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Virginia Board of Education, Work Session (Part 2), Wednesday, June 24, 2026

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

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[00:04:10] Good. Back there. Okay. The chair would like to entertain a motion to certify the purpose of the meeting in closed session. Mr. Hanson. We convened today in a closed meeting pursuant to a recorded vote on the motion above and in accordance with the Freedom Information Act. Section 2.2-3712 of the Code of Virginia requires that the board certify that to the best of each member's knowledge, only public business matters lawfully exempt from open meeting requirements under this chapter, and only such public business matters

[00:04:46] as were identified in the motion by which the closed meeting was convened were heard discussed or considered the member who believes there was a departure from these requirements shall so state prior to the vote indicating the substance of the departure that in his or her judgment has taken place this statement of the departure will be recorded in the minutes thank you mr hanson is there a second second this motion has been seconded um this will be a roll call vote all those in

[00:05:16] Figner will signify by saying aye. Dr. Bridges? Aye. Mr. Hansen? Dr. Northern? Dr. Wilson? Aye. Mr. Robinson? Aye. Mrs. Kilcor? Aye. And chair votes aye. Thank you. I will now go through our decisions.

[00:05:41] In the case of 26-16, the chair will entertain a motion to issue the license. So moved. Is there a second second we'll call dr bridges hi miss mcpherson sir hanson dr northern dr wilson hi mr robinson hi

mrs killmore and chair votes i thank you in case number 20 26 12 the chair will

[00:06:21] entertain a motion to revoke the license of craig scott small so moved their second all in favor signify by saying aye dr bridges hi miss mcpherson mr hanson dr northern dr wilson hi mr robinson hi mrs kilgore and chair votes i in case 2618 the chair will entertain a motion

[00:06:56] to issue the license so moved is there a second great we'll call uh dr bridges miss mcpherson aye mr hanson dr northern dr wilson aye mr robinson hi mrs kilgore and chair votes aye and then in case 20 26 20 the chair will entertain a motion to issue the license

[00:07:26] your second second we'll call dr bridges hi miss mcpherson mr hanson dr northern dr wilson aye mr robinson hi mrs kilgore and chair votes aye thank you that includes um our um licensure portion we the board will now take a brief 10 minute break and we'll convene shortly thank you

[00:08:01] morning good morning i am going to turn it over to superintendent conway to start our work session

[00:20:52] excellent good morning um i will ask chief of staff holly koi to come forward to present on the report on the 2026 legislative session for you all thank you so much chief conway i mean chief that's you okay good morning thank you for that introduction um it is a pleasure to be here with you board members and Chair Ashen. This morning I have a brief summary and report

[00:21:28] out on the 2026 legislative session and some of the implications and considerations for us as a department and you as a board. So, generally speaking, the 2026 General Assembly, it was a long session quote unquote 60 full days for the General Assembly to consider more than 2300 bills as well as a budget and as you you are likely well aware the budget is just coming to conclusion here hopefully soon with the General Assembly finalizing their version on Monday and some

[00:22:06] outstanding amendments perhaps coming from the governor but hopefully that will be closed out shortly. But in those 60 days, of those 2,300 bills, there were roughly 278, depending on how you're counting, that impacted K-12 education in some way shape. Of those, about 130 actually passed, though many of those, as you know, not in the form in which they were originally introduced.

[00:22:35] Some of the hot topics that emerged throughout the session were continuations of conversations that our General Assembly had been having around assessment, accountability, and high-quality instructional materials. But then we also saw new topics emerge related to the JLARC considerations on SPSF. We saw some innovative conversations around employee child care assistance. Public schools and immigration enforcement was a hot topic, as well as AI education technology. And then last but not least, there was also robust discussion around the mental

[00:23:11] health supports that our students and children in the commonwealth need. As I mentioned, some of these bills were a continuation of conversations that General Assembly had begun or had continued even in 2025. And so when it comes to the kind of core teaching and learning elements and the role of the state in the instruction assessment and accountability of our classrooms, there were three topics of particular note, so high quality instructional materials, the bulk of that work was

[00:23:46] really completed in the 2025 session, but that work and implementation continues on. We saw the conversation continue around modernizing our assessment system, so there was directives and funding in the budget previously to bring that work forward, as well as statutory reforms that similarly

have staggered implementation and reenactment clauses and so that will be obviously the subject of much conversation later today along with the legislation that provided direction to the board on accountability and school improvement i'm asking you all to consider the jlrk

[00:24:24] recommendations that were made in december i will note that in addition to these core kind of teaching learning and accountability measures there were also conversations by the general Assembly on a number of different curricular topics. Those will come forward to you in a variety of different forms as we implement them. Some of those topics, environmental literacy, water safety standards, will come as you review SOL standards on their regular schedules. Some of

[00:24:58] those academic and curricular components will come forward to you in guidance documents or other regulatory actions in the course of your work. And that is a good segue to this last slide. As we look ahead, we wanted to share with you some of the more immediate actions that we see on the horizon, both as a department and as we work to support you in this work. So today, the department will send out a comprehensive legislative report to our divisions. That is the attachment on your board item. The goal with that document is to provide a very short summary

[00:25:35] on each bill and then to provide some context around statutory timelines as well as anticipated timelines that the department has on when resources or supports may be available to our school divisions as they consider their own implementation of the legislation. When we come back to you in August, we do anticipate bringing forward a couple of regulatory items to initiate the implementation of a few different bills, some related to licensure or the three-year CTE licenses,

[00:26:12] as well as changes to the division superintendent license. And then finally, on that side, you'll see a few notable guidance report documents, Board of Ed reports that are in the more immediate future. Again, just so you're aware of some things coming down the pike.

[00:26:29] On August 1st, the DOE, in collaboration with the Office of the Attorney General, will need to issue guidance on immigration enforcement on school campuses. We anticipate this fall having guidance for AI use for student instruction available for our school divisions.

[00:26:48] And we also anticipate then in October, there will be a couple of interim reports due to the General Assembly to report on initial steps taken to implement bills related to a new requirement to biennially review all CTE courses pathways and credential offerings as well as a new charge from the General Assembly to look at alternative licensure pathways and create a work group to study that topic and bring recommendations forward for future considerations

[00:27:21] by this body and that concludes my very short and sweet presentation but happy to answer any QUESTIONS THAT YOU MAY HAVE ABOUT THESE TOPICS OR OTHER COMPONENTS COMING OUT OF THE 2026 SESSION I'M GOING TO SAY THANK YOU CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT BUT CHIEF COY FOR MEMBERS DO YOU HAVE ANY FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS UM SUPERINTENDENT CONWAY ANYTHING ELSE TO ADD ARE YOU GOING TO GO TO THE RIGHT MR. ROBINSON

[00:28:03] SUMMARY AND LIKE SAYING IT SEEMED LIKE THERE WERE TWO PIECES THAT THEY WERE SAYING MORE THAN considered seem like more of a direct and those directives and and how we should excuse them absolutely so there were two specific pieces of legislation the first was that as you mentioned the charge to the board to consider specific recommendations coming out of the jlrk study the second as you have noted was in fact much more directive and related to school improvement

[00:28:39] i'm really clarifying in statute that school improvement is a broad responsibility of the entire department under the superintendent's leadership and under the board's direction really kind of shoring up this connection between school improvement efforts of the department and the accountability system just a quick follow-up on that on the the change in labels change in weight growth could those be considered more directives or just consideration those were

[00:29:15] part of the list of considerations for you all to take under advisement great board members superintendent conway anything else to add not at this time thank you next presentation

[00:29:41] joe is that right turn over to superintendent conway first to wonderful thank you all thank you for uh to joe and to the extended uh uh audience support from from jlark we wanted to make sure that this board could hear directly from the joint legislative

[00:30:18] audit and review commission and uh in large part uh for two reasons one is i think there was a recognition during the course of this general assembly and expressed by our new governor about the value of of the effort that had gone into analyzing the school performance and support framework and soundness in its recommendations. The second is as Chief Coy just noted that it turned into legislative requirement of consideration and as she noted a very explicit requirement on how to

[00:30:56] think differently about school improvement. With that in mind we thought it would be valuable for you all to hear directly from the JLARC folks to be able to hear the presentation and to be able to ask questions as you think through this new newly legislated responsibility to consider these recommendations. We are grateful for the thoroughness of the study, the willingness of JLARC to come and to present today. And as somebody who's spent quite a few years in Virginia state government just knowing how much work is underneath each of these studies

[00:31:34] and that intentionally there's an effort to focus on facts and on data rather than politics per se and we are greatly appreciative for all the time and effort in this report as well as thanks in advance for your presentation. Thank you Superintendent Conway for the kind words about good morning everyone my name is joe mcMahon i'm a project leader and chief legislative analyst at jlark as you probably know jlark is a legislative agency we conduct objective nonpartisan research and analysis for our commission of general assembly members i'm joining me today is our

[00:32:14] director hal greer our associate senior associate director justin brown who oversaw the work and then the analyst that worked alongside me on this study kate hopkins sam leesman and laura white my one little disclaimer here for generalists we've now moved on to completely different topic areas for the last seven months i'm going to might rely on the team a little more than i did have back in december for some of the q a if something's not coming back to me immediately so the study was completed last year in response to a resolution from our commission

[00:32:51] i have a list here of our primary research activities i just want to focus on a couple we did extensive analysis of the school accountability results for the 24-25 school year We conducted an extensive number of interviews, including national subject matter experts, school superintendents, principals.

[00:33:11] We also viewed every state board of education meeting where school accountability was discussed over the three years prior and talked to board members who were involved in the design process. I'm going to quickly move through some background, but then a majority of the presentation will be focused on our findings leading into recommendations and policy options.

[00:33:31] So the school accountability system serves several purposes. provides stakeholders with information about school quality and student performance it's meant to hold school leaders accountable and motivate them to improve performance and it's the tool the state uses for identifying schools and students that need additional support an accountability system achieves these goals by quantifying and reporting on school performance board approved virginia's new system the school performance and support framework i'm going to refer to as the spsf or the framework they replaced that prior system that had been in place since 2017 and the

[00:34:05] framework went into effect for the 24-25 school year. Here's a look at the measures or indicators included in the framework. As you know, the framework is really essentially a big math equation. Points are assigned on a per student basis for each indicator, then the weighting of each is applied. The product of those is an indicator score, and then all indicator scores are summed to produce a total summative score for each school. Then the framework assigns each school a performance label that's based off that summative score in addition schools with certain

[00:34:43] levels of low performance can also receive a federal designation which i'll discuss later on and one other piece of relevant information is that the state board took action to raise cut scores last year cut scores are the numeric scores that delineate performance levels on sols and those changes to cut scores would result in declined overall ratings if fully implemented assuming no other changes are made I can pause I'm going to pause at each one of these slides for for questions so any questions so first I'll give an assessment of our overall assessment of the

[00:35:22] system so when evaluating a school accountability system it's important to keep in mind that because of the complexity k-12 education states varying priorities means there's no single best system each is a balance of policy priorities stakeholder concerns and transparency states are limited to measures where data is produced consistently and reliably statewide, and there's many trade-offs to consider. Some of the big ones are which areas of performance would include, how to weight, measure, and score each indicator, and how to balance simplicity and precision. For our first finding,

[00:36:00] we found that the new accountability system is more effective and useful than the prior system. First, the framework better differentiates school performance. That differentiation is important for several reasons notably providing more transparency and information to stakeholders you can see here for the prior system in that 23-24 school year all schools fell into just two performance categories with most receiving the highest rating that distribution was not typical with what you see in other states and not aligned with best practices in contrast

[00:36:35] the framework has four performance categories and distributes a meaningful number of schools into each one, which is closer to what you see in other states and what experts recommend. Next improvement is that the framework is a single system used for state and federal accountability purposes. That means it uses identical indicators, weighting, measurement, and scoring for the purpose of meeting federal accountability requirements and for producing state results.

