathways from your service time and everyone knows i was one of those under an americorps umbrella and so just wanted to create that one more pathway where we know so many of our youth are able to pursue that and then help pay for additional upskilling and credential pathways so that's still in the works so we'll make sure that's

[05:59:04] reflected as we continue to share this out with the field but we're still fine-tuning on that data collection mr. Jennings if you wouldn't mind could you also I know that we talked about this in our last board meeting about JROTC and how we've included there the equivalent leadership course just I know that you and I had had some conversations around the difficulty in many cases of schools being able to offer a JROTC program and so that's why we have that equivalent leadership course in there so I'm not sure if you want to speak to that at all

[05:59:42] yeah excellent yeah so you see here on the slide and I'll say to you thank you superintendent Gullickson you will see when the state plan for public comment there's a nice paragraph around continuing to explore other service opportunities that you referenced and we are working on that data collection we want to ensure if we put it in here that we are able to offer it and have the data to support it and so that's you don't see it here on this slide but it is in our state plan so yes you'll see some language here around the leadership courses we engaged with some school divisions around that and and would talk through sort of a definition of that course and what's included to provide more opportunity and so we would define that and then we have a way to collect if you're in those leadership courses and so if a student had JRTC as an

[06:00:21] option, excellent. If they did not use another leadership course, again with that B grade, in partnership with the ASVAB score, they could earn those values. And so you see for school year 26-27, again with the integrated reading, writing, the adjustments there. You're not seeing 3E highlighted there because the overall weight wouldn't change. It would just be the criteria, so more students would have ability to earn more points through enlistment. And then we talk about school year 27-28, and this goes to our conversation we had earlier. This would be bringing the history

[06:01:01] social science indicator in, and this gives time back to our earlier comments. As we talk about my earlier comments at the beginning of this presentation, how this fits under federal law and our cohesive accountability system, we have explored already with USED how to use performance assessments, what would be needed for that, and they did share with us a two-year timeline. You You would need one year to really look at data, analyze data, collect it another year and sort of go through the approval process.

[06:01:30] And so this would allow us to sort of, you know, go through that and get feedback from them to include it. So what you're seeing currently is that Virginia studies S.O.L. tests in elementary, civics,

economics, and then Virginia's history. Again, not to say this would be the definite and there would not be opportunity for performance assessments, I'm just sharing what we have now that we know we can do, but what would have to happen under federal law to bring in other types of assessments.

[06:01:56] I think Mr. Monk or Ms. Kilgore have a comment. Sure, absolutely. Thank you. On slide 56, I know there has been some conversation around credentialing, and I know in our last work session you shared some information around the .75 for a CT completer who's earned an IRC.

[06:02:19] Thoughts around if there were to be tiered credentials, could lower numbers be there thinking a 0.75 or a 0.5? How would that play in there, or does it need to be one set based upon the model?

[06:02:35] We could. I mean, you know, you could. I mean, it's completely possible. There's no reason you couldn't. Some options there. Yeah, absolutely. You see the options when you look across sort of the consistency of a 0.5, 0.75, but there's nothing to say that this industry-recognized credential is a half a point and this one we're at 0.75.

[06:02:55] We could delineate and make it very clear to the public. I think that's the point is when you think about this and the signal you're sending in resources and planning, but you could delineate and say we think this should be recognized as a 0.5, but this one's a 0.75. I mean, you already have that at one point value with the credentials that are high demand.

[06:03:12] Right. And so you could say we want to differentiate even more and set up three tiers. Absolutely, that could be done. Wonderful. anything further okay so we move to advanced coursework and we're on slide 61 and i share on slide 62 that currently advanced coursework is only measuring students who are taking middle school or middle school students who are taking end of course assessments in mathematics and so our proposal here is to begin looking at advanced coursework in science world geography

[06:03:47] world history what you would want to do here is basically open up more opportunities for students in these courses but what would as far as the math seven would be a marker so math seven they take the math sol and if the student score advanced the expectation is a student would go into an advanced course it could be courses but what this means is a student if i'm a student math seven i pass the sol or get an advanced on the sol basically i'm going to go into an advanced course it could be algebra and you would in the numerator denominator satisfy it it could be earth science

[06:04:25] it could be world geography it could be world history what this does this flexibility and this is a change from what you saw a few weeks ago as we engage with stakeholders what this does is now provides more flexibility to school divisions if they did not offer earth science or they did not offer world geography they did not offer world history one in middle school there would be no penalty and so i want to make that clear and so this allows the flexibility in scheduling to continue their course sequence but also says students have more opportunity

[06:04:57] They can take an advanced course, but it doesn't have to be earth science, it doesn't have to be world geography, it doesn't have to be world history, it could be algebra, which many of our schools do. But we also have many divisions taking earth science currently in middle school or taking world geography or world history. And that is when we were looking at this and looking at the data, more middle school students are enrolled in world geography than world history one.

