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- Official meeting video (VDOE, YouTube): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=40GARAVx6h8>
- 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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[00:01:22] we um sorry for the technical difficulties i understand we are back online so i am going to turn it over to dr bridges to restate what you said for public thank you i was trying to that the slide we're looking at now that items two three four and five uh were predominantly from the jlark board recommendations and i understand that number three is a video recommendation and

[00:01:55] and items two four five are um are from jlark and i was asking my colleagues are just welcoming more conversation about those because um i'm i'm assuming large support from the board on those items but i don't want to make i don't want to falsely assume and then number five is as number five says maintain focus on teaching and learning not testing but we had a significant i'm i'm asking about that as part of the jlark recommendation and it is so so then we get to

[00:02:33] provision one here which is the increasing expectations for proficiency and i was clarifying that when we're looking at what the um board approved in december we are talking about a five-year phased-in model and and those tables that would probably be helpful for the public to be able to see um so we are still talking about a phased-in approach um with this category of approaching that gets created for three years and then goes away those were my clarifying questions yes and hopefully we can do a quick turnaround and get something that really lays this out as

[00:03:09] clearly as possible for you all but i think that that is an accurate description it was a four-year phase and plan I would say four year not five because the real sort of 25 26 there was some conversation about what to do and the conversation that the board was to not make any changes starting in the 25 26 school year to not make any changes that would impact seniors seniors that in 2026 exactly so the four-year plan that was voted on in December was sort of starting in the 26 27 school year, there would be this new approaching proficiency category. What it would take to be

[00:03:49] approaching is different for every subject and every grade level. So it varies by test. And students who were scored at the approaching level would be considered as passing for purposes of accountability and things like that. So even though it's a new label, they would still be considered passing. So you would have that approaching level would be in place for 26-27, it would be in place for the 27-28 school year, and it would be in place for the 28-29 school year. What it would take to be approaching is not only different for every test and by math or

[00:04:27] reading, it is also different in each and every year. So that's, I think, partly why maybe in the boilerplate and things from December, they just gave examples because it would have taken maybe and pages to show all of it, yeah. So we will provide that level of detail for you so you can have full transparency into it.

[00:04:47] And then again on that December plan, in the 29-30 school year, that is when the approaching level is no more. It is sunset. So in 29-30, you would just have, go back to having the four levels with proficiency being the scores that the board voted on in September.

[00:05:08] So what those 29-30 scores were ultimately going to be to be proficient on every assessment, that was voted on in September. That sort of four-year phase-in plan was voted on in December, if you're trying to figure out which to look through, because it came up multiple times.

[00:05:25] The plan that we have shown here today varies on the 26-27 school year, and that approaching category would not exist. It varies in the 27-28 school year in that approaching category would not exist.

[00:05:41] Instead of having the approaching category, we would be showing to parents and showing to divisions what their scores would have been as if the full implementation was in effect. So that would be the 29-30 scores under the existing plan the board voted on.

[00:06:01] That's what would be shown to families and to our divisions and our schools. So, yeah, so that's, yeah, we just need a presentation because it's your, it's your, it's your, your show. Thank you. So, I appreciate it.

[00:06:18] Thank you for that answer. No, that's okay. Because I hope the third, so what we're really talking, they're both, the proposal today and the previous board votes, there's always been a phased in multi-year approach. Because I do think when we talk about things like a sense of urgency, I am getting a really favorable sense that everyone shares those values.

[00:06:41] So I want to get really clear about what the differences are in that one area. And then if I could, the final question that I had was about number three, the timely data to calculate mastery in high school. Would that help us with the high school issue?

[00:06:56] Because, you know, even though I wasn't on this board, I watched all that the board did. I'm so pleased to be able to build on that foundation with y'all now but when y'all talked about honesty gap and I

read that JLARC report on what we're doing in terms of labeling high schools right now is like we're not being honest if we keep that this way so will that provision with timely data and calculating mastery help us with that what I think is a kind of a false positive of so many high schools getting labeled in a category when they still have lots of improvement to make? So it may help somewhat, but it's not the major thing that I think is going to

[00:07:36] affect that. The two things that are probably going to most help get our high school data to be a little bit more consistent with how we're treating elementary and middle schools are looking at the JLERC recommendations related to the 3E readiness indicator. And then the second is their second policy recommendation about the thresholds for each performance category. Because right now we use the same scores. So it's 90 points to be distinguished for elementary, middle, and high school, even though the underlying data we use is quite different for those grade spans. You know, high schools have graduation rates. Elementary and middle schools do not. Our graduation rates,

[00:08:14] thankfully, in Virginia are pretty high. You know, elementary and middle schools have growth. High schools right now do not have growth. So there's underlying differences in the data, but we still are using the same it's 90 points for all of them and that is so i think until we come back at a future time and consider that recommendation as well that is really it's both 3e and sort of what are the cut points between each uh performance category that is really going to be the juice from the squeeze that is my second encouragement to my colleagues is i'd love to hear more from y'all about how you feel about the recommendations two through five here and do we want to think about

[00:08:53] accelerating the JLARC recommendations given that sense of urgency point that I think is quite compelling. Beyond, you know, recommendations beyond what is currently being. So thank you all for the clarification. Thank you Dr. Bridges, Dr. Wilson. Thank you very much for all of the conversation, the clarification. I want to amplify a few things that I'm hearing and agree with this idea of urgency. I agree, Dr. Bridges, that we all, I think, share a sense of urgency,

