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Virginia Board of Education, Business Meeting, Thursday, April 23, 2026

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- Official meeting video (VDOE, YouTube): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fG8esELn22o>
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[00:10:36] Good morning. It is just after 9 a.m. We have a full house, and we are going to convene our meeting. As is now customary for this board, we will begin our meeting with a moment of silence, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

[00:10:55] Please rise if you are able.

[00:11:02] Good morning. We have a full standing room only in the house today, and for those who are live streamed, we'll want to welcome you to our board meeting.

[00:11:36] Before I begin, I first want to welcome our new board members who are at the stage today. First, we welcome Dr. Jamel Wilson. Dr. Wilson currently serves as the dean of the University of Richmond School of Professional and Continuing Studies.

[00:11:54] Prior to her appointment as dean, Dr. Wilson served as superintendent of schools at Hanover County, Virginia, from 2011 to 2015. Before her appointment as superintendent, Dr. Wilson worked in Hanover County Public Schools as a classroom teacher, a lead teacher, an assistant principal, and superintendent, and everything else.

[00:12:16] In 2015, Dr. Wilson was named Region 1 Superintendent of the Year, having been selected for this honor by her colleagues in the region. Dr. Wilson served on the Virginia Board of Education from 2017 to 2022. Dr. Wilson earned her Bachelor's of Arts in English and a Master's of Teaching from the University of Virginia, a Master's of Arts in English with a concentration in writing and rhetoric from Virginia Commonwealth University, and a Doctor in Educational Leadership and Policy with a concentration in Administration and Supervision, also from the University of Virginia.

[00:12:53] Dr. Wilson has been appointed to a full term, which expires on June 30, 2029. please welcome Dr. Wilson and some thank you then we also have Miss Beth Reinhardt to my left Miss Beth Reinhardt is the president and CEO of the Bristol Chamber of Commerce serving both Bristol Virginia and Tennessee Miss Reinhardt currently serves on the Virginia Promise and Action Board and is a member of the Sorenson Institute State Advisory Board she previously served as the chair of

[00:13:29] the Bristol Virginia Public School Board and board member secretary for the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation and Governor McCullough's appointee to the Commonwealth Council on Childhood Success. Most recently, Governor Youngkin appointed Ms. Reinhardt to the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority in 2023. Ms. Reinhardt earned her BS degree from Mary Washington College, Master of Art in Teaching, and Master of Science in Counseling degrees from Johns Hopkins University, and an MBA from King College in Bristol, Tennessee. In 2025, Ms. Reinhardt was named the King University Distinguished Alumni recipient at their

[00:14:08] annual Dogwood Celebration and earned the Virginia Association of Chambers of Commerce Executive of the Year in 2025 Ms. Reinhardt has been appointed to an unexpired term which expires June 30th, 2028 welcome we are excited to have all of our board members serve apologies for mr. Hanson not being here he's with us in spirit and again just want to thank all of our board members for being here

[00:14:43] and serving on behalf of Virginia's students and families with that I will take a motion to approve the agenda as presented so moved is there a second wait all in favor of you well miss Reinhardt yeah I dr. Bridges I miss McPherson Dr. Northern aye Dr. Wilson aye Mr. Robinson aye Mrs. Kilgore aye and chair votes aye thank you staff have provided members of

[00:15:21] the board with draft minutes before the meeting is there a motion to approve the minutes as presented to the board so moved second great I'll do a roll call Miss Reinhardt I'll abstain as I was not present thank you Dr. Bridges I miss McPherson Dr. Northern aye Dr. Wilson Epstein Mr. Robinson aye Mrs. Kilgore aye and chair votes aye okay the board appreciates being able to feature our

[00:15:57] wonderful arts program across the Commonwealth this has been a tradition since I have been on the board and it's typically been the highlight of our times together and that is having our students perform at our meetings I will now ask Dr. Bridges to provide us with an introduction for our guests happy to welcome up to the front please the Prince Edward County High School Chamber Ensemble under the direction of Haley Watson the ensemble is made up of students of all skill levels in grades 9 through 12 the students performing today make up a portion of the Prince Edward High School concert band which

[00:16:33] consistently receives high ratings of excellent and superior at Virginia band and Orchestra Directors Association events. Attending to support the Chamber Ensemble is the Prince Edward Director of Curriculum and Instruction Mrs. Janine Garrett and Superintendent Dr. Chip Jones. The piece they'll perform today is titled "Through the Purple Mists Ascending" by Ted Allen which was inspired by the poem "Prairie Dawn" by Willa Cather. The poem begins with a pioneer experiencing the wonder and awe

of a vast sunrise on an open prairie. As the poem comes to a close the moon changes see we got to listen for this

[00:17:10] right in the music the moon changes to a beautiful homesick melody based on a Scottish ballad so please enjoy the Prince Edward County High School Chamber Ensembles performance of through purple mists ascending

[00:17:42] transition on I just want to say thank you so much for that wonderful

[00:21:12] performance at my school we typically talk about one band one sound and you actually modeled that today so thank you it was beautiful it's a beautiful way to start today thank you oh yes and please we after we do our celebration we will exit and I'll take a picture so if the scholars will just wait momentarily we will be right there with that mr. Robinson we are now transitioned to the Virginia dual language emerging teacher of the year

[00:21:43] would you do the honor yes please come to the podium It is my pleasure to introduce Ms. Nancy DeVia, an elementary dual language immersion teacher from Prince William County Public Schools and the 2026 recipient of the Virginia Dual Language Educators Network Dual Language Immersion Teacher of the Year Award.

[00:22:23] Thank you for being here. Ms. DeVia is a highly respected educator whose work exemplifies the very best of dual language instruction in Virginia.

[00:22:39] A model in which students learn academic content in two languages with the goals of developing bilingualism, biliteracy, and strong cross-cultural understanding. These programs provide equitable access to rigorous learning while valuing and leveraging students' linguistic and cultural assets.

[00:22:58] Ms. Stavia is known for her skillful use of scaffolded, engaging teaching practices. Her expertise in helping students build true biliteracy through purposeful bridging between Spanish and English. And her leadership in mentoring colleagues, supporting curriculum development, and strengthening dual language programs within her division.

[00:23:19] We are honored to recognize Ms. Davia today for her exceptional contributions to bilingual education and her profound impact on students, families, and the broader educational community. Please, let's recognize Ms. DeVia one more time.

[00:23:35] Thank you, Ms. DeVia, and the faculty and staff, as well as your family members.

[00:23:53] We know that you do not do this alone. It takes so many people, and so we want to recognize your family and staff here as well. Oops, are we okay? Lights. Just give us a minute. A little technical light challenge. Wonderful.

[00:24:14] Now we will transition to the recognition of the 2026 Principles of Distinction. with that Ms. Reinhardt would you please read the recognition thank you madam president good morning everyone it's an honor to announce this inaugural class of principle of distinction awardees I will read through this and we'll announce each of the principles we're gonna do the there's a lot so we're gonna do the recognition as madam president mentioned outside and do a photograph with everyone but as I call your name you're welcome to come up to the front

[00:24:50] if you will and we'll recognize you that way so in partnership with the Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals and the Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals VDOE has

launched a new program to recognize and celebrate principles of distinction this initiative honors exemplary leadership of Virginia principals highlighting their significant contributions to education and inspires excellence within the school community in fact the principles of distinction represent schools that demonstrated strong results in the inaugural year of the school performance and support

[00:25:28] framework Virginia's federal and state accountability system under section 8 VA C20 - 23 - 620 F of the Virginia administrative code the Virginia Board of Education outlines pathways for a principal to earn a principle of distinction endorsement eligible building level administrators must have at least five years of experience in a public or accredited non-profit school non-public school and must have completed a formal induction program as a principal or assistant principal. The statewide principles of distinction

[00:26:05] program provides an opportunity for principals to receive recognition while engaging in meaningful professional growth experiences. VDOE opened the application period for this inaugural cohort in December of 2024 and applications were due February 15th of 2025.

[00:26:25] Each submission required a letter of endorsement from the division superintendent. Successful candidates participated in a professional training symposium and completed a high quality professional development capstone project at their school in January of 2026.

[00:26:43] Priority was given to applicants who demonstrated strong leadership in improving student achievement, providing effective and structural leadership, and cultivating a school environment that reduces non-academic barriers. Emphasis was placed on evidence of impact on student outcomes.

[00:27:03] A total of 31 candidates were selected to participate in the first class, and the following 25 principals successfully completed all requirements to be recognized as the inaugural class of the principles of distinction.

[00:27:18] So I'm going to read each of those, and please give me a little grace if I mispronounce someone, but I will do my best. you would like to come up and stand as we call everyone please come forward Megan Arthur Roanoke City Public Schools Christopher Benson Roanoke County Public Schools Kristen Bolum York County Public Schools Mary Jane Boynton Rappahannock County Public Schools Liza Browman Aldana Arlington Public Schools Micah Deloach Virginia City Virginia Beach City Public Schools Mary

[00:27:57] Lee Grubb Orange County Public Schools Heidi Hagerty Wagner Alexandria City Public Schools Stephanie House Virginia Beach City Schools Kim Hire Smith Roanoke County Public Schools Cynthia Jackson Washington County Public Schools Katie Johnson Loudoun County Public Schools Michelle Luttrell Loudoun County Public Schools Mark McAvek Virginia Beach City Public Schools Daniel Miani

[00:28:35] Virginia Beach Public Schools Drew Miller Rockingham County Public Schools Melinda Morgan Montgomery County Bridget Outlaw Chesapeake City Schools Angela Ramsey Danville Public Schools Ryan Schubert Virginia Beach City Public Schools Michael Sidebothan Stafford County Public Schools Beverly Smith Chesterfield County Public Schools there's a lot of you that's great Paul

[00:29:10] Thiessen Jr. Loudoun County Public Schools Amanda Volker Chesterfield County Public Schools and Shane Wolfe Fairfax County Public Schools Again please give these principals leaders teachers this recognition is just tremendous I was trying to capture all the places across the state that were captured

I think every almost every part of the state is captured you all didn't just get recognized you actually had to do work to do this which I think

[00:29:49] is incredibly important and as a principal who I know you don't do it alone I just want to celebrate you celebrate your team celebrate your families and again just give this group a tremendous round of applause okay with that we're going to exit to take pictures with our rec our honorees today we will take a brief break and then come back for public comment thank

[00:30:23] you just want to again say thank you for our teachers our principals and our

[00:41:15] students who performed today they are just a small representation of the excellence that is across the state of Virginia and so for those who are watching again appreciating all the teachers and leaders and students who perform we are now going to transition to public comment as stated in the board Bylaws, it is the pleasure of the board to accept public comment on all matters related to public education in Virginia. Before we begin our public comment today, I want to share a few comments about the manner in which public comment will be

[00:41:51] conducted. I ask that you all model professionalism, dignity, respect as you share your thoughts today. As adults, it is important that we model respectful, civil, public discourse for our students and children who are either in attendance today or viewing the stream now or in the future. We also appreciate the enthusiasm and passion and commitment that everyone has for their students and for the work that we are doing here at the Virginia State Board. When you begin, please provide your name, role, or affiliation,

[00:42:30] and where you live in Virginia. All remarks must be directed to the chair, not to any individual. Speakers will have three minutes to share their remarks. You'll notice that a timer will be on the screens. We'll begin with three minutes in green. At one minute, the screen will turn yellow.

[00:42:53] The screen will turn red when the time is up. At that point, please close your remarks promptly. And I, again, apologize in advance for respect for time. I will interrupt if I have to. Speakers may provide copies of their comments to Mr. Joe Cook, right here in the front, the department's regulatory and board coordinator.

[00:43:17] Joe already raised his hand. Okay. All written comments received during public comment will be collected and provided to the board as soon as possible after public comment. You may also email a copy of your remarks to the board at boe at doe.virginia.gov.

[00:43:39] With that, I have a list of individuals who have signed up. I would ask that you come to the podium and, as mentioned, state your name and where you're from. I first have Scott Rayband. Is that right? Did I say that right?

[00:43:55] And next up is Lawanda Travis, and next up is Neely Minton. Good morning. Good morning. President Ashton, Superintendent Conway, and members of the Virginia Board of Education, my name is Scott Braebrand. I'm Executive Director for the Virginia Association of School Superintendents. I live in Lynchburg, Virginia.

[00:44:13] I want to welcome all of our new Board of Education members, and I want to thank all of you for your dedicated service to the Commonwealth of Virginia. On behalf of Virginia School Division superintendents, we respectfully submit the following feedback around today's agenda.

[00:44:29] First, the return to separating first review from final review. We strongly appreciate the return to separating first review from final review on key educational items before the board. This additional time allows for thoughtful feedback from stakeholders across the Commonwealth. We also appreciate the posting of key board meeting documents the week before your meeting so that we can provide the informed public comment at your meetings that is truly appreciated.

[00:44:56] We also strongly support the simplification and streamlining of the yearly accreditation report that's before you today. We look forward to continuing to work with you to refine and simplify reporting requirements for all of our school divisions in Virginia.

[00:45:11] In regards to the school performance and support framework updates, VAS appreciates the use of value tables to measure growth and their transparency and ease of use for both students, teachers, and parents.

[00:45:28] We also appreciate the update around the exit criteria for students who are English learners with the most significant intellectual disabilities that are taking the alternate access test. We will provide any additional feedback to VDOE on these updates as needed before your next meeting.

[00:45:48] And then finally, we also appreciate the revisions to the School Construction Assistance Program that is now going to provide even greater flexibility to school divisions to access these important state funds for school construction. Thank you for your engagement with us and with so many others, and we look forward to continued partnership with you in the year ahead.

[00:46:08] Thank you. Thank you. Ms. Lawanda Travis are you present? Neely Minton present. Next up will be Ms. Tyra Shaw.

[00:46:23] Just wait to the green if not. Good morning Superintendent Conway, President Ashton, and members of the board and welcome to the new board members. My name is Neely Minton and I'm speaking today as president of the Virginia Social Studies Leaders Consortium. First I want to extend

[00:46:57] sincere appreciation to the VDOE and board for your recent engagement with the field. Thank you Thank you for not including social studies in the proposed ESSA amendment today. That decision reflects a clear understanding of both the intent of recent legislation and the importance of preserving space for high quality, locally driven performance assessment systems as outlined in Virginia Code.

[00:47:22] We support accountability, but it must be based on the right measure. Thank you for conducting a comprehensive listening tour. process has mattered. It has re-established trust with educators across the Commonwealth and signaled that practitioner voice is not only welcome but valued. And thank you for your intentional inclusion of VSSLC members in both the local alternative assessment committee and the innovative assessment committee. Those partnerships are critical as we work together to ensure strong implementation moving forward. At VSSLC we are excited to continue and build upon Virginia's robust inquiry-based performance assessment system.

[00:48:01] We believe deeply in a simple principle: good assessment leads to good instruction. In classrooms across the Commonwealth, assessment is not separate from learning, it is learning. Across the Commonwealth, through local alternative assessments, students at all grade levels are engaging with compelling, authentic questions such as: How have Jamestown and where Wacomico changed from long ago to today in first grade?

[00:48:26] Why do we need government, which aligns with the civic strand of the third grade SOLs? How did all American civilians on the home front help the soldiers on the war front in middle school U.S. history, too? Why is the consent of the governed essential to democracy and 12th grade government?

[00:48:44] To answer questions like these, students work with content-rich primary sources. They build knowledge of important historical, geographic, and economic content while applying critical thinking skills to analyze evaluate and synthesize that information into evidence-based claims facts absolutely matter but they matter most when students use them to make meaning draw connections and support their reasoning this is rigorous engaging and it's the kind of work that prepares students for civic life this is the system we are committed to strengthening vsslc stands ready to continue partnering with the videoe to support school

[00:49:21] divisions across Virginia in implementing this work with fidelity. Thank you for your leadership, your willingness to listen, and your commitment to getting this right for students and teachers across the Commonwealth. Thank you for your time. Thank you. Tia Shaw, did I pronounce that correctly?

[00:49:38] Tia Shaw. Tia Shaw, thank you. Good morning. Good morning. Good morning, Superintendent Conway, President Ashton, and members of the board. My name is Tia Shaw, and I'm honored to serve as the president-elect for the Virginia Social Studies Leadership Consortium. First, I want to extend my sincere appreciation to the Virginia Department of Education and the board for your recent decisions and your engagement with the field of history and social sciences. Thank you for your decision not to include social studies in the proposed ESSA amendment. That action reflects a strong

[00:50:13] understanding of the intent behind SB 200 and HB 299 and protects the space for Virginia's locally developed performance-based assessment system to continue to grow. I also want to acknowledge the work of the Local Alternative Assessment Committee, including VSSLC members, ensures that the perspectives of practitioners remain central as this work moves forward. That connection is critical to getting implementation right.

[00:50:39] While we support accountability, we will continue to advocate for local alternative assessments because of what they produce in our classrooms. The priority is not just measurement, it is ensuring that assessment drives strong, meaningful instruction. At VSSLC, we are actively building that accountability through the development of high-quality performance assessments. Through our grant work with the Library of Congress, we are creating and sharing tasks grounded in rich primary sources and aligned to Virginia standards. This work not only strengthens classroom practice, but also has the potential to serve as a model and resource for divisions across the state. That is a system we are committed

[00:51:17] to strengthening, not just in theory, but in practice in classrooms across Virginia. BSSLC stands ready to continue partnering with the Virginia Department of Education to support school divisions in implementing this work with integrity. That means ongoing collaboration, clear guidance, strong exemplars, and sustained investment in teacher capacity. Thank you for your leadership, your willingness to listen, and your commitment to getting this right for students and teachers across the Commonwealth. I look forward to the work ahead.

[00:51:47] thank you Tia Shaw thank you next up we have Miss Wendy Little Rodney Jordan greetings Virginia Board of Education Miss Ashton I realize you have master's

[00:52:27] in special education congratulations thank you to the rest of the board there's many things that you are unaware of because you're new there are some who are very aware so I am here to deliver an oral color of law notice to the entire board and superintendent um miss conway um the jay jones determination was uh written for my son there is a state complaint the board of education determined that chesterfield county public schools was non-compliant with special education requirements in 2023 with letter of findings 7 17 2023 chesterfield county public schools had one administrative appeal and

[00:53:05] lost that appeal by Cecil Creasy jr end of story compensatory education services and related services to get him back on track instead within what is supposed to have been if none of this and another prior private day school had not given him elementary school work at eighth grade he'd be graduating this year and I fully expect that every single one of you is going to make sure that happens on May 21st as was his trajectory with his peers had none of this ever happened so I'm also here to say that as you consider your IDEA Part B application as well as others that it is non-compliant because compensatory education has never

[00:53:45] been made available provided nor delivered to Aaron Little from the 22-23 school year when I filed due process on the Board of Education I had to do it twice because of complete sabotage then I turned around and filed it on the Department of Education and P.O. Prince determined yes indeed my son has not received educational supports and services since the 21-22 school year that was last summer somebody buried that that is a public document that's supposed to be on your website for review and available to SEAC to consider whether to recommend that you apply for IDEA Part B funds so I have some information here

[00:54:21] is a letter that was also buried because Sam Hollins goes as we discussed and I had to file the due processes last summer based on that Senator Vola said board of education department of education you work with chesterfield and resolve this by and report on it publicly july 2025 that was already one year past your final deadline of july 2024 to comply with enforce this your own department of education state complaint and appeal july 2024 this is unconscionable somebody's going to fix this because he will not die under my watch because

[00:55:01] of a complete failure of the board of education's failure of oversight and multiple superintendents protecting all the stuff and many of you have had detailed information before this is not the department of murdering children instead of public education in a public school building this needs to be corrected and it will be corrected because my son is not going to die under my watch by this continuing to allow to go on.

[00:55:32] He will graduate May 21st with everything he should have had. Thank you, Ms. Little. Rodney Jordan, please come to the podium. Good morning, President Ashton, members of the board, and Superintendent Conway.

[00:56:00] My name is Rodney Jordan from Norfolk City. I bring you greetings on behalf of President Jenny Nichols, Executive Director Gina Patterson, and the entire Board of Directors of the Virginia School Boards Association. To the newly appointed members of the Virginia State Board, welcome.

[00:56:16] Your willingness to serve in this capacity is both meaningful and necessary, and we appreciate your commitment to the students, families, and communities across the Commonwealth. The work before you can carry great responsibility. The decisions made at this level shape not only policy, but also the conditions that allow student achievement to take root and grow in every division across Virginia.

[00:56:39] At VSBA, we remain firmly focused on supporting that work from the local governance perspective, ensuring that school boards are equipped, informed, and aligned in their efforts to serve students well. We value the longstanding relationship with the State Board of Education and VSBA and look forward to continuing that partnership with each of you.

[00:57:02] Strong alignment between state leadership and local governance is essential if we are to see meaningful and sustained progress in student outcomes. Our goal is to be a resource to you, whether through feedback from the field, collaboration on key initiatives, or simply serving as a conduit to the experiences and perspectives of local school boards.

[00:57:23] To that end, we consider it an honor and demonstration of meaningful collaboration that the past Board of Education presidents and members accepted invitations to speak directly at VSBA Board of Director meetings and task force meetings.

[00:57:39] We extend that invitation to each of you today. On a personal note, it is an honor to stand before you today, having had the privilege of serving as president of VSBA and now continuing my work as a consultant. I have seen firsthand the impact that thoughtful collaboration can have on strengthening public education across our state.

[00:58:00] Before I close, I'd like to take a moment to introduce a new member of our VSBA team who will play an important role in the collaboration moving forward. We are pleased to welcome Sophia Panetta as our new governmental relations staff person, if she would please stand. And Sophia will be working closely with the General Assembly and partners like you to ensure strong communication, coordination, and advocacy on behalf of public education in Virginia.

[00:58:24] We are glad to have her on board and look forward to the contributions she will make in strengthening our collective work. Again, congratulations to each of you. We look forward to working alongside you in service of our shared priority, supporting strong schools and advancing student achievement across the Commonwealth.

[00:58:43] Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Jordan. Ms. Candice Lucas. And if there are other members who would like to provide public comment, please come to the front. Just one second, Ms. Lucas. Dr. Lucas.

[00:58:59] Sorry, thank you. Dr. Lucas, you may begin. Good morning, board members. My name is Candice, Dr. Candice Lucas. My doctorate is from Liberty University Law School in Education regarding special education law. My dissertation is centered around the school-to-prison pipeline and how the Virginia Department of Education rapes black mothers of their humanity, dignity, and their overall opportunity to educate their children.

[00:59:27] Today I'm here again. I've been coming here for about 15 years. Actually, tomorrow will be my 57th birthday, and I'm celebrating it, protesting outside of your office. Jenna okay because Jenna you made the comment that every child deserves to enter school I don't stop him from addressing her the previous person but you didn't stop the previous stop my time stop my time thank you if you're gonna correct one person you need to correct everyone because he welcomed her

[01:00:02] you didn't stop him. All right, thank you. Every child deserves to enter school, to enter school ready. Every child deserves to leave school life ready. That is not happening. That is not happening.

[01:00:20] The Epstein files have nothing on the VDOE files, the truth be told. The fact that our children are dying, specifically our black and brown children and children with disabilities, are being funneled into the school to prison pipeline and every month we come back here parents like Miss Little come here and tell you and you do nothing. You are co-conspirators with the death and the murder and the mass execution of millions of children and under oppressive systems without your respect

[01:00:56] chair civility, respect, dignity and professionalism are out the door. I'm going to fight like hell to protect my children. I don't even have a child with a disability. But every child in the Commonwealth is my child who has to fight for their right to be educated and you have failed them.

[01:01:18] Under Virginia Code 22.1-214, it states verbatim, the Board of Education shall prepare and supervise the implementation, shall prepare and supervise the implementation by each school division of a program of special education designed to educate and train children with disabilities.

[01:01:40] That means that is your responsibility under the Constitution. You have failed us repeatedly. The second issue is that the Virginia Constitution gives the parent the right to direct, direct the educational upbringing of their children.

[01:02:00] That means Sands Anderson Law Firm can't do it. That means you can't do it. That means the school division can't do it. That means the superintendent's association can't do it. The parents direct it. The parents have been relegated to second class citizens by state acting oppressors.

