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Virginia Board of Education, Business Meeting (Part 1), Thursday, June 25, 2026

Date Thursday, June 25, 2026
Place Virginia Board of Education (Virginia Department of Education), Richmond, Virginia
Length 3h 40m (video)

- Official meeting video (VDOE, YouTube): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1mkqVFRFa64>
- Board of Education meetings, agendas and minutes (VDOE): <https://www.doe.virginia.gov/state-board-data-funding/virginia-board-of-education>

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

[00:12:21] you down there um it is just a little after 9 a.m and i will now call this meeting to order as is customary for this board we will begin our meeting with a moment of silence followed

[00:12:43] by the pledge of allegiance pledge allegiance thank you it's a full house here thank you all

[00:13:23] for coming out to reynolds uh community college thank you again for hosting um i'm gonna just take a moment to recognize one of our board members today is the last meeting of our board vice president mr bill hansen um as a monument as a monument to his dedicated service the board has a resolution to present to him which i will read so it'll be patient because we're going to read it

[00:13:53] to be patient looking out there says resolution of appreciation presented to bill hansen virginia board of education member from 2022 to 2026 that's four years but it really feels like 20 years i'm sure because we've done a lot of work and vice president from july 2023 to june 2026. whereas it is with profound respect for his professional and personal accomplishments that the members of

[00:14:27] the board of education recognize mr bill hansen for his distinguished service as a member of this body from july 2022 until june 2026 and whereas mr hansen has shown steadfast leadership by serving as vice president of this body from July 2023 until June 2026, whereas his professional work has shown a

dedication to improving the lives of children and families and earned him the respect and admiration of his peers, whereas he has been an unwavering advocate for the transformation of

[00:15:07] education across the Commonwealth, thereby contributing to the betterment of the lives of all current and future Virginians. Now, therefore, be it resolved that the members of the Board of Education extend to Mr. Hansen, our valued friend and colleague, our highest regards and gratitude for his unfailing service, integrity, and collegiality, and professional manner in which he has performed his duties.

[00:15:35] Be it further resolved that the members of the Board of Education extend to Mr. Hansen our warmest, best wishes for continued success in his future endeavors. Adopted Richmond, Virginia, this 25th day of June in the year 2026. With that bill, there's no truer words that have been, whoever wrote this did a good job, about your service, but it says here in your continued future endeavors, which we won't let you go. We'll still call on you for future work. And with that

[00:16:09] Bill, would you like to share some words? Thank you, Madam President. It just has been an honor to serve the families and children of Virginia these last four years, and just grateful for Governor Yunkin for the opportunity to serve, grateful for all of the board members, quite a few over the last four years of different changes, but just really appreciate the friendships, but also just really getting to take a look at just everybody up here on the dais right

[00:16:47] now and everything that was just said in there could be said about everybody here and including the leadership at the Department of Education. So just very much appreciate the opportunity to serve. And just as I told the governor when he asked me to serve, it is personal. I've spent my his whole life and my whole career involved in education and whether it's been in the business sector the non-profit or philanthropy or government service and but most importantly i've

[00:17:20] had six married children who all were raised up in arlington and fairfax counties and 17 grandkids and up until now are all northern virginia students and so it is personal to me and just grateful to have been able to just have a little part in the efforts that we all care so much about and having our school systems engaged in a way that will give our students and families the best opportunities for their their growth and their future endeavors and so just thank you

[00:18:00] madam chair and uh we're helping anywhere i can down the road thank you um first is there a motion

[00:18:23] to approve the agenda as presented. So moved. Second. Dr. Bridges. Aye. Ms. McPherson. Aye. Mr. Hanson. Aye. Dr. Northern. Aye. Dr. Wilson. Aye. Mr. Robinson. Aye. Mrs. Kilgore. Aye. And Sherbrooke's aye. Okay. We're going to approval of the minute. So staff have provided the members of the board with draft minutes before this meeting. Is there a motion to

[00:19:02] approve the minutes as presented? Is there a second? Second. Dr. Bridges? Aye. Ms. McPherson? Mr. Hanson? Aye. Dr. Northern? Aye. Dr. Wilson? Aye. Mr. Robinson? Aye. Mrs. Kilgore? Aye. And chair votes aye. Okay. This is our favorite part of the day. The board always appreciates being able to feature the wonderful arts programs across the Commonwealth by having students perform at our meetings, particularly in the summertime which is your time off. So we really appreciate you being here today.

[00:19:41] I will now ask Ms. Kilgore to provide us with an introduction of our guests. Good morning. The Cavalier Quartet, under the direction of Ms. Mary Sensenbaugh from Lakeland High School in Suffolk

Public School Division, is comprised of sophomores, juniors, and seniors. This select ensemble of advanced and highly motivated orchestra students dedicate significant time each week to practice, rehearse, and perform. Known for their commitment to excellence, the Cavalier Quartet is frequently invited to perform at events throughout Suffolk and Chesapeake. Their performances

[00:20:19] reflect both their technical skill and their dedication to musical artistry. The group would like to thank the Virginia Board of Education for extending the honor of performing today. Their quartet will be performing two pieces: Magical Gardens by Augusta Reed Thomas and Voyage

[00:20:35] of the sun chasers by matthew yelfer

[00:31:06] take a moment to again thank our performers but thanks for all of our students um performers musicians singers dancers there's just so many countless hours that goes into that presentation and then to stand in front of your family and friends is a tremendous opportunity but we are also tremendously grateful so thank you um i have been reminded that we did we had a wonderful resolution for mr hanson but we didn't actually vote on it so uh with that i would love for someone to make a motion to officially adopt

[00:31:41] the resolution that was read in honor of mr hanson so moved is there a second okay great Dr. Bridges? Aye. Ms. McPherson? Aye. Mr. Hanson, can you vote for yourself? Same. Okay. Dr. Northern? Aye. Dr. Wilson? Aye. Mr. Robinson? Aye. Ms. Kilgore? Aye. And Chair enthusiastically votes aye. All right. Wonderful. We also love to recognize our 2026 Principles of

[00:32:16] distinction with that dr wilson will you please read the recognition good morning in april the board recognized 25 members of the inaugural class of the principles of distinguished of the principles of distinction program today we are honored to recognize an additional four distinguished school leaders whose exemplary dedication visionary leadership and steadfast

[00:32:52] commitment to students have earned them statewide distinction through the Principles of Distinction program. This program honors the exemplary leadership of Virginia's principals by offering a structured pathway to earn specialized credentials on their Virginia teaching licenses. These credentials are noted in meaningful professional learning experiences aligned with the school performance and support framework, emphasizing data literacy and improved outcomes for every student. To complete the program, each participant attended a professional

[00:33:28] training symposium and carried out an independent capstone project within their school. For the capstone, principals identified a problem of practice and created data-informed solutions to address it, focusing on demonstrating measurable gains in student outcomes. These exceptional educators represent the highest standards of school leadership across the Commonwealth of Virginia. It is our honor to introduce the four additional principals who have successfully fulfilled all requirements and are recognized as part of the inaugural class of the Principals of

[00:34:06] Distinction. They will become, they are here, I think, in the wings, and so we'll ask that they come forward. Sean DeRose from Fairfax County Public Schools, Victoria Gelbert Culpeper County Public Schools, S. Kambar Keshaba, Fairfax County Public Schools, who was unable to be with us, and

[00:34:44] Brandon Wolf, Loudoun County Public Schools. On behalf of the Board of Education and the Commonwealth of Virginia, we extend our deepest congratulations to each of these extraordinary leaders. Your work inspire schools across Virginia, and your impact will be felt for generations of students to come.

[00:35:08] Thank you for your service. Thank you for your leadership. And thank you for your unwavering [00:35:13] dedication to excellence in education. We'll be back. Just congratulate our principals who are [00:38:40] recognized, but also all of our principals and leaders across the Commonwealth. For many who don't know, this is actually the busiest time for principals and leaders as they prepare for the fall to return back. And so just want to extend tremendous gratitude to our leaders who wake up every day supporting our teachers and our school communities.

[00:39:02] We will now shift to public comment. As stated in the board bylaws, it is the pleasure of the board to accept public comment on all matters related to public education in Virginia. Before we begin our public comment today, I want to share about the manner in which public comment will be conducted. I ask that you model professionalism, dignity, and respect for others as you share your thoughts today. As adults, it is important that we model respectful, civil, and public discourse

[00:39:37] for our students and children who are either in attendance today or viewing the stream now or in the future when you begin please provide your name role or affiliation and where you live in Virginia all remarks must be directed to the chair not to any other individual speakers will have three minutes to share their remarks you'll notice that a timer on the screens front there will begin three minutes in green at one minute the screen will turn yellow the screen will turn

[00:40:14] read when time is up at that point please close your remarks promptly speakers may provide copies of their comments to Mr. Drill right up front the department's regulatory and board coordinator I'll just raise his hand thank you all written comments received during public comment will be collected and provided to the board as soon as possible after public comment you may also email a copy of your remarks to the board at boe@doe.virginia.gov that I have a list of

[00:40:53] remember those who have signed up for public comment uh Scott Brabant I'll call you in order is Scott Brabant uh Kathy Halverson Alexander Halverson and then Dr. Justin Hensley good morning President Ashton, Superintendent Conway, and members of the Board of Education, my name is Scott Brabant, and I'm Executive Director for VAS.

[00:41:25] I live in Lynchburg, Virginia, and I want to thank all of you for your dedicated service to the Commonwealth of Virginia. And thank you, Mr. Hanson, very much for your distinguished service. On behalf of Virginia School Division Superintendents, we respectfully submit the following feedback around today's agenda.

[00:41:41] First, VAS strongly supports your final review of the simplification and streamlining of the yearly accreditation report. We look forward to continuing to work with you to refine and simplify all reporting requirements for our school divisions.

[00:41:58] MASS also appreciates the final review around the use of value tables to measure growth and their transparency and ease of use for both students, teachers, and parents. We also appreciate the final review of revisions to the school construction assistance program that provides greater flexibility to school divisions to access these important state funds.

[00:42:22] We also appreciate the first review of the Assessment and Accountability Roadmap. While there's time for additional feedback and engagement, we continue to support high expectations for all students. We also continue to support VDOE's commitment to additional data modeling and sharing "what

if" data calculations that will give school divisions multiple opportunities to prepare for these expectations.

[00:42:48] We also strongly support the change in the SPSF school performance labels from off-track to approaching expectations and from on-track to meeting expectations, which are in alignment with the JLARC recommendations around this issue.

[00:43:04] Finally, in order to treat elementary and middle schools fairly and in alignment with JLARC's recommendation, we support the reallocation of the EL progress indicator's weight proportionally across all other indicators when a school does not have a sufficient number of EL students to produce a valid score.

[00:43:24] Thank you for your engagement with us and with so many other stakeholders, and we look forward to our continued partnership with you in the months and years ahead. Thank you. Thank you. Let's see. No, Dr. Justin Hensley.

