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Virginia Board of Education, Business Meeting, Thursday, January 8, 2026

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- Official meeting video (VDOE, YouTube): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-fEhde_i7hE
- 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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[00:11:16] well just as customary for this board we'll begin the meeting with a moment of

[00:11:26] silence followed by the Pledge of Allegiance just for the benefit of those

[00:12:05] in attendance my name is Bill Hanson I'm the vice president of the board and I'll be opening our session today I'll note that I've approved the remote participation of Mache Ashton and Debbie Kilgore under board bylaws in section 2.2-3708.3B3 of the Code of Virginia, because their principal residence is more than 60 miles from the median location.

[00:12:38] I think some in the audience and across the Commonwealth have heard that Grace Creasy has resigned her seat on the Board of Education. We're just extremely grateful for Ms. Creasy's leadership as President of the Board over the last two plus years as well as for almost four years on the board. Virginia is better and Virginia's children are better because of Grace's commitment and her vision for what's possible and I personally wish her the best and as I said at the end of our last meeting just on an important vote that we had

[00:13:16] I was on the same term with Grace and we've been at this since July 1 of almost four years ago And I just really appreciate her leadership on the board and her commitment to this board and to support of the department and all of the folks that she's had a wonderful stewardship over.

[00:13:43] And before I proceed with Governor Yunkin's appointment to her seat, I would like to pause in case any other board members or the superintendent would like to make any comments about Grace's tenure and her leadership and contributions. All right, well, thank you.

[00:14:05] Okay, great. Thank you, Vice President Hansen. We, on behalf of the department, are just so grateful for Ms. Creasy's leadership. She has been a catalyst for our public schools around high expectations for students, From our earliest learners in our early childhood care and education system, to our virtual learners and mops, to our traditional models and innovative models that are underway.

[00:14:43] From my first week in Virginia, President Creasy was a stalwart for optimism around what's possible and that we have a lot to do for kids and educators in a short period of time.

[00:14:58] And I have been very grateful for her continuous support, thought partnership, and constructive feedback since taking the helm at the department on behalf of our staff. We are so grateful for all that she did over the last four years to support, lift up, and elevate all of the incredible team members and work underway at the agency.

[00:15:23] and so we are very thankful for all of her time and also excited about her replacing here and what he will bring for kids and educators in Virginia. So with that, I would pass. Also, I think you see a new face up on the dais today, and I'm just pleased that Governor Youngkin has appointed Mr. Mark Carraway to the unexpired term for Ms. Creasy's seat, which expires on June 30th of 2026.

[00:15:58] Mr. Carraway began his career in public education in Orange County High School. During his time at Orange County High School, Mr. Carraway developed an interest in school leadership and then earned his master's degree in education leadership at George Mason University, and great to have another alumnus of George Mason.

[00:16:17] Mr. Carraway then became principal of Madison County High School in 2001. After four years of service at Madison County High School, Mr. Carraway moved on to become director of the Blue Ridge Virtual Governor's School, a position which he's held for 17 years. Mr. Carraway is currently the president of the Scuffletown Consulting LLC.

[00:16:38] He is involved in work at the University of Virginia, teaches leadership development at the Federal Executive Institute and the University of Mary, Washington. And this is Mr. Carraway, on behalf of the board and the state superintendent, welcome, and just would invite you to say a few words.

[00:16:57] Thanks very much, and I'm honored to be here, honored to work on behalf of the students and the great educators of Virginia, and looking forward to working with the board to see what we can do next. Thank you. Thank you, and welcome. I'd like to recognize Superintendent Gullickson.

[00:17:14] Thank you. With Mrs. Creasy's departure, the board has some business to attend to at the beginning of this meeting, and i have a few clarifying remarks on the board's procedures per the current bylaws article 2 section 5 of the board's bylaws state that if a vacancy occurs prior to the conclusion of the regular term of office of an officer the election to fill that vacancy may take place at the current board meeting but no later than the next regular board meeting further the bylaws states that any officer elected to fill a vacant office should hold office for the remainder of the original

[00:17:52] term of office since mrs. Creasy was re-elected president in June of 2025 to a term ending on June 30th 2027 the board will now elect a president at this regularly scheduled meeting to fill the

remainder of her term of office set to end on June 30th 2027 mr. Hanson I will now turn the meeting back to you for the election of an officer thank you and um i just uh would like to take this opportunity to nominate mishay ashton as president of the board of education to fill the term ending june 30th

[00:18:29] 2027 and just again just grateful for mishay's leadership on the board for the last couple of years and just have found her to be an incredible leader with her school background her leadership background um the schools and also just her commitment to this board and to the students and families in the commonwealth so i would invite a second to the nomination second is there any

[00:19:03] discussion yes um in michelle's absence and not able to ask her questions about the workload um i i know we have to move forward per the bylaws but i will likely abstain in the vote i do have the utmost confident michelle to be able to do it but again in our absence and not having a conversation with her i would like to abstain in my vote okay thank you miss ackerman well um if there's no further discussion we will move to a vote um dr ackerman abstain mr green

[00:19:40] aye dr northern hi miss mcpherson aye miss kilgore mr monk aye mr carraway aye miss ashton i don't know if we lost our connection with both uh and the vice president votes aye so So the motion passes, and we'll move on to our next item of business.

[00:20:22] Ms. Shea, if you're here, I would invite you to say a few words. The audio calls. Okay. You say two minutes. She's gone. I'm not sure it's connected here.

[00:20:56] I have to just rejoin.

[00:21:26] It'd be on now. It's kind of here, so. Yes. That is. Someone's talking.

[00:21:53] I think it's on a lot. While we're waiting, I'm going to go ahead and just proceed with two administrative items. of for the approval of the of the minutes is there a motion to approve the minutes or excuse me we need to approve the agenda first so is there a motion to approve the agenda so moved is there a second second dr ackerman aye mr green aye dr northern aye miss mcpherson

[00:22:31] aye mrs kilgore ah mr monk hi mr carraway hi mrs ashton and and i vote i as well so the agenda is approved okay so i understand that mrs kilgore and mrs ashton are back online and can hear us and i faintly heard mrs kilgore and ashton's votes um just again not knowing what

[00:23:10] you heard we did have a motion and a second to uh elect uh mishay ashton as president of the board of education and uh i was not able to hear both of your votes so if we could uh uh miss kilgore yes ah thank you and mrs ashton okay if it's appropriate for me to vote for myself but if my

[00:23:41] fellow board members voted for me and then i i'll vote for myself okay thank you and um mrs ashton i just wanted to turn it over to you for a a moment here and for any remarks that you would like to make thank you mr hansen um board members i'm sorry i'm not any person with you um but i First, we'd also want to thank President Creasy for her leadership during my time on the board.

[00:24:15] I echo everything Superintendent Stokes and shared. Grace led with courage, with clarity, and with our children at front and center. And I am incredibly honored to serve in this role.

[00:24:32] I look forward to working with the board members to ensure that every student in Virginia really grows and reaches their full potential and with that i'll turn it back over to you mr hansen thank you thank you adam president it's nice to call you that um well let's uh turn to the approval of the minutes um i

hope everybody's had a chance to read them is there a motion to approve them so moved second dr ackerman aye mr green aye dr northern aye

[00:25:12] Mrs. McPherson. Aye. Mrs. Kilgore. Aye. Mr. Monk. Aye. Mr. Carraway. Aye. Mrs. Ashton, and I vote aye as well, so they're approved.

[00:25:27] Well, the next topic on our agenda is my favorite part of the agenda today, and that's the board appreciates being able to feature the wonderful arts programs across the Commonwealth by having students perform at our meetings.

[00:25:44] I'd like to now ask Mr. Carraway to provide us with an introduction of our guests. Thank you, Mr. Hanson. This is a great first task as a board member. The New Kent High School Theater is under the direction of Linda Galland. The group was crowned first runner-up at the Division III High School League State One-Act Theater Competition in December, with cast members Sophia Ward and Leah Maltese receiving Best Performance Awards for their powerful portrayals.

[00:26:12] The three cast members of the award-winning performance, Addie Hofstede, Leah Maltese, and Sophie Ward, showcasing their musical theater talents today performing selections from previous school productions seniors addy and sophie and junior lear are all honor students with multiple awards and activities linda galant serves on the board of directors for the virginia theater association as the immediate past president and was selected by the organization as a certified master teacher in 2020. also in attendance is new kent high school principal allison strickland and superintendent Dr. Brian Nichols. New Kent County Public Schools proudly offers both curricular and

[00:26:48] extracurricular theater programming to promote excellence in education in our schools.

[00:40:01] We'll now turn the time over to Mr. Green to recognize the inspiring school employees as part of our agenda. Thank you Mr. President. Today I'm pleased to introduce two outstanding school division employees who are recognized for their exemplary service to their schools and communities. Ms. Laurie Barber of Bedford County Public Schools and Ms. Lisa Delp of Gallic City Public Schools are Virginia recipients of the Recognizing Inspiring School Employees Award,

[00:40:40] which honors the commitment and excellence of classified school employees. I would like to share a little about each of them. Our first honoree, Ms. Lori Barber of Stanton River Middle School, demonstrates exceptional dedication, compassion, and an unwavering commitment to students. As the in-school suspension coordinator, she transforms disciplinary moments into meaningful opportunities for growth and accountability. She begins each day by greeting students

[00:41:14] with encouragement. She arrives early, she stays late, and she continues supporting students long after they leave her care. Her work has driven student behavior, relationships, and the overall school climate, creating an environment grounded in respect, reflection, and hope. Thank you, Ms. Barber. Our second honoree, Nurse Lisa Delp, exemplifies excellence through her clinical expertise, her professionalism, and her compassion. Her impact extends well beyond the clinic as she

[00:41:52] remains a visible and active presence at athletic events, extracurricular activities, and throughout the school day. She led her school efforts to achieve the region's first Project Adam destination for cardiac emergency readiness and spearheaded the creation of a school-based health clinic, expanding access to care for students, staff, families, and the broader community.

[00:42:21] Ms. Depp's knowledge and compassion makes her an indispensable member of the school team, supporting both student wellness and academic success. Thank you, Nurse Depp. Whereas this award recognizes Laurie Barber and Lisa Depp as exceptional professionals whose commitment, skills, and talents inspire excellence and empower staff and students to meet future challenges with confidence and success.

[00:42:54] And now, therefore, be it resolved that the members of the Board of Education extend their sincere congratulations on your recognition as the 2026 Virginia Rise Award winners and express our heartfelt appreciation for devotion to service.

[00:43:11] I would like to extend a sincere appreciation to their school leadership and to their families who have joined them today, whose encouragement and support make their extraordinary service possible. Please join the Board of Education for a photo. Congratulations.

[00:44:13] A proclamation on the Blue Ribbon Schools.

[00:46:05] Whereas, since 1982, the National Blue Ribbon Program annually honored America's most successful public and non-public elementary middle high schools based on their overall academic excellence or their progress in closing achievement gaps around student groups and whereas the National Blue Ribbon Schools program sets a standard of excellence for all schools striving at the highest level of academic achievement and whereas Virginia is invited to select up to seven schools to be nominated for the award in the performance awarded categories of Exemplary High Performing and an Exemplary Achievement Gap Closing and whereas to be eligible for the nomination

[00:46:43] as an exemplary high-performing school a school must achieve top 15% in the Commonwealth for reading and math combined top 40% for reading and math combined for historically underserved student groups or the top 15% in high school graduation rate and whereas to be eligible for nomination as an exemplary achievement gap closing school a school must achieve top 15% in the Commonwealth for reading and math combined improvement for one or more historically underserved student groups top 40% for reading and math combined for each historically underserved student group top 40% for graduation for

[00:47:21] each historically underserved student group or school improvement that equals or exceeds the whole state improvement rate whereas consistent with the shift toward returning education to the states the government the federal government discontinued the National Blue Ribbon School programs in August 2025 whereas to maintain this long-standing tradition of acknowledging educational excellence Virginia joins other states and continuing to recognize exemplary schools including the 2025 National Blue Ribbon Schools program nominees now

[00:47:57] therefore be it resolved that the Board of Education that accomplishes of the following schools for the 2025 National Blue Ribbon Schools program and their prospective categories for meeting the aforementioned criteria our exemplary high-performing schools yes thank you Tiara is gonna come up and help but with this part of it when we call you come up and maybe stay up is that the how would you like to do that yes so we have some of our Blue Ribbon nominees in the audience today and so we would like to call them up to take a picture with the

[00:48:33] board and to recognize their accomplishments and so we have Gloucester County we also have and we'll hand your year certificate and then we'll right here for the for the picture York County Public

Schools we have recognized

[00:49:06] Henrico County Public School and Lunenburg County Public Schools and we have the principals we have directors all representing their schools and so we would love if the board could come up and take a picture with these wonderful blue ribbon nominees and let's all give them an applause while the board is gathering I'd also like to read off those who are unable to attend we have exemplary high-performing schools of Tuckahoe Elementary School Henrico who

[00:49:41] is here Central High School Wise County Seaford Elementary School York County an exemplary achievement gap closing we have Bottetot Elementary School Gloucester County Francis W. Jones Magnet School Hampton City Central High School Lunenburg County JW Carver Elementary Salem City adopted in Richmond Virginia on the 8th of January in the year to 2026 we recognize all of you thank you and we

[00:50:08] have Hampton City here as well thank you well it's just a wonderful time to

[00:56:14] recognize our students and our employees and our schools and also the schools themselves so just a great reminder of what we're here for so that's great we will now turn to public comment as stated in the board's bylaws it's a pleasure for the board to accept public comment in all matters related to public education in Virginia before we begin our public comment today I want to share a few comments about the manner in which public comment will be conducted I will ask that you model professionalism dignity and respect for others as you share your thoughts today as adults it is important that we model respectful civil public discourse for our students and the children who are either in

[00:56:54] attendance today or viewing this stream now or in the future when you begin please provide your name role or affiliation of where you live in Virginia all remarks must be directed to the chair not to any other individual speakers will have three minutes to share their remarks you'll notice that a timer on the screens will begin with three minutes in green one minute the screen will turn to yellow and the screen will turn red when time is up at that point, please close your remarks promptly. Speakers may provide copies of their comments to Mr. Joe Crook, the department's regulatory and board coordinator. Joe, will you raise your hand? Good place to be. All written

[00:57:34] 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. We will actually move in order of those who have signed up publicly and the first three that we have are Scott Brabrand

[00:58:00] and Neely Minton and George Bishop. Good morning. State Superintendent Gullickson and members of the Virginia Board of Education, good morning and happy new year. My name is Scott Brabrand. I'm executive director for the Virginia Association of School Superintendents and I live in Lynchburg, Virginia. I want to thank the state superintendent and all members of the Board of Education for their hard work and efforts this past year around developing the state performance and support framework we look forward to continuing to implement this framework in the coming months

[00:58:38] and into next school year in addition and thank yous i do want to thank president creasy for all of her leadership these past few years she was a great partner she had created time for a dialogue and mutual understanding and i deeply deeply appreciate it and miss ashton i hope you can hear me virtually i look forward to working with you and vast does too in the months ahead for your tenure as a president of

the board we also wanted you to know that we are reviewing and assessing the recently released jlrk report we actually had our superintendents jlrk presented to our

[00:59:17] superintendents and chief financial officers at our winter conference so we are reviewing and assessing that study and its recommendations and we hope that you all will look at that framework as well and do your own review and assessment we want to thank you too for your hard work around using fy25 scap funds to continue to support school construction projects in the commonwealth of virginia that is such a valuable program and we're continuing to work with our superintendents to make sure they take full advantage of those funds we also appreciate the report you're looking at today on teacher licensure and we want to continue to emphasize the importance of flexibility

[00:59:57] in teacher licensure options so that we can ensure school districts can have a high quality teacher in every classroom finally we appreciate the first review of the amendment to virginia's consolidated plan giving educational stakeholders the time to review these recommendations before your march board meeting and i understand maybe that might even be till april an extra month is greatly appreciated and we will share feedback on all of that as appropriate in the months ahead so thank you for all you do happy new year and i hope you have a great morning today

[01:00:34] thank you scott good morning superintendent gullickson and members of the board i am neely minton president-elect of the virginia social studies leaders consortium i support accountability hb 1957 directs the board to build guardrails around local alternative assessments to ensure quality consistency and rigor building those guardrails is how we can ensure accountability without returning to forced SOL testing this ESSA amendment

[01:01:12] moves in the opposite direction despite extensive feedback urging not to impose high SOL tests in history and social science this amendment pressures divisions to give SOL tests even when the law says divisions don't have to This amendment, in plain English, goes against what's written in the law.

[01:01:33] Let me be clear. ESSA itself, the actual federal law, does not require history or social science testing. HB 1957 states that divisions are lawfully allowed to choose local alternative assessments in lieu of SOL tests not specifically required by ESSA itself.

[01:01:53] Though you may try to find a loophole by amending the state ESSA plan and claiming SOL tests are now required, the fact is that HB 1957 still stands. Inquiry-based social studies is literacy-rich. Students read complex text, write, argue, and defend.

[01:02:13] Returning to rote instruction and selected response testing will not solve the literacy crisis that we're in. It will make it worse. Many of our alternative assessments ask students to engage with authentic audiences and develop and demonstrate work readiness skills that employers want.

[01:02:33] If the board wants accountability and civic mastery, then model it. Follow the law, build the guardrails HB 1957 requires, and stop the amendment at first review. Thank you for your time. Thank you.

[01:02:51] After Mr. Bishop Bo Dickinson. Good morning, Chairman and members of the board. My name is George Bishop, and I'm the CTE Supervisor for Frederick County Public Schools.

[01:03:08] I submitted written comments to the board earlier, and I'm here supporting my teachers and my students to request that the U.S. Entrepreneurship Certification Examination remain on the VDOE Industry Recognized Credential List. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

[01:03:24] Thank you. Good morning. Welcome new board members, Superintendent Gullickson, members of the board. My name is Bo Dickinson. I serve as the Social Studies Supervisor for Rockingham County Public Schools in Harrisonburg, Virginia.

[01:03:43] I also serve as the treasurer and past president of the Virginia Social Studies Leaders Consortium, VSSLC. Last month, Social Studies leaders met with several members of the Virginia Department of Education, and in that meeting we were assured that we would be partners in developing an assessment system that supports best practice in history and social science.

[01:04:03] While we appreciated the opportunity to finally engage after four years of sustained advocacy, it was striking that we were not able to hear from or work directly with the leaders who actually oversee history and social science specifically kristanya brown andrea emerson and brandy mccracken educators in my field hold these three professionals at the videoe in the highest regard and we are eager for them to be directly involved in this process as well unfortunately what we see today is an essa amendment that is unchanged now while we do support accountability the type of

[01:04:43] assessment being proposed simply just does not work for history and social science and we know this because of more than 20 years of experience in the field our discipline history social science is inherently content heavy and that challenge is unique and it has only intensified with the unprecedented level of new content added to the 2023 standards and we do want to be a partner in implementing those standards with fidelity in courses like 11th grade virginia u.s history just Just for example, there are now more standards than there are instructional school days.

[01:05:21] When that pressure is combined with a high-stakes selected response test, instruction predictably shifts towards coverage and, unfortunately, memorization. We want history and social science to be more than just that. What is especially frustrating is that Virginia has already built something innovative that does indeed work.

[01:05:44] The locally awarded verified credit, otherwise known as the LABC option, is an assessment system that has created a functioning, performance-based model that is inquiry-based as well, and it could also serve as a meaningful accountability system outside of or in addition to ESSA.

[01:06:03] LAVC is grounded in the work of the C3 framework and the nationally recognized work of Dr. Cathy Swan, Dr. John Lee, and Dr. S.G. Grant, the three architects of the inquiry design model and social studies.

[01:06:18] engage in sustained inquiry in LABC. They develop arguments. They use evidence. They demonstrate civic reasoning over the course of a school year rather than through a single test of discrete knowledge in May. These same points were echoed in the JLARC report on school accountability referenced earlier by Mr. Braban, which recognized the value of performance assessment in social studies. We respectfully urge the board to pause the ESSA amendment or exclude social studies from it so that the commonwealth can build upon this existing and innovative research-based system

[01:06:58] that has been nationally recognized. Thank you for your time. Thank you Mr. Dickinson. Our last participant who signed up is Danielle Graham. Good morning Superintendent Gullickson and members of the board. I'm Danielle Graham, president of the Virginia Social Studies Leaders Consortium.

[01:07:19] Since the last meeting, we had the opportunity to meet with the VDOE to discuss the proposed amendments to the ESSA Consolidated Plan related to history and social science. The SSLC appreciated

this dialogue and would like to highlight a few key points. First, to be clear, we are not opposed to accountability.

[01:07:36] Accountability measures should reinforce rigorous instruction at most critical taking historical inquiry and civic reasoning, not rote memorization. In our experience, reliance on SOL tests often promotes rote memorization and constrains instructional practice, limiting meaningful historical inquiry. While we understand there is a desire to move forward using what already exists, that is not an acceptable rationale.

[01:07:58] We would not build a bridge with flawed materials simply because they are on hand. Why should we risk the futures of our students in the same way? Virginia already has an innovative assessment system in place with the LAVC performance assessments. About 50% of divisions participate, making it accessible to over 60% of students in Virginia.

[01:08:16] The LAVC system we are referring to differs significantly from what was discussed at the last board meeting, as multiple things are called this. That misconception was not addressed by the VDOE, so I want to clarify it today. The LAVC assessments we are referencing are not remedial.

[01:08:31] They are designed for all students, use common state assessments, rubrics, and anchor documents, and provide meaningful performance-based evaluation that supports inquiry-driven instruction. These systems have been successfully implemented and demonstrate performance-based assessments can be rigorous, equitable, and scalable.

[01:08:49] While the VDOE may not have the data readily available, divisions are required to maintain it and it can be requested. While we appreciate the changes made to the proposed advanced coursework indicator, concerns remain. Social studies is not linear like math or science. College courses rarely require prerequisites and our discipline is intentionally flexible to allow for multiple narratives and perspectives.

[01:09:11] This proposal reflects a fundamental misunderstanding of social studies and risks eliminating important historical content. We also remain concerned about transparency. Key details posted less than 48 hours before public comment and nothing shared prior to last meeting.

[01:09:28] Transparency is essential to ensure divisions and communities can provide meaningful input and make informed decisions for students. We remain eager to partner with the BDOE on thoughtful implementation of innovative assessment approaches. If the board ultimately decides not to move forward with history and social science SOL tests, VSSLC stands ready to collaborate to build on Virginia's nationally recognized inquiry-based assessment work and strengthen high-quality instruction for all students.

[01:09:53] Thank you for your time and for your commitment to Virginia's students. Thank you very much. We will now open it up to those who did not sign up previously but who would like to come before the board. Maybe just line up and make sure you introduce yourselves.

[01:10:10] Good morning, Superintendent Gullickson and members of the board. My name is Todd Truett, and I'm here today as a parent of two Arlington Public School students to speak in support of the ESSA plan amendment. First, I support how the ESSA plan does not amend, does not exclude current high school students from future cut score raises, which has been proposed by one of the big three lobbying groups.

[01:10:36] Notably, the same lobbying group did not oppose in public comment, immediately lowering our math and reading cut scores in 2019 and 2020 to the lowest in the country for all kids. Second, I support adding Earth Science, World Geography, and World History as optional classes to the middle school advanced coursework factor.

[01:10:55] Arlington Public Schools has had World Geography in eighth grade. For years, it has worked great. Lastly, as a parent and a lawyer, I strongly support adding Social Studies to accountability. As we know in education, what gets measured gets done. In social studies, opposition to content-based standardized exams often rests on the assumption that critical thinking skills transfer independently of knowledge, yet cognitive science consistently shows that thinking is domain-specific and driven by the content students know, making these exams one of the few reliable ways to verify whether schools have taught this essential knowledge.

[01:11:33] Inquiry social studies is not new. It's cyclical. Like whole language and contrary to cognitive science, it reflects a long-standing faith in discovering learning over knowledge-based knowledge building. It is rooted in the theories of Dewey 100 years ago and Rousseau 250 years ago, which approach has been repeatedly recycled over decades.

[01:11:55] Each time is new. Far from being rote learning, knowing important facts is essential to learning and citizenship, one of the five C's. Famous Virginian Edie Hirsch wrote about this four decades ago in a seminal work, Cultural Literacy, which has more recently been confirmed from a cognitive science perspective by a prominent University of Virginia psychology professor, Daniel Willingham.

[01:12:18] I have written about optional local alternative assessments for social studies and received almost universal negative feedback on them from parents and community members. I've also received multiple reports of poster projects being used in place of exams.