[01:02:18] So no, we will not be civil. We will not be respectful when you're killing our children. It is time for it to end. I'm giving you notice that every parent that I'm associated with will file a lawsuit against this board to hold you personally and professionally accountable.

[01:02:40] You have no immunity because you violated the constitution. You have no immunity. You have not. Our children are in a crisis and you are sitting here as though this is a Sunday brunch and we're having tea.

[01:02:56] No, it ends now. - Thank you, Dr. Lucas. - Oh, I'm giving these out. These, Minister Sherylson prayed over this oil. Please take it and anoint your heads and your hearts. Thank you.

[01:03:11] - Thank you, Dr. Lucas. Is there anyone else who would like to provide public comment today? Okay, thank you. That ends our public comment session. We will now return to the agenda. Thank you.

[01:03:29] We are going to focus on our consent agenda. We have, first up, final review to certify a list of qualified persons for the Office of the Division Superintendents of Schools.

[01:03:45] And then we have a final review of the Financial Report on Literacy Fund and updates to the first priority waiting lists. Is there a motion to waive first review and approve these items on the consent agenda? Is there a second? Second. Great I'll do roll call. Ms. Reinhart? Aye. Dr. Bridges? Aye. Ms. McPherson? Aye. Dr. Northern? Aye. Dr. Wilson? Aye. Mr. Robinson? Aye.

[01:04:15] Mrs. Kilgore? Aye. And Chair votes aye. Thank you. All right we have our action items up for discussion first i'm sorry final review of the regulatory action in align with item 130h of chapter 2 of the acts of the assembly 2022 special session mr chapman thank you president ashton members of the board superintendent conway i have no additional comments from the presentation that occurred last month other than to note that we have received no comments on this item since that uh that presentation and also to make sure for the

[01:04:55] the new members this item has been in the works for quite some time this particular phase of the action since 2024 but before that started as a fast track action back in 2022 the same text has come before the board this is the the sixth time we have never received any comments on this text and the recommendation for the the superintendent is this to get approved at the final stage is there a motion to approve the final stage of the regulatory action as

[01:05:23] presented to the board. Second. Great. Ms. Reinhart? Aye. Dr. Bridges? Aye. Mrs. McPherson? Aye. Dr. Northern? Aye. Dr. Wilson? Aye. Mr. Robinson? Aye. Mrs. Kilgore? Aye. And chair votes aye. Thank you. Mr. Champion, you're up again. Thank you, President Ashton. Item D, similarly up for final review. This is a legislatively directed change, and this action, the changes to the regulatory text in this case in order to account for an alternative to CAPE accreditation for these

[01:06:01] two programs related to counseling is very narrow. It comes right from the statute. The recommendation from the superintendent is this also be approved on final review. Great. Thank you, Mr. Chapman. Is there a motion to approve the regulatory action as presented to the board?

[01:06:18] So moved. Is there a second? Second. Ms. Reinhart? Aye. Dr. Bridges? Aye. Mrs. McPherson? Dr. Northern? Aye. Dr. Wilson? Aye. Mr. Robinson. Aye. Mrs. Kilgore. Aye. And chair votes aye. Thank you, Mr. Chapman.

[01:06:39] Okay, we have Ms. Michelle Wallace, Assistant Superintendent of Instruction for the second review of the Virginia Textbook and High Quality Instructional Materials Process. Good morning. Good morning, President Ashton, Superintendent Conway, members of the Board of Education. Welcome to our new members.

[01:06:58] Michelle Wallace the instructor the assistant superintendent of instruction for the department it is my pleasure to bring to you the second review of the Virginia textbook and high quality instructional materials process we commonly refer to that as HQIM so that's well what I will be saying in 2025 the General Assembly enacted chapters 680 and 683 commonly referred to as House Bill 2777 which made changes to the textbook and other high quality instructional materials process that are being used by school divisions as the basis for local curriculum of classroom instruction in English 6 through 12

[01:07:36] mathematics K through 12 science K through 12 and history K through 12 the changes require that each local school board adopt and implement textbooks and other HQIM in these areas and that each education prep preparation program that provides training of individuals seeking initial licensure include a program of coursework and clinical experience in identifying and implementing textbooks and other HQIM.

[01:08:03] These changes do not impact the existing requirements for required core instructional materials in English K-5 and supplemental intervention materials in K-8 English as required by the 2022 Virginia Literacy Act. In your materials, you have links to the current 2011 process, which is the last time that the process was approved by this board, as well as redlined version showing the changes and then there is a what we call a clean version but you will notice that it does have some changes in it as some updates have been made as Superintendent Conway and I reviewed this again since the last

[01:08:42] board meeting well it looks like a lot of changes in that red line actually the process is very very similar but what we are changing is the definitions for textbooks and HQIM, the supports offered to school divisions and other stakeholders prior to and during the process of an adoption process, the rubric

that assesses alignment to the standards and to the definition of textbooks and HQIM, and then finally the support that follows that process that will be provided to school divisions. Next slide. We will start with the

[01:09:21] importance of HQIM followed by a synopsis of how the textbook and HQIM law changed in 2025 stakeholder engagement and an overview of the changes to the process next slide and again high quality instructional materials are some of the most powerful levers to improving student outcomes at scale particularly when there are new teachers in classrooms including those who have gone through a non-traditional pathway to licensure HGYM ensure that every student has access to evidence-based standards aligned content to

[01:09:58] support mastery. In 2025 Virginia law passed or Virginia passed legislation to define textbooks as textbooks in HQIM and requires divisions to select such materials to align with this rigorous expectation. Additionally this effort aligns with priority one of the board which includes that helping to set every learner up to meet high expectations next slide so the research on HQIM is presented in this slide and you can click into that link to link out to some of

[01:10:38] that research but curriculum can have an immense impact on student learning and so these are just some of the studies that we pulled forward as we have been training and working with school divisions on HQIM implementation and so you can see that implementing the HQIM leads to improvement in student outcomes, comparable to more than a half a school year of additional learning. Next slide. Next slide.

[01:11:04] Now we'll talk about the new law and the implications. So this slide kind of outlines, and some of these are already existing, so not everything on this slide is new, okay? Some of this already exists, but basically it outlines the responsibilities of the Board of Education, the Department of Education, the school divisions, and our educator prep programs. Of course, you, Board of Education approve the revised process that we will use. You'll also approve textbooks and HQIM as they come forward for first and final review. And then with this legislation there is a requirement to approve a list of vendors

[01:11:41] of curriculum based professional learning to support the professional learning of school divisions and teachers around implementing high quality instructional materials in the classroom. The Department of Education which is the staff within the instruction on the instruction team. We take the the lead in reviewing and updating that textbook review process for your consideration. We then also review and recommend to you textbooks and high-quality instructional materials for those content areas that you see.

[01:12:13] Develop and adopt and publish that list of vendors for professional learning. We annually will publish a list of textbooks and HQIM and professional learning resources adopted and procured by each local school board. This is a new requirement and something that currently we do collect information on textbooks but we don't collect exactly what they have adopted except in our K-5 English literacy realm. And also we will provide support to HQIM liaisons, back to my

[01:12:52] slides did I knock something thank you and we will also conduct HQIM review and monitor implementation for schools identified in need of improvement so that means that we'll be working with our office of school improvement to ensure that schools that have been identified in certain areas will be implementing curriculum that are from the approved list and provide support to them and that also is new with the legislation. School divisions are required to adopt

[01:13:30] and implement HQIM in English language arts for grades 6 through 12, mathematics science and history and social science for grades kindergarten through 12. From the list approved by the board or through a local adoption process that incorporates board requirements in accordance with board regulations. So the first part of that is a little bit new. The requirement that they shall adopt is new in the legislation. However, the local adoption process that incorporates requirements that follows the process this board adopts is already in effect

[01:14:05] and will remain in effect with this legislation. They will have to annually review their professional development. That actually is already in the standards of quality and is not new and they should provide that professional development around HQIM now. That's the new part. Ensure that division-wide comprehensive plans include support for student achievement through HQIM divisions already have comprehensive plans those plans should now include how they plan to support student achievement with the adoption and implementation of HQIM they have to designate a faculty member to serve as the HQIM

[01:14:40] liaison and that has already occurred we had them identify an HQIM liaison this school year and then report to the department through our SOQ reporting process which textbooks have been adopted again this is semi-new they have just indicated on the current report if they have adopted textbooks that you guys have approved now they will have to name which materials they've adopted so a little little new nuance there the part for educator prep programs is completely new and that is that the educator prep programs include a program of coursework and clinical experience and

[01:15:16] require that those students in those programs demonstrate mastery and identifying and implementing textbooks in HQIM and support the identification and implementation of HQIM as a strategy to support student learning and so that part is actually we've already started working with our educator prep programs on this particular component of the legislation. Next slide. So what really changed with the definition of textbooks is the incorporation of HQIM and

[01:15:52] really looking at the adequate content of materials for student mastery of the corresponding standards, defining instructional practices that are aligned with general and discipline specific research evidence. So we know that what you do in a science classroom might very well differ from what you do in an English classroom. So that's what that means there. Assessments to monitor student mastery of curriculum content. So those assessments should be built into that HUIM so that teachers can monitor student mastery ongoing rather than at the end of a semester, end of a nine week period. This assessment, these assessments typically go on almost in a daily fashion. Guidance for meeting

[01:16:32] student needs including enrichment above grade level students and for the intensification for students who are at risk for not mastering curriculum content. This includes our English language learners and students with disabilities as well. And then resources for our teachers, and this is really to give teachers that support to develop their own knowledge about the curriculum. We know that teachers are not content experts in every single content area particularly at the elementary level these materials give them that support so that they know the content and can instruct on that content and that the content is reliable trustworthy and valid next slide so where are we

[01:17:10] currently currently the textbook review process was last adopted in 2011 so it's a little bit out of date not just with the HQIM and the trends in education right now but just some other nuances that had to be updated throughout the plan. Johns Hopkins also conducted a study in the fall of 2024 so that's almost

been two years ago and so some of you were on the board of when Johns Hopkins came and did a synopsis of that study and you heard that 63% of English teachers reported using HQIM most frequently and approximately 37% of

[01:17:49] teachers reported using materials that did not meet an ed reports alignment or usability standards. In mathematics, you see the numbers are drastically lower, and so that was only 10 percent in that. Remember, this is 2024 reported using HQIM most frequently, and approximately 80 percent reported using materials that did not meet ed reports, alignment, and usability standards.

[01:18:14] Next slide. With the Virginia Literacy Act of 2022, it actually went into effect in the fall of 2024, where teachers were using core instructional programs for the very, very, very first time. So every student must be receiving core literacy instruction from an evidence-based literacy curriculum for the entire literacy block, and that is done through the K-5 core literacy programs.

[01:18:42] Additionally, the law calls for K-5 and K-8, or sorry, 6 through 8 supplemental and intervention programs. and several times if you've been on this board or if you've watched meetings you've seen many items come before the board for review and approval by the board and we will have some for this board to adopt later this year so you'll get to experience that process if you haven't already some of the lessons learned are kind of informing our process moving forward we realize that implementing hqim requires significant effort at all levels and involvement of division leaders and superintendents

[01:19:19] so with the ELA implementation at the K5 level we did a whole series of implementation of on HQIM we have already started that series with our division leaders knowing that this legislation and that this process is coming into effect very soon and then with the since the 2024 study of Johns Hopkins we now do have a hundred percent of our schools using or that have adopted core programs and as well as those instructional intervention programs in k-8 all divisions have division literacy programs that outline that curriculum adoption and therefore the department

[01:19:57] does know what divisions are using for their curriculum their core instructional program next slide this is just an implementation timeline to give you an overview of what we have done since actually 2023 with the adoption of uh where we began our evidence-based adoption for k-5 as early as 2023. We have new standards in English. We have new standards in mathematics. We have adopted textbooks in both English 6 through 12 as well as mathematics. When those textbooks were adopted, of course, this legislation was

[01:20:32] not in effect, but we did look for the tenants of HUIM because we did have some flexibility in that second part of the rubric that allowed us to do that. So we did go ahead and start applying HUIM, not necessarily by the definition of this legislation, but certainly for the tenants of HQIM that are being used nationally. And then we are anticipating board action for final review on this process in June. We anticipate some additional summer training for our EPPs.

[01:21:03] Actually we have that planned out and then we will be bringing to you also this summer a process timeline for the processes of science and history adoptions and then we anticipate additional training on this process because that is part of what the feedback from stakeholders they wanted more input they want on the front end and they wanted more stakeholder support on the back end next slide and again so as I said this process this legislation had us convene a group that looked at our current textbook process we used

[01:21:42] those individuals who have been through recent textbook processes for English mathematics because they could provide some great insights into the actual process for the from the 2011 process we also engaged with others who had gone through previous processes and those who have not been through any textbook or processes at all and so from all of that feedback you know overwhelmingly the feedback was the process is a good process what needed to change there were some tenets the definition of textbooks in HUIM and then what we look for in the process and then again those additional supports to make sure that we

[01:22:18] are implementing the textbook process with fidelity. Textbook vendors also provided feedback on the process as well and then next slide our stakeholder process our stakeholder feedback again like I said primarily favorable in support of the current process. Instructional support for special populations was identified as a critical need and so that'll be built into the process where we're getting making sure that those student groups are represented on our textbook adoption committees and then alignment to the standards was highly regarded as a priority and

[01:22:55] should remain a priority since we are teaching the standards of learning testing on the standards of learning our textbooks should be aligned to the standards of learning and then clearly defining our processes for publishers what what the different areas of adequate limited and no evidence mean and then hqim should provide that end-up support to facilitate teacher understanding so that's that back-end training that we're talking about to make sure that teachers after something has been adopted they actually had great ideas about having each vendor do like a little 10-minute snippet overview of their program offered to all stakeholders next slide the

[01:23:34] additional feedback is that rubrics should reflect discipline specific components and so that is where we do you know you'll see a generic kind of one that we've done for English but those components would be specific discipline specific that also is in alignment with the legislation. Build in extra time for the new process. Time became a big topic of discussion because with our recent implementation of English and math standards we kind of implemented those on a little bit earlier timeline than has been typical in the past and therefore they wanted to

[01:24:11] make sure that we had textbooks and HQIM in process as new standards are adopted and new textbooks are then subsequently adopted and then division leader participants requested training and so we've built that into the recommendations so next slide and then again so as we think about the rec the revised process before you we have the broader definition of textbooks and other HQIM that's within the legislation from 2025. We have incorporated the identification of how textbooks and HQIM will support advanced learners, multilingual learners, and students with disabilities. Additional training for

[01:24:49] textbook reviewers. Additional feedback solicited on the materials to be being considered for adoption. We made a lot of technical changes. That's a lot of the red lines that you made and that or that we have and then the timeline for the cycles to align with what the field is asking for. Next two slides. So our next steps after this meeting, you know, we'll solicit additional feedback. We'll bring it to the board in June for your final review. Once approved, we'll engage with our field on the process and develop resources to address awareness and

[01:25:24] training needs. We'll review current materials and timelines. The legislation did set some enactment clauses on the timelines but does give us flexibility to change those timelines based on when we've last reviewed standards and adopted other materials and so we'll um we'll be reviewing that we've

already done that actually but um just to give you some parameters uh science and and history are being selected to to go first because they don't have any materials in those areas and we know that history in particular has been asking for a long time and then you guys know that you just adopted the science standards in the

[01:26:00] last part of last year so we're right on time with science which is why we would be doing those at the same time um use the new process uh when we adopt so we're currently going through a core k through five materials review process that's led by the virginia literacy partnerships at uva our partners in the vla implementation and so we've been working really closely with them new for this year uh this cycle we are after they've done their initial review we are taking a comprehensive look on the doe side to standards alignment and then we'll be putting out documents

[01:26:35] that inform what how those materials align to our standards of learning and so that is something that will be new for this cycle and then finally ensure full compliance with all aspects of the law recommending vendors there's an appendix there that shows you you can go to the last two slides that shows you the professional learning that took place since the last board meeting we had really great response from the field on just learning about HQIM in anticipation of the legislation and anticipation of the new process coming and so you know

[01:27:09] that's been very welcomed by the field as far as how divisions think about what they're good how they're going to implement the new HQIM in other content areas other than English literacy k5 any questions okay Dr. Wallace thank you so much for that presentation. I'm going to go to Ms. McPherson and then Dr. Wilson. Thank you.

[01:27:36] So going back to what I have is page nine, the current state. And so the John Hopkins study indicated that 63% of the English language teachers reported using some form of high quality instructional materials, correct? But only 10% of math teachers were using some type of high quality instructional materials most frequently so am i to understand that um and 80 percent of

[01:28:10] the math teachers were not using anything that apparently met ed reports alignment and usability standards so one of the slides also indicates that it looks like the best data we have will demonstrate it will take us three years before we will see any improvement or manifestation of the use of the high quality instructional materials as it relates to math because it takes about three years before we'll see a difference yeah so that's a good indication I mean anytime you change anything we in school improvement we typically say three to five years

[01:28:48] before you're gonna see improvements and and when you have high quality instructional materials you're gonna that's really dictating I mean that's going to be a less time so I'd say yes on the three-year end but remember this is a 2024 study and we're in 2026 and this board adopted mathematics high quality instructional materials last February and March so divisions have been going through their local adoption processes over last summer and this fall some have started implementing those those HQIM we also had a ten million dollar grant that targeted high quality instructional materials use that

[01:29:24] was awarded to school divisions and with those funds divisions are also purchasing some of those high-quality instructional materials so I would say that the vast majority of school divisions will be using high-quality instructional materials in the math classroom beginning with next school year the 26-27 school year and so yes I mean but some have already started implementing because some were early

adopters and they implemented piloted in the fall and more implementation with fidelity in the spring And at some point I'm assuming that we'll also get information as to the use of those

[01:30:00] materials as it relates to the performance on SOLs I'm hoping that we'll be able to crosswalk that Yeah so great question so there are two things in addition to what Dr.

[01:30:19] Wallace noted so I think the first is a survey gives you a snapshot but it's not kind of systematic you know you know where it is or is not being used right because there's two sort of opted in to complete the survey I think those survey results did their job in saying hey we're further along in English language arts and we in mathematics as Dr. Wallace noted but ultimately what I I think the comprehensiveness of this law does it also calls more broadly on the department not just in the area of instruction but to think about for example in the area of accreditation which we're going to talk about later

[01:30:57] today how do we check to make sure now that this is state law that every school not just the division is part of a broad plan but every school is chosen and has adopted a high quality curriculum so I think you're gonna see Ms. McPherson us developing better systems to gather that information and then once you understand what a school is identified as using then you can then go back and marry that with the growth and the performance based on our standards of learning assessments and so I know that's something that we're looking at

[01:31:34] right now now that we have systematic information on k5 literacy we've not had done this but we can look at the 3-5 literacy growth and performance and then sort of at least at a minimum correlate right it's not causal but can correlate that with the curriculum choices all right okay Dr. Wilson Dr. Wallace thank you very much so this point that Superintendent Conway just made about the what this information study recognizing limitations provides us as a

[01:32:10] baseline and thinking about the through line then and the responsibility of the department to help support divisions and holding the department and the board accountable for its part in student learning. So my question though goes to roles and responsibilities and who is identified in terms of making and keeping track of information so on the slide that talks about Board of Ed, DOE, school divisions and then educator prep programs I noticed that the

[01:32:46] department is required or will be publishing annually a list of these materials but I don't see a similar level of responsibility at the local level so it seems to me that there is some responsibility yes for the department and the board's perspective we need to be able to to understand what's happening and how our work is impacting what's happening in the divisions but thinking about the local responsibility I wonder if there is any expectation that locals are are publishing and being perhaps transparent

[01:33:24] to their communities about what the materials are that they have adopted in where that that line is yeah so that actually falls within their comprehensive plan so their comprehensive plan which should be on their websites is where they would document the information and every division does comprehensive plan differently some give a lot of background information on how they got to that point of what they've adopted and how they're doing with that adoption some may do it differently but that's where their accountability comes in the legislation calls for us to publish the legislation doesn't call for them to publish but through that comprehensive

[01:34:03] division-wide plan they should be including that then again when if you look at the the divisions responsibilities or excuse me the department's responsibilities about monitoring

implementation for those schools that have been identified on school for school improvement those school improvement plans have to go before their boards which is a public document as well and so those improvement plans should also incorporate some tenant of their textbook adoption since it becomes part of the school improvement process. So just one follow-up comment if I may. Thank you. That reminder is good. I think for the

[01:34:40] public though who may not know where to dig for that information it makes it a bit more difficult for the public to understand at the local level what is happening how it's happening and then it comes here. So that's my observation. Thank you. Yes, thank you, Dr. Wilson. So in the spirit of transparency, and I want to applaud Dr. Wallace and the instruction team for their diligent work on what I consider to be a very important law that provides a nice framework for this body,

[01:35:16] for the department, for divisions, and for our educator preparation partners on how we should approach this work as I am in my role and evaluating the ultimate kind of how do you implement this law fully I want to note that it will I think as we come to you in subsequent meetings be much more than instructions right so and you'll notice a similar vein when we speak later today about school improvement that it can't just be owned by one division or office within the department so when you think about holding schools accountable for inputs based measure that's our accreditation system right and thinking about how we

[01:35:56] make sure once this all goes into effect fully which is in July 1st right that that is so that every superintendent understands when they are signing off on accreditation that they are too attesting to the use of of high quality materials I think when we work in partnership with with our COO and our deputy superintendents around how do we make sure that you know to the extent possible our federal funds right are you know in sort of any applications as Dr.

[01:36:24] Wallace noted we had a math grant on this but again if this is a top priority and we know that folks are still in the process of changing aligning resources to make it possible and to encourage more divisions to to purchase these if they've not already ultimately there is a big shift for school improvement and I think um really thinking through not only um you know where is it in your comprehensive plan or where is in your improvement plan that you take to your board but how do we put this at the center of the school improvement plans and how do we think about making that more publicly available

[01:37:00] it is not necessarily part of the school performance and support framework we don't necessarily want inputs there but you could see where we might as we have done in the world of early childhood post online on the school quality profile which curriculum is being used right so that parents that do know to go there for information about schools could do that and then again really thinking through with our educator preparation partners how do we make sure that they're not only delivering this right but that it we're seeing changes in terms of the educator candidates that come out so that is you know I want to sort of both recognize

[01:37:36] the incredible work of instruction, but just acknowledge that there are multiple aspects of the department that will need to think through this implementation and be responsible for communicating that in order to comply with all six layers. And then I think thinking through as well, how do we make sure that our school division partners understand this is not just a chief academic officer at the VDOE to the local division, but is broadly, and you think about your funding choices, your school improvement, your

teaching and learning, as well as your superintendent's office, that all of those folks understand what the law calls for for them.