[00:37:04] Another improvement is that the framework separates school accreditation from school accountability. As you know, accreditation is a measure of compliance with state requirements, whereas accountability is a measure of student and school performance. Subject matter experts and a majority of school divisions viewed these two changes positively. The framework is also more precise and inclusive

than the prior system. This includes how it uses separate indicators for each type of performance, how it scores many of the indicators, and the minimal number of student

[00:37:36] threshold or n size that is used as part of calculations and reporting. So our next finding is that the framework's overall structure is generally found but we did identify some refinements that are needed we found that the framework structural elements such as indicators weighting measurement and scoring are generally consistent with federal guidance expert opinion or recommendations and other states accountability systems so given that the overall structure meets this criteria we determined that fundamental changes are not needed they'd be unnecessarily disruptive and would be

[00:38:12] administratively burdensome to schools however we did identify areas for improvement and made recommendations and provided policy options accordingly and that those would be the focus of the rest of the presentation you indicate fundamental changes to the system are not needed because otherwise they would be unnecessarily disruptive so you're talking about fundamental changes to the proposed system that the board has adopted are not necessarily needed because

[00:38:48] otherwise major changes to what we agreed as a structure would also be unnecessarily disruptive and administratively first so i just want to be clear about that because want everybody to know that you have fundamental changes to the system you're not talking about um the old system you're talking about to the system that we are now operating under making fundamental changes to that would also be unnecessarily disruptive and administrative

[00:39:27] yes i'll just follow it up miss mcpherson um when we talk fundamental structural changes we're talking don't throw it out and start again don't completely change the indicators don't completely change the scoring indexes it's more tweaks changes on the margins and refinements

[00:39:53] So moving into the results of the new system, you can see here the majority of schools received an on-track or distinguished label for the 24-25 school year. Our first finding related to those results is that we found the proportion of students in a school that are economically disadvantaged is the characteristic that has the strongest relationship with school's results. This means schools with more economically disadvantaged students tend to receive lower overall ratings from the SPSF. Now this isn't unique to the framework or Virginia. Accountability systems

[00:40:33] typically reflect, accountability system results typically reflect school student demographics, especially economic disadvantage because many commonly used indicators like test results are correlated with those factors. There's a lack of consensus among experts about how much results should reflect student demographics. So on one side of the argument is that results that strongly reflect student demographics are the product of maintaining the same expectations for all students and can help target support to address disparities the other side is that results that are overly reflective of demographics evaluate schools on demographic factors outside of their control

[00:41:10] rather than on their effectiveness you can see that relationship here on the left a school's percentage of economically disadvantaged students increases their average summative scores decrease By another measure, schools receiving the lowest performance labels had a higher percentage of economically disadvantaged students on average. And I'll talk about this a bit more in a bit.

[00:41:38] Pause there for any questions. This next section. So student population that is economically disadvantaged can be weighed one or two ways. Weigh them straight across as it relates to the

accountability and test performance. And because they're economically disadvantaged, historically and based upon expert predictions they are going to score lower because of status and all of the

[00:42:16] other factors that go with being economically disadvantaged such as they may not be receiving the intensive support that they should be receiving or their schools have not been previously provided with all of the materials that they should have had or we could lower expectation the economically disadvantaged students and then their performance will look better on the accountability scale so those are the options that we're kind of looking at yeah we didn't get into

[00:42:54] the factors and and the things you named are are some of the factors that contribute to that relationship and it is it is an observed relationship between the results and the percentage of students that are economically disadvantaged um we'll talk about the trade-offs there mostly through that proficiency and growth conversation and kind of the two philosophical sides okay so i just wanted to make sure we were all kind of clear about where you were going in

[00:43:19] terms of defining what it looks like in terms of measurement my understanding from the jlr report you could figure out about how current levels were distributed across the figure five four

[00:43:49] it does part of the report page 59 and um i just want to clarify you know in terms of options before the board um on on page 43 of the commission draft um uh you you your committee showed um the correlation difference uh between reading proficiency versus reading growth based on

[00:44:21] um and and uh in my understanding is you know that that's partially why you're seeing a much stronger correlation in the current um ratings uh is because of the strong proficiency um weight But in growth, you don't see as much as strong of a correlation.

[00:44:44] Yes, that is correct. And I will get into more of that in the growth and proficiency section here. But we could see that the proficiency indicators, one of the appendices has all the technical correlations and relationships between the two.

[00:45:00] But we could see the strongest relationship for all indicators between scoring and economically percent of economically disadvantaged students was among the proficiency indicators. The weakest correlation, albeit it still was correlated, is the growth indicating Appendix G in the JLR Commission report.

[00:45:31] So moving on to labeling school performance. To begin, school ratings are highly visible. They're the primary way states communicate accountability results to the public. Many states aggregate their accountability results in a single overall rating, like Virginia's framework.

[00:45:48] States use various formats for these ratings, such as letter grades, stars, colors, or descriptive labels. School ratings are important because they can have both positive and negative implications, such as shaping public perceptions of schools or affecting school and staff morale. The SPSF uses four descriptive labels to communicate school's overall performance, and you know those are distinguished, on-track, off-track, and needs intensive support.

[00:46:15] Research shows it can be difficult to develop descriptive labels that are clear, widely understood, and broadly accepted because different stakeholders interpret terms differently. But with that being said, we found that some of the SPSF performance labels do not clearly communicate school performance or function as part of a continuous scale.

[00:46:38] So the first part, three of the four labels do not clearly communicate school performance. There's often confusion about the terms when we were talking to experts and stakeholders. For example, on-track and off-track were often thought to imply a school's performance trend rather than a static snapshot.

[00:46:55] Stakeholders viewed on track as schools that are improving and off track as those that are declining. That means that the labels are not clearly and accurately conveying what they are intended to mean. A distinguished label may also not clearly communicate school performance because it can actually overstate how well some schools are doing.

[00:47:13] The term distinguished suggests a school is exceptional across the board when it could be underperforming, and we could see that in the data, underperformance on some indicators or have weaknesses outside of the school accountability system. And I think the bigger piece is that the four labels do not clearly relate to one another as part of a continuous scale.

[00:47:32] There are four disconnected terms, and there is no intuitive progression through the four labels. And because of this, it can be difficult for stakeholders to understand the order of labels and how they relate to one another. For example, in interviews, we heard off-track be misperceived as being a lower rating that needs intensive support because some people felt it sounded more negative.

[00:47:53] Others felt that there was only, experts felt that there could be perceived that there's only two ratings on track and off track if you weren't aware of the others on either side of them. Other descriptive labels, such as those used in West Virginia, which you can see here, allow for a more clearly continuous order.

[00:48:10] This is a better approach because it's easier for people to intuitively know where a given label fits amongst the others. So given that the labels are unclear to some stakeholders, and we have a recommendation for the board to develop new terminology for the four performance labels, it's worth saying here that it's unlikely that any set of accountability ratings will satisfy everybody. However, developing terms that are part of a continuous scale and more clearly and accurately convey school performance could help improve clarity and address concerns.

[00:48:39] And then just overall, we view this as a relatively minor change given it does not affect how schools are scored or how the accountability system functions, but could meaningfully increase stakeholder buy-in. There's a needs intensive support, which also identifies the fact that the school system may be in need of additional funding because it comes directly to the funding mechanism.

[00:49:06] You're recommending West Virginia's language as an example to use does not meet standards, but that's just a recommendation. Even though you say that it somehow appears to connect, like if we don't meet standard now, maybe next year we'll partially meet standard.

[00:49:31] after that maybe we meet standards then finally we'd see standards so somehow embedded in that you think there appears to be more of a continuity that parents other people would understand more so than what correct and and i do want to emphasize west virginia is an example of this continuity we're not recommending and you pointed that out we're not specifically recommending that exact approach you could use needs intensive support needs support like there's all different ways to

[00:50:04] do it but the continuity is the important piece right something that appears to give us superintendent conway and then mr henson uh joe could you clarify i know that some of the feedback

we've heard when you talk about funding being attached to these labels typically that is funding dedicated to support improving schools rather than sometimes there's a perception that schools that do better receive more funding for doing better but could you clarify when you talk about funding in that prior slide that is typically with other states to prioritize schools that need intensive support for

[00:50:42] additional funding not the reverse correct superintendent conway that is that's what we're referring to we're talking about those school improvement funds or even just school improvement support from the from the department going to the needs intensive support schools or or off-track schools depending on how that decision is made but i think it's important for us to remember that many of the legislators have been very concerned about the fact that in some of the schools where there are students that are economically disadvantaged that they have been

[00:51:17] deprived of funding that is needed for them to move forward so needs intensive support has been somewhat identified with the fact that they also need additional funding so i i hear you in terms in language but i don't want us to get too far away from the fact that very that our legislators are very very clear about the fact that the money needs to follow where the most work is needed with the students we don't need to mislabel what it is we're trying to do as a resident mr hanson yeah

[00:51:55] dr mcpherson i agree and i think even and again i think there's many different ways you could cut the words and the terminology, and I do appreciate having the consistency or the consistent theme, but I do believe, to your point, Ida, that the needs and intensive support is really what this whole effort is about, is communication effort, and sometimes when we talk about stakeholders,

[00:52:28] some of the stakeholders that are in the system know this, but it's really for parents parents and for people who normally aren't paying attention as much, really need to understand locally what the needs are. Also, just taking a step back as well about, you know, the most recent NAEP scores, the learning loss that we first in the country after COVID, the movement that we've made, but just even the most recent NAEP scores still showing that our disadvantaged

[00:53:06] students across the board on almost any every segment are where we need to be putting our priorities to help close the achievement gap going forward and so i i just i know this is this terminology and such and i like west virginia's a little bit more maybe but then again maybe we jumble this up and come up with a different terms that are consistent and constant

[00:53:36] BUT ALSO MAYBE ARE TRYING TO TELL THE STORY THAT WE'RE TRYING TO TELL THE MOST CHALLENGED. MR. ROBINSON, WOULD YOU TURN YOUR MIC ON?

[00:53:54] MR. THANK YOU. I LOVE THE COMMENTS RELATED TO THE STORY AND THE SIGNALING OF NEEDS INTENSIVE SUPPORT ON WHAT WE HOPE OUR STATE IS ABLE TO DO. FOR RIGHT NOW, IT'S ONLY 213 SCHOOLS THAT HAVE THAT LABEL 12%. MY UNDERSTANDING FROM JLARC'S RECOMMENDATIONS IS THE MOST -- YOU'RE SIGNALING that the on-track and off-track labels are the ones that have the most both stakeholder feedback

[00:54:26] as well as the most confusion because of the signal of, you know, that it's a trend that may not be true. You could improve from needs intensive to off-track. So you're kind of on track to improve, but you're still labeled as off-track. And I think we'll hear later recommendations that include keeping the needs intensive support label and changing others, which I would support. But I just wanted to clarify

from a JLARC standpoint that on-track and off-track is really partially what you're amplifying for us to consider.

[00:55:02] I think that's accurate and really distinguished as well. Some of the things I mentioned that distinguished can kind of paint this. School is great across the board where there's underlying good and bad in most schools. And the on-track and off-track, which you said, the directionality, also just, it's in our report, off-track just was not very favored by a lot of people. Just they felt it had a negative connotation, felt it was worse than needs intensive support. So I guess to summarize what you're saying, needs intensive support is probably the one, I'll look at the team that had the least pushback. So if that helps with decision-making, that's what we were hearing.

[00:55:42] And then to Mr. Hansen's comments, too, that just shows how difficult it is to create this terminology and convey what you're trying to convey and get a majority of stakeholders and people interested in the system to be on board. Joe, can I just ask you to clarify, I think it would be, is it just the least pushback or also, if I remember you all speaking in December, was also it was the one that was most clear, right?