[06:05:20] And so when we analyze the data, we're having those conversations and meeting with different groups. convert well you know should it be this or should it be that part of the conversation was the new history standards world history standards and the the rigor of those and are those appropriate for middle schoolers and so that was some of the big thinking involved in why it was world geography over world history but when you look at the data as far as where students are enrolled in middle school if they take one of these courses students there are more students in world geography than world history but they wouldn't have to do that. This, again, is providing flexibility, and it's simply saying advanced coursework is

[06:05:58] available at the middle school. It could be mathematics, it could be earth science, and it could be world geography or world history, but it doesn't have to be all of the above. And so if divisions are concerned about, well, now we have to offer this or change this or change that, the answer is no, you do not. You could, but as long as students had one of these four pathways, then they would satisfy the indicator.

[06:06:23] And this is a change. Be very transparent. This is a change from what I shared with you before based on feedback. This was feedback we received. And so we did adjust this. And so if you see the calculation, which, you know, these are the questions I get. What does that look like when a math breakdown? On slide 65, you see it in red there, is that the numerator, denominator, numerator, students are taking these assessments and passing, and then the denominator would be bringing in these other assessments and not for a couple years.

[06:06:52] But again, it's an OR model, so it's not saying they have to do it, it's an OR. So they have that flexibility, which some of our divisions are begging for, just to be very clear. They're asking for this because they're already doing it, but it does not require middle schools to do that. Mr. Jennings, could students take multiple advanced courses and earn points?

[06:07:12] They can do multiple. They would only get credit in one, and we would take the highest score, though. Dr. Northern.

[06:07:41] Absolutely.

[06:08:04] Absolutely. You know, great, great feedback there. So it falls under the umbrella. Love your points. it falls in the umbrella of advanced coursework um you know using with the element of you know the students who are scoring advanced again it's the saying that the students are ready absolutely and so that that's your determining factor the majority of and we've met with other states who do something comparable to this i'll put that out there but um many of the students would currently as they are using mathematics because you absolutely see the correlation there and this was a way to provide for students who may not have scored advanced with math 7 tests but are taking one of these courses because they are ready.

[06:08:39] So this doesn't penalize you for that. So maybe I didn't get advanced on math, but I'm ready for Earth Science, EOC, and my division offers it, or I'm ready for World Geography, and my division offers it, or World History I, and I take that, now I'm included in this calculation. So it doesn't penalize them for that.

[06:08:55] And so if I didn't get advanced on my Math 7, it's okay. But that's sort of where we're looking to say, because again, the correlation does go back to math. If you get advanced on your Math 7, we're looking to see you move up to algebra. Superintendent Galickson okay sorry so also in the spirit of the

board with the 3E readiness and pathways along with seat time flexibility that dr. Wallace mentioned earlier this also incentivizes our middle schools as we're looking at transformation and making more student-centered models to pursue

[06:09:32] multiple advanced course pathways looking at additional endorsements and pathways for teachers to upskill further so that they have that much more room in their schedule come high school to pursue for example as we saw on Perkins 5 youth apprenticeships right or other opportunities that might be outside of some of those traditional bell to bell hours and so you also think about just the great momentum that we are having around helping students not be held back while they're in those middle grades to empower those local communities to make those decisions around course sequencing and

[06:10:11] opportunities for kids but we also know that what gets measured changes behavior and that we're hoping even more middle school principals will be excited who are not already providing this on top of those who are and see the great value of creating additional advanced courses other than just math for their students to pursue that then leads to that many more options and advanced courses in science, like we heard about earlier today, as well as others.

[06:10:43] Dr. Ackerman? First of all, I'm really encouraged by this entire presentation because I think a lot of what I'm hearing anyway, and if I'm interpreting it correctly, is that this is this rigid thing that was created, and it's unmovable, and everybody has to get on board.