[01:38:18] Dr. Bridges? Thank you. I have a couple questions. I do think, to Ms. McPherson's point, it's exciting with the focus on math. We really should start to see some movement in those math recovery outcomes just from this, because we know that alignment and reducing variation in what children are receiving in instruction can be a huge big step so I'm excited about that I wanted to ask to your point about the ed prep programs because we've got so many educators coming in now from alternative programs and not even having

[01:38:55] field-based training as part of their experience before they're in the classroom do you see do you feel like we're able to close that gap with the professional development expectations that are that are in the proposal yeah I mean that that actually it's not spelled out in the legislation again so you know this is what you know we were charged with implementing the legislation certainly we can go beyond and I think that that is also a valid point to bring up to school division partners right as and how they are training their local teachers and so with the curriculum based professional development that is

[01:39:32] also a part of the legislation it's not a requirement that school divisions use CBPL it is a requirement that the VDOE adopts or puts out a list for curriculum-based professional learning CBPL sorry for the acronyms just kind of kind of kind of rolls it's education yeah but that yeah we're our C of the alphabet today CBPL and HQIM they're your two two new ones today but the the legislation calls for us to adopt CBPL that at the state level that signals

[01:40:08] to divisions these are approved by us to support the curriculum that we have adopted in Virginia as well and so those kind of align right and then it's divisions have the option to select from that list to get that curriculum professional learning which is direct typically direct classroom observations support to teachers and I think that is where that training is really going to hit any teachers that have come in a non-traditional fashion because they're going to be really looking at that curriculum not just holistically what is

[01:40:47] HQIM as our educator prep programs are going to be doing but also very specific to that school divisions implementation of the HQIM at the classroom level and typically that type of professional learning is a very sustained type of professional learning that it's not one and done it happens over the course of the year many times and we actually do have a couple of grants right now the math grant is one we also have a literacy grant that is doing that same thing right now in divisions to provide that that support through curriculum based professional learning vendors you know but the very valid point and how we

[01:41:24] we can really think about maybe working with some of those alternative accredited or alternative teacher pathways that offer that and you know I will just say that we've encouraged we've been talking with EPPs for a little bit now they were invited to all of this training so they got what the divisions got and we've encouraged them and we'll be encouraging them to reach out to their localities find out what they have adopted and get samples of those curriculum materials for their students to see put their hands on look at the lesson plan thematics and how it's set up and what they can do to adjust lessons to address student needs

[01:42:03] for disabilities or advanced learners or EL learners thank you I have a second question but it's not it's not related I think the other really important piece there is that the law provides a clear expectation

that we're gathering this data right in order to publish it but it also means that we can start to look up at okay what do we know about this school how many provisional licensed educators do you have right at what levels right and then what are they using in terms of HQIM where are we seeing growth where are we not where might that be related to professional learning so the Dr. Wallace is exactly correct this

[01:42:41] will probably be our priority over the course of the next four years in terms of like that's how long it takes on the other hand what we've learned from our work in early childhood is really thinking how you measure and show that back to a school division every step of the way is critically important as you sort of think about what do we have at the aggregate level how do we take things from accountability or sort of test level performance attach that to what we know about the workforce attach that to what we know about which HQIM are are or not being used right miss McPherson oh wait oh dr. Bridges has another question do you want to add on or okay okay so I'll be quick so I'd like

[01:43:20] From an elementary standpoint, so the role of the board is to obviously look at systems and make policy that's going to make changes. And in order for us to do that as we adopt standards and as we adopt materials, that information has to flow out to everyone so that we know that they're all on the same page with us.

[01:43:45] These are the high-quality instruction materials that we expect that you will use. So the communication needs to be really clear because to give you a perfect example, I'm sure that during COVID time and even before that, because I've got some experience with it, there were materials that were being used to provide shortcuts to learning.

[01:44:07] What we have found from the experts is that as well as that was intended, those materials were not based on fundamentals because the textbooks that are approved have fundamental steps of growth in them.

[01:44:23] And as you go through those materials and you master those, you get to the next set of materials, you have the building blocks. And when you shortcut that, you don't have the foundation, and then students fall behind. But from a board's perspective, what we're trying to do is say we need to get on the page together so that we can move from the materials to some of the other issues that teachers and principals and superintendents have said create problems for them, such as self-regulation in classrooms.

[01:44:53] So that's my point. Can we get the word out? This is where we are. This is what the expectations are. So the teachers are clear about what we're expecting of them and their accountability. And we can then help them with some of the other issues that are facing the school system across the board.

[01:45:12] So I do want to thank the staff. I do want to thank everybody out there that's trying to do the best that they can under this circumstance. But just understand the framework. We want to try to move on from this to help you address some of the other issues so we can build a first-class Virginia entire system for the growth of our students.

[01:45:30] Thank you. Dr. Bridges? Thank you. This is just a clarification from my understanding. the background document, not the presentation, talked about the Excel and Ed report that only eight states require or maintain official adoption lists. Does that mean Virginia with this law becomes the ninth? Is that what it does? That would be my perspective. I don't know the specific underlying criteria, but in my 15 years, this is one of the more assertive state laws on hqim and we're thankful to the general assembly for it yeah and if you look at those

[01:46:09] eight there's a couple in there that you know are getting some attention for some of their advancements and um in the outcomes so thank you for that thank you uh dr northern and then mr robinson so i just want to underscore um a point just made by our superintendent like this is this is huge um in terms of what we're being asked to do um i've got frankly mixed feelings about it On the one hand, there is no other state in the entire country that's deciding HQIM for history and science, because guess what?

[01:46:43] It can be a hornet's nest. Like, we know the problems that we had, and I'm just being real frank here. We know the problems that we had with our history standards, getting them, you know, right, so to speak, where we could actually feel good about them and all the negotiations and collaborations that we had.

[01:47:01] So you can imagine us trying to, as a body, say, like, here are the science textbooks that we think are great, when nobody else is willing to do that, right? So we're going to have debates about climate change, about evolution.

[01:47:17] Like, these are no small issues. And so that's one. Both science and history have their own hornet's nest, right? So I would suggest that there's going to be some education that we need to do with the General Assembly to say There's a reason no other state has done this before, right? We started with with math and ELA because they're Easy, right? And we know they're not So I guess just that point like I I just feel like this is going we're going to be the frontrunner on this when nobody else has done it Um, and so we need to be real careful and it's going to take time. Um, I don't think we need,

[01:47:57] I don't think we should push and say, okay, well they told us we had this timeline and it's more like, okay, let's tell you like why it's important for us to take our time when we're going to be the, the only state to, to do this period. Um, my second point is I think that, um, we're trying to do this through the textbook adoption process from what I understand. I guess that's the right vehicle I worry though like is it the right vehicle to say like this is how we're going to think about this process I don't know if it's I don't know if it should look like a textbook adoption process given that we're not in 2011

[01:48:33] anymore and teachers are not just using a textbook we've got like all these materials on you know on Google classroom and on canvas and on all these digital learning platforms like getting a textbook and putting it your backpack is not the world we're in anymore so I really do think that we might consider what the process look needs to look like in 2026 and going forward given that textbooks are not what a teacher mean I just did a survey in my day job teachers are telling me they use 37 different types of materials and but you know intervention and core and supplementary and all this stuff begins to blend

[01:49:10] together so I would just encourage us to think differently about the process and not try to tie it to 2011 process and I'd also be I'm also curious this is my question what the textbook vendors said because I feel like we've put them in a compromising position in some cases there just haven't been enough high quality ones out there and we've had to force ourselves to say we think these are high quality even though I don't think some of us were convinced that they were and so sometimes the field hasn't caught up with what we're being asked to identify and so again I do worry that there may be no HQ IM in these

[01:49:48] two areas because other states haven't been forced to do what we're getting ready to do so the vendor that is specifically gave feedback I talked with them and said hey well I've got you let me ask these questions get your feedback and actually you know they they like the Virginia process the process of that

we go through is a good process and primarily it's not changing what is changing is the way we implement that process with the rubrics that we're using to evaluate things.

[01:50:19] As far as textbooks, and you think that we look at textbooks, we did not get a single hard copy textbook in the last two reviews for English and math. Everything was digitally reviewed. So we are up with the times on our review processes of the materials and we do look at those tenants what's changing though is the ancillary other materials that are with that textbook that becomes the whole package those are now going to be reviewed where they haven't been reviewed in depth in the past now we did incorporate that into our math textbook and ELA textbook review process because

[01:50:59] we knew that there was going to be legislation coming so we did look at some other like supplemental type materials with those not just the textbooks right whatever the vendors sent to us is what was reviewed and that included those other materials but now this process gives us and the deaf the clear definition of what HQIM are in Virginia gives us a clear mind and to develop a rubric that can go along with that definition and along with you know what doesn't what is a quality assessment look like for looking at the materials and the progression that students should be making with those

[01:51:37] materials and so I think that we we're we're we're already moving in that direction so I want to reassure you on that that even in our last review process we're already moving in that direction there's no way we could look at a hard copy and then we have to keep all of those hard copies until the next textbook review and so yeah so that that piece but the the vendor going back to the vendor they appreciated because we're very transparent with our vendors throughout the process this is where we need to see better alignment and then

[01:52:14] they revise and and then they send back materials and we review again or you know if we have questions they're very responsive about getting us what they need our process is very clear that we have to know who who wrote the materials it's not that you know who was the editor or the author of the materials You know, there's some components of our process that are safeguards, not just for the textbook vendors, but also for divisions, because the pricing structures, things like that all have to be submitted ahead of time.

[01:52:45] That protects our divisions in the long run. And so, you know, overwhelmingly, both the stakeholders, teacher, educator stakeholders, as well as the vendor that I spoke with, we're in favor of how our process works is a good process. Yes, there are things that can be.

[01:53:01] so we know that HQ I am differs based on the subject and the grade level we're being asked to do this for k-12 every course I assume and every grade level so I would just suggest and I know we've relied heavily on UVA in the past to help us with our reviews of HQ I am in in reading and literacy given again that we're going to be the the forerunners on this I would suggest that we find you know our partners in the state who are also experts in science and history and

[01:53:37] have have some real credentials around this as opposed to putting it all on the feet of our educators I think we're really going to need some heavy-handed expertise here that have expertise working with other states that are you know maybe have done this at a local level again I know nobody's done it at the state level and so yeah I just and also my last point is just that we study it right I've talked to the superintendent about this before like everybody's saying HQIM but we don't have any impact data that actually shows that particular HQIM are increasing student outcomes which is a real problem

[01:54:14] we're still using rubrics and so on without real outcome data so two points we do invite institutes of higher education on to our review committees we also get feedback you know so we do have some insights there and then also our team right now is learning about HQIM and there is a session today going on about science HQIM in the session that that my team is attending as we speak right now so we have through CCSSO already been looking at science HQIM we've been talking about it for about a year and a half there are a few states that have some OER that are considered HQIM and that they've been

[01:54:54] implementing and it is getting more national attention on the forefront as far as history you're 100 correct they're not going to be a lot of all hqim in history and we've seen that there are some states that are developing their own so there there are lots of different things going on nationally so very valid points thank you superintendent cumway yes thank you um you know

[01:55:23] I want to kind of acknowledge, I mean, it is a very big deal to contemplate this work for history and social sciences and science, fundamentally, particularly with the definition of HQIM, saying that it's adequate content and materials for student mastery of that content means in some form or function it is a relitigation of the standards, right?

[01:55:45] as you think about the extent to which that content is covered, how you demonstrate what you sort of define as that threshold for mastery, and then how you make the choices about what's in and out fundamentally in drawing that line. So I want to acknowledge that. I also just want to acknowledge and again have appreciated Dr. Wallace and the team jumping in to the deep end but this is a significantly different definition and this is not just take textbooks and just added the four words high quality instructional material but

[01:56:22] the reason we had the team put the definition here on slide eight and the reason that we brought this back for second review is I am concerned because you have not heard more about this that we potentially don't have a full recognition in the field when you think about what Dr. Northern just noted and how many grades and that every single school division every single one of our 1883 schools right would be affected by this that there's probably some

[01:56:55] additional work to be done around really making sure that supports student mastery that it is thinking about the science of learning in terms of the instructional practices it is calling for you know intentionality around that ongoing assessment which is completely different and we know when we when we were out on the listening tour that from a educator or parent perspective you're pretty indifferent whether the assessment comes from the state or the assessment comes locally but if the testing balance is not right that

[01:57:31] impacts your experience as an educator or as a parent and then how do you really make sure that there is the professional learning and so I just I don't want anybody to underestimate the magnitude of that definition and as we think about then all the responsibilities that follow on on that chart so I think you know this will you know it there's a flag here and wanting to one as we heard today make sure that there was some time for additional review between now and June but I think we'll also be looking at the maximum discretion on how we roll this out over the next four years and i think this is a four-year law uh quite frankly that will you know

[01:58:10] from at least the entirety of my tenure and thinking about where we need to take more time to get it right um because the thing that you're watching it whether you're avoiding and i know this is what is beyond the newness of it and and dr northern is an expert the other thing that you want to avoid is a

whole lot of work for a null effect right and if and if you say everything is okay then what you see is a ton of investment the vendors of products end up making more money but there's not actually effect on students and so really thinking through how do we bring the

[01:58:46] right partners to the table how do we make sure our school division partners are fully aware and phase this over the next the next four years and make sure that it is a core piece of whatever kind kind of a four-year roadmap that we would produce great mr. Robinson first I want to applaud that ambitious goal and the ambitious effort and we're seeing in places that moved on literacy your high quality instructional materials really fast movement in many divisions in many schools in dramatically improving student

[01:59:21] achievement and so I think when when done well you know I think we need to absolutely study it a lot more and this is an anecdote not research that I'm saying but you know we have multiple examples of students getting dramatically better instruction and seeing results within a short window and that and so one thing I want to say is just encourage us yes it often takes three to five years for change to stick but we're making this huge investment you know we should start to be seeing student outcomes particularly for students furthest from opportunity in in a much shorter window and what I want to ask before comment is you know about the alignment to standard to remain a

[02:00:00] priority that's one of the principles of the board in this this comprehensive shift of this definition do you have discretion as you think about the scoring rubrics and how you evaluate whether or not we're keeping a high enough standard for whether these materials knowing it'll be very hard in harder in history and science and math and language arts you know I'm concerned that is our is our criteria actually high enough and are there too too many materials being approved as HQIM and just what your experience is so

[02:00:35] far yeah so that that's a it's a very valid question and I will say that alignment is at the forefront of this process and so the first leg of the review process is alignment and if they don't make it through that alignment component they should not make it through to the next section of the rubrics which is the HQIM tenants right alignment can be defined in a lot of different ways it could be 60% alignment to standards could be 80% alignment to the standards and just just curious you know how we're thinking about using this opportunity to ensure that we feel very good about those evaluation

[02:01:15] criteria so so my team is really good on alignment they and they train very well on alignment and really anything we we would for adequate alignment is around 80% but we try not to equate it to an exact 80% but looking at the whole you know all of the materials across the whatever was submitted some materials are only submitted for you know a couple of grade levels some materials are submitted for k-12 some are six eight you know and so you know we we hold that

[02:01:49] higher standard on our on our committees and then um you back to the implementation you know once you have those that have gone through i love that we're adding the in the definition assessment to monitor student mastery of the content um and as we do that i worry about it being very focused on what the curriculum providers are promising and not necessarily aligned to the standards and so i i I appreciate and support the addition of that and love your explanation.

[02:02:24] That was more about the formative assessments. And I think the field needs a lot of help in ensuring that we aren't just giving the keys to all of our assessments to what the curriculum providers promise us. And instead, the field is getting support and how they're thinking about how that ties to, you

know, interims and units and other assessments that help ensure the learning is deepening and is aligned to Virginia standards.

[02:02:52] So all that to say, I support all this and encourage, as we think about the training of system and district leaders, which I see in here as part of the criteria, that we really hone in, particularly as math is so new, in thinking about how we're scaffolding system leaders to support teachers with systems for assessment and PLC that are more comprehensive.

[02:03:22] than just what the curriculum providers provide. Have you been dropping in on my staff meetings? Our team is already considering a lot of what you've said. The PLCs, we have a literacy planning cycle that was introduced with the Virginia Literacy Act, and we're applying that to like a lesson planning implementation cycle.

[02:03:42] So we've already integrated it in our math materials that we've shared out, but we'll be doing it holistically. We have additional tools like walkthrough tools that are designed for HQIM implementation for those division leaders to look at how the HQIM is being implemented also looking at those assessment results looking at where teachers are filling in the gaps where something may not be aligned 100% to meet the rigor of our standards we're also so that whole planning cycle that that we're talking about with school leaders is all about what you just said and you do that through your PLC you know it's not let's go to a PLC and talk about our field trip it's let's go to our feet PLC and talk about how we're going to

[02:04:21] implement this new HQIM lesson and what did our data say from our last set of walkthroughs that we did and when we were focused on X Y and Z so we've put out new walkthrough tools that we're training divisions on that really is specific to looking at that implementation of HQIM at the classroom level additionally I do want to say we are looking at SPSF data for literacy already our team has looked at the data we have we're currently doing school visits to those schools that have shown tremendous growth which we do think that came from the implementation of HQIM and so our team is finding some pockets

[02:04:58] where there are some strong places of HQIM implementation of that literacy K5 and we'll be highlighting some of those in the fall through a process that we're working through defining we also are seeing where and this is where Superintendent Conway and I have had some discussion that you know sometimes incremental steps like that you see the teachers still using the the you know holding the computer to go through the lesson they're implementing right they're implementing with fidelity but they are not a hundred percent confident and so you know in the listening tour for example I went into two different classrooms one where the teacher had the had a computer and the other where the

[02:05:35] teacher was on the floor saying verbatim what was coming from the HQIM they had script they knew the script they knew it and that's what you're going to find with your quality teachers that have been there a little longer your experienced teachers that you know kind of you know they know the routines they know the content that's why HQIM is so good for new teachers because it's all there for them and they and it outlines a high quality instructional program for students in particular our students that come that don't have the resources and and the backgrounds at home that they're bringing to the classroom so all those things taken into consideration and I swear I think you have a microphone in

[02:06:12] in in my staff meetings dr. northern so just last comment on this for me I would just suggest since we are the the the guinea pig I'll say for the entire country on this I think that like we did with our process for history review where this board and this is before I was on the board but they meticulously like rolled up their sleeves and got involved in making sure that those standards I remember mr. Rotherham I

saw pieces like literally going through this I would just encourage you to involve this board a little bit more on the

[02:06:51] process and how it rolls out and when you begin to review textbooks particularly you know since you said science and histories first let us know like give us examples as you continue to confront you know present to the board of like here's what we're seeing as we're looking at new textbooks here the problems we're coming up against um here's where we worried like that we just don't think there's going to be enough um history history textbooks out there to match our standards because you know like we create a really good standards i don't know if textbooks have caught up with us um on the history front so just in general um because i do think there's going to be some education that we need

[02:07:30] to do on this and i'm kind of look forward to that like okay if we're going to be the four runners here then let us be a model for other states and let's be transparent about the process that we go through with you guys and be real open about the troubles that we see in trying to do something like this thank you I appreciate the request and welcome that great okay so chair has final comment on this one which is it's gonna say everything that you just said first I just want to thank the previous board members previous staff members and our current board members and current staff this is really just the most appropriate next step in our work we've

[02:08:07] done accountability we've done standards we are you know accreditation and performance framework from my experience high quality instruction materials is the highest leverage thing that is going to move our our state across the state forward from you know from our youngest learners to our highest learners and it takes time and that's that's the tricky part so how do we have the patience persistence but move with urgency around high quality instruction materials and what I hope you are hearing and that the board is agreeing that we are 100% on

[02:08:42] board with moving forward high quality instructional materials for our for our state it has different parts and elements whether it's the process or the tools or the resources but we are a hundred percent on board with it because we know it is what is needed just just a couple things from my experience is almost exactly what you said the implementation with fidelity what we know and from my experience is there's a third of our sector that is hungry for this and is already moving forward and they're gonna see probably the most immediate impact on academic outcomes for their community and we need to learn

[02:09:21] from them very very fast there's another group that's somewhere in between like you said you know they've got the materials what the shift is from my experience is teachers have to internalize the material so you can't just read a script that is more heavy lift it's a different kind of lift for educators that we're used to i have examples of a you know a teacher who was tremendously successful and a new teacher coming in new teacher just takes it implements and turns gets better results than a teacher who's been teaching for many years

[02:09:56] just because of the rigor of the standards and the alignment and so there will be varying stages of implementation and i think that the more we learn the more we're patient around it the last thing i'll say two two last things is uh is the point you made um all of the data and there's a lot of data and research around this our most vulnerable students are the ones who don't have access to high quality instructional materials and that is where we're going to close the gap by the work that we're doing today and this is a

change management process and what I think you've heard is I am one who does not want to be in all the details

[02:10:36] particularly around history and science standards but but take that to Dr. Northam but yes yes however the communication around this the whether it's to all of the stakeholders what i would just really emphasize is why why high quality instructional materials if we don't spend enough time on that i think we'll we'll run into two just bumps that are unnecessarily and so again we can get down to the details but i think the more

[02:11:13] we emphasize the why and you know we're we're not the first to lead on high quality instructional materials that has been happening across the country we would be the first around science and social studies so it's really an opportunity for us to just jump frog the whole country around it but if we don't explain the why i think that we're going to have some missteps so just thank you for the team and with that we will accept this item for second review and see you in june thank you you very much for your time I did not anticipate it would be this long so

[02:11:46] exciting thank you thank you okay board are you in need of a break maybe a quick five-minute bio break okay we are gonna take a quick five-minute break and we

[02:12:02] will reconvene on our next item thank you brief break we will return back to

[02:21:37] the agenda although I don't know if we need to wait for that this is mr. Williams thank you our assistant superintendent of child care health and safety I remember the the I can't remember the exact comment but the ickies or something so yes we are we are getting an update I believe so would you please present yes ma'am good morning madam president superintendent and board members my name is Jeff Williams so we're here to do a final review for a guidance document for licensed child day centers so I'm here for any questions but in full

[02:22:15] disclosure to stay out of the ickies hopefully there aren't too many questions so we don't have to get into goopy eyes or crusty lesions but what questions might you have for me great thank you board members any questions okay thank you is there a motion to approve the guidelines for a notification reporting of communicable diseases so move second thank you all right miss Reinhardt aye

[02:22:47] dr. Bridges aye dr. Northern aye dr. Wilson aye mr. Robinson aye mrs. Kilgore aye and chair votes aye thank you mr. Chapman you're up thank you having been in the technology gentlemen's shoes please forgive them they hate this they are trying their

[02:23:23] best to keep this running and just have to do their best we understand we also appreciate the library for hosting us and moving us from room to room so we know takes a minute well if it's okay madam president I don't think my presentation depends on on the slides okay yes please jump and thank you board for hearing this item mr. Williams will stay up here just because the content area falls within his his his jurisdiction however the reason I'm presenting is because this is a very highly technical item and essentially

[02:23:59] what has happened here is this this action a series of actions that affected a number of different chapters in the child day center regulations have come back before the board a couple of different times and this is just the latest iteration so in 2024 the department started the process of enacting a piece of legislation that had to do with epinephrine availability in early in child day centers that action had stalled for a couple of different reasons and then proceeded in the fast track towards the beginning of

this year so this is obviously a much larger implementation time than i think anyone is anticipating for the the so-called fast track process when this went

[02:24:39] into public comment it triggered a provision of the administrative process act basically these received more than 10 comments of folks who were, you know, a little wary of this action. I will say that the reasons for the weariness seem to have more to do with the controversiality of the action and people not really liking some of the provisions, the cost aspects of this, things that, you know, were considered by the General Assembly, not the textual aspects of the actions.

[02:25:07] However, under the Administrative Process Act, those actions as fast tracks must now proceed as full regulatory actions that are going to take a much longer period of time. We are coming before the board today to ask the board to withdraw those actions and allow the department to come back with a single NORA, a notice of intended regulatory actions, to kind of restart these for one specific reason.

[02:25:30] We have had a very large regulatory chapter in the works. It's a replacement of 780, which is the standards for the licensed child day centers. It's been in the process for five years since the NORA came out, I think, my third month on the job with the department.

[02:25:45] And that is in the final stages we expect it to come back to the board next month for first review at the final stage. That is a very large ship, and we would really like for that ship to dock and get settled. Since one of these epinephrine actions from 2024 is amending the old chapter, it doesn't make sense from a policy standpoint to have the licensed child day centers completely out of sync with family day homes and with voluntarily registered child day centers.

[02:26:18] So we think the right thing to do at this point is to take a step back, let the other regulatory action play out its course, and then come back with the NORA in order to amend the correct new chapter and all the other chapters at the same time. So this is just a very sort of wonky situation with a regulatory action that we thought was going to be much quicker colliding with a very large a very large regulatory action that that sort of needs to needs to complete this five-year journey okay thanks mr. Chapman are there questions okay is there a motion to wait first

[02:26:51] review and approve the action to withdraw actions of 6 380 6381 6383 and 6384 so moved second miss Reinhardt I dr. Bridges I dr.

[02:27:10] Northern? Aye. Dr. Wilson? Aye. Mr. Robinson? Aye. Mrs. Kilgore? Aye. And Chair Rhoads, aye. All right, thank you. Okay, Jim, you're up again. Thank you, Madam President. So we're doing the first review? Yes. Yes, okay. Sorry, yeah, item H is a first review of a fast-track regulatory action to amend the regulations governing pupil transportation. This chapter had a periodic review in 2025, where in discussing the language and the text with staff, we found a series of

[02:27:47] amendments, very small changes that needed to be accounted for that we thought a couple of minor clarifications. There's one instance, probably the most substantive, has to do with school buses and when they move over railroad tracks. The current regulations say that those lights need to be turned off before they go over the railroad tracks, whereas I think the practice has changed in the time since these regulations were originally published that now we want them to turn off after they cross the railroad tracks. There's some very minor technical changes along those lines.