[01:12:35] That's why civil rights organizations strenuously advocated for ESSA's comparability requirement for assessments. These organizations argue that standardized tests are essential for centering equity versus local exams where disparities can be easily hidden.

[01:12:50] I've heard that our social studies tests in the past were not great, but I was pleased to hear about the updated tests in the BDOE presentation. Plus, Virginia is in the process of overhauling its exams even further. Knowing historical facts is essential to being a citizen of this country and is backed by cognitive science.

[01:13:09] The state should hold schools accountable for it. Thank you. Anybody else? Well, thank you for all of those who have come before the board and taken time to come here today. We will now move on to the business section of our agenda.

[01:13:30] And the first item is our consent agenda and final review to certify a list of qualified persons for the Office of Division Superintendents of Schools. Is there a motion to waive the first review and approve this item?

[01:13:50] So moved. Second. Thank you. Any discussion? Dr. Ackerman? Aye. Mr. Green? Aye. Dr. Northern? Aye. Mrs. McPherson? Aye. mrs kilgore mr monk hi mr carraway hi mrs ashton and the chair votes aye we will now turn to the presentations and first up um presenter of item b will be superintendent gulickson followed by

[01:14:26] the executive leadership team members from the department on the department's organization

[01:14:31] structure update all right well i will get started and then chief calmly will be here momentarily

[01:15:37] um well thank you uh we've been continuously updating the board on the transformation at the department and so i'm going to start with a few opening remarks and then you'll hear directly from the chiefs or deputies involved on their pillar of work so um what we've really grounded the new organizational structure in is around videoe really being organized as an agency to deliver outcomes for kids and one of the things that you will see is that we are really

[01:16:12] organized around functions and what we do for kids which is at the center i am so excited about the team that we have established at the department some long-time champions in the agency for students some new members into the agency who are laser focused on what is best for students you will see today there are some divisions and teams that are forward-facing and in the field and others that are more back office functions but we are all fully aligned

[01:16:50] and centered around how can we best deliver outcomes for kids and it's been an honor to work with the team and also to get outside perspectives including from some of the um folks you heard from earlier today in public comment and more around what is needed what's been missing roles or teams that the field really wanted to have access to given the direction and momentum that the board has made under its current strategic plan and so here um as we've shared

[01:17:24] before were some of the guiding principles around the organization and really making sure that we deliver successfully outcomes for Virginia's kids and the other constituents that we serve you are going to see that we've really broken it into four branches that are really around the four pillars of work and what we do for kids so you'll first hear from our two deputy superintendents who had the academics and innovation branch then we will hear from Chief Berta on the role

[01:18:01] of operations both internal and external operations our early learning and specialized populations branch with Chief Conway and then we will outline some of the next steps on the branch for external partnerships three of our four branches have been fully launched so this has been across the last 10 months and a few months prior to my start at the department and then we are still in conceptual and developmental fees on this last branch so you can see here but we'll zoom in here

[01:18:38] momentarily on the next slide um but the uh structure that's broken down and we're now going to go from left to right with deep dives so that you can see closely what's on the screen so we're going to start uh with uh deputy superintendent tiara booker dwyer to walk us through um the first side of our branch of academics and innovation and how this team is structured to really deliver for kids and our educators yes good morning again board members so the structure of

[01:19:16] the division of student outcomes and school quality is organized to advance research-based practices that improve student outcomes. We start with the Office of Educator Workforce and they focus on ensuring the quality of our teachers, our leaders, our paraprofessionals, and other staff that function in our school buildings and central offices. They also are responsible for conducting any investigations to ensure that educators, if they need to maintain their license or if they need to have a license revoked so they really do ensure that our education

[01:19:54] workforce is of high quality the office of instruction is grounded and focused on ensuring high quality standards and curriculum are implemented in every school they lead our standards work they are often on the front line doing professional learning developing the instructional guides and working hand in hand with our office of student outcomes and performance because they work on assessments and we know that our standards and assessments are tightly aligned and so we have a unit of student assessments and a unit of accountability so that we can

[01:20:35] that roll out of the school performance and support framework all under that unit of accountability We have our Office of School Improvement that supports providing customized technical assistance and resources directly to division leaders and school leaders.

[01:20:55] They also coordinate the cross-departmental, leveraging subject matter experts from across the agency to deliver their expertise directly in schools. And we are very excited about the Office of Excellence and Best Practices that will be scaling of identifying effective practices to highlight and scale across the Commonwealth thank you deputy superintendent okay all right deputy

[01:21:28] superintendent Dwayne McCleary outlines our next major division within the branch of academics and innovation thank you superintendent Gullickson board I'm excited to share a little bit about the division of innovations through the pathways and opportunity. We are one of the newest divisions within the organization and grateful for the prioritization of this work moving Virginia forward. Our vision is to reimagine education in education by fostering innovative learning environments and expanding student pathways and creating future ready opportunities that empower every learner to discover their passion, unlock their potential, and also to thrive in a

[01:22:07] dynamic world. Looking at our structure of our office, you will see First, the Office of Innovation, the Office of Student Pathways and Opportunity. This unit comprises a lot of our great work from our CTE unit, which looks at the high-demand credentials and showing that we're supporting the Perkins V plan and implementing that with fidelity.

[01:22:33] We're also looking at, coming soon, our unit for registered apprenticeship, high-quality workforce learning. This is really looking at how do we ensure that our students are receiving and looking at and getting exposure to opportunities so that they are ready for the workforce.

[01:22:51] We also are looking at expanding Coming Soon, focusing on the unit of military pathways. We are a military state, and so we need to also ensure that we're providing the right supports for our students and also ensuring that they're entering and ready to go into the enlistment opportunities.

[01:23:09] We also have the unit of federal and state tax credit programs. This supports for some tax credits that are heavily popular across the state. And we're ensuring that we're producing this in a fidelity, but also in a very transparent manner for state and federal tax credits.

[01:23:29] And we have our new revised 3E readiness coordinators. This will actually help support us to bring 3E readiness alive for our districts. So these are individuals, four individuals, that we were supporting divisions across the state of Virginia to really bring that to life.

[01:23:47] Next is our Office of Innovation. Within this office, you will be able to see that this office is comprised of innovation, which is around virtual learning. It's also around computer science. And also when you think about AI, we were looking at how do we utilize AI in a meaningful way not only for students but for teachers to kind of remove those mundane tasks so that they can focus more on students.

[01:24:14] Within that unit, you have the unit of digital learning, which I shared, so Virtual Virginia is there, computer science and AI component work is there, and then we have the computer science unit. Next is our office of advanced learning, where our gifted education, governor's school work happens, and also our post-secondary access and dual enrollment.

[01:24:34] We're really focusing on dual enrollment this year and looking at how do we leverage dual enrollment, ensuring parents understand that work, but also how do we prepare our students? We should not wait until ninth grade. We should need to be looking more at middle school. How do we ensure that they've taken full access? And last but not least, we're super excited about the new office of new learning models and school redesign.

[01:24:56] This office will focus on transforming public education through innovative student-centered approaches, but also expanding opportunities to increase flexibility and delivering measurable results for our students. So this office will definitely champion looking at seat time flexibility, but also looking at small learning communities that you'll be hearing about later and also our lab schools charter schools and other flexible and innovative models to come and helping schools really look at how do we redesign and utilizing the school construction grant in a meaningful way that's

[01:25:31] our office thank you great thank you chief burda will now walk you through the branch of operations good morning president ashton vice president hansen members of the board and superintendent Gullickson, Christina Berta, Chief Operations Officer for the department, and proud of the work that this team that I'm about to highlight for you does on a daily basis.

[01:25:53] I think one of the important pieces that you will see in this revised org structure is the Division of Human Resources moving underneath the branch of operations. This was a critical move that we made due to the importance of really needing to connect and make sure that our human capital and finances align, and there was definitely a disconnect before this structure change was made.

[01:26:13] and so proud of the work that our division of hr and budget and finance are doing to ensure that we are in alignment with mel as well as in alignment with budget for the agency our division of human resources is really trying to focus on how we can enhance our own employee relations making sure that we recruit top talent and this division certainly is an internal division to us and really doesn't function outside with other school divisions unlike many of the other divisions that i support you will also see the division of budget and finance which is a has been under the

[01:26:50] operations branch for quite some time one of the exciting highlights for you is the office of grants administration across the agency there has been a discombobulated i don't know how to describe it function of grants administration there was never a central hub to manage all things grants and so many of our instructional and academic folks would I operate in isolation separate from budget and finance and so we've created this centralized hub and this is work in progress for certain excited that we have found and discovered a grants administrator that

[01:27:29] will begin at the end of the month to begin this great work and so the units of our title programs will be there but also you see that purple box that talks about the unit of general grants administration and this is the continued work that we will be doing to move over other grants that function inside of our program offices to be a centralized hub this is not only important for us as an agency to know what money we have available to support but also for our school divisions everybody is

currently operating in their own isolated bubbles which creates some chaos for our school divisions as there's different competing timelines so we want to create some

[01:28:07] consistency there not only for the agency but also for the field and then you see the office of finance and the office of procurement so really making sure that we are continuing to align resources and I think the important part of all of my divisions is really infusing the thoughts that what we do on a daily basis while it might be indirect is really an impact on students and so every decision that we are making we should be making for the benefit of students and that's one of the questions I ask how is this beneficial for kids and so we will continue to infuse that work it's really important even though we manage a lot of the state agency operations that we still think about our

[01:28:45] field and think about the school divisions that we serve so then moving forward I also support the division of operations and technology and security and so this is made up of three different offices one is the office of support services which supports our student transportation our facilities and safety operations both internally and externally for school divisions just helping guide that work that happens through the school construction assistance programs and the literary fund loans that you all approve the unit of school architecture is important because by code school divisions have to report projects to us so our team actually looks at that from an architecture

[01:29:23] standpoint to make sure that all of the school facilities that are being proposed built renovations align with the requirements in state code the office of school community and nutrition programs has been under operations i'm excited about the work that is happening there to really make sure that we are providing schools and students with access to meals and good quality meals providing training to our school divisions our school nutrition staff in our school divisions this leadership of this office does great job in trying to make sure that we're continuing to move the needle in school nutrition the purple box you see is the office of accreditation and this is

[01:30:01] in response to the board's work to expand accreditation to be more than just academics and really looking at how we incorporate facility and finance related school data collections into the process and so this is underway and will align with the work of the board as well to ensure that we have staff that can monitor and really take a look at the the facility and the finance-related task related to accreditation.

[01:30:30] And last but not least is the Division of Operations and Technology and Security. And so really working to ensure that this team aligns with the needs of the agency. And this is where we're going to be doing some work to do some more cross-collaboration across departments to make sure that we have the data tools to meet some of the innovative needs that we have and we've talked about.

[01:30:55] So we are continuing to work in that arena to make sure that everything is aligned. I think the biggest part of all of mine is really trying to make sure that we have the connectivity to the academics, early childhood, special ed branches so that we can serve together to make sure that the decisions we are making are not done in isolation and are done in a collaborative manner.

[01:31:14] So really excited about the work of the branch of operations. Thank you. Thank you, Chief Berta. I'm Chief Conway. Good morning, President Ashton, Vice President Hanson, Superintendent, members of the board.

[01:31:30] I am Jenna Conway, and I am the Chief of Early Learning and Specialized Populations, and very pleased to be here today talking about the broad spectrum of work that the department does. As some of

you are familiar with, the VDOE has a birth through 12th grade and beyond, in fact, mandate.

[01:31:51] So we typically think about state education agencies as K-12 entities, but there are far more little learners and adult learners that we support, and the support for those folks sits in the branch of early learning and specialized population.

[01:32:09] So led by the very capable Deputy Superintendent Samantha Hollins, we have the Division of Special Education and the Division of Specialized Populations. so you're familiar with special education but that ranges from the dispute resolution supporting families who are concerned about the experiences that their students are having the instructional services so this unit works very closely with Deputy Superintendent Booker Dwyer as we think about not only the tier one instruction that students are receiving but what are those

[01:32:47] additional interventions budget in finance there's a significant amount of federal funds involved and then ultimately program improvements so accounting for all of those federal funds and ensuring that delivering on behalf of kids Sam also oversees our specialized populations and that looks at adult education and so really that kind of lifelong trajectory of learning and how we're maximizing every federal dollar to support those learners as well as led by and that's led by Heidi and then the work of Joe and the team around behavioral health and student safety which continues to be front and center

[01:33:24] for our schools and our educators across the Commonwealth if you look on the other side of the spectrum if Heidi supports the adult learners and we go all the way down to the babies and this is where the division of early learning is I always wish I could bring actual props give you each an infant to hold a Wiggly infant to hold during this part of the presentation, but you'll see, so, and Mr.

[01:33:52] Carraway or Dr. Carraway, you're new, but in 2020, Virginia passed a law moving oversight of birth to five care and education from different state agencies all to the DOE, and so it's now under the auspices of the Board of Education, and so some states have consolidated, some states it's still fragmented. Some states create their own agency, but Virginia's approach was to think about how would we leverage the strength of education while also building out a public-private system that is inclusive of family child care and child care and Head Start and all of the programs

[01:34:28] that parents of our littlest learners select. And so you'll see kind of a similar structure within early learning that you have in the broader videoe as the unique nature of these programs educators and kind of family preferences looks slightly different from from k-12 you have the office of early learning and that covers everything from analytics and technology to learning to grants and finance quality and workforce and then preschool programs and again uh you know this supports with our work of vqb5 which is our nation-leading measurement and improvement system

[01:35:03] as well as and this uh if you think about learning we're thinking about your early learning and development standards uh the curriculum used in preschool even curriculum used with babies and toddlers and vkrp which is the virginia kindergarten readiness program which is for threes fours and kindergartners so we work very closely with doctor uh with deputy superintendent booker Dwyer for that continuum from our littlest, littlest learners through third grade with this goal of getting kids not only to kindergarten ready, but to third grade on level.

[01:35:38] We also make sure, because our little learners tend to be more vulnerable, that they are safe wherever they might be. And so led by -- and Office of Early Childhood is led by Deputy Superintendent --

sorry, Assistant Superintendent Aaron Carroll.

[01:35:54] Office of Childcare Health and Safety is led by Assistant Superintendent Jeff Williams, but his team, which is located in regional offices across the states, inspects. So they're out there today walking through child care centers, making sure that they are safe for young children and putting that information online for parents.

[01:36:13] Led by Assistant Superintendent Rebecca Ulrich is our Office of Early Childhood Access and Enrollment Policy. And you might say, "Well, why do we need that? isn't that covered over in Chief Berta's shop. Early childhood is different from K-12 in that there is not a universal funding through one source for all children. Instead, it is a combination of state and federal funds, and states are charged with making decisions about how do we allocate these dollars, who do we prioritize as being in most need, how do we set those rates, and how do we distribute those resources based on parent preference.

[01:36:49] And so we have an entire shop that's dedicated to that, works very closely with the Department of Social Services to make sure that families can access the child care subsidies, kind of think of them as kind of vouchers or scholarships for families to choose child care across the Commonwealth.

[01:37:05] And then last but not least, you know Head Start as a federal to local grant. And so the federal government contracts about 46 grantees across the state to run Head Start. Those are -- in Virginia, they might be schools, they might be local government, they might be community action agencies, 501 organizations.

[01:37:25] But each state has at their kind of lead agency an Office of Head Start Collaboration. And so Executive Director Twanda Jeffries works very closely with me, with the community action agencies, and with the Head Start grantees.

[01:37:41] Even though we don't have any direct authority over those Head Start and early Head Start programs that's still over 160 million dollars in federal dollars that come in to serve upwards of 12,000 of our most vulnerable most low-income infants toddlers and mostly preschoolers and so that kind of having that all in one shop means that we can truly serve and we think back to the superintendent's first slide we are organized to execute on behalf of families across a slightly different landscape than just your typical k-12 system thank you very much

[01:38:17] thank you chief Conway so as you can see three of these branches have fully launched I want to draw your attention to the legend and so that green in progress there are a handful of roles that interviews are underway or jobs are live purple getting a bit more input from stakeholders to get those roles or offices live like accreditation for the board's great direction and newest SOQ

[01:38:52] prescription nod last month but really being thoughtful and we're really proud of all the work they're in a stronger more coherent structure to really work students and constituents as we look at the last branch we it's our external partnerships now this one has come as a focal point especially from our board of ed members on how do we continue to make sure that we have outreach

[01:39:29] constituent services even further than what's underway right now so that we can really be partners with the field and so this is still a directional concept is still getting input both internally and externally the blue and gray offices are alive they are currently in existence and you know many of those team members and then you will see some roles that are live around press relations not just for internal messages but really making sure we're better able to tell the

[01:40:05] story of what the department and most importantly our schools and communities are doing externally and then really streamlining we've had our team on educator partnerships you've certainly seen dr. Christine Harris here and our team on parental engagement are currently live but really how can we better leverage them with our community partners and really looking at ways to make sure especially in new dynamics we have even more access local state and

[01:40:44] federal relations from boards of supervisors and mayors especially with all of our new scap and literary loans and onwards and then we also have had great momentum from the team you will hear from mr. Chapman here on item C on all of the momentous progress on regulatory review adoption direction from the board and so looking at I'm still in the exploratory stages around a

[01:41:21] new division around governance regulatory and legal affairs right now we have a one-person FOIA team she is dynamic but as you saw in the strategic plan you know public records and transparency are so critical and so really elevating that critical work that she does every day around an office of public access records and compliance really being able to pull out all of that critical work on regulatory management and being able to better

[01:41:56] navigate with our fantastic partners at the Office of the Attorney General so that Deb Love doesn't get 45 emails from 45 different teams and so this one's for you Deb and so that is still in the works but we wanted to show you based on this one's largely been informed from board member comments as well on where needs are and for all the great work that we're doing in the community so with that we will open it up for board member comments or questions and the teams

[01:42:31] available to field anything you have questions comments for the team quick question around two questions one of those being around our first let's see there the office of student pathways and opportunities and then we've got the unit of career technical education and then a coming soon unit of registered apprenticeship and high quality work based learning can someone share with me I know from an accreditation perspective we've got those high quality work based

[01:43:08] learning pieces by credential there and just want to know that will crosswalk and communication between units say that the last part I didn't hear you just really wanting to make sure I understand how the unit the CTE unit and the apprenticeship and high quality work based learning will crosswalk knowing that kind of both are contributing to that accreditation of a student yes yes so that's the collaboration of me and Deputy Superintendent Booker Dwyer I will say in order for the apprenticeship work to happen you'll hear a little bit more today about seat time flexibility because we have to first address that

[01:43:47] before we can get into their apprenticeship component so that will be a great component for districts to be able to understand how can we get this done but then also with the apprenticeship and high quality demands we're also looking at how do we ensure that the 3e readiness framework that we have i think we're revisiting that work and ensuring that that is aligned so that when students are actually taking advantage of this apprenticeship internship work-based learning that is also recognized by our cte perkins by plan so i think that's something that we we're definitely working to ensure that they're they're not in isolation there in the collaboration so that when students do take advantage of these

[01:44:25] opportunities it's reflected in there and I would like to add on Member Monk you know this is a new metric for us in the current draft of the Perkins 5 especially around youth and pre-apprenticeships this is definitely a critical component within the Virginia Works strategic plan is one of their core

moonshots and we also have heard from superintendents school business officials and principals that they want more technical support and guidance and thought partnership around the monies that are available for youth and pre-apprenticeship Virginia has historically left some of those dollars

[01:45:03] on the table and so really how can we better collaborate but as you can see and as you've picked up on the theme and also how we're structuring the new facility where the team continues to transition into at 701 East Franklin these teams are definitely not in silos and so the teams the structure this whole branch is on one floor with collaborative spaces collapsible movable walls this is not as if one team is on floor 14 and one is on 20 and so

[01:45:38] there will be great collaboration partnership and great linkages with the team and registered apprenticeship team specifically on the ground at Virginia Works to make sure that we're really driving forward in a in a connected way but also expanding the support and technical thought partnership around this part of the work given the focal point from all of the workforce agencies as well as higher ed institutions and as we get more input from the field especially from SHEV VCCS like everyone's coming out with their new plans and their new strategic goals we're also ensuring that we're looking at those and make

[01:46:17] sure we're taking those into effect and also this is new work for us so we're also looking at all right what does this look like how do we roll this out how do we support districts how do we ensure that funding is aligned I think it's a work in progress but we are definitely trying to be very strategic that we're not siloing our work that it's not just a opportunity and pathways work It's an actual Virginia Department of Ed work.

[01:46:40] Hence the coming soon. It's still a work in progress, but critical work. Yeah, I appreciate that. I know the forefront, especially in youth apprenticeships, you know, work with those registered intermediaries. There's a lot of labor-intensive lifting there, and so it's great to have a unit that will be focused on that but also connected.

[01:47:00] So I appreciate and look forward to seeing what that looks like. not really a question on the second component but just really excited about the connection of HR and the division of budget and finance so looking forward to seeing how that correlates and then of course I know I've talked at nauseam about our grants and so looking forward to that coming soon of general grants administration I think that will be really powerful for local school divisions across the Commonwealth and mr. Monk I'll also say this will be coming your way as well as the co-chair for the CTE advisory we're also going to getting a lot of input from you and miss kilgore looking forward to that thank you thank you mr mike

[01:47:40] right i wanted to um thank the staff as well for the development of this uh whole operational strategy because it's becoming clearer to the board as to how the parts are going to be integrated and at the same time do the individual work especially as it relates to grants and grants management that they've reorganized so that we don't have these gaps or you know missing information that we have to catch up with later and figure out the needs again they're very early learners when they do the inspections are they inspecting both

[01:48:16] the facility as well as say the playground areas and the safety issues that some of our youngest people face um you know and the teacher population as relates to being able to watch the very early learning absolutely so for the office of child care health and safety they execute or use for their inspection the different regulations that have been approved by this board and so they look different for example for

child care centers as compared to family child care settings They look at both inside, they look at all the spaces that children are, right?

[01:48:54] So they look at the kind of the classroom spaces, and they look at the outdoor spaces. There's also, and it's quite complicated, there's also a set of federal requirements for programs that take public dollars, some minimum health and safety expectations.

[01:49:12] So those are primarily, thanks to the work of this board in recent years, aligned with the child care licensure. But if you are a faith-based program, for example, that has chosen not to be licensed but does take public dollars, that you have sort of a similar set of baseline expectations.

[01:49:30] This body has, in the last four years, completely overhauled those Child Day Center regulations and with the goal of implementing that next year to kind of focus on using the most recent research on kind of striking that right balance on keeping kids healthy and safe but also uh minimizing regulatory burden and all of that uh uh board member mcperson is separate from bqb5 so those are the uh in-person observations of the teacher-child interaction so licensing health and

[01:50:06] safety we'll just look at are there the appropriate number of children right you would want to come into a setting and see nine babies and one educator not only is that poor educator but you know and how can you possibly change and feed and manage all those babies but it's dangerous right if there were to be a fire or some other incident but they're just looking at that kind of minimum what VQB5 is looking at is how that educator or all the educators in the classroom are interacting with the young learners so we kind of and what the VQB5 online portal does is put all that information at parents fingertips so you can go to one place for health safety and learning information about all of our programs

[01:50:45] that take public dollars yeah kudos on this I've got a question a comment my question is I noticed that the English language learners and our gifted kids are in the academics and innovation branch and our special populations are in the early learning branch together and I guess I'm just trying to figure out why are you know the advantages of having the early learning and the special needs branch together do they coordinate is there some reason to have

[01:51:22] those in the same branch and why perhaps our other special populations our ELs and our gifted are in a different branch than our special populations well this may be for all three of you so I'll start with Jenna and we'll go in order So, Dr. Northern, so this is, I'm now on year 14 of working in state education agencies, and I will say that there are lots of different ways, right, to kind of organize and title these different components, and that ultimately one can never draw like a crystal clear bright

[01:52:01] line, right? I mean, sort of even the title specialized populations could encompass a whole broad set. I would say right now, this decision was sort of driven more by kind of where folks were located, how to kind of pull together a set of disparate groups that often kind of went beyond the kind of typical scope of of k-12 and then to kind of organize upwards and partner for me to work very closely with the assistance students in early learning and then with the deputy superintendent on special education and specialized populations. It is

[01:52:35] not a forever in time and I think um as uh as you hear with with uh Deputy Superintendent McCleary he works very closely with Deputy Superintendent Booker Dwyer right there's just not bright lines across his work and I would say that uh Sam's work in particular you know is situated very much in between the work of early childhood and the work of Dr. Booker Dwyer so uh the sort of think of it it less

around we defined it a specialized population and then put things underneath and more that we sort of pull things together realize some uh strategic ways to kind of integrate and

[01:53:12] combine and call that specialized populations um but ultimately we have to work closely across the different units because there's just not these bright lines across any of of the org chart regardless of you know how bright the white might be on the background here thank you chukami and And then, Deputy McCleary, can you elaborate on our advanced and gifted learners under the Office of Advanced Learning, the value?