[00:09:30] and we don't want to stutter step. We don't want to create confusion, which would then cause some pause at the local level. And at the same time, thinking about clearly, practically, what is possible doable etc to dr norther norther's um comment about getting just just getting on with it right can we just get on with it so i have several questions um that may or may not be

[00:10:01] answerable right now so i note on slide 21 i believe it is um the proposed transition timeline there's a phrase there that says without the lift of preparing for multiple significant changes every year whose lift are we talking about right um i think that gets to a question that you were raised so so what is the barrier to that um i second point and i'll just get them all out at one time

[00:10:33] and you answer in whatever way you feel appropriate um second point is uh agreeing with a comparison a timeline if we know that our end goal is x and it demonstrates urgency how do the two plans or three plans if there are such right because i hear the one that was adopted or talked about in september adopt there was one adopted in december and now we're talking about this one in whatever month this is right now um so so how do those three plans or paths differ in

[00:11:09] getting us to the same endpoint and whatever the end goal or date may be seeing that visually would be really helpful the slide on 21 slide 21 i understand has some of that information as we're talking about the in june but it's busy right and so it's it's not necessarily easy to decide and then just a point of

clarification um as we're thinking about a four-year versus five-year implementation plan i wonder to what extent any of the preparation work that would be necessary

[00:11:47] So if this board were to say we want to maintain the the cadence that was prescribed in December, can practically at this point, can that really be done? Has the groundwork been laid sufficiently from an agency perspective to be able to deliver? And then the last piece is I think it's important

[00:12:16] for us not to lose sight of for whom this work is most important and who will use the information. Yes, certainly our schools, our local divisions, local school divisions need the information to be able to serve our students. There's also though some expectation I believe from the public and our parents and so thinking about what does any change or what does any plan or change in plan

[00:12:51] demonstrates suggest to the end users multiple and how do we then reconcile all of those things in a way that is going to practically allow us to serve the students that we are here to serve thank you so several questions do you want to yeah i will i will do my best to remember the the multi-carder. If you don't remember them all, that's okay. Yes. No, I mean, I think wholeheartedly, I think one of the biggest takeaways from this conversation is there is a lack of transparency

[00:13:24] about what the current proficiency implementation plan is. And I think we can definitely commit to bring that back, you know, as soon as tomorrow and like work tonight to get that so that it does become clear kind of what are the key differences between this roadmap and sort of what was previously voted on. Is the old path feasible? I think one of the hardest parts of that is that because there is a lack of transparency right now, that plan does have some things that would be taking effect this school year. And it hasn't been changed. So just as y'all are sort of kind

[00:14:01] of, what do we, what is it? What, you know, our divisions, our families, our parents have also not seen those details. I will be frank. And that I think is a question about feasibility, especially for next year about that question of, you know, one of our least guiding principles here was no surprises. So I think that is just something to bear in mind. I think what it has been made clear and what has been shared very publicly is the 2930 version of the current plan, the full implementation, the true north of where are we going for each and every subject? You know, we're

[00:14:39] going from 400 to 446 here, or we're going from 400 to 453 on that test. That is clear. What has not been clear enough, in my opinion, and I think in the opinion of what this conversation here is, those interim years, what it looks like in between. And so that is a key to that question. I think that is a piece that we would need to address to be sure that we are not surprising anyone, whether that's our leaders or our divisions. Before you go to that next point, so have those have those incremental scores been identified and calculated?

[00:15:15] So we have an internal document that has not been shared. What was shared publicly was sort of, I think, is, I can't remember, it may have been you, Ms. Bridges, was saying, oh, in this item, there are some examples. But it wasn't sort of the full, we have so many assessments, as we know. So it wasn't every end-of-course assessment.

[00:15:31] It wasn't every grade. So there's just some examples of that. And sometimes that was even shown as a range for what the scores would be across three years. So it didn't distinguish 26, 27, from 27, 28, and from 28, 29.

[00:15:47] So we need to provide the, I think that is a key level of transparency that is missing right now. And talking about sort of the lift here, I do want to be, I think there is a lift at both agency and local. I want to be clear that one of the things we will need to do, some of these, the JLARC recommendations in particular have different degrees of difficulty.

[00:16:11] you might say. And some of those things are, I think maybe we have a pretty clear option, but we might have to go through the regulatory process. That takes time. That can take a year just to go from the proposed through final, even if the change is relatively simple. It's just the process of going out for public comment, addressing those public comments, and walking through that.

[00:16:35] So that is something that I think on this, albeit complicated, slide 21, part of the reason why we have begin regulatory updates happening this year because we have to begin that this year are not within the purpose of the board to do without regulatory change yes absolutely one or two that have to be a regular yes we can make that there the options

[00:17:10] immediately identify ones that absolutely require that we go in for regular yes we can bring that back tomorrow agency would would take a position telling this board what they believe in writing require regulatory change i think that would be yes and two when we go back and we look at what we implemented i'd also like to be clear about what we said we would tell the public and the school each of those years what we talked about we would publish the results superintendents would

[00:17:48] get it the parents would get it the parents would have it on the on the parent report files and they were going to be able to talk to the students in the home about it they were going to be able to send back their feedback for the scores that they released every year all of that information is that's what we took into consideration when we decided to phase in the parents were going to know what the new scores were as the results of the testing have the opportunity to communicate back to the board and i realized that maybe i haven't left the agency but at the end of the day

[00:18:24] everybody said we were prepared to do it we've been going out talking to superintendents about this whole process talking to the teachers and all the input came back and it was pretty good we looked at the number of comments that we had there weren't that many that were in opposition after we finally rolled it out which is why now i'm trying to understand why is there so much opposition to the way we were going to do it before because we went out to the public and we talked about it at all these different meetings and we had buy-in from everybody

[00:18:57] and we looked we looked at the staff looked at if we issued this test and these questions and the public voted on the questions of where the cut scores would where the cut scores should be based upon all of these community groups that we put together all the focus groups that we put together We came up with the scores after all of that.