[02:28:15] We do have Carrie Miller, who is our director of pupil transportation, who we've been working with a lot on this. We have also consulted with a number of pupil transportation directors across the state

and the DMV about these changes.

[02:28:30] But we are presenting it to you as the results of the periodic review. And these changes, we think, are in line with the periodic review from last year. The recommendation from the superintendent is this be accepted for first review. Are there any questions? okay we will accept this item for first review and see you in june thank you very much okay i think we are reviewing the 2026-27 bqb5 guidelines is miss carol oh there you go all

[02:29:05] right good morning uh thank you to the board for having us here uh today we're excited to build on the great conversation that we started yesterday during the work session uh where we talked about early childhood virginia's birth the five system and specifically vqb5 so i will kick us off again today and i will once again turn it over in just a few slides to our expert and lead in this area chris meyers so we can go to the next slide so today we will take just a few moments to refresh

[02:29:45] and reset on some of the key goals that we are seeking to accomplish through our vqb5 efforts again that's virginia's quality measurement and improvement system we'll talk a little bit about some of the feedback that we have heard from the field in doing that and the structure of our vqb5 guidelines these have of course been provided to you they're one of the i'm sure many monster documents you got today so we'll summarize some of that for you as well and then Chris will provide some details related to the two key changes that we

[02:30:20] are proposing for this year as well as some of the more technical edits that we have included next slide so we wanted to start with just taking a quick step back and looking at our guiding principles and so these principles have been essentially exactly as they are here from the very beginning of our development of this quality measurement and improvement system and that is work that started seven seven maybe plus years ago and we designed these before

[02:30:59] we had the name BQB5 before we even had the measurements identified and have worked hard to refresh and remind ourselves of them every year and as we go through the year so we have sought to build and support a system that really focuses on the impact on school readiness so as we talked about yesterday really centering on school readiness for our birth to five learners using measures that can distinguish quality and support growth so really equipping teachers and the professionals in the field to know how they can get better

[02:31:37] actionable information and incentives for improvement we knew when we were charged with building the system that we were going to need to expand it to every publicly funded site so 3 500 plus sites and so that requires that the system is affordable and scalable so there's some you know practical measures to keep in mind there and importantly that we are increasing opportunity for children, that we're mindful and what we are measuring as far as outcomes, much of which we

[02:32:11] discussed yesterday, and then always with the centering of how this is useful for families as they make one of the most important decisions they make related to child care for their young children. Next slide. So one thing that we're really proud of on our team is the level of engagement and opportunities for feedback that we try to keep consistent throughout the year, both as we prepare annual revisions to this document, but also as we launch in the fall and

[02:32:48] the spring. And the amount of feedback we have is sometimes overwhelming, but we have tried here to summarize some of the key themes that we have heard throughout this year. So the first key

theme, we continue to hear general satisfaction with class and curriculum I cannot tell you how many times I have heard people just attest love for the class tool and we're actually going to provide some examples of what that looks like in action in just a few slides we received general support for the ready region for

[02:33:25] link B5 and for the way that we have as a system been able to coordinate responsive supports yesterday we highlighted the success of the honor roles which really gave programs an opportunity to highlight areas where they shine and we've seen that carry throughout the year as well people are very pleased with the accessibility of our VQB 5 data this is a very transparent system we actually just post an Excel file with all the scores and ratings on there. Folks can, you know, do with that in a safe way, of course, but do with that

[02:34:04] what they want if they want to, you know, really dig into that. And then as we mentioned yesterday, we've seen our quality profile website be extremely popular with about 200,000 visits in just two years, not even two years. Some of the areas that we have heard feedback on that we are continuing to refine are related to the link b5 and the va connects user experience as we mentioned yesterday the va connects website was new this year and we've heard some ways that we can continue to make that more user friendly and are actually actively working on some of those updates right

[02:34:44] now i think sites have communicated that they continue to benefit from hearing what the purpose and rationale is this system is work there is lift to be done here and the more that we can help folks really understand the benefit to everything we're asking them to do the more we equip directors to do that when they have to ask their teachers to fill out profiles and you know participate in that way the better off I think we are and we have continued to expand the way

[02:35:23] that we use our data to support classrooms and i think that will continue to go as we have more data year over year and then we have heard and we will talk quite extensively about this today but we have heard feedback that we that there's a demand to make sure that the rating levels are accurately reflecting children's experiences and so as we showed you yesterday currently the vast majority are sitting in that uh one middle rating level next slide so again you have the the full

[02:35:59] guidelines document in your materials today we have not changed the structure of this document significantly this is the sixth time we have brought this document to the board of education we've brought a set of updates every year again trying to be responsive to this evolving system we you know started in a pilot we had these as guidelines that were evolving were a first year a learning year practice year and have continued to make some refinements annually since then

[02:36:35] one important thing to note and i don't think we covered this yesterday but we do have the early childhood advisory committee and so this is a legislatively mandated group that we take every document that we bring to the board of education to them beforehand and they have the opportunity with their expertise to really weigh in ask questions and so we did do that on march 19th had a great discussion with them and received an endorsement next slide so there are two key proposed updates and i'm going to summarize them here and then chris will

[02:37:10] give more information but you know just to kind of steal the surprise for her uh the first change that we are proposing today is changing from a three-level rating system to a five-level rating system and so we alluded to this a little bit yesterday again this is really with the goal of providing more meaningful information to sites and to families and more distinctions in what quality looks like and so

she'll explain a little bit more what that looks like and then the second change is changing to a required site improvement planning for a larger

[02:37:49] category of sites so for right now that starts at 399 which is a rating that very few sites receive and this would be a modified but required improvement planning process for an additional group of sites which we will also talk about and next slide so why are we talking about this so as we covered a little bit already and we have seen several challenges with the three rating levels which again is our our primary i think the biggest change we are proposing here and um

[02:38:25] somewhat motivates the second change of the um the site improvement planning um so i think some of the challenges we have seen is with those bigger rating categories we're really getting more general feedback and we are grouping a whole bunch of sites together that are really doing very different things i think that is limiting both for our higher performing sites that are in that category that really have something to be seen and it is also limiting for our lower performing sites that fall into that big category where when we know that they need some additional supports

[02:39:03] compared to others again we also want families to be able to see the more accurate information and have more meaning from the ratings that are available moving to a more differentiated rating system is also important for our ready regions and improvement partners we really emphasize prioritizing supports to those that need the most and this helps us identify who that is with that we will go to the next slide and Chris Myers will take us through some of the details for our

[02:39:39] first change good morning glad to be back and to follow up again on the great discussion we had yesterday so this is our kind of big change so what you see here is our current structure the three rating levels there on the left that is what we were are under right now so when we share profiles in the fall that will still be under those three rating levels but we are proposing starting next year to move to a five level rating system again those would not be published until fall of 2027 but we'd begin measuring under that system i'm going to walk through just a couple of

[02:40:17] the key changes here but the full definitions are in section six of the guidelines page 65 if you want to refer to those as well but we tried to pick even just the names for these levels to be something that was easily understood and kind of built on each other so the first thing to point out is we are keeping the lowest level exactly the same so a 100 to 399 points will still be called a needs support rating we are also keeping the top level at least the points the same so the top level will still be a 700 to 800 points we are proposing changing the name of that

[02:40:56] level when we look at what those class scores are and we think about calling these sites national exemplars which they they truly are we think distinguished is actually a better name for that level it also aligns with the k-12 framework so we think there's some nice alignment there then basically what we have done is taken that meets expectations range and broken it into three categories that we think better explains where these sites are so the if we start from the bottom there the 400 to 499 points we're proposing calling those approaching expectations

[02:41:31] They are partially having some of those good quality interactions, they just aren't fully there yet. 500 to 599 would now be considered what we expect, and that would be meeting expectations. And then the exceeds expectation sites, 600 to 699, again, they are doing some higher level interactions and things that we'll break down in just a minute as well.

[02:41:55] So we think that's a better label for that 600 to 699 category. Next slide. So it's important to note we are not proposing a change to how we actually calculate the rating and this will actually allow us to continue to measure year to year growth from how we started in year one. So it will still be this three digit score. Again, we just found that parents found that three digit score confusing. And so again, having a shift in the labels and the kind of cut points will help with that. So we calculate these ratings at the end of the year. So this just kind of summarizes what we're doing now.

[02:42:33] and what we will do under this new proposed system the first thing to highlight is we will continue to get most of the points from those local observation scores that happen in every classroom in the fall and the spring we multiply the average score at the site times 100 and that's how we get up to 700 points if there's a score replacement as we talked about yesterday if there's any inconsistencies we factor that into that interaction point category the curriculum point is a slight change and this was actually approved by the board last year if you'll go back to that other slide so the curriculum change was approved by

[02:43:11] the board last year but it doesn't actually go into effect till next year so just want to remind everyone that currently we give the 100 points if they are using a curriculum and at least one classroom and again that's optional then starting next year again they wouldn't have to use curriculum but if they are using it they would need to use it in every classroom in order to get that additional 100 points we'll still add the points together for the total points and then you can see the difference between the cut points for the three levels versus the five levels that would start in the fall of 2027 next slide so

[02:43:50] this has been one of our favorite slides to share with the field to kind of show the impact you didn't have to look behind you Jenna you knew what slide this was so we were trying to help the field understand what the impact is going to be with this change so what we did here is we took our existing scores from the 24-25 year and kind of modeled what that would look like or what it looks like currently and what it would look like under these new cut points so the blue line there on the left is all 3,293 sites that currently have a quality rating the orange in the middle is their current where they've fallen currently so again there

[02:44:29] were 101 in that top category 25 in that lowest category and all others 3167 were in the middle under the new cut points that's the green bar there on the right so what would end up happening is most sites would end up in a higher or equivalent rating category so we still predict uh very few at that top and that distinguish we still predict very few at the bottom and that needs support but then we think there would be about half of those meets expectations that would move into that new exceeds expectations category another fair chunk that would stay in meets

[02:45:08] expectations and then about 300 or so that would drop into that approaching expectations and that's what we'll talk about in a few more slides again about how we would require some additional improvement support for those particular programs on the next slide we took a look at what this looks like by site type so the dark blue is the current three level rating system and the lighter blue is the five level rating system and then you can see the percentage by centers family day homes and public schools so again most site types would fall either into

[02:45:42] exceeds or into meets expectations that's true for all three site types but overall there would be more public schools that would be in that exceeds expectations category and when you look at the approaching expectations category that's mostly centers or family day homes however we do predict there

would be a few public schools that would be in that category we have not had any public schools in the need support category but we do think there could potentially be some there again this is our estimate we'll have another year of data this summer that we'll do another modeled impact on but this helps us kind of predict what would happen and what

[02:46:18] the impact would be on the field. Next slide. So when we were thinking about how we could potentially shift to more levels one of the things that we talked a lot about was how do we help our system and help families in the field use these levels to better understand what children are experiencing. That's really kind of one of our main points with using the CLASS tool is to understand what those children are experiencing. So we decided to use these 100 point brackets because every 100 points then represents a shift in the frequency, the quality, the intentionality of the interactions that are impacting

[02:46:57] children's experience. The class tool itself actually uses a 1 to 7 point scale so each one point of class actually represents meaningful changes and how that teacher is supporting interactions and a one point in class is equal to a 100 points on our interaction system. We're not gonna have a seven-point rating scale that would be too many ratings and really when we look at what's happening at 399 points and below, truly children in those sites are rarely if ever having those positive interactions so again that would kind of be our lowest chunk but then we'd move up by 100 point intervals and you can

[02:47:35] kind of get a sense that the frequency of those positive interactions that support learning happen more frequently as you get up each level on the next two slides we're going to break this down even more I know we talked some yesterday but we thought to really help this hit home on what we're talking about with what children are experiencing we wanted to put this into a couple slides so we've got an infant toddler example that we'll look at first and then we'll look at a pre-k example so what we've done here is we've taken some actual children's experiences based on things that the class tool looks for and we've

[02:48:12] broken them into the low mid and high range so the class tool also kind of lumps things into low mid and high and then has individual score breaks that breakdowns within those so if you start on the left if you read those interactions it's it's pretty hard to read to think about our babies and toddlers being in settings settings that are having those types of interactions consistently. That's why those are considered sites that need support. They need very intensive support because we need to have our infants and toddlers having better experiences. If you look first, let's just kind of do the three kind of basics. So if you look at meets expectations, those sites tend to

[02:48:51] have class scores that fall pretty much in the mid-range. So when you look at those types of experiences, that's primarily what's happening in a site that's meeting expectations definitely some good things happening and things that are starting to support learning and then if you go to that highest level what would be considered a distinguished infant and toddler site you would see the types of experiences you see listed there as well which are very high quality stimulating experiences for those little ones a brain that you saw the pictures of yesterday that will really support that high level of brain development the two new levels that we're proposing tend to be a little bit

[02:49:30] kind of on the border and have a little bit of a mix of interactions so what we see in the approaching expectations that 400 to 499 category those class scores tend to be a mix of some lower interactions and some mid-range interactions and then the 600 to 699 what we see again is a mix we see some mid-range interactions but we also see some of those higher range interactions and that's why we

think having those additional categories helps that make more sense this is also similar to some of the language we'd like to use more with families to help them understand what

[02:50:03] the class tool is and why these interactions are important next slide so similar to what we just looked at this one it's pre-k and it's also just one domain of class so the pre-k class actually is two other domains that look more at emotional support and classroom organization but this instructional support domain it is actually the one that we see the biggest variation in across our pre-k classrooms it's also the lowest scoring overall domain across the state so we wanted to kind of really try to explain and put it as much it you know examples here to help you understand what's happening for

[02:50:43] instructional support in a need support site versus the other levels as you move up the system so again if you start at the left of the things that are happening there are not really supporting learning and those needs support sites and so we need to get in there and help those programs start to promote learning and to do it in ways that are developmentally appropriate for young children meets expectations again there is definitely some interactions that are starting to promote learning they're sort of a mix they're just not happening as frequently or at the depth and then when you get to that high level not only are these things happening but they're happening frequently they're they're

[02:51:18] lasting longer, we talk about the duration and the depth of those experiences. And I think even after yesterday's meeting, we were talking about how just helping folks understand how important talking and having those back and forth conversations with young children is for promoting their brain development. Again, those two new levels, they're more of a mix. So again, the 400 to 499, we see a mix, so kind of low and mid examples there. And the 600 to 699, we see a mix of mid and some high range interactions. Next slide. So we wanted to give you a little more data about these two new

[02:51:57] levels and again that kind of helped us really feel like these were the right levels and breakdowns for these sites. So first on the left is the sites that scored 600 to 699 so we looked very closely at those scores and some of the trends that we noticed from last year's data is that these Programs had a higher average compared to all so they their average was 639 compared to 592 which was the overall average 99% of these sites were using an approved curriculum So pretty much all of them were using an approved curriculum compared to 80% of all sites

[02:52:35] Most of these sites 92% were returning meaning they mostly had had a couple years of being in VQB 5 although there were a few that were first time participants in bq5 teacher retention overall was higher at 84 percent compared to 77 percent that probably means there's less new teachers coming in and some strategies at those sites that are helping retain those teachers and then on average when we looked at a couple different categories of experience and years in early childhood these staff had more years of experience in early childhood compared to other sites so we

[02:53:12] We feel like these sites need the recognition to serve as peer models. In some ways, as we think about those distinguished sites being our national exemplars, these are our state exemplars too, and we want to be able to learn from them so that people have more examples of what this really looks like, how is it working, and what they could do to reach this level.

[02:53:33] When we took a closer look at the sites with 400 to 499, they definitely demonstrated more of a need for that targeted support. So their overall average was lower, 466 points compared to the overall average. Only 23% of these sites reported using an approved curriculum, so very little curriculum use.

[02:53:54] And if they were using it, they're probably not using it that effectively to be in this category. Still most of these sites were actually returning, 77%, so a little bit less. But these are sites that for the most part had some experience with VQB5, a few more newer sites but showing that potentially we need to get in there and help support them more a teacher retention was a little lower so these sites probably have more new teachers on average staff had less experience coming and working at these sites and then this last point really hit home for us because we have been prioritizing these sites the last two years

[02:54:31] we send letters we encourage them to participate in coaching we tell our coaching partners to prioritize them but as of december only 14 of these sites have taken us up on those state coaching supports so that is partly what led to us wanting to have some kind of requirement for this these sites to help them improve which i think takes us into the next slide so the second part of our change which again is related to the first again this would not actually start till the fall of 2027 because we'd measure under the new five levels next year and then we'd actually publish

[02:55:07] the new levels in the fall of 2027 but starting that year we would require site improvement planning for both our needs support sites and those approaching expectation sites when you look at the definitions of those sites you can see again they're a little different that needs support definition again they are definitely significantly below the standard so we are actually not proposing any changes to what we're doing with those sites it seems to be working it's very intensive both with a DOE quality consultant and intensive coaching so that would continue to be a very intensive required improvement

[02:55:43] support to meet the quality expectations for the approaching expectations again they are making progress towards they're just not fully there towards our quality standards so we would propose more of a targeted approach that would be required to help them fully meet our expectations which we'll talk about a little bit more on the next slide so to give you kind of a sense of the differences here on how we'd kind of differentiate the support we put this side by side so again the need support items no changes this is actually what's happening now so need support sites their goal is to move out of need

[02:56:19] support ultimately we want them to reach that meets expectations they have to work with our coaching partner out of UVA the Virginia early childhood coaching consultation so no choice there that is the coaching partner that works with them every site leader every classroom every new teacher at those sites has to participate in the coaching and the coaching happens a lot so on average it's about every two weeks but it might happen even more and at minimum to meet the compliance piece of this they have to have at least ten sessions during the program year so a very intensive approach that we would continue to have

[02:56:57] the approaching expectations is a little more flexible but still again with some requirements so their goal would be to get to that 500 level point level or higher we would give them a little bit more choice here so we have four current state coaching partners of the VECC is one of them we have some stream coaching related to using the stream curriculum we have an infant toddler specialist network and our t tax as well so one option would be for them to work with a state coaching partner and if they work with them those coaching partners again have those minimum requirements of coaching and that would meet the requirement as long as they're

[02:57:37] participating and keeping up with their coaching the other option would be that they identify another qualified coach or an improvement partner and they would work to develop their own quality improvement plan they would have to submit it to us and we'd have a committee that would review it And

if it met our criteria for that, we would approve that, and they could kind of manage their own quality improvement pieces.

[02:58:01] We'd monitor it, but not as closely as we would with some of the others. The second option is probably more an option, we think, for our public schools who already have instructional coaches on their staff. Sometimes our Head Starts have their own instructional coaches.

[02:58:17] This is probably a more challenging option for a family day home who doesn't necessarily have a coach. But potentially there could be other coaching organizations that, again, if they met some requirements, this could potentially be an option. But we would guess and we would want as many as possible to take that state coaching partner option.

[02:58:37] As far as who would participate in coaching, a little more flexibility here. We would require the site leader themselves to get coaching. We'd look at the individual classroom scores and determine which of those classrooms had the lowest scores to participate in coaching.

[02:58:53] is potentially there could be a center that has 10 classrooms and maybe one or two of them actually had higher scores so we wouldn't necessarily require every classroom to participate but we use our data and then any new teacher at these sites we would require to get coaching coaching would happen less frequently again this is kind of our initial proposal we'll work and kind of think this through over the next year but we're thinking something more like a minimum requirement of at least every month with something more like five sessions throughout the year again as a minimum there could certainly be more than that that we'd encourage so that's just an overview of kind of how the two

[02:59:32] are differentiated you can go to the next slide so that kind of sums up the main two changes and again we can take some questions on those in just a minute this slide I won't go through all of these individual items but as you heard Erin talk about when she introduced the guidelines document we do just find kind of every year there are places that we can strengthen our language to talk more about the purpose or perhaps adjust a deadline based again on either the feedback or the data that we see in the field. So this kind of outlines some of the areas where we've made some smaller

[03:00:06] clarifications again to address those pieces from the field as well. And something like the honor rolls is not new. We just didn't have that fully fleshed out in the guidelines and recognize that we needed information in there as well next slide so to wrap up just want to kind of share with you and remind you sort of of this timeline one thing that we are currently doing is going out into the field and having lots of stakeholder sessions about these proposed updates we had a webinar just a couple weeks ago that has almost 2 000 views of the recording so we are

[03:00:43] trying to get this out there this spring this summer sites go in and they have what's called a data verification period at the end of July and they get to preview their rating and that's when then they can request a change if they think there was an error so when they do that this summer they will go in and they will see their three level rating and we will also have some kind of additional information that will say if you got this score this year it would look like this under the new five level rating system and it would give some information as well to start them thinking about that in the fall of 2026 again those quality profiles would still be published under the three

[03:01:19] level scale but we would start to have some communications on the website and for families to start letting people know that this is coming and what this means the improvement planning again

starting in the fall would still just be for those needs support sites but we would continue to prioritize coaching and we think more sites might be motivated to take us up on it if they know that they're going to be required the following year. Throughout the winter and spring we will plan on doing many emails, newsletters, webinars both for families and the field and then next summer of 2027 when we have data verification that's the first time they would log in and see their

[03:01:57] kind of preview of their rating under the five level scale and then the fall of 2027 we publish with the new scale again we need to have some resources and FAQs to explain the shift and the change and that is when the improvement planning requirement would start for both needs support and approaching expectation sites and with that I will open it up for questions superintendent Conway any just appreciation for the team and for the incredible amount of work here I do want to note that the early childhood

[03:02:35] advisory committee does go through this in-depth and there was a full unanimous endorsement of this and as noted 2,000 views already but continuing to gauge that no one is surprised by what is a very significant shift and how we how we rate these these programs I'll just I don't have any questions I you know I think the transparency and the change gives just a great feedback that providers need in order to improve but also to highlight the providers that are doing an excellent job so I just want to thank you for their presentation

[03:03:12] Dr. Bridges thank you so much for building on what we learned yesterday and and really um taking us through the the very thorough process y'all have been through I just had two quick questions I see in my rabbit hole of links that y'all provided that class has a a new version that the class 2 and that's not being used yet and so is there a plan for that uh integrated into into this so a couple things with that the second edition of the pre-k has been out now for about three years and so we have built some initial

[03:03:47] capacity at the regional level to understand and explore the tool it it aligns pretty closely with the current tool it's not major shifts so it can be used for some professional development it's just a bigger shift to completely shift to that and they had not released the infant toddler second edition until this past fall um and that tool is significantly different they've actually taken the two separate tools and combined it into one so it it would be a pretty big lift both uh from you know the cost of it and the time for people to completely recertify so we're exploring it and we're sort of trying to like kind of look at that capacity um but we will not shift yet until we

[03:04:27] feel like it's really the right time the second edition tool is very much still it's not like they're gonna phase it out they are still using it it is still very much supports high-quality interactions and there's really more of a research base still behind the initial the original versions and so we've also asked for more data on the impact of the second edition tools side note from the rabbit hole too I didn't know that class was used in K-12 settings and in some studies is even has proven to be more effective than the Danielson framework which we see so often so anyway that's just food for later thought my second

[03:05:04] question and honestly this the move to the from the three to the five rating scale makes so much sense to me as someone who has personally wrestled with standards-based competency-based grading myself in a college setting and I this semester dropped exceeds expectations from my my system because I was finding you know the subjectivity increases so much when you get anywhere beyond meets because you can really map you met these things here are the things so I'm just curious

[03:05:38] for y'all how you think about the need for exceeds but even distinguished is there is that incentivizing anything in your mind to add the distinguished there is there an advantage in terms of

incentivizing improvement for others or or spreading best practices what what do you what do you think having both exceeds and distinguished provides for providers I guess that's a great question and it is true that it's a fairly small group that

[03:06:13] is currently in that what is now exceeds and will be distinguished however those sites really and truly are national models to be able to multiple times across a program receive scores at that level it is a distinguished rating and we do hope that it is motivating for folks to see that and we also hope that we can continue to equip those sites to be models to the sites around them and we didn't share this graph today but we do