[01:53:37] Yeah, so we definitely collaborate across the whole division because we have to ensure that when we provide these supports for students, we're looking at how do we bring in the special education opportunities, how do we also look at receiving high-quality instruction, but also looking at innovative approaches moving forward.

[01:53:53] So there is a lot of dotted lines that you may not see here. And I will tell you, my team is lit up from multiple offices where anything that we do, we're just not doing it in silos. We're actually doing it across collaborative approaches. We have our leadership support teams.

[01:54:10] We have our functions. We, you know, walk next door to Tiara's office or I'll go find Sam. We ensure that nothing that we do comes out without the eyes of others before it. It definitely comes before the public. So that work is happening. And what we really felt like from the feedback we were getting from the field with the new auto-enrollment law around our 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th graders in math, the readiness indicator around advanced coursework for middle schools, that really having that focal point was important.

[01:54:41] we heard that a lot from our middle school and high school principals having a one-stop hub for advanced coursework as well as knowing exactly where to go on early college credit coursework dual enrollment and the pathways through made sense and then deputy superintendent Booker Dwyer do you want to address the last one yes so just to double down on what my colleagues have said we really do work across all the different divisions and so with instruction for instance instruction assessment and our special education as we're developing these assessments the the core content standards have to be addressed and then

[01:55:17] we also have to develop assessments that for our special education students and so we work seamlessly across all of our areas and you'll even see later on today a presentation around school supports that's going to highlight the special education work and um the team the work of my team so we we break down all these barriers to ensure that we are addressing the needs of all students holistically although we are assigned to different units and divisions we truly do work across the department okay um thank you for that um and i was

[01:55:55] just curious the a pre-post like is this like big time change or is this like is it nips and tucks or does this, I guess, you know, what did the pre-hierarchy structure look like? Or was there not really a strong hierarchy late before?

[01:56:17] Everybody's smiling, so. Chief Conway, since you said that you'd been here for 14 years, in the agency world, you've nominated yourself for commentary. So I think the best way to think about this, Dr. Northern, just it's constantly evolving um i know you know again having done this work for six years in

louisiana and now eight here and having worked both across the department and with the governor's office um you know and with you know very closely with all of our our partners in the general

[01:56:54] assembly i think the true north remains the same of you should organize departments of education you should organize state education agencies by the function right by the work that you're trying to achieve on behalf of students families and educators and that is a contrast from SEAs of a decade ago where it's often associated by funding source and I use the example of title one where we have title one schools and we have title one educators and in fact in Louisiana we had a title one building because guess what that building was funded by title one and it really

[01:57:31] misses the point that title one is about serving our kids and our communities that are our most low income most disadvantaged most in need of support schools educators and kids and so i use that as just a kind of example of where we've inadvertently because we're bureaucratic because we're subject to jargon kind of gone astray and thinking about how we organize the people and the resource and the processes to execute you think about a school you think about about an educator you think about a community differently if you go in saying these are the schools these are the kids who are in greatest need of support versus this is title one and so

[01:58:08] I'd say that the video we in my eight years in Virginia has been in constant flux I think parts of this reflect pretty significant change and then parts of it like the elements you know when I started in Virginia you know I didn't have any direct reports in the area of early learning and We've taken some things that are as is, and we've also sort of restructured.

[01:58:30] So, for example, when we moved over a top-notch team from the Department of Social Services, they at the time were called vendor relations, and we didn't see that as the work. We saw it really as sort of services and customer service and renamed it. Our work is colloquially known as licensure, but we really think their goal is to keep kids healthy and safe, and so we renamed it the Office of Child Care Health and Safety.

[01:58:54] Renaming alone, you know, taking Title I off the building and just changing the name won't change the culture and won't change the hearts and minds. But I think, you know, this has been an evolution rather than kind of a revolution or dramatic change. And my guess is that it will continue to change, and it should, as there are other opportunities that make themselves available federally, as there are other interests of the governors and the General Assembly, and the real kind of true north that will continue to come back to the chiefs and the deputies is, are we organized efficiently to deliver for kids from birth

[01:59:31] through adult learning experiences? And if not, how can we better organize ourselves? And I just really need to say this, right? Like, there's just no perfect way to do this, and so the collaboration and sort of -- but by organizing by function, it helps you to sort of really say, where are we the same, where are we different, and how do we work across the different branches, titles, offices, divisions, departments, lots of different terminology, but that true north remains the same.

[02:00:01] Thank you very much. Also add, and this came up at best, we are also reorganizing by needs. So districts have been echoing some needs for a long time, and so now they're kind of like, we've been asking for this.

[02:00:18] prime example, seat time flexibility. It has been a statute for a while. They did not know how to actually implement that. We have a webinar today where 180 plus divisions have signed up to do that work. So we're also listening to parents, to teachers, but most importantly, the people that we serve divisions to ensure that we're moving them faster and helping them understand how to utilize funds in a more meaningful way. So that is also a big component. So braiding all of those things together has been interesting uh but it's been great work well thank you just leave that slide

[02:00:52] up just i just want to thank you all and thank you superintendent gullickson for this and i'm just going to maybe share 30 seconds of my geek self on this i i was 15 years at the u.s department of education and um it was a cfo coo deputy secretary and this is important because you have to have the public trust of our constituents our families our parents taxpayers the schools of teachers and those that lead the schools and you know it was I remember it was about 24 years ago today we got the first ever clean

[02:01:31] audit at the US Department of Education and it was a two trillion dollar bank pretty much in essence of the time but that was important where a lot of time people wonder why you're wasting all your time on this but it just showed that you take your stewardship seriously the execution the delivery of those dollars to college students to school districts to states around the country and so I just I know we spend a good deal of time on this I know this has been a priority for you but it also is just evident with the leadership team as well

[02:02:11] I just I just really commend you for the work and the collaboration and the leadership that each of you are putting forward on this so just thank you for this we're gonna move on to the next agenda item but I'm also just gonna make a comment to the board we're on agenda item C and we have W to get to so I'm gonna suggest that we actually just plow ahead here for the next hour or so to get into our lunch period, but if people need to take a break, please excuse yourself

[02:02:47] for a few minutes, but you're not going to like me sitting in the chair seat today, but I just would like to keep us plugging and plowing ahead. So, Mr. Chapman, thank you. And this is also, likewise, a very important topic to me, and just appreciate the good work as I'll set the table for you, but thank you.

[02:03:06] Thank you. President Ashton, if she's still on, Vice President Hanson, members of the board, Superintendent I am so excited to be here to present the final results of the Executive Order 19 regulatory reduction efforts that this board has had ongoing, especially because I know that the depths of regulatory detail are at the center of this board's interests and certainly of the attentions.

[02:03:29] This is clearly the most exciting work that's done in state government. A brief summary of this presentation, you know, we're going to go through what the executive order required. I want to talk a little bit about this regulatory reduction method, and I think that'll become clear a little bit later why.

[02:03:47] We are going to present the final regulatory reduction results as long as the guidance document method and the guidance document results. Executive Order 19 was issued within six months of Governor Youngkin's inauguration as required by state law, and that order was very different from previous executive orders on the regulatory process, in large part because it began with a very forthright recognition of a number of the problems with the regulatory process in Virginia.

[02:04:18] At the time of the publication of EO19, approximately half of all regulatory actions in the state were exempt actions. Not all agencies were utilizing the Virginia Regulatory Town Hall website, which of

course made it a lot more difficult for the public to track which regulatory actions were moving through state agencies.

[02:04:38] There was no standard cost benefit analysis that was conducted on proposed regulations and this is certainly out of step with the way that regulations are promulgated at the federal level. But the biggest thing is that this process was extremely cumbersome with numerous opportunities for delay.

[02:04:56] And anyone who is, you know, claims in state government to do regulatory work and you see that they've only been in a job for a year or a year and a half, you can be guaranteed that they haven't seen anything happen in the regulatory process where large-scale regulatory actions often take three or four years to complete and span across administrations.

[02:05:15] It was a process that was very, very long, and it's something that Executive Order 19 was particularly interested in cutting back. And so one of the things that Governor Youngkin did was he created the Office of Regulatory Management within the Office of the Governor.

[02:05:31] That has been headed up by beginning Director Andrew Wheeler and most recently Director Reeve Bull, who I know he's not here today, but I have to say is one of the most delightful people you will ever meet in state government. In addition to being a scholar of sorts on regulatory processes and theory, he's just an incredible person to work with and has done a fantastic job of really creating a central spot in the governor's office where agencies across verticals within the governor's office can get clarity on how actions are moving when they affect different branches of the or different aspects of the executive branch

[02:06:09] and he has really done a lot to speed up the process with for review in coordination with the various secretaries with the agencies that alone has been a fantastic accomplishment of this In addition, Executive Order 19 did require a 25% reduction of regulatory requirements by the end of 2025, which has since come and gone.

[02:06:31] I'm sorry, by the governor's term, but largely 2025. And we'll talk a little bit about what that requirement entailed. And also a 25% reduction of guidance document word counts by the end of the administrative term. So when we talk about how did this happen, What exactly did this board do in order to achieve regulatory reduction results?

[02:06:54] Well, the first part was we had to obtain a baseline regulatory count for all of the board's regulations, and that's done in accordance with the Office of Regulatory Management's accounting procedures. A baseline regulatory count asked us to count all aspects of a regulation, every discrete line of code that required an individual to act in a particular way or it affected behavior in some way.

[02:07:23] And so the accounting procedures asked us to divide all of these and categorize them into those requirements which were mandatory upon regulants, meaning those who were the people who were being regulated by a body of regulations or that they're mandatory upon the agency. And really, what this means is that it's a state law or a federal law that's requiring the actions, and so the regulation is simply mimicking that requirement that's already in a state law or in a federal law or a federal regulation.

[02:07:51] And then we would divide those also into discretionary requirements, which are those actions where an agency is exercising a little bit more control over the specifics of what and how behavior or action is being controlled. And those also were divided between those upon an agency.

[02:08:09] A lot of times when we're doing regulations, the board exercises authority, and it's really telling the department to do certain things, as opposed to those regulatory requirements which were acting upon the regulants or those people who were involved in being regulated by the board.

[02:08:27] For the purpose of the 25% reduction, ORM was only counting the 25% of discretionary on the regulants, so it is a significantly smaller number than the total number of regulatory requirements in the chapter.

[02:08:43] But in the process of doing this and obtaining this baseline count, Joe Crook over there and myself spent weeks in a small corner of the Monroe Building going through the board's entire regulatory catalog, Thousands of lines of the administrative code and slowly documenting each and every single requirement that the board has Has made in the last 30 or 40 years That was a significant portion of our summer of 2023 and since then Connor Skelly on the team has also

[02:09:20] Contributed a lot to making sure that those numbers are accurate We then analyzed all the regulations for their potential for reduction so that we knew we could target on large clusters of discretionary requirements. We initiated periodic reviews on regulatory chapters, and there's going to be a little bit more about that on the next slide.

[02:09:39] And then there would be tons of internal consultation with subject matter experts, the Office of the Attorney General, and we would then propose actions to board leadership and bring those to the board for review. The real engine that drove the board's regulatory reduction was the periodic review cycle.

[02:09:58] The agency had never done periodic reviews before January of 2024. So this was a very different process to stand up internally. And so we would start off, my office would send out a questionnaire to whoever we found would be the subject matter expert of a particular regulatory chapter.

[02:10:18] We would ask lots of questions around what stakeholders needed input on a particular regulatory chapter, about the continuing utility of the regulations, lots of policy questions, and certainly a lot about changes since publication.

[02:10:35] We would have a lot of dialogue as a result of this, sometimes hours. And then we would go into a research and analysis phase where we would spend a lot of time reading volumes of federal estate law and policy. We would take historical detours into board minutes from the 80s, the 90s, regulatory documents that we would have to dig up, and at least on one occasion, a trip to the Library of Virginia Archives in order to dig up the documents that we needed in order to really understand what the board had done years and years and years ago.

[02:11:08] After that, we would open up a public comment on Town Hall. This was the first of numerous points of engagement for the public where they would be able to comment on the regulatory chapter and what they thought the utility of that chapter was, whether it needed changes or not.

[02:11:24] We would then move into a presentation of results to the board where there was additional opportunity for public comment. And then after that, if necessary, we were initiating periodic reviews. There would be additional analysis, additional stakeholder engagement during the regulatory process and opportunity for public comment at each stage through that.

[02:11:46] And by statute, periodic reviews also include opportunities for review by both the Office of the Attorney General and by the Governor's Office. This was not a quick process, but it was a very thorough

process that the Board engaged in.

[02:12:02] So, what were these regulatory reduction results? Well, as I mentioned, as of 2024, the Board had never done periodic reviews, but as of this point in time the board has completed 46 periodic reviews on its regulatory chapters between 2024 and 2025 that is about 85 percent of the board's regulatory chapters that were subject to a periodic review which which means that they had not been promulgated within the last four years so that excluded a couple of the early childhood chapters or if they were not currently being repealed or replaced with a new chapter so for example the standards of accreditation underwent a repeal and replace, and as did a couple of chapters within the Early Childhood Division.

[02:12:41] Eighty-five percent in two years is an unbelievable timeline. It was a lot of work that the board has done to review all of those chapters within such a short period. And you may notice that the governor had requested for a 25 percent reduction in requirements.

[02:12:58] This board, in that same time, in those two years, has repealed or streamlined 19 regulatory chapters that means 19 chapters that are no longer subject to periodic reviews they have been either ruled to be out of date and no longer required to be on the board's role or else they have been moved into a single chapter that made more sense organizationally for the regulation so instead of that just achieving a 25 reduction the board actually rolled back 32 of its chapters of regulations that is an absolutely astounding number but in addition to that um we have initiated 38 Eight separate regulatory actions in the past two years for the purposes of regulatory reduction.

[02:13:38] That does not include having overseen this board had oversaw 52 total regulatory actions during that same period. We removed numerous documents incorporated by reference that were imposing outdated or unnecessary regulatory requirements. And at the end, this board has eliminated 3,527 discretionary requirements for a 62.69% total reduction of its discretionary requirements.

[02:14:09] Now, part of the reason for making sure that we spent a lot of time on the method that was pursued and making sure we were clear about the time is that 62% I know is a fairly large number. When we first started this project, we were really wondering how we were going to get to 25%.

[02:14:28] So the fact that this agency was able to achieve a 62% I feel like deserved some explanation. The board has removed four DIBRs, four of these documents incorporated by reference, that alone accounted for about 50% of the regulatory reduction goal.

[02:14:44] And I think this is part of the importance of going through an exercise like this. For example, the board removed a reference to forms within its regulations governing school activity funds. That alone reduced 258 discretionary requirements that were not in use, as the forms had long been replaced by industry standards promulgated by the General Accounting Standards Board.

[02:15:05] So, here you have a government being involved in telling schools how they are supposed to use forms that are not in line with industry best practices. That document was repealed, reference to it was repealed, and 258 of these discretionary requirements were no longer imposed upon schools that we had no reason to think was in their best interest to continue to use.

[02:15:29] In the regulations governing adult high school programs, the board chose to remove a very restrictive reference to an external degree competencies program that was, first of all, out of date by a number of years and versions, and in the process opened up a number of different compliance pathways

for other such external degree competency programs to stand in its place or alongside the program that had been in the regulations specifically named this reduced 71 discretionary requirements.

[02:15:59] In the regulations governing pupil transportation, there were 100 discretionary requirements that were removed from a DIBR simply by recategorizing form templates that have been promulgated by VDOE and had been a document incorporated by reference. So in the regulatory world, this was telling schools, you must use these forms, whereas the board's intent, as we could gather from talking with the field, talking with experts, was that these were really suggested forms to use.

[02:16:23] So we removed those in order to make clear the flexibility that schools already had. And then the big one, 2,461 discretionary requirements were involved in the removal of the driver's education standards of learning, which was stated specifically in the regulations that this is what must be taught.

[02:16:43] Now, the big problem with that is that that particular driver's education SOL was two cycles out of date. Now, you probably recall standards of learning are reviewed on seven-year cycles. So this was, you know, two cycles out of date, 14 years out of date.

[02:16:58] But they also didn't need to be specifically named within the statute. So essentially all of those requirements, simply by removing the reference to the drivers of education SOL, and instead deferring to the statute requiring for the public school curriculum to be taught by these, we aligned the board's regulations with underlying statute, allowed a lot more flexibility to the field, and essentially moved these from discretionary to mandatory requirements.

[02:17:24] Now, even if those DIBRs were not factored into the board's baseline total or the reduction efforts, I am proud to say that the board still would have achieved a 30% reduction in discretionary requirements. And this final regulatory reduction percentage exceeds the governor's goal in EU19 by a little over 37%.

[02:17:44] However, in line with our cost-benefit analysis that the Office of Regulatory Management asked each of these regulations to perform, We also have some indirect benefits from this that are worth discussing, because the agency had been so long without doing periodic reviews, this was an unbelievable opportunity for the agency to develop its own leadership, its own capacity for reviewing regulations, and its own institutional knowledge. We have been able to provide training opportunities on regulatory processes that can be extremely obscure and reflect on the board policy and the agency policy in the

[02:18:23] process and very you know important to me we've created an internal process for the review and modernization of regulations and guidance documents that has a number of parallels that can be applied to other areas of the agency as they review policy and even as they start reviewing you know legislation internally those skills transfer across the work that is done within each vertical of the agency and certainly as legislative season you know comes into play here. I hope that staff members will be able to use those same skills as they analyze legislation and what types of things need to change as the result of legislative proposals.

[02:19:03] The guidance document reduction method, I want to be sensitive to Vice President Hansen's comments about the time. We pursued a very similar review process. The only difference is we had to obtain a baseline for the word count for each document, which meant converting them from PDFs into Word documents and doing a Word total.

[02:19:24] But we would do a lot of internal consultation with subject matter experts with VDOE, with the Office of the Attorney General. We would bring actions to the board in regular intervals, removing guidance documents if they were outdated or proposing other changes. And I will say, you know, this agency has reviewed 175 guidance documents in the last two years.

[02:19:45] I personally know I've read every single word of those guidance documents. I think Mr. Crook and Mr. Skelly have done about the same. And this board had determined that about 50 of those guidance documents no longer need to be certified as active. There was a removal of 4,300, 438,496 words, or 28.7% of the 2022 baseline in the process.

[02:20:10] So next steps that we'll be pursuing. We have a few chapters that we would like to complete periodic reviews of those chapters. We do need to navigate a sustainable schedule for these periodic reviews in the future. Because we did so many of the chapters within a two-year span, and because those are all subject to periodic reviews every four years, I personally have no intention of doing another 85% of those in a two-year span.

[02:20:37] So we'd like to stretch that out over a reasonable schedule. And we'd also like to establish a schedule for the periodic review of guidance documents. That's something that a recent executive order encouraged agencies to do. We do have a schedule for that that you know we would like to start pursuing in the next three or four years and we're ready to roll out to make sure each guidance document gets adequate review and that we don't have continued outdated guidance on the Virginia Town Hall that doesn't reflect current board priorities and does not reflect current law that brings me to the end of my

[02:21:11] presentation Mr. Chapman any questions or comments I just miss Vice President Hanson I would just like to thank Jim and his team members who stepped out but I will relay this to them as well exceptional leadership I had the privilege of working with Jim and the Secretary of Education side of this work before joining the agency and this is no small feat and so Jim I hope you are very proud on what you have done to give more flexibility and autonomy to those in the field and that they have that accurate regs and guidance to act upon

[02:21:50] on to better and further our work for kids so congratulations all right next item D small learning communities and Dwayne McCleary good morning once again to President Ashton in her absence well virtually and Vice President Hanson presiding today Superintendent Gullickson and to the board members the Virginia small learning communities toolkit offers a roadmap for transforming

[02:22:29] large school systems and large schools and to personalize student learning environments. At its core this small learning community model organizes and supports students and educators in small cohesive units often themed around career pathways, academic interests, or grade bands where relationships, relevance, and rigor drives everyday teaching and learning. The purpose of this toolkit is to help school divisions embed small learning communities into their daily practices rather than just treating them as isolated programs. Research has shown that well-implemented small learning communities improve attendance,

[02:23:08] behavior, and graduation rates while creating clearer pathways to a career in college. This work just did not come up by itself. This was actually work that was being requested from the field, from divisions. Also looking at it, it's a greater component, which you will hear a little later, around our student projections and student enrollment this is actually something that's coming out of that work as well so we

wanted to ensure that we're providing guidance for divisions and so I'm going to just walk through this quickly and for the time sake so looking at kind of the first section one of the document the purpose

[02:23:47] and scope the goal is to one you know research consistently shows that well implemented small learning communities strengthen our student adult relationships also improving attendance behavior increasing graduation rates and providing clearer post-secondary pathways principals our superintendents may also choose to design and launch small learning communities to add personalization without creating entirely new schools this approach can now be supported through our school construction assistance program grants under the Board of Education Amendment Fall 2025 guidance.

[02:24:27] School leaders might also implement small learning communities to boost engagement in larger schools, which also better align high school pathways with workforce or college readiness or help middle schools to prepare for freshman coursework.

[02:24:43] To determine whether small learning communities are needed and how they can be best served students, school leadership can also analyze enrollment trends review recent school performance and support framework data and also engage families early in the process you'll see within the scope we designed for school divisions and school administrators instructional teams student support personnel this toolkit also outlines some best practices for structuring small learning communities to operate smoothly in everyday in-person instruction and also

[02:25:22] serve as a guidance for transitioning seamlessly to a hybrid or remote modality when needed and as you can see there are some guidance here for that but also we outlined here by embedding you know small learning communities into the fabric of the everyday instruction and aligning with the Virginia Department of Education priorities around instructional quality opportunity and student well-being, divisions are also building systems that can build systems that help deliver consistent, high-quality teaching, as well as secondary benefit in remaining resilient and without disruption.

[02:25:59] We also kind of developed and shared here a crosswalk looking at how everyday practices of small learning community aligns with our profile of Virginia graduate, and as you can see here outlined for the small learning communities practices also looking at how it aligns with our profile of a Virginia graduate section 2 outlines the core principles of the small learning community so really looking at how it's grounded in the belief that students learn best in environments where they are known supported and challenged and organizing students and educators in

[02:26:34] smaller more autonomous semi-autonomous teams with a shared mission which helps increase engagement personalization and student outcomes which also leads to better enrollment you'll see here's some fundamental practices and principles within that section moving to section 3 you will see that everyday instructional routines and structures and so it's really looking at how do you use daily practices that improve instructional quality and student supports so this hits on our relationship centered structures looking at collaborative

[02:27:11] planning and cohesive instruction, tiered supports, models, data practices, and progress monitoring, family and community partnerships. Section four looks at the resilience and continuity. While as small learning communities are primary primarily in everyday instructional approach, their routines can also naturally support the continuity of learning during disruptions. So using the following addendums to align with existing smaller and community structures for resilient planning so we also have outlined some supports here for preparedness for

[02:27:51] schools so looking at building on everyday routines that are already in place by small learning communities can actually support some virtual home basis scenario trainings where they can actually practice remote transitions and activate community communication trees and refreshing student well-being and readiness but we also can look at access planning we also have here some outlines of response response in this responsiveness doing a temporary disruption of schools and a recovery for post disruption section 5 looks at the implementation guidelines so this looks at the designs and structures give a

[02:28:31] little guidance around what the design and structures of small learning communities could be that could be around student grouping models staffing leadership space planning but also seat time flexibility looking at access and inclusion where we can look at technology connectivity inclusive practices and family community engagement also outlined in section five is professional learning and capacity building and the monitoring evaluation of continued improvement section six looks at the benefits for students

[02:29:06] families and educators and this enhances day-to-day experiences by building personalized inclusive environments that reduce the and it strengthens relationships that can ultimately provide improved engagement and attendance clear communication pathways safer more positive school climate and cultures military college and career relevance and also professional growth for educators in the appendices you can see that we've also did some sample scheduling so that schools can possibly see what this could look like within

[02:29:43] their schools so we have a high school sample schedule here as an example and also a sample advisory framework we wanted to be very clear that this is a living document and it's going to be have additional examples that will be pulling from the field from other school systems and divisions which will we will add over time and we will also be working work is underway to provide divisions and school principals with guidance on how we can also look at public micro schools as a model for as an exemplars for small learning

[02:30:19] communities so that work will continue this is a living document any questions one quick question I'm a big fan of SLCs but one of the issues I've seen is the seat time I saw seat time flexibility been out of game for a little bit what does what does the seat time flexibility guidelines look like now real quick just as a we would that's actually coming up next we will actually dive a little bit into that so with the seat time flexibility where there's actually already got us around that where schools can actually submit a written response to us

[02:30:57] and we can grant them that seat time flexibility we also have are providing supporting guidance around that actually this afternoon for divisions we have a webinar with a vast and we it's a three-part series which i'll get a little bit into in our next presentation and it's going to look at what is the law of seat time flexibility what are some examples within virginia but also some national examples and then the third the the technical assistant series is now that you've heard all of this how can we actually help support you in developing a structure and framework within your district for next school term great thanks and

[02:31:34] we'll be sure to get you the board adopted um policies so you can get quickly up to speed because this is a major topic and focal point for our partnership with bass um mr mcclary uh if you can quickly note we've got a great partnership coming underway with the national microschooling center um

one of the things that we're so proud of with Virginia that came from the fields request where they have some excess wings of buildings or spaces that they want to utilize um to our knowledge we're the only states that allows with our school construction assistance grant this prioritization around flexibility and flipping and

[02:32:12] redesigning from excess space and so as you heard from W.C. Reinhardt McCleary there's been great interest on successful small learning community models both in a physical four-walled building of a school but also in partnership in community spaces and so we are in the final process of locking in a partnership with the National Microschooling Center there's three other states that have supported public micro schools and that's been an area of focus from some of our divisions on how we serve students especially for our rural communities and may not entire you know 500 person new school so if you

[02:32:51] can just add a little bit on our vision for what we're trying to provide for technical support there so I think the biggest thing here is a lot of our schools are saying we don't know what we don't know and so we just need some exemplars and supports and helping us design what this could look like but also being videoe we're also saying here are some opportunities for funding which is most important but i think it's also important for us to look at the outcomes for students looking making at high quality instruction which is also embedded in that so what we're doing is we're looking at providing some technical assistance with divisions who may want to be some piloting partners in the future

[02:33:30] So we're not just looking at rule. We're looking at urban and suburban opportunities. So we're looking at what are some some needed areas. Student enrollment, decline in enrollment has been a big thing echoing around not just Virginia, but the nation. So we're also looking at how do we look at opportunities that we can actually leverage to better support our students, but also provide options for our our students and their families.