[00:19:21] Let me let me pop in on the sort of the with with with the lift question and to that very point, Ms. McPherson. So if you go back, right, sort of the biggest lift here is around thousands and thousands of educators being clear on what proficiency looks like and how that is different from the past.

[00:19:43] and just to kind of go back to work that has been done you you first have to revise and strengthen your standards right you have to be very clear about what students know and be able to do and as many of you know particularly those educators that's many many pages of content right and then as as you all are familiar and if you go to the website and look at the august and september content from last

year in, you know, in sort of under the oversight and with support from our TAC, right, which is, as Dr. Northern noted, kind of the group that supports doing this in a fair and

[00:20:22] consistent way. They did exactly that, right? They took our standards. This group, which involved more than 250 folks, which represented educators, subject matter experts, as well as community members for the first time, then went through and they looked at the rigor of those questions, which are now more rigorous because of the standard as deputy high slop noted i think there's an open question around the transparency around when standards are adopted versus when they fully appear in tests right because of you need to field test and do that so this even sort of whether or

[00:20:57] not we've been clear there but the math tests for last year fully reflect the revised standards and the higher rigor point they are still because we field tested last year ela will not fully reflect that until this year and those cut scores that you then voted on i believe it was first review in august final review in september reflect what that difference looks like they reflect the entirety of that difference right between where we are today and the true north they don't necessarily reflect the incremental so if your true north your previous you know passing is 400

[00:21:36] your true north is 445 like it sort of reflects the difference there not the 415 the 425 the 435 right with the the confusion our concern on the from the lift perspective in and and why we are proposing the shift in terms of the multiple significant changes is that to really equip system, the thousands of different educators across the system and those that support those educators, that, you know, there is not a precise understanding and to get everybody to understand

[00:22:10] how you would need to move towards that. Now, still the most important thing is the true north. What does the 445 look like in terms of what specific kids, whether that's reading as a fifth grader or the algebra one as a seventh or eighth grader um and then you that is to me the biggest lift right so that you are actually making sure that you sort of from evaluating where your kids are at the beginning of the year understanding where they're strong where the deficits or the gaps excuse me and how to sort of organize that day-to-day to get those kids across that finish

[00:22:46] line i think part of the premise of having higher cut scores and why i think there is so much urgency to echo mr hansen's point is that you have to know exactly what that looks like and how much a kid needs to know and be able to do that is the biggest lift and i think you know we're you know uh prepared to support that conversation this year i don't know that we're prepared to be able to describe the difference between a 415 and a 425 just to be totally candid but i think we're prepared to describe that difference this year prepared as you all know to say here are the literacy high quality instructional materials here the math high quality of instruction materials to support

[00:23:26] it's to get there um but that that to me is is is the biggest lift i think what we're proposing be you know is is twofold and again this body might not ultimately agree with that is that there's a lot of noise and the kind of difference across these interim steps um versus saying here's what that difference looks like in terms of what students need to be you need to know or be able to do but we move up then a year to kind of to get there and that is a much bigger lift than some of the things you heard this morning around um accountability there there will be things that

[00:24:04] are not lifts but will be hard to deal with so if you think about with dr bridges notes i don't know this is a lift but i think we're going to get some pushback if you have 65 of high schools are distinguished today and you're going to ultimately reset that threshold which again we get numbers we

have two years of results we look at 3e we fix 3e in a year we bring modeling to you next spring there's not a lift per se for school divisions there will be some changes in what they do because of 3e but there will be you know some pushback as you go to a more normalized distribution that will not say that 65 of high schools are doing that so there's sort of the real lift

[00:24:42] related to the most important thing which is raising these cut scores and setting the expectation and then there's the other pieces related to jark some of which will require some shifts in behavior whatever we say is different for 3e that will be some changes for high schools um and some of it will be around it's a fairly easy change for the department to make but it will still uh you take some time for school divisions to understand and be able to communicate to their i really do now get off my being away in just a minute i'm gonna have to go to something for a

[00:25:16] face. I don't understand why somebody we put in a classroom that we say is capable of teaching fourth grade reading and fourth grade math, they have a set of materials that they can't get those students to perform. We got here because I think we just we got caught in a lot of mush.

[00:25:52] this is about teaching a teacher materials a student you got them for like six hours the more layers we put on top of that i think the more it becomes a heavy lift but that's unfortunate these parents place these kids in the care of the school system for a certain number of hours and the goal is materials teach you got it sure there gonna be some that are falling behind but that's

[00:26:29] once we figure out where those problems are, that's where I say we put the resources and we figure out, is it a teacher? What's the student? What's the parent? I think you have to stop and just say, we got to get about the business of teaching. We got too many layers on top of basic education and students are falling further and further behind. And I really appreciate the difficulty it is at this point and where you are and what you have inherited.