[00:43:39] No? Great. Stance. Thank you. Good morning, Board. My name is Dr. Justin Hensley. This is my son, Kevin. We're both citizens of the City of Lynchburg. Kevin is an AB honor roll student with dyslexia, dysgraphia, and dyscalculia, and like many students with learning disabilities, he relies on assistive technology accommodations to access and demonstrate what he knows.

[00:44:05] For the second year in a row, though, the only SOL he's spelled is mathematics. I am not here to argue about scores. I'm here to ask you all a simple question. What is a student required to demonstrate, or why is a student required to demonstrate math differently on the state's most important test than he does every other day school. So Lynchburg City Schools has worked really hard to implement Kevin's accommodations. This is not a local school issue. This is a state issue. So rather than hearing from me like you did last year, I want you to hear from Kevin today. And so Kevin, tell us how many computers do you normally use

[00:44:44] when you're in math in your regular class? One. How many computers did you have to use when you took your Mathes? Two. What did you have to do between those two computers? I had to balance out the work between one and two. Okay, so you have to switch back and forth between the two computers and that's different than what you do in class. Which of those ways is easier? Using the one. Why? Because I don't have to squat back and forth. How does it make you feel when you have to switch

[00:45:19] back and forth between the two machines during an SML? Because it just makes it so much harder. So you work hard in school, you earn A's and B's, you're on the National Junior Honor Roll Society. How do you feel, how did you feel when you found out that you failed the math as well again this year? I'm mad because I know I know all the stuff on it, just that I don't, not support, but stuff that I can do. So do you believe you know the math that was on the SOL?

[00:45:59] And it's similar math or same math what you were learning in class where you make A's and B's, but then you felt so if you could change one thing about the way that you take the math as well what would it be we did do you have any other comments you want so thanks for listening um if y'all want to review this this is case 26 uh 572 um with you all right now um it here's my

[00:46:33] final request in my 15 seconds after this meeting if your schedule is allowed i invite you to reach out and talk to Kevin first. I'm happy to coordinate that, okay? This is about his experience. Students like Kevin are the reason that accommodations exist and their voices should help shape how

[00:46:51] those accommodations are. Thank you. Thank you. Next, I have Dan Zacharias. Well, good morning, President Ashton and Secretary Conway and our Superintendent Conway, pardon me, and members of the board. I'm Dan Zacharias. I'm Director of the Old Dominion Association of Church Schools.

[00:47:25] i still live in the beautiful shenandoah valley where i plan to go as quickly as i can when i'm done here um i haven't been able to uh be at one of these meetings in a few months i was last in your meeting in january and then in december before that and my oral comments here will supplement what is being what joe is handing you right now um in december you had an agenda item i which dealt with the first and final review of outdated guidance document for the standards

[00:48:00] of accreditation and i addressed the board in december about just one specific matter of interest to us in the guidance document in that meeting the board took no action they deferred it to the future which is understandable given some of the weightier matters that you're working with right now. I understand your plate is full. The particular guidance section that we were interested dealt with, section 60.D, and it dealt with credit transfer from non-accredited private schools

[00:48:39] to Virginia public schools. There's language in that guidance that the board adopted 20 years ago that we support and has served very well. It doesn't seek a guarantee of credit transfer, but it does try to establish a reasonable and academically sound decision-making process.

[00:49:02] And for the past 20 years, that language has been very helpful to us. Even this spring, just very recently, when we encountered a problem with a credit transfer issue that was positively resolved just a few weeks ago. And so this is just a simple reminder.

[00:49:18] Whenever you get around to that agenda item I again in the future, This is a little piece of it that we're interested in and would appreciate your consideration. So thank you for listening to our perspective, and I hope you have a great summer.

[00:49:35] Thank you. I have Banner Slack and Emma Lobo. Next up will be Jen Slack and then Caroline Wagoner are here.

[00:50:01] Hi, my name is Emma Lobo. Thank you for letting Herbert, our turtle, stay at school.

[00:50:22] And thank you for letting us stand up while drinking water. I believe that children would have an easier time learning if they are with someone who has been where they are and knows about it.

[00:50:50] Babies and toddlers can also teach older children. I would like it if there was no rule about keeping toddlers, infants, and preschool friends free. I feel like the learning studio friends can keep the younger friends safe, even without being separated.

[00:51:13] At our school, communication and it is important to make sure everyone is getting what they need. And we like to play with the babies and families and check out the younger siblings that they like to check in with and spend time with.

[00:51:40] I'm hoping there will be more climbing chances in the classrooms. A little bit of climbing space isn't enough. I wouldn't like to have teachers have to keep a list of each one with them.

[00:52:01] Having to carry something with our name or picture would make it hard to learn because if you're having to carry around something, that would be distracting. Thank you for letting us, me and Emma, speak, even though we are younger than most of the people speaking.

[00:52:24] Thank you, Banner and Emma. Well done. Again, thank you, Banner and Emma. You did a great job. Jen Slack and then Caroline Wagner. I want to express support for all my colleagues speaking today about the child care licensing standard and shift our attention now to line 3,014 of the new screen time limitations.

[00:52:54] These proposed standards require that programs get parental consent for everything from emergency medical care to the use of sunscreen and diaper cream, but the department doesn't see it fit to protect the rights of parents to limit children's visual media use. As a parent, I can withdraw my child from a field trip at any time. I can prevent them from wading in water. I could not consent to the use of hand lotion at school. But these standards are okay with my 18-month-old watching 15 episodes of Bluey a day. A competent regulatory framework stops things that are harmful. So I applaud the banning of screens for infants, but this body should use its power

[00:53:30] to put knowledge and control into the hands of parents. Requirements that programs report media use and require parental consent for media use is simple. It's not a burden to add these regulations. I've been an early childhood educator for 22 years. I'm a program owner and a director for the last 15 here in Virginia, and I'm also a mom. I had the luxury of starting my own program where I know my kids will get the care and protection that they deserve. But all the parents that take the risk to put children into our early childhood programs need us to advocate

[00:54:10] for common sense screen regulation. It's the best thing for our young children. Parents don't often have a choice in their child care because access and affordability seriously limits choice. It's not a burden for these regulations to require informing parents of the screen use as they do for other general center policies, lunch menus, or injuries that occur or require screen time permission as required for transportation, swimming, and field trips. Language for those amendments are in the handouts I provided, along with one final concern. I'm unsure what's leading

[00:54:47] to this, but there are seven new regulations around strings and cords in this draft. My experience in this process is things are written and rewritten and often get better and simpler with time. These additions, which are detailed in the paperwork I provided, are in many different sections they're confusing and they reference ages and reference nowhere else in the standards in my opinion these court regulations are more than confusing they're also overbearing there are many childhood toys that would be unnecessarily restricted by these standards i urge you to take a look at them and either adjust the same language or send them back to the ecac for further review

[00:55:23] i appreciate all that have worked on these standards they're good i don't want to dismiss that but i do think it's worth taking another look to make them great before moving them forward thank you uh carolyn wagner uh good morning i'm so grateful for all the work that i know has gone into the standards before you today and i appreciate the department considering and making some of the changes already in previous um i know that we're getting closer and i would really like to see another round of comments and changes the standards forward i'm here today as

[00:56:03] a teacher in a mixed age three to eight year old classroom um my biggest concern at the moment is to is the moment-to-moment tracking of children in line 2250. Anything that requires ongoing maintenance of a physical list is a significant burden for educators with minimal benefit. Teachers absolutely need to know who they have, who's with them, and the maintenance of physical list. Our school, for example, allows children to flow freely between grips. We have systems for communication

and always keep sight and sound supervision, but maintaining a physical list as children flow from teacher to teacher would be a serious burden and create more stress

[00:56:41] and unneeded limitations on children's work throughout the day it's not just in our context though many programs split their classrooms during the day and one teacher might take a smaller group for a project while another takes a larger group outside if i were to split my class of 14 three year olds so that 10 go outside while four helpers stay inside to clean up before transitioning i would need two lists two classes are on the playground together they would need to combine lists or what if somebody has to go inside and get their lunchbox or go to the bathroom i know the intention is safety and this is not a simple thing teachers are already tracking so many things including knowing where all the children are already they don't need a physical list to keep

[00:57:20] track we can trust that our teachers are competent and care about children's safety learning and day-to-day i'm requesting a full review of these licensing standards one more time to delete what we can that's not needed and fix some other things before moving forward um there's a list of things on my handout um but a few things to name the definition of waiting would seem to include just splashing in puddles and having to get permission for that uh definition of staffing would include people who are coming to provide services like ot play therapy slps the use of the term physical barrier and the supervision standard is confusing there's

[00:58:00] seven new cord regulations and there's language that would prevent us from washing children's clothes at school if they had a so um thank you for your time this morning and share consideration of feedback from parents teachers and children who will be impacted by these teachers thank you um neely minton and then derek max good morning members of the board i am neely minton and i'm

[00:58:38] president of the virginia social studies leaders consortium i'm speaking today on behalf of members who couldn't be here because of a conflict with VDOE-sponsored PD. Over the last several years, Virginia social studies educators have faced two battles over the future of our discipline.

[00:58:54] The first was over our standards of learning. Hundreds of experts in social studies education came together to develop rigorous standards. Then much of that work was set aside through an 11th hour rewrite by individuals with little knowledge of our discipline.

[00:59:11] Today we face a second battle. Individuals with little expertise in social studies are questioning decades of research and practice around inquiry-based performance assessment. Yet on July 1st, SB 200 will take effect. This law continues Virginia's move toward rigorous knowledge-rich performance assessment in social studies. Performance assessment raises expectations for every student. Consider the Virginia studies inquiry was reconstruction a success. Fourth graders read Frederick Douglass. They examine the 13th, 14th, and 15th

[00:59:47] amendments to the Constitution. They study voting records, black codes, and sharecropping contracts. Then they construct an evidence-based historical argument to answer the compelling question. This is content rich, it's literacy rich, and it reflects the complexity that defines history and civics. This is AP level rigor for every student. Reducing these complex historical and civic questions to selected response items oversimplifies both the rich content and the critical thinking we expect every student to master. Some have suggested that performance assessment lacks

[01:00:22] accountability, but the opposite is true. There are shared rubrics, common scoring expectations, and common grading scales. These tools allow divisions to analyze and publicly report student performance. We are asking for accountability based on a series of performance assessments that measure the full range of knowledge and skills students are expected to demonstrate. We are asking for rigor for every student. The question is will we trust the social studies experts this time? We urge the board to honor the intent of the law and provide a pathway for divisions ready to implement permissive local alternative

[01:00:59] assessments in lieu of SOL tests during the 2026-2027 school year. Many divisions are making preparations right now. So time is of the essence in terms of getting guidance to divisions. Thank you so much. I appreciate your time. Thank you. Derek Max. Thank you. My name is Derek Max. I'm the Vice President at the Jefferson Forum, formerly known as the Thomas Jefferson Institute. I want to start by thanking you all for your service, and Bill, you'll be missed. I've known you for a long time. Your work matters more than you may realize, and I pray that you are

[01:01:36] rewarded for that effort. Virginia spent too many years telling parents that children are doing better than they actually are. This is not compassion. It's not equity. It's not good education policy. In fact, it's a failure of honesty. And the students most hurt are the children most in need of your help. It is reported that you are considering to delay the long overdue increase in the standard of learning cut scores for another three years. If that happens, Virginia will continue using some of the lowest proficiency standards in the country. By the time the new scores are fully reflected in public reporting, Virginia could have spent nearly a decade

[01:02:12] operating under weak benchmarks that mask the true academic conditions of our schools. That would be a serious mistake. This should not be a partisan question. Governor Banberger has said the right things about accountability. As a candidate, she put it plainly.