[02:33:57] But that is coming. we're excited about that partnership with micro schools so that we can actually develop some great exemplars and also pull from their expertise and best practices that are already in place so we're not reinventing the wheel well thank you for the work on special on the micro schools as well it's important topic in my real world as well so just thank you thank you any other questions well I don't I know you're gonna be joined by Stacy and yes on the next item on item E with student enrollment best practices.

[02:34:37] - Yes, Deputy Superintendent Stacy Langdus will be joining me. We have been, as you saw in the reorganization, I said there were a lot of dotted lines that you did not see. This is one of them. We have been working in tandem with the operations team with Chief Berta and Deputy Superintendent Langdus.

[02:35:00] So we wanna get started. looking coming back to you from our November board meeting to give you a more in-depth toolkit this is just a start there is more to come with this because we are still receiving information from the field but also we're still building out what this could look like for our divisions so looking at the presentation with our table of contents we'll talk about why enrollment practices matters we'll hit on some suggestions on root cause analysis to improve enrollment practices and what's next after you have completed the root cause analysis within a division and then also looking at some

[02:35:37] possible solutions review of the DCJS summary findings and also some technical support options for divisions good morning president Ashton VP vice president I'm Hanson members of the board superintendent Gellickson I'm Stacy longest deputy superintendent budget and finance on november 12th

2025 we talked about enrollment decreased from march 24 to march 25 fall enrollment numbers as projected have continued to decrease which aligns with those falling birth

[02:36:13] rates that we talked extensively about we are seeing the senior class leaving at a much larger numbers than the kindergarten class coming in to confirm the fall numbers represented a 2.1 degrees and 27 degrees in 28 and that was certified with school divisions this is in line with what we've shared with you about the downward trend intentional efforts have been made to ensure the school divisions feel supported and received adequate training technical support rather than

[02:36:49] just the compliance focus that was the traditional focus of VDOE. Chief Berda, Ed Lanza, and myself have taken every opportunity during in-person and virtual trainings to remind the school divisions to truly review enrollment and re-evaluate needs based on declining enrollments. Many other aspects as described on slide three affect enrollment also. Student engagement and attendance, parent and student demanding demands of shifts demographic changes and then the

[02:37:25] facilities and operational planning thank you deputy superintendent long this so looking at why enrollment matters hearing those numbers it's a daunting task to try to now how do we help support districts look at this in a different way in a different light and so looking at the enrollment planning and practices impacts looking at educational quality and physical stability we're looking at how do we decline the number of student-age children impacting Virginia public schools and then also looking at area

[02:38:02] permits for constructions and turnover so we really have to look at the root cause of what's really happening are we preparing divisions and preparing our our field and our our teachers to look at how do we better support and structure our systems because a lot of times we see enrollment shifts but we may not see the shift in structure of FTEs so how do we better use our staff and use our spaces understanding the root cause analysis this helps improve enrollment practices so it's important

[02:38:38] that divisions actually look at a structured process that will help school leaders kind of uncover some real reasons around and behind the enrollment challenges sometimes these are not visible and you have to really understand and see why did this happen why did students leave or look at some dig deeper into finding out some underlying causes to school divisions so that they can understand and try to prevent similar issues in the future so we can look at ways of identifying true challenges instead of just reacting to kind of surface level issues

[02:39:14] like a low enrollment numbers or late registration we also within this root cause analysis we can also look and define questions like what are the barriers that are preventing families from choosing or staying in schools it may be attendance it may be transportation and we also can gather data around attendance trends withdrawal codes also looking at transfer destination where our kids going and also course access and transportation availability engaging levers leave we can also conduct some focus groups I

[02:39:53] think that's important so when parents leave us we're actually talking and asking them why are you leaving what caused the leave and also interviewing families who are exiting who and who are choosing other options what are those options is it home school is a virtual school or are you leaving for to move to another place understanding what those really are I think will help divisions kind of better develop resources and supports of what's really happening with the migration of students and parents also looking at taking targeted action I think once the root cause is clear leaders can also implement solutions

[02:40:32] that address those sources of problems so mapping and finding finding action so aligning the causes of the solution so looking at if it's climate issues within a school is that why parents students are leaving we can also then dovetail into a solution could be small learning communities or we may need to look at transportation open enrollment opportunities for a district is it also looking at are we having issues with course access maybe there is an option for virtual dual and virtual options maybe there we need to look at dual enrollment or maybe looking at some other program relevances that need to be

[02:41:11] addressed within the division and also looking at maybe there's an opportunity for career connected opportunity pathways are there charter options or even magnet options within the division which are illegal within the state of Virginia also deploying quick wins I think this is something that divisions these are things that are on the books now that divisions can take advantage of currently so looking at piloting maybe seat time flexibility options out of zone or open enrollment policies and high demand areas while looking at long-term transportation modernization and also flexible learning spaces as

[02:41:49] they're possibly being built out these are options that can be taking place in the short term so after you've done your RCI what's next so you have to we were looking providing guidance to divisions to use a structured approach to understand why the parents leave looking at the academics transportation or school climate and other options but also what could bring them back to the division so looking at prioritizing solutions which could also be in reviewing and identifying root causes and proposing corrective actions but

[02:42:27] also ranking them by impact and feasibility within the division so looking at those quick wins how do we get those quick wins out there and publicize them but also get them accessible to parents but ultimately what are some longer-term fixes that we may need to look at down the road developing an action plan so assigning responsibility to Pacific staff and team members ensuring that there's project management what does that look like how our dollars are signed I'm a strong believer in how you spend your time and how you spend your money is your true priority.

[02:43:01] So are we spending enough time and funding to support and look at what the real root cause of what this is? And also setting the time limits and measurable goals. So being very focused on that, looking at maybe in examples, increasing early registration by 15%.

[02:43:18] How do we focus on that? What are some opportunities there? Communication and plan, sharing the plan with principals, not only just having it at the division level, making sure it is getting down to schools so that they're able to actually support because they are the most connected and boots on the ground directly supporting students.

[02:43:36] And looking at enrollment helps from enrollment teams and families ensuring that you have clear, crystal clear communication and consistent and also being responsive. Implementing corrective actions, for example, improving outreach through social media, simplifying registration steps.

[02:43:54] So maybe some steps that you can take that will better simplify the registration students. If you already have some information, if you've been asked those questions already, because we already have that information, we know who the parent is, I need you to fill out maybe an update of address or something. So how do we better support that? Technologies are out there to better support those where maybe it can already capture and say, just verify that this information is correct, instead of them having to sit there and type all of the information in.

[02:44:19] So looking at innovative ways, maybe supporting AI could maybe support with some of that work. And also training staff on customer service and enrollment processes. Because when parents feel welcome and parents feel safe, they tend to come back. Looking at monitoring progress, so tracking enrollment data, not only yearly, but I think daily, weekly and monthly, I think is very important so that you can see trends and also make some anticipations in the future.

[02:44:49] And utilizing dashboards for reporting. Evaluating and adjusting, holding, you know, mid-cycle reviews to see what's working, and also maybe abandon what's not working and adjusting strategies based on feedback document documenting and best practice uh sharing best practices so capturing lessons and learning for future enrollment cycles and also sharing successes i think within video we we're also charged with doing that so i think capturing those successes for divisions that may we see some enrollment spikes what are they doing how can we share that out how can we you know possibly point to them as exemplars but also sharing it in a way and storytelling where it's not just

[02:45:27] we're saying this division did this but hey you might want to look at this rule division because you are a rule division and they have similarities to you with demographics so i think that's also important for the work that we do so that when we're sharing out that information to the divisions listing here is also some possible solutions to maintain the increase in public school enrollment school divisions can also in and by embrace innovative solutions that respond to the challenging demographics family expectations and school student needs here are some high-impact options that we can be standalone or in a combination of options so helping divisions understand what these options are and

[02:46:06] helping them kind of ideate on which of these one or two or three of these that we can possibly combine and support the work and also looking at braiding of funds possibly what that looks like here you can see these options here I'm not going to go into all of those but you can see the seven options flexible learning models personalized and specialized programs expanding access and family choice modernized transportation family-centered engagement mental health and climate investments and also school facility

[02:46:41] use and design next thing we listed here for divisions to take note is looking at the review of the dcjs survey findings i think this is very important for divisions and leaders to also review this which provides several findings that align closely with innovative strategies for boosting enrollment so here are the additional insights from the report and as you can see it's listed here as you know sense of belonging matters bullying harassment

[02:47:20] mental health needs teacher student relationship safety cautions and also communication and voice so these findings reinforce the school climate improvement for enrollment strategies and family choose schools where their students feel safe supported and connected last but not least is the technical assistance opportunities upcoming so we're already working on providing supports to divisions as I shared before there's an upcoming webinar there's actually one today so that's what I'm trying to speed up so I

[02:47:56] can get to it later today at 2 o'clock I will be working heavily with Tierra shop dr. Michelle Wallace will be supporting alongside me where we'll be talking about from an academic side but also an innovation side on what seat time flexibility can look like in your division so this is a video website webinar series where it is titled rethinking time and reimagining learning this series will present a dynamic three-part webinar series designed to support school divisions school administrators and educators in

[02:48:32] navigating the evolving landscape of instructional time with the new legislation and guidance from video e school divisions now have a greater flexibility than ever before to design and also the learning experiences that prioritize competency over clock time and while we are just beginning to explore the possibilities of the and getting divisions ready to lead boldly innovatively this series will provide the insight and inspiration and practical tools to help them move forward so today at 2:00 p.m. we our session one is

[02:49:10] beyond the bell and understanding seat time in Virginia currently as of 6 a.m. this morning we have 187 participants that dr. Michelle Wallace and I will be leading that that discussion on January 15th session 2 we're looking at innovation and action seat time flexibility across Virginia and the nation so this will focus on some from from Chesterfield Virginia all the way Arizona schools are reimagining instructional time so we're going to be

[02:49:45] bringing some exemplars to them so they can see what this looks like not just me talking about it because that's my job so so they can actually see what what it looks like and also here's some outcomes from what seat time flexibility has been able to provide for divisions and our last session which will be on January 22nd is the design lab where we're reimagining seat time in the division we currently have a hundred and seventy one participant registered and a hundred and seventy eight participant registered for session two so divisions are super excited about this work and we are super excited to provide this technical

[02:50:22] assistance and it's not just my division is multiple divisions especially school instruction and also construction and operations this is not just a one division thing once I said as I said before we're ultimately working together in tandem to ensure that we're utilizing all of our resources and also identifying opportunity and funding that can align with this we're not just saying it we're putting our our best foot forward and also our resources behind it so that is happening currently I'm also offering weekly virtual office hours within my division so the offices here the office of innovation office of

[02:51:00] advanced learning office of career and technical education and also the new Office of New Learning Models and School Redesign we'll be doing a weekly starting in February one office will be taken a week and we'll be doing having office hours for divisions to sign up so if they want to learn more about opportunities things that are out there and also opportunities that are upcoming and how we can better support them I think that is important so that divisions know who we are and who they can actually tap on for support last but not least march uh 2026 the school construction assistance program grant application window

[02:51:37] opens and so technical support will be provided over the next two months and also a more formalized toolkit that will be more fleshed out with more resources and one pages is coming but we wanted to make sure that we give you guys kind of an overview of where we're headed to and ultimately things shift and change based on what we're hearing from the field and what the needs are from divisions it's now open up for questions thank you just and we do have the data broken down by the different regions in the state if there's a higher

[02:52:12] rationale for departure or other enrollment issues so we have it broken down by school division and then we can break it down by region if you would like to see that just maybe it can be offline or whatever but just maybe any um issues that you're seeing you know for fairfax county northern virginia

versus southeastern virginia or some of the rural areas of just some of the things that your toolkit would be most helpful for in different regions so yeah i would say honestly we're seeing across

[02:52:48] all regions a decline i'm not saying every division but all regions um and i think sometimes it's the moving so they're moving from one division to another um but then we've seen an overall decrease um across the board so i can provide that information i think it's important that we're also looking at every student so we're giving this guidance so that when we get the numbers for example you have 500 kids we're declined by 500 kids but i would like to know more in depth of those 500 how many of them went to home schools how many of them went to another

[02:53:23] division how many of them left because of military how many of them you know left to go move to another state I think that helps divisions to kind of see better into what's really happening but it also helps us as a division to better support and provide resources to school divisions maybe we need to relook relook at what we're offering to our students so I think that's important as well and that was my second comment was really gonna be on the choice or the quality of learning or lack thereof or the relevancy issues how relevant what

[02:53:55] they're getting is, what do they see it taking them? So, questions? Yes, I'm watching on social media about five families go back and forth right now about leaving public schools over the SOL testing. So, I think they were already having children who struggled. And again, remember my field special ed. So, there's still fear, I think, associated to the new SOL scores and what that might mean to families. And I didn't really see that mentioned much in here, but I think that be an interesting part of the analysis and as even a part of a solution I'd like to restate what I said I believe the last time we met about a graduation committee that can help with some of

[02:54:35] those things so mr green yes mr mcclary as long as thank you for your work in terms of helping it to develop the toolkit and I know and I guess I can speak on behalf of all school divisions in in Virginia who are currently having a challenge with trying to keep kids in schools and keep enrollment up that they will probably very much appreciate this toolkit and some of the technical assistance that the DOE is going to be able to provide going forward. I think one of the biggest reasons

[02:55:12] primarily where it would benefit a lot of our school divisions depend on state funding that's based on student enrollment. So I will be, if I was a school division superintendent, a school board, I will be talking to you and you all the time in terms of how to best implement some of these best practices, get kids in classrooms.

[02:55:35] The second part, though, even though I think I got a general idea of why student enrollment is declining, I'm going to wait for your findings to see if they align and if they match. And I think you probably got a general idea of what that is, and I think Emily Ann do as well.

[02:55:53] what I think we need to see more of to keep kids engaged and where they would want to continue to be in school and excited about school. So that's all I want to say. Appreciate that. I think it's important for us to, I want to say, especially speaking directly to divisions, if they're listening, I'm sure they are, what we're prescribing here and what we're sharing is just a toolkit. If there's something that we're missing, let us know, because once I said this is ongoing, We're constantly building this out.

[02:56:24] So whatever the needs are from the divisions, we're happy to step in and support or help them understand clarifications around what is in place now that I can take advantage of and what laws are on

the books, how do I interpret that, how do I take advantage of it.

[02:56:42] Most of it, we're trying to break down those berries and red tape to get divisions to better understand. And more simple a layman's term, this is all you have to do versus having to read a long guideline and not understand what it means. So we're working very hard in the division to break that down, make it more simple for divisions, but also providing that technical assistance so that you know who to call, where to go, and who to ask to get this work, to get it ultimately in the hands of students and making opportunities for students better.

[02:57:15] Dr. Mervin? So I think that the problem is just declining birth rates, period. I mean, I feel like we're kind of, like, trying to figure out a root cause analysis, but that's kind of it. And I'd like to see a revised toolkit.

[02:57:33] I know you guys are continuing to work on this. We know that up to 85 percent is staffing. Like, this is no big surprise. So we begin to kind of have a more realistic approach to some of these strategies. the early retirement incentives is like you know needs to be a table we need to look at if divisions are operating half-empty buildings that's exceedingly expensive so we're going to need to begin to look at consolidations and what is what is a effective consolidation look like where it minimizes the impacts on kids we need to start looking at centralizing back-office operations

[02:58:08] because that's another way that you save money we need to look at combining low enrollment programs if you've got programs with eight kids in it you're just not going to be able to have those anymore so how can we combine those programs and how can we look at new staffing models so I really see a need for this to be much more not like oh my gosh can we save every little kid that we have but like this is a new reality and we can't operate we have to have her Marguerite Rosa say this many times and she's an expert on this we have to learn to be small so just have to adopt a whole different mentality and I know

[02:58:46] closing schools is so unpopular so we you know if that's the last resort then all these other things that I just mentioned and more need to be done first right to see whether they can you know fill the fill the gaps I think in terms of homeschooling I've been looking at the research on this for a while nationally the kids who left during the pandemic to homeschool never come back the kids who went to private school are more likely to come back but I don't know how many of our kids I know y'all got some research about this but the homeschooling kids it's harder to get them back so just just letting you know that that reality for whatever reason that's kind of what we're seeing

[02:59:24] across the nation thank you and I think also you know as you look at the use of potential capacity there I had a conversation with Chief Conway the other day around early childhood education and repurposing some of those facilities there so maybe including some of those conversations but also one thing I noticed around the toolkit that may be helpful for more engagement is parent liaison and conversation there I know at least on the absenteeism side that's a huge conversation and so this might be somewhere to include that as well and a

[03:00:02] little bit more prominent way thank you any other questions or comments well again thank you and appreciate the work and the update and just all the commentary as well as it's going to be an ongoing priority for us so thank you all right I think you're still up again move to item F on the college partnership lab school updates yes thank you thank you for the Virginia college partnership lab school update I think we have not been before you to give you an update on where we are with lab schools we've brought some

[03:00:40] information around the contract modification but I wanted to give you an update on where we are with the status of lab schools so with the agenda today we will talk a little bit about the lab school wait list I give you some idea where some lab schools are with the wait list we'll talk a little bit about new lab school applications and then also what are some next steps for lab schools so first up is the lab school application currently all lab schools most lab schools are just open their lotteries so their lotteries open January 5th and doesn't close until February 20th and so we won't really have a lot of numbers I'm sharing with you today but I do have a few that can

[03:01:19] have existing numbers and where they are currently but we'll definitely come back with you at the next board meeting hopefully after the lottery is closed on the 20th to give you updates on all of the lab schools and their weight numbers there are four lab schools and if you're looking at the slide deck I'll actually call up the number in the name of the school so number three the aerospace Academy of Eastern Shore currently their current ninth grade Academy has a wait list of six kids number four on the map our Smith Tech at Oscar Smith

[03:01:54] Middle School has a wait list of four students number eight our JMU lab school for innovation exploration currently has a wait list of 31 students and last but not least number 13 the stem Academy at Booker T Washington a Virginia lab school with the partnership with Suffolk Public Schools and Old Dominion they currently have a wait list of 200 students and so there there is momentum that individuals are looking at lab schools they have wait list and I will say the other schools have said that they think that they

[03:02:32] would have some wait lists as well after the open enrollment of lottery which ends on the 20th moving next to our new lab school applications we currently have two new lab school applications one of them is our Richard Bland College Global Academy they're looking for their first student cohort to begin in June of 2026. Grades they would like to serve is 6 through 12. It's through Richard Bland. They're currently working on finalizing their support from a

[03:03:10] four-year institution that will actually support them as a fiduciary holder. The purpose of this lab school is a transformative innovative design to engineering pathways and excellence within STEM education, which is science, technology, education, arts, mathematics, and health for 720 underserved students in grades 6 to 12 urban and rural communities in Virginia. The global target schools with interests and

[03:03:43] aptitude in STEM-H disciplines and aim to build confidence, efficiencies, and readiness for STEM-H careers through structured research-based supplemental programs. Our second lab school application is for our bio futures Academy at the Piedmont Virginia Community College they're looking for startup period in June of July I'm sorry of 2026 with their first student cohort in June of 2027 they're looking to serve

[03:04:17] students grades 10th through 12th the organized organization supporting them is a University of Virginia the proposal lab school is in collaboration with University of Virginia, Piedmont Virginia Community College, and regional K-12 school systems. Their goal will be supported by the Seville Biohub and a robust network of bioscience companies to connect students to bioscience careers to reshape the future of central Virginia. What are a few next steps in

[03:04:52] February? The goal is once these applications are in good standing and have been reviewed by OAG and have come went through the Virginia Department of Education's committee and have met all of

the compliance standards it would then be submitted to the lab school standing committee for review of the application also next steps is the mid-year reports are currently due lab schools are working on those currently those will hopefully be done in February Old Dominion

[03:05:29] University has been helpful in supporting the technical assistance for these lab schools so they're helping help us with collecting those and supporting schools with getting those done and also a material change policy and procedure for the Virginia lab schools we're still working on getting that final legal information but also taking some information from the field from lab schools last but not least ODU is supporting again this year the the innovation summit and lab school learning exchange this is not just for

[03:06:04] lab schools they're also offering it to public schools so in the prior event they actually open it up to public school teachers so that they can learn alongside them and they can actually learn from public schools so this is not open just to lab school members this is open to the public this is March 26 23rd to 26 and the registration is there and I'll open for questions well thank you and just again appreciate the ongoing work.

[03:06:30] I just had one question on the Richard Bland. Is there a four year public institution in that partnership as well or is that? So Richard Bland, as you may know, they currently have gained their independence from William and Mary. And so they're they're they're working behind the scenes now.

[03:06:47] I'm helping support them to find a four year institution. So that is ongoing. That just happened recently. Similarly, on the next slide, talk to Joe Disco chairs this entity that I've served on with her and so we look forward to getting the time schedule appropriately but just any questions Dr. Northern I just want a refresher on where we are with appropriations in the General Assembly I know we've struggled with this in the past and I guess if you could just speak to how our lab schools are doing you know in terms of you know sustainability

[03:07:25] as well as as these potential new ones coming aboard I saw the one in and Virginia has a supporter, but I was wondering about the other one, too. Yeah, I think at our last meeting in November, Karen Sanzo gave an overview of the sustainability report on where lab schools are from the 2024-25 report.