[00:27:08] I think what this board is saying is that the chips are going to have to fall where they got to fall. We got to figure it out. We're just done with waiting. Implement it. Let's see what happens and let's put the resources where they need to be. That's my bottom line because here's the opposite of that. If we take this new system and we go to 2029 and we're not absolutely sure where the problems are. We just wasted another four years. And we're going to be right back here

[00:27:43] talking about, oh, now we need another system because that didn't work. The sooner we figure out where the problem is, no matter how difficult this is, the better we're going to be. I appreciate your passion and commitment to that. And I think one of the things that I want to just clarify to you a little bit, I think, again, that absolutely the scores that this board voted on in September would be a huge monumental improvement for raising expectations

[00:28:16] for Virginia students. I want to spend the next year focused on that, not focused on approaching this like ephemeral thing that is changing each and every year. I want to be sharing with our educators to prepare them for the change that is coming to actually get there. And I think by, in some ways by having this approaching level that is it's confusing it's an approaching level that is counts as passing like what does it's approaching proficiency but yet it is counted as proficient that's confusing and that's not the point where we want to get teachers and lead and

[00:28:50] our kids we want to get them to what this board voted on in 29 30 that is what I want to focus on and I think that by having in 26 27 and 27 8 those those prepare and preview years that's what would be

doing we wouldn't be sharing so here's how your student did and here's what approaching means and it's going to be different next year it would be here's how your student did and here's what it's going to look like when we raise the bar period it is just focusing on that i understand

[00:29:26] i understand your passion too yeah but i'm saying that's why i didn't have a problem on track off track because you're either on the track or you're off the track you see what i'm saying yeah you get it yeah okay i'm going to call on mr robinson dr lord thank you well first of all on the recommendations two through five before going back to one i want to um i commend the urgency to get uh fixed as quickly as possible those changes that will make the system better the already strong

[00:30:02] system to this board got in place better without going through the regulatory process and i want want to double down on the recommendation to come back to us with where do the other recommendations fall because I think some of them like the high school recommendation number five on 3E is just going to make systems so tremendously better even just signaling to the field sooner that we're getting the regulatory process going even if we can't get it in place because of technical reasons yet I think would bring a lot of value to the field and then the ones that are more in the middle maybe just go ahead and name. Hey, we don't know yet. Because then on those ones, maybe we could

[00:30:39] signal, okay, well, how can the board help? Or how can a committee of practitioners and the board help figure out solutions over the next couple of years on those? But that would just be great signaling to the field. Question before my comment on number one, if in 26-27 this year, we were to move to what the board already recommended or already voted and passed um if we were to do that would there still be are there any blind spots we have on standard setting

[00:31:17] or having the right data in place or anything that would prevent you from getting to your recommendation to have full implementation by 2029 if we were to at least do this board's recommendation for going ahead and raising having urgency with raising the standards this year standard i mean the cut scores this year i think from a technical standpoint nothing it's mostly just on the communication side because again we really have it found i think discovered in this conversation the lack of understanding about what exactly 26 27 looks like for each and every

[00:31:50] assessment um thank you well my my thought is that the um you we are already changing a lot a lot of things in 26-27. We're moving on with urgency on these SPSF changes that we can get done. We are streamlining assessments per the legislature's push. We are implementing for the first time the higher standards in ELA per prior recommendations. Your team per your push is moving on getting out the assessment results sooner and moving it to a zero and a hundred scale.

[00:32:21] So all that to say, there's just a ton of changes happening in 26-27. So this idea that we're not making any shifts, like one big shift in 28, 29. I don't buy that one because we're already making a lot of shifts in 26, 27. And I think we're just valuing the other shifts over the cut scores. And I would promote having at least as much urgency on the cut scores as the other changes. One of the things I loved about this presentation was your focus on these values that can guide our conversation next couple years I love the values that proposed

[00:32:57] and I think we're just valuing focus and simplification over high expectations opportunity for every student and actionable improvement and I'd like to see us consider you particularly given where we are in the nation with 8% of our black students proficient and other metrics name to have urgency the

signal the field that we're not gonna do the Charlie Brown thing we are going to that there's no chance that we're gonna change our mind two or three years from

[00:33:33] now we are moving to higher cut scores with urgency and if there were you know what I do hear and value the concern about this approaching piece being confusing and the communication piece being hard and so you know just as a consideration I wonder if there's a compromise possibilities out there to move with urgency on doing exactly what the board has already stated for 26 27 you're moving with greater urgency in this proposal to move towards full

[00:34:11] implementation a year earlier so so are there you know with discussion and a lot of people's ideas other than my own ways to urgently go ahead and raise the cut scores whether it's to the 27 28 level or to the 26 27 level like this year to and if we don't like this approaching if we think too confusing for the field there's got to be ways to still move to higher cut scores this year and not have to do that category because I do understand the desire not to have four shifts four years in a row

[00:34:45] but I guess my broader point is we can move to two shifts instead of four shifts and have a lot more urgency towards higher expectations sorry the final point there is that the other value that we said is instructional coherence I think right now there's a lot of instructional incoherence you know as we happening and just moving to higher cut scores will help the field understand those incoherencies and misalignments with greater specificity and experience. And I do want to have an urgency towards the field experiencing cut scores that are no longer the lowest in the nation

[00:35:23] to help us experience what it's going to take to move towards those richer student experiences our Virginias deserve. So I'm appreciating very much Mr. Robinson's observation about compromise. I mean that's resonating with me as an opportunity to explore.