[01:02:27] I know accountability is vital to ensuring that our kids are learning, getting the education they deserve, and getting additional help they need. She is right. But accountability without honest standards is not accountability at all. For years, Virginia's test scores have painted a much rosier picture than the National Assessment of Education Progress.

[01:02:44] That difference is often called the honesty gap. Virginia has one of the largest honesty gaps in the country. That gap is not a technicality. It means thousands of parents believe their children are on grade level when they are not. It means schools may appear to be succeeding when they are not. It means policymakers congratulate themselves while children continue to struggle.

[01:03:04] The federal data on cut scores is just as troubling. The NCES comparison of state proficiency standards shows that Virginia students are being given low expectations and their poor performance is being masked. In every other aspect of school life, Gordon, expectations put before students is higher.

[01:03:21] No football coach is telling their team their goal is to rank at the bottom third. The students who performed here today were not told by their band director or orchestra instructor to just try to be on beat and in tune a third of the time. The theater director is not telling her students just to try to get some of their lines right.

[01:03:38] No, they are pushing perfection and the hard work that that entails. I can still hear my marching band instructor telling me to get in step, get in line, and stay in tune. changed my life. Before

joining the Jefferson Forum, I founded a private school in one of the poorest communities in Washington, D.C., where I was principal. There was nothing more painful than to tell a parent who has a student getting straight A's and had performed well on the fairly weak D.C. standards that their student was two or three grade levels, but two or three levels below grade. It is a painful and troubling fact. We need to tell the parents the truth so that they

[01:04:13] can take action. My fear, and I hope it is not true, is that you guys are afraid that these parents will take other options into account. That is not a reason not to have high standards. Thank you. Thank you. Thomas Johnson and Philip Abouzaki. Good morning. President Ashton, Vice President Hanson, members of the board, thank you for your time today and the opportunity to speak before you.

[01:04:51] As I mentioned, my name is Tom Johnson. I'm a resident of Chesterfield County. I'm a dad of multiple kids at Virginia Public Schools, and I work for one of the largest employers in the Commonwealth. I come here today wearing both of these hats. When I learned last fall that the Board of Education had finally raised its proficiency standards and expectations for kids like mine, and they were actually going up, I was highly encouraged. That is what our kids deserve, and that's what they need. But then I read this weekend about the roadmap the department is proposing for accountability and proficiency implementation. The fine print makes it clear

[01:05:28] my kids will have graduated before expectations ever get raised for them. The message this is to my kids and their friends is, your generation can wait. There are additional items being removed, eliminated, or with multiple years of delay without any consequences attached. I'm a parent.

[01:05:49] I know what happens when there's no consequences. Nothing happens. When my other head is a manager and employee, we are desperate for prepared candidates. This is not abstract. We have open roles. We have a talent pipeline problem, and that is both real and urgent. Every year, we see applicants who graduated from Virginia schools, good, hardworking kids at that, who simply were not prepared for what we need them to do. This plan does not fix that pipeline. It delays fixing

[01:06:25] it by years. So I'm standing here as a dad who won't see his own kids benefit from higher expectation this board says it believes in. As an employer who will spend the next several years again working around preparation gaps that this roadmap decided was not urgent enough to begin to solve in this upcoming school year.

[01:06:47] And finally, our kids are students right now and their preparedness for the future depends on a Board of Education and State Department of Education that treats urgency like it actually needs something. Again, thank you for your time today. I wish you the best. Have a great day.

[01:07:04] Thank you. Philip Abuzaki. Morning. President Ashton, Vice President Hanson, members of the board, Superintendent Conway. My name is Philip Abuzaki.

[01:07:19] I'm a resident of Midlothian. I've spent the last 21 years the plumbing and pipe fitting industry i was here last year urging this board to raise proficiency expectations for our students you heard me and others like me you move in the right direction for kids but i have to be honest with you this morning i'm concerned about this new road map in fact that has not raised expectations for years let me remind you about my industry modern plumbing pipe fitting is not a wrench in a leaky pipe my teams use 3d modeling software read complex technical blueprints and make calculations that require algebra, geometry, and trigonometry daily

[01:07:56] to construct hospitals, universities, life science buildings, and data centers. Precision isn't optional, it's the job. Right now we cannot find enough young people who are ready for it. We hire motivated, hard-working kids, genuinely good people who want to build a career, but they are behind in the fundamental math and technical reading they need. We could ask, who told them they were ready?

[01:08:19] a system that was measuring them against the bar set too low that's not preparing kids that's misleading them so when i learned the higher proficiency scores may be pushed back to 2028 and beyond giving schools consequence free years for student outcomes i want to remind the board and the department what this means in the real world with billions and if it means another year of two to my industry loses young virginians to a skills gap we could have closed with billions in infrastructure investment coming to this state we have a once in a generation opportunity to grow

[01:08:54] this workforce but that window does not wait for a hot for longer transition timeline i came here last year asking you to believe in our kids coming back today asking you not to stop believing in them don't lower the bar do not delay higher expectations our students in virginia industries are counting on you so much for you too thank you um amante smith and then angela harrison

[01:09:18] morning my name is amante smith and i am a teacher in charlottesville of our neighborhood um i'd like to start online 2472. i want to invite you for a moment to think about the best and the worst training you've attended in your careers nothing against our department of education but as a required government training ever truly impacted the engagement of anyone or the equality of

[01:09:56] anything as a new teacher i have found this career can be extremely overwhelming as well as rewarding in my experience the requirement of 16 hours of ongoing training has flourished my confidence and strengthened my ability to be proud of the way i show up in the classroom ongoing training provides educators with the ability to connect with experienced colleagues build supportive learning spaces and forge professional relationships this requirement is powerful it helps educators keep learning and growing and benefit students by creating classrooms that are

[01:10:32] safe engaging and rich with opportunities of growth i'm concerned however that in the last 10 years there has been a push towards more specific state required training starting with their pre-service training for subsidy providers in 2016 and then all providers in 2021 now this regulation continues that trend by adding the annual health and safety update course to the required training we beg you to reconsider a recent FOIA request shows that this pre-service

[01:11:03] an annual update led to 203 i'm sorry 237 409 hours of training provided by the state in 2025. what if those training hours were happening in early childhood membership organizations conferences infant toddler networks communities of practice and in the local programs themselves This online state trainings are not how we build a robust, thriving early childhood system.

[01:11:31] Please stop this layering one of more requirements for teachers and trust that there are much more qualified providers of high-quality early childhood training than the department. Please consider the cost of asking tens of thousands of early childhood teachers in Virginia to take a three-hour government-mandated training each year. I know the intention is good, but this is a terribly inefficient way for the department to distribute health and safety information and it reduces educators seeking the training that they might need to improve their quality of care thank you

[01:12:06] thank you then angela harrison morning chair ashton vice chair hansen superintendent conway and members of the board i'm angela harrison superintendent of the david public schools and i'm here today with representatives from the school community i recognize that today you're taking an important step to consider voting to allow our school division to exit the mou

[01:12:41] corrective action plan status when we entered this agreement with the virginia department of education it provided the urgency that our community needed to transform the community and better serve our children our journey towards systemic has not been a solitary one we have benefited from tremendous support and guidance from the VDOE through access to resources, technical assistance and increased accountability. Our school board represented here today by Mr. Kessel Walker, our city council,

[01:13:17] our city manager, our business community and our non-profit partners joined in collaborative efforts to support our educators as we implemented the corrective action plan and became a powerful learning journey for us all. Our external partners, including the UVA work through science of reading and our partnership for leaders in education, Cognia, Hampton City Schools as a mentor division for reviewing data, the Virginia School Boards Association with strategic planning, and the Virginia Association of School Superintendents through leadership development have all contributed

[01:13:55] it to a better Danville. Most importantly, our students and families wanted better. They engaged in a meaningful and robust manner to hold themselves accountable and continue to grow as a community of students. Your vote today does not mean that we're done. We still have much work to do. However, this process has demonstrated to our community that the belief that all children deserve a better education through high expectations, as well as in Virginia as a whole, certainly evident in Danville, Virginia. I would be remiss if I did not thank the Office of School

[01:14:35] Quality, specifically Dr. Ballard and Ms. Britt, as they have become a part of Team Danville. On behalf of the Danville Public Schools community, I would like to thank you and the more than 30 individuals that drove left at 5 a.m. this morning. I'd like them to stand.

[01:14:52] parents school leaders district leaders and school board members who drove to be one thank you thank you for driving five hours um is uh that is that has that is my complete list is there anyone who

[01:15:14] would like to um add public comment please come to the mic good morning superintendent conway and members of the board my name is todd truetz and i'm speaking today on behalf of arlington parents for education a grassroots bipartisan organization with a community forum with more than 1200 parents, educators, and community members. We are committed to educational excellence in Virginia's public schools. First, we want to thank the superintendent and members of

[01:15:53] your team for meeting with us during your listening sessions and for your team's prompt attention to our follow-up questions. During our discussion, we emphasize the importance of parents receiving honest information as soon as possible about their child's academic performance through higher cut scores. Therefore, we strongly oppose the last-minute proposal to delay the scheduled increase in Virginia's English and math cut scores this fall.

[01:16:16] Children and parents are the primary stakeholders in our public education system. Schools exist to serve students and families, and decisions about academic standards should reflect that reality. When parents see the comparison between Virginia's cut scores and those of other states, they are shocked.

[01:16:34] Parents want high expectations and an accurate picture of whether their children are meeting them. What parents don't understand is a lack of any urgency to raise cut scores in this proposal. Parents were promised in November that the first small increase would be this fall. School is now out for the summer, and most parents are not paying as close of attention.

[01:16:54] Even with this small increase, Virginia would still have some of the lowest cut scores in the country. Notably, when scores were lower to the lowest in the country in 2019 and 2020, it was done immediately mid-school year. It was encouraging to hear yesterday that little work is required to implement this fall small increase.

[01:17:14] That increase should go forward. To prepare students for the event or prepare parents for the eventual final cut scores, the VDOE was working with the Learning Heroes on a plan to include NAPA line performance information and SOL reports to families.