[06:11:01] but you're listening to your constituents where we recognize this is someone in a pilot phase and we're making adjustments. I do think to Dr. Northern's point that that's how it can start seeming like throwing jello at the wall, right? Like I'm going to come complain and then I'm going to get XYZ. And so I do think, and perhaps you already have it and things are happening too fast, but it would be neat to take some of these recommendations and show data with it.

[06:11:30] She gave one example, but I even think, is this getting us closer to those, the matching the federal type, like by moving that 0.75 to 0.5? But all those little things, like in addition to it being a good idea that we're hearing from our folks, our boots on the ground, who are really doing what we're trying to initiate, is there also a data source or something we can point to that says this is why they're correct, if that makes sense?

[06:11:57] And that's required by federal law. Yeah, short answer. Yeah, and so what will happen is as the conversations continue, again, nothing's even been put out officially for public comment. Again, we're taking the public comment, so please keep them coming. It does inform, like you're seeing today, changes in the system.

[06:12:13] We'll put out our state plan, we'll get more public comment, and then we'll model. We'll model before, like we're doing modeling even now with these to sort of see what it looks like. What federal law requires is that you, and the term in federal law is you annually meaningfully differentiate. The goal of this is that you differentiate your schools.

[06:12:29] required that you can't have all schools be distinguished i mean and that's that's the reality of the law and so you have to every year meaningfully differentiate and show data that these indicators are doing that that they're providing data to show how schools uh can be differentiated between one from another and so we'll provide data with this based on what we're talking about so the leadership course we would look at some of our codes we look at some of the course we have right now how many students

would that use with the students you took as that last year how many more students would get those points if we had from you a list of okay these are the industry recognized credentials we want for a 0.5 what does that do to the data absolutely we can model all that so you could see if we do this what is the consequence and then as we've said

[06:13:09] behaviors change based on that I do know I have some divisions very much begging to bring our science at the middle school level into the accountability system they use this we have divisions doing world history at the middle school level and world geography and so this gives that flexibility and so we would look to see that where it provides more students opportunities and just to see what is it, the result.

[06:13:34] And so the next slide shows you the proposal with 27-28 weights. That's school year 27-28. That's when history would be brought into the accountability system. Advanced coursework, again, there is highlighted 10 points. Really, the only change is bringing more assessments in if students were ready.

[06:13:50] There's no penalty if you do not offer earth science or world geography or world history. Those are just options. Again, now you've got more options because you also have the algebra there, geometry, any EOC assessment there would be our current proposal. We'll continue to get feedback.

[06:14:06] And as we get here to slide 67, I mentioned this at the beginning, we're going to continue to engage with stakeholders. We'll have listening sessions. We set up listening sessions based on the topic. So we've been engaging with groups around the recently arrived things that were going to be in effect for this year. We've been spending time around those topics.

[06:14:22] I think you understand why. their growth meeting with the elementary principals growth we need to decide for this year so that's been getting you know more attention more energy but we're certainly going to engage with other stakeholders especially around the history conversation in light of especially 1957 House Bill 1957 again as you see there number two we are opening up a plan to look at all the titles and make sure everything is updated and so that you know you can review those and make sure everything aligns and then you see we'll announce both the finalized plan by final I mean ready for public comment and then we'll announce that through the education update in the website and we'll announce any sort of

[06:15:00] listening sessions and feedback and we'll be back to the board January 8th and share our next steps any questions here before we wrap up this presentation miss McPherson I'm just briefly looking at the weight and notice that you assign the 10% to the advanced coursework but as you go through and you're beginning to get the data I'd be interested in knowing what that does to what our initial goal was which was the mastery in reading and math because we lowered the weight scores in order to accommodate advanced

[06:15:38] coursework so I don't want us to get far from proficiency and accountability again by now putting 10 on the advanced coursework and having to lower mastery in in reading and math I love the feedback and so we're gonna put this out for public comment thank you for your comment because I think absolutely you know advanced coursework could be five percent and you put five percent back into reading or mathematics absolutely um one of the comments I shared with the elementary principals on Monday is we've had good conversation I'm we're gonna have a survey form because we really want to collect good data on this is chronic absenteeism you know initially we talked about