[00:35:46] I also, in that vein, I'm thinking about. So if our the ultimate, one of the ultimate goals of having scores to begin with is to be able to identify those students who need the most resources, the schools and the students who need most resources.

[00:36:06] So as we're thinking about introducing cut scores at whatever cadence it may be, for me, a question is, If that cadence is, whether it's annually that we introduce new cut scores or increasing incrementally increasing cut scores, or we wait until whatever period of time, what are the mechanisms that we can have in place to ensure that even throughout the process as we're moving incrementally, perhaps, to ensure that those resources are going to the students who need them the most? So because I hear that as maybe the fear or the concern,

[00:36:44] that we're not getting to our students the resources that they need to be able to move them forward in their learning journey. I appreciate that. And I think that is an important point to make as well here is that regardless of any modifications to this roadmap, we are continuing the accountability system in each and every year. So we will have SPSF. We are giving school ratings. A lot of times when states do this type of work, they pause things. They they maybe say let's like put things like let's not do that so every year um so this fall we'll

[00:37:22] be identifying new targeted support and improvement schools those are our schools that have struggling individual groups of students whether that's english learners black students economically disadvantaged students that's happening this fall that will happen next fall as well it will happen the fall after that it's every year we do that so whether the cut scores go up or don't we will be identifying those

schools, which I think gets to especially our students furthest from opportunity. We'll also say that all schools that are federally identified, so if you're in targeted support, if you're in additional targeted support, if you're in comprehensive support, and we already

[00:37:59] have a number of those schools right now, they are all eligible for additional funding through the federal grant for school improvement. So, we as an agency set aside a portion of our Title I funds and only divisions and with those schools are even eligible for the funds so those resources will also assuming congressional appropriations continue for title one those resources will be available each and every year and is something that our team will be directing to the schools that have those identified schools in addition i think as part of this new charge we have from

[00:38:37] the legislature from jlarke to have agency-wide school improvement i think when we're thinking about how are we implementing hqim we want to be sure that hqim implementation is strongest and like effective in those schools that are federally identified when we're thinking about in the special education office how are we working with school divisions are we are we prioritizing our divisions that have identified schools that work is underway now we have a new senior advisor for school improvement that's helping us think through that um and so i think that is a piece of this

[00:39:11] work of regardless of timeline on that is happening and that is happening starting this year and will continue forward chair takes prerogative to jump in if that's okay um so i've as i've been listening in i think it is uh important we've used the word uh true north and i think the question is true north for who um and i am sitting here as both a parent and as a school leader and you know all I'm looking at is if I have a kid and this is where the conversation happened last year was

[00:39:48] really the impact on high school kids and if you I actually have two kids who are going into ninth whoa you're right are we connected I have two I do have two uh students who are going into ninth grade and I'm thinking for my ninth grader when two ninth graders when the stakes are so incredibly high in terms of preparing them for college and career. What is the standard? And

[00:40:22] that's really where the conversation started. And that's where we said we have to make it very clear where it was both support and clarity for parents, for administrators, and for kids. What gives us confidence at the end of fourth year, we are putting our kids out in the world and they are ready to be competitive in college and career in their life pursuits.

[00:40:45] So this feels very personal to me, having ninth graders going into high school. That being said, what I'm thinking as a principal of a school, honestly, I'm thinking about what is proficient. Like that's where my true north is right now.

[00:41:03] And I'm trying to figure out what I need to do today in the summertime when everyone else is at the beach, How am I preparing my teachers, my staff, when they come back in the fall to get to proficiency? And what I appreciate about what we've done, and we have done tremendous work over three years, and so I do not want that to be taken away.

[00:41:26] High quality instructional materials, high quality standards. We have done major, major work. And so for the field to have high quality instruction materials, have high standards, Going into this year, we are going to get the feedback that we need to decide to determine whether or not Virginia's kids are on track to be competitive, not just in Virginia and not just in the country, but in the world.

[00:41:50] That's, I think, what we're looking for. And when I oh, gosh, somebody is touching the lights. some jumping jacks the first yeah we're still here um i think what it is really a sign

[00:42:22] get out your guitar yeah okay um so i i am uh i think i want us to as a body to be very clear uh that this is a work session that we are collecting information so that we can be as informed as possible as we go into tomorrow and in future conversations the point that we are having i think the most um questions about is around the proficiency cut scores and making sure that we as

[00:43:00] the current state board of education are incredibly clear about the the decision we're making the clarity to the field to parents to everyone around how are we going to make virginia the best in the country like that to me is that's where we are um trying to get some clarity around and i i want to just really um echo a point that dr northern made there's intent and there's impact the intent is we want high standard the impact is there's there there's some work that needed to happen from

[00:43:38] september to november to december that now the team has tried to do and so i want to applaud the team for trying to make sense and you know listen and to take into it in to account jlark um so but but we are trying to do three different things from my perspective trying to get clarity around proficiency cut scores and the timeline for implementation we're trying to take the advice for jlark and make sure that it makes sense in the timeline that has been um outlined and we

[00:44:13] are trying to manage feedback from everywhere feedback from stakeholders um a new composition of the board and i go back to what i said earlier is we can do hard things um and this is not easy it is it is hard but i think all of our students deserve us to do the hard work to make sure that they're set up for success and we don't have time to delay um we we do have to act with urgency so what i i want us to make sure we are clear on what we are talking about i also want to be clear