[00:56:08] Going back to what Ms. McPherson and Mr. Hansen said, that felt like that was also just the clearest if you're looking for clarity and continuity. Yes, it's understandable. It's understandable. It's clear what is being conveyed by that lab. Joe, you could build a scale around it. We're not suggesting it, but you could.

[00:56:27] And this has to be continuous. Kate, from our team, she said, yes, you could ground the scale and needs intensive support and then needs support and does not need support, something like that. Again, that's not a recommendation, but that's another way to make continuity grounded in that term.

[00:56:43] For our next finding, we found an issue with how the framework assigns performance labels to schools. The approach ignores differences in how the three school levels are measured, which ends up significantly benefiting high schools.

[00:57:03] You can see here that because each level of school is evaluated on different criteria but scored using the same scoring thresholds, the same point thresholds, high schools are much more likely than elementary and middle schools to receive a distinguished rating. Likewise, they are less likely to receive a lower rating.

[00:57:19] According to experts, you would expect to see more similar distribution of the performance labels across each school level. And this means that results across school levels are not comparable and can lack fairness. So we have a recommendation there for the board to develop new scoring thresholds that are unique to each school level and result in a more comparable proportion of elementary, middle, and high schools receiving each label.

[00:57:46] So before jumping into this next section, just a bit of background. I think this will all sound familiar, but if anyone's watching, this gets pretty technical. So states are federally required to use their accountability system to identify low-performance schools. These schools are given a federal designation, which is essentially another label in addition to their SPSF performance label.

[00:58:08] There are three types of federal designations, CSI, TSI, and ATSI, which I'll walk through on the next slides. The reason this relates to labeling school performance is that based on the rules of the

framework, If schools receive one of these federal designations, it can affect the state performance label assigned by the framework.

[00:58:28] So our first finding here is that the framework should ensure that comprehensive support and improvement schools receive the lowest performance label. Comprehensive Support and Improvement, or CSI, is the most serious federal designation. It is primarily given to Title I schools with the lowest overall performance in the state.

[00:58:46] Despite their low performance, many schools did not receive the lowest performance label of needs intensive support. Instead, they're labeled as off-track. Experts recommend that CSI schools receive the state's lowest rating. This helps ensure that federal and state labels are aligned, send a consistent message, and then most importantly, that the lowest performing schools are clearly identified and prioritized for support. Therefore, we have a recommendation for the board to amend regulations to ensure that all CSI schools are labeled as needs-intensive support.

[00:59:20] how would that go back regarding the high school middle school numbers the nation would it um the chance you're asking would it balance out that uh I don't think that yeah it's it's

[00:59:50] really technical stuff but it wouldn't we also have a finding related to how schools with two other federal designations are labeled the SPSF lowers all targeted support and improvement and additional targeted support improvement schools performance labels, which is imprecise and can be overly punitive. The TSI and ATSI designations indicate that a school has one or more significantly underperforming students subgroups. To reflect this, the framework rules lower the performance

[01:00:28] label of TSI and ATSI schools. The board adopted this approach to make sure that students subgroup performance is explicitly factored into schools accountability results. Without it, a school's could mask low-performance student subgroups within that school. The issue with this practice and how it's currently being implemented is that lowering all TSI and a TSI school's performance labels is imprecise and overly punitive. First, TSI is meant to serve as a warning of poor performance in a subgroup. To reflect this, we propose that TSI schools would not have their state

[01:01:05] label lowered in the first year that they're under a TSI designation, only after a second year of repeat TSI performance which that would then indicate that student subgroup performance issues are persisting. Second, schools that are designated as TSI but already receive an off-track label would not be lowered any further. This is a vast majority of the TSI schools so if the point is to align the federal and state labels we think that off-track and TSI that that warning federal

[01:01:36] designation are already aligned so no need to further lower the state label. Our proposed changes to the ATSI rules are similar. ATSI is a more severe designation than TSI, so we found it appropriate to lower schools with distinguished or on-track scores to off-track. But as with TSI schools, schools designated as ATSI and that are already labeled as off-track would not be lowered

[01:02:09] any further. So here's the high-level summary of what we recommend. Rules can be changed to maintain the board's emphasis on subgroup performance while also better aligning with the intent of federal designations and avoiding being unnecessarily punitive.

[01:02:32] Yes. On that last bullet about avoid being unnecessarily punitive, does that mean in terms of designation is, again, part of this process is important as prior to charts also might make it look like there'll be fewer schools in the needs intensive support because, again, it's simplistic.

[01:02:57] there's two schoolhouses on slide 42, a recommendation doing the same on slide 41. So part of this effort is to not be punitive in the way that there's a label, but being helpful to target resources.

[01:03:18] I'm just wondering if I'm acknowledging you. - Yeah, Mr. Hanson, you're absolutely correct. These changes would leave more schools in that off-track designation, and there would end up being fewer in the needs intensive support designation.

[01:03:36] So that ties back to the need to reconsider these thresholds. It was actually a vast majority of the needs intensive support schools were there, not because their summative score was in that range, but because they were off track and received an ATSI or TSI designation and then had their score lowered to needs intensive support.

[01:03:57] So that's what an example of all these different things working together. But when we say the punitive piece, talking about a school could be relatively high in the off-track scoring 78 79 points have one or two small subgroups underperforming and then tsi's case for just a year and then drop all the way down to that needs intensive support and and we felt that that those tsi and a tsi

[01:04:23] designations are better aligned with the intent of off-track thank you for all the clarification so i i understand the recommendation on the tsi uh is meant from a federal designation to be a a warning, not lower all the way to needs intensive.

[01:04:49] To clarify, the ATSI, you've now been designated multiple years as having subgroups that are forming at the similar level as the bottom 5% of the schools. And so if you have an off-track score as an ATSI school and you were to be moved to needs intensive support, would that have the effect of heightening attention to underserved populations?

[01:05:23] Mr. Robinson, yeah, I think it could. So that, again, this is a policy call whether where you feel that alignment is best served. Is ATSI better aligned with off-track or is it better aligned with needs intensive support for those things that you mentioned?

[01:05:40] We as a board, if we wanted to heighten attention to underserved groups, again the TSI might misalign with the federal um intent of TSI but the ATSF we were to say no we actually want those receiving needs intensive support not as a punitive but because we want more attention more spotlight um on those students that that that would be a something to consider yes that is something to consider I think internally the way we were viewing is that the csi comprehensive support improvement is the roughly equivalent to that lowest category of

[01:06:19] needs intensive support atsi was at the next level up on the federal designations the next level up would be the state's off track and then tsi at least in that first year you could that school could stay as on track or stay as off track where it was and then after a second year it would be then put into alignment with off track the same as tsi because of the repeated underperformance but again it's all it's all judgment calls and policy decisions and actually all of the

[01:06:55] recommendations can be implemented obviously we'll ask staff about that but can be implemented pretty much within the framework that we've developed with some tweaking this is not a master overhaul that delays our implementation but that we can go on and make these tweets and figure out rollout implementation scoring adding in your record yeah to add to that dr mcpearson yeah it's not a wholesale change everything it's tweaks to the system but there are implementation

[01:07:34] considerations i think you're going to hear from staff uh that there is some sequencing some you do got to do this before you do that type stuff things that you want to make sure that schools have time to prepare for it's something so there are still some timing and implementation considerations we may have factored those then when we talked about the way we've done it aggressively because we took that into consideration but how we were going to progressively implement the plan itself we've already taken into consideration that it is not a major rollout but every phase of it so

[01:08:13] we have some we have ways of telling you where you are now telling you this is where you scored as it relates to new framework and then how we phase in all of that information going forward in terms of scores and graduation dates and things like that so we did take into consideration so it would be interesting to make sure that we're still on track with our rollout that we previously agreed upon by tweaking these few things that need to be done so my next session is on proficiency

[01:08:51] and growth indicators both are based on student performance on sol tests as you know proficiency measures whether students are meeting grade level standards and content areas growth is a comparison of students current year test performance to that same student's performance in prior years together they account for majority of the rating for elementary and middle schools two findings here the framework's proficiency indicators are generally well designed and the growth indicators are an improvement over the prior system but still had shortcomings but are being changed

[01:09:25] as i mentioned the proficiency indicators are generally well designed the The framework uses standalone indicators for reading, math, and science and quantifies student and school performance for each. This is more transparent than the state's prior system, which combined proficiency and growth into a single indicator.

[01:09:44] Another positive element is the use of index scoring. As you know, with an index, schools receive full credit for students who score proficient, but also partial credit for students who score below proficient and extra credit for those scoring advanced. This encourages focus on students at all achievement levels, not just those near the pass fail line.

[01:10:02] The framework's growth indicators also have some elements that are improvement over the prior system, like proficiency. Growth is a standalone indicator instead of being combined with others. It measures growth for all students, not just those who scored below proficient, as was the case with the prior system.

[01:10:22] We did find issues with the approach used for scoring the growth indicator for the 24-25 school year, But the board is making a wholesale change of the growth measure for this current school year, so unless there's questions, I won't go into any more details there. Our next finding is that the framework's much heavier weighting of proficiency overgrowth does not fully capture school's contribution to student learning and increases the impact of student demographics on school scores.

[01:10:59] Previous system or both? We're talking that heavier is in reference to if internal analysis of our own system, if you switched it to higher growth relative, or if you just increased growth, like if you made it 50-50 versus what it currently is now, that's where you would see some of that relationship decline.

[01:11:35] yeah yes comparing it hypothetically if Virginia it's like efficiency and growth if we flip-flopped them if we made them equal and what it is now that's the that's the differences we're comparing to not

necessarily the old system or that that correlation other states I think that interpretation much happier but also be looked at too much happier in this you know and i don't know if

[01:12:10] yeah we have the the next slide i believe is there are two slides it at least compares the ratio to other states it does not we did not compare that correlation relationship in other states so both proficiency and growth measure important aspects of student academic achievement proficiency measures how well students perform against state standards for core skills and knowledge and will help identify schools with the greatest proportion of students not meeting grade level standards growth better isolate school's impact on student performance encourages a focus

[01:12:49] on continuous improvement and identifies schools whose students are not making enough progress from prior years here's the figure that i was referring to the weighting of growth and proficiency it's really one of the biggest philosophical debates in school accountability as it requires each of the two indicators have substantial weight but give states flexibility in how to weight them relative to one another this figure shows the ratio between proficiency and growth by state on the left you have states where growth is weighted higher on the right where proficiency is weighted higher and in the middle states that give them equal weighting and you can see here that virginia has the third

[01:13:25] highest ratio of proficiency relative to growth nationwide were you able to do any evaluation on the Arizona, Massachusetts, and Mexico, Iowa are in terms of their systems and short answers. I don't have that. I'd have to look more into that. I guess comparing NAEP scores would be the very top line way to do it, but probably more detailed analysis could be done.