[01:17:29] Yet that effort does not appear anywhere in the board slides. In fact, parents are not mentioned at all in the board slides in accountability and cut scores. As a result of the new accountability system, Arlington Public Schools is now devoting more resources to its schools identified as needing support and taking a laser-like focus on English learners.

[01:17:50] Those efforts would not be occurring had the new accountability system been delayed, as some in the education establishment had advocated. Virginia should be a leader in education and none of us should be satisfied with continuing with the lowest cut scores in the country for any longer. We urge the board to reject this proposed delay and move forward with higher expectations for Virginia students this fall. Thank you.

[01:18:17] Thank you. Is there anyone else who would like to add public comment? Please come to the microphone. My name is Mim Longrange. I'm a proud and unapologetic Democrat and ardent supporter of Governor Spanberger.

[01:18:47] And I'm here to strongly oppose the proposal to continue with Virginia's math and reading cut scores that are the lowest standards in the country. I'm proud to have voted for the first woman governor of Virginia. And I'm proud of what her administration has accomplished so far on women's and immigrants' rights and affordability.

[01:19:06] That said, one of the many things that sets us apart from the opposing party is that we hold our elected officials accountable. And today, I'm here to do just that. Governor Spanberger campaigned on the promise of upholding academic excellence and rigor in our schools, and yet here you all are today about to fumble a bipartisan policy on education reform at the behest of the special interest groups in this room.

[01:19:33] Raising cut scores and academic standards for students not only aligns with Democratic values, it has strong bipartisan support. If you delay raising cut scores for two more years, you'll be right back here in 2028 doing it again for these same special interest groups.

[01:19:49] Meanwhile, the kids who pay the highest price are the least advantaged, the ones that the students that our party claims to fight for. If you continue with this delay, you better have a redeemable answer for constituents on both sides of the aisle come 2029 because the reason you have today that the adults who run the system here need a break is frankly pathetic.

[01:20:12] Especially when we have Republican states like Mississippi and Alabama who spend much less per student than us and are still outperforming Virginia. That's embarrassing. Today, I live in one of the most affluent areas of the state. I feel fortunate that my partner has the know-how, access, and ability to provide supplemental education for his kids where the state has fallen short.

[01:20:36] But my background as an English learner and having come from a very humble, economically disadvantaged community, I know that not all children have the same privileges. This state has put those kids, we're talking about English learners, student of blue-collar workers, and latchkey kids on the back burner for long enough.

[01:20:55] Guaranteeing access for all students to high academic standards and providing an education pathway that supports that is the job you all signed up for i lost my way sorry um it should high academic standards should not be afforded only to children who have special access after all we're not asking for every school to have an elite lacrosse program it reminds it pains me to say that as much as i hate policies coming out of texas i'm starting to understand why private school choice has the political appeal that it does if our public school system can't guarantee

[01:21:33] high academic standards for all students then i can see how many people would support vouchers for students to access private schools that do thank you i think that concludes our public comment thank you we are now going to go transition into presentations from the student advisory committee i believe there are two presentations from our student advisory

[01:22:04] four three okay will the first group come on up do you need a couple of minutes let's we're gonna

[01:22:29] oh okay stand that should work yeah thank you hello my name is wilson lucas and unfortunately my partner laurel altizer couldn't be here today so i'll be presenting the virginia stem pathways

[01:23:09] initiative proposals so a little bit about ourselves i'm the region one representative and we'll be about 10 minutes down the road in rico county i recently just graduated from freeman high school and then fall into the university of virginia to study engineering in the future i want to go into an engineering profession and eventually use my knowledge and experience from that career to give back either through education or policy or some kind of humanitarian work. I'm on this board because I want to use my experiences now to make a change.

[01:23:35] I want to use the lessons I've learned and what I've been served 8 through 12 to give back for those who will follow after me. Laura is the Region 6 representative and lives in Montgomery County. She recently just graduated from Auburn High School. In the fall she's in Virginia Tech to study aerospace engineering. She's on this board or in the future she wants to go into an engineering career and do creative writing on the side. She's on this board because she wants to help develop the areas around her using STEM. And that leads into our issue. So, Laura and I identified that regional Virginia have a large disparity in their access and participation to STEM. Specifically,

[01:24:12] urban and suburban schools have a much stronger focus in their classes and extracurriculars on math and science compared to rural regions. This is a problem because, one, not all students in Virginia have equal access to classes and career opportunities. And two, those regions with lower participation rates are disadvantaged economically and don't experience all the benefits that STEM

professionals bring. So what does this look like specifically? As you can see, using the percent of schools offering in AP Math as a benchmark for STEM accessibility, there's a 30% disparity between regions. There's a 30% disparity between urban and suburban schools and rural schools.

[01:24:50] That's a statistically significant number and proves that a student in Northern Virginia has a much greater access to STEM classes and therefore STEM careers than a student in Southwest Virginia has. The policy that most directly relates to this right now is the Board of Education's standards of accreditation, specifically the school and student support framework. This framework requires schools not only track student performance on math and science at SOLs, but how much they grow over time. So it's not just tracking how well a student does, but if they're improving, if the school's policy is actually helping students.

[01:25:20] Also recent legislation that relates to this issue is the recent House Bill that was passed in 2025. What this House Bill requires is for schools to provide multiple pathways into advanced math and science classes and it also requires any student who performs advanced on a math or science as well to be placed into an advanced class. And since it was 2025 we still have yet to see the full effects of this House Bill. So why is all this a matter? Like how is this really affecting students?

[01:25:49] in the short term students become very discouraged by math and science i'm sure we've all said it and well i'm sure we've all heard it and probably said it that i'm just not a math person like that's not for me my brain doesn't function that way and that can be more far from the truth students get discouraged easily and then they start to participate less in those classes and less in those extracurriculars and so as they start to participate less they demand less from the teachers and so teachers know have no incentive to go to these regions and that turns into a cycle Students aren't interested, so teachers don't go. And without teachers, there's no one to support the students. And that's why we see some of these voids in schools and regions that just have low

[01:26:27] STEM participation rates. In the long term, students miss out on the key crucial, like, cognitive skills that STEM provides. STEM doesn't just help you in math or science class. It physically alters your brain. It builds more neural connections and develops your critical things meet in economic skills. Even if you're not going into a STEM career, these benefits are still crucial in any career or walk of life you choose to take. And finally, as I mentioned earlier, these regions miss out on the economic benefits and workforce benefits and social benefits that STEM professionals bring. Take Northern Virginia for an example, a region with a very high STEM

[01:27:05] participation rate. They have a booming industry because companies want to go there. Companies want to go there because they know they'll have a workforce that can support them. For regions with struggling economics this can be a light fly just increase their STEM participation and companies will follow and so the Board of Education is important all this because we have the ability to make a change and to just increase STEM participation and the effects will follow so some pausing considerations we could take to address this issue we of course can go through estimates raise our lower standards or change how they're administered but what Laura and I found more interesting was using teacher professional development so of course right now teachers are required to do license renewals. And as a part of that renewal, they must earn 180 points,

[01:27:45] either through publishing or books or conferences or so forth. But what we found interesting was connecting teacher professional development to STEM accessibility. So we benefit both teachers and

students at the same time. And before I go into our proposal, I want to give one last or convey one last message about how STEM has, how this issue has really affected people because statistics don't say everything. So Laura, who of course lives in Southwest Virginia, had to travel to a regional governor's school for all of her math and science classes because her school didn't offer what she needed. And she was only able to do so for her junior and senior year. And so freshman

[01:28:21] and sophomore, she was stuck with whatever her school offered, which was limited. For me, as a resident of Henrico County, I'm grateful I've always had access to the AP or college prep or honors or dual enrollment classes I've wanted to take. However, when I talk with my peers from North Virginia and Virginia Beach. They talk about flight simulators and electrical engineering classes, and it's a foreign world to me in Freeman. And finally, I think one of the most influential testimonies we had was from my Physics 2 teacher, Orion Altman. He grew up in Southwest Virginia,

[01:28:58] and out of the 120 students in his graduating class, 20 went to college, 10 actually graduated, two with a STEM degree. He told me, quote, "Many students don't consider STEM a possibility." And And that's not to overgeneralize, and he's talking about students and his peers in southwest Virginia, but what he's saying is that many students don't consider it a possibility because they don't have the role models and mentors and experience around them to make them interested in them.

[01:29:22] And that is what Laura and I want to address. So our proposal. Laura and I are proposing using professional development to incentivize STEM engagement. We want to do so by amending the teacher license renewal policy to allow teachers with a math and science background to earn professional development points by giving presentations to students about their past workforce experience. So these presentations would entail how they got into that career, what they did in their work, and how students can get there today. And so what we hope this will do is expand STEM exposure. What we know it'll do is

[01:29:58] expand STEM exposure. It'll create personal connections with students and give them the role models that they're missing to just create their interest. Because all of these stupid students are capable of going into these fields. They just don't have the support that waits in that way. And I could go on about all the theoretical ways this can help students, but I think the best way I can convey this is one last story. So my AP Physics 1 teacher, Freeman, by the way, has outstanding physics teachers. My AP Physics 1 teacher, Thomas Gatlin, did a partnership with the CERN Particle Physics Lab. And as a part of that partnership, he's required

[01:30:34] to give a presentation to his students every year about his work there. And so when it was our year and when I was in his class and he was telling us about it, five students put their hands up to attend it. And once he told us it was a homework grade, or not an extra homework grade, extra credit, everybody put their hands up. And so it was pretty miraculous. During a study hall at Freeman, we had a classroom full of students literally sitting on tables waiting to hear about particle physics. It sounds like an oxymoron. And Mr. Gallo didn't just tell us about particle physics. He told us about his job there and what he did and how it was at CERN and introduced us to a whole

[01:31:10] new world. Students who didn't even raise their hand regularly in physics class were asking about particle physics. It was truly incredible and what inspired us a lot in our proposal. And so what Laura and I hope to do with this proposal is bring just apart that same inspiration that Mr. Gallo gave me to all students of Virginia. We want to make STEM—we want to make the benefits of STEM accessible to all

regions of Virginia, all students, not just STEM. Thank you. And I want to give a special thank you to Ryan Altman, Robert Peck, Wiley Hunnicutt, and Ryan Altman, who all helped me greatly on this presentation.

[01:31:42] Well done. Do any board members have questions? Yes, Dr. Wilson. Wilson, thank you very much for the presentation. And a question—not necessarily a question, a comment we heard yesterday from our partners at JClark they presented a report about access and your observation your and Laura's observation about the access that students have to programs

[01:32:17] and courses amplifies and is consistent with what our state partners are saying our research partners are saying so thank you for bringing that personal connection that personal testimonial to what the data is also showing us. And I also appreciate the solution, potential solution and the impact that you've described and the stories that amplify again, amplify the value of this particular issue.