[03:07:45] We're currently working on the new report for the end of this year. We'll have some sustainability metrics. Sustainability has been about the same. They're looking at partnerships, looking at support. Some of them are gaining support from philanthropy opportunities and also some opportunities from some private partners like the biometrics here there's been a huge focus on bio meds within the state of Virginia so there are a lot of new funding opportunities coming in for support for our lives okay good so that is forthcoming that that will definitely be

[03:08:16] coming back before the board with the sustainability update okay thank you so I'm assuming this is coming in new to this but I'm assuming kids in lab schools be transcribed by their local schools was that say that again with their the kids with their courses would be transcribed by their local schools as in where would you know for for credits towards graduation oh yes yes yes um one of the issues i've done a lot of college and university and school partnerships one of the big issues for us was master schedule collections get

[03:08:54] codes um where do things stand with that and if this is easier more expedient to give me that information on the side that would be fine but that's been a big issue in the past I know with trying to get unique college oriented in a college originated courses for high school credit I would say that's not just a lab school issue that's the public school issue getting skankos right but there has been some technical assistance and supports we've had some opportunities to meet with our planning teams our scheduling teams with lab school members are actually get on

[03:09:31] zoom and they can actually do virtual opportunities to understand what these codes are so that there's some formality around that what that looks like across the board but also what is being met for graduation and opportunity so that is also something that we provide support with Old Dominion University has been great in helping us in organizing that work and so the SCED codes we we ensure that they submit them we ensure that they align so that there's not doing any type of coursework that doesn't align with graduation they all fall in the

[03:10:06] same standards of high quality instruction for us Virginia schools yeah and I know you and I will probably talk more in detail about what you shared mr. McLary but I'm curious because you were sharing some of the data around some the wait lists yes someone were single digits somewhere as high as 200 I think for the one that you've referenced that is in Suffolk any rationale as to why we have is it because of this one in Suffolk is a larger school area than

[03:10:43] some of the other smaller doesn't matter where they are however there may be local municipalities that students may want to go to that school I think the other opportunity is once lab schools open they have a capacity that they can meet right so what what happens is you know once they meet the capacity then there becomes a wait right there are some lab schools that have smaller wait lists is because they have no wait list at all is because they had opportunity and capacity okay for for those students to come in so I did I did ask the question hey why don't you have any numbers we extended our numbers this

[03:11:20] year and we accepted all of our students off our wait list and based on some of those conversations and dialogues with some of those school systems and some of those labs that are in capacity any future vision of Hannah kind of how to speak expand seats to be able to increase capacity to make it more available to students who want to attend so that is something that is we're there in conversation with there's a bigger they have like a bigger committee that's talking about some of the lab schools that may have opportunities with capacity to be able to

[03:11:54] expand. But also looking at, I think that's where the contract modification comes in. If they were to move to a bigger space, we would need to have that contract in place. So that's why we're trying to get that in place. So if you were to move a bigger space, we need to be just notified that that's happening and ensuring that kids are safe. Got you. Understood. Thank you. I'd like to speak I had the opportunity to visit the Boogarty Washington program and their lab school.

[03:12:23] And I think a large part of it is how organized the staff is regarding that program, too, how innovative it is. And the offerings. They made the community very aware of what they're offering. And they retrofitted all of the classrooms so that they're top-notch.

[03:12:40] So I'm pretty sure that's why people from other areas and in that area are very much interested now in going to that facility. I am interested in knowing how much we're advertising to the public. And we can do this offline because I'll have some additional questions about lab school.

[03:12:58] But for sure, just how much we're talking to our public and private colleges about the opportunities that are available to partner with the K-12 school system in order to provide more opportunities.

[03:13:15] But we can do that offline. Yeah, I will say for the STEM Academy at Booker T. Washington, they have a well-oiled machine when it comes to publicizing their work. And so what has been happening internally, the lab schools, they meet, I think, monthly, and they're sharing their best practices now.

[03:13:34] And they're learning from others of, like, what are you doing? What is working? How are you getting these numbers? How are you getting the information to students? Who are you collaborating with? What applications or technology are you using to push this information? Are you buying ads on local transportation and buses?

[03:13:52] Are you doing billboard? Like, are you doing word of mouth? And a lot of it is, I think, for Booker T. Washington is that it's word of mouth. Parents are sharing with their colleagues and their friends that, hey, my child is thriving here.

[03:14:08] And I think that's something that could be learned not just for lab schools, but could be learned as an option for all schools. So how do we better publicize and get the word out about the offerings? You know, being I am the Office of Student Pathways and Opportunities, how are we providing and making sure that the opportunities you are providing to students, parents know about it?

[03:14:30] Mr. Hanson. Thank you, and I agree with Mr. McPherson, too, on Booker T. Washington. I remember when the application came in and just the physical structure of the school and the community, I just think it was very conducive especially based on the quality of the

[03:14:50] work they're doing so I'm so glad you raised that in the introduced budget at the request from school divisions who partner with governor schools governor STEM academies governor health academies etc etc there's language to expand the

[03:15:26] school construction assistance program grants to regional high school models because that has not been an opportunity just and complex for a lot of divisions to navigate since so many divisions have kids enrolled so that is currently underway and we hope the General Assembly will continue to look at that language because that's definitely of interest not just under the lab school arena but long time governor school models as well thank you and appreciate

[03:16:02] miss McPherson your comments around communication and WC McLeary explaining some of those best practice sharing I think I'm become just my work with DSCA parents are now reaching out to me how do we get engaged I think that word-of-mouth component right now is what's happening and so definitely a lot of room there to share with parents in the community around opportunities that their learners have and then just wanted to kind of go back to the comments around the credits there it's my understanding that in that MOU and contract those really are

[03:16:35] already in place prior to the engagement okay thank you well thank you again and I appreciate the update and the good work so thank you we are gonna break for lunch in about two minutes but I think we're gonna just maybe do a quick pivot here and we're gonna move to item I and we'll come back after lunch to item G but Dr. Hollins thank you for bringing this to us my pleasure my specialty is two minutes so thank you all so much for having me President Ashton, Vice President Hanson, State Superintendent Gullickson and board

[03:17:14] members. It's my pleasure to bring back before you for final review the guidelines for selecting parent materials related to student safety concerns and I won't redo my spiel previously but just a reminder that as a result of the General Assembly and a couple of bills we were asked to amend and update the code and which prompted this guidance document to be developed.

[03:17:35] The guidelines for selecting parent materials related to student safety concerns, address and provide guidelines and resources to assist schools in the requirement to provide state approved suicide prevention materials to school divisions that include guidance on safe firearm storage and limiting access to lethal means. I just want to follow up on a couple of concerns that were identified previously. Since our last meeting we were able to re-engage with staff at the Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety over at the Department of Criminal Justice Services and really appreciate the strong collaboration we've had from director Burton there they have given us a lot of information on

[03:18:12] continuing collaboration that they find really effective and they were integral in the development of these guidelines and so as they looked and debriefed based on the board's concerns there were no substantive revisions made to this guidance but I do want to point out a couple of ongoing opportunities that we will collaborate with them particularly in some areas that you all had asked for follow-up we will continue meeting quarterly with those staff to discuss ongoing work areas of intersection and opportunities for school division training particularly around member Monk and President Creasy brought up previously the strong partnership with law enforcement is explicitly identified as one of the required experts within that ongoing collaboration they will

[03:18:51] review and vet locally selected materials and that's why we emphasize existing memorandums of understanding to school divisions local police to guide those discussions Dr. Ackerman also mentioned the rising concerns around artificial intelligence and self-harm and while the bill doesn't specifically require that we've worked very closely with DCJS staff to already begin curating resources and training for school staff and parents regarding this growing concern to student safety and well-being and I think you'll be pleased to see the additional resources we'll be able to provide as part of that subject specific area we also plan to offer continuing technical assistance at

[03:19:28] the December meeting member McPherson underscored a really important point that we fully support that these guidelines and materials are intended to support meaningful conversations with families and should complement and not replace direct communication and individualized supports for students and their families we plan to continue to offer technical assistance related to these guidelines I highlighted our school-based mental health Institute that'll be next month that we already have a great participation rate from school divisions as well as the ongoing support from Joe wharf and his staff to continue to round out those technical assistance resources I'm also bolstered by your work today because we continue to receive a lot of staff inquiries for

[03:20:08] this information coming into the DOE so I know that the field is anxiously awaiting final approval so that these continuing conversations and support can really get where they need to go with that I'll pause I'm happy to answer any questions and really appreciate the board's consideration of this important guidance any questions while hearing none I is there a motion to approve the guidelines for selecting parent materials related to student safety

[03:20:34] concerns. So moved. Second. Thank you. Dr. Ackerman? Aye. Mr. Green? Aye. Dr. Northern? Mrs. McPherson? Aye. Mrs. Kilgore? Aye. Mr. Monk? Aye. Mr. Carraway? Aye. Mrs. Ashton? And Chair

votes aye. Thank you all so much. Thank you. Well we will break it's 12:15 and we plan on coming back around 1 o'clock and we will follow instructions on where

[03:21:09] lunch is we'll follow Jim as we always do thank you all right I think we're

[04:17:37] fully accounted for here so back to the last item on our presentations agenda item G grateful to have miss Booker Dwyer here and Samantha Hollins present to us on the school and student supports update I'll turn the time over to you yes good morning members oh good afternoon now members of the board and so today I'm providing my my monthly update on where we are with school improvement and I am I'm happy to be joined by my colleague deputy superintendent Samantha Hollins who's going to discuss students with

[04:18:16] disabilities and this specific supports that they will receive I will start by providing an overview of some of the funding that we are releasing or that we have released and will be releasing to support school improvement and the key thing that we are doing is we are grounding all of our support funding strategies in the framework outcomes so we are actively using the outcomes of the school performance framework to support our school divisions and we're truly using it as that key lever for improvement so that we all have that

[04:18:52] consistent understanding of the targets that we need to meet and how to to truly improve the outcomes for students grounded in this common framework so the funding we have revised how we are releasing funds for school improvement so listed on the screen are a couple of key things that we are taking advantage of so number one is this priority waiting in our rubrics for schools that have been characterized as off track, needs intensive support, or identified federally

[04:19:30] as a comprehensive support and improvement, targeted support and improvement, or additional targeted in support and improvement school. And this ensures that we are targeting funds where they need them the most. We're also emphasizing the use of competitive grants when allowable. And so that also just helps with the quality of the proposal, the planning, and just ensuring that we are going to yield the highest returns on student outcomes we are taking

[04:20:02] advantage of all of the expanded time limits that that we can leverage with using federal grant funds i know in previous board member previous board meetings we discussed the edflex waiver that we are actively pursuing but we are shifting away from having school divisions right for grant funding and be on these nine-month writing cycles to truly extending their time frame to the multi-year plan and giving them time to develop their plans implement for us to monitor for them

[04:20:35] to submit their um to then for them to submit reimbursements requests and um and other items associated with the funding the thing that i am most excited about and we're going to talk a little bit about when we get to the math innovation grant especially are these network-based applications across divisions this allows cohorts of divisions to come together and and work together on specific school improvement initiatives so this allows them to to truly accelerate the learning of the

[04:21:10] adults and students across the divisions and it helps to increase the spread of what is working with school improvement we know you have to get the foundational elements right you need this the strong curriculum you need high quality educators you need all those foundations strong in order to improve school outcomes we have recently released grant funds for the comprehensive literacy state development grant this this is a part of a 30 million dollar grant

[04:21:47] award provided to the Virginia Department of Education from the from the federal government we are in year two of this grant and we awarded seven million in year two funds and there were two priorities the first priority was supporting reading at home given parents and students the resources that they need aligned with classroom instruction so that they can continue and become stronger readers while they're not in the school building and then to establish these literacy improvement networks and so this will allow school leaders and teachers to all learn from each other focused on effective literacy

[04:22:27] practices and when we awarded these grant dollars we use that priority weighting in our rubric and what you will see is that over 75% of the awards for this grant went to schools that were characterized as off-track or needs intensive support and in the slide deck if you click on that press release you can see the full list of schools that were awarded funds and how they're going to use those dollars to improve the literacy outcomes of students and you also will see that we didn't discount any of the distinguished or on-track

[04:23:03] schools either they still got awards as well because we want to ensure that we are still increasing and enhancing effective practices across the state so that was the literacy grant there has been 10 million dollars in state funds awarded for the math innovation grant and this is one that i am i'm really really excited about because it allows school divisions to implement the high quality instructional materials competency-based models and then they can also form these phenomenal regional networks and so and i want to just kind

[04:23:38] of talk a little bit more about these regional networks because 27 school divisions they were awarded um these grants and and you know this so the 27 awarded but four of them are leads for regional network so the actual number of school divisions that are that will be impacted from this grant is much greater because that 27 is just the count of the fiscal leads so for those four school divisions that are serving as that fiscal agent and that coordinating um that coordinating team they are working with multiple school divisions and institutions of higher education

[04:24:15] to improve math outcomes so we are really excited to see what comes from the from this regionalized approach that's impacting multiple school divisions and institutions of higher education across the agency and we we will have a press release coming out soon we're still finalizing all of the grant awards they will be coming out to school division shortly and then we will share that full list of schools and the full list of divisions and the the funding we are in the process of preparing to to release 10 million in direct student services grant so this is something that i've

[04:24:54] brought up at several board meetings and now we're to the phase where we're ready to actualize it and get it out to school divisions any school division can apply and once again we're doing that priority weighting of those school divisions with the highest percentage of federally identified schools and schools that are identified for needs intensive support parents have to be involved on the front end of this grant so this isn't a the division just writes it and submits it to us and then tell parents that they have the money that we were requesting that they demonstrate evidence that parents were involved in this grant application because these funds are meant to be used directly for students so parents must have a

[04:25:33] voice in the development of this application there are key priorities and allowable expenses that this grant allows and once again everything goes directly to students and so it's not you won't see a lot of teacher professional development in this grant what you'll see is opportunities so for instance what's

listed on the screen for career pathways if a student need to take an industry credentialing exam uh the cost to cover that exam you can use these funds if there's career in technical education courses that are not offered in at the school that a student wants to take you can pay for that student to take that course elsewhere you can pay for the transportation

[04:26:12] to work-based learning experiences or apprenticeship opportunities you can engage in credit recovery for those students who want to to make up some credits or to accelerate their learning you cover the cost of the courses the exams transportation to and from the courses graduation coaches and in career navigators you can do a lot these funds are really really flexible you can also use these funds for advanced additional advanced coursework options that are not available in the school so if a student wants to take a course online or through a higher institution of higher

[04:26:49] education you can use these funds to pay for that course to pay for their transportation to pay for all the support and resources that that student would need to be successful in those in those advanced courses and then the personalized learning component of this grant is really flexible so you can use it for the competency-based um tutor for competency-based learning you can use it for high quality tutoring to keep some of the the work that started with the virginia literacy act going and having those high quality tutors right in the schools with students and and working with them. It also covers in school and out of school time

[04:27:26] experiences. So it's a lot of things that can be done with this grant to directly benefit our students and then transportation. So there's, there's an option where you can use this fund to, um, to pay for students who are in comprehensive support and improvement schools to go to a school that's not identified for comprehensive support and improvement. Um, however, I want to be clear that it still has to be a public school and you still have to follow all of the the rules and regulations um in the state of virginia to um to to transfer schools and then one percent of this award can be used toward direct communication to parents to make

[04:28:04] them aware of these available um opportunities through this grant and that includes translation services hotspots so that you can get them to a community meeting and they can register their kids for the course um you can you can use these funds to get a parent liaison that goes directly to work with parents so that their kids can have advantage of these opportunities communication materials it's like I said this grant is very very flexible and we're really excited about it 20 million in school improvement grant funds we are we have released that application and school divisions are actively working on

[04:28:41] that that is being led by Dr. Quinton Ballard and his in the school improvement team and once again these funds can be used for a variety of of reasons you can use it during if you're a newly identified comprehensive support and improvement school you have to take a planning year so you can use these funds to conduct a really thorough needs assessment develop that multi-year plan you can partner with with different organizations to support your larger school improvement effort and there are a host of upcoming support sessions and

[04:29:17] information around the school improvement grant that is being led by the Office of School Improvement uh they have released a lot of information to school divisions that are like self-paced modules on how to identify your needs developing that multi-year plan and then that is followed up next week with all the regional meetings and then and so we want to provide the maximum amount of support

to school divisions so that they can get these dollars and leverage them in a way that's really going to improve outcomes for students so i will pause there any questions before we transition

[04:29:54] to the support for students with disabilities okay thank you guys so much so you heard from dr broker-dewire that you know this is really about how are we supporting with resources right and so what we're going to do now is i'm going to ask you to activate your prior learning from november except for mr carraway he's off the hook for today but remember we kind of set the stage for what's next as far as state education agency support based on the new framework and so while

[04:30:31] we just spent some time talking about resources that will directly deploy to divisions i want to now talk to you a little bit about what the technical assistance and support from department staff will look like in order to support this next frame of work as you heard from dr brooker dreyer you know all of this work is supported by the framework and so we'll be talking about a lot lot of things today that have already been published you know I know that for some of you this is this is new information and new data however this is not new for department staff we knew what this data looked like long before we started paying attention to the framework one thing I do want to explain is that I think there's been a characterization of oh my gosh all of a

[04:31:10] sudden all of these schools are newly identified for students with disability supports and that is true the data definition has changed and that's why focusing on students with disabilities part of our presentation today but the focus of the department's work has always been in supporting schools and addressing the needs of their subgroup of students with disabilities the reason that we're seeing more schools identified is because quite frankly we changed the rules of the game and so we have now on our radar formerly many more schools as a result of really reducing the amount of students it took to be flagged for this kind of work and so this slide walks you through a little bit about new to you information and why we're focusing this data and have reassigned our

[04:31:49] training and technical assistance in order to focus on specific schools and divisions now let's talk a little bit about how the department will use data to support the field particularly to use this data to individualize supports for students and schools this provides a lot of rich context data for us to provide technical assistance to support division-based leaders to use their data to individualize supports for schools and students with disabilities we will use this data to prioritize schools with the greatest need and look specifically at what those needs may be by grade level content area skill development and really a huge voice in instructional planning this will obviously look very different for

[04:32:29] elementary schools than it will for secondary schools first we will prioritize schools with the greatest need and look specifically at what those needs are as you can see from this slide really going to start to break down some of this data and i know how much you guys love data So, looking at each of our types of schools and the number of schools that have been identified, you see here the breakout that happens across the state.

[04:32:50] One thing I want to reaffirm from our discussion in November is that this data is similar to what we see in other states. There are persistent gaps at both the national and state level for the performance of students with disabilities. However, as I also stated in November, we know the prescription to really start to address this problem.

[04:33:09] Early intervention matters. with disabilities often start behind in foundational skills. Early evidence-based instruction and appropriate accommodations are critical to improving long-term

outcomes. And I just want to put a small footnote here. Dr. Norton asked a great question about why the reorganization has housed special education within early childhood development. And I just want to reiterate Chief Conway's point about our initiatives being outside the scope of simply K-12. As you can see, our focus is on building supports for learners that can impact them from birth all the way to adulthood and so our ability to leverage those supports in a meaningful way sourced by federal dollars is really made much more facile by the

[04:33:47] organizational structure that we've adopted. Most importantly for students with disabilities, growth is possible. Students can make measurable academic growth especially when we target those supports and provide what's needed but this does not always and this is not always result in immediately closing that proficiency gap and in order to kind of make you feel a little more confident with that I want to remind you that our Virginia data shows that modest gains overall in reading and math have been demonstrated for students with disabilities particularly over the last five years. However we see our biggest gains across our middle school and high school students meaning that for the longer that we have our students the more that

[04:34:24] we're able to target those instructional services and support the more successful they become. I think it's also important context that sometimes I have to remind myself that you guys might not be aware of that regional network is so incredibly important to our work at the department. As I've stated my staff is is pretty pretty big compared to other offices right but we still don't have the folks the bodies necessary to boots on the ground support to every classroom we should be getting to and so how we divide and conquer is really by relying on our regional support and organization that is integral to our being able to deliver that support whether it's conversations with

[04:35:02] regional superintendents groups we also mirror that support from my department with our regional meetings with special education directors in each of the school divisions but most importantly we tailor support boots on the ground in their communities and neighborhoods our regional training and technical assistance centers are housed in public universities across the commonwealth that can provide research-based strategies support and most importantly coaches and folks that can get out to those classrooms and help walk teachers paraprofessionals and administrators through the change and support that they need to make a difference for our students.

[04:35:37] I want to also talk a little bit about how we we differentiate this need and really how to help us prioritize participation and support. This is just a couple of data points and I want to highlight too a huge thank you to Mark Jennings and his staff for pulling some of this information available.

[04:35:56] I could talk about this for a lot more than just this one slide but I do want to let you know that we're seeing some some interesting information that can help us to help us continue to prioritize the support to folks across the commonwealth like in our professional development we have talked about previously and we'll revisit in just a moment this has been incredibly useful in helping to make sure that school divisions who have the greatest level of need get prioritized for our activities and support you heard a little bit about that previously about funding but most importantly this helps us deploy people and resources from our professional development development centers like the t tax but also

[04:36:32] like our university centers for excellence that we have across the state that really help to support specific subgroups of students with disabilities now i know i'm talking about a lot of data and you guys obviously are getting super excited but i do want to urge a little bit of caution as a teacher myself here

in virginia i remember every year it was a new was a new ball game right new students new results and so keep in mind that the data that we're looking at is one assessment year with one grade and one class of students. It's much more important for me and my folks to focus on those trends over time that help us to identify important context and to address

[04:37:10] systemic support needs for students. So this data is helpful and useful but it must be taken within a larger conversation over time. Growth and contribution to proficiency helps to add context to our data discussions as well and I pulled out a couple of areas here of some really amazing work that's being done by our educators across the state and helping to close that gap and most importantly show the opportunity they have with students and what we can see in result of that i'd like to wrap up with a couple of really important points not to not to harp on the org chart presentation but i am so excited about being reunited with our team in behavioral health

[04:37:49] and student safety as you can see our work with chronic absenteeism has really been a boon to us at the state education agency and previously i've had the chance to to manage and supervise this group and i'm super excited we'll be able to do that again because all of this really speaks to the fact that we are most well situated to work and support our students who are most vulnerable and we talk a lot here about chronic absenteeism and the role of having students present in instructional settings can make a huge difference what we know is that for students with disabilities and other at-risk populations that risk increases at a much lower threshold of chronic absenteeism

[04:38:27] so while we talk about that for kind of our neurotypical students the importance that 21 days has it's even less even a few days can make a huge impact to our most vulnerable population and so our ability to capitalize on the growth and development of resources within the shop will really help us to systemically address this with some of our most needy families and students here are a couple of examples of how we will support the field to adapt the change in practice that we really think they're well attuned to make. Students with disabilities likely require specialized delivery of instruction in order to address their disability in the educational setting. The reality is that

[04:39:06] instruction may look different than what works for most students. We know that students likely have assessment needs with accommodations and modifications as part of IEPs and so how can we best support teams and not only identifying those most appropriate accommodations and modifications but deploying them accurately. And students with disabilities may require multiple attempts on required assessments and so how can work to support guidance around things like credit accommodations and locally awarded verified credits that allow students to demonstrate their proficiency while also making it an efficient process. As you might imagine this will look different for elementary

[04:39:44] schools than it will for middle schools and high schools will require yet another approach let's use an example of an elementary school around literacy with implementation the virginia literacy act we've been able to provide additional data and valuable screening information that contributes not only to identification of students with disabilities but also most importantly helps with instructional planning in order to align support appropriateness and align support appropriate instruction in order to make sure it's effective i'll also point you you know, VALS just released their 24-25 snapshot, and we saw a decrease in the number of students

[04:40:19] who scored as high risk between the fall and spring. So quite frankly, as I told you in November, we know what works. We know that the use of specially designed instruction, high quality

instructional materials, and a focus on phonics-based literacy benefits all students, and most importantly, some of the populations we're most concerned with. And the data is reflecting that that's making a true difference. I also want to point out that as you can see through this slide, this is really highlighting the collaborative and consultation role that we'll have at the department with other shops. School improvement, the Office of Assessment, Accountability and Instruction. These are part of the day-to-day work that our teams are doing right now. Actually if you look out the window you

[04:40:57] can probably see them in the windows furiously working away. Finally let's wrap up by remembering what levers exist that have been shown to impact practice and data. These are the big five buckets that I walked you through in November that have been shown not just through what I'm telling you but through research and practice and data that we see here in Virginia the ensuring the appropriate identification of students with disabilities developing high quality individualized education programs that meet their needs increasing the support and education to our families so that they know how to facilitate and exercise their rights and most importantly be the valued partner of

[04:41:34] educational development at the table professional development I want to give you an update you remember that when I was here last time we talked about our December conference which was school-based instructional leadership and administration we had hundreds of educators and administrators from across the Commonwealth join us up at James Madison University over two days in December and I can tell you that their communication back to us through our survey tells us that they are developing skills that are relevant to their roles they gained actionable strategies to support students with disabilities and they left with an enhanced understanding of effective special education practices. The work that you're helping to support is making a true

[04:42:12] difference in the skills of our practitioners today. And most importantly, how are we setting up our students for successful graduation and ensuring that their diplomas serve as a bridge from K-12 education to success post-school. And with that, I will pause and I'm sure I speak for Dr. Brooker- DeWyer. We're happy to answer any questions and really appreciate the board's time. Thank you, Dr. Hollins. Any questions? Thank you. You mentioned the resources I think with the increase that we're seeing you feel confident that your regional groups are able to resource the new amount of influx of

[04:42:50] students with special needs that are going to need to be part of the improvement yeah great question dr. Ackerman you know one thing I will say is that for us they're not new students our students our main population has always been every student in the Commonwealth close to 190,000 of them with disabilities and so our model is really built to scale I think the biggest thing to your point is really seeing some of the trend impact across regions and where we might be able to capitalize on sharing best practices and how support looks different from a division level to where they've seen actionable results for students and so yes I think our network is incredibly able to not only with staff at the department which I think is the best in

[04:43:27] the nation quite frankly but our partnership with our higher education institutions ensures that we always have a direct line to somebody who could truly actually be physically in a classroom and who's trained on evidence-based strategies and things we know through science and research and through practice to be effective for every student thank you but if anybody has extra state money we'd love to have someone special ed just keep it coming well thank you and appreciate the continued updates and more to come all

[04:44:04] right well we will move back into our action items and we will move to item H final review of the career and technical education industry recognized credentials list and dr. Williams good afternoon back again this afternoon we

[04:44:42] want to discuss final review for the CE criteria separately then also have a conversation to discuss the industry recognized credentials a list for the board that's okay before dr. Williams come up we wanted to really as we promised last time to come back to you with the criteria so that we're bringing that to the forefront so that individuals understand how do we even get to the point of creating a list. This criteria is kind of how we're help us to actually gauge and also look at how we're going to measure what goes

[04:45:20] on the list. So it's informed by some metrics of data-driven outcomes, industry-recognized credentials, portability, program quality, stackability, third-party validation so when dr. Williams is going to come up and share a little bit about that process we've also had some more input from the field we've had some opportunity to engage with individuals and committees from the agriculture field as well and we've also had several conversations with the co-chairs of the CTE committee so dr. Williams would you come up and share a little bit about their credentials before we delve the tail into the list

[04:45:57] credential is. Good afternoon, everyone. I wanted to share some information just around our journey around over the last couple of months during our research and stakeholder feedback in regard to industry-recognized credentials. You have the criteria before you, but I do want to touch on just some important factors, and I also want to start with first just defining industry-recognized credential. And in addition to the criteria, we have never had a historically a statutory or

[04:46:32] regulatory definition for industry recognized credential. And so we do feel that it's of value to at least start at that point with looking at a definition and in addition, then we'll move over and into the criteria. Industry recognized credentials validate a student's skills and knowledge in a career and technical education field of study and are included in Virginia's 3E readiness framework and graduation requirements. Industry recognized credentials are defined as credentials that are recommended by multiple employers within the industry or sector involved and are accepted, preferred, or required for screening, hiring, retention, and advancement

[04:47:12] purposes. And where appropriate, endorsed by a nationally recognized trade association or an organization representing a significant part of the industry or sector. Okay. These credentials are developed and evaluated by external organizations, ensuring they meet industry standards and are relevant to employers.