[01:14:04] Was there any measurement of proficiency as it relates to NAEP scores for these other states? the growth and proficiency we're higher rated proficiency did you look at a model of another state that was close to us as to performance on the names dr mcferson we did not do that i think that would be an interesting analysis and i don't have anything to add because that was our our goal was to get the status performance up to where you know the federal recognition would be

[01:14:43] there that we were performing at least at basic level proficiency so if we should be rating proficiency higher than just measuring growth because of where we're trying to go and maybe we the curve is right for us and dr mcphierce i do want to caution there's a lot that would go into those needs there's the accountability system there's student demographics funding levels so yeah it would be something to look at but there's also other factors that are going to complicate

[01:15:16] them so as just was alluded to the board was intentional about this decision to place more emphasis on proficiency reasons cited at the time include the belief that meeting grade level standards is a key outcome wanting to maintain the high expectation of proficiency for all students inciting that they heard from stakeholders such as parents and those in the business and military communities that proficiency is what they care most about the trade-off of this waiting decision is that proficiency indicators produce results that are more highly correlated with student

[01:15:56] demographics especially economic disadvantage in contrast student growth results are less correlated with student demographics and majority of schools and division staff as well as subject matter experts we spoke to emphasize that growth is a better measure of the extent to which a school's efforts are contributing to or affecting student performance because this is a policy decision with trade-offs no single answer we have a policy option and that is that the board could increase the weight assigned to the growth indicators to more fully account for school's

[01:16:27] contribution to student learning right and this is my last major section here it's looking at other refinements that we identified across other areas of the system this first one is the scoring used for the three e's college career and military readiness indicator is problematic the scoring approach used for this indicator differs from the others for the three e's high schools earn points for student achievements in college career and military readiness opportunities and one student can score points across multiple pathways you can see on the slide an example of

[01:17:06] the student with achievement in all three pathways for scoring a total of 2.5 points hypothetically a student can score a maximum of 3.5 points if they hit the highest level in each category that's compared to just 1.25 or one point for each of the other indicators this design is intended to incentivize schools to make many three ease opportunities available to students and to encourage broad student participation across each pathway. However, this allows schools to score much higher on the three E's indicator than on the others, which can distort overall results. This means at least for some schools, their overall school is

[01:17:45] being driven more by the three E's than is intended by the indicator's assigned weight. You can see that schools with high three indicator, schools scoring highly on the three E's indicator at 34 percent of their summative score comprised by the indicator when the intended weight is just 25 percent this effectively lessens the importance of the other indicators likewise it can distort overall ratings which can be misleading essentially a high overall score caused by the three e's gives a perception of higher overall performance than is reflected across all of the school's indicators this is one of the factors contributing to why so many high schools receive

[01:18:25] the distinguished label as mentioned earlier in the presentation. We have a recommendation to the board to change the scoring of the three E's indicator by capping the total number of points a student or school can receive. I'd like to point out that the report provides examples of how these caps could be set in a way to strike a balance between that goal of incentivizing student achievement across multiple pathways while also limiting the indicator's disproportionate impact on school scores. This recommendation in no way means that there should be a limit on the actual

[01:18:58] number of opportunities being made available to students. Next, schools can score points toward the enlistment category with much less effort relative to other 3E pathways. This is because schools are awarded points for students earning above certain scores on the ASVAB test, even if they do not list in the military or participate in a JROTC program. The ASVAB is a one-time test, typically taking under two hours to complete. Other three E's achievements that are worth comparable amounts of points for the framework require substantially more time and effort from

[01:19:33] students. This scoring can incentivize gaming the system by having many or all students take the ASVAB test regardless of their interest in a military career. So we recommend the board change the scoring for the enlistment category so it's more commensurate with the time and effort required to earn points in the enrollment and employment categories. Moving to some of the topics related to English learners. We found that the framework's inclusion of more English learners when measuring schools' proficiency and growth aligns with federal requirements and is supported by experts.

[01:20:09] However, the board could change the exclusion period for recently arrived English learners to partially address division and school concerns while still aligning with ESSA requirements. For some context, Virginia's prior accountability system excluded all English learners' assessments from proficiency

and growth calculations for up to five years. The new framework, The new framework in alignment with federal requirements excludes only recently arrived English learners for one year.

[01:20:40] Recently arrived English learners account for about 10% of English learners statewide. The framework's approach not only aligns with federal requirements, but is also strongly supported by subject matter experts and is much more aligned with practices in other states.

[01:20:58] Virginia's prior approach was a true national outlier. This earlier inclusion of English learners is important for several reasons, including tracking student progress, targeting support to students who are struggling, and maintaining attention on students that face the greatest challenges. The purpose is not to set the expectation that these students should be proficient by their second year.

[01:21:19] However, these rules were among school superintendents and principals' top concerns with the new framework. They shared that counting test scores of students with limited English proficiency is unfair or unreasonable. There is something that can be done to at least partially address those concerns while maintaining alignment with federal requirements and best practices.

[01:21:39] ESL allows for exceptions that apply to when to include recently arrived English learners in performance calculations. The framework currently uses exception A, but could switch to use of exception B, which would delay inclusion of recently arrived English learners from proficiency calculations until their third year in a U.S. school.

[01:22:00] This longer delay for proficiency may be preferable to schools because it's generally more feasible for a student with limited English proficiency to demonstrate growth than achieve academic proficiency, especially early on. Therefore, we have a policy option. The board could switch to Exception B for excluding recently arrived English learners.

[01:22:25] Thank you. Is that a recommendation for both reading and math? The timeline on the previous slide would recommend Exception B is for both. yes that thank you it applies to both correct there's some real technical stuff on it growth for one of those would actually exception be actually moves growth up a year for one of the two that it would be in the report and um i think you can see it on the figure with the symbols but yes it would move proficiency for both back to that thank you thank you yeah um dr bridges and

[01:23:02] do y'all have any along the report um any indication of where other states are we we do if you give us one second we can track that they're on the case in my in my next stop page 63 up near the top page 63 near the top it's

[01:23:39] it's almost 50 50. eight eight using one nine using um joe one question for for clarity's sake on the graphic here on 64 for exception b though in order to measure growth in year two are that recently arrived the year one presents it the same but there actually is a difference exception a they're not taking any assessments exception b they are taking the assessment in order to understand what the growth is in year two is that correct just in terms that is correct that they would have to take an assessment in that first year to establish a baseline for then growth to be compared to in

[01:24:17] that second year when growth counts thank you did you find any discrepancy when you were looking at octe plan workforce development and all of that that there was advanced classes students that were taking advanced classes you may not have found any discrepancy but you know there's credit given inside that framework for people who take in advance dr mcpherson we compared the criteria

[01:24:52] in that college and career readiness indicator to other states and as you can imagine there's a lot of stuff going on there in other states but generally the things that are in this new framework align with what's common in other states we didn't see that advanced coursework was nothing jumped out at us if that was in the college and career readiness piece, the AP tests.

[01:25:14] Yeah. That's another one of those technical questions that I might have to. High school.

[01:25:29] Oh, there's no growth in high school. There you go. The growth indicator does not apply in this phrase that work here.

[01:25:58] All right. Get back to where I was here. Okay. So, the next slide is the framework's rules for reweighting the ELP progress indicator for elementary and middle schools with too few English learners reduces comparability and fairness of results. So the EOP progress indicator is a measure of English learner progress toward achieving English language proficiency as measured by the WIDA exam. This indicator is required by ESSA. So why this matters is 42% of schools have below the 15-student minimum threshold of English learners, so this indicator doesn't apply to them, which means that the entire indicator is excluded

[01:26:37] when calculating their overall score. That means the 10% weight is distributed elsewhere. For high schools, that weight is redistributed proportionally to all remaining indicators. For elementary and middle schools, that weight is entirely redistributed to the growth indicator.

[01:26:54] That redistribution of the entire 10% weight to growth alters how a substantial proportion of elementary and middle schools are being evaluated when compared to their counterparts that have a score for that indicator this reduces the comparability of results and has implications for fairness between schools with and without the indicator so we have a relatively straightforward recommendation to change that to proportional re-weighting for all school levels the next finding is that the ELP progress indicator uses binary scoring rather than index scoring which

[01:27:29] does not reward partial or significant progress and differs from the scoring approach used for indicators the elp progress binary scoring approach rewards a point for only students who meet their growth target there's no partial credit for students making progress but who fall short of their target and no extra credit for students that exceed their target using a scoring index for the elp indicator would be consistent with the board's rationale for other indicators reflect best practices and then this is a big one getting down into the the weeds on the math it makes schools ELP progress indicator scores more comparable to scores for the other indicators

[01:28:07] which has implications for the fairness of results again when comparing schools with and without that indicator so we have a recommendation to use index scoring for the ELP progress indicator and this is our moving into our last one here proficiency scoring index for assessments with three levels can produce misleading results and affect how certain students and subject areas are prioritized. So the SPSF scores its proficiency indicators with one of two

[01:28:41] indexes. For SOL tests with four performance labels, so I'm talking about advanced, proficient, basic, and below basic, framework uses a scoring index ranging from 0.25 points to 1.25 points awarded for each student based off the performance level they achieve. For SOL tests with three performance levels, those points awarded per student range from just 0.75 to 1.25. What we found is that the three level

scoring index awards too many points for failing students which could lead to deprioritizing assessments in subject areas that have that three performance levels

[01:29:20] disincentivizing focus on the lowest performing students reducing the framework's responsiveness to scoring changes within those subject areas and masking low performing students contrary to federal guidance so you can see an example of how that all plays out science subject area which has sol tests with three performance levels had the highest average indicator score for elementary middle schools despite having the lowest sol pass rate and that's really an effect of essentially more points for that bottom category this another relatively simple fix the board could reduce

[01:29:59] points awarded for the proficiency index calculations from 0.75 to 0.5 for students who score fail or does not meet proficiency on assessments with three performance levels and then to conclude it was just discussing your legislative update so i won't read through everything exactly there were legislative and executive actions taking response to the report the house bill asking the board to consider changes what to the framework that align with these recommendations and policy options and in executive order directing the secretary

[01:30:36] and the superintendent to present an action plan for considering these recommendations joe could you talk a little bit more about that recommendation how you landed on the 0.5 assuming a distribution for those who did not um achieve proficiency is that just a best approximate approximation because you don't have the two categories but there's nothing necessarily that you found about science for example that would suggest that everybody scored on average lower um it's just that you know mathematically unless you either you have two options either to split

[01:31:13] those uh or to take a lower average is that is that a correct understanding yeah superintendent conway i think we landed on the 0.5 because the other one is a 0.25 and a 0.75 for those two below proficiency levels when there's only one below proficiency level in those three level tests then essentially merge that into a 0.5 and that gets you uh scoring that's comparable to the other tests that are using the four point index there could probably be further analysis it might be 0.53 it might be 0.47 if you want to get real precise to try to make them comparable but that's

[01:31:48] where we got there that concludes everything that i have unless there's any other questions i just want to thank you um i feel like this was a well thought out report i felt like you really listened uh I know when you spoke to me at length and many of us on this board at length um and I see some of our um concerns reflected in here uh and I think that it was a thoughtful report and well done and

[01:32:24] that we should so thank you again for the kind words thank you for participating in our interviews and and for being very open and transparent with us Ms McPherson says that we should take into consideration that you made nine recommendations and there are two policy options let me make sure i'm seeing the two policy options yes they are 0.75 to the 0.5 um the policy options i believe are the exception a versus exception b on the el what page did you put them in here in growth first

[01:33:03] you set them out as your policy yeah in the in the slides they're labeled at the top and really that gets kind of in the it's the growth versus proficiency weighting and the exception a versus exception b for one to include el learners and to get into the jail those are jlarck terms in our reports the recommendation is something where we have it hopefully i get this accurate for how a recommendation is kind of a higher burden um we really think this should be done a policy option is there can be two different ways to do it or it's maybe not as strong as a recommendation a few

[01:33:41] A FEW OTHER CONSIDERATIONS FALL INTO THE POLICY OPTION. MR. ROBINSON. FIRST, I WANT TO ECHO DR. NORTHERN'S COMMENTS ON JUST AN EXCEPTIONAL RESEARCH REPORT, THOUGHTFUL, YOU KNOW, NONPARTISAN, JUST REALLY THOROUGH CONSIDERATIONS FOR US AND THE BDOE TEAM. SO THEEPLY APPRECIATE HOW MUCH YOU POURED INTO THIS. ONE OF THE THINGS THAT YOU DO NOT not have a recommendation around that's most unique about Virginia's new framework is the

[01:34:20] advanced force work designation or 10% of the score in middle schools. And my understanding is, you know, ultimately part of the reason that you do not have recommendation on it is because it only negatively impacted like three schools and there was some evidence that it did positively impact incentivizing schools to have students take algebra earlier. And so I'm just curious over the long, you know, as we consider that very unique to Virginia and I think Florida metric, are there

[01:34:55] any, you know, maybe not recommendations, but considerations as we are piloting this new measure for us, what should we be learning about as we're trying to see is this acting as intended just to get, my understanding, the intent of the board is to get as many students taking advanced coursework as possible. And so we may not have that one right yet because it's new. And so I didn't know if you had any recommendations for how we learn about that one in the years to come.