[03:06:48] or chart today but we do have a map and and the sites that are in that category well you know not not a ton they are around the state and they they cover every site type which is really important and so we think it's important that there are family day homes that are distinguished centers that are distinguished head start sites schools and we can point to those and hopefully you know regional partners can do that too to really lift up what that looks like there anything you'd add superintendent Conway yep so I think the

[03:07:24] other important just to take a step back and to to bring together some of the concepts from yesterday and today, is that this is all a very significant evolution, right? So before the law was passed, one in six of our programs that took the child care subsidy program, predominantly family child care and child care, were participating in any form of rating system, and most of them were at the entry level, which was functionally just licensure, right? The sort of the floor in terms of health and safety. And as we rolled out this system, we wanted to be very cognizant that if you were going to tell folks that they didn't meet expectations, what they

[03:08:04] would more likely do is to say, I'm not going to take public dollars, right? And then the risk would be, unlike our K-12 system that sort of has to take public dollars, that they would simply say, I'm not going to take public dollars, and then our most in need, children and working families would not have access, right? And so the whole idea was to say, okay, we will lay out a reasonable bar for meets expectation and we will drive resources for improvement to that group that no matter where you went and no matter who you were that if you walked into that classroom you would agree this is a place that needs additional support. We then also said we know that the

[03:08:41] research from the tool sets a very high bar. It is a very hard bar to achieve and we have the benefit as Chris noted of almost two decades of class right and we can say if you can get a six like no matter where you go if Dr. Wilson walked in or if Dr. Bridges walked in they would be like this is truly exceptional and that compares kind of across the country but setting that bar right meant that in year one we had about 79 is that right like uh sites that met that bar out of 3,000 and this year we had 101 and that feels like a really you know feels like almost too small

[03:09:16] but you keep it small because it is truly exceptional by creating the exceeds it truly recognizes those folks that are higher performing where there is a difference for children um and allows there to be kind of a recognition of of that that um again thanks to the underlying tool there truly is a difference between exceeds expectation and meets expectation i will say and I have this sort of, this is a rare moment of mentioning other states, but we happen to know that there's another state that has had this system in place for now than a decade. And one

[03:09:54] of the things that I had the opportunity to share with the authors of the class earlier this year was the power of holding that high bar. So when we looked at some of the Louisiana data, 10 years into this, they still have the five levels. So similarly in Louisiana, we started with three and move to five that you have examples and the example I'll give is a as a very rural underserved parish in the Mississippi Delta known as East Carroll Parish when this effort started they had three early childhood sites and they were kind of an approaching expectations right

[03:10:29] so if you think about what we describe and that kind of where kids are not receiving those high quality interactions fast forward 10 years later they have eight sites so they didn't reduce the they nearly tripled it and their network average the average across those eight sites was a 6.02 which basically that plus curriculum would put you into you know that distinguish if you were to go back and Aaron and I would go back to East Carol Parish in 2016 it never felt possible right it did not you could not imagine only half of their only a quarter of their population has bachelor's

[03:11:04] degrees you know 70% in his poverty it felt like that bar was too far out of reach but we think by creating the kind of the stepping stones by aligning the resources and by keeping that high bar even though it's a little frustrating in the beginning because only you know only 100 out of 3,000 sites earns it that if Virginia can hold that bar and add that ingredient of support and time we have to believe that it can be done anywhere thank you mr. Robinson speaking of holding a high bar for those who didn't get to watch the presentation yesterday

[03:11:42] I just want to recognize one reason that this is such a phenomenal change in raising the bar is because my understanding is we had about 50 schools that had were in that bottom category a couple years ago and now only 25 in part we hypothesize because of the strong support the team has provided and this will raise the bar in not only expectations but also in more schools receiving support and so my question before comment is like do you do we have the resources is that like you're been twiddling your thumbs to dramatically

[03:12:18] increase the support that we'll be providing to schools in the way outlined this is a great question and one that we've been receiving and are actively working through yes we do and we'll continue to figure out to make how make sure that we are prioritizing the supports that we have we're currently getting an estimate of exactly how many classrooms, and we're going to use our most recent data to make sure that, you know, the supports and the coaching partners that Chris mentioned that we

[03:12:51] have available will be able to meet those needs. I do think that will require us to do some thinking, potentially some, you know, re-evaluating this year of exactly how those supports are prioritize and reach the the teachers that need them most um but as chris said this this is a change in the requirement but it is not a change in how we have been doing this the last few years we do reach out directly to this population already in fact we have our coaching partners these are the folks that have contracts with the state reach out to them directly already and what

[03:13:31] we have seen is just not a lot of uptick and i i don't think that is a criticism on these sites at all i think these sites are likely overwhelmed and and you know handling many challenges and we believe from what we've seen in that very lowest group that has been required that putting some uh you know weight behind that and saying you you have to do this to stay in the system we'll get them to participate again primarily with these partners that are already in place and already targeting these populations, or these sites, rather.

[03:14:05] So, yes, I think we have the right resources. We will take this year to reevaluate, look at our most updated data, and when we're going into designing scopes of work and so forth next year, make sure that we're spelling that out exactly as we need to.

[03:14:22] That's phenomenal. One thing I was most excited about was when you said that you'll start to offer this support, And I really encourage modeling exactly and learning from exactly what you've proposed here. So if there are new sites in that 4 to 499 range, really treat it as change management and learning lab to model this, learn from it, see if you think you've gotten it right, as in we then require it a lot more the next year so that you have that learning.

[03:14:48] And then final comment in terms of power of holding the bar high, I love the simplicity of the model in terms of how it's scored. and and defer to the committee that's already fully endorsed this and just want to recognize that we're proposing that I think about 50% of our sites are now would be now be at exceeds expectations in an environment where thanks to your work and the educators across Virginia we're continuing to raise the bar in the scores and so I would just want us to at least consider long term maybe not now raising the score bar as well on what it takes to

[03:15:25] exceed expectations as we incentivize better practices for our youth Ms. McPherson I was looking at the scores in the category of the 400 to 499 sites in 2024 so where their total point average was lower about 466 points and they need to get to 500 to 699 in order to be at meet expectations but i also see that one of the biggest problems they have is that they're not using an approved

[03:16:04] curriculum but then am i correct that they're getting a hundred points if they just implement an approved curriculum in at least one class which the hundred points then to one at one school that say is scoring 466 would then put them into immediately put them into meeting expectations So for every school that implements at least the approved curriculum in one class, do we give them 100 points and then it would move them over into meeting expectations?

[03:16:41] And just do you think that skews the numbers or is it that all your data will tell you that that alone makes them meet all the other requirements pretty much for meeting expectations? But as we go forward, I mean, obviously I'd be curious in understanding more about were we really making a difference or should we require that all of their classrooms have at least the approved curricula for them to get to 100 points?

[03:17:09] Because it's going to move them to another category immediately. That's partly what led to us requiring it in every classroom. So that's one shift that would also be in place. So they would need to start using it in every classroom in order to get that 100 points.

[03:17:25] But we would look at, again, to get the class scores that would also help them get to that level are not as low. They are some of those mid-range class scores. So the combination of those together would still be what we would look at. And we do analyze, even currently, how many sites are just across the edge and what are the characteristics of those at all the cut points and just below the edge as well.

[03:17:50] So we'll continue to kind of watch what that means, too. Do you want to add anything? appreciate appreciate the work remember is there any other questions okay dr. northern just kudos I just like many of my colleagues here on the board just really applaud the effort and the process and I've shared this with the superintendent privately just the way in which the system cultivated trust right buy-in of course buy-in but not buy-in sounds kind of icky right it really was

[03:18:26] building trust over time and and acceptance right because when you have a trust you kind of accept the system you're and you want to work with it and it's incentivizing sites wanting to get that higher bar right because now we trust the system we understand what we're being measured by all the transparency stuff my other colleagues have said so I actually think the process in which this was carried out was really informative for me frankly just in terms of how we think about change, right, and how we begin to build trust in change.

[03:19:03] And my other comment is a little bit more pragmatic. I was looking on slide 18. I've personally been excited about linking data systems, and I know we give vowels. It's a K3 screener, right, not just K.

[03:19:19] And so, I mean, is there, am I right that we are going to begin at least on the literacy front with VALS to begin to connect these data to the early elementary school grades and to begin to see, okay, now we can look across and begin to identify these kids even earlier prior to the typical third grade identification when they have their first SOL test?

[03:19:43] Yes, absolutely. That is absolutely one of the key goals and outcomes that will be possible through the new VA Connect system. Again, we have prioritized doing this as safe as possible, making sure our systems are in good place, but having that data all housed together is going to allow us to really take a look in both directions, right? What is happening in early childhood and how is that working out in later grades as we go on and have more and more years of data,

[03:20:19] as well as looking back and just understanding the more full picture of how we got to those early elementary outcomes. It's a very unique perspective to be able to have. I think we're the only, if not one of the only states that are going to be well-equipped to do that at this scale, And we are incredibly excited to explore that data.

[03:20:42] Probably none other more than Superintendent Conway. Great. Well, with that, Ms. Carol, Ms. Myers, we want to say thank you very much for your presentation yesterday. And today has been echoed.

[03:20:58] We think this is a model and hope to have some best practice and learn for our K-12 system. And so with that, we will accept this for first review and see you in June. thank you very much with that um we still have a number of items remember i would propose that we uh break now for lunch is that okay okay great we will uh adjourn now for a brief lunch and then

[03:21:23] we'll come back in about 45 minutes okay thank you get back into session in the back are we all set

[04:15:51] okay thank you all right um we have a item j um mr jennings is that that's you all right we are the first review of the amendment, Title IX, of Virginia's Consolidated State Plan.

[04:16:08] Wonderful. Thank you. Good afternoon. Good afternoon, President Ashton, Superintendent Conway, and members of the board. My name is Mark Jennings. I'm the Assistant Superintendent for Assessment and Accountability. I have two presentations for you today. The first, we will talk about this proposed amendment to our Consolidated State Plan, and then we'll pause, take any questions, and we'll move into our accreditation system. So we'll move through the slides, and if you turn to the next slide, I want to outline the presentation for you. We'll talk about the purpose of amending our state plan at this time, two proposed revisions that are needed for 25-26 accountability, and then we'll talk about the process and timeline for next steps with this

[04:16:46] amendment. And so our next slide. So we talk about the purpose of making these changes for the 25-26 school year that we're currently in, and I want to share that it is this administration's priority that this will not occur in the future you know coming to the board at the middle of the year the end of the year talking about an accountability during the year is not best practice and so we want to own that admit that up front and we're excited that at the June board meeting we'll share with you any changes for 26 27 we'll do public comment as needed and then would ask for a final review for that in August but as you saw in the last presentation really what we do states

[04:17:25] would have this really locked down by April at a board meeting like this so that school divisions can plan their summer professional learning and know what's expected for the next year. So want to share that vision with you and the public that's listening and that is a cadence we hope to move to and so we stop this practice of being in the middle or end of the school year asking you to make or approve changes to an accountability system. Now these two specific elements you're looking at today are federally required and that is why we're asking for them and so we'll talk through them today. The first is using value tables as our growth methodology for reading and mathematics and then second we do need to establish an exit criteria and progress levels

[04:18:03] for our students who are English learners with the most significant intellectual disabilities and they take an assessment called the WETA alternate access test and so we'll turn now to our next section and there you'll see on this slide about value tables transparently measure growth and so you'll see here national experts from our techno advisory council they've given us guidance on this and Virginia educators prefer that we use value tables in 2015 when the Every Student Succeeds Act was passed states you know could use this as an indicator and Virginia selected to

[04:18:40] do that Virginia embarked on a study and we looked at value tables at that time they were progress tables I'll explain the difference we looked at student growth percentiles and we looked at value added and from that research and stakeholder engagement Virginia selected progress tables at that time we did use value-added model for one year which was the past year and so the proposal today is to return to value tables with some modifications to it and so why does the public prefer these why detect recommend these one what value tables do is they're going to measure changes in performance year

[04:19:16] over year again the helps with transparency consistency and familiarity to Virginia schools can look at these in advance and tell families teachers students this is what's expected for growth this is what your target is and pretty immediately they would know did the student meet these expectations. Value tables allow both the SOL tests in our VAP program our Virginia alternate assessment program to use the same growth methodology. Last year we had two growth methodologies we used value added for SOL test and then we used value tables for our Virginia alternate assessment program because the vendor

[04:19:52] was unable to create value-added model for our alternate program. So we actually did have to run both. This will bring both back to use the same model. And as you see in the last bullet, educators stated that using value tables again provides better communication with families and the public on student growth. So I'll share with you, we asked one of our experts who worked with us on accountability, Chad Alderman has presented this board multiple times, we asked him to look at value added in the way we ran it last year. And then we asked him to look at value tables in the way that we're proposing it to you today and when he did a correlation he found there to be a 0.96 correlation

[04:20:29] between how schools performed and value added and how they performed in value tables so a very high correlation to see that schools that are having students grow the students are growing i mean so just wanted to share that with you we did find some differences as far as with our value added we had done some partial credit for students it was a bell curve those students some students may not have shown the same partial credit uh with the value uh tables that we're talking about today so if i give you percentages here for reading using our previous model we had around 50 of the

[04:21:03] state showing reading growth under value tables it was 66 so you can see a clear difference in metrics in math we had 49 of the state showing growth using the value added model value tables it's at 65 percent and so you can see using value tables you do have more students showing growth individually they're not being compared to their peers that's one of the key differences there we'll turn now to the next slide and you're seeing here in virginia we use a zero to 600 reporting scale currently and that's what you're seeing grades three through eight these are our annual

[04:21:37] assessments and so you know we call it a horizontal scale it's how we communicate sort of how a student has performed we have four performance levels you know are they below basic basic proficient or advanced and what you'll see for growth is now on the next slide we have a vertical scale and that's where we take uh we took the test from grades three through eight and we link them we funded a linking study to look at our assessments for reading and mathematics to see what progress should be made year over year with these tests so rather than seeing them in isolation you'll see there's a through line from 1000 to 2000 you can turn to the next slide please

[04:22:16] and so that's what you're seeing there all the way through and that's why the scores are different which you'll see on some of the tables that are coming up so what does a vertical scale do well it allows for reporting of scores across these sol tests to measure student growth it's more sensitive than the horizontal scale i just showed you now the progress tables we used previously what we did with those is we would say a child is high basic or low proficient or high proficient it was still within a bucket but it was very broad so you know we might say to a parent your child is high advanced or low advanced what the

[04:22:53] vertical scale does is it actually gives you numbers to that and so it's much more specific and so that's the difference between a progress table and a value table is we're actually using the values versus using the progress or the bands there and so we will look at a student's performance year over year to see how they did individually from one test to the next and the expectations for growth can be defined so that again teachers students know what's expected for them at the beginning of the year the next two slides here eight and nine these are examples well these are the value tables that we had based on our

[04:23:32] current SOLs you see the score ranges there from 900 to 2000 looking here at reading and you see the different ranges and the expectations we can go the next slide and look at mathematics you see the difference is we have a large percent about 50% of our students in middle school will take an end of course assessment there'll be an algebra you most of them are algebra and some are in geometry and so that is why we included algebra in our linking study here as well so that we can measure students who may move from 8th grade into algebra to measure their growth and so that's that's our math table that we've used

[04:24:09] and we would continue to use based on our current proficiency standards. On the next two slides you're going to see our proposal and so in the past when we had value tables what we said is if a student moved up a level they received a point and that was it. We also said if a student passed the test they received a point and so really as long as a student passed they were getting a point and if a student moved

up the level they got a point that that was the business rule to it that was the methodology. What we're doing here is we're proposing some indexing we're looking to reward students who are showing moving from one performance level to

[04:24:47] another and so if a student failed in the prior year and now demonstrates proficiency they would get a 1.25 or if a student was proficient in the prior year and now they're advanced it would be a 1.25 or if you see a student who moved two ranges you would see the 1.25 as well so we're trying to incent more growth and growth moving from not being successful not passing to passing or showing advance and if students still move one range we're still doing the point i mean they're still showing expected growth there and so that's what you see on this proposal on this

[04:25:23] slide and now if you would go ahead and click through for me you're getting some animation here around the different point values and how they work you can keep clicking we're going to move to the next slide and on this next slide what you'll see is now we have where students may not advance they may move back one or more ranges and so they would not demonstrate growth and would have zero points. Students may move back one or more ranges but they're still being successful on the test and so they would receive 0.75. If students were not successful on the test but they

[04:25:59] maintained then we're proposing a 0.5 value and if students stay in the same range also again proficiency you're seeing the 0.75. Staying in the same range I know this is very detailed but this really came from stakeholder engagement really to look at individual students and how they're scoring and providing all these different points and so I'll say to you in this complexity really was to honor that feedback and say students grow in different measures and so could have kept it simple but we wanted to honor those different points there and so you'll see there if you can keep clicking through these visualizations you'll see there on our final point is a student who scores at

[04:26:39] top of the range and then the next year is the top of the range they also get 1.25 there's nowhere else to go and so from our feedback in our study there 1.25 seemed appropriate I'm going to move to the next section and again we'll take questions on the growth methodology here at the end I want to recognize today with me is Nikki Saunders she's the department's title 3 coordinator she was very instrumental in the work I'm going to describe to you now also want to recognize with us a national expert helped lead us through the conversation I'm going to share with you Molly Faulkner Bond who works with

[04:27:15] WestEd she's a national expert and multilingual learners and she helped facilitate this process so we're going to talking with you now if you go to the next slide about the WIDA alternate access and so this is an English learner progress assessment it is based on the alternate model performance indicators it's developed by WIDA just like our access test these are for students who also participate in Virginia's alternate assessment program which in Virginia by federal is supposed to be around 1% and Virginia very proudly was under 1% last year we're very proud of that and so in Virginia you have about 3,246

[04:27:53] students who took this assessment last year which is 0.3% of our population two percent of our English learners take the WIDA alternate access and so what this assessment is it's a large print paper pencil tests administered to students one-on-one who have the most significant cognitive disabilities and so what it's assessing is students language arts mathematics and science across the four language domains of listening speaking reading and writing and so the next slide please and so the test was redesigned in 2024 and this is why we currently do not have an exit criteria we're bringing it to you today and

[04:28:32] that's why we're bringing these progress levels they expanded the test to be in compliance with ESSA. ESSA requires that you would have a measurement for your kindergartners and so they expanded that and they also made substantial changes to the grade 1 through 12 pieces so that only 15% of the original items remained and so when this happens at both the national level with a test like this or at the state level we come before the board and talk about standard setting what is the proficiency level progress levels and so while again the test itself you know had pieces that remain the same given the changes to the academic language the rigor of the assessment did change and so we

[04:29:11] convened a standard setting committee we had English language learner specialists we had special education both from the department and the field on this committee again our national expert facilitated this process of course title three was a part of this instruction was a part of this assessment and accountability and we worked together to give you these recommendations for an exit criteria and progress levels and so on the next slide you'll see the proposal the committee is recommending that of the five levels that for a student to exit with this assessment they would exit at a level four and

[04:29:47] there's no integer this is integers here there's no decimals it's not like a 2.3 or 2.1 like the access test has these are whole numbers here and so previously again if you're wondering well what was the prior exit criteria there wasn't one This is a newer assessment, and Virginia did not establish exit criteria previously.

[04:30:06] So this would be the first. We did coordinate with many other states on this to hear as they walked through this process where they landed as far as their recommendations. And you'll see in the final bullet some of the methodology that we used. We did look at performance-level descriptors like we would do with our reading, math, science, history, standard setting.

[04:30:25] we looked at data on how students performed both on this assessment and our alternate access our alternate assessment program and we also looked at services we looked at the services that students receive and title three and instruction were instrumental in that because you talk here about if a student exits these are duly identified students so they still have services under special education but now they would exit under English learner services but they still would have monitor status and as we talked through this again And Nikki's available, any questions around sort of a student might exit and might be reclassified.

[04:30:59] So just to share, that was very instrumental to this work, to think through sort of a student's exiting that communication to families, but they may also re-enter. And on the next slide, you'll see the data. So what is the impact of this? Again, currently, there is no exit criteria. We have students who are scoring, as you see, a level five, the highest level, and they're not able to exit because Virginia is not defined.

[04:31:20] And by federal law, we need to do this work. So exit, level four was proposed by the committee. committee had great conversation between levels three and four looking at the performance level descriptors thinking about this exit thinking about the students think about how they scored on VAP all that criteria really good conversation they really you know between levels three and four and they settled on a proposal of level four this will go to public comment we'll hear from the public around that as well and bring that back to you at the June board meeting but the recommendation from this committee was to maintain a a higher standard at four we did find many states that did select three but our recommendation here

[04:31:59] is a level four and now that's exit criteria so now we need to talk about what about students who continue in to be measured through this how do we measure progress and so if you turn to the next slide we're going to talk about progress for this assessment so the approach for this was we only had two years of data and so this is something we will examine this fall with more data it's a new assessment how are students doing but even with two years of data you still need to determine progress levels it's required by federal law so we use the data and i say two years of data but really you're looking at one year because it's really 23 24 being compared to 24 25 so really

[04:32:36] that one data point we were looking at grade clusters were certain grades performing better than other grades you know how are they doing uh based on the type of assessment and the different levels one through four and again we looked at the calculations for the groupings and the average performance and so considering all of that now if you can go to the next slide i want you to see our proposal here and i'll mention to you j lark the joint legislative audit review commission put together a study on our k-12 program accountability made a list of recommendations you'll hear more

[04:33:12] about and one of the recommendations you know based on feedback was to index english learner progress this is the beginning of that work it's something this committee felt very strongly about and it also signals to the field that we would look at partial credit currently for English learner progress we simply say to the student meet the benchmark yes they get a point no there's no there's no credit this starts to look at a way to say well they made some progress could we give some value to that versus no credit and so what you see here is very interesting in the data typically what you have with English learner assessments and from WIDA study and other assessments is that the lower the students are performing they actually

[04:33:51] move faster and that the higher students are performing they're actually slower in their growth it's actually the opposite here students at the proficiency level of one are showing less growth than students with a higher proficiency level that's unique to this population again this test is intended for students with significant cognitive disabilities and so you're seeing some of that plateau but that that's different you know if I come back to about access it would be the opposite and we need to treat these tests differently but just to share sort of you know it's not what was expected in this research. So the proposal here is proficiency level one you know you might look at it say really one point one point on a scale score for this

[04:34:31] assessment in this population and nationwide I will tell you that was the consensus that one point for a scale score is considered to be growth and the student would earn a point. If a student went over one in their scale score then they would get 1.25 and again just to set sort of the ground there in the establishment now Virginia I've got to share with you Virginia other states they let that be the the guidelines for all all levels looking at our data we found that two points for levels two through four was very doable we saw students as an average meeting that benchmark if not exceeding it and so our

[04:35:08] proposal is for students in proficiency level two through four if they meet the two-point threshold they get a point if they exceed the two-point threshold they get 1.25 but let's say they improve by one point then they get half a point and so you're starting to see some of that partial you know credit there for showing some growth but not full growth our thought here again is to have this by law we need to have this we'll come back and analyze more data this fall with a next another year of data and to see sort of again if the trend is continuing with the student performance and so with that I'm going to turn to next steps and share with you where we're headed. This will go out to public

[04:35:48] comment. We'll announce this next week. We have meetings already set up next week with English learner specialty groups and leaders to talk through this and get more feedback from them. We will embark on listening sessions around these proposals. We have some conferences coming up. It'll be made publicly available through our website, our newsletter that has over 2,000 subscribers. It'll be on the website for a minimum of 30 days you see there. And And then we'll bring all this feedback to you, to the board, and share what the public had to say, if there's any proposed revisions from the public comment.

[04:36:21] And then we would ask you in June for final review. With approval from the administration and the governor's office, it gets submitted to the United States Department of Education. They've already been made aware of this so that they could expedite the approval process so that we can run 2526 accountability and have it on time.