[01:32:46] So thank you very much. And wahoo wah. Superintendent Conway. Thank you. Thank you, Wilson, for a very thoughtful presentation. That included data, which is just about, as this board can attest my favorite thing. When Dr. Smith and I were going around the state on the listening tour, we talked with a lot of high school students who noted that the only way that they could get access to higher level math and science or dual enrollment courses was through technology,

[01:33:23] whether that was coming to school and then participating in a virtual class or doing that from home if there simply wasn't an educator or the distance was too far to travel to a governor's school. I'm curious, did you all come across that in terms of, particularly for Laura, students in Southwest Virginia who were able to access some more STEM and whether it felt like it was as high quality as that kind of those in-person experiences? Yeah, so we actually did look into the virtual option using Virtual Virginia, and it is a good lifeline for what it has.

[01:34:00] It provides those classes and allows students to get that access, but of course, the experience isn't as beneficial as having a teacher there to share their personal experiences. It's still over computer, and oftentimes, you just end up doing homework. So, it's a good option for getting into those classes and getting AP and dual enrollment classes, but what we were looking for is creating the more inspiration for the students that maybe don't or aren't inclined to go take those classes. Thank you. Thank you. Board members, any other questions? You're off the hot

[01:34:36] seat. Well done. Thank you. We'll have our next presentation. Thank you. Oh, guys. Which one is left? Okay. Thank you, guys. Good morning, President Ashton, Vice President Hanson, members of the board, peers, and those in the audience today. My name is Kyla Leggett, and today I will be

[01:35:15] presenting a proposal to strengthen and modify reading interventionist policies. Before I begin, I would like to introduce my partner, who unfortunately could not be here today. Her name is Olivia Tarbell, and she's from Weyers Cave, Virginia, where she attended Fort Defiance High School. She plans to attend Blue Ridge Community College to major in business management and hopes to become a licensed esthetician. I am from Newport News, Virginia, where I attended and Mitchell High School.

[01:35:41] I will be attending Harvard College in the fall where I plan to study sociology and global health and health policy. I hope to become a gastroenterologist. We both care deeply about reading interventionist policies because of our firsthand experiences witnessing the positive impact they can have on our students and their academic performance.

[01:36:00] Today, we are proposing improvements to reading interventionist policies that will help ensure all Virginia students receive the literacy support they need to succeed. Moving on to the issue at hand, on January 29, 2025, the National Assessment Governing Board reported continued declines in reading achievement among U.S. students.

[01:36:22] Moreover, according to the 2024 National Assessment of Educational Progress, Virginia reading scores remained stagnant among 4th and 8th grade students. Only 31% of 4th graders and 21% of 8th graders were reading at or above the national proficiency level.

[01:36:40] This brings us to our current situation. The Virginia Board of Education has raised standards of learning expectations to better align with national standards. While this is an important step forward, it also raises concerns that the percentage of students achieving proficiency in reading and writing may decrease without additional support from reading interventionists.

[01:37:01] It is imperative that we continue building upon the success of the Virginia Literacy Act rather than becoming complacent with its progress. If we settle for less, we put Virginians at a disadvantage, as reading is a fundamental skill necessary for success in school, the workforce, and everyday life.

[01:37:20] A weak foundation in reading places individuals at a greater risk of poverty and unemployment, challenges that can be compounded by systemic failures within our education system. Today, approximately 43 million adults in the United States read below a third grade level.

[01:37:38] This literacy gap is estimated to cost the nation \$2.2 trillion annually. Again, let me restate that. This literacy gap cost our nation \$2.2 trillion annually. However, this issue is not just about statistics.

[01:37:56] Those numbers represent real students facing real challenges, and Olivia and I have witnessed that firsthand. In my hometown, a fourth grade teacher personally shared with me that she spends more time on reading and writing remediation than is allotted because many incoming students are reading below grade level. In more rural counties, reading interventionists face additional barriers.

[01:38:20] With only one interventionist serving approximately 550 students, according to the Code of Virginia, these educators are stretched thin. In Augusta County, where Olivia resides, the difference between Craigsville Elementary School and North River Elementary School's distance is approximately 45 miles. That equates to a 36-minute drive. That is 36 minutes spent on the road instead of working directly with our students. Every minute lost to travel is a minute that could have spent helping

[01:38:54] a struggling reader develop the skills they need to succeed. So how can we improve board? Olivia and I have developed three solutions. Our first solution is incentivizing teachers to obtain reading interventionist certifications. No one knows their students better than their own teachers.

[01:39:13] By encouraging teachers to earn their certifications through grants for classroom equipment, bonuses, or pay raises, we could create a culture in which teachers are better equipped to address literacy deficits in the classroom during instructional downtime on a personalized level. Second, we should reimburse reading interventionists for their travel between schools. In rural areas, schools are often further apart and serve fewer students. As a result, many reading interventionists spend significant amounts of time and money traveling. To ease these financial burdens, school budgets should include funding for travel expenses incurred between schools for

[01:39:53] reading interventionists. Finally, we need to establish an after-school program that includes literacy-centered instruction. Most public schools already offer after-school programming for students whose parents enroll them. We can invite parents of children who perform below grade level in reading and writing to enroll their students in these programs. If we allocate time for a reading interventionist to visit the program and provide targeted instruction, we could seamlessly offer additional support without disrupting students' daily routines. To conclude, these proposals

[01:40:29] aren't revolutionary. They're not flashy, they're not groundbreaking, but they are necessary because the further students slip through the cracks the greater the educational and economic consequences become for our communities our great commonwealth and our beautiful nation i urge you to strongly consider these proposals and continue building upon our great progress of the virginia literacy act the future of virginia students depends on the decisions we make today and it's your

[01:41:01] responsibility to make them thank you very much thank you phyla board members do you have questions well i will comment that i very much appreciated your presentation at my school we typically say everyone is a reading teacher and you really emphasize that it's not going to be one person but it's going to be a whole approach to it and i particularly appreciated the data that you use and your passion so thank you um good luck as you go off outside of virginia we won't say where

[01:41:36] be the to uh represent us uh in your future endeavors thank you guys so much thank you i believe there is one more presentation okay thank you uh good morning my name is carmen my name is sophia robinson and today we want to talk about rethinking graduation requirements in

[01:42:10] virginia to make them more student aligned and help with attendance flexibility before we start we want to introduce ourselves i'm carmen pond i'm from rappahannock county high school I'm representing region four and I'm headed to JMU to potentially become a physician's assistant and I'm really interested in increasing student morale and helping students get ready for after high school. My name is Sophia Robinson I'm from Bluefield Virginia and was a student at Graham High School and I'm currently representing region seven. This upcoming fall I'll be attending the University of Kentucky double majoring in political science and journalism with a minor

[01:42:50] communications on the path to become a lawyer or work in public policy. And what I'm really interested in is personalized plans for students. The issue we wanted to talk about today is that currently Virginia's education system is still heavily centered around traditional education structures such as seat time, standardized testing credits, and accreditation-driven scheduling decisions. Although these systems were created to maintain consistency across schools, they unintentionally reduce flexibility for students pursuing different post-secondary pathways

[01:43:27] students may feel that parts of their education are focused more on institutional requirements rather than the meaningful preparation for life after graduation i saw this firsthand in my school where seniors were required to take classes that they did not need for after graduation and it

[01:43:42] required it made them skip school and i'll give you a real world real world example while i was in

[01:45:11] high school I was earning my associate's degree and DE was strongly encouraged as a way for students to accelerate their education. However, current policies in my division made DE courses no longer count as a high school class and required students to take extra classes as they did not need to

satisfy their high school requirements. Experiences like this can discourage students as a student can feel like the extra effort required to pursue advanced opportunities are not always recognized or valued on paper. Virginia has created multiple pathways for student success.

[01:45:47] but implementation can vary across divisions if the three e's are all considered valuable outcomes students should receive equal recognition support and opportunity. This issue matters because it impacts students, schools, and communities across Virginia. Rigid graduation requirements can increase students' stress, burnout, and disengagement while limiting access to career-focused opportunities, like internships, apprenticeships.

[01:46:19] English language learners and students with disabilities may face even greater challenges in systems lacking flexibility. These issues also affect schools' abilities to support individualized learning and can leave communities with workforce shortages and high-demand careers.

[01:46:35] Overall, graduation requirements should focus more on meaningful learning and preparing students' life after graduation. Currently, the standards of quality and accreditation standards, the profile of a Virginia graduate, and the 3E Readiness Framework already supports flexibility through opportunities such as dual enrollment, CTE programs, virtual learning, and work-based learning experiences. However, the main issue is not necessarily the absence of flexibility, but the larger issue in the gap between policy and implementation. Because schools are

[01:47:15] naturally influenced by the matrix they are judged on, many local systems prioritize traditional structures. Virginia has already laid most of the groundwork needed to support student-centered pathways. The challenge now is ensuring that local implementation fully reflects their goals. Student experience shows that the real impact of these policies. Many students are required to take classes unrelated to their future goals, while internships, jobs, or job shadowing opportunities often conflict with school schedules.

[01:47:50] Students balancing work, caregiving, or mental health challenges may struggle with strict attendance policies. Research also shows that chronically absent students perform worse academically, especially those facing economic disadvantages. Overall, the current system does not equally support all students or reflect the realities many learners face today.

[01:48:15] We have three recommendations for how to move forward. Our first recommendation is allowing students to formally declare a graduation pathway by 10th grade aligned with one of the three E's. This will not eliminate core academic requirements like English and math, but provide students with greater flexibility in electives and career-aligned opportunities.

[01:48:37] For example, a student going into healthcare could prioritize enrollment sciences, internships, healthcare certifications while a student entering the workforce could focus more on CTE experiences or industry credentials. Our second recommendation is that students should be able to earn graduation credit through the meaningful education experiences like internships, volunteering, dual enrollment courses, service learning, or job shadowing. Our third recommendation is instead of relying primarily on seat time and traditional testing, students should have additional opportunities

[01:49:15] to demonstrate mastery through portfolios, performance assessments, capstone projects, presentations, and industry-recognized certifications. Our final recommendation focuses on attendance and accreditation reform. Attendance should recognize meaningful education engagement beyond

classroom seat time, including internships, virtual learning, employment, volunteering, job shadowing, and dual enrollment.

[01:49:45] We also recommend accreditation systems that value post-secondary success, such as workplace readiness, apprenticeships, credential attainment, and employment placement. Reducing the focus on seat time metrics would create more flexibility, improve student engagement, and better prepare students for life after graduation.

[01:50:04] Thank you for listening to our presentation. Do you guys have any questions? - Mr. Hudson? Both. And just wondering if there's an experience that you've had with an apprenticeship or some other engagement, volunteer activity that has had an impact on your path?

[01:50:26] I'll speak. Not personally, but through my friends, a lot of them didn't feel like their classes aligned with their graduation, life after graduation.

[01:50:43] So they, instead of coming to school, they would skip and go work, or they would skip and go get CTE certifications. Or I live in a rural area, so they found more value in going and getting those work experiences than sitting down and taking that art class that they don't need.