[01:35:25] You're right. It is relatively unique. Unique isn't necessarily bad. We didn't find enough to recommend changing it or getting rid of it. So I think that's where we landed there. I think we already did kind of learn something. I was surprised in the data that we can only find 266 students statewide that scored advanced, seventh graders that scored advanced on their seventh grade math SOL, but then were not in algebra one in eighth grade. So what that told me was that schools are

[01:35:59] already advancing students that show this aptitude in math at least by eighth grade and likely before then which is why there's so few in seventh grade scoring that advance um so i think and and i think that's you mentioned one of the sets another side there's really only 18 of 360 middle schools had five or more students that fell into that bucket of scored advanced in seventh but did not take an advanced math in eighth so if the incentive is to or if the intention is to incentivize this to happen it is largely happening already i do think it will help those 18 schools and two to three

[01:36:38] hundred students that are left potentially get moved up into advanced math i may have lost my way on your question but i think i think it already kind of has taught us something and and i do know there's legislation too that directed schools to come up with a policy for advancing students in math so there's also a legislative intent to try to encourage this as well so they're getting it from a couple angles and on that legislative intent my understanding is the legislature actually goes further that there's more students that the legislature is incentivizing to take advanced math earlier than just those who score advanced and as we consider raising cut

[01:37:15] scores and other things where advanced is harder you know part of my interest and curiosity is how to get even more students into algebra earlier and if this indicator could do that could be used to do that and again i think we probably don't know enough i didn't know if you wanted to comment on that you are right that the legislative um the bill from last year is the top i think 25 top 25 percentile of math scoring which then captures students that scored proficient as well and it recommends that they would be moved up to advanced math um yeah i'd have to give some thought on how

[01:37:55] changing the cut scores and there's fewer advanced students and and then where that 25th percentile Falls I'd have to give some thought to how all that worked there may be a way to tweak to tweak this to as those things change all right Ms. McPherson yes I want to thank the whole JLOC team not just for the presentation but for the hard work I think what it does show us is that you know this has been a long time in the making and there's a whole lot of moving parts but I think you helped confirm that we're moving in the right direction and that's really important to the board

[01:38:33] And as you find additional things that can be helpful to us, these past the one, especially as it relates to moving forward, you know, our student population, they're like, they're looking at it from, I think, this standpoint, you know, AI is emerging quickly, and they are moving in that direction, and they're looking for as much innovation as possible.

[01:38:56] So as we drill down, making sure that they have the fundamentals, we kind of want to keep our eye on the fact that they really are taking that curve in a whole different direction, which is why we may see some changes as it relates to math and engineering and some of the innovative things that are going to build a pathway.

[01:39:15] Like, for instance, Amazon just put \$1.2 billion for employee improvement for workers to move up to the next skill level. So our whole workforce development, innovation, you know, our new CTE platform is really going to take off. But thank you for helping us with the funding.

[01:39:39] And Chair Reserves, final comment. I thought JLARC was policy, not people. And so I want to say thank you um for actually bringing this to life for us i i think um having served on this board for three years you summed up three years in about 45 minutes um and i think it is encouraging uh the work that the board has done is all about the three words you use um it's about improving the outcomes for our kid making sure there's clarity for the support and the continuity

[01:40:13] and i think what you summed up in 45 minutes i want to say thank you thank you for the team um at first i wrote we we can do hard things and you made it sound very easy thank you for that we're going to end on that positive note now um with that so thank you for you and for the team again very very thoughtful work with that i would propose that we actually break for lunch

[01:40:47] now and then come back for the assessment accountability roadmap thank you all so much

[02:47:50] hey uh good afternoon uh we are going to come back into session um will you introduce our next presentation absolutely thank you uh welcome back um and again uh in the theme of kind of making sense of various strands of work from this morning deputy superintendent highslope and i are going to begin a conversation that will go into tomorrow and into the august

[02:48:27] session around thinking through the implications we're good um how to think through some of the the charges challenges and considerations in front of this body um you heard first from chief coy about important pieces of legislation including multiple pieces of legislation related to

[02:49:07] accountability and assessment. And we'll talk a little bit more about that. You then heard that what the General Assembly rather simply framed as you need to consider the school and performance and support framework recommendations from JLARC. After a very lengthy, thoughtful presentation from JLARC, you see the complexity of those recommendations. And then you have the work that this body has been diligently endeavoring over the last few years. And what we would like

[02:49:43] to do this afternoon is to kind of bring all those strands together as we think about the different components of a measurement system, a measurement system that thinks about students, the 1.2 million students across our system and what we want them to know and be able to do, in our schools the 1800 schools which which those students attend and that a great part of how we measure our schools is in how those students perform uh what they know what they demonstrate that they know and are able to do and how they make progress uh towards towards those those

[02:50:22] standards um we wanted to first um and i'll talk through these kind of first couple slides and then turn it over to Deputy Superintendent Hyslop who will take us through the the details or kind of and preview what we will be bringing to you for for first review tomorrow um what we wanted to first do is take a step back and just talk about how we at a vision and values perspective see these different strands coming together um which cover both these different areas of the work and

[02:51:00] The many different groups that help set expectations for our schools, right, which range from this body, the Board of Education, and our appointees from a governor, the governor, him or herself, the General Assembly, our Senate, and our legislature.

[02:51:19] And each part of that system, whether it's laws, whether it's setting regulations, whether it's how you do measurement, kind of has an implication for this measurement system.

[02:51:34] From the outset, this governor has been clear and has emphasized to myself, to the Secretary of Education, Dr. Jeffrey Smith, a commitment to excellence and an idea that is espoused in her platform from last fall, as well as her executive order, a desire and a belief in excellence, believing that every student deserves an excellent education that puts them on track for success.

[02:52:09] I think you saw this in the JLARC content. I think we've talked about this even a little bit so far this morning, having this deep belief that our students are capable as any in the nation, and how do we think about our responsibility to prepare them to be successful. You've heard me talked before about much of my career has been rooted in accountability for early childhood systems with this idea of how do we organize all the adults to improve interactions so that kids come to kindergarten ready for success. And I think the really important work that many of you

[02:52:48] have done for years is how do we think about measuring students and measuring schools so that ultimately, as we make these investments in this K-12 system that results in graduates who are ready for life and prepared for success. We, as a piece of this, you know, kind of really bringing together assessment, where we are in assessment, accountability, and thinking through what we are trying to achieve, you know, and that is about not only, and I always find myself a little bit

[02:53:24] lost in the weeds, but like the big goal, and I think we heard this from Ms. McPherson and Mr. Hanson earlier, right, is to motivate actors to change what is happening down to the classroom level to improve outcomes for students and really thinking through how each aspect of that system can do that. You've heard me talk a bit about, and when we were out on the listening tour we have heard from folks and we heard this from jlark as as well

[02:53:57] how do we balance between staying the course um where uh there are things that are working well for our students where there are things that we share in common and that the politics may have changed but you know at the end of the day that we we believe in excellence for our students we are not

comfortable with our cut scores being the lowest in the nation and we you know ultimately know that it will take all of us to dedicate resources to those schools educators and students

[02:54:33] in greatest need and to know that those resources are turning into better experiences and better outcomes. I think what is so hard and what we want to start the conversation on today is that there is great complexity here and thinking through how each of these pieces play a role in this is really key. I also, as I described this vision, want to kind of recognize that as this board has incrementally kind of made progress, whether that is strengthened our content standards, which you have in math and English language arts, among other subjects,

[02:55:12] helped increase the rigor of our standards of learning assessments which you have thanks to your higher standards for math and english language arts and run a process to lay out more specific performance level descriptors as we did last summer to kind of really lay out what do we want our students to know and be able to do we also have to reconcile with some of the shifts that have happened since December and whether that's you know we have this JLARC report and some of

[02:55:47] the recommendations on shifts to the accountability system which as you heard Joe reference then has implications right if you change some of the underlying measures ie you change those cut scores that then has to be accounted for as you think about implementing those changes as Chief Coy noted we had a very extensive assessment law that was passed as well as a very clear legislative requirement on competing out our entire assessment system and implementing a new system

[02:56:19] you know that is mandated by our General Assembly and thinking through how do we provide a clear path forward for you all that reflects some of those shifts while also recognizing the trajectory over the last few years to have heard from usdoe about needing to adjust our standards and our cut scores the desire and the success of having a measurement system for schools known as the school performance and support framework that does not say that all schools are the same but actually

[02:56:56] begins to differentiate but also needing to make some shifts in that based on what you just heard from from jlark equally important and you heard as described from chief coy was that you know the place potentially where jlark was the most clear and what was turned into a law that was very directive was an obligation for this agency to make sure that we moved away from school improvement being something that was owned simply by an office or a subset of staff at the vdoe to something that

[02:57:30] was an agency-wide priority and that was a crystal clear law that was passed and signed by the governor and that's why we moved to this slide just thinking about the big picture is so important you've heard me talk before about vqb5 and my work in early childhood and sort of that one of the most important things that VQB5 does is to help ensure that resources get to those early childhood programs that we know need the most support and that you ultimately see that improvement

[02:58:03] year over year that requires consideration of multiple things whether that's the standards and being very clear about what we want our students to know learn in our classrooms and And again, great progress has been made in that area.

[02:58:20] What we talked a little bit about, which is also kind of essential, but is essential to this theory of change, is that this law that was passed by the General Assembly, whether the laws, I should say, whether it's the Virginia Literacy Act or the law more broadly pertained to high quality instructional materials, provides a very clear path forward that goes beyond the standards and says that Virginia school divisions

and leaders must use high quality instructional materials that will help students achieve mastery in line with recommendations

[02:58:58] that come from this body and so begin to really go not only beyond clearly defining what we want students to know and be able to do but then says these are the resources through a rigorous process that will help students get there when used, used well, used with fidelity, and used consistently to meet the individual needs of students. To meet the individual needs of students, we need to know where the students are. And so thinking about the assessment, and as Deputy Superintendent Hyslip will talk with you, we've got a lot of sort of parameters and expectations,

[02:59:32] you know, set on us as we think about assessment. But at its core, it's helping to ensure that there is a transparent understanding of what kids do know and be able to do as this body has grappled with in the last six months of last year making sure that we are setting the right bar for that teaching and learning so that we are making sure that if our students and this is an important commitment to our students and their families right if students meet that bar that they are truly prepared to be success whether that's in college career whether that's within the common

[03:00:07] or they are nationally competitive and ultimately that accountability right is as well important piece of this is really the way in which we measure and ensure it's the lever kind of across the 1800 schools the very different leaders and educators that by having a true north right that is based in standards hqim and assessment that hqim becomes that pathway along with supports for our educators and that's really important a box with a curriculum is not is only a step is necessary not to but not sufficient to actually seeing that educator use that to support children's students

[03:00:46] learning and and and and and development of skills and accountability becomes the very important way in which we say this is how we measure this in schools and that we're ultimately aligning assessment which is how we understand what students know and able to do with how we measure schools and understand what they are able to produce in terms of students learning and and growth over time and as we'll talk today i think it's just very key that we as we present this to you and we're sort of saying coming back to this body and saying here's what we understand the true

[03:01:23] north to be what we and I describe that true north both in terms of less in terms of the standards because that's where you have already begun to define what we want students to know and to be able to do and we're not at this point in time proposing any changes to the standards but when you think about how we measure that success for students in terms of assessment and how we measure that success for schools in terms of school performance and support framework I think there kind of two two sort of versions the student the school version of that that we must get to and

[03:01:56] what we are proposing is how we reconcile those pieces as we as we go forward i know uh i won't spend a ton of time on these values but just to know that hopefully um we can agree on the true north i think there we welcome uh inquiry on kind of how we actually get there reconciling both what with all the work that this body has accomplished, and then some of the things that have shifted in terms of JLARC and the legislative mandates coming out of this session, but that these values can

[03:02:30] guide us now and along the way that I have heard from both sides of the aisle, new and veteran board members, and many of our stakeholders across the state around the importance of high expectation. And I think, Ms. McPherson, you noted that today in terms of setting a standard of excellence and making sure that we are supporting students to achieve that. I think as you will hear and in the

complexity and in even all the recommendations made by JLARC, how do we think about focus and how do we think about what are these changes and as Joe noted that sequence and

[03:03:06] how do we do this at a fast enough clips to make difference for kids but also in a way that we can move the system of 1800 schools and all the many classrooms and educators. Part of our ask and why we present these things together today is this idea of coherence and really thinking through how do we make sure that all these things align. An example of this, and Mr. Robinson alluded to this earlier, is if not, we end up sending disparate messages to the field. So in a scenario where we have laid out higher cut scores for math, but also have a law that requires a certain

[03:03:44] percentile score to be referred to advanced math if you looked in the out years of that of those kind of numbers what it meant is that you were potentially at risk of referring students who were not proficient in math into advanced math right and again that is a fixable issue right because as we sort of raise those cut scores I think we'll figure out how to address that but if we're not thinking about all of the different factors here there is a risk of of not sending kind of a clear and coherent message to the field that reinforces from standards to assessment to accountability, kind of this vision that gets us to this true north.