[04:36:39] last say that the appendix that you see is for you in the public I just want to share if you would go ahead and click to that appendix really quickly because I just want to highlight the reason this is there is to share with you transparently in the public there's no changes to the weights and so we just want to share that the same weights that were used in the prior year the same weights were proposing for the framework no changes there and that's why just to sort of put that out there and be transparent and then that final slide was around some scoring on the access test some of the levels so I will pause there and to take any questions or feedback. Thank you. Superintendent Conway, anything to

[04:37:15] board members? Dr. Northern, I'm coming straight to you. All right, this is going to be unpopular. I have several issues with value tables. I've been really thinking about this since you initially presented it, like are we going forward or are we going back? Because we've been talking about doing growth right for a few years now. So the issue with value tables is that we're incentivizing focus on the bubble kids which is exactly what we wanted to get away from so value tables are only measuring whether a kid is moving between the performance levels it's not measuring growth within a performance

[04:37:54] level so you're incentivizing again if the kid is far below or far above proficiency they're going to receive less attention because you really only care about the kids who are just about in between those levels right and moving those levels and so I think it's confusing and not very good for parents either because they're gonna see the risk is that they're gonna see no level change as no growth even if there was a lot of growth within the level right and I think once we try this out with school districts they're gonna get a little frustrated right because they're gonna they're gonna be trying their hardest to get kids to move and we're only capturing if they move between the

[04:38:32] level and not within the band and so I think that um the other problem is a very small shift in scores can then cause this huge shift in ratings because now you've got your little you've got all your teachers are concentrating those bubble kids like we used to do frankly I used to do it too when I was teaching um and now you're gonna see you were able to move some of them to the next level um and so you're gonna get a big shift right even though you didn't have that much growth like you just got your bubble kids over you actually didn't have growth in all the different categories because again the system is prioritizing um you know between the levels so i think that a

[04:39:10] lot of other states have done student growth percentiles like people like value tables because they're simple but they're simple because they're ignoring like 85 percent of the data right like we're just concentrating on the moving the levels and so an sgp even though it's a little harder to explain i don't think

it's i don't think it's out of the realm of explanation because you're basically comparing a student with another student who has the same exact prior test score.

[04:39:36] And then if you're making that comparison, then you're able to look at the whole distribution of growth. And we want to be able to look at the whole distribution of growth because that's the way we started two years ago. Like I remember all of us were aggravated because the old system prioritized the bubble kids. And now I feel like we're kind of going back to that because again, we want to be able to look at the whole distribution of growth and not just movement between categories and then ignoring the growth within the one category does that make sense you guys oh yeah i think you raise good questions um i guess um is there a specific question you have

[04:40:14] for mark to respond to or so my question is can we continue to discuss this and if it's going to be an issue where we're meeting a deadline and we're you know because i think this is a to me this is one of the biggest issues to get right on the board is how we measure growth because we've never done it before and we've been trying to get this right for so long and I feel like we're making this quick change to value tables when that wasn't the right direction where we're going because we heard somebody say it's simpler so my question would be like do we have time to actually continue to workshop this try to explain it to folks like the like why I just tried to hear like explain

[04:40:51] some of the negative ramifications of going this direction and then I mean maybe we just say okay this is something we try we were we get feedback from the feel but we're not going to you know etch this particular methodology in stone. So a couple comments the of old the way it was done is the way you described it this this proposal is students would still get credit from moving within the same performance level so as long as they move up one range we still give them credit or if they move up two ranges but you could you could show growth even if you're low basic to high basic you could still earn growth. What I also would say to you is

[04:41:27] we do currently do not have a methodology to run accountability for this year so I don't want to speak on behalf of the superintendent but just to throw a proposal is we could you know solidify this have this for 25-26 and again I'd look to the superintendent is you know with future years you could then explore student growth percentiles we can you know investigate have more stakeholder engagement we did examine that before we brought this back to the board talked with TAC around that analyzed it but the thought was for some of the same reasons I mentioned was the familiarity the consistency sort of this is what Virginia adopted prior that

[04:42:01] this was the best route. Superintendent? Thank you thank you Mark so I had I heard two things I think one is about how do you make sure that you focus on on more of the kids and so it seems to me while it is probably not possible to go to to something that's kind of a value added like we used last year that arguably what I hear you saying Mark is that you know because we do split there's a difference between kind of rating and

[04:42:37] range like you you you move you get credit for moving range even if it's sort of basic or proficient I suppose the team could go back right and look at could you make even more ranges right which would allow for a more incremental focus, right?

[04:42:55] Like you could divide it into more than two ranges, right? And we can look at sort of the mathematical impact of that. I do think it would still reflect kind of the most practical solution with the time constraints that we have, but I think we can ask the team to go back and at least look at that, And we

could then sort of really look at the number of ranges, and this is math that makes my head hurt a little bit, and sort of what students fall in which and sort of growth and sort of try to understand is this only affecting X percentage so that we have some confidence that it's not just a small percentage.

[04:43:36] And then I think the second piece is the concern, Dr. Northern, about etching and stone. I think we acknowledge that this is a kind of an ask for a surgical change to sort of address a real need so that we can roll out accountability by the first week in October this year.

[04:43:55] But as we sort of, we hear the underlying concern about this approach. And so thinking through, doing things in parallel, which is what is the best way to get this year's done, while also coming back to this body and saying, you know, there will be some discomfort in continuing this in perpetuity.

[04:44:14] Just a follow-up. So just a clarifying question. So right now, are there just two ranges in each column? Yes. Okay, so your point is, which I actually think it's interesting, right? so if we and I don't want to get too technical either but if we build out like four ranges right within each bucket are we capturing a more complete distribution like what are is there still like how grossly are we clumping together parts of distribution you know I would think that four would be better you're going to lose some of the you know ease of explaining um but yeah I do think

[04:44:52] that you're going to um actually incentivize um what we want to happen right more but paying attention to all students in that way and I can go back to the researchers you put this together and ask absolutely to look at more more ranges within them Mr. Robinson first of all I support both broader pushes that I'm hearing so first of all thank you for prioritizing surgical shifts to get this ready for a timeline that's gonna be more responsive to educators to actually learn from and enhance education by having results to schools and districts much

[04:45:27] earlier this year and so I deeply appreciate both proposals in terms of their surgical precision to move things forward quickly and I also support at least an examination of whether moving from 8 to either 12 or 16 levels could make sense I was heartened to hear that that mr. Albans or dr. argument's research showed that there was some correlation between this and the value added and maybe that could be made public at some point but you regardless like I think this is a great push from from dr. northern and then and then my

[04:46:05] my my push would be like to make sure that not initially for this year but as we think about long term we're considering a growth measure that that's truly prioritizing growth particularly for the students furthest from opportunity when I look at this current measure like it makes me you could be reward more students advancing three levels uh you know uh rewarding the same someone advancing two levels to someone staying the same level i understand that it's uh we want to incent people to to continue at high levels when they're already there um but we already reward that in our our

[04:46:41] proficiency scores and uh since this is meant to measure growth i'd like to see some that better prioritizes growing the results for underserved learners, at least considered. And one bubble specifically I want to call out is right now in this proposal, if you're at proficient and you go down to range four, you get zero points.

[04:47:04] And if you're at range six and you go down to range five, you get 0.75 points. And that's-- again, I'm supportive of us prioritizing proficiency, but that seems quite a stark-- not the intention of a growth measure. Thank you. Dr. Wilson?

[04:47:21] Thank you. So Dr. Robinson's observation, this last observation, is exactly one of the questions that I have. It doesn't quite make sense to me, and so I appreciate that observation. So having made that, you having made that, I'll tag into Dr. Northern's concern about are we fully recognizing and capturing growth in a way that is even handed across a full population of all of our students.

[04:47:58] As we examine that, we should also be thoughtful about how we explain this to our community and to families, because the accountability system certainly is for our use, but there is a call from the public that they understand, and it's not, you know, we talked about the acronyms that we use consistently, right?

[04:48:20] so this education ease that is a real concern and so as we are thinking about how to best represent what's actually happening across students performance we can't lose sight of how we communicate whatever it is at the end of the day to families and the broader community thank you board members any other questions Dr. Bridges I'm not seeing who that the Technical Advisory Committee I know you

[04:48:56] mentioned quickly but is that can you say more about who that group is because that you said they're the ones that were saying that the system would provide transparency consistency familiarity so can you tell us a little more about that yeah so they're national experts in their field they're recommended some have served I mean I can provide for you their names some have served as state leaders in other states and they serve on different advisory boards some one of them in particular worked at the University of Pittsburgh in assessment evaluation some have worked even with other companies such as like an

[04:49:32] assessment vendor and they do that work and so there's five members of the team Molly now sits on that team Molly Faulkner-Bahn Dr. Bahn previously she hadn't been but now she sits as one of our TAC members and so we meet at least twice a year we bring to them assessment and accountability topics and they help advises they look at the the data from Virginia they bring their national expertise and provide those and so and it's a great conversation very rewarding so they have been talking through this with us for since we you know first initially brought to the board and looking at the data and sort of looking at the context of Virginia and what the research says and so they had recommended

[04:50:10] for a variety of reasons that the value tables were a good fit for Virginia I think the piece you know one of the things they said was which you may lose I think to Dr. Norther's point, what you may lose in statistical usability, you gain in usability. And so just that sense of they're very usable. And so I think that's part of, you know, talking about the trade-off sort of what you get from one for the other.

[04:50:30] Okay. So then that's five. You said that's five votes? Yes. Okay. So the open comment time will get the Virginia perspective because, you know, they're saying it's familiar to Virginia based on their external examination.

[04:50:46] This was adopted. Virginia has been using value tables since 2017. First, they were progress tables, and then after this linking study was done, they were value tables. And then for one year, last year was the first year we shifted to value-added. This proposal that you're seeing was presented at the VAST conference last year, and so superintendents also gave feedback on this.

[04:51:05] So they've seen this as well as we were walking through with the board and talking through it. So they've given feedback, and some of their feedback was incorporated to the changes that you're seeing today. And so they've also seen this presentation. Is it okay to continue? Yes, go ahead.

[04:51:20] And so I appreciate the reference to the appendix and that nothing's changing there, but I'm curious, when will that change? Because having previously been a part of groups that had looked at the necessity for growth to be in the overall accountability system weighted a little bit differently than it currently is, is that sort of let's not do both things at the same time because?

[04:51:48] Correct. So this is to close out this school year because we need these two pieces to have accountability for this school year. And then our proposal is to come back to you in June with thoughts, recommendations, with more stakeholder engagement to save. JLARC's recommendations, you just referenced, one of them was to consider growth and the weight of growth, which we were just speaking of.

[04:52:05] And that could be used for 26 next school year and beyond. But we wouldn't obviously retroactively apply that. And so that conversation would be forthcoming in June. And you could do public comment in July and then do a final, take final action in August. So when you say, so then essentially the open comment period will be asking folks about both things?

[04:52:26] This is to close out this. So this is, we're now sitting in April. This will go to public comment now during the month of May. We come back in June to close out these two pieces that, like the superintendent said, is very surgical because we need to close that out. And then we would open up another amendment.

[04:52:41] So Amendment 10 would have some of the pieces you're describing, looking at growth more broadly, maybe SGPs more broadly, sort of really looking at the accountability system at large. But these two pieces are to satisfy federal law and to run through, so our 25-26 can be processed.

[04:52:57] But you're saying still we would be trying to get over the summer public comment and input on Amendment 10 For Amendment 10 would be in the month of July. To complete in August. Yes. Okay. Yes. thank you for that context yeah no thank you and and and mark is right so we're trying to balance between we don't want to be confusing to the public but we also want to make sure that we are using first and final review and also being responsive to this body executive order for that came from the governor on her

[04:53:35] first day and and recent legislation so this is uh surgical related to this year it's still because it uh requires an amendment that goes to usdoe has to have public comment right and so we we've just got to do that and check that box and we'll try to to do our best to explain why it is so narrow as much of the field is still wondering as you are dr bridges about the broader set of recommendations um because of executive order four and the feedback we've received from the field we as early as next week have a proposed approach for thinking about the broader set of

[04:54:13] changes to the school performance and support framework that we will share with the superintendents do some engagement around not official public comment in the way that usdoe recognizes but just to at least be able when we come to you for first review so june will be final review of this and first review of a broader set of changes which would ultimately become part of amendment 10 that there we would then need to then do formal public comment after that so think of some of what so we're doing two things in parallel formal public comment for these very narrow changes engagement for the broader set of changes but a commitment that you will have both

[04:54:53] a first and final review for those broader changes that could begin as beginning as early as june Great. But Dr. Northern, the broader set of changes doesn't, this gets settled in June and then the broader set of changes doesn't have to do with this.

[04:55:13] Exactly. Right. Okay. So it's consequential. It doesn't have to do with this. No, it doesn't. But I think what it does, I just want to sort of note, we have to solve for this share, right? Because we have to deliver it and it has to be growth or, you know, I just don't know that we can change everything. What I hear in this conversation is important and this is something that JLARC recognized as something we needed to look at more carefully when it came to the 3E readiness indicator is you have to do the actual math and the modeling to understand the impact of these changes on the sort of what is the on paper

[04:55:51] percentage versus depending on how students are earning points what is the actual percentage so the example cited in JLARC is that even though the on paper for 3E is I think 25% Mark correct me if I'm wrong you know when you count how the students earn it ends up being up to 34% of their piece and I think that's a sort of similar point that Mr. Robinson is namey in terms of let's look at you know as we sort of you know math this out I don't know if you're supposed to use math as a verb but that like if we end up that we are you know proficiency ends up being more than we meant because of how we've done this we need to make

[04:56:27] those adjustments. And so part of what that ultimately means without giving this away is that we have to think about these changes in chunks because you have to do the math to understand the impact before, for example, you reset the threshold. So this will be, I think, a healthy part of the June conversation and sort of saying, here's how we're thinking about it so we have enough time to do the math and modeling and bring back the changes to you all. We just are in, And as Mark noted at the outset, we are in an awkward position and we just have to resolve this for this year.

[04:57:05] And we appreciate this feedback because it helps us understand, okay, even now, how do we think about the analysis we need to do this summer so that if this is not something that you want to see, you know, in the future, that we are hearing that and gives us some time to think through how do we make sure we organize to do that.

[04:57:24] Dr. Wilson? I was just going to reiterate, you know, the point about clarity for the public. You know, as we are thinking through and articulating here, kind of the timeline, what has to come first, second, what's temporary versus long, that clarity will be really important for the field as well as for the general public.

[04:57:47] Thank you. You know, I think that's what I wanted to also add. you know mr. Jennings I appreciate actually the way you started this which is just acknowledging that this is not the ideal timeline for us or practitioners or you know folks who are in the field to make decisions that impact the next school year and you mentioned in an ideal world we would be having this in April where this would be final I guess I'm trying to get to next April so tell me with the the changes that we just said the surgical we're going to get this done and then

[04:58:23] there's the the broader changes like in the ideal world if if i could put you on the spot where were we where do we where do we see these changes happening so that you know we're getting ready already for school year 26 27 where 27 28 where we ideally be related to this ideally no hot seat questions. Yeah. So, I mean, it ultimately comes back to the why, right, which is that the purpose of accountability, separate from giving all of us an opportunity to test our math and decision

[04:58:57] analysis skills, is about, as Mr. Robinson noted, students, educators, and classrooms furthest from opportunity. And so, one of the most salient themes I heard out in the field is that, you know, the sooner we can get to schools an understanding of how we define and measure success so that they

understand which schools need the most help, the better, right? And I am realistically saying to you all based on what I understand to date, like the first week in October is the best we can do for this year, right? With obviously still pieces being, you know, decided now, which is not ideal.

[04:59:37] from a school perspective, they would like to have this in August, right, in terms of if not earlier for some of our schools that began then. And there's also a relevance here in terms of a significant amount of federal funding, which sort of in general rolls over in line with the federal fiscal year, which starts on October 1st. So, you know, already there, like that is what matters right for schools with the additional consideration that um uh you know knowing what

[05:00:07] changes when in the spring before that year is is ideal um uh realistically we have uh uh a a jark study that on the one hand which is great for this body says fundamentally the school performance and support framework is foundationally strong right and that you know and that it would be preferred to kind of continue to support the implementation of that rather than to start over. On the other hand, it gives you a very long list of recommended changes, some of which, you know, changing one would affect the other. And again, the most obvious example

[05:00:46] of that is it very much says we should not have the same scoring thresholds, although that is simple and easy to explain. If a 90 is a distinguish, right, for, you know, across the board well then it's very easy as a parent to understand however as you see how that played out it meant that we had a very different message about high schools than we did about elementary schools right and in a way that we did not think served our schools or educators and our students well but we have to kind of do all of the other changes and then look at the distribution to then decide right where um you know we would we would change those thresholds so it you know in that

[05:01:24] you're going to hear us say, here's a set of changes we think for next year that probably do not go as far as some might want in terms of what best practice is, but are realistic about what we can actually change. And then, you know, it will be the subsequent year in which we will bring to you the sort of the broader set of changes. So, you know, I think we will be in a solid place by probably the 28, 29, realistically, in terms of getting those pieces in place

[05:01:56] with transparency, clarity, more simplicity, while also kind of making sure, similar to the conversation about guiding principles this morning, that we're kind of remembering the why about this work. But I think we also need to hear from you all in June with specificity around, okay, hey, do you want us to move a little bit more quickly here or there, right, even if it is a little bit, you know, potentially more confusing for the field, right, or even if we have to, you know, change that this year and then change it again next year.

[05:02:31] I don't know that we'll be able to evaluate that until we put that in front of you in June, realistically. Great. Thank you. That's very helpful. Dr. Wilson? So as you all are playing out the timeline and process, It may be helpful to understand from VAS and from VSBA because I've been thinking about resource allocation and budget season and all of those kinds of things and requests and how superintendents and boards put those proposals together.

[05:02:58] You know, all of that may inform what the timeline realistically needs to be because we want to set divisions up for success. We want to set students up for success. And so understanding that may be really helpful. Great. Thank you. Ms. McPherson, before we transition, did you have a question?

[05:03:22] It was a comment. It was quick. Okay. We may end up needing a complete work session to deal with that material, you know, where it's not necessarily a board, you know, where we're having to also make a decision. We may need a work session so that we get the material we have.

[05:03:45] Right, I get it. And I didn't even want to be the one that we posted, okay? As someone's coming on, everybody's schedules are getting ready to unpack everything. But we just may need it. We just, you know, we probably need to dig deep into, and everybody flesh out, you follow me, what you're thinking, and we do what we're asking everybody else in terms of the professionals and the teachers and superintendents to do, to just decide what we like and don't like about where we are, so we can get a really clear message out to the public.

[05:04:21] Great. Thank you. Okay, Mr. Jennings, thank you. We will accept this item for first review with a follow-up in June. I think you're now on for the school accreditation system report decoupling well if we separated out our accreditation and our accountability system and so I'm gonna speak to you now about that accreditation system and if we can move to that slide deck I'd very much appreciate it so we brought this to

[05:05:00] you previously and we last year the board approved a report that was exclusive to the 24/25 school year and so what today will be an update of that report and sort of expectations for the accreditation system. Let's go ahead and go to the next slide. You'll see the outline for the presentation will differentiate between accountability and accreditation in Virginia, which we're still learning. I mean the public is learning with this. We still have conversations internally and around sort of these terms being used. I'm going to provide for you a background of the standards of quality, our Virginia code and the standards of accreditation, determining how our accreditation designations determine, the review and appeal process that we're going to

[05:05:39] propose for your adoption and then changes to the report itself so on the next slide you see here the accountability and accreditation system if you go ahead on the right side you see the accreditation system this is rooted in the standards of quality Virginia code which you'll see on an upcoming slide that directs the board to establish these regulations for how to accredit schools goes back to 1970 this came after colleges universities of course were being accredited and so the expectation from the General Assembly was our secondary school should be accredited too. And that's how it began. It was only for secondary schools, sort of mimicking what we were seeing at the collegiate level. And then it also

[05:06:18] went, was moved down into elementary and middle schools. So accreditation from the outset was very much inputs, which you would think of the term accreditation to mean. As we got into the 90s with the standards of learning and moved starting to assessments, Virginia was a pioneer in this work. This was before No Child Left Behind. Virginia had a seat at the table of No Child left behind because of the work that we had done and that's when the words accreditation started becoming outcomes and we think of it in that sense of you know accreditation how are students performing and so from there we're going back to how its original intent was you get these accreditation designations of fully accredited condition accreditation denied this information is shared

[05:06:58] publicly through reports and we provide support if you're out of compliance what do you need to do to be in compliance state law is very clear that division superintendent should and should ensure that all of their schools are fully accredited that that's what should be I mean there should be no sort of how you know that should not be the exception that should be the norm that all of my schools are fully

accredited and in our previous system we would get pushback from superintendents on that because they would say how do you expect all my schools be fully accredited when you're waiting all these academic factors but the law was set up for these compliance measures you see on the left side what we just talked about and and to the board members comment miss McPherson

[05:07:36] around a work session I would absolutely embrace that idea to walk through with everyone the framework as it is now and then any proposed changes but you see from this this graphic of the framework we have three standard models elementary and middle or two and high schools the third you're actually not seeing on this we actually have six models total because we also honor our combined schools and they have their own weights to honor their configurations from those calculations and the different indicators in these buckets of growth readiness and mastery we get a performance category and we'll be talking more about performance categories and these names in the near future but currently you see what they

[05:08:14] are and then we move to federal identification so our system now is cohesive between state and federal this meets all the requirements of ESSA and so you see that some schools most schools in Virginia are not identified some schools are identified as targeted or additional targeted support really looking at the student groups and then we have a percentage of our schools that comprehensive support whether it's based on graduation rate or the lowest serving 5% or they are additional schools additional target support schools who the student group is just not making progress after three years all of that again is publicly reported and the department is really shifted to allocate

[05:08:54] both state and federal resources into one to braid those funds and help schools and so we can look at our application process and rubrics and say this school in need of support both on the state side federal side and then give what it needs to maximize effect and so that's that's the bifurcation we talked about the decoupling of these two systems on the next slide you see the standards of quality that i reference standard three here says again the board these are the expectations these eight criteria are laid out to the board to say regulations need to be established in these areas and so from those regulations standard

[05:09:30] three in the standards of quality we move now to the standards of accreditation that this board adopts and if you go ahead and go to the next slide you see there the intent of the standards of accreditation are to ensure an effective educational program is established and maintained in all of our schools they provide an essential foundation again a continuous appraisal and improvement of school programs they foster public confidence that parents know that the inputs in the school are doing what they're supposed to be doing and then I can see the outcomes. It assures recognition of Virginia's public schools by other institutions of learning. We do certify that our

[05:10:07] schools are accredited for NCAA, teachers on visas. There is a purpose behind this. It is important. And then finally to establish a means of determining the effectiveness of schools. We're looking to see sort of again how are they using the resources they have and being in compliance.

[05:10:22] So on the next slide it talks again about the board has adopted a process to accredit schools. the 2024 regulations that the board adopted shifted some of this when we bifurcated between accreditation accountability and section 300 of chapter 132 outlines which we'll see in a moment and so part of this process is the department is charged to make all of this transparent all of this clear and make it very

accessible and understandable to superintendents principals and the public and if we go to our next slide you'll see these areas of compliance there are 11 total

[05:10:58] Really, it's a list of 10 because number 11 simply says if you were non-compliant in the prior year, what have you done to address it? But this list of 10 items, you know, promotion, retention policies, graduation requirements, instruction, safety and facility, parental notification, school planning, and there's a piece for federally identified schools.

[05:11:18] That's what we're looking at as far as inputs. Are schools meeting the requirements here, both from regulations and statute? And so this is all spelled out for them. So from all this information on the next slide, you see, again, a school can be fully accredited, which means they've satisfied everything, conditionally accredited, or accreditation denied.

[05:11:41] And let's unpack those together on the next slide. And so fully accredited would mean that all evidence is submitted to the department and it's satisfactory. And so that's what you expect to see. State law says all schools should be fully accredited. That's the expectation. Conditioning accredited says that some of the information received by the department was unsatisfactory.

[05:12:02] And they'll remain conditioning accredited until the school successfully submits additional evidence. And so there's a pathway that a school that's conditioning accredited can submit a corrective action plan and move to fully accredited. Because that's our goal. I mean, that's the expectation.