[00:44:49] on what actions are we taking or not taking but also clear feedback to superintendent conway is that right now we do need some more information and clarity to make sure that this whole body is clear about what has already been approved because it lives our values of urgency accountability of support um i feel incredibly encouraged that the spsf is in place and schools are going to get the feedback that they need to make the best decision parents are going to get the feedback

[00:45:27] they need to make the best decisions. So that is progress. And I think when I see the one through five, it's like three of them are covered in the JLARC conversation presentation we made. And I think there was clear support or consensus around one. And then the high school just got kind of thrown in there. And so I think what, one, I want to make sure that we are clear on exactly what we

[00:45:58] are debating, deciding, voting on. But right now, when it, the point of confusion right now is around the proficiency, the implementation, the timeline. And my sense is, at least based on the information we have right here, we don't have it clearly laid out for this body to, in order to really thoughtfully make sure that we are sending the right signal to our key stakeholders. And so I

[00:46:32] want to, you know, see where you feel about that, Superintendent Conway. But then I do have some questions about, and this is something Dr. Bridges raised earlier, about what first and final review. so I'm going to actually ask Deb to help me out in a minute but when you hear that the kind of like what are we what are we talking about what are we deciding where is their consensus how is that um I'm gonna say landed on you Superintendent Conway oh yeah I mean uh thank you uh Board President

[00:47:08] Ashton and I appreciate um the the summary there um I will note that this was uh intended initially to be just a preview there's actually a little bit of content on each of these five items for tomorrow um so this is feedback for us on the the danger of a little information um uh but in all in all seriousness um uh what this conversation has made very clear is um you know is absolutely the need to be um very specific around each of the recommendations for which there is some underlying

[00:47:47] content in your in your packets i would say the other piece of of of of useful feedback here is just a recognition of um how we can do a better job of pulling particularly in a place where we have uh a different mix of when folks were here and when folks were not like all although much of this content is available on the board of education website just we can do a better job of pulling that sort of the relevant content because i know there's a lot of information so that um as as dr bridges note we just sort of say okay all the meetings last year here's what you

[00:48:24] all agreed to in august after the process that miss mcpherson described around laying out what the true north is in terms of these cut scores and then here's what you decided uh uh in december And just so that there is a thinking in how we reach more into the past and don't just make the assumption because it's on the website that everybody's on the same place.

[00:48:48] I think that's another key way in which we we can improve the other just piece that I will note. and I appreciate everybody's both strong, you know, sort of strong moral commitment to kind of to urgency. I also just want to acknowledge, even though it was complicated, we did feel an obligation to kind of bring a bigger picture. I think we maybe needed to break this down into more discrete pieces. But the reality is, is that this JLARC result, these came out and like there

[00:49:25] are very big operational implications in terms of where you draw those thresholds, right, that that will affect schools you know uh there are uh very big implications around the assessment rfp and it's just more than an rfp it is a requirement that as per the law uh or per the general assembly that we have to be uh have you know completed this current contract no later than july january 1st of 2028 and so it is in law that's not just a nice to have a recommendation that we have to do that

[00:49:59] and um you know and i don't want us you know and that we had a very complicated many many page assessment bill that was passed and so i don't want there to be any interpretation that um that presenting some of these other factors which are more systematic in nature um you know is somehow a distraction from the very very important work of the cut scores but these are legal obligations that as an agency and as an agency head that we are accountable for and so i just i want just to sort of restate that and i'm not saying that anybody is accusing that you

[00:50:36] know at this at its core this work is absolutely about kids but it's also about making sure that we are implementing the laws right and and this is the one job i've had in which i've had many many bosses but i have a governor as a boss i have a secretary of education i have this board and i i have 40 senators and 100 delegates, all of which to various formats, not to mention, you know, kind of our partners who ultimately make this happen in our 131 school division.

[00:51:06] So this has been very helpful. I think we can be more clear, but just wanting to note that part of why we wanted to do this work session, bring these pieces together, was that this is what ultimately what we have to execute on. What I think we will definitely do before sending it back to you, board president, is is to just get really clear on what changes and what doesn't related to the slide on the proficiency score so

that you understand here's what you approved or didn't approve in december again no change on what those final expectations are right we can put those let's get those in writing

[00:51:46] in in whatever document we share with you tomorrow and then here's what will be different um you know we'll have different perspectives on it i i and again understanding as dr northern noted the difference between intention and impact i i would say you know personally having spent as much time as i have in virginia where the governor changes every year i think getting to the full true north in 2029 i thought that there might be a little bit more excitement about today than was received okay message received feedback is a gift in whatever format it comes in but the idea of sort

[00:52:22] of getting to that number that this group voted on a year earlier uh you know it's like when the cat brings the dead mouse and you're not really that excited about it um but would be so that we could you know in some ways you know be there to support that not have that be an election year and have some of what the noise of the last few months is also related to a transition and i've been through multiple governors in multiple states and no matter who you are and how long you've been there you know with those transition comes you know a little bit of inherent noise and chaos so um again you know that was our way of showing respect for urgency um it didn't land in the way

[00:53:01] that we exactly thought it would um but let us sort of get these two things on a piece of paper a couple piece of papers for tomorrow and then to note um let's figure out what you need to find out and kind of first versus a final review as we go into tomorrow um thank you for those comments and And I do want to thank y'all for the theory of change and really sort of pulling back and trying to make sure folks understand how all these pieces fit together.