[03:04:24] We believe in opportunity for every student and prioritizing those students who are furthest from opportunity as the priority for resources. We talked about the needs, intensive support, and how critical it is that we are not saying that all schools or all students are the same or telling them that they're okay. I think as you saw in the JLARC report, while I have incredible confidence and have seen extraordinary high schools across the Commonwealth, I think it is hard for me to reconcile how we can have 65% of

[03:05:00] our high schools distinguished and then significantly different numbers for elementary and middle. And And so kind of it's, again, not a critique of high schools, but sort of a recognition that we probably need to sort of relook at 3E and some of those indicators sort of to be more consistent, you know, in the ways that we sort of look at other schools and that if we're telling them distinguish, I think, as Joe noted, that that could create a risk, maybe less focus on really making sure that every student is fully included and supported.

[03:05:32] if you can score more points in 3E and then that student furthest from opportunity is not given every possible resource to pass that reading or math test, that's the type of disconnect that ultimately could harm our students furthest from opportunity. And last but not least, if you've ever heard me talk about early childhood and accountability, just this idea of how do we make this actionable and how do we think through, you don't change systems by measuring and catching people at the end, you change systems, right, by being very, very clear about what are the adult

[03:06:06] actions that need to change in order to achieve those results. And so as we think through with our 131 school divisions who have, you know, who are, have noted to us a commitment to raise the bar and pursue excellence, who recognize the importance of measuring schools to both show the value of public education in the commonwealth but also noting that there's always work to be done how do we think through the pathway over the next few years that is as focused on the improvement as it is that high bar for excellence and again that's why although uh deputy superintendent

[03:06:46] hyslop won't talk uh as much about that but as we think about hqim as we think about every possible resource at our disposable whether that's the school improvement funds I asked that question of

Joe those resources how do we make sure that as we set these these high expectations that we support all of our schools particularly those that serve our students further furthest from opportunity to achieve that and so with that what I would ask as I turn it over to Deputy Superintendent

[03:07:17] high slope is for you all to take what we um have have compiled for you today um ultimately what we want to ask for for first review tomorrow is a set of of shifts you know for the upcoming year but to sort of what we felt would not be wise but to bring kind of you in pieces right if you think about the entirety of joe's presentation it felt a little worrisome you know he even made a couple of allusions to the kind of complexity to just bring you pieces of this without the big picture

[03:07:54] i imagine you know and there will be tons of questions today about okay but how does this match up with what we agreed on in the past how does this match up with what the pathway is for improvement from this body today but we wanted to do recognizing again this is first review is to lay out my perspective a very practical year by year here is our first proposal on how to make sense of all these things the work you've done as a body what we have in terms of this jlark

[03:08:26] report what the general assembly has put in front of you and us recommendations in some places requirements and others and how to begin to implement that i also recognize first review there might be many questions and additional data or things that you need us to go uh in more detail on that and i know i've asked the team to sort of be very prepared to kind of take down that information and think what we need to bring back to you to support to support that that conversation uh with that let me pause and see if there's any initial questions there and then

[03:09:01] i'll turn it over to deputy superintendent hyslow so as it relates to the vote that we previously so the implementation of the new accountability platform and testing while we have this for a first review procedurally it doesn't change the board's prior decision so we are still on the path

[03:09:34] that the board originally voted that we would be on and regardless of what we do with this it would take a new vote of the board to overturn our previous decision. Yes, so right now we're in the implementation phase of what we voted on.

[03:09:53] That's correct. So we would need to see, I think, a chart that says this is where we are with what we voted on and this is what the new proposed transition timeline would do so we would know and we want to help out the vote because we already voted for implementation do you want to respond to that oh yeah so i i think that's correct i think one of the things

[03:10:26] that has come up um even as we have prepared these resources and begun to look at implementation is that uh there was a very clear uh very very clear true north in terms of this body's agreement on what proficiency looks like across each of those areas right and those numbers are very clear and were shared with this body multiple times um as we look at the details of what that exactly means year by year it does not appear that that is a publicly available document from

[03:11:06] last fall so we we do need to pull that get that out get that for you in terms of again we said four-year implementation true north is are those numbers very very clear from your process that we had with 250 stakeholders right to where you landed and all of that we were able to do that i think the one place where we would need to be more transparent about both with you and the general public is exactly what that meant numerically each year for each assessment and

[03:11:39] then how that would change with our shift in the how we get there there is no proposal to change what we're getting to okay so you're saying the proposed transition timeline matches up with the private vote what the difference is what we're going to do in each of the years well let's have i think let's hold that question in terms of having the deputy watch us through that yes but But then thinking through, you know, what that actually means in terms of the interim

[03:12:17] years, there was narrative copy and there was a set of examples shared, but there's not the kind of the in-between cut points that we're trying to then figure out. So a part of it is to sort of to get clarity on what was actually voted on and what the difference is, is on our list of things that we absolutely need to do.

[03:12:43] But in the interim, certainly until there is a subsequent vote, that is in effect. Dr. Bridges? Oh, no, I was making sure you had seen. Sorry. I was.

[03:13:01] Thank you so much. It's a pleasure to be back before this board. I worked with many of you on the initial development of the SPSF as a consultant and appreciate the opportunity today to present this coordinated plan.

[03:13:21] I know a lot of times, as Superintendent Conway so artfully walked us through, you know, assessment, accountability, school improvement are inextricably linked together. And I think it makes a lot of sense to think about all these changes, whether it's the things the General Assembly has told us to do around assessment, like recompeting the assessment RFP for the first time in 20 years, the changes to sort of the administration and scoring of assessments in Senate Bill 200 that Chief Coy talked about,

[03:13:50] The changes that Jay Lark so artfully talked about as needing for us to consider that I think, you know, bringing all of this together was our goal so we could really think about, is there a way to look at all the chess pieces on the board and synchronize the implementation in the most effective way possible?

[03:14:09] We do know that our students are smart, capable, have high aspirations for their futures, and we need to do our job to meet them there through both assessment and accountability. to reflect those expectations. So this is the proposed transition plan. Our goal here was to try and simplify and streamline all those needed changes to both assessment and accountability.

[03:14:31] And to Ms. McPherson's point, the SPSF changes have not been brought forward to the board prior to this meeting because JLARC came out last December. So all of the how we are going to implement the sort of SPSF 2.0 and those refinements, this is the sort of first time we've really brought that forward to the board for discussion. We have had a lot of conversation over the last several years around our standards and assessment, though. So I think this package here is really focused on the bigger transition roadmap, but also some very specific technical policy adjustments to the accountability system that start to get at some of those JLARC policy

[03:15:10] recommendations and options. But certainly not if you see a policy recommendation that Joe may have mentioned that's not in this deck, it doesn't mean we're not considering it. It's just maybe not one of the initial steps we're taking because we have to sequence things appropriately. So here, we're sort of calling this the measurement roadmap. It's not an assessment roadmap.

[03:15:30] It's not an accountability roadmap. It's trying to think about it all as a cohesive whole. We built this off of, I would say, a set of kind of key principles here that guided some of our initial thinking. But the most important piece here, I think, is that we are trying to create that clear, consolidated timeline for all of these changes, with a lot of opportunities for the field, for the board, to learn about and prepare for the

changes before they take place in the 28-29 school year. So that, when we looked at, again, the changes on the assessment side, the changes on the cut scores, and the changes needed for SPSF, that was the school year where

[03:16:09] the timelines could converge into a single year. Importantly, we wanted to be sure that we sort of reflected each of these key principles, and I'll walk through them in turn on the next several set of slides. So first, in Superintendent Conway, I think many members of the board have talked about this already, really building from the incredible work that has already been accomplished over the last several years. We have new, stronger, more rigorous standards in reading and in math that were adopted in 2324. We have to build from those standards and fully incorporate them into our

[03:16:45] assessments. We have already done so in math. We are doing that this coming school year in reading. So this year is the first year, this upcoming school year, where our assessments will reflect fully those higher expectations that were set by this board in 2023 and 2024. We are also releasing test items. We have not released test items for educators in many, many years. This will help give them insight into how our assessments are reflecting those higher standards. And that's transparency that we plan to continue in future years. And in fact, the General Assembly is

[03:17:20] directing us to do that. We are also, as a result of General Assembly actions, streamlining some of our assessments. We are getting rid of eliminating the Virginia growth assessments, those interim assessments. We're also making some moves to streamline the high school integrated reading and writing assessment. If you remember, there is a standalone EOC writing, which is what most students take. And then there was also this IRW test. We are just going to be phasing that out based on feedback from divisions, student usage, et cetera. And we also know that we're going to be making some really critical changes this coming school year to get assessment results out to

[03:18:00] parents and to the public faster within 45 days of the end of the test administration. We are also reporting test results on a 0 to 100 point scale. So those parent reports that parents will see next summer are not just going to be on our 0 to 600.

[03:18:19] We're going to show them and sort of translate that score into a 0 to 100 point scale. That was something that the General Assembly passed this year as a way to make assessments more intuitive for families. We are also, as Superintendent Conway mentioned, releasing an RFP for an updated statewide assessment contract.

[03:18:40] That is going to be released this summer, and I can sort of give you a sense. Here we say that it will probably take at least a couple years to execute. Part of this is out of our control, though. We're working with VITA. We're working with the Office of the Attorney General.