[04:47:36] Earning these credentials are essential for career readiness and success for several reasons. And so as Mr. McCleary mentioned, for employability, career advancement, and alignment to industry needs. A structured process for validating the list of industry-recognized credentials has been identified based on the following criteria.

[04:47:59] Industry-recognized credentials provide data-driven outcomes, industry recognition, they're portable, they represent program quality in their alignment with CTE courses and programs, they are stackable, and as mentioned, they are validated by a third party, a reputable independent third party organization.

[04:48:21] In addition to the public comments received since they started back at the November board meeting, the Office of Career and Technical Education solicited feedback on November the 21st from a variety of stakeholders. Key stakeholders that provided feedback included Community College System, Virginia Works, Virginia Office of Education Economics, Virginia State Council of Higher Education of Virginia, Virginia Department of Corrections, Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice, Virginia Association of Career and Technical Education, Virginia Association of Career and Technical Education Administrators, the Superintendent's

[04:48:59] Regional Representatives, Virginia CT Advisory Committee, our Career and technical student organization state advisors Virginia Manufacturers Association the Virginia Nursery and Landscape Association the Virginia Restaurant Lodging and Travel Association what we have proposed for you as far as the identification of the criteria is what we are seeking as a superintendent's recommendation for final review upon final review of the definition and criteria that we have provided for you the superintendent

[04:49:35] recommends that we receive additional industry credentialing submissions from employers for review and evaluation against the prescribed criteria. Our hope is that we can bring to you a final list of industry credentials at the March 26th board meeting. So at this time, I would open it up to any questions. Any questions?

[04:50:04] Appreciate it, Dr. Williams and W.E. Superintendent McCleary. I know we've had many conversations around this. I appreciate your time around that regard. In that regard, I think, and the way I understand it, you're looking for support around what the criteria are and then kind of have a separate conversation around the credentials themselves. Is that the best way to approach Vice President Hanson? Yes, yes. We believe that if we can agree on a definition and a set of

[04:50:43] criteria then from there that allows employers to be able to assist us with the recommendations that we have already made that may provide us with additional recommendations that need to be added to that list and it provides that screening criteria I think is also important if we can provide this criteria and make it public if something is not on the list and industry can prove to us through the criteria that it has should be on the list that also helps us to be able to identify if that makes sense and we run it through our process but I think it helps us to be able to have a better list I agree thank you I think from my

[04:51:22] lens in our last conversation we talked about our criteria my perspective is that much of the criteria is relevant and and important there in terms of the data-driven outcome industry portable program quality and third party did have a question that's come to me since our conversation on the stackable component thinking about like the barber I think there's a barbers certification in there knowing that there's probably likely nothing beyond that where does that stackable begin and end or is that kind of it you know if it the credentials not able to meet that criteria is it automatically out because I think

[04:51:59] there's some that might be terminal credentials there are two levels of barbering licenses so to that point they're just using that as an example I That's an excellent example because that is a state license and so that experience culminates with a state license.

[04:52:18] That experience personally, I think that when we look at state licenses, that kind of sits into a different category. When we look at stackable credentials, we're looking at examinations that, for example, may start in secondary education.

[04:52:35] There may be additional examination opportunities in the workplace as, you know, ASC certification examinations. One may be an expert in brakes or engine repair and may go on to receive additional certifications as required by their employer. Got it.

[04:52:53] I want to make sure that whatever language we have in here isn't prohibiting potential future credentials that are not necessarily stackable but are still meeting this other criteria and relevant and useful for um you know the workplace and then the second question that i have is around industry recognition and agree with what is listed here around employers um you know wanting wanting to uh widely accept the credential but want to make sure that some folks have reached

[04:53:30] out to me and said that that's maybe being interpreted as is it in a job application or is it relevant there? And so I want to better understand what this widely accepted standard of competency might be or aligned with in-demand occupations. How is that measured? Can you give me some detail around what those bullet points mean from your perspective? It's kind of a combination because I see you were talking about the job vacancies and that's actually in the section that we have identified as portable. And so we want to ensure that across career clusters and across these industry sectors that these these credentials of these

[04:54:09] examinations are something that is accepted for employment that's how we landed with the OSHA 10 certification there's not an employer in those industries that you know I have have come to the department to say that this is something that is required for entry-level employment you have to have that and so some employers are saying we'll hire you but you must obtain this within the first 30 days that's industry recognized that's something that is required for that entry-level portable and maybe we need to you know redefine industry recognition but as we have identified here portable it

[04:54:49] reflects the current and emerging workforce needs as reflected in job vacancies I know we did have a meeting with the Virginia Office of Education Economics this week and they are willing to assist and support the department with the evaluation of future credentials and how those credentials align to future job opportunities through that research from those job vacancies.

[04:55:13] So that is a collaborative effort, not only from the department, but engaging our other workforce agencies as well. I think that's all I have for now. So my comments maybe have a little bit more to do with the employment points and all that stuff.

[04:55:36] maybe we'll be getting to that again but in terms of which i think our comments now are just we're talking about the criteria on page four is that primarily what you're asking for comment on now i do not have that in front okay we're talking about portable stackable third-party validation that is correct okay um i mean one thing i'd suggest adding to the list is the skill levels because i feel like um and this is going to tie into later um i feel like skill level is a really important way to distinguish among ircs so you can have high skill moderate low skill

[04:56:14] a lot of other states are using o-net um you've heard o-net yeah and because that lays out like which ircs have high medium or low skill levels and that might be another sort of way that we can can begin to, you know, think about the criteria, as well as some of these other things.

[04:56:35] And I also kind of—I don't know, when we're looking at data-driven incomes, I'm trying to figure out—I mean, to me, the most important one is wage-earning potential. I mean, continued education is probably also picked up by Stackable, so I guess my other large piece of feedback would just be to

prioritize the wage-earning potential relative to some of these others that are already captured in other criteria and just as a point of clarification would you would it be the recommendation of the board as far as the

[04:57:13] skill level section you know I know we're categorizing that or developing a process to review high mid and low are we gonna focus on the high is that something that you just wanted us to bring back before you for additional discussion maybe as this is bleeding into the other part of the discussion But we've talked about before just making some tiers of these so that all IRCs aren't created equally because we know that, you know, some of these IRCs, an engineering IRC is not the same as a Microsoft Office.

[04:57:47] That's my famous example because we've seen, and I'm sounding like a broken record, but Texas is way ahead of this than we are, right? And I feel like we should be learning from what they learned. And they're fixing some of the things that were going in doing this, and one of which is not having a criteria by which to designate the quality of these IRCs.

[04:58:08] So they used labor market demand, wage earning potential, and skill levels as the three criteria by which to then say, here's a Tier 1 IRC, here's a Tier 2, here's a Tier 3. You're going to get 0.25 for this one. You're going to get 1.5. Yeah, I mean, because I think that's kind of what we've been after for a while.

[04:58:26] And correct me if I'm wrong, but it still looks like the point values in terms of how we're thinking about the IRCs aren't predicated on the types, the tiers, or the levels of different IRCs. It's just based on whether you get anyone off the list.

[04:58:43] Is that accurate? So to provide some clarification, there has been some changes to the initial three employment criteria over the last year. initially as proposed that criteria included multiple tiered levels and so if you could recall we had a high demand high wage there was high wage there was you know there were multiple categories and so we were looking at an entire list and the point system was totally different the intent around this proposal and criteria was based on what we have currently approved for 3E

[04:59:22] employment which is a high demand criteria for industry credentials and then we have industry recognized credentials so we just have those two different point values that would be awarded and so in the proposed list you'll see a column that identifies the high demand certifications which would qualify for the higher point value and then all other certifications would qualify for the lesser point value.

[04:59:49] So, I have a question. So, I'm looking back at high demand criteria definition, and it kind of goes back to some of my earlier comments.

[05:00:06] One of them is medium annual earnings, minimum of \$29,160, 200% of the federal poverty level. So I would support as we move forward or consistent with what we're trying to develop is having some different tiers because I've been concerned about the fact that we're building a CTE program that really caters more to low-income employment than it does to job readiness in high-skilled professions

[05:00:44] and high industry demand for AI, machine learning, medical research. And my fear is that if we don't say something about what we're aiming for and build a program for the future, that employers are just simply some employers will take advantage of the low standard that is being set And students will end up picking these lower-tier job opportunities to meet some requirements.

[05:01:20] The U.S. is going in terms of what the real needs are. So I just want you to give consideration to the fact that I don't want us to build a program that just because there's a high demand for a restaurant

worker, that that's where we're trying to shuttle our kids off to.

[05:01:37] I want us to build a CTE program that is built for the future. to the extent that you can help modify that criteria as we move forward. I understand where we are now, but that is a huge concern that I have. Mr. Monk.

[05:01:54] And Ms. McPherson, I appreciate that and understand that. I think there's also kind of a potential shift in the market too, right, where, you know, when I was going through school, maybe some of the trading industry like plumber and electrician weren't high wage, and now they've kind of transitioned into high demand, high wage.

[05:02:13] So that's another thing to factor in in consideration as to what does that look like in the future and what are the different variables that are there. I guess, and I don't know if this is a question for Superintendent Gullickson or what it looks like, but from a timing perspective, and I know I've talked with the team around Perkins 5 and what Perkins' plan needs to look like, is this something that could be taken to the committee for a tiered approach?

[05:02:43] What, I guess, needs to be addressed now and what can be tweaked? I don't want to belabor anymore, and I know we've had many conversations around it. So where we are with the timeline, the current Perkins plan expires in June.

[05:03:04] We must have our plan submitted fully by May. So that means we have to have it fully buttoned up, sealed up, approved by the board before May. And you have to look at the timelines when it starts with, you know, where we are with board meetings.

[05:03:22] I do think it would be beneficial if we could take some items to the committee because I think that's where the trade-in industry and the folks that need to have the input will be and help us move this a little faster and give us more immediate feedback.

[05:03:44] So that would be my – I would definitely appreciate that. If the timing would work, I just really appreciate the comments and questions, concerns of where we are on the tiers and the skill levels. And if we could bring this back to our March meeting, would that give you the time for the May Perkins application if we were to approve it then?

[05:04:07] And obviously you've got two months to work with members of the board and others to get it perfected so we can approve it then? I think if we are engaging with the committee that gives us a head start on that Perkins plan so we have a general idea, we have a 60-day public comment period.

[05:04:24] So the reality is we can most likely get that released sometime in March, understanding that there may be some technical revisions to that. I think massive changes or significant changes could delay or cause future issues. Secondly, around the point value for 3E employment, I'm not sure what that impact would entail or what that would look like to align 3E employment to a tiered system.

[05:04:53] That's another side that lives outside of this particular office, but something that we will also have to consider. Dr. Northern? Yeah, I mean, if that's the case, which I agree with my colleagues, it'd be nice.

[05:05:13] I'll just put a couple other things on your radar, just from, again, we've been doing a lot of research in IRCs in Texas. So one thing they fixed this last General Assembly go-round was that some of the IRCs were allowing open-book exams, and that was becoming a real problem.

[05:05:31] So I would just put on the radar that we don't want to have open-book exams for IRCs. And the other thing they were having a problem with in Texas was unlimited retakes. So kids could retake this thing 10, 12, 15 times, which is something else we don't want. So if the committee can figure out, okay, how many times can they retake an IRC?

[05:05:50] Do we not allow open book? And the other thing was it was just getting out of control. They had like 500, 600, 700. They just kept growing and growing and growing. And now they're back to paring down, paring down, paring down. So I would just say for us, we don't want to have so many of these things that we're not actually focusing on the most important high-demand high-wage high-skill whatever we're trying to focus on. Thank you. Any other comments or questions? Are we okay if we can put this on our March schedule and just make sure and I've encouraged

[05:06:30] Board members to be directly in touch and just make sure everything is on the table with all the issues so we can get this moving in March. Okay. Okay. Thank you all. Okay, Mr. Chapman with our item J and our annual report.

[05:06:59] Thank you, Vice President Hanson, members of the board, Superintendent Gullickson. Item J is the board's annual report, otherwise known as a 2025 annual report on the condition and needs of public schools in Virginia, which provides an overview of the needs of public education and an update on student achievement, highlights the board's voluminous work over the last year.

[05:07:19] One of the main features of this report that I'd love to highlight is its interactivity. You will notice that because the board has engaged in so much work over the past year, it was more convenient rather than make this a 400-page report to have these links within the report itself to the work that the board has already done, to the boilerplates and the summaries there.

[05:07:42] Speaking of the volume of work, one of the reasons this is coming in January, this report was due in December, is because the board still had a number of very large policy items and decision-making points from the November and the December meetings. And so it was the recommendation of then-President Creasy that this report be deferred until today, which is the reason for first and final review, because this report is, in fact, due to the General Assembly.

[05:08:09] We want to make sure that they have the information there. So the recommendation from the superintendent is that this report be wave first review and approve this report and delegate to the board president and to the superintendent the ability to make any final edits and I believe any edits that are consistent with the board comments here. Thank you, Mr. Chapman. Any questions or concerns? Hearing none, is there a motion to wave first review and approve the board's annual report and delegate to the board president superintendent the ability to make final edits consistent with the board's conversation

[05:08:47] before submission and technical edits. So moved. Second. Dr. Ackerman. Aye. Mr. Green. Aye. Dr. Northern. Aye. Mrs. McPherson. Aye. Mrs. Kilgore. Aye. Mr. Monk. Aye. Mr. Carraway. Aye. And Mrs. Ashton. I think she's off at this point. And chair votes aye. Thank you, Mr. Chapman. Thank

[05:09:17] moving on to item K first and final review of the reallocation of the SEP 25 unused funds and thank you Vice President Hanson members of the board superintendent Gullickson before you this afternoon is a first and final review of revisions and reallocation of school construction assistance program unused funds from not the district and you all have here in the 25 the reason

[05:09:52] these reallocations is due to odenberg county who was originally awarded 16 million 500 for their project subsequently canceled their project and is unable to move forward what the process is based on your guidelines is to redistribute those funds to other school divisions that met the board's criteria at the time along with the points minimum point score of 65 or greater we have two projects that we are recommending to you today to move forward with allocating funds and the reason for first and final today is just to be able to distribute those funds and allow these school

[05:10:28] divisions to move forward with their projects fairly quickly so of the 16 million 500 we are recommending that you reallocate a total of 15 million 583 583 034 with two awards one to sussex county public schools for sussex central high school with a project entire eligible grant of one million seven hundred seventy two thousand this project scored sixty six points sussex ranked higher in the project ranking list due to the composite index above petersburg petersburg city

[05:11:05] public schools is also recommended for an award of a partial grant of thirteen million eight hundred eleven thousand thirty four dollars to fund their petersburg high school project this project in the scap 2025 award process was only partially funded due to the available funds at just for distribution at the time this project also scored 66 points is the recommendation today that the board of education approved the proposed reallocation of available funds from the school construction assistance program for fiscal year 25 I'm happy to answer

[05:11:40] or any questions you may have just just on the this is just going down from the prior application pool of the next one that's correct yeah we had more projects than you had money available to award and so when a school division is not unable to execute we go back into that approved application and we recommend approval for you to move those projects on the list thank you can you tell me is

[05:12:19] this Petersburg high school is this a new high school are they do you remember this what what exactly obviously the bulk of the funding is going to Petersburg one second let me see if the sheet tells me cheating I cannot remember I believe it is a replacement high school because the total project cost is ninety one million three hundred eighty five dollars and so we awarded a partial award based on the funding that was available at the original distribution so the recommendation is to award them the remaining of that project to fully

[05:12:54] fund their 30 percent they do have the remaining funds they do okay all right thank you i just want us to get in the same situation again it always could happen anything could happen at the local level but we want to make sure we do our part to try to make the project success and then vice president hansen and just to reaffirm what you heard earlier there will be another round of school construction assistant grants opening in March that will be awarded again this spring before the board probably at your June meeting maybe your April meeting depending on how ambitious they are but likely your

[05:13:29] June meeting so that's on deck just just quickly cheaper to not to put you in the spot but you feel good about the Sussex application yes thank you well thank you um is there a motion to wait first review and approve the proposed reallocation of available funds in the

[05:13:49] School of Construction FY25 program. So moved. Second. Dr. Ackerman? Aye. Mr. Green? Aye. Dr. Northern? Aye. Mrs. McPherson? Aye. Mrs. Kilgore? Aye. Mr. Monk? Aye. Mr. Carraway? Aye. And Chair votes aye. Thank you. Thank you. Item L and Jim are you in item L? Dr. Wallace. Jumping the gun.

[05:14:33] you really want to Jim help yourself excuse me good afternoon President Ashton if you're still on I'm not certain Vice President Hanson and Superintendent Gullickson members of the board today I bring to you and I have with me Amanda as well because you remember Amanda from Advanced Learning because Amanda Navitrol is this item involves our IB coursework and so if you have any questions she may have some of those answers I bring to you the board

[05:15:09] approved courses to satisfy graduation requirements for standard and advanced diplomas this has been brought to you several times within the last year just making some minor edits excuse me and when we do have requests from school divisions or requests from multiple school divisions we like to try to get those requests completed as soon as possible so because this does impact their programs of studies. It is a minor change today on page 14 of the board approved document. You will notice the change being proposed to include updated

[05:15:42] language, which would include AP, personal business with personal finance, as a course that can count for the graduation requirement for economics and personal finance, provided the standard right into that course. Approximately 10 school divisions have requested this change. We also recently had a superintendent who reached out to us as they were going through their program of studies and they would like to begin enrolling students in that class for 26-27 because this is an item that you have typically seen before as a body and it's a very minor change the superintendent does recommend that the board wave first

[05:16:21] review and approve this update to the board approved courses to satisfy graduation requirements for the standard advanced studies diploma thank you dr. Wallace anything else or any questions from the board hearing none is there a motion to way first review and approve the update to the Board of Education approved courses of study courses to satisfy graduation requirements for the standard and advanced studies diplomas in Virginia public schools to include language to include advanced placement business with personal finance as a

[05:17:00] course that can count for graduation requirement of economics and personal

[05:17:03] finance provided the standards are incorporated into the course. So move. Dr. Ackerman. Aye. Mr. Green. Aye. Dr. Northern. Aye. Mrs. McPherson. Mrs. Kilgore. Mr. Monk. Aye. Mr. Carraway. Sorry. Aye. Thank you. Chair votes. Aye. That's approved. Okay. Thank you very much. Thank you. We're just very excited about adding one more course option to students on the advanced pathway. So thank you board.

[05:17:44] Thank you, Mr. Chapman. Thank you, Vice President Anton. Members of the Board, Superintendent Goldstein. I had my latte right at the end of lunch, so I'm like amped up and ready to go. I'll also thank you in advance because this is another item on my regulatory bingo card.

[05:18:01] Ask the Board to repeal a major chapter on first and final review. The background checks for child day programs and family day systems is actually a very important chapter. It's integral to putting forth standards to protect health, safety, and welfare of children receiving services by ensuring that persons required to have background checks have not been convicted of an offense which prohibits licensure, registration, approval, and employment, which brings the obvious question, why are we doing this on first and final review?

[05:18:27] And the answer is because this is a merely procedural matter at this point. You may recall that the board has already approved a new general procedures and background checks. That's 8 BAC 20-821.

That has been through the full regulatory process already. It recently completed public comment on, I believe, January 1st of this year and is set to go into effect on February 1st of 2026.

[05:18:50] That chapter includes the distilled version of this chapter, and it's in updated form, and so that really makes this chapter obsolete. During the regulatory process, both of those chapters went through the NORA in November of 2022.

[05:19:07] Is that correct, Jenna? 2021, November of 2021, these regulatory actions have been in process for that long, over four years. But in the process, those got out of sync. And so the general procedures with the new background checks has already been approved. This one was trailing behind. And so we're asking that just for expediency, we can get this off the books, since it's no longer necessary. It's a regulatory vestigial organ at this point. And so we're asking that the board would repeal this chapter at the final stage so that we can move forward with 821. Thank you, Mr. Chapman. Are

[05:19:43] there any questions? It's very consistent with prior conversations. Is there a motion to a first review and approve the repeal of background checks for child day programs and family day systems and delegate to VDOE authority to make any changes necessary to comply with the Administrative Process Act or Virginia Register Act? Second. Thank you. Dr. Ackerman? Aye. Mr. Green? Aye.

[05:20:19] Dr. Northern. Aye. Mrs. McPherson. Aye. Mrs. Kilgore. Mr. Monk. Aye. Mr. Carraway. Aye. And chair votes aye. Mrs. Kilgore pipes in. Yes, if for some reason it went off at the time you said her name, but I do vote aye.

[05:20:42] Thank you so much. Okay. Well, we have a vote and approve it. Item N, we've got Mr. Gilstrap with us, and I'll take it away. good afternoon president Ashton if you're still there vice president Hanson superintendent Gullickson and other members of the board I'm Rob Gilstrap assistant superintendent of now educator workforce today I bring to you a first and final review this would be very familiar to you if you've been on the board for any length of time we brought the same basic request to you and you've

[05:21:18] approved it on every case this is just one additional area the Virginia literacy act introduced requires the improved literacy outcomes for students across the Commonwealth public schools are actively implementing the VLA the requirements out right now revisions are needed to the reading specialist endorsement regulation to align with requirements defined in the VLA work groups were convened during the summer of 2025 to recommend updates to the reading specialist endorsement in the fall the Advisory Board of teacher education licensure ABTEL recommended that the proposed changes to the reading specialist endorsement be presented to the Board of Education while I'm here

[05:21:57] the regulations for the reading specialist were revised through the same process as the other endorsement areas early childhood elementary ed middle and special ed included in the VLA which have all been amended to address the requirements for evidence-based literacy in high quality instructional materials superintendent recommends that the board way first review and approve the regulatory actions delegating authority to the VDOE to make any changes necessary to comply with the Administrative Process Act and the Virginia Registration Act if you have any questions I'm open to answer them

[05:22:33] this the changes that you will see will be identical to the ones you approved earlier this year just in another section in the Thank You Mr. Gilstrom any questions comments right hearing none is there a motion to wave first review and approve the regulatory action and delegate authority to the VDOE to make

[05:22:54] Any changes necessary to comply with the Administrative Process Act or the Virginia Register Act. Thank you. Dr. Ackerman. Aye. Mr. Green. Dr. Northern. Aye. Mrs. McPherson. Aye. Mrs. Kilgore. Aye. Mr. Monk. Aye. Mr. Carraway. Aye. And Chair Boats, aye. Thank you. Thank you. Okay. Okay. Mr. Chapman will start us off and I think Superintendent's going to step in as well.