[05:12:17] And so some schools have to provide more justification to move to fully accredited because they did not satisfy the fully accredited. didn't do exactly what was needed by a timeline and then you see accreditation denied for a school to receive that they would have to have been conditionally accredited and they would have to demonstrate that they were not making progress there was no corrective action plan or no progress in that corrective action plan we currently have no schools accreditation denied you'd again have to establish a pattern and this is a new system and so no no pattern has been established yet I will share with you from our results last year the schools

[05:12:54] that were conditionally accredited sought to appeal sought to make corrections and wanted to move very eagerly to fully accredited we didn't see any schools say you know we're just going to maintain that sort of we're gonna let it be and so we want to share with you today two slides about the review process on the next slide here the process has these two opportunities first and this is going to work as well with our accountability system we really want to provide ways for divisions to see their school data to be able to verify that data validated and make sure it aligns with what they've sent to us and so when after

[05:13:31] they've completed the report I'll share with you prior to public release they would be able to see what the designation is are we you know categorizing them as fully accredited or condition accredited and then they would know why which area listed the 10 items for you is it number one two four and then they would have an opportunity to submit additional information to department the department would review that with respect of offices so if it's in the area of instruction we would pull the instructional offices and take a look at the additional information and then the school could move to fully accredited we would note they had to give us additional evidence but they can

[05:14:07] move to fully accredited and so any issues identified during this stage again the expectation is to have them resolved before the results go public which benefits us benefits the schools sort of it's not a gotcha no surprises everybody knows why they're receiving what they're receiving and so that's phase one

that would be over the summer before any of the public release they would be seeing it internally we'd be having conversation with them part two of this process on the next slide is an appeal process that is outlined in the regulations that the board this board has authority to allow appeals to their

[05:14:40] accreditation designation and so what would happen is after that first phase if we're still haven't reconciled to move to fully accredited status, a school division may appeal to you, and they would have 30 days to do this. We would look at some of the specific areas here, you know, extraordinary substantive data, procedural errors, circumstances beyond their control, sort of other circumstances that warrant special consideration. We would review their information here at the department. The superintendent would review it and let them know sort of would they receive her recommendation for the board to support this appeal and the school

[05:15:18] division would have then have the the authority to say we want to submit it to the board after another look or they may say we've decided we don't want to go public with this we'll accept sort of your findings it's another another opportunity for the department to re-examine additional information from the school division and you see the final note there the board retains final authority to hear and decide all accreditation appeals and so if the division does want to pursue it we'd let them know the superintendent's recommendation and then this would be brought forward to to the board for a final review in our next slide we'll talk here about some next steps so the report itself you see on the screen

[05:15:56] a red line version for you the report on the left is the 24-25 version we went through the regulations and pretty much spelled out in great detail what is required under each of those 10 areas very detailed and what we went back to examine based on feedback is many of these items are also captured in the standards of quality report that superintendents do could we reduce paperwork could reduce the burden could we simplify it and that's what you're seeing in the red line is that we're not saying these areas are not important we're not saying we don't collect information we're simply saying we're going to get this from another source and so we're going to remove them from the accreditation report because they're already captured in the what we

[05:16:35] call the soq compliance report that superintendents complete and so the report that would be completed this year, shorter, for that very reason. But we still note where this information is coming from. The next slide gives you a sample of the screen that the division superintendents would see.

[05:16:54] Our proposal is that superintendents would complete this again this year on behalf of all their schools. We would want to work with our associations and superintendents about principals having a role in this. The regulations do speak to principals, but we need to build that process together collectively. And so the survey here asks again, did you satisfy the requirement? If not, tell us why. It's self-reported. And then on the final, you get a summary here of what we're looking to do for 2526. Again, division superintendents would complete this and certify it on behalf of all their schools. This would be the specific

[05:17:29] 2526 report. Again, it removes any items if we collect these and other sources. We want to be very clear, and we've given to you, we provide already to the public for feedback this appeal process the board needs to adopt an appeal process that they would use and so we've submitted that to you for your consideration and make that also publicly available so divisions know the expectations and the timeline our goal again is public reporting to be clear and more transparent about how schools are meeting these

obligations this information is on the school quality profile we're really working to make sure the public understands accreditation versus the school performance and support framework and then documenting

[05:18:08] how schools are satisfying these again in their commitment to use these resources to improve student outcomes and so thank you today Superintendent Conway do you have any board members you have questions well thank you thank you mr. Jennings we will sorry good mr. Robinson I just want to express gratitude for the simplification of the process of reporting for superintendents and divisions and all the thoughtful work that went into this thank you

[05:18:41] getting you off the hot seat Mr. Jennings so thank you we will accept this for first review and see you in June thank you okay we are now the first review of the exit memorandums of understanding Dr. Ballard ready to go good afternoon President Ashton Superintendent Conway members of the board I am Dr. Quentin

[05:19:19] Ballard and I serve as the director in the Office of School Improvement. Today I'll present an update regarding eligibility of five school divisions to exit their respective Memorandum of Understanding with the Virginia Board of Education. Next slide please. So in today's update you know I'll talk a little bit about an overview and the history of the use of MOUs to improve student outcomes, the impact of separating the accountability and accreditation on the current MOUs, share a little bit of data from the impact impacted school divisions, and then finally recommendations to the board for

[05:19:56] your consideration. Next slide. And so as shared during the November 12, 2025 board meeting, the standards of quality require all local school boards to maintain fully accredited schools and describes a process for addressing systems and processes impacting student performance outcomes. When the Virginia Board of Education determines that the failure of schools to meet standards is related to division-level failure to implement the standards of quality or other division-level actions or inactions, a division-level academic review actually may be required. And so the

[05:20:36] division-level academic review refers to a process used to kind of analyze a school division systems and practices to determine the degree to which the local school board is meeting its responsibility as prescribed in the standards of quality. Outcomes from the division level academic review informed the development of a memorandum of understanding between the board and the local school board and so this formal agreement really defines the responsibilities of the board, the local school board, the division

[05:21:11] superintendent, the Virginia Department of Ed staff to strengthen implementation of the standards of quality and improve student outcomes. Next slide please. And so since 2004, there have been eight school divisions have entered into a memorandum of understanding with the Board of Ed.

[05:21:29] After implementing interventions to build local capacity for improvement, four of these divisions exited MOU status, including Lee County in 2006, Sussex County in 2017, and Franklin City in 2018. Although Richmond City exited an MOU in 2007, the Richmond City School Board actually requested a second division level review in 2017 and entered into a second MOU with the board in the same year.

[05:21:59] And so currently we have five divisions that are under a memorandum of understanding with the board. We have Danville City Public Schools, which entered in June of 2020, Greenville County Public Schools, which entered in March of 2018, Petersburg City Public Schools, which was enacted in April of 2004, Prince Edward County Public Schools enacted in June of 2020, and then Richmond City Public Schools enacted in July of 2017.

[05:22:25] Next slide, please. And from July 28th of 2000 through September 25th of 2024, the Virginia school accountability system included an integration of pre-accreditation compliance standards.

[05:22:42] And there are things like instructional programming, school instructional leadership, and student pass rates on the standards of learning and other alternative assessment. This resulted in an overall rating for individual schools, which Mr. Jennings just talked about a little bit and reviewed in his presentation around fully accredited, you know, schools being designated fully accredited, conditionally accredited, accreditation denied, etc.

[05:23:05] And so in 2024, the regulations were revised, as he mentioned, which separated accountability from accreditation. Current MOU exit criteria were established, I want to emphasize that, under the prior unified accountability and accreditation system.

[05:23:21] therefore divisions operating under an MOU status are currently measured against criteria aligned to a system that is no longer in effect next slide please each school divisions memorandum of understanding contains specific exit criteria agreed upon by all parties related to schools earning full accreditation status before the local school board is released from the former agreement moreover these agreements include different exit criteria based on the regulations and legislation in effect at the time of the respective MOU

[05:23:57] enactment so this slide really talks a little bit and intends to contains the specific exit criteria for each of these impacted school divisions for your review it is important to note that many of these divisions have experienced growth improvement during the MOU period however they may not exit their respective MOU until 100% of their schools are rated accredited as you see presented in the language there. Next slide. The current standards of accreditation sets a new threshold for division level and eligibility. I'm sorry. The current standards of accreditation

[05:24:33] sets a new threshold for division level review and eligibility, if you will, for an MOU with the Board of Education. The new criteria emphasizes the percent and number of schools within a school divisions that are identified as comprehensive support and improvement and or additional targeted support and improvement. If 40% of schools in a division are identified for comprehensive support and improvement or additional targeted support improvement, or 10 or more schools are identified as comprehensive support and improvement, the division will be required to undergo a

[05:25:09] division-level academic and resource allocation review that is conducted by the department consistent with the Elementary and Secretaries School Act, and the school board will enter into mou with the virginia board of education based on these criteria danville city public schools greensville county and prince edward county school divisions do not meet the threshold however petersburg and richmond city schools would be eligible for division level academic and resource allocation review which would result in revisions to the current memorandum of understanding with the board additionally franklin city schools meets the new eligibility

[05:25:47] requirements for division level academic and resource allocation review and MOU next slide please and so at this time I'll take an opportunity to kind of review the data for each of the impacted divisions and so next slide first up would be Danville City is eligible to exit this MOU with the board based on the new criteria though all of the schools you look at it from last year what you're looking at is a presentation of its accreditation information from 2024 school year compared to the 2526 and so you have an opportunity to kind of

[05:26:22] see what the conditions look like as it relates to accreditation accountability in this particular division next slide Greenville County Greenville County is eligible to exodus MOU with the board based on the new criteria next slide for Prince Edward County public schools eligible to exodus MOU with the board based on the new criteria though you take a look at all of its schools have not been accredited without conditions for two consecutive years for Petersburg

[05:26:56] City next slide please sure division level academic and resource allocation review that's the abbreviation for division level academic and resource allocation review yes ma'am yes ma'am no problem at all and so for Petersburg City Public Schools its current MOU will require revision since it does not meet the previously established exit criteria additionally the division currently meets the new division level academic and resource allocation review criteria promulgated in the 2024 regulations and the Virginia

[05:27:31] Consolidated State Plan under the Elementary and School and Secondary Education Act as amended as you see presented here. Next slide, please, for Richmond City. Richmond City, current MOU would require revision since it does not meet the previously established exit criteria. Additionally, the division currently meets the new division level academic and resource allocation review criteria, as well as similar to what was just presented here for Petersburg.

[05:27:59] and so can we go back a slide can we go it's ahead next slide please did it skip go to the next one please somehow no way got out of order okay and can we go to the next one okay for Franklin City Franklin City public schools is actually eligible to enter an MOU because it meets the new division level academic and resource allocation review criteria as outlined in attempted to be

[05:28:37] presented here if you would transition back then I think based upon the order of this if we would go back maybe to there we go yes there okay and so what we're attempting to share just to show and here is an overview of the divisions with a significant number of percentage of schools that are federally identified for comprehensive support and improvement over the past two years and so presented here for you you'll see the Danville City has remained constant four schools or 36% of its schools that identified as CSI. Greenville has no schools identified as CSI for the past two years. Prince Edward has remained

[05:29:15] constant with one school at 33% of its schools. Petersburg is at 66% of its schools for the current year. Richmond City has 45% of its schools or 20 schools and then Franklin City has one of its two schools that is currently identified for comprehensive support and improvement and so if we could go forward now I think that's going to be two slides forward one two eight there you go right there okay and so based on the information provided this the in this presentation the superintendent of public instruction recommends that the

[05:29:53] board accepts a first review the recommendations to one release the Danville City Public Schools board from the memorandum of understanding with the Virginia Board of Ed that was enacted in June of 2020 released the Greenville County School Board from the Memorandum of Understanding with the Virginia Board of Ed enacted in March of 2018 and released the Prince Edward County Public School Board from the Memorandum of Understanding with the Virginia Board enacted in June of 2020 and so at this at this time it is recommended that the board should not take any action on the three school divisions Richmond Petersburg and Franklin City that are eligible for a division-level academic

[05:30:31] and resource allocation review and may need to revise or establish an MOU. This will allow VDOE staff to conduct additional analysis on the results, engage stakeholders, and identify sufficient

funding to produce recommendations for moving forward. Next steps certainly would be brought forth to this board at the June board meeting for consideration.

[05:30:51] Dr. Ballard, thank you. Board members. Superintendent Conway, comments first. Absolutely. Thank you, Dr. Ballard. And I know there's a lot of letters and systems here. So I'll just do a quick summary, and Dr. Bell or Mark will correct me if I misspeak.

[05:31:10] But basically, we have a system that identifies schools in greatest need. And you do that through the federal identification and through our school performance and support framework. We then have gone a step further and we said, you know, if a substantive number, if a division has a substantive number of those schools, then it warrants additional attention and intervention from this body is the gist of the changes that were made as we separated accountability and accreditation.

[05:31:43] What Dr. Ballard notes and just wants her to be transparency about is that the original agreements were very much rooted in a time when accreditation reflected performance in addition to compliance with expectations, right? And so even though it said that then, as of 2024, we moved to a system where we said the additional attention and intervention would be based on how many of your schools, either as a percentage or a raw number, above 10.

[05:32:15] And so we, with that lens, sort of said, if you apply that lens, three of them, three of these school boards should be exited, and we want to bring that for first review and then final review, first review today and final review in June.

[05:32:30] It also means that there are three that we now need to sort of figure out the path forward for that additional attention and intervention, but we need a little bit more time to kind of come back to this body with a proposal. So, that's the, again, I know we're making your brain think in all different ways around sequencing here, but that is it's sort of helping you understand the change, understand the move from accreditation to accountability, noting that the intent of MOUs was not really about compliance, right, as I think you heard from Mark and Dr. Ballard.

[05:33:06] The idea is every one of our schools ultimately should be fully accredited because that means that's kind of like the floor in terms of compliance. And ultimately, the purpose of the MOUs was around that additional attention and intervention if there are students, classrooms, and educators in greater need at a higher proportion within these divisions.

[05:33:26] Dr. Wilson? I'll apologize because I have several questions. So thank you, first of all, for the analysis looking through kind of where divisions are at the moment so I don't even know where to start so the as we are contemplating releasing three school divisions from an MOU my fundamental question is do we believe that over the course of time that they have been in under this MOU that they have now

[05:34:05] developed the kinds of structures and systems that are necessary to continue to move their school divisions along that's the question kind of related to that when you look at the number of schools that are right now receiving comprehensive support for example in each of the divisions the number you know for Danville for example that number of schools hasn't changed they still need comprehensive support in 2526 as they did in 2425 same thing with prince edward so i

[05:34:40] wonder about you know have we really helped the divisions to be more ready to continue to improve and make a significant mark and i'll go on and finish all of my questions maybe at one time um and then thinking about sustained support um for uh the divisions that remain and or going forward so in

the number of and what resources are available that the division or that the department can provide I remember when a number of these school divisions

[05:35:16] entered into MOUs and the conversation at that time was a huge concern about what are the resources available at the department to actually provide the kind of supports that are truly needed to move divisions and so thinking about you know kind of the ebb and flow um as we release some divisions for example but then we add potentially I know that this will be a later step but potentially adding others does do we have the resources really ongoing to provide the support that that whatever the divisions are knowing the number of schools who um who are under this need for comprehensive support and improvement so in

[05:35:56] any way in any order you'd like to address those Dr. Ballard happy to hear in response thank you Thank you. And so if I missed one or two of the one of those questions or two, please come back. So what I'll say is that the new division level academic and resource allocation review, you know, you know, after this, the state superintendent and, you know, OSI certainly planning to engage our division superintendents and our leaders to really talk about what a meaningful process is to look like.

[05:36:27] This process has to come before the board for the board to kind of determine what that is actually going to certainly be. As it relates to progress and improvement, you know, if I may say these are kind of the rules to the game now, considering that we have these new SOAs and how everybody, if we're going to treat everybody kind of fairly and equitable, et cetera, these are the terms and the rules to the game, if you will.

[05:36:53] Many of these divisions, I would say yes, in terms of where they were until where they are now, have put in systems and processes. One of them have actually partnered with external vendors, one of which is UVA, UVA, PLE, to kind of really look at driving some systems changes.

[05:37:11] And they have done two years of support through that entity, and this year is actually continuing. And you can see the evidence. They came before this board in, I want to say, August or September and provided a presentation around just some of the systemic improvements, some of the improvements that they've actually made around leadership in the areas of human resource leadership, in the areas of student academic performance.

[05:37:37] And so, you know, as it relates to improvement from where they were to now, certainly these divisions have put forth some systems and processes in place we can certainly say as well when you talk about the nature of the support so with these divisions sustainability planning is is crucial and key many of these divisions you see if they have federally identified schools or schools that are identified on the state or federal side they'll continue to be supported through our office things that we have done which have been prioritize placement in any technical assistance offerings workshops different things that are offered from the agency we've triaged they've these divisions

[05:38:17] also have had a consultant support and an executive liaison that have been on site to provide if you will a monthly support to them in some of these divisions in addition to that we continue to monitor their schools to ensure that they're meeting state and federal accountability to support them with their needs assessment support planning in addition to that there's on-site technical assistance offerings so we typically we will go out we'll coordinate and work from an interagency perspective as well so if there is an identified need that exists with these divisions we're coordinated with the

[05:38:56] instruction office with the accountability office with the special education office with whomever to really make sure that we're there to provide the necessary support that they certainly need when you say the capacity moving forward I do want to say that as we consider releasing these divisions they are not going to be left alone they are still going to be under the if you will the support of our office and the support of the agency for sure and that if I just to follow that that's that's my observation is that you know by the sheer numbers where I know that the ethos of the department is not

[05:39:31] to you know but when you look at the numbers where we'd be moving even with releasing schools from our divisions from the MOUs will be moving from 25 25 schools to 30 schools so you're at we're still so because we're not leaving them we're still in some capacity increasing the number of schools to which the department will be providing support. And so just observing that that's a resource need and ensuring that the department has the resources in order to provide the kind of supports ongoing for new

[05:40:08] and or those who are remaining under the auspices or the wings of the department as you move far. So just an observation that I think needs to be considered. No, and I think there's an important consideration here. I think to Dr. Ballard's point around, according to the criteria set forth by this body you know the the exit is there they are still federally identified schools still eligible for the school improvement resources still the top priority for this department i also just want to acknowledge part of that fairness is also recognizing that we have other school divisions that also have a high number of identified schools and really thinking through how do you think about

[05:40:48] the resources for all of those divisions you know the mou is this designation of additional attention and intervention um but i think what we have heard and we saw this as we separated and had more clarity around accreditation and accountability we also heard a clarion call for agency-wide support around school improvement for every single identified school and i think in the past it's sort of been either in the mou bucket or out of the mou bucket and somehow the perception is if you're out of the mou bucket that um that you're okay and i think what what

[05:41:23] what i hear from our general assembly and from jlark and from this body and the conversations and making the decisions to separate or as mark said vibricate um that you know and to change that that in or that number of students meant that we identified far far more schools through school performance and support framework it does raise a resource question um this was another uh key principal that went from jlark and was uh adopted into legislation and i imagine as a group in addition to looking at what we need to do for these particular three school divisions uh also

[05:42:00] thinking about what the resource implications are and being prepared to advise the governor as she prepares her her upcoming budget in addition to maximizing all federal resources thank you yep Ms. McPherson?

[05:42:15] So, I was looking at schools, is seven, or are you just giving me the numbers that need?

[05:42:57] Six, they have six schools.

[05:43:10] They went up, ma'am, so they have one additional school that was identified for comprehensive support and improvement. So, previous year was three of the six, this year is four of the six. Yes, ma'am. That's exactly right, because they are above the 40% threshold.

[05:43:36] Very good question. I do want to just simply add, while their MOU was enacted in April of 2004, it was updated by both parties in November of 2006, November of 2009, and then most recently in April of

2016. So that was the last time that it was actually kind of updated, if you will, between the local boards and the Virginia Board of Education since 2004.

[05:44:00] I mean, you raised a very good question. I would also mention I think that's what the state superintendent is certainly wanting to do is to get out and get in front of these division leaders and talk with them a little bit about what a meaningful division-level academic and resource allocation review is going to look like and mean for them.

[05:44:20] Petersburg is, I would say, a little different in the sense that I've been here now four years. In my four years of service here, they've had five superintendents to include three acting. So when you think about just the work that has to happen and, you know, some of these questions that you're, some of the data points that you're looking at, I certainly would say to you that, you know, their current superintendent has been there since the summer of 2024 and certainly I think has built a team of leaders from across the nation and filled vacancies across, you know, with principalships in the schools, et cetera, to kind of get some stability there when it comes to recruitment intention,

[05:44:57] which we know having highly effective leaders in schools is very, very important. Certainly no doubt about that whatsoever. I've been involved with changed things. But when we look at the executive order and we talk about, you know, the executive order says that we should be looking at focusing the financial resources to the places that need it most, which is why I'm concerned about us having some underlying data about, for instance, Franklin City Public School that has one that may have to go into an MOU.

[05:45:36] what is it that we need to provide to them, really hearing from them, and then let us measure how they're doing based upon this joint effort, us and them together, because, you know, we're measuring against our standards, which we should do, but obviously there's a missing piece here that it seems to me would be easy to correct.

[05:45:58] And before we decide with the new standards, oh, now we have all these other people who need some intensive support, we need to fix this first. We need to help these schools. And the division-level academic review will be intended as a way of kind of diagnosing.

[05:46:14] If I could, you know, use an analogy of taking your car to the auto body shop and they're running a 100-point analysis or diagnostic, right, like determining what are the components that we're going to look at, if you will, underneath the hood, if I could use that as an analogy, it's going to be part of this process and initial phase of our efforts before we come back before the board in June.

[05:46:36] And I think what the state superintendents certainly want to make sure that that is done in terms of engaging these divisions. Dr. Northern? Wondering why, what they're struggling with. Like, I'm looking at these 11 things, you know, that they've got to kind of provide documentation for.

[05:46:57] But if there is a pattern, you know, which of these 11 things do they most struggle with? Yes, ma'am. what I would say to you Dr. Northam is that again with you know we transitioning to this new accountability system and certainly where we are at this point we would want to go in and do a new analysis and that division level academic review resource allocation review would be a driver to kind of help inform the very answer to the question that you just that you just raised for many it's what I would say to you and I think mr. Jennings can kind of maybe speak to some

[05:47:33] of the the data maybe I think you may be asking for more specific data he would be no you know I guess the one question you mentioned a small anecdote I would be curious about leadership in all of all of these divisions meaning how long how many if that if there's some trends there while also wondering about the local school board again how long new members that would just help me have clarity around you know we are a governing body that's setting policy and

[05:48:08] looking at data but don't have the face behind the data and so being able to just have that antidote of who is leaving and how long might give us some more clarity so but I don't know so I'll speak first some of the comments heard Dr. Wilson I'll speak to some of the comments you raised and so let me frame it our old accreditation system was the compliance but actually was more of the academic achievement the things that we think chronic absenteeism so some of these schools it was any school that had a level three was conditioning accredited so some of these schools were able to improve in reading math and science but not chronic absenteeism many of these schools

[05:48:47] as you see the dates on the board entered their mou right before the pandemic so when we look at their academic data and we're trying to look at all of them went up because right after the pandemic i mean we had 20 30 pass rates so they entered there and i will say as i analyzed the data To be fair, we use what we call the pass rates, which is the simple, the kids who took the test, they pass or fail.

[05:49:07] No exclusions. We have to provide that for the federal government. And these schools are showing increase. Some schools went from 30% pass rates to 60% pass rates. Some went as high as 70% to 80%. So we're seeing growth to the question from Dr. Wilson, sort of, are we seeing evidence? We looked at the key metrics in reading, math, science, and chronic absenteeism.

[05:49:26] And so some of the schools, science was still an area of concern, but we saw reading and math and chronic absenteeism. Now, to your question, they still have federally identified schools. I just wanted to clarify, these schools to exit federal identification need to show two years of growth before they can exit.

[05:49:42] Danville could not exit three of their schools because they need an additional year. Those three schools are showing tremendous growth. We are projecting, based on what we've seen, they would exit this year. The same is true for Prince Edward. So while they're still federally identified, they're on track to exit this year.

[05:49:59] So I just wanted to put that out there, too, as far as they're going to exit. They saw these federally identified schools. We're seeing tremendous growth. They're following the procedures and the supports that are available. But I did want to provide that piece sort of why they haven't exited yet. But we analyzed the data in those three areas, reading, math, science.