[03:18:55] We'll see what the vendors come back with. We don't fully control that timeline, but we are moving as fast as possible to get that work accomplished as well and i think you know as joe mentioned earlier the work that this board did to adopt a new accountability system is an incredible strength it is a more effective more efficient system than the prior one it may need some refinements we have those 13 policy recommendations and two policy options but we are going to be building from that we are not taking wiping that away we are not it's refining it is not throwing the baby out of that so i we really

[03:19:33] wanted to be sure that we were considering all of these really critical pieces that have already occurred as we think about what the next three years look like the second piece here that we thought to as

we alluded to earlier is to have one major transition across all of these different moving pieces whether that's our assessment contract the assessment cut scores and the school performance and support framework and are proposing this transition plan that has that 28

[03:20:08] 29 school year as the implement year there's a year to prepare a year to preview and a year to implement um i will say you know in thinking a little bit of mcperson's question um part of our piece here is trying to again synchronize the most significant changes as one cohesive whole because everything is interconnected um during this prepare year it would give us time to bring forward to this board more of jlar's recommendations to begin the regulatory process that we would need to for a few of the policy recommendations that the board will consider

[03:20:46] require regulatory change and that's a longer process that can take a year or more and so we need to begin that we also need to be working during this prepare year on our assessment contract to be sure that we get um we're evaluating the vendors who submit proposals and selecting a high quality vendor moving forward we also want to be sure that we can use these years in the room to help start to preview for our school divisions preview for our families what new accountability changes what higher cut scores look like um that would certainly be the main focus of the 27 28

[03:21:24] school year that preview here um we're hoping that we would be able to provide a full look into the sort of spsf 2.0 as we are calling it without stakes attached so this would be sort of an insider insight look into what's coming down the pipeline before everything takes effect in the 28 29 school year. And while it is not listed here, we also anticipate that in 28-29, we would be under that new or updated contract. So, that work is also converging under this timeline as well.

[03:21:58] I think a few key points here is that this is actually a year faster to get to the proficiency cut score changes than the plan that the board voted on prior. That had full implementation in the 29-2030 school year, this is full implementation in 28-29. So it's same destination, a little bit faster. But our goal here, of course, was to synchronize everything together. I think what may be slightly different to Ms. McPherson's question is what is happening in 26-27 and 27-28, as well as 28-29, and that we would be at full implementation at that point, as opposed to in the final year

[03:22:38] of that phase and plan. So if you're, if I hope that is a helpful clarification, and we really appreciate the feedback on this, because again, this is sort of our first opportunity. We really want to, you know, be sure that we're getting feedback from the field and input as we refine this. And ultimately, this will inform the report that we will be sending to the General Assembly with our plan and timeline for considering the accountability changes as well. To that point, I mean, I think we're committed here to continually trying to signal high expectations for both schools and for students, as Superintendent Conway mentioned.

[03:23:16] This is about being sure that our accountability system is as rigorous as our assessment system. One is sending you a signal sort of to what we expect students to know and do, and one is sort of sending signals to what we want the adults leading our school systems to know and do and take action, whether that's because we've highlighted a great practice, a school that's hitting it out of the park, or a school where individual groups of students may be struggling.

[03:23:41] We really want to be sure that, I can't tell you how many times in this work I've heard, like, implementation is the death of policy. We want to be really thoughtful about implementation of all these changes. That is certainly something that we heard on our listening tour during the first 100 days of this

administration with Superintendent Conway and Secretary Smith, was just, this has been a lot of change. Help us manage that. Clear the guide path. Show us how we can get there because I believe that we can get there. I know we can get there and we can have better outcomes for educators, for students, for families, but we need to have a strong transition

[03:24:19] plan in order to accomplish that. To that end, I think it's critical that we think about using this whole plan, to really be mindful about how we are communicating with all stakeholders, whether it's families, parents, those who work in our school systems, our state leadership, our board, to give everyone the time, information, and tools that they need to prepare for these changes, whether it's the change or a potential change in an assessment vendor, whether it's a change in cut scores, whether it's a change in how we measure 3E. We don't want there to be surprises. We want to give folks time

[03:24:55] to actually understand what is changing, why it is changing, and when it is changing. And that is going to require a lot of listening and learning on our part immediately following this presentation. We already have plans, Chief Koi and I, for all the people that we are going to be talking to in July and August, how we're going to be communicating with different stakeholders to get input, to refine this.

[03:25:19] We certainly want to hear your questions during this presentation, as well as first review tomorrow so that we can come back and refine this and be sure that we are being as clear as possible. And one of the things that I think we really do want to do is by having the time to model and to preview, I think is going to be critical to building trust so that the folks who are being held accountable or the students who are being assessed and their families understand what we are doing and have insight into it before it happens. It won't feel like a surprise because they've already seen it. Finally, I do want to say this is critically important to me, and I wish we

[03:25:58] could talk even more about it, because the whole purpose of a measurement system, it's not a math problem. It's not about getting the right number of schools or the right distribution. It is ultimately about action and school improvement. That is why we do this, and that is an agency-wide priority, and that is one thing that this General Assembly made clear. They have already implemented several of Jay Lark's recommendations to ensure that this board and the agency and Superintendent Conway are specifically charged with taking responsibility for school improvement, not just for designing that accountability system in all math, but for actually improving outcomes for

[03:26:36] students. And so this is not work that is just going to be happening in the Office of School Improvement. We are committed to thinking about how can our Office for Specialized Populations that serves English learners, that serves our students with disabilities, how are they supporting school improvement? How is our Office of Instruction supporting school improvement, whether that's through HQIM and ensuring that teachers have what they need to teach our high standards that this board has voted on? And we really hope that when we are using our measurement system as this kind of foundational tool, data being the foundation of how we consider school improvement, it's going to guide and create the conditions that we need for both division action,

[03:27:15] but also action within the agency. So it's really critical that we get these pieces right so that we can then have this effective school improvement system that's going to accelerate outcomes, especially for our students that are furthest from opportunity, but frankly for all of Virginia's students. This work will benefit everyone. So we know that this work is going to take some time. It is complex, as Joe alluded to,

and I will likely be spending a lot of time in front of this board over the next three years or more um but we know that we can get there and we know that the outcomes

[03:27:51] the end result is worth it because it will lead to that meaningful action that we need to see our parents our students our schools our educators our divisions taking to continually improve student outcomes um so i am happy to now just turn over briefly um can run through some of these actions that we're bringing forward for tomorrow for first review. The first is related to that proficiency implementation plan and sort of having one change to increase expectations for proficiency that's synchronized with these other changes. So that would be in the 28-29

[03:28:28] school year instead of 29-30-31. Same endpoint. We're not reopening what the cut scores would be, but it's more about the timeline and then what happens in those interim years between now in 28-29. That's the first action being brought forward. And then the actions two through five are mostly related to the JLARC recommendation. So, the first is to update the SPSF performance categories immediately this fall. So, we're proposing in this item for first review to no longer identify schools as off-track or on-track in fall 2026. Instead, we would be updating those

[03:29:07] with approaching expectations and meets expectations are the names that we put forward in for first review consideration but i'm sure there will be a lot of robust discussion around that and that doesn't preclude maybe future action on those items but this is one step that as joe mentioned is kind of it's one piece that is less connected to everything else if you change those school names it doesn't have a ripple effect on a bunch of other items in the system so it is something we could change sooner the third fourth and fifth changes are probably even more wonky and technical um one thing right now is that we don't use in high school how we

[03:29:45] look at test results we don't look at recent data we look at the 12th grade cohort and for many students in 12th grade they took that reading test in ninth grade so it's lagged by multiple years and we have other measures for high schools that do look at the 12th grade cohort we look at graduation rates. 3E is based on the 12th grade cohort. We don't have many measures in high school that are looking at those 9th and 10th grade students, and we think that it would be a good change to move for fall 27 to an annual measurement so that we are looking at all the students who

[03:30:20] took assessments in high school that year rather than waiting multiple years to include them in the accountability system. That will lead to more timely, actionable intervention and improvement. We also are planning to bring forward for consideration the JLARC recommendation that would be related to when schools don't have enough English learners to have that English learner proficiency data point. This is what was creating a great deal of unfairness and inconsistency in terms of growth mattered a whole lot more in schools that didn't serve enough English learners to have that indicator compared to those that did. So this is would be bringing forward that

[03:30:58] recommendation for fall 27. And then finally, this is the policy option that Joe mentioned around exception A, exception B. Here, what we are proposing is because this would take multiple years to implement statewide, our recommendation for consideration is that for this year, we would maintain the ability for recently arrived English learners, those are students who have been in the country for less than one year, to not take the reading assessment. That

[03:31:27] That is our current policy. We would stick with that. We would consider, though, seeing if we could pilot the other option in a few divisions to test it out before to see, you know, what happens to the

results. Kind of do that modeling, that preview before it would go potentially statewide and we could bring it to this board for consideration.

[03:31:46] So we just want to get some more information about what this would mean for students before making a drastic change that would affect all students, students in all schools and divisions. So those are the five pieces. Like I said, if there's something that Joe mentioned earlier that we've talked about or y'all have talked about in prior meetings that's not on this list, rest assured, it doesn't mean it won't be coming forward in the future.

[03:32:08] But these are the changes that we thought made sense to bring forward now for first review. For final review, that would be in August. And do just really want to recognize and appreciate all of the work that this board has taken over the last several years to get us to this point.

[03:32:25] I think we are at a really exciting kind of pivotal moment in Virginia where we have built a very strong foundation of our management system. But over the next three to four years, it's going from that version 1.0 to that 2.0. It's strengthening it, it's improving it, and kind of finishing the work.

[03:32:45] So I'm happy to answer questions now. I know there's a lot of content, and I will be back tomorrow, of course, but any questions or discussion, be here. Thank you so much for your presentation.

[03:32:57] Do you have questions? I almost don't know where to start with this, but I guess I'll start it. I do think it's important that we really go back and figure out where we were. And I understand this whole thing about wanting to roll out, not making some principals upset, some superintendents upset, this whole thing about names on track, off track versus meeting expectations, not meeting expectations.

[03:33:28] but at the end of the day we have determined that virginia students are not prepared when we look at it nationally we don't have to go back and talk about the fact that the you know the stats tell us about their reading and writing and the low scores in virginia which none of us are proud of i don't think we have four more years to figure out how we're going to roll this out so i'd like for us just go back look at what we talked about cut scores that date we were going to implement them

[03:34:03] and compare this to we can pull in the tweaks that j-lock said is not going to require a major overhaul but this board was committed to going into accountability and transparency as quickly as possible so we would know where we were and figure out how we would best put the resources to improve so i'm i'm really concerned about a four-year interpretation not really rolling out the cut scores not telling them what the cut scores are and then in 2029 beginning to talk

[03:34:39] about the accountability that we took three years to build so a couple of things let's let's break it piece by piece i mean first i want to just acknowledge that you know putting these things side-by-side is a necessary step for this body right so we can absolutely do that work um you the language adopted in december said 29 30 right and we are moving this up a year right so that sort of aligns very closely with this idea we cannot wait four years i think what is is different is

[03:35:14] how we get there and you know what this body did adopt and is in place until we change it was moving the line between approaching which was a brand new category right that was an interim that was not actually your true north but this interim place right that was different for three years solid across all these different assessments right and moving up the line between approaching and fail basic right you know varied across that it was recommended it was clear and resources shared

[03:35:49] you know from the fact another that potentially that there was some concern about doing that incrementally that was then made more complicated by the reporting on a 100 point scale and some of the other things that were then adopted by the general assembly and so this just to be very to the spirit of transparency like in light of all that we are proposing a shift that would move up the kind of the full move over but would in fact not have those two years well three years of like a different fail basic and an approaching category that was you know you know that ultimately would

[03:36:27] not be passing but would be in those interim periods because of the confusion that would create for parents i think we can go map that on paper so that we can all see that and agree to that i think there's also a sense of um you clearly and even the feedback you all have heard that we need to be much more clear with everybody about what is and what we're proposing so that there is at a minimum transparency but is this would be a shorter timeline overall timeline than what was

[03:36:59] proposed in december um it would not however have those interim years of the approaching which again the other piece that i hear is very important how do we signal each of these years about the true north and so thinking about what we provide uh for divisions in terms of the delta between where you are today and again with different numbers that are agreed upon and were very clear and published in september in october in november and december um and then how do we get that to parents right and and what you voted on was let's move up the fail basic and call approaching and i

[03:37:38] I think what we would recommend is that's a lot of noise and complexity over the system each year to operationalize while you're also rolling out a new assessment system to figure out a way to communicate to parents in schools, but then move up when it is in effect and is aligned with how we measure students and how we measure schools.