[00:53:31] Because I think sometimes we talk so much about one particular area and we don't think about all the things that have to get into place in order to move the needle of accountability. So I do greatly appreciate that. I wanted to comment on something that you said, Dr. Conway, and now we've lost it in the thoughts.

[00:53:54] Oh, I think where I would like clarity from the discussion of the board is, to your point, you brought forth a plan that accelerated and kept the same final year for cut scores as the board voted on.

[00:54:10] And so I think we're just talking about those two middle columns and the specificity of when to when to start bumping things up. And so I would really value hearing from folks what the implications of that is. It's kind of like our lunchtime conversation. I hear about 98 percent agreement on this board.

[00:54:29] And I think we're really just talking about some very technical updates that I would appreciate hearing from board members about what does this mean if we do or don't shift the basic, create the temporary category. That's not crystal clear to me.

[00:54:45] All the rest of it, I'm fully on board with. And so I would appreciate hearing from folks as well as the experts in our department about what those implications are. Absolutely. I think that that's a good summary all around. You know, the comments that you made as bridges as well as President Ashton and Superintendent Conway.

[00:55:03] And I will also say, I mean, maybe this is getting to your question for Deb there at the corner, is part of why we wanted to bring this for first review as well is we want to also hear from the field about this idea. Because they have not also been asked that question directly of do you like for 26, 27, 27, 28, is this approaching proficiency level?

[00:55:27] Would you rather? This is really a question. I actually think there's a great deal of agreement around wanting to give full divisions and parents a preview or a look on what higher standards look like in those years. And it's a question of how. And I think we should be. This is a question that our board should debate rigorously.

[00:55:47] Feedback is a gift, as Superintendent Conway says, but also that we need to hear from our educators, our parents, our division and school leaders, our state senators and our state delegates. Like we want to hear from everybody so that we can then come back in August with a revised, if needed, proposal that reflects all that feedback or at least say, here's what we heard, good, bad and in between.

[00:56:12] Oh, if you look at the U.S. Department of Education in 2022, mapped out our cut scores compared to anybody else. Virginia here, way at the bottom, we're at 218. Efficient is 249.

[00:56:30] So that's the delta, about 31 points. Personally, the reason I wanted, personally, a phase-in of multiple years is because I don't think that you can make that big of a jump that suddenly.

[00:56:46] I think that it's fair to say, like, this year we're going to bump it up five. We're going to bump it up another five. We're going to bump it up another five. You know what I mean? Trying to get from there to there is going to demoralize, I think, a lot of our educators to see that we expected that much in one year.

[00:57:03] I feel like if we delay cut scores and weakens momentum, like we've got momentum, I feel like it takes away some of the incentive to adjust instruction. That's another big one for me. But back to this point, the biggest thing I think is just the delta. Because we're the lowest, we have so much ground to make up compared to the rest of the country that we need multiple years to get there.

[00:57:28] like I just feel like we can't make that big of a jump and we know we're now tied to make proficient and again you know you can go to the department you can see like how much we've got how much we've got to make up so that's to me is um you know and I get it like to me I'd rather give the field another year and I know it's hard for me to say this but I'd rather give them another year and give them more time than and wait on the cut scores like I think we're all saying that the cut scores are important for us to signal that we're serious about this, to signal that we're starting

[00:58:03] this process of raising that, and that, yeah, we're figuring it out to this point of, like, communications. I'm with you guys. Like, it is so important, and if there's not a mechanism for the department to be communicating, like, every week with districts and principals, because, like, they need that right that that communication support so um i agree that that's um something we need to work on yeah the question about the vote was if we vote without implementation let's talk about

[00:58:39] implementation as you talk about fast approaching but we did talk about a symptom in 12th grade students but we talked about implementing scores and i was just looking at some information about So if the students aren't able to perform at the national level as NAEP has identified, what do you think the likelihood is that they can pass an SAT or an ACT? What do you think?

[00:59:10] The research shows that if they're not at that level, their ability to pass a college entrance exam is almost nil. So that's why I'm concerned about delay because if we don't tell people where they are now and move that needle four years from now those kids don't stand a chance so let's just talk about what we said about we were exempting the 12th graders but when we were going to really implement when people were going to be told exactly where they were that's my piece and i

[00:59:48] appreciate that as someone who's done a lot of work on high school graduation assessment requirements in the past and i do um want to be clear too that the roadmap we're bringing makes no change to the vote that this board made around the class of 2026. I don't think the board fully got to discussing the class of 2027 and the class of 2028, because we know a lot of students take our assessments very early in their high school career, and they may retake them, but, you know, they start taking some of these SOLs for verified credit in ninth grade. So we can't just sort of think about our 12th grade students. We have to back it up a few years as well to think

[01:00:25] about our freshmen and our sophomores in high school yeah yeah what the impact was going to be and when it was finally going to hit where it would impact complete fail rate for graduation so we phased all of that in so yeah I think the the specific piece here is the question I think that maybe was not specifically addressed was sort of for say 2027 when you were going to have that

[01:01:00] approaching and the proficient level. What is the standard for verified credit for graduation? Is it proficient, which is our, you know, the true north and gate proficient? Is it approaching? Is it something else? Is it something more like the current 400? That is a, I'm not sure that that question was specifically addressed to the extent that sort of we would need to, to provide that clarity to our students so that they and our teachers, they knew exactly what was needed for