[06:16:16] making it five points at elementary and five points at middle school then we heard from a number of groups and said, "No, we're working so hard on chronic absenteeism and we're doing really well. It deserves 10 points." So I had some other emails this week that said, "No, we think five." So it's going to be interesting to see the data and kind of look at it collectively and which groups want. But yeah, the weights are important. They all add up. But obviously, if you pull weight from something, it goes, you know, somewhere else. And so that's a conversation to have around the integrated reading writing. Should the five points come from reading or should it come from chronic absenteeism? And so this is what we'll need to have the conversation from you and the public around where they should be superintendent Gellickson mr. Jennings can you remind

[06:16:54] those folks who are tuning in this month but weren't in the prior why it's 7.5 percent for the civics thank you yeah so if we started elementary breaking down the numbers so five percent there was used being taken from mathematics for the history assessment science was maintained at ten percent the reason why it's two years of content fourth and fifth grade we go to middle school you'll see that civics again civics is part of our uh we talk about profile of a graduate we talk about our five c's you know civics is one of the five c's and so the importance of that especially in

[06:17:31] our american democracy was to weight it more than five percent and so it's a 7.5 there and then you see at high school um biology the five points were taken from biology and given to virginia u.s history and again both the thought being that both courses are one time of one course and so they were given the five and so that that's the change you see for the high school calculation Dr. Northern one quick question and one comment if a school does not meet the English learner progress minimum in is that just lower their denominator that 10 doesn't get attributed to

[06:18:11] some other category correct so currently uh I want to be clear I know if you were listening Currently, what we do is for 24-25, the weight was given to growth because we were looking at growth. So five points were given to reading growth, five points for math growth. We are talking, and this is more of a business rule, but it's a very important business rule.

[06:18:30] We were talking about reallocating the 10% across all the indicators. But to be clear, the schools are all measured based on 100 points. So we don't deduct the 10 and just say it's not used. So it's got to go somewhere then. Right. and so if you high school we do reallocate it across the board so we're trying to have business rules that are consistent so it's easier people to understand okay thank you my other quick comment is I've been trying to wrap my head around these the difference between a progress value table and a value-added measure it's not easy I think my rudimentary understanding and maybe you

[06:19:09] can give us more information later is that the progress value tables don't control for prior performance or student characteristics which makes me a little nervous but I also know that the reason that you want that is when you're trying to isolate a teachers value added on that student and that's not what we're trying to do here so maybe it doesn't matter but I also wonder that if we're showing a broad trend or an overall pattern relative to these progress value tables and we're not controlling for these things that value added controls for like what are the trade trade-offs in terms of getting a real growth measure because when people think of growth they

[06:19:49] think of one child and you grew this much from the beginning to the end that's not what this is measuring right we're not looking at a single child from beginning to end so anyway i think i could just and maybe the public could too imagine maybe you've already had these questions but the fundamental

differences between moving to a progress value add versus a value added model and just how should we talk about that and defend it relative to?

[06:20:12] Great questions, and we can share back during the beginning of ESSA when the states were selecting their growth calculation. Virginia did invest in some pilot studies actually through legislation, and they investigated value added and student growth percentiles, and they investigated progress value tables.

[06:20:30] And based on that study and based on stakeholder feedback, progress tables were selected, and I'll share with you the report. It's now a little dated. It was back 2017. When meeting with our technical advisory council and talking it through, and we did use value-added for one year, as you know, from SAS, the VVOS model, when we returned and started having these conversations again, pretty much every stakeholder said, please return back to the clarity of progress tables.

[06:20:55] It is the individual child. They like that they can plan with that, know the targets, and know from year to year what to expect. But as you shared with the value added, you know, the intention of that, you think about the legislation race to the top. You're looking at school, classroom, you know, where is growth happening with these factors embedded?

[06:21:13] Whereas the progress tables are just individually, this is the child, how they scored in the prior year. You know, we're expecting that year growth using the. And we do call these progress tables. You look at the literature. I know people say with the vertical scale, technically they're not. But for our purposes, they do.

[06:21:29] I mean, the part that concerns me is not, I mean, the whole reason to have growth, right, is to control for prior performance or student background. That's the whole purpose. So the extent that, I mean, I guess I'm just trying to figure out why don't we need to do that now, you know, relative to looking at more overall trends.

[06:21:47] And I just want to be able to explain that. I mean, I have friends who are principals, you know what I mean? Like, you know, I mean, that was the reason that I personally argued for growth is because we want to be able to control for those factors and say, like, We have to hold this, you know, stable so that we aren't penalizing schools that are serving, you know, at-risk populations and so on and so forth.