[01:51:03] A personal experience I've had with an internship is this past session, I had the opportunity to be an intern for the Virginia General Assembly during my school semester, which took away seat time for my classes. In the future, I want to go into public policy and politics, and so from gaining that firsthand experience was really valuable to me compared to from sitting in a classroom learning about government when I can see it really in person.

[01:51:29] To Northern. Carmen, I just wanted to get some clarification from you. You were talking about the dual enrollment course you're taking, and I thought you said it wasn't credit. It didn't count for credit for high school, but to my knowledge, dual enrollment gives you credit for community College. So can you explain that a little bit to me again? Yes. When I was told that I could earn my associate's degree while in high school, so I was taking my dual enrollment classes to earn that.

[01:52:03] And this current year, they changed policy so that my classes that I was taking were not counting on my high school transcript. And they told me I was eligible to play sports. And so I had to pick up extra classes um like i was a ta just so that i could be in the school building because they weren't counting my dual enrollment class work um kind of as an elective either yeah they they weren't counting it at all um but yeah i think you guys did a great job and you surfaced a real problem i think that we're often looking for uh industry to step up and provide our kids with more

[01:52:42] apprenticeships and work-based learning opportunities um but it's really difficult on their end as well reliability and you know they worry a lot about you know i just encourage you guys to continue to try to problem solve on the employer side that you know as a board we're definitely open to that but often it seems like we're not getting you know problem solving needs to occur on the other side as well and then conway wonderful thank you both for uh this presentation

[01:53:18] uh glad to know you spent some time in session and that you even came back is you know and are willing to deal with this other public body says something um uh did you or those dual enrollment classes did you have to pay tuition or did the school division pay for because i think it seems to me that there's both a uh an element of access does it work for my schedule and sort of transportation there's the

tuition or sort of the cost impact and then there's do i get credit for it where i need to get credit for it in terms of either the graduation the diploma or the

[01:53:56] associate's degree and i'm just curious about uh the the sort of covering tuition yes um my school is a little bit different than every other school because we're so small there's 68 in my graduating class um but we were we were told that if it wasn't through the future educators academy or mount vista governor school that your dual enrollment was not going to be counted so you know i was required to take five classes instead of four but i was still able to earn my associates

[01:54:31] thank you mr robinson thank you both for the presentation sophia you spoke about how you were able to have flexibility to do the the internship so i'd like to better understand did you receive credit for that and when you speak about the attendance reform in some students not receiving credit for their internships or job or virtual learning experiences could you give us a little bit more flavor into the experiences of your peers to help us understand when in your experience students receive credit and when students do not receive credit so um i had two different

[01:55:10] situations where i was an intern so i interned my sophomore year and also my past senior year and I did not receive credit for either of those internships. I actually had less seat time, so it counted as an absence instead of me being away for an internship, and so it was not counted for credit.

[01:55:28] Thank you. In general, thank you for these three very clear recommendations, really, from all three student committees, and I encourage whenever the board receives our next updates in these three topics, Virginia Literacy Act, STEM, as well as Pathways. I request that the staff speak to these recommendations to help us better understand where practice is. Yes, Ms. Kilgore. I just want to do like a summary of thanking all four individuals and the other people, young people in the audience

[01:56:04] too, who weren't talking, but I'm sure have a lot to say. As someone who's spent 36 years of my life, A lot of my time with high schoolers, teenagers, I am so proud to see the representation that you were giving your age group. I always tell my students that when I meet somebody for the first time, I tell them I taught high school, they'd either look at me like, oh, wow, that's just wonderful.

[01:56:26] Or I'd be like, oh, wow. And I always tell students, you know, that you're great. You're wonderful. And you four, probably six, are reflecting what's good about our young people. and I'm just so proud of all four all four of you for your presentation very very impressive thank you Mrs. Kilgore Dr. Bridges the last presentation y'all are getting all the comments about the process overall but I did have some questions about the process have y'all been meeting since September of this past year it says monthly meetings since last year yes we've been

[01:57:02] meeting virtually on teams right and this program was transferred is it from the governor's student advisor can be the secretary of ed is that right yeah um and so uh that i just want to encourage all of the students who did these presentations and are heading off to fine institutions two of which i'm an alumnus of um to wander the campus and hit up the school of ed at your um and your school of public policy because even if you're a stem major engineering pre-public health um that

[01:57:37] you all have demonstrated really great insights into public policy through these presentations and into public education. So, take a class over there, y'all, and you just never know. Career paths shift, and you've got a long life of career ahead of you. If you can bring some of this back to Virginia's public policy and education system, we would love to have y'all. Thank you very much. And thank you to

Secretary Smith for shepherding such a fabulous program. Great. So, just closing out, i want to also just um echo our appreciation for carmen sophia wilson kyla olivia i know

[01:58:15] there were two who were not here um i echo miss kilgore's comments just around the belief around what's possible for our young people uh we have been deliberating over these policies at least feels like for centuries um and the way that you have so articulately talked about uh literacy and and graduation requirements and STEM requirements really makes it very real for us.

[01:58:42] And so again, thank you for your comments. I wanna thank also to the parents of these young people, you did a very good job, as well as to the teachers that you all have had over these last 12 years. And we really do wish you the very best in what you pursue next.

[01:59:00] And I echo Dr. Bridges, please stop by the School of Education for each. need you back here teaching in the next generation so thank you with that if all the young people just presented we're going to take a picture outside and we will also take about a 10 minute

[01:59:16] break so thank you and i convene back in session thank you for allowing us a brief break um going

[02:16:53] to the agenda we have um two items proposed for the consent agenda is there a motion to waive first review and approve the items on the consent agenda so moved second great let's do roll call dr bridges i mrs mcpherson mr hansen dr northern dr wilson mr robinson hi mrs kilgore and chair

[02:17:27] votes aye thank you okay now we are now moving to uh our action discussion items um we have a final review of the divisions eligible to exit a memorandum of understanding with the Virginia Board of Education. Dr. Ballard, welcome. Yes, ma'am. Good morning, President Ashton,

[02:18:02] Superintendent Conway, and members of the board. I am Quentin Ballard, and I serve as the director in the Office of School Improvement. Today, I will present for final review information about three school divisions eligible to exit their respective memorandum of understanding with the Virginia Board of Education. Today's final review will include an overview and history of the use

[02:18:37] of MOUs to improve student outcomes, information about the three divisions eligible to exit their MOU with the board, and then finally, recommendations to the board for consideration. I'll make sure it was this.

[02:18:54] Okay. And so as shared during the April board meeting, a memorandum of understanding is a formal agreement that defines responsibilities of the board, the local school board, the division superintendent, and Virginia Department of Ed staff to strengthen implementation of the standards of quality and improve student outcomes.

[02:19:16] When the board determines that failure of schools to meet standards is related to division-level failure to implement the standards of quality or other division-level action or inaction, a division-level academic review may be required.

[02:19:33] The division-level review intends to—refers to the process that is actually used to analyze a school division's systems and practices to determine the degree to which the local school board is meeting its responsibility as prescribed in the standards of quality.

[02:19:51] Outcomes from this division-level academic review informed the development of the MOU between the board and the local school board. And so since 2004, just to reorient ourselves, there were

eight school divisions that have entered an MOU with the board.

[02:20:10] After implementing interventions to build local capacities for improvement for these divisions exited their MOU status. The board has been instrumental in the process by establishing division level review processes and selection criteria in 2004, 2012, with the latest occurring in 2024.

[02:20:30] And so from July of 2000 through September 2025 of 2024, Virginia School Accountability System included an integral integration, if you will, of pre-accreditation compliance standards, and student pass rates on the standards of learning and other alternative assessments.

[02:20:54] This resulted in an overall accreditation rating for individual schools, such as fully accredited, conditionally accredited, accredited with Warner, accreditation denied. And so in 2024, the regulations were revised, which separated the accountability from accreditation. And the current MOU exit criterias were established under the prior unified accountability and accreditation system and so therefore these divisions operating under the MOU status therefore divisions operating I'm sorry under MOU status are currently

[02:21:30] measured against criteria aligned to a system that is actually no longer in effect and so it is in September the board updated its regulations and set forth updated criteria for division level academic review and clarify that that such review includes both academics and what's called a resource allocation review.

[02:21:52] And so the regulation specifies, in particular, that if a division has 40% of schools identified for comprehensive or additional targeted support, or 10 or more schools identified for comprehensive support, then it is eligible for a division-level academic and resource allocation review.

[02:22:12] Based on these criteria, Danville City, Greensville County, and Prince Edward County, no longer qualify for MOU status based on their performance as illustrated on the slide that you see presented. And so the Virginia Department of Ed conducted a virtual exit interviews with division superintendents and their board chairs of Danville City, Greensville County, and Prince Edward County to gather feedback and information about their experience with the MOU process.

[02:22:48] The VDOE staff were honored to be joined by President Ashton or Vice President Hansen during each of the exit interviews. During these structured interviews, participants reflected on successes and challenges of the MOU process, division-wide strategies implemented to improve systems and processes, and plans to sustain progress subject to release from the MOU.

[02:23:19] The VDOE plans to certainly use this information gleaned from the exit interviews to evaluate the effectiveness of its support, inform the design of future support, and certainly address, assess, if you will, the contextual fit of professional learning activities by considering factors, a number of factors that include division size, demographic, and other factors.

[02:23:40] And so the appendix included in today's board presentation contains the individual exit interview findings for Danville City, Greensville County, and Prince Edward County. The VDOE analyzed the exit interview findings and identified several common themes, which I'll certainly take an opportunity to review briefly.

[02:24:05] the first theme that was identified was VDOE oversight and technical assistance benefited the division by creating certainly a sense of urgency, building capacity, and monitoring progress. And so these

divisions shared how the MOU requirements certainly did create a certain sense of urgency for them and a point of emphasis of rallying school and division and community leaders to engage, if you will, in the work of improvement together. They talked about the needs

[02:24:41] assessment and corrective action plans, serving as a model and using data and aligning stakeholders around, if you will, these common actions that were required to lead improvement. They talked about the support that was gathered from the VDOE and provided from VDOE. Rather, that was through the Office of School Improvement or the Office of Instruction or any office that was at the agency and how they felt that, you know, as it relates to on-demand support, their needs certainly were

[02:25:17] a priority. And they spoke of a variety of professional learning resources, again, and grants that were provided to MOU divisions to support their work. And so that really speaks to some positive impact of the MOU support that these divisions have received from the VDOE.

[02:25:36] As it relates to on the flip side of that, some challenges and or limitations, the second theme they identified were some bureaucratic delays, unclear or inconsistent communication, overly ambitious corrective action plans and or staff attrition caused some challenges.

[02:25:56] And so to that extent, these divisions talked a little bit about how there were delays in the accountability results, if you will, that subsequently had an impact on the approval of their school improvement grant funding.