[05:50:16] Those are the core areas. And then we did look at chronic absenteeism. But I would say to you, some of the divisions, like Greenville, it was level three just in science. So they were making growth in reading and math even before the new accountability system, but they were still not fully accredited because of science.

[05:50:32] And so they basically, it was just this sort of, the expectation was fully accredited, which means everything has to be, you know, at these certain benchmarks, 80. The real number of schools in which we're paying keen attention to, to use the analogy of the blue line from the early childhood conversation yesterday, is 80, right?

[05:50:58] So this is a higher percentage than most, but all of those schools are in need of that comprehensive support intervention and need sort of the full attention of the department and this body. Do you have a quick – Dr. Northern.

[05:51:15] I think it's a clarifying. So the bifurcation that you kind of started with – oh, sorry. The bifurcation that we started with, I mean, the old system was measuring outcomes. The new system for accreditation is all inputs. Like, when I look at this, it's compliance with facilities and safety provisions, compliance with parental notification provisions, compliance with the requirement to offer courses.

[05:51:40] None of that's outcome, right? It's all input, which is really how an accreditation system should be. So I think you're saying, and correct me if I'm wrong, going forward, now that we've got a whole other system that deals with outcomes, we're actually going to be following Virginia administrative code, right, which kind of we should have been before.

[05:51:58] before we we couldn't we were doing both because we had the system that was globbed together yes but now that we've pulled them apart going forward are we saying that we're only going to identify schools based on these compliance no it's completely off of the 40% federal identification which is in alignment with federal law which says a significant number of federally identified schools need to receive resource allocation support sort of here as a state agency you need to show what are you doing for those school divisions. So our new MOU with the new regulations says 40 percent. Sorry, sorry, I should not have a

[05:52:34] sidebar conversation. So if you look at page seven, and again, we asked Dr. Bell to include the old content about accreditation so that we were being transparent, but the idea is this body decided in 2024 to move away from compliance. So ultimately with accreditation, the goal is that everybody at the end of the day wants to say that all their schools are accredited and so even though you do have a number of schools for a variety of reasons last year that weren't fully accredited that the hope is between now and then that we're having conversations to get them into compliance on that

[05:53:12] right so that no matter where you go in the commonwealth that you'd see we have 1,883 schools they're all fully accredited it doesn't mean that the performance within those schools is the same And so even though it was an MOU and that contractual agreement was in place, we are saying that the reg that was passed in 2024 supersedes that going forward.

[05:53:35] It is all about your federal identification, which is based on performance. Obviously, we're still monitoring and would like for Richmond and Petersburg City to get those schools up to accreditation.

[05:53:51] but we will only be able to exit once you reach that certain performance level. I would also note that there, to Dr. Quilson's point about clarity, I think there's still some confusion in the field, right? There are a whole lot of people who are very excited that all their schools were accredited, and we were also excited for them.

[05:54:12] I would say that when they put that on their billboards and put that in their newspapers, that many of us, I think there was a general assumption that was still reflective of performance, so there's still some some work to be to be done but ultimately getting the system to pay keen attention to the 80 identified schools and then once you have a you know preponderance of those schools either more than 10 or 40 percent that that is where we go a step above and beyond I also think it is really helpful to hear your feedback on how we think about what we bring to you in June

[05:54:46] in addition to what the board president noted and and Miss McPherson these are also just very different contexts and so I think that we are trying to balance between where you want this to be consistent across the board however Petersburg is quite different from Richmond City which is quite different from Franklin City which has a brand new and it believe superintendent right versus Richmond has had the same superintendent for eight years and so really trying to balance between from a fairness perspective which dr ballard noted about and where we want things to be uh consistent enough but then from a an equity perspective and a contextual perspective that these look very

[05:55:25] different running a school division uh that um has as many schools as richmond city looks very different from running a school division with two schools um and that happens to get over that uh 40 threshold because one of its two schools meets this this this criteria so this is incredibly helpful feedback as we think about what we ultimately need to bring to you for the school for the divisions that are going to continue to be engaged in this way with the board going forward Mr. Robinson forgive me for my excitement and nerding out on this topic a little bit but I I think Virginia has an opportunity to be a national leader

[05:56:01] here the MOU process the fact that it exists the fact that we have this reset with the criteria to align with the School Performance Framework and separate it from inputs and more focus on outcomes and the fact that we have a chance to learn and write new MOUs here I think we should take full advantage of it and truly move from an MOU process that sometimes is perceived as compliance focused to one that is focused on what we as VDOE and the divisions together decide is going to take for transformational outcomes there's so many great

[05:56:40] things about the existing process number one the opportunity to be partners together in understanding needs and and building on the other board members thoughts and how you coalition build towards what needs to change but also the fact that's tied to corrective action plan which gives a chance for bold action and cover to do the work that our students need educators and adults doing on their behalf and so um just a few things i want to share from what i've seen nationally and places like ogden utah that had five of the eight lowest performing schools in all of utah and then a few years later had none of the bottom 20 percent or fulton county that went from 29 f schools down to

[05:57:18] three there there's uh or even danville that that is showing great gains there there's consistent themes. And one is starting with a comprehensive needs assessment. So I know the statute talks about instruction and resource allocation, and I'm in full support of the deep focus on instruction and bare tying that versus sticking up school improvement as separate. But I really encourage the team to think comprehensively about the needs as we think about talent and time and other things as well. Number two there's a chance to tie it to these divisions

[05:57:55] haven't had MOUs written in over a decade. So there's a chance to tie it to what has the video we learned over the last decade. So for instance do we have any non-negotiables in our theory of change similar or at least aspirations similar to how we have in early education. We've said we want high quality curriculum. We have a theory of change about what needs to happen to help that come into place. How are we building that into the comprehensive needs assessment?

[05:58:22] And then finally, how do we get the divisions to drivers of transformation, not just a long list of things to do? Because they already have comprehensive plans. They're still going to have comprehensive plans. We're still going to support comprehensive plans. How can a corrective action plan be about the

bold things that we're deciding together need to be invested in, need to be shifted, and might allow for not only better implementation, but innovation and boldness and thinking about things like, you know, do these divisions want more high-dose tutoring?

[05:58:58] Do these divisions want more time for teacher collaboration? I don't know, but the point is what's gotten us here is not going to get us to where these students need us to go, and I just, again, forgive my... passionate on this topic, but Virginia has a better opportunity than most states to get this right because of all the moves this team and this board have made preceding this and the existence of this MOU process.

[05:59:27] And please come to June with recommendations, but please take your time. Like, let's get this right. Let's be bold. This is a generational opportunity. Thank you, Mr. Robinson. This is all very, very helpful feedback.

[05:59:43] And again, without giving Dr. Bell a heart attack here, I think the other pieces, I think we have to get it right for the 80, right, not just the 25. And so I just, again, I think there's been this, to your point earlier, Dr. Northern, about the sort of the bubble. I think the MOU and that hitting that threshold signals the bubble, right?

[06:00:02] And if you're Franklin City, you're like, but only one of my school is, right? There's a lot of other divisions that have far more than one school affected. And so I think it's about, obviously, what we have to do to comply with the law around these particular divisions and doing this in partnership, not two, because they don't need another list of things to do, but also being able to come back and think about, for all 80, what are we doing and how are we working with a school division that otherwise might have incredibly high-performing schools, but for whatever reason, historical, contextual, also has schools in great need.

[06:00:34] And those kids at those schools are just as in need as in the ones in the MOU divisions. Correct. Ms. McPherson? Yes, I was going to say, just like we also reward good behavior, we also have to hold people accountable for what we do do and put in place for them.

[06:00:52] So a part of the comprehensive needs assessment ought to also have built in the performance that relates to exiting and what resources the board has when people are not performing when they could perform.

[06:01:10] So, for instance, if a school gets some of the latest and greatest teachers and, you know, teacher salaries have gone up, as we understand, like 19% over the last few years. If those things are put in place and then there is no improvement, then the question becomes to the board, what are our rights and responsibilities as it relates to those particular schools?

[06:01:34] And I'm always hopeful that everything is going to turn around because I think the kids are so resilient that they get it right even when we don't but I'd be interested in the needs assessment comprehensive and again hearing from those schools that are struggling to let us know when in fact they're really needing that we need to meet that need and then we can measure the performance as we go forward all right I'm going to see you you're nerding out and raise you a passioning out I don't know what else to call it um I'm not usually one to like go on and on

[06:02:11] about myself in my second meeting with any organization but I do want y'all to have a little bit of context of why this may not sound as coherent as I'd normally like to sound I was I joined the Richmond

School Board in 07 and I served on it till 2012 I was chair in the still to this day oh one and only year when all Richmond schools were fully accredited as we called it then right so I saw firsthand what it took to get there and then I went to DOE and watched it unravel and so now I teach a course where I use Richmond as my case

[06:02:47] on sustainable improvement and where did I realize that I went wrong as a governance official at that time and watching you know continuing to watch today as as these schools struggle so you see Richmond Petersburg's been in a long time Richmond went out right when I was there got everything put all the put all the pieces together got fully accredited and then they it eroded leadership turnover was a huge piece of that but not the only piece there were four superintendents after I left between 2012 and 2017 when you include the interim that's a huge piece of it but coherence

[06:03:25] and a robust theory of change where the entire division understands what their what their big levers for improvement are actually we learned that at the ple because at that time I came as a school board member to better understand some of these things so so what I will say in terms of thinking we've got the immediate decision about the couple of divisions for the MOUs but then the bigger issue thank you so much for the work you're already putting into it I I would say there are things to think about because I don't see the MOU process as distinct at all from the accountability process.

[06:04:01] Even though you've done this bifurcation, to me, MOUs and BDOE supports are the other inputs now with accreditation. And then the outputs and the outcomes, obviously, if you continue the logic model, we should be able to put those puzzle pieces together in a way that we see outcomes, But we set divisions up for sustainable success because it is all too easy for things to erode when leaders turn over, boards turn over, teachers go away, et cetera.

[06:04:31] So I would say the three big questions I think we should be able to ask of any of these divisions when we're doing these reviews is if they're coming out of it, like Danville, and you're seeing some success, what support did they get? What did they do with it?

[06:04:48] and how will they sustain and and not talking about those things means that we don't have lessons learned for for the franklins of the world and i know dr conway is so right every context is different but we do know from the literature that there are there are themes in what you can do and coherence is a big one of just having folks who all understand where you're driving towards and what your levers for for success are and knowing um that those things you're just you just become religious about doing those things. I watched two superintendents do it successfully, and then I've

[06:05:23] watched as it's all gone by the wayside. And so in terms of the short term, though, with Dr. Wilson's point, we hear that some things are heading in the right direction, and so the recommendation is that they exit this but I wonder if there's some middle ground there maybe it's not an MOU but may is there some kind of you know caretaking kind of that no I don't like that language some kind of partnership that can still sustainability

[06:06:01] sustainability to help them sustain to help ensure that we don't see Danville sliding back in in three or four years if the stellar superintendent there gets plucked up by another division because that's the thing that happens too right so that's what I'm thinking about the short term is there another option a middle ground there where they exit the MOU but still continue to get some kind of identified resources and we do need to hear from these division leaders about what they need what their big challenges are

where they would if they could wave their magic wand for video help where would they point to those places that

[06:06:41] would help so does that help the sort of short-term thinking and then the longer term yes let's talk big picture about what we can do that might be transformational William I agree with you that you know really take an opportunity to think about meaningful support that can provide improvement that sustains thank you that was a lot I know but I'm telling you like this this is my jam I love pre-k but this is the thing for me no I just wanted to just simply, you had asked a question about the time frame by which these division superintendents

[06:07:18] were serving, and I just wanted to just simply share that for many of these, all of these divisions, none of the superintendents that are currently serving went through the division level review process, were not in position when these divisions entered, so Greenville actually just made it, named their new superintendent as of April, in fact, their April board meeting, So they have a new superintendent that starts May 4th and that was supported by the Virginia School Board Association with their superintendent search process, etc.

[06:07:48] Prince Edward, Dr. Jones, is in his first year there, July 1 of the 25-26 school year. So he's in year one and then Prince Danville, Dr. Harrison, who is a Danville native, as I understand, I think has been there now about four or five years maybe.

[06:08:07] So I just wanted to just simply share that information. And likewise with Petersburg, and obviously Superintendent Cameron was not in place when this division-level review was enacted. So I just wanted to make sure that I clarified that and shared that information since you brought that point up, ma'am. I promise I won't talk that much again.

[06:08:23] But can I ask a quick question? I did notice, again, thinking about these things, it's all linked together now. We've got accreditation as an input. We have MOUs as an input. But I did notice both Franklin and RPS do have accreditation challenges. And so knowing what those inputs are and what the challenges are will help us to better understand perhaps investments or supports that they need with that.

[06:08:49] It didn't look like, I don't think, in the last report that Petersburg had accreditation. Well, accreditation in the sense of the new, how accreditation is defined. The 24-25 report, the spreadsheet. Sure, but the way that accreditation is defined for the 25-26, right, compared to the previous year.

[06:09:11] And so that's what I would want to maybe make sure that I emphasize there. I can invite Mr. Jennings back up to. So you're saying the spreadsheet I was looking at, it was not just reflecting input, it was reflecting performance? So, yes, there's one element, not to confuse things.

[06:09:31] There's this one thing. The Code of Virginia, the first one says that it includes student growth and outcomes. And so in the regulations adopted in 2024, Section 300, it talks about schools that are CSI, Conference of Support and Improvement Schools. They start off as conditionally accredited.

[06:09:47] For them to be fully accredited, they have to be showing academic progress at a rate that they could exit within three years. So there is a correlation, to be very fair, and this will come up in our future accreditation talk. is a correlation between these schools being federally identified as CSI comfort support and they're also for the accreditation piece even though everything else might can be compliant their data is not showing they'd exit and so they're also conditionally accredited so I just want to be clear as far as that might be the area of need which is roots back to the outcome piece which is something that's on our

and this goes back to just one of those things where again additional conversation can be had in this area but

[06:10:25] this board and the superintendent remember we cannot rewrite code so the idea is that there could be a scenario where there are recommendations to the General Assembly to remove that not because they don't care about growth but because they want these to be two distinct systems the desire of this body was or to be two distinct systems they just got stuck in this one little piece of law that uh continues to blur the two systems great well talked about it thank you very much

[06:10:58] we will accept this for first review and see you in june thank you thank you okay we have chief berthia you're up so we are in first review of the guidelines for school construction good afternoon madam chair members of the board superintendent conway i am christina broberta chief operations officer for the department and with us today we also have mr vj ram narain who is the director of support services and the master of making sure that all of these things get delivered to school divisions in compliance with your board guidelines for those of you that have been through

[06:11:37] this presentation before please forgive me I'm going to go a little deeper for our four new members so that there's a clear understanding about what these guidelines are and what they support for our school divisions we have taken the approach in the past that this has been first and final review and we're hitting the brakes a little bit just so that you all can take this under advisement it also allows for our school divisions and other stakeholders to also provide feedback before you vote on that in june so funding for the school construction assistance program began in 2022 to 2024 i don't have a

[06:12:10] presentation you're just going to hear me talk i'm sorry and that has continued in the 24 to 26 biennium with 80 million dollars in funding that was included in the Appropriation Act for fiscal year 26. These grants support our competitive basis for school divisions to apply, and they are for local school divisions to remodel, build, construct schools, and or our regional career and technical centers. They have to demonstrate poor building condition, commitment, and the need for the funds for construction expansion or modernization of public school buildings.

[06:12:49] During the 2025 General Assembly session an additional 30 million dollars was transferred from the literary fund for a total of 110 million dollars being available for distribution of grants in fiscal year 26. Any unobligated appropriations in the SCAP program in a prior fiscal year can also roll over into the next fiscal year and be used for the same purpose. There were funds that were left over as of June 30, 2025, by way of \$88,341,766 and an additional \$5,269,283

[06:13:25] from previously awarded SCAP awards that were returned by several school divisions due to the inability to execute their grants as they applied for them. This brings the total available in this grant cycle, once these guidelines are approved, to a total of \$203,711,049.

[06:13:44] The legislative intent of the School Construction Assistance Program is to provide funding for major school construction, renovation, or additions project, giving priority to high-need school divisions and regional CTE programs. Funding is intended for planned projects, so it has to be in their CIP, or for a planned project that lacks sufficient funding and that are not yet in a construction phase.

[06:14:11] funding is based on a competitive criteria through an application process. The Board of Ed, you, are charged with developing guidelines for the administration of this program to include establishing competitive criteria used for the scoring of the applications and determining funding eligibility. The

competitive criteria must reflect the categories of commitment, need, and poor school building conditions and a minimum qualifying score is established for a project to qualify for funding.

[06:14:41] These current guidelines include various criteria reflecting these three categories and assigned point values. Department staff have updated the data used for several selection criteria so that the latest available data is used for the upcoming application process. A minimum of 65 points on a 100-point scale was previously adopted by the board as a minimum qualifying score for a project to qualify for funding under the program. School division and regional CTE programs apply through the Department of Education for grant funding during all of our designated open application periods. As established by the

[06:15:20] appropriation language, awarded funding is based on 10, 20, or 30 percent of approved project cost depending on a division's local composite index and the localities fiscal stress category. This item aligns to the Board of Education's priorities and goals for the 2024 to 2029 under the category of to advance safe and healthy schools. In your documents there are some key proposed changes to the guidelines to ensure that divisions can enhance student learning environments and these changes include the following: one, we have made adjust a

[06:15:57] recommended adjustment to the point score for the building poor building condition to enable some divisions that did not achieve a minimum score of 65 points in previous applications to potentially qualify them for funding consideration. We have also recommended the addition of a new criteria for school division enrollment trends. Using data from the fall SRC, which is our student record collection enrollment, divisions could earn a five point weight for increased enrollment over the course of three years. So we will look at their student record collection and if they are seeing increased

[06:16:36] enrollment, we are recommending that we assign a point value for that to recognize their growth in their schools. The points for the scores awarded to school enrollment criteria are obtained by adjusting the following criterias. One, reducing ADA criteria points from five to three, reducing debt capacity criteria from five to three, and reducing the condition of all schools criteria with a previous maximum score of nine to a max score of eight. We are also recommending points be adjusted for the ISP, which is the identified student percentage, fiscal stress designation,

[06:17:16] and poverty percentage, which may enable some schools that fell slightly short of the minimum 65 points to qualify for funding in the next application round. We have also added language on the process to determine the correct final grant award for projects whose actual costs are below the estimated cost that they provided us in the original application.

[06:17:39] We want to ensure that the grant aligns with the allowable criteria and requirements outlined in the Appropriation Act. As you take a look at this item for first review, attachment one provides you with a red line version of the criteria. Attachment two is a clean version with our recommended changes and attachment three provides you with a detailed criteria change in a summary format.

[06:18:03] i am happy to answer any questions that you may have while this is under advisement for first review superintendent do you have anything to add no uh dr northern yeah i was just um i'm intrigued i don't think i noticed before that the funds could be used for regional cte programs yeah um does that cover like equipment or like can you talk a little bit about what's in and what's out relative to the cte program funding yeah it's for buildings so it's got to be and let's say they wanted to convert a cosmetology area to an auto mechanic area and that is included

[06:18:40] in the regional plan and they have their board their regional board approve that that would be allowable it would also include that equipment but it's got to be the construction of to be part of the project okay so you're creating a new space or you're rehabbing an old space yes and with that okay it can't be for non-capital items it has to be capital expenses which i would include a a renovation of a space you can't have the space without the equipment I would classify that as collective okay can you tell me is there a percentage or are you saying that more applications

[06:19:18] are for CT programs or are you not saying so I believe that the board changed that criteria to allow regional CTE centers two years ago and we saw two CTE centers apply I'm in your last round And in fact, Chesapeake, I believe, received full funding from this program up to the allowable amount to build a new CTE center, a regional center for their school.

[06:19:43] And also happy to see the points for the enrollment. I know we've talked about that before. Yes, ma'am. Dr. Bridges? I'm in support of the additional criteria and the changes that you made. I do wonder, for divisions that aren't increasing enrollment, you know, sometimes one of the toughest things they have to do is to consolidate schools.

[06:20:08] oftentimes those are very very old schools that would meet some of these criteria and I wonder about the potential of this funding conversely to be able to incentivize you know consolidation where you're getting essentially two or three schools worth of small old buildings into a state of the art facility I mean sure something y'all considered or so it gives them points if they are increasing enrollment but it does not exclude them from other things they're building maybe in such a dilapidated state that they get points in another category that they still could qualify for the award so I don't want you to think that just because they

[06:20:47] don't have increasing enrollment doesn't mean that they may not get an award there's there's 12 other criteria that may qualify them for that I should add for the new board members too that once you approve these guidelines and we put the open application period out there before we make awards you will see all of the things that came to us what their point values were assignments and you actually approve the distribution of those awards so that's that's also an item that will come back to you in a future meeting

[06:21:17] mr. Robinson I just wanted to second the I'm not sure if this exact program can be used to help incentivize very thoughtful consolidation but I just wanted to second you with the with the demographics and the student population continuing to decrease and you know back to the earlier conversations about cover for hard decisions anything this division can do to help move our school buildings and its student experiences to state-of-the-art and serve only only

[06:21:56] only have the number of school buildings that are appropriate for serving that population the better student learning opportunities we can give our students again that may or may not be something you can suggest because this has to be I understand a scored program for equitable allocation but it I am similarly curious yes sir okay Chief Bertha thank you we will accept this for first review and see you in June with that though that completes all of our review we are now transition to presentation and written reports is

[06:22:34] is there anyone who's going to present on this or there's no one left to present we've cleared the room it's a very different room from this morning

[06:22:53] yes okay well we'll we'll take the report as as is um uh final uh anything final from you superintendent conway and then i will close this out uh one thank you uh for those of you who I know made it last month it was a little easier a little shorter than this month so thank you to Dr. Wilson and Ms. Reinhardt for your patience. A deep appreciation to the team for the preparation I think as we as we heard this morning a full commitment to try to make sure that there is

[06:23:30] ample time for first review that is separate from final review. I want to flag that at certain moments both yesterday and today members of this body were apologetic for having lots of comments and I just want to gently remind you that we see feedback as a gift and that the purpose of first review is to hear your passion to hear your questions and to let us know sooner rather than later if there are things that you are deeply concerned about so I know many of us can have a

[06:24:07] tendency to sort of apologize before doing that, but you really don't have to because this is incredibly valuable for our team and just want to thank you for that part of what we wanted to do is to hear what you care most about, what you would change, and that will then help inform us so that we ultimately don't have a place where we're coming back in June and you're saying, oh, whoops, like this is really not what I want to see.

[06:24:33] So, again, we'll work with Mr. Hanson to make sure, because he wasn't here, that he has plenty of opportunity between now and then to get up to speed on this. So I really want to reiterate some of you who heard us on the listening tour, and I think for Dr. Wilson, who's observing for a year these board meetings, the feedback is incredibly helpful.

[06:24:57] Please do not apologize ever, ever for it. And the team, you know, we use it to be better. All of us can be a little bit better tomorrow than we are today. So with that, thank you for your patience and just a steadfast commitment to getting this content to you on time, making sure that our partners at the various associations are dedicated folks who come and make comment, have it in enough time so that they can be prepared, and then where possible having the two opportunities for review so we can fully hear from this body

[06:25:32] is a top priority. Thank you Superintendent Conway and my only final comments are that I appreciate all the board members I appreciate getting the materials and you know when I hear the apology it's actually a reminder that there's great work that happened with our previous board it's the transition to our new board and the apology is like if this already has happened already and you know i think that we we do appreciate the questions and the comments and just the respect that you all are bringing to this process and to the team uh it's just great greatly appreciated and you know i will always be committed to moving us because we always have to

[06:26:10] get out of the library by five o'clock but i i really um and just appreciative of the questions of the engagement the time the materials that the staff presented and always superintendent your your ability to reflect but also hear and just commit to follow up that's the level of transparency and trust and flexibility that we just want to continue to build and the listening tour getting the updates on the listening tour has been invaluable so thank you for that work as well and please extend it to the secretary and to the rest of the team with that i will take a motion to

[06:26:46] adjourn so moved second all in favor signify by all right motion no roll call run out of here thank you everyone



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