[06:22:08] So if we're losing those controls, we just want to understand, you know, why they're no longer needed and how the progress value tables are adding some value and are still getting at the essence of what we want. Yeah, excellent. Love the conversation. I would say to you that, you know, using the individual child for this, you are looking to see where they were the prior year, the expectation of growth.

[06:22:27] the other piece too with this is as we talked about i think last time is that the the students finish the assessment they get a scaled score and then we have these six additional items that does for this assessment now we can go below grade level and so we are getting some more data from this assessment to see how the students are doing whether it's below grade level on grade level or above grade level and so that calculation that's what's used in the vertical scale to help us really get a better tune of where that individual student is But it's not factoring for some of the other factors you're talking about as far as an expected score.

[06:23:00] It's just what did you test before, and then, you know, where are you now to see if there's progress made. And it's not growth to proficiency, right, because that's what we're trying to get around.

Like, we want to be able to not have a ceiling on growth. So it makes me wonder, when you say the broad trends and overall patterns, whether we are actually just looking at whether they grow to the scale of proficiency.

[06:23:25] Absolutely. above it you know absolutely so the last couple slides there you'll see the progress tables you'll see the vertical starting at 900 range one going to 2000 and so for students who are kind of to the point there about if the students are in range eight you know they've maxed out if they continued at that range we're giving them a 1.25 but this vertical scale going from third to eighth grade you know the expectation that every year you're moving up a range and provides some of that

[06:23:54] variability in the range. Thank you. It does. Thank you so much. We'll be back. Sorry, I wasn't using my

[06:24:27] mic. We have completed our agenda and we'll be going into closed session. Dr. Northern, would you read our motion to go into closed session so that we can hear from board counsel? We convened today, oh no, I move that the Virginia Board of Education convene in a closed meeting for the following purposes. Consultation with legal counsel employed by or retained by a public body regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel pursuant to Section 2.23711, Section A-8 of the Code of Virginia, and that legal counsel to Virginia Board of

[06:25:05] Education and Staff, whose presence will aid in the Board's consideration of this matter, participate in the closed meeting. Okay. Is there a second? Second. Dr. Ackerman? Aye. Mr. Green?

[06:25:21] Aye. Dr. Northern? Aye. Ms. McPherson? Aye. Ms. Kilgore? Aye. Mr. Monk? Aye. And chair votes aye. We are now in closed session. Thank you.

[06:46:36] From our closed session, and Dr. Northern, would you read our certification to return

[06:51:59] to open session? We convene today in a closed meeting pursuant to a recorded vote on the motion above and in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act. Section 2.23712 of the Code of Virginia requires that the board certify that to the best of each member's knowledge.

[06:52:15] One, only public business matters lawfully exempt from open meeting requirements under the chapter, and two, only such public business matters as were identified in the motion by which the closed meeting was convened were heard, discussed, or considered. Any member who believes there was a departure from these requirements shall so state prior to the vote, indicating the substance of the departure that, in his or her judgment, has taken place.

[06:52:38] The statement of the departure will be recorded in the minutes. Dr. Ackerman? Aye. Mr. Green? Aye. Dr. Northern? Aye. Ms. McPherson? Aye. Ms. Kilgore? Aye. Mr. Monk? Aye. And chair votes aye. Okay. We are getting to the conclusion of our meeting here, and I'd like to recognize Mr. Green.

[06:53:00] Yep. I'll be super quick. I think it's only fitting that two weeks from today is a very special day. So I just want to wish everybody happy holidays. So to you, Madam Chairwoman, my colleagues here on this board, State Superintendent Gullickson, DOE staff, Miss Love, happy holidays.

[06:53:21] So that's all I wanted to say. You as well. Totally anticlimactic. I told you. superintendent gullickson okay well here's my 20 updates uh thank you president creasy and i have just a handful of updates because a lot of work is underway at the department and so i first want to give a huge shout out to

our early childhood team on Monday December 1st they successfully launched our new modernized attendance tracking system and this is just dynamite within the first

[06:54:01] week 94 of child care providers were already leveraging on this new system nicknamed pass and about 31,000 logs a day and what's really exciting is there's different modalities depending on what works well for you recording attendance from tablets and iPads to smartphones and websites so the team is working to make sure all providers and families and partners are involved but this is just one more great nod they've been such contributors towards instilling the importance that attendance matters with our earliest