[02:26:11] They talked about the time to receive feedback from VDOE or prospective licensed administrative candidates and certainly being conscientious of the awareness that those transitions and hiring of individuals not only have on their division, but also if it was such that leaders were transitioning from other divisions, certainly it was impactful, if you will, and important that they got those approvals and notifications in a timely manner so that the other divisions could certainly work to fill vacancies that were subsequent as a result of individuals transitioning in.

[02:26:47] And then they talked a little bit about communication processes and limited knowledge of the MOU process subject to transitions, whether that was in leadership roles, in terms of division leadership, and or certainly there have been changes in board members as well that have been serving in these divisions since the inception of the MOU. And so they talked a little bit about the protocols and orienting them to the process and then certainly staff attrition that both within the division and

[02:27:20] also here at the agency as well. And so from a sustainability standpoint, the third thing that emerged from our meeting identified was that MOU divisions plan to continue systematic processes related to the routines, data analysis, engagement, and human resources that they've worked on.

[02:27:48] And so we attempted here, the MOU divisions have all indicated just a relentless focus on, they talked about being in the business of supporting people, and certainly recruitment, development, and retention of staff. You'll see that there was a focus on, they've talked about focusing on data analysis to inform instruction and monitor the impact of practices on student performance improvement graduation rates and to address student and teacher attendance they also are talking about sustaining taking some measures to ensure that they continue to implement community engagement practices there was emphasis and references around outreach efforts

[02:28:27] with town halls listening sessions and confirmed with experts related to family engagement and then the division plans to certainly continue human resources practices for again as I've mentioned

recruitment development and retention of highly qualified licensed staff and there was also another point of emphasis around restructuring key positions in operations and instructional oversight to enhance the organizational effectiveness and to help drive the student achievement efforts for sure and so although these the three school divisions have met, if you will, the exit criteria are being recommended for release

[02:29:07] from their respective MOUs. The department intends to continue to provide support to these school divisions identified for, to their schools, I'm sorry, identified for improvement based on federal accountability and the support performance and support framework. And so that support would certainly include, but not limited to, continuation of access to use of school improvement grant funding, invitations to participate in learning network opportunities for their principals and teachers, continuation with on-demand technical assistance subject to any identified

[02:29:44] needs, prioritized placement in VDOE-sponsored professional learning opportunities, and then monitoring certain visits for their schools that are federally identified. And so based on the information provided in this presentation, the Superintendent of Public Instruction would recommend to the board to accept for final review the recommendation to release the Danville City School Board from the Memorandum of Understanding with the Virginia Board of Education that was enacted on June 18th of 2020, released the Greenville

[02:30:24] County School Board from the Memorandum of Understanding with the Virginia Board of Education that was enacted on March 22nd of 2018, and released the Prince Edward County School Board from the Memorandum of Understanding with the Virginia School Board that was enacted on June 18th of 2020. And so at this time, I will answer any questions from the board. If you permit me Before I do, you've heard from Dr. Harrison and during public comment, who is present here today, if you'd allow me a moment of privilege to also share that representation from all three of these divisions are here today.

[02:31:01] We do have the division superintendent, Dr. Jones, who is here from Prince Edward County Public Schools. He's joined by his board chair, Mr. Townsend, vice board, vice chair, Ms. Kimbrose, and board member Ms. Simpson, and then he's also joined by his director of instruction, Ms. Garrett, who's also here with us, and then certainly representing Greenville County Public Schools.

[02:31:27] We have the new superintendent, effective May 4th of 2026, Dr. William Wright Jr. is certainly present here today as well. And I do have a colleague of mine who is also here from the Office of School Improvement, Ms. Britt, who you heard Dr. Harrison mention a little bit, who has been very instrumental and doing a lot of the work around improvement and graduation and division so i would want to take an opportunity to acknowledge and thank her for being here as well and at this time i understand any questions from the board superintendent conway wonderful thank you dr ballad and just uh want to

[02:32:02] make sure the board understands in addition to all of the important insights that dr ballard shared just how much time uh was spent with us in preparing this i know at the april board meeting we talked about the eligibility criteria but then this body asked us to really explore what did we learn from the mou process and how would we know as a body that this work would be sustained and so each of these superintendents board chairs and respective uh local leaders came together with us

[02:32:35] for 90 minutes took question after question many of them came prepared with slides and data and insights just demonstrating their commitment to the students within their communities and so just deep appreciation for not only those 90 minutes and all we learned from you but just all the preparation

and all uh the work done over recent years to improve outcomes for your students great thanks superintendent conway mr henson i just would really like to thank the department for

[02:33:11] leadership and working with these three districts and just had the opportunity to participate in the Danville city school board exit interview and I just really wanted to shout out Angela Harrison and her leadership it was you know I had a couple of takeaways from the meeting and just how you got from there to here and you know the things that jumped out at me was it's leadership

[02:33:45] and but it's also community engagement which is very prevalent. It's also the partnership with the department and again I think it's incredibly important when you're going through this type of a process and it's not viewed as punitive, it's not a gotcha, it's how do we solve the problems but also build for the future where we're going and what needs to be done and so

[02:34:16] So I, you know, in many ways, too, I just, in terms of everybody being here, too, it's just, I think, such a reflection of the resiliency and hard work and teamwork that has gone on over the years. I just wanted to take a minute and just say thank you to all of the leadership at Danville, but also to the department.

[02:34:36] It was very apparent sitting in that meeting that I was just witnessing all of the hours of drives and the binders of preparations and the data that went into getting the results of where you are today.

[02:34:55] I just really wanted to commend you and thank you to your hard work and especially to the leadership that you've brought to the table for the kids and the families. Great. I would like to also add my appreciation first to Dr. Ballard.

[02:35:18] You know, it's like seven lines that has this motion to release you all from an MOU, which has no indication of so much work that has been put into this process. So thank you for your leadership and your thoroughness. And, you know, the board asked as we were going into this to really to share the lessons learned.

[02:35:39] And you went through all of them. But there are a couple of them that really stuck out to me. And I think for any school division that is, you know, close or maybe close to this, like they really need to take some lessons from you all.

[02:35:55] And I want to share them. And the first is radical transparency and honesty. We talk a lot about the honesty gap and in all the conversations that I had with you all, you were radically clear, you were honest, you were hopeful, but you didn't shy away from the real data and facts about what was happening for our young people.

[02:36:22] And I think that for me was particularly inspiring. The second thing that really stood out is the relentless focus on what's actually happening in classrooms. And so at times you can be so high level, performance frameworks, accountability, high quality instruction materials, and you all really said, "What is happening day to day in our classrooms for our young people?"

[02:36:50] The next thing that stood out is relentless focus on the data. And so whether it was making sure that you had the right staffing and the capacity, but that you look at the data and use that to inform the decisions that you were making.

[02:37:06] And then I think some lessons that we need to consistently think about, I mean, you all did incredibly well on this, is communication with key stakeholders there. because you mentioned some of

the transitions and staff and board, the need for consistent and constant communication around exactly what does this mean that we are an MOU and making sure that there's yearly communication from the staff, from the board that really over communicates to

[02:37:40] make sure that we don't lose time as you're working towards this. And then the last thing was again just the complement to the staff in terms of the involvement and specifically the hiring whether it was superintendent thinking through staff changes because there was so much change i think i was on a call with someone had literally been in like two weeks on the job and so you understand the number of changes that requires communication with a lot of stakeholders so that we don't lose time and our young people don't lose time and again i just want to echo how much

[02:38:18] i appreciated your transparency your honesty and your really just relentless focus on what our students and families need so congratulations yes mr robinson thank you um building on those themes i i want to first of all express gratitude for the divisions again for uh giving your time and for the Board Chair, the Vice Chair, Superintendent, Quinton and team, Mr. Fowler and team, for helping us shape these lessons to help us inform how to improve this process going forward.

[02:38:53] It's just so beautiful to see the collective ownership shown here that's been made possible through the collective commitment to not accepting the status quo and to believing in students and getting in systems and structures and collective effort and collaboration to do something about it. And so I can't express enough gratitude to those in the room who've been standing up for our students through your efforts. I think the state should use this process more. I think the lessons show the power of partnership between the BDOE and divisions, what looks like when done

[02:39:32] incredibly well a lot of lessons learned are exactly what we want to see greater urgency greater focus on instruction greater focus on data greater focus on systemic ownership versus saying it's on the teachers and on the individual schools to do something about our students who aren't seeing success saying no this is a collective effort that we're actually going to hold accountable systems as well as the state on what we're collectively doing in partnership differently to better serve those furthest from opportunity and so as i think about the lessons learned about how we could improve going forward i really uh encourage us to um as we get more

[02:40:11] experience with this new framework to um to to rethink the criteria uh because i think the criteria were established you know before we had experience with the framework and so we're seeing again great effort across all three divisions and i am seeing a difference as well in danville i'm seeing um the number of schools out of 13 that are needs intensive improvement or off track is actually below the percentage of schools in the state that qualify for the same piece and uh at greenville you know i'm seeing zero of their three schools in the needs and needs intensive

[02:40:50] improvement category in prince edward i'm seeing a lot of great improvement that's that's uh great for students uh and results of incredibly high effort and still two out of three schools either in needs and intensive improvement or comprehensive support and improvement and so if this process is good and helpful to divisions uh then i would personally like to see um you know that partnership continue in divisions that are in such situations uh uh in the future when we have different criteria I'm not advocating for change of the criteria midstream right now.

[02:41:23] So that's number one. Keep the bar high because it's a good thing to be part of this. We're designing it well. Number two, you lifted up the duplicative requirements in the corrective action plans as

well as the other plans required by the division.

[02:41:41] In Greenville, it said there were 108 essential actions. Obviously, there were not 108 essential actions to be done. if you're focused on so many things, you're not focused on anything. And I commend the Greenville leaders for, despite the VDOE requiring 108 essential actions, obviously having greater focus than we provided them.

[02:42:05] And so really encourage us to look at those lessons learned from the divisions for going forward. And finally, the piece about knowledge transfer. Again, back to collective ownership, it sounds like a lot of great efforts done at the front end of establishing these MOUs on on establishing expectations and what we're going to co-create together but it sounds like there are a lot of lessons in terms of how as as board members change at the division level as superintendents change as principals change how do we have a process to ensure continued collective ownership again these are all things that are made possible thanks to the result of everyone who participated in those interviews and i just wanted to stamp those lessons

[02:42:43] AND THANK YOU FOR THE TIME. GREAT. THANK YOU, MR. ROMSON. MS. MCPHERSON? WE TALKED ABOUT THE EXIT OF THE MEMORANDUM UNDERSTANDING AND THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS THERE, BUT I ALSO WANTED TO POINT OUT THAT AS IT RELATES TO THESE THREE SCHOOL DIVISIONS, OBVIOUSLY IT WAS NOT ALL THEIR SCHOOL SYSTEMS THAT CAUSED THEM TO ENTER INTO MEMORANDUM UNDERSTANDING AND WE GOT TO ALWAYS REMEMBER THAT there were a whole lot of bright spots as it relates to these three divisions and what's

[02:43:18] really key that sometimes maybe we overlook as we were going through accountability standards and looking at proficiency all three of these divisions were spotlighted for programs that they had that we could look at and that we could model after so i just want to celebrate your achievements as well so you've done well in terms of correcting some deficiencies but we also want to celebrate all of the good things that were done and the fact that we found those as we were going through this process in all three of those divisions. Thank you. Any other board members?