[01:01:31] graduation purposes may I just say um the intent was there was no direct impact on kids on high schoolers yeah that was the intent and so that was the intention well it may not have been you know explicitly stated the intent was that while we were it would remain 400 essentially for they would have the you know we wouldn't say oh the cut scores got raised and now you have to retake or you're not eligible for verified credit but you know again just want to over communicate the

[01:02:05] intent was the intention was no yes the specifics may we may not have fully fleshed out but mr henson just uh your process question for tomorrow just again thank you bill superintendent on way and just your team it's been very very helpful and um and maybe just some counsel with the jail recommendations, and I think there was a legislative session by August 1st, if I remember correctly, and I'm just throwing this out. I don't know if it's a good idea or a bad idea, but just maybe

[01:02:40] for our consideration tomorrow is to maybe bifurcate, because I do sense a good deal of unity and appreciation on what recommendations that they had in there. I know, and I think if those are put out there for first review, it seems like that could be on a glide path to report to the

[01:03:05] legislature on April 1, and then August, you know, the second and final review, and then other issues where I think the board may need to have deeper considerations, and again, I'm not, maybe we need to have a sense of urgency tomorrow and get it all done, but just it's maybe as everybody's doing their midnight work and pulling stuff together, it might just be a way of at least making sure we get what we need to get done with the legislative of work tomorrow, but just an idea.

[01:03:40] No, I think that's a tough one to clarify. We wanted to bring this together as a unified package, in particular because we've already gotten questions from divisions of what are the cut scores this year? What are they? Tell us what they are for grades, for every test, every grade. Like, we don't know. We need to get that information out.

[01:03:56] And so, in order to bring this forward now, you know, we wanted to be sure we would have that vote in August on that issue so that we can be crystal clear with our divisions what the expectations are

this year. The report that is going to be sent to the General Assembly is only talking about the JLARC pieces.

[01:04:13] That is what the legislation mandated us to do. So the legislation itself has already told us that that is just, how are we thinking? How is the VDOE, how is the board thinking about sequencing and timing the consideration of the JLARC recommendations?

[01:04:31] Even just the report that they gave us to be what said? Yeah, so I think part of the reason for bringing all of this together was, again, just that we know that's that theory of change. These things are related, and we are getting questions now from our divisions, from families, from the field.

[01:04:48] It just needs to know what's happening in 26-27 for assessment and for accountability. So we're trying to meet their requests while also recognizing, too, we have this additional requirement of what we provide to the General Assembly in August related specifically just to JLARC.

[01:05:05] First of all, I think you're in month one, week six, I think.

[01:05:17] And all the thought that went into the proposal and your construction of the SPSF, we're seeing, I'm seeing across this Commonwealth already, schools amplifying attention to special needs students, black students, multilingual language, superintendents putting out statements about how we're going to have a laser-like focus on these issues in a way that I haven't seen with an urgency. And I know that's a direct

[01:05:56] result of your, this board's, Ritchie Conway, and other work. And I think on that issue, the board ultimately did what had a student North Star. And as we're thinking about, I'm ultimately fully on board with, yes, this is very complicated and we need feedback from the field in the how. I think it could be construed, this proposal, as getting feedback from the field

[01:06:28] on weather. And that may not be, I don't think that that's the intent. And I think it's risky of us as a board to send a signal that we're asking weather to raise cut scores. And so I've state of where I stand in terms of wanting cut scores raised this year, at least doing two as opposed to only one shift. But in general, I just wanted to name that same North Star that yourself, Superintendent, and the team made possible with the framework as we think about

[01:07:06] what to bring to the field. I hope it's not just, do we do what the board voted on in December or we do this it's it's something that's more into what's it going to take for this to be successful because then that could connect to jlark's older report on school funding and what it's going to take for us to truly uh support schools in achieving this i did first of all my children when they were little got me a t-shirt for mother's day that said it was a life is good shirt and it said let's have full you've seen those because i tend to look at things let's

[01:07:45] half full and it's not a necessarily bad trait is I've sat here and listened to all my colleagues you know I don't care what anybody says when they're watching this as we're meeting together every single person who is here in the audience or on the stage or behind the scenes cares so deeply for our students in Virginia that's what matters most and at the end of the day that's all that really matters. And if it had been a church service, I would have been saying amen to every one of my colleagues. Everybody had great things to share. And we are all pretty

[01:08:23] much on the same page. We're not that different in what we, in the outcome that we want. And there are, there's been some very valid concerns, you know, pro and con as to what we do from here forward. One thing I would, I don't want to echo like with one of the things that Amber did that i was before shaking my head about as a former teacher i do wonder if we do prolong implementing changes as amber pointed out that to me sounds more challenging for a classroom teacher

[01:08:56] an administrator go from one score and jump you know and ultimately to the higher scores that sounds more challenging to me if i was back in the classroom than if we did it like we have voted on in december so i'm open i'm open there's pros and cons to everything i don't think um i think we've had some healthy discussions today and i'm very proud to have been part of that even though i was over here pretty much just listening and shaking my head but um we have some work to do but i think we can get there and thank all of you for your hard work i know you've put many

[01:09:31] hours into it so thank you session that ends us for today and we'll be back tomorrow and we're

[01:09:51] here sorry we are going to that ends our work session uh thank you uh uh superintendent conway staff for your presentations today may i entertain a motion to adjourn there a second okay i don't think okay thank you earned



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