[06:54:39] learners that now is carrying into our kinder classes so wanted to recognize that team also very fun since we hit the VQB 5 portal launch in mid-October remember last year we had 100,000 views total across an entire year since October to now we've already had over 56,000 engagements from families and constituencies in just two months and so it's really being used by community members they're so grateful for safety indicators quality indicators options close to work close to home and so it's doing what we had aspired to

[06:55:18] successfully provide for both employers and families on the K-12 side those of you that did not tune in yesterday you definitely want to check out the work session we covered a deep dive on the school performance and support framework cannot say enough high remarks to our incredible team across multiple branches and teams who have just put in so much work to make sure that parents and stakeholders and educators could really trust all of those great results we have heard lots of positive messages on the regional snapshots so for those of you

[06:55:58] they're involved in your go ready regions in your ready regions your economic development chapters your local chambers we hope that you find those regional snapshots I'm really a useful tool thank you to the communications team for really helping take all of this excellence that's underway in our communities across the Commonwealth and putting them in a digestible usable way already hearing folks digging in and starting to make contact to principals in other schools because of those so less than 36 hours in and we're already

[06:56:37] hearing great testimony on the use. I would be remiss if I did not make sure that the board was fully aware. We had a very special guest here in the Commonwealth last week, U.S. Secretary Linda McMahon of the Department of Education and a former VDOE alumna, Assistant Secretary for the Office for Civil Rights and Acting Assistant Secretary for the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, Kim Ritchie, came to Virginia and we got the opportunity to showcase an incredible elementary school Winding

[06:57:11] Creek Elementary in Stafford County Public Schools for celebrating 50 years of IDEA being signed into law and that particular elementary school has just had huge gains not only across the board with their students from reading and science and history but especially with their students with disabilities proficiency percentages just in three years have gone from 56 percent success rates to 78 percent and growing they are a bright spot in our community and we were so proud that Virginia could be in that spotlight we have really come a long way from under federal monitoring to

[06:57:51] being federally recognized and a standout just this last week some of our team members were at a national convening and once again the Virginia Department of Education and the Commonwealth of Virginia were showcased as an exemplar and called on to support other states including Massachusetts

Ohio and others in their monitoring progresses so wanted to give a nod there in the spirit of readiness we also love when we get bragging rights that our students are outperforming nationally compared to their peers and so we are grateful for our partnership with the college

[06:58:29] board that our high school graduates have outperformed peers nationwide on the sat in 2025 and so we've got lots of great data we're going to share with superintendents but in comparison the average pass rate was around 39 nationally in reading writing and math virginia graduating seniors hit 52 percent meeting and exceeding and we've got some great stats on how many points we were higher than their peers so these higher expectations that the board has really focused on

[06:59:04] the more rigorous academic standards are working and so we wanted to make sure we gave that plug once more to those tuning in who missed our work session yesterday we are so thrilled with our new more active partnership with chev executive director scott fleming came about their move towards the direct admissions portal and on behalf of the board we were so excited about what this means for simplicity and ease and eliminating access barriers for students and families and so you will definitely be hearing more about this those tuning in if you're curious we can definitely get

[06:59:41] you connected in and then lastly we were able to put out a fantastic press release yesterday about the momentum that we are making here in the commonwealth not only with decreasing teacher vacancies but also increasing teacher salaries and so in case you missed it it'll be in our uh our newsletter this week about really being able to strengthen our teacher workforce you see all the bullets of the new pathways endorsement opportunities grow

[07:00:18] your own opportunities and in just three years our teacher vacancies have declined by 35.9 percent and so huge kudos to the localities who have really taken advantage of the larger toolbox for working with their hr teams and figuring out high caliber candidates to make sure that they were utilizing those pathways to get incredible aspiring educators into our classrooms and so in in case you missed it you'll definitely want to check that out most notably that I'm proud of we did not have universal teacher licensure until this

[07:00:55] administration we have already had 4535 universal teacher licenses granted to date we expect more great teachers are coming to Virginia to teach so just wanted to give that plug lots of great stats so you'll hear more as the board but we were really proud and wanted to make sure you all knew about the incredible momentum and what that means then for our students and families. So Madam President I'll

[07:01:23] pass back to you. Yes I will also share my well first I'll share my thanks for all of you but also just to say that I wish you all a wonderful holiday season, Merry Christmas and certainly a happy new year. And so with that, I would entertain a motion to adjourn. So moved. Second. And we are adjourned.