[05:23:32] Yes. Thank you so much, Vice President Hanson. The Board may recall that this topic has been on its radar. It has just been a little bit of time. Back in August 27th of 2025, the Board engaged in a thorough review of the current comprehensive plan.

[05:23:50] And then in September of 2025, had a more substantive discussion about revisions to the Board of Education's comprehensive plan. This item is now on first review, you know, presented to the board with a fairly substantial update um major items that have been changed include the mission vision and charge for public education virginia certain the purpose of the strategic plan updated statistics on k-12 enrollment trends a new proposed five-year strategic framework which includes goals key focus areas and draft outcome metrics as well as the appendices that are required by law the board is required was required to

[05:24:30] review this um every two years and so the board did that over the summer um and so now we're we're bringing a draft back i i will say that uh you know as as one matter this is a much more visually appealing um you know strategic plan than previously and i i would be remiss if i didn't point out the very hard work of tim nuthall back there um you know who who does everything media for the agency but really made this one look spectacular um and certainly you know includes a lot of the, I think, elements that the board had discussed, and we think a couple of other things that we're hoping that the board will be excited about, the plan would be to bring

[05:25:09] this back for a final review with any comments from the board at the March meeting. Great. Thank you, Mr. Chapman. As we are reminded of in the current comprehensive plan, since 1870, our public education system in the Commonwealth has been underway and so we have a long-standing history of setting the vision for students and families here one of the elements that

[05:25:49] you will see is as you saw from our very robust past year of work I'm at the agency in partnership with the board we've had some successes that make some of the strategic plan in its current form already moot there are other areas where the board has really emphasized meeting after meeting are a top priority such as modernizing data infrastructure and other systems to be much more in tune to have more responsiveness and empowering the board with

[05:26:24] even more data information as well as parents, and as you heard previously in multiple comments including the organization structure and the recent CTE conversation, a lot of our peers in both education and workforce agencies as well as outside entities such as the Virginia Chamber's very robust Virginia blueprint process with well over a thousand Virginians setting the vision for 2035 have really set their visions and many of them have K-12 components

[05:27:03] that were mentioned but not as clearly captured as is being presented in this amended draft. So you note that there are eight core pillars that are core elements of the work.

[05:27:22] of the items chief conway and i noted is that there were zero focal points on our early childhood and early learners in our current comprehensive plan which obviously is um problematic on a multitude of reasons but we're really honing in on that strong start and seamless transition we've been

hearing from principals and superintendents on the kindergarten readiness is improving and we have more to do but that they're really noticing this incoming class is more prepared and that goes to the great work of our vqb5 program uh we have maintained key

[05:28:00] categories like educator leader and leadership excellence as you have heard you heard from vast this morning they want even more flexible pathways and our current plan had a few a few pathways but really narrowed the breadth and scope of the agency team that oversees that work um to really meet the demands of what the field is looking for such as dual enrollment credentialing additional pathways that were not yet a focal point and so it incorporates elements and key components but one of the main goals that we realized is uh there was a missing element around data

[05:28:40] and clear outcomes the current comprehensive plan had the board tracking over time to the same data point metrics as 2011 we all know the world is very different than 2011 we have made momentous progress for advanced learners students with disabilities as we heard from dr hollands earlier and are in a new era in the commonwealth and so this is very much as a preliminary draft to spark and start conversations on enhancements and refinements to the core elements that are

[05:29:19] captured in the existing plan as we really make sure that the the virginia department of education delivers on our part on the education continuum as we've heard from the council of presidents and our feeder institutions employers military etc so as you note in the boilerplate draw your attention to page 3 and the boilerplate around implementation and communication we are working on a web page to house this along with any

[05:29:57] refinements that the board wants for this first take to post and we'll continue to take input feedback on goals metrics what's missing what do we want double down on until at least Monday April 13th so that gives about four months of robust engagement with stakeholders each priority will be uniquely featured in a comment section so for example our early childhood care and team can really seek input for priority one as proposed that builds off

[05:30:33] of the Virginia early childhood foundation strategic plan and a lot of core principles and focal points of the Early Childhood Care and Education Commission but make sure that we're setting that that mark right for the board's responsibilities and lens and contributions and then the same goes for the other seven and we are going to continue to give periodic updates of the draft so that as we're receiving feedback you'll have key versions the board will be able to engage in some of those stakeholder sessions I would be

[05:31:11] remiss to the staff if I did not remind people the general assembly legislative session is very closely approaching and so there will be very active in person convenings in in late March and April but virtual and interactive web-based in January and February just given the multitude of early childhood and k-12 bills we are seeing get filed the team will be very busy next door so that's where some of the framing here but surveys listening sessions opportunities for input so we really are building off of the great momentum we had the

[05:31:48] opportunity to weigh in on a lot of the the community college chefs strategic plans the workforce agency plans the Virginia Chamber blueprint really listen to our team on both early childcare adult learning and k-12 and so this is now our part to make sure we're really preparing our learners for the future and want to give enough time for really meaningful and authentic stakeholder input so that I ask you I think great work looks good as a

[05:32:28] suggestion I would tie in this K through 12 enrollment trend to something else maybe in a section maybe that deals with chronic absenteeism on national you know stats and you know Virginia stats and maybe move it to another section and not make it first I always like to lead off with the positive and not the negative so I just does that mean a negative is coming no no no I mean yeah because it all it talks about the decline in enrollment and obviously

[05:33:03] it's there but I'm just saying it kind of hits you up front no it does that's great thank you Any other comments, questions? Dr. Northern. Just a quick one. A couple quick ones, I hope. On page 18, can we actually track kids? Does our SLDS tracking system allow us to track them from elementary, middle school, high school, secondary into the workforce? Anybody know?

[05:33:31] I just asked because page 18 says that we're going to track the percentage of graduates who enroll and persist in post-secondary education, career and technical training programs, and military service. Yes.

[05:33:47] So I will answer this with a caveat about the existence of a system. Know what it specifically tracks. I am not able to answer those questions. So VA Connects captures across all of the publicly funded early childhood care and education classrooms, so about 12,000 statewide, which kids are in those classrooms, the quality inputs about that.

[05:34:13] That back end now through VA Connects is also connected to all of the Virginia Kindergarten Readiness, so the Kindergarten Readiness Screener, Preschool Screener as a 3- and 4-year-old, and then as a kindergartner. At the moment in which you enter a school system, VA Connects enables us to look back through probabilistic matching, and so if you check whether or not you were in any early childhood experience using four fields, name, address, like zip code, something else, and then backwards assigns your state testing identifier back to that infant-toddler preschool experience.

[05:34:52] That's also the same back end with VALS or the literacy screener. and so which is also your track then on your literacy progress over time using your same state testing identifier which then links up with your standards of learning so that kind of all of that so basically an active state testing identifier assigned either for vkpr or vows va connects probabilistically matching it back to your early childhood experience and and then my understanding although not an expert on it is that that through VLDS then

[05:35:25] enables connection to a broader set of higher education community college and workforce indicators VLDS is under the auspices of Chev although we're a partner in that but the key thing is all of the system now thanks to VA connects goes all the way back using the state testing identifier and then the real question is what are all the capacities when you look at that that new addition and you look at what the capacity of what VLDS can do yeah yeah that's great I I hope I mean I assume chev's a strong partner with us because

[05:36:01] we obviously we want the state agency and shove to be you know so we can continue to track those kids so that's good and it's wonderful for being able to get us all the way back to early childhood that's phenomenal vice president hinton member northern just to add on to chief conway's remarks you heard from chev at the last meeting we'll make sure you get up to speed on the direct admissions portal that they've been building in partnership with us the virginia community college system and other workforce agencies phase one is on taking that k-12 data and we're merging the va connects team

[05:36:37] with chev to try to build this and make the systems talk to each other but it's early um but we're very excited about what that means to eliminate access barriers to both public and willing partners on the private institutions of higher ed then phase two is then now how do we start adding some of those workforce elements um phase three on the military but phase one is how do we get it right now that we do have this robust set of information of birth through eighth grade so that in addition to the longitudinal data studies of vlids we have some actual and short-term

[05:37:12] information we're also working through just mous across the institutions to have better data feedback loops for us to pull in for the school quality profiles and like really what is the impact so you notice that that is one of the leading reasons that's informed priority five around the post-secondary pipeline alignment, not just for institutions of IR ed, but how do we get to better have that feedback loop on is it working? If we say that students are really ready, is that how it's being received as they go out into enlistment in the military, actually enrolling

[05:37:51] in college-level courses at a two- or four-year institution, or are they really feeling day one ready into a career path. So we're in the early stages there, but they've been great thought partners. Partners were very grateful for Executive Director Fleming's leadership and collaboration. And as was noted at the December board meeting, have the first ever data sharing MOU agreement with them because we're really bridging that collaboration in a meaningful way, including down to our earliest learners. My other quick question was where we got 12,500

[05:38:29] post-secondary credentials as a goal seems like an odd so this one is cited from the Virginia Community College System strategic plan based on their input so we linked in a few spots where there was great alignment with board interests and ours that one had been voted on through their stakeholder input that doesn't mean we need to keep that theirs is through 2030 our plan is obviously through 2029 but in a few spots you'll see direct citations where their strategic plans that are publicly posted voted on by boards or councils

[05:39:05] had key metrics regarding early childhood k-12 education or that post-secondary through line and that was one of those okay so we hope that public will give us feedback on is that right the questions comments all right Well, just again, we had this on the agenda in our August meeting, September meeting, just appreciate the work that's gone into this.

[05:39:42] And I'm going to suggest we do this item a little differently, that even though it's for first review, I'd like a motion to accept the item for first review and delegate to the board president and superintendent the ability to make final edits consistent with the board's conversations today and previously before submission and technical edits.

[05:40:04] Since this item will go out for public comment and listening sessions and input opportunities beginning next week through the middle of April 13th, this delegation will help make sure that the public sees the best possible version of the document. I know that's a lot for a motion.

[05:40:23] Is there a second? Second. Thank you. Dr. Ackerman? I'm not fully sure I understand.

[05:40:40] We're on item P? O. Item O. oh okay the motions around us having the ability to comprehensive plan yeah and make the modifications we heard from you all today so that we can get it publicly posted next week aye thank you mr green aye dr northern aye mrs mcpherson aye mrs kilgore ah mr monk and

this is first review with you all to be able to make edits yep aye and mr carraway and chair votes aye and now we will move on to item

[05:41:15] this first review of the revised board approved textbook and high-quality and structural materials process yes and so greetings again this is the first review of the Virginia textbook and high-quality and structural materials process the board item outlines for you the current process it's just the textbook review process and so that begins on page two you have a redlined version also of the old process as well as a clean version reflecting the

[05:41:51] proposed changes because you can get really lost in that redlined version. I will provide to you an overview of the recommended changes by following the presentation that you see on the screen and that accompanies the item. Textbooks and high-quality instructional materials are among the most powerful levers available to improve student outcomes to us at scale when thoughtfully selected and rigorously reviewed these materials ensure that every student has access to evidence-based standards aligned content that supports deep learning of

[05:42:31] content while we while our standards of learning define what students are expected to learn at each grade level and course high-quality instructional materials are the curricula and instructional educational materials that are aligned to those standards and that also reflect evidence-based practices for teaching and learning. Standards and HQIM work together to bring high quality instruction to classrooms in Virginia along with quality teaching and so you can't you kind of have your standards you have your HQIM but you also have to have that quality teacher nothing replaces that quality teacher in the

[05:43:09] classroom. So pursuant to the enactment clauses of chapters 680 and 683 from the 2025 Acts of the Assembly, the department was tasked with consulting with experienced teachers, division level content specialists, and special subject matter experts to evaluate the proposed changes to the current textbook and review approval process. Through this consultation with educators who had engaged in the recent review processes you'll remember that we brought to you most recently English 6 through 12 textbooks for approval as well as math

[05:43:49] K through 12 textbooks within the last year and so we engaged with those educators to make sure that we had their feedback as far as what their experience was with the current process and what we needed to do to update our current process and as we look at the review of this material remember this does tie back to your priorities to help every learner meet high expectations it sounds like that might be a continuing priority to review our current process

[05:44:25] we held those multiple stakeholder feedback meetings as well as we sent out a survey to receive feedback we also had some input from recent publishers in that process as well overall feedback was in favor with the current process being continued mostly remaining the same however making sure that we maintain it being a clear fair and rigorous process what does need to be updated includes the tenants included in the legislation which define textbooks and

[05:45:00] HQIM so you will see in the item the legislatively driven definition of textbooks and other high-quality instructional materials. You'll see first up there that adequate content and materials correspond with our standards of learning. That is no different than the current textbook process. What has been added to that definition are the other facets. The instructional practices that are aligned with general and discipline specific research practices, so what is good in science and what is good in math and what is good in English

[05:45:36] and what is good in history and then assessments to monitor student mastery of that curriculum content so our current process really just looks at the textbook itself this would expand and look at those assessments that accompany student learning so that teachers can gauge how well students have mastered that content and then guidance for meeting students who have needs who are at risk of not mastering content. This includes our English language learners and our students with disabilities. You heard Dr. Hollins earlier talk about the

[05:46:12] supports needed for our teachers and so this would expand supports to teachers of students with disabilities as well as English learner students through the high-quality instructional programs. And then finally resources for teachers that develop their content knowledge. That goes back to the high quality instruction that teachers have in the classroom that they are producing in the classroom so making sure that our educators are trained and they are able to implement the instructional practices of those programs that we're reviewing and that those practices are based on reliable trustworthy and valid evidence

[05:46:51] and that there is a demonstrated record of success and a build of understanding on those curriculum components so it's really that training piece that training component for educators and that is actually what we heard loud and clear from the field from their experiences they really support those resources for teachers and the the focus on having that those extra support and supplemental materials for students who are struggling to master content in addition to stakeholder feedback so there is stakeholder feedback included on the

[05:47:27] slide I will not go through all of that but in addition to that stakeholder feedback which you know really does support kind of making minor what I consider minor edits that are going to have major impact to the process we did take into consideration that we had the Johns Hopkins study I can't remember month this board saw that back in the summer maybe the HQIM Johns Hopkins study and so we did take that into consideration as well when we reviewed

[05:48:02] our processes we also took into consideration very strongly what we have experienced with the implementation of the Virginia Literacy Act HQIM has already been in effect for our youngest students our K through 5 K through fifth grade English classes already use HQIM in their programs and so we took that into consideration too is like the best practices and lessons learned and a lot of that has to do with teacher training you will see some of

[05:48:38] the feedback included that rubrics should be discipline specific and so in our previous process things were a little bit more generic and yes we did have some discipline specific that was related to the standards but remember when you have research out there for science, science is gonna be different than research for math or English, and so we really wanna be able to make those rubrics discipline specific based on that latest research.

[05:49:03] And so some of our rubrics were kind of confining us to what we were able to look at in regard to those practices. Some other things that we heard from the committees is that timelines and workload constraints were cited as a significant hurdle with the recent review cycles, And that really had to do more with the math review cycle.

[05:49:24] And just because there was somewhat of a delay, and then it was kind of a hurry up and push through and get as many companies on the list as we could. And so the review panel members themselves

who participated in those stakeholder meetings indicated that, you know, they could have taken a little bit longer to review some of those materials.

[05:49:46] And so it was recommended that we build in additional time for this process. so that there's also some professional learning opportunities and what they want to see with professional learning is that once we have that verified and you have approved textbook vendors that we do some sort of professional development for division leaders that explains each of the products to them as an overview that would assist them with their local processes for adoption at the local level and so that is where you see that division leaders requested that training and support documents that are easy to understand. We'd like to develop support

[05:50:24] documents that are really easy to understand on the alignment piece and we have done some of that for, we always publish our correlation documents, but we have felt like some of the resources from the VLP, the Virginia Literacy Partnerships, that have come out with our curriculum guides could be modeled or used to model for other content areas as well and adjusted appropriately. In addition to the Johns Hopkins study and our stakeholder feedback we looked at practices utilized by other states kind of looking at what other states do some of them do a lot of what we are recommending in the proposed changes

[05:51:04] they do a cycle much like we do of every seven year some of them do shorter cycles some of them do intermediate you know review cycles and then some only approve early literacy they don't even approve textbooks for other content areas so there's a wide range of what was included in that review of states and then like I said lessons learned I'll go through the selection best practices pretty quick this is in your in your item and I'm certainly not going to read all of this but really it is important that we engage our committees in that rigorous HQIM vetting process making sure that they are trained on

[05:51:42] what the expectations are for high quality instructional materials as well as they go through that process of reviewing materials. That we review HQIM and determine gaps with accessibility, and this is where we want to make sure that we're supporting all learners, particularly our students who struggle with learning, but also our advanced learners, because we know that our advanced learners sometimes will sit in classes and, you know, wish that they could go ahead. It speaks to our seat time flexibility. Been bouncing out of these this meeting in between seat time flexibility training that was also going

[05:52:16] on at the same time so very very hot and fresh on my brain. Also conducting a practical and technical review so really looking at usability and technical cost and being very transparent with the materials and how much they're going to cost. We have worked with the Office of Innovation to kind of lean into some of some advice on this and they recommended you know having some single sign-on compatibility that means that when a child logs into their device for the day they're logging into that those high-quality instructional resources as well that learning management systems can integrate with these programs as

[05:52:54] well being very transparent about the cost again I talked about the professional learning and I won't go into that but really just more professional learning teachers are eager to have professional learning division leaders are eager for professional learning and particularly around how high quality instructional materials look as they are implemented in the classroom and we are starting to roll out some of that training in February actually so very timely and then developing and implementing a strategic plan

so it's important that and that's what we're going to be working with divisions on how they roll out HQIM in their divisions will be very important and that'll all be at the

[05:53:33] local level and this process still allows that local level to have autonomy on what they are going to adopt so just as the previous process we would make recommendations to approve textbooks in HQIM but then local divisions would lead their own adoption processes to adopt HQIM with the new legislation and so the next slide 11 kind of outlines for you where these changes are in that big document that is the new process where we are really looking to have that additional training support our learners a solicit additional feedback and so

[05:54:11] that was another another bit involving and making very explicit announcements about textbook review cycles at the state level so that we can get more localities involved in that process and then making technical changes so we do have you know there are some technical changes within this document that we had to kind of just get with the times so to speak right it was an old process last adopted in 2011 so it's time for some of those updates and so what we are also

[05:54:47] looking at is based on this stakeholder process department staff recommend a look at some of the board approved materials from the recent mathematics adoption in February and March well some of them demonstrate you know some alignment that we would want to be in more current in alignment with this new process once it is passed by this board and so that process is outlined for you where the publishers would be provided with an opportunity to realign some of those materials that were less aligned and that would just support our students our educators in the field and make it easier for them to adopt more materials.

[05:55:27] Some next steps. So after the process is approved we'll host webinars on the updated process. Of course we have this time period between now and March when we bring this item back to you for review and we would recommend or we would look at the current timelines. The legislation around this bill did specify dates for adoption we would look at adopting on a little slightly different schedule than that more to mirror with the needs of materials in

[05:56:03] the hands of school divisions and so we've provided for you you know there when the last adoption cycles have been out there and science and history are two content areas that have not had adopted materials in quite some time so we would begin using this process of course with the upcoming 2026 review cycle for our core literacy programs we've already worked with our Virginia literacy partnerships really doesn't change their process a whole lot but it does align our processes and also make sure that they are protected as well training for our school divisions we begin that in February as I said and

[05:56:42] then proceed with the process to review re-review currently board approved materials in mathematics so you have attached to your board item also a letter that could be sent to publishers from those recent reviews but now you know entertain any questions if you have that you have about the process and it's probably easier to read in the clean version of the HQIM document but I'm happy to answer any questions thank you dr. Wallace and just open it up for

[05:57:16] questions or counsel or direction. So right now we have ed reports, knowledge maps, reading league, curriculum insights. There are four or five new curriculum review on the block, right? Used to be just ed reports and now we've got all these other ones springing up and there's confusion in the field. It's

been written about as recently as this week and I think states are getting confused, right because ohio adopts one virginia doesn't adopt it vice versa and everybody's like going okay

[05:57:54] which which one of these should we be looking at for direction so i guess i mean and now we're adding on our own process so i guess my question for you is how do you think about these four or five national folks who are evaluating and and bringing people teachers together just like we are some of which you know obviously are looking at standards that are not unique to us but how do you how do you guys use other other folks and how are you thinking about ai because i know that several states who have spoken with have already come up with a human set of vetted criteria like they've

[05:58:33] did the the real brain work of putting the a putting the criteria together and then they've run that through AI and in many cases they're finding that AI is doing a better job with alignment finding alignment examples and they're able to find themselves so I guess if you've just two parts whether how you think about the other folks doing this work and how you think about the potential role of AI so great questions and certainly appreciate that we did you we have used as you know ed reports and we look at those and consider that as a part but because it

[05:59:07] wasn't part of the process we had and so any of those review processes they're nationally done I think the big thing that we've heard loud and clear even as yes is as earlier as recent as yesterday during a math task force advisory committee meeting where we talked about this process and gave another opportunity for feedback from the field and practitioners and we heard loud and clear that alignment to Virginia standards is really a key point and so think that you know to your point that's where this process is virginia specific because we are

[05:59:42] really looking at that alignment to the standards and many times the people on our review committees for textbooks and high quality instructional materials are also the persons who were on committees who wrote the standards so they're evaluating materials for standards that they were involved in developing or refining and so they have great content knowledge of what that standard is for virginia students now those reports are certainly great and those other processes are certainly great for some of the other components of hqim and i think that is also why we you know started looking at ed reports and some and other states are moving away from ed

[06:00:22] reports and moving to some of the other reviewers um you know until ed reports updates uh their reviews but um you know to your point i think that you know the we can consider those as a part of the review and looking at some of those instructional practices but what we're hearing from the field loud and clear is that alignment is really really important and ensuring that alignment is there and then the implementation is very close second to that so how these products are being implemented at the local level and gaps being filled because there is no core

[06:01:01] you will hear me say it a million times and you'll hear other other practitioners in our office will say this a million times there is no perfect core program and so there's always going to be something that is missing or not as robust in a in a program and that's where the local level really has to think about filling in either with content or instructional practices, supplemental materials, that kind of thing.

[06:01:26] As far as AI, I don't think as a state that we are ready to have a, you know, we would have to invest in some programming to kind of be able to do that and use that. I think it's a great place to work towards going for those processes.

[06:01:47] But I think that we look at AI in a couple of different ways. you're looking at it as reviewing the materials. We're looking at AI also as how teachers might be using AI in the classroom for instructional practices. And so, you know, there are different facets to considerations for AI. Yes, sorry. Those are wonderful questions because we do want to have that national lens in what's happening nationally with curriculum and instruction.

[06:02:17] One of the things that Dr. Wallace and I were talking about with this process was using it as a lever to improve the preparation of our educators in how to identify high quality curriculum and implement it. And so one of the things that we are going to do moving forward is looking at some of the teachers who are provisionally licensed or some of the educators in our needs intensive support schools or off track schools and leverage this process with them.