[03:37:57] I also think it is, and maybe it's helpful to reconcile the slide that is making the one major transition. I think there's, and the SPSF transition timeline in terms of like what is start of the year versus beginning of the year, because I think what is, what I read, and I just want to be radically transparent about it, is that the proficiency cut scores increase, right?

[03:38:23] So the tests that are taken in the fall of 28 and in the spring of 29 have higher cut scores, but then you have on the appendix slide no change to cut scores in 28-29. So I'm a little also worried that we have not done what we needed to do even in preparation for today in terms of being clear.

[03:38:40] But the idea is that by the SPSF as fully implemented in fall 29 and that what it reflects is higher cut scores in the implementation year 2029. Is that correct?

[03:38:57] That's right. Yes. This is the inevitable year of the data versus when the results come out problem, which is perhaps the bane of anyone who does this line of work. And I fully agree that the Appendix B timeline maybe made it more confusing rather than simplifying it, especially because it does not always consistently reflect the year of the data.

[03:39:18] So what this is intended to show is that for the assessment results that were taken from the 28-29 school year and are released in the summer of 2029, that is when the full implementation of the higher cut scores would be in effect.

[03:39:38] And that is one year faster than the plan that this board voted on in December. That is also, so that fall, fall of 2029, we would use the 28-29 school year data and release with consequences, with stakes, with federal identification of new comprehensive support schools and ATSI schools.

[03:39:58] That would also happen on that same year of data. It just happens in the fall because we tend to release accountability data a little bit later than our assessment data. so i do think it's important that we get the slides back from the time that we voted the discussion because this is not sounding to me anything like where we were and so mr jennings i know you made presentations back then it's going to be helpful we really need to see because we had we were going to implement the scores we're going to be able to see what the progress was we were going to put the support in place and we were going to tell schools exactly where they were

[03:40:38] it sounds like we're just kind of sliding towards 2029 without that transparency being in place and i understand the intent for clarification and i understand the recommendations of j-lock which is why i was really clear about asking them this is not a major overhaul what they recommend are things that we could put in place apparently pretty quickly and stay on track now i do recognize that needing a vendor for your new assessment could be a potential delay you know but then again here we go i mean a contract of vendor or contract gets off track whatever but

[03:41:18] i think we really need to go back to where we were and now look at the recommendation i think that is a fair point and we can definitely bring that back for august and share ahead of time and i think what we'll also try and do to that is since the prior slides that you discussed in november december work and if the board can have some information tomorrow before we go into public sessions it's going to be helpful you can go back and put something together that we have because i do think we need to be able to see that tomorrow before we have this open discussion we can at least do that with the proficiency cut scores i think because the board's discussions

[03:41:56] in november and december we didn't have the jailer report then so that information is not reflected in that but i think on the efficiency yeah and three years of studies what we made a decision yeah what we wanted to do and to your point about the vendor too i do just want to assure you that we thought about the risk of a delay the soonest the new the an updated contract could be in place is the 27 28 but be built in buffer in case there was a delay because of you You know, these processes are a little bit outside of our control.

[03:42:33] So we felt, you know, confident, more confident saying that in 28, 29, you'll absolutely have that contract in place, but felt less confident in saying that definitively, you know, we wanted to build in that time. Great. Mr. Henson and then Dr. Norther.

[03:42:57] I agree a lot with what Haida just said. I also, I think there's a little bit of moving the ball on what the board approved in December and what the goal or what the world would look like in 2030 versus 29.

[03:43:17] So I think a little bit of an apples to oranges discussion and how we're getting there. I just feel like there needs to be a sense of urgency here. The purpose of this is to bring transparency for parents to the public generally.

[03:43:36] This has also helped. Let's just go back a few years ago. 2017, our standards were lowered in the state. Three years later, we had COVID hit. We had the largest decline of any state in the country in our student performance, learning loss.

[03:43:57] The last four years we've been digging out of this, and there were a lot of sense of urgency things done to dig us out of the COVID hole, whether it was the high dosage tutoring, whether it was the

pay and retention to where the teacher shortage has been changed.

[03:44:22] One of my first board meetings was where the superintendent at the time brought forward a proposal to kick the can down the road on the chronic absenteeism problem that occurred from COVID, where we had, I think, a three or fourfold chronic absenteeism.

[03:44:46] that recommendation was thrown on its head and we were able to make chronic absenteeism an absolute priority to get on top of it change it and the data now is showing that because that was made an absolute priority we are back to where we were at pre-COVID levels so you know if you look at this in these tranches of four years what was done and able to solve you know really an existential

[03:45:23] crisis that we had not faced before with the learning loss in COVID it took action it didn't take transition plans it took action plans and it took action by the legislature by governor by the board by all of the boots on the ground with the teachers and the administrators and the parents and students. This just feels to me that we're getting a little bit into this situation where I have a true north and I think the board had a true north and

[03:46:02] putting this in place last year it is a sense of urgency it's a sense and I haven't even talked about the NAEP scores and about how 60% of our minority and disadvantaged students in this Commonwealth in eighth grade are not going to be ready as of where we stand as a Commonwealth today when I graduate from high school to either go into the workforce or to go to college. If this is put into place and so again those kids in eighth grade today are going to be

[03:46:37] dealing with the same system and the incremental change. I think it's a recipe for disaster. When I talk about disaster I'm talking about the kids and talking about where are they going to be four years from now and I feel like a lot of whole conversation that we've got going on right now is about the systems, it's about the process, it's not about kids, it's not about the sense of urgency. And I know everybody is well-intentioned in what we're doing here and trying to get it right, but this is a massive challenge. If we

[03:47:15] can't learn from the examples of 2017 to 2021 or 2022 to 2026, you know, these numbers and years are, to me it shows absolutely no sense of urgency that we need to continue to do whatever is necessary to help us and again the other true north of this is to identify the schools that need the help the most so that they can get it to the kids that need the help the most and to allow for parents to be able to make informed decisions on what's in the best interest for

[03:47:55] for their kids where they are going forward. So I agree with Heidi, you know, I'd like to see almost a side by side or at least have the information of what we did in December. I've got it, I've been looking at it for the last few days here, but for the board, I think for public transparency, to be able to show what we are doing here with apples and oranges and the delay for this.

[03:48:22] And I will tell you as somebody who sat through lot of the changes these last four years. This is opening up opportunity for Lucy to keep pulling out the football from Charlie Brown every time he's kept a kick it or moving the goalposts or whatever you want to call it. And we need to get about the work of what you put in to get this accountability system in place. And again, I can rattle off a dozen states that have done this, have done this right, done it fast, done it efficiently, and I just feel like we've got to stay focused on really

[03:49:01] what matters most here, and that's to get our accountability framework done, our transparency system done, the systems in place to help our students, to help our most needy and disadvantaged students to get to where they need to be. Yeah, I'll try to be pithy. I could go in so many different directions but i'm going to start with norview high school which is where i taught in

[03:49:39] virginia and i'm going to start with as a young teacher having the the new sols at that point they were fairly new i'm going to show my age and how much we used to have to put the sol on the board every day and how marjorie staley was the principal at the time was about i don't know four and a half feet tall and she wore stilettos like this and you listen to her because she knew these kids could um succeed she knew that all the kids were on free and reduced lunch and yada yada but

[03:50:16] she didn't give a flip and she just kept pushing us and pushing us to high expectations we ended up winning the board uh the broad prize which is the prize that they don't give anymore but they used to for helping to close the achievement gap nationally it is a very big deal to get the broad prize um so i'm so proud of my time at northview high school and that accolade i say all that because um like my colleague here uh let's remind ourselves what percentage of eighth grade

[03:50:48] black children are proficient anybody know in virginia eight eight percent of our black children are proficient um and that's in eighth grade uh let's see we have 13 percent of proficient in eighth grade 13 of hispanics sorry our white kids 38 percent and other races are 30 so we don't even have anywhere near half right and and and what what what we're doing for some of these groups is you know we've already gone through we're the lowest cut scores in the country we've already

[03:51:25] gone through um you know all these other terrible terrible things we're now known for nationally so i don't care um i know that we all want to have our act together that's what i keep hearing i heard it through the last administration like everybody kind of wants to have their act together you want to have the pieces in place you don't want to confuse the field i get all that um but we will not have everything right in the next year in the next two years the next three years the next 10 years. Like, the act of school improvement is back-breaking work. I've been in this field a long time. I've worked in charter schools. I've worked in schools myself with, like, this school improvement

[03:52:04] is the hardest thing we can do, period. And so, if we think that we can wait for the test score assessment to come out, we can wait for, like, the data to come in for the 3E framework on military readiness, like, there's a million things that aren't going to be ready, and we have to go anyway like we have to go anyway and so i just feel like um we're doing a great disservice to our kids by not continuing on with the phase-in path i mean you guys my gosh i was on the side of

[03:52:40] like you know let's not rip the band-aid off right and we heard so many people come in and say like it's not fair to go zero to 60 in one year and they were right you don't raise expectations like that it makes teachers feel um demoralized frankly i wouldn't have wanted them to say oh you got to raise you know the cut score in one year by 50 points but i did copy out what we approved in december right so i could see what the phase in looked like because you're right we should have gotten this on our packet and if i'm right it looks like and i don't know how much of a cut score we're doing in this last year i know you guys are going to get back to us yeah we'll show

[03:53:18] you the plan for each subject area and each test because i know that document has ranges showed that's right and so i don't know whether this 2829 is starting from this 2627 or 2720 like i don't know which one of these approaching where y'all are pegging it but if you if you say you're not going to

decrease expectations then i assume 2829 would still be what we initially agreed would be which is 453 so that's saying 425 26 to 453 so there's no way we're going to expect kids to jump

[03:53:58] 53 points in one year so i don't know why we're not wanting to rip the band-aid off in one year versus having this lovely approaching thing that changes yes it changes for every subject it does um that then says okay what here's your north star like we all say when you know the north star like there's your number for the north star and oh by the way if you're in the approaching bucket you're still going to be counted as proficient we're going to hold you harmless for four years just so you can see like this is where i'm aiming for but i didn't get there

[03:54:34] but you know what i know what i was aiming for and next year it's going to go up a little bit and it's going to go up a little bit after that but it's a phased in approach we've already had a prepare and preview year. I just looked at it like we already gave them their scores in 2025. No, they weren't perfect. Were the data probably need to be cleaned? Yes. But all of these things that I'm seeing, and sorry, I'm very passionate about this, all of these things in my estimation are Department of Education challenge. They're hurdles that your staff need to get back their act together. If their data house need to be cleaned, you guys need to work with ODU and help

[03:55:12] them get your data clean pronto. The test, I don't buy it. Like the way that the tests work and if our TAC is any good, and they should be, they know how to correlate a 400 scale as a SOL score to a 0 to 100 scale. It's called equi-percentile equating. So they can do this, and they do this all the time. This is not something that's difficult, okay? And by the way, we shouldn't let the test interfere with what we're doing because the test we don't want to break the trend line so why would we say like we're going to care all about the

[03:55:49] new test when we're going to do a bridging study if we know what we're doing and equate the new test to the old test so that we're not breaking the trend line and that we can compare kids across years so the test shouldn't be like states change tests all the time and they do bridging studies so they can keep the scale comparable. So, like, why are we letting that be the big thing, one of the things that's going to hold us back? So, anyway, I think I've said enough there, but I do want to say that we made such positive high, I mean, across the country, people were like, yay, Virginia's getting

[03:56:27] their act together. And already I'm saying, oh my gosh, they're already new administration, they're changing their mind. Like, that's not the headline I want of this. I want, regardless of whether it's a Republican or a Democrat in office, an administration, Virginia's for high standards, and they're going to work together with colleagues that are on the right, the left center, I don't care. And we're going to continue to do the right thing by kids on an aggressive, aggressive, yet doable timeline. Dr. Bridges?

[03:57:00] I know a few things. The five proposals



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