[06:02:47] Because what we know is even if a division purchase curriculum teacher's still going to go online and pull a lesson so they need to know how to identify is this lesson high quality and so i think by leveraging looking at that the national what's happening nationally looking at that a strong alignment to virginia standards is one thing leveraging this process as a training tool to build our educator workforce is the second piece and then ai definitely we have to do more with ai i know we are moving forward with like teacher

[06:03:22] licensure and collaborating with another state agency to to really improve that process and leverage ai and i think that's also something once we get that system down and train that ai system we could look at other areas that we are working in um to leverage ai because um that that's where we're headed and as dr wallace said also how are teachers leveraging ai in the classroom for instructional purposes thank you other questions or thoughts all right well thank you dr wallace

[06:03:58] and we'll accept this item for first review and see you in march thank you thank you all right uh items q and r i guess we're gonna have mr jennings or not we work together on this oh he is blocked by the dais okay so we are going to discuss accreditation appeals in december you were presented with the outcomes of the school performance and support framework and so you saw

[06:04:35] the accountability piece and then there was the accreditation piece so there was this deliberate separation of accountability and accreditation and so we presented the accreditation outcomes and schools were either had were awarded for this um based off of the 24 25 submissions either fully accredited or conditionally accredited at that december board meeting this data was shared so there were um a little 1700 a little over 1700 schools that were fully accredited and 113

[06:05:12] schools that were conditionally accredited divisions they can appeal their accreditation status and so school divisions had until december 29th to submit appeals to for accreditation and um the board considers per the regulation uh appeals in only limited circumstances so we received all the appeals we looked over them um in in depth none of them rose to the to the level that met the code requirement to bring them before the board because a lot of these

[06:05:49] appeals were either oh we didn't understand the question so here's the evidence or they met with their board and they adopted policy that then met the criteria and so there were 12 school divisions and they're all listed on the screen here that submitted appeals and in total was 59 schools where these appeals were submitted for that were conditionally accredited so of those 12 school divisions nine of those divisions had their the school all of the schools that they submitted for were transitioned from conditionally accredited to fully

[06:06:26] accredited and I just want to give you some examples Prince Williams really comes to mind they were conditionally accredited because they did not have in the policy at that time a requirement to offer a certificate of completion so in the regulations it's required that you have a you know diploma and then you also offer a certificate of completion uh and and what we heard from our school divisions is that what we want all of our schools all of our students to get a diploma so why would we even offer that certificate and we know that um it's in the reg and we are following we're following the requirements in the

[06:07:04] law um so in december prince williams they did their board um updated the policy uh to include that certificate and they have now met the requirements um when we look at gloucester county this was one where they were some of their schools were conditionally accredited because of facilities and safety provisions specifically content that was was either lacking or not present in certain handbooks or student code of conducts so they have worked and they have updated all of those handbooks code of conducts they have trained teachers they submitted a ton

[06:07:41] of information demonstrating that they are now in compliance with the regulation and so and so all of the schools that they submitted will be conditioned will be fully accredited and so next steps the goal is we want all schools to be fully accredited so any school that is still not fully accredited we are going to work with to ensure that they can make some significant progress towards becoming fully accredited the schools that did not transition just yet from conditionally accredited to fully accredited were those that were

[06:08:17] comprehensive support and improvement and so the regulation is very it has some very key requirements to move these schools from a conditionally accredited status to a fully accredited status and so we are going to work with those division superintendents to ensure that they are set up for success to move their comprehensive support and improvement schools to demonstrate that improvement that's needed to move that accreditation status and so this is why we didn't bring any of the appeals before you because there were none that were so unique that met that threshold that warranted the board to officially

[06:08:53] render a decision we are going to start to send letters to all of the school divisions that submitted accreditation appeals so that they can have their accreditation they can have the updates for their accreditation status and the results of those appeals and the next steps and then we will work to update the online system so when you go to our school quality profile and you see that the school is conditionally accredited so what we have planned to do is we're going to update it but we're going to update it within with an asterisk because want to demonstrate that there was um some movement so that if someone who looked at the

[06:09:33] school quality profiles in december and now they're looking at it in january they're like well what happened here so we want to be able to um clearly identify what happened and why that moved why the rating changed and so are there any questions vice president hanson uh deputy superintendent and thank you so much I just want to make sure the board is fully appreciating this presentation obviously you've championed now for multiple years this bifurcation on student accountability

[06:10:13] through our school performance and support framework and pulling out the accreditation side on making sure schools are safe that they're complying with laws and I think this is a testament that within days of the accreditation ratings coming out with clarity on why school divisions took action and deserve a

huge nod to both the superintendents and school boards that have really leaned in on making sure that they are up to all of the codes, regulations,

[06:10:51] requirements. And it's doing what we hoped the system would do. That being said, we also know from the board's robust discussions on SOQ prescriptions and where you want to see accreditation go, there's definitely more work to be done, including in partnership with the General Assembly, including on elements that you may want to eliminate, and drawing back to the organizational structure on the operations branch building out an

[06:11:24] accreditation office so that in addition to the team currently involved that there is a one-stop hub to help with supports technical expertise etc and so for year one this is great progress and more for the board to do in the March March, April, June meetings around what does year two and beyond look like to really make sure that that's capturing operations, finance, safety, and just that housing conditions are systems, and that there's a chance to demonstrate making that progress was so beautifully articulated

[06:12:04] by the deputy superintendent. So just want to draw that parallel since we've had so many conversations from the board on this on why this is great for a year one in just one month from those releases on momentum being made and there's more work to do yes and I just want to thank all of the division superintendents that took the time to submit appeals and who did the work to make sure that they were tightly aligned with the accreditation requirements and they did this I mean December 29th those appeals were due so they got into action as soon as they got

[06:12:40] their accreditation status and and also to the department staff who worked very diligently over the holiday to review all those appeals so to mr. Jennings and team so thank you for that and we look forward to continuing to do this good work thank you I just would like to echo both comments too and when we kind of started a lot of this work three and a half years ago and just trying to bifurcate the two and just even from a nomenclature and just even an understanding in the field and parents it was just really terrific to see where

[06:13:19] we are can I just ask a quick question just what we're just taking this on first review today but what are the next steps keep us updated on the status of the audits right so there's no first review we would just wanted to give you an update on where we are and so but we will keep you updated and if any appeals come are submitted to us that do warrant board action then we'll bring that before you but we will continue to work with the school divisions that have schools that are not that are conditionally accredited so that they can have a path toward a credit fully accredited status

[06:13:53] thank you all right on item our first review of an amendment to the Virginia's consolidated state plan mr. Jennings that's right so speaking of bifurcation we thought important to sort of separate the two of us and so thinking about accountability which is very much around performance metrics that that is the focus of our consolidated state plan and and that's where accountability lives under title one part a and you're gonna see in our presentation today this is a collaborative and so I come and sent to

[06:14:30] you but I'm coming on behalf of the entire department so good afternoon to you all. Good to see you. And so what we're asking for today is by Supertent's recommendation is first review to send our consolidated state plan amendment nine for public comment to send it out and have the public and stakeholders continue to engage with us. So I'm going to walk through the slideshow here and do a high level overview of the changes and what will be sent to the public and take any questions from you. So we'll

start with the purpose for seeking the amendment, the background on the state plan, stakeholder engagement, which is very crucial to this work,

[06:15:10] the overview of proposed revisions, and then our next steps. So I want to share that amending the plan expands opportunities for students and incorporates the current accountability outcomes. So when the board was discussing the framework through 22, 23, and 24, the years there, 23 and 24, it's really we're getting into the details of the framework, the board signaled that it wanted to continue conversation in areas.

[06:15:34] It was very clear that it wanted to continue to discuss JROTC in particular. They wanted to revisit 3E readiness. I didn't put on there about high-quality work-based learning because that's already happened. That was something the board signaled and said, we're not ready at this time. We want more information.

[06:15:50] We'll come back and think of that. And the board adopted that in May by request of school divisions to include it during the school year. We could have held that, but the school division said, please do that work now. so we brought it to you and the board adopted it. JRTC, we're still sending it out for public comment. We want to hear. We've revised what we proposed to you.

[06:16:11] We've added leadership courses, so not just JRTC, but this idea of also leadership courses. Another piece was expanding advanced coursework for students. The board discussed prior to the adoption of the framework going beyond mathematics. We discussed world history. We discussed history. We discussed science. We looked at high school courses within the framework at the middle school level. And so the proposal here is to expand beyond mathematics and look at history and look at science as well. Civics education. The board discussed in 22, 23, 24 and now 25 and 26 the importance of civics education. If you

[06:16:51] look at the five C's in Virginia, the profile of a graduate, civics is one of our C's. The importance of civics education. And the board discussed having civics as a high school metric, the citizenship test. That was something that the board discussed, you know, using that in the framework. And so that idea of history being included has been something the board's been discussing. And so now we bring that again to you and to the public to weigh in. Also, when we put Amendment 7 to USED, we shared in our amendment to them that we needed some baseline data from our first year of the framework, and we would come back to them with amendment so this was expected all along that we would do an amendment we needed to we needed one

[06:17:31] year of data to review our federally identified schools look at some other pieces around the readiness indicator things like that so this was expected work that we've been doing other pieces is feedback you're going to see on my next slide feedback even from other groups we were consulting quite a bit with jark they were informing us and we were talking with them they're engaging stakeholders we're engaging stakeholders looking at business rules looking at calculations and so they've been giving us feedback throughout the year of what works, what they would like to see change. So that's included here. Multiple sections of the plan contain outdated information.

[06:18:08] This plan came around with the Every Student Succeeds Act in 2015, now 10 years ago. And that's when the plan was beginning, 2016, 2017. That's when it was adopted for implementation. So we're talking now six, seven years ago, pre-pandemic. You think about programs you were doing pre-pandemic and how things may have shifted post pandemic. You look at the data, all those pieces. So it was important

to go through the entire plan and update accordingly. Examples of misalignment you see there. Again, data back to 2007-8 sort of the programs. There were some 2003 McKinney-Vento talking about some dispute resolution processes. Again, people use what they had at the time,

[06:18:48] but it was now time to look with fresh eyes and make revisions. And then Virginia Department education staff from multiple offices. I want to again applaud the work. Our ESEA programs office really reviewed sections, thought about feedback from stakeholders and went through and you'll see red line in the version of updates to those areas. Continuous stakeholder engagement. We've been meeting with division and school leaders. We've met with subject matter experts, advisory groups, organizations, associations. All of that's been included in the proposed revisions and we continue to gather feedback through emails we receive

[06:19:27] meetings conferences phone calls again we go to conferences sometimes to talk about one topic and they'll give us feedback on the section and we consider that as well and that's what we're asking in today is just to send it out for first review to send it out for public comment and start our no less than 30 day public comment to gather even more feedback that feedback as I shared that third bullet we've used that and made revisions you know I've come to you month after month and saying well here last month we said this and now we're saying this and sort of this is what we've been gathering and finally you see I referenced in earlier but J Lark study the Joint Legislative Audit

[06:20:04] and Review Committee very important work that they've done a very comprehensive review of our accountability system they included pieces of our amendment that was available at the time and and provided some feedback on that and so that also was thought in consideration with what we're doing for review so title one part a is where the accountability system lives the school performance support framework and so you see there won't go through all of these but you see at a very high level the proposed revisions within that section we talked about some non-negotiables or things that we must do we do need to have

[06:20:41] a growth methodology that is something that is needed for this year we've been talking with the field around we've talked to our technical advisory council as well. TAC recommended that we use progress tables or value tables. That's been something we've been discussing. Moving to exception B for the recently arrived learners. Mastery index for assessments. Three performance levels.

[06:21:03] TAC recommended that as well. Adjusting our mastery level calculation. I've already mentioned to you about the advanced coursework. We've been talking about adding history. That's something we've been discussing. Readiness indicator there speaking specifically to the integrated reading and writing assessment that's been operational now for a few years, but how is it scored is a question. Talked about the JRTC piece and then looking at federally identified schools, how will they exit? So quite a bit of information there. It's staggered. Some of it for this year, a few pieces, and then some of it for next year and the year after that to give time for implementation. We talk about revisions to

[06:21:42] Title II, Part A. This emphasizes supporting our current and aspiring teachers, assistant principals, principals and principal supervisors it's focusing on effective teacher and school leader preparation and retention talks about funding mentoring and induction programs and you see a wealth of data resources there to align and update really helping our teacher pipeline our principal pipeline things we talk about to really retain solid staff and help recruit solid staff as well other title programs updated

resources in program partnerships the department now is working with different organizations it's important to update

[06:22:21] that to really fit the needs of Virginia students now in this year again many years ago it may have been different based on the population updates to the academic career plan updating screening tools this is our title 3 section professional development monitoring frequency English learners who take the alternate access tests the grant cycle in title 4 has changed to improve student outcomes and better align with federal expectations. Title four is also, this is your 21st century.

[06:22:51] They've increased their grant awards to ensure programs can deliver high quality comprehensive out of school time. And that's something they measure really to see the success of these after school programs or out of school time programs. So you see on that list, it's pretty overwhelming. And that's why I do refer to it as a consolidated state plan. It was, you know, formulated to say, how is a state going to meet the requirements of ESSA? And so you see on slide nine all the titles that I referenced all this pieces of you know federal dollars coming to us grants sort of legislation how are we responding to this how is the department being responsible

[06:23:27] fiscally programmatically how are we serving our students and so you see them all listed there and as you look and others look through public comment you'll see changes red line version of the changes through these sections so our next step is continuing to refine the plan through ongoing stakeholder input. Again, what we're asking today is first review to send it out for public comment. We'll continue to collect and review stakeholder feedback. We're going to have listening sessions to really hear from people around it, make sure they understand what's being asked or being changed or considered for change. Again, we'll apply this feedback to inform

[06:24:04] refinements so people understand the vision, the rationale, and how pieces fit together, and then sharing that stakeholder and feedback with you at the March board meeting. So I pause there for any comments or questions I have a few things and this might be partially my fault I took a girl trip with my daughter this weekend and so when this came up late I think I'm I might be missing some information really want to yield to all the social studies experts we've received emails from extensive public comment on some of their concerns as well as this going up

[06:24:42] too quick so I need clarification on reporting back to us in March and April Is this going to be for a final review, or is this a report back on what we've heard from the social studies people after they were given access to the Virginia social studies people, that type of – does that – I don't know if you can answer that question.

[06:25:03] Right. So the next reporting would be the culmination of feedback for each section. Okay. And so it would be now that they've seen the final proposal – because we've been talking and sort of sharing language through PowerPoint, but not in the final plan. And now that it's out there and we've engaged, you'll be coming back to the board and saying, here's what the public's saying and bringing back for you to decide, should it be found our view?

[06:25:21] Do we need more comments, sort of what to do? But again, it's hard to say because the plan, that's the intention, is to put it out there, get feedback, and it could change. You know, based on that feedback, it could be changed based on what we just proposed today. Yeah, but I guess what makes me nervous is seeing social studies in 26, 27, with a lot of the concerns from the social studies community.

[06:25:41] But that's not my area of expertise. social studies is not but I want to speak to special education because they will also need significant time and I don't know if the board is aware for for Wiesel and VAP if they create history social studies as an assessment next year so I just want to jump in quickly and clarify it's 27 28 okay one of the reasons why it we need time to implement it okay and we just had new history standards 23 24 history standards and so what you need to do with and we just finished this with reading and mathematics is you then create what the VESOL she's referring to as essential standards you take the standards of learning and you talk about what's essential and this is for our

[06:26:20] students who are cognitive significant cognitive disabilities and so what we need to do for history as if this is where we end up going is we need to develop we need to revise them anyway but really devise them in a way that meets the requirements under ESSA as reading math and science do and so we would do the essentialized learn standards of learning and then we would revise VAP our Virginia alternate assessment program we would have assessments again that would be equivalent to reading math and science for history as well and so that is why we 18 giving us the two years that is sufficient time to do that work it will take time to build out those assessments and do field testing and everything you're discussing and so that's why the

[06:27:00] proposal is for school year 27 28 and so I just want to clarify that but great point okay great thanks mark and I honestly just I'm a little nervous about how quick this went up and doing the first review so I would really want to caution that if we do this if in March and April this board probably should hear from the Virginia social studies leaders on and and I think maybe a work session see in this performance assessment I think that we should look at that since so many of the unified voices of the social studies community and I hate to put dr. Hollins on this spot but it would probably be good to

[06:27:36] hear her timeline needed for VAP and vSOL whenever that before this can be decided I think in a final review part of me likes the suggestion the one one of the people we heard from in public comment this morning said maybe we move forward and exclude social studies for now but I really feel like we should yield to some of the concerns we're hearing around social studies do not agree with not including social studies for now I hear your concerns and I appreciate them and we'll take them into account with the outreach and our

[06:28:15] communication efforts but I just think we got to proceed with what we have and get the input from folks and yeah and just to be clear all today is asking is just to put it out for public comment officially and start the process just to engage and then when we bring it back in March with all that public comment we'll share. The forms that I referenced here, the online forms, there are some specifically around, you know, proposing elementary middle high school, sort of where people smell that. We've got some strong feelings very much in favor for civics from the school, but maybe they don't feel as strongly about some of the others. So we want to collect that data and bring it to you, sort of, it can be

[06:28:53] very general to say history, but sort of specifically where. Where are the concerns, what are the concerns, and what does that look like. We've met with that group, we've talked about, I've shared with you, I've met with USCD around a pathway for performance tasks what that looks like and sounds like and we again I can articulate all that here for you today so it's something we can bring back to the board with some data and talk through sort of what public comment says at this time Vice President Hanson member Ackerman I also want to affirm we also have had very favorable public comments and so we just need to remember

[06:29:29] our board meetings are not always in a convenient time and location for all stakeholders from the commonwealth to engage and so we also have received letters from other social studies organizations who have said thank you for prioritizing this so i i am very appreciative of the advocacy work by the sslc but remind the board there are also additional stakeholders organizations and inputs that the staff have also received i think it's just also my personal philosophy that that I'd love to see performance measure too.

[06:30:04] So I agree with the public comments that do we need another SOL test, so. - Well, that's a great segue to say. Soon, we'll be coming to the board around, we need to revise the guidelines for those performance assessments. And we'll talk about legislation, as we refer to as House Bill 1957, around guidelines, scoring rubrics, data collection, and sort of what that legislation requires.

[06:30:26] So you will absolutely see and be a part of the process and it'll be, the board will adopt guidelines for that. And we'll be working with, and we have in the past, we'll work with groups on that to help develop those guidelines and sort of look at. Right now, again, you heard the statistic around half the divisions are using it, and they're using the board-adopted guidelines for it.

[06:30:45] But some of the pieces in that will need to be reviewed by the board. And you've heard it already around the data collection pieces one, where we as a state currently do not collect that. In the new system, that might be something the board says we do want to collect that. And there's some pieces in House Bill 1957. There's some requirements that we will meet.

[06:31:02] And so you will. You will get a look at that. And we're excited to engage with those divisions and those advocacy groups, those organizations around the new standards and thinking of the new standards and then what do these alternative assessments look like. Mr. Jennings, can you please remind the board, especially with our newest board member, on the cliff notes of House Bill 1957 and, most importantly, when it actually becomes law?

[06:31:25] So House Bill 1957 to be prepared for, that's why we're going to begin the work here shortly, goes as an amendment to July 1st, 2026. And so we're getting prepared for it to start next year. So we've been doing groundwork, foundation work, things like that. But it's a very comprehensive assessment bill. We're doing work like I shared. We have an innovative assessment work group around it to build out a new assessment system.

[06:31:44] There's other pieces in the legislation. The alternative assessments is one that we've heard around, but also grades 7 through 12. Students, SOL, becomes like a final exam. It's 10% of their grades. that's another piece in there reporting to a hundred point scale helps with that communication of you know as a parent I received my child's score how do they do parents seem to understand a zero to a hundred point scale that's another piece of legislation so very comprehensive but it looks at you know assessment and our practices and sort of that thinking through that lens of what we're

[06:32:15] reporting and sharing out not to be a broken record but I'll just point out that as I'm looking at this again with fresh eyes both the enlistment and enrollment buckets clearly have tears for all the points the only one that doesn't and what we were arguing for earlier is the the employment CTE the employment is the only one that doesn't have tears so anyway it just seems like it even be much more elegant and consistent standard if we also treated

[06:32:51] that similarly as we're treating the other areas okay well thank you mr. Jennings and we will take this item for first review and we'll see you in March and look forward to the feedback and thank you all for the next five agenda items are all written reports and what I would hop her up to the the board is that these are all reports on the progress to date from key initiatives of

[06:33:25] the board and if hopefully everybody's had a chance to read them and I don't think we need to have summaries given to those but I would offer up if any board member has questions on any of the five we can take those now and otherwise we could also work offline with other reports of the staff hearing none we will move to our last agenda item on discussion of current issues and mr.

[06:34:01] did you have an item you wanted to bring us up to date on? I did and appreciate that Vice President Hanson. Earlier this week I was able to attend a conference with superintendents and chief financial officers and just want to thank the superintendent and the staff a majority of which have presented today but spent a good bit of time connecting with those superintendents and chief finance officers to share some of the information we've talked about but also a plethora of other information and so really excited to see that connection

[06:34:36] between the agency and those in the field and appreciate the extra work that I know went into that so thank you for doing that and the connection to the field it shows thank you any other comments from members of the board before I let superintendent Gullickson have the last word today I would just like to again thank you mr. Carraway for joining us today and actually had several texts and other communications today of just of your background and commending you for who you are and what you are so just hope your ears are

[06:35:15] burning a little bit and also just grateful for her colleague of Michelle Ashton being able to step forward and look forward to her leadership as president of the board going forward here so great thank you vice president Hanson I also want to echo we are so thrilled to get to work with you the team is already eager on connecting with you and diving in so welcome again to

[06:35:48] the board I also wanted to pause and just thank the tremendous staff in case you are not amazed by this annual report this team has gone into superdrive for kids and this was not part of the plan and I want to recognize them because it

[06:36:27] is a sign of their deep committed relentless pursuit of excellence for every child. And the transformation that has gone on in the organization, the shift from what is possible and dreaming bigger and setting aspirational but attainable metrics that push our own internal staff and external partners further, our massive expansion of stakeholder

[06:37:05] input collaboration I mean the amount of time leaders like dr. Wallace and mr. Jennings have put in on stakeholder calls you would be amazed the evenings the mornings the midnights the weekends and they are always accessible to fielding barriers eliminating roadblocks helping leaders pivot on all of the transformational laws that we've been able to get through with bipartisan support at the General Assembly and with support with Governor Youngkin and and

[06:37:44] the board is in great hands for what is next and so we cannot wait to get more input from the field on how we've tried to sum up where we are after all the momentum we've made for kids and where we really want to take kids by 2029 and And so that is going to continue to drive the work of this team.

[06:38:10] But we have a best-in-class staffed agency. And I think sometimes we make these board meetings look easy because they do so much work in partnership with our stakeholders.

[06:38:28] I am not always the easiest with my redlined pen for these team members. And they're all laughing, with joy at that and you know it's because we want excellence not only for our agency but for the board and most importantly for our stakeholders that we serve and so i just want to say thank you to the team who just puts in so many hours to really move the needle for kids for families it's so exciting to me on where we are at the start of 26. i hope you are

[06:39:05] inspired about what this year has in store you have less board meetings this year you're welcome uh that's more for the staff um but we are so excited to be able to collaborate with the general assembly on concepts that are coming forward on budget discussions that are coming forward as well as continue to drive the board's um tremendous vision forward for kids but The amount of work they've done just in the last month, including holidays and mandatory agency closures, cannot be underscored.

[06:39:39] So I know it was a robust agenda getting all the way down to item W, almost to Z, so close. But it is to drive the needle even further for students and I think really gives a lot of folks hope on what's possible as they start off their spring semester, Including with a new advanced course option starting for next school year. So just thank you to the board This this team is dynamite. So I needed to pause and recognize them and with that I think you can take a motion to close Thank you

[06:40:15] Just here here and just even looking out at everybody right now. Just it's a great collective Team and just appreciate the leadership. So thank you all yeah I just want to just glob on honestly I'm one of those that ask a lot of questions on here to you guys and just wanted to say it's it's it's never been questioning your ability or your knowledge it's just really because we're all seeking excellence for kids and I appreciate that you guys have been so terrific and answering my questions and the questions of my board members up

[06:40:55] here so thank you for leading the state I feel like we had a state agency for many years that thought we can't do that we can't do that and just actually just give up their license to lead and I thank you guys for actually taking the mantle of leadership as opposed to just using it as an excuse of we can't do that because we've never done that before and you've shown what it takes to actually get you know our districts and divisions on board and actually look to you for leadership I think they're looking to you now in ways that they've never done before because they haven't had an agency to look to in my opinion

[06:41:32] and I also just wanted to thank the superintendent for her leadership hands down this has been a some turbulence we'll just say that we're not acting like we haven't had leadership changes on this board and and the superintendent spot but I will say that this was a smooth transition it was a strong transition and I feel like we are the better for State Superintendent Scullison's leadership and we've all appreciated her demeanor and the way that

[06:42:06] she leads with humor and grace and dyna dyna how do you say that word it's dynamite or dynamic dynamism you understand the same dynamite dynamic dyna dynement i'm gonna give up you got it either way dynamite dynamic thank you and uh here here i'm gonna stop before i get a motion mr vice president can i say you can i say a few words absolutely miss kilgoire thank you wow i would much rather have been there

[06:42:45] in person to see everyone um i appreciate the opportunity to participate via zoom today um i want to echo what all has been said thus far about all the state staff i tell anyone i meet to ask me any questions about my experience with vdoe and i i always tell them just how impressed i am with each person and how they're they're so caring about their knowledge and their and their built their ability to care for what they're doing is so exceptional and i try to tell them when i see them face to face um so thank you to all of you for such hard work i know you put in

[06:43:21] hours that we have no clue about and to emily and think of three words and i guess the three words i think of you also describes the state staff professionalism passion and compassion and i've been honored to work with all of you thus far and i i just wanted to say that since i wasn't there to share in person so thank you so much for all that all of you do thank you mrs That is a wonderful message to leave us on so motion to adjourn our meeting.



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