[02:43:53] Dr. Bridges? Probably echoing some of what my colleagues have said about coming out of the MOUs, I just wanted to amplify a couple of things. The MOU process, creating a sense of urgency, I think is a really critical piece, but I also want to echo something that I, a mantra from when I teach sustainable improvement, and that is urgency without resources, strategy, and capacity building is energetic chaos. And so we talk a lot about a sense of urgency, and I know y'all had to actually use that urgency, kind of corral that urgency, and really think strategically about,

[02:44:32] as some of my colleagues have said, what do you prioritize? Because if you're doing all the things, you're prioritizing none of the things, right? So with that in mind, I think it's really helpful to see from those exit interviews the levers that really made a difference for each community because you can see in that it's not a one-size-fits-all. There are definitely elements that you all have in common in terms of that focus on curriculum, focus on instruction, focus on good governance, right, focus on stakeholder communication and collaboration.

[02:45:04] But the extent to which different levers were being pulled in these respective communities show you got to be really targeted and focused on what the community needs. So congratulations to all of them, and thank you to the department for getting this data so that we can learn to continually improve and support districts. Because I'm not sure I agree with my colleague, William, that we want more MOUs.

We want more support on the front end so that nobody has to have an MOU, right? Like that you're continually being supported in a way that you feel you can target

[02:45:42] the state support to the needs that each local community has. And I do note in y'all's exit interview data, the sustainability piece is going to be critical and there are resources embedded in each of those elements that y'all talked about. The professional learning for Prince Edward, the PLE program and monitoring through Cognia for Danville, the technical assistance that y'all got in Greenville through the Literacy Grants, the Innovation Grants, the Math Grants, all of that is that's resources, right? And so for y'all to keep us posted on how you're able to sustain

[02:46:18] when some resources from the state perhaps get directed in other directions. So please keep keep the state posted on how the resource piece is going because that's critical to sustainable improvement. We can have short-term success through lots of hard work, but it's only going going to sustain if you, again, strategy, capacity building, resource support, right?

[02:46:41] And I would say one of the hard lessons I learned when I was a local school board member was until the community embeds these practices, you will have things erode anytime there's leadership turnover, school board turnover, classroom teacher turnover. And so really thinking deeply about how do we keep the community really bought into what's going on in our schools? Because they're the keepers of best practices. And so you didn't ask me for advice, and y'all are certainly doing a lot of things really, really well. And I'm looking forward to just don't not stay in touch. Keep

[02:47:20] us posted on how sustainability is happening, because that's really the key for every school division in this Commonwealth. We want to be able to see everyone sustainably successful, and y'all are on the path to leading the way for that. So I look forward to hearing more. And thanks to your office and all of y'all who are trying to gather the information so that we can make sustainable improvement for reality across the Commonwealth. Thank you all. I know it's so hard work. Okay, let's get to the action. That being said, one other thing that you all did mention I did want to raise for the group is the differences between the rural and more suburban

[02:47:56] and urban, like having different experiences and making sure that we are mindful of, I think, what you talked about, Dr. Bridges, the resources and the constraints that they experienced so i did want to raise that um but with that is there a motion to approve the release of the danville city school board from the memorandum of understanding with the virginia board of education enacted on june 18 2020 the greensville county school board from the memorandum of understanding with the virginia board of education on march 22nd 2018 and of the prince

[02:48:35] edward county school board from the memorandum of understanding with the virginia board of education enacted on june 18 2020. is there a second okay roll call dr bridges aye mrs mcpherson mr hanson dr northern dr wilson mr robinson all right mrs kilgore ah and chair votes aye

[02:49:04] congratulations i ask you guys to stand up yes you guys should stand absolutely congratulations now you get to do even more work so congratulations and thank you dr bowler thank you ma'am awesome

[02:49:26] thank you thank you thank you thank you we're gonna go ahead and get back in session uh we'll

[02:50:08] take a couple more actions before lunch break as our uh mou exited divisions are celebrating i was wondering where all those people were okay we have up for up for consideration final review of the

guidelines for 2026-27 of the early childhood unified measurement and improvement

[02:50:42] system yes yeah excellent thank you so much members of the board for having us here this morning we're technically still in the morning um i'm aaron carroll deputy superintendent of early childhood and i'm joined by chris meyers director of quality measurement and improvement and we are excited to be coming back to you for the second time to talk about the virginia quality uh birth of five system otherwise known as vqb5 and our proposed guidelines for the 26-27 school year

[02:51:16] So this is a brief overview, just talking at a high level and offering some reminders. We did have, of course, as you all remember, the in-depth discussion related to VQB5 and the Bertha 5 system overall in April.

[02:51:33] So I want to just offer a few refreshers this morning about our system, some of the major proposed revisions that are included in the 26-27 guidelines, and give you some updates on the work we have been doing since April to get ready for this. So as we talked about in April, there are several guiding principles that we have embedded in our VQB5 system since its initiation. So we are closing out right now our third full year of VQB5 required participation. It's really our fifth year, though, because we had multiple practice years before that. And from the beginning, we have focused our system on

[02:52:12] some shared principles. Those are a system that is focused on improving school readiness, so tying to outcomes and what is seen in preparing children for kindergarten. We have built a system that focuses on providing actionable data, so making sure that what is coming out of the system is useful for educators, for program leaders, and for families. We have built a system that we focused on making affordable and scalable, knowing the vast scope of the early

[02:52:45] childhood landscape and number of teachers that we are including. And then primarily a system that is focusing on increasing opportunity and access for all children. As we are closing out our third full year operating statewide, we are really feeling like we are in more of a steady state.

[02:53:06] Things are slightly more predictable, and that has enabled us to come to you with a set of two revisions that we think are building on the momentum and the solid foundation that we have in place in our statewide measurement and improvement system.

[02:53:22] So, again, two kind of key changes that we talked about in April. The first was moving from a three rating system to a five rating level system. So, we have rolled out the system thus far with three levels. Those have been needs support, meets expectations, and exceeds expectations.

[02:53:42] And this has been critical, I think, in the early years to help folks get familiar with the rating system and the tools that are embedded within it. However, what we see after several years of data now is that the vast majority of our programs are scoring in that middle needs expectations bucket.

[02:54:03] And so, we have proposed to shift to a five-level system that will differentiate that middle, which currently has about 99%, 99, 98% of programs in it, to a system that would include five levels.

[02:54:19] So, that would be distinguished, exceeds expectations, meets expectations, approaching expectations, and needs support. This will help families understand that there are distinctions in quality. It will better reflect meaningful differences and give families and providers more information about what is taking place in each of the sites they are.

[02:54:46] The second key proposal that we talked about in April is somewhat related to this also. So we are proposing to expand the requirements for improvement planning. So as it is right now, we have required improvement planning for the lowest performing sites that fall into the need support bucket.

[02:55:06] In this next iteration of the system, we would also have requirements for those that are in the bucket right above that. We think this is really important. Those sites are demonstrating some needs, and we want to make sure that that is where we are prioritizing our resources, prioritizing our coaching services and our TA services that have proven to be very successful thus far with our programs who have participated in it via the need support system.

[02:55:35] So since April, we have continued to socialize these and build the field for this proposal. We have continued with overall communication and field preparation through newsletters, webinars, working very closely with our REDI regions.

[02:55:54] We have done 18 engagement events since April and have had over 2,000 webinar views of our webinar that goes through these proposals. that we delivered to the field in April or March, I think. We have also continued to prepare our system.

[02:56:11] So there's a set of updates that need to be in place for some of our technology systems for next year. Those are getting ready and are on a go. And we have been notifying providers or preparing to notify providers of these proposed shifts. So importantly, these shifts will all affect the ratings that are coming out a year from this fall, fall 2027, following the upcoming year of observations and data.

[02:56:38] So following the 26, 27 year, but we want providers to have a chance to really understand what this would mean for them. We're preparing for this summer when we share the rating that folks will have privately with providers to also let them know what this would look like on the five level system next year.

[02:56:58] So not that that will be their rating, but just so they can kind of envision that would look like a year from now. And then, of course, we've also completed our year three, a successful year three of statewide implementation for VQB5. So, this has involved completing class observations in over 3,200 sites, completing over 9,000 coaching sessions, and preparing to share that in the fall. So, in summary, these proposed updates strengthen the

[02:57:31] clarity fairness and usefulness of the vqb5 system while ensuring that all sites receive supports and focusing those on those that need them most and with board approval today the department will finalize the fy 27 bqb5 guidelines and continue preparing the field for the next year questions great great thank you all members are there any questions dr wilson thank you for this presentation and the reminders of the path that you all have been on. I have a couple of,

[02:58:07] maybe a question and an observation. An observation in the board material, I noticed that the spring engagement events, it looks as if compared to prior events that most of them, most of those events were not available for virtual participation. So live events versus recorded views so i'm assuming that in the earlier um introduction to the public there were virtual options for attendance and then in the spring or recently there have not been can you speak

[02:58:44] if that is the case and then can you help us understand you know kind of the the logic and thinking about how to have that opportunity and then i do have a question it's a follow-up sure So these are all virtual, actually.

[02:59:04] They are all virtual. Yes, they are not all recorded. So depending on where they were, so most of these were, I'm looking now at the list, most of these were delivered specifically to like a head start director meeting or like a specific occurrence.

[02:59:23] So they were to a targeted group. Our main way of getting to the public, and we do have a ton of engagement with that, is through that proposed guidelines webinar. So again, we had about 200 people attend that, and then it's been viewed over 2,000 times since then.

[02:59:41] We also have a survey that we collect after that and read and respond to those comments as appropriate from that. We have not done a ton of in-person only events, a few conferences here and there. - That clarifies, so live attendees.

[02:59:57] - Yes. - Not necessarily. Okay, great. And then the only other observation was during public comment today, we did hear some concern about some of the changes. And so, I do note here in the materials the opportunity for the public to continue to weigh in as this moves to its next stages.

[03:00:23] yeah absolutely and we um you know continue to be open and receptive to feedback as we refine the system year over year um we think it's really important we've come to the board every year i think for five years now uh or four maybe i don't know a good number of years um uh again not necessarily with huge changes but just with an opportunity to reflect some of what we're hearing hope to continue to thank you uh and thank you dr wilson deputy superintendent carroll

[03:01:01] and director myers thank you all so much for all of the work that has gone into this presentation and this engagement over the course of the spring uh for members of the board i know we discussed this at length um in an earlier session but just noting that this is a nation leading measurement and improvement system year-over-year progress and this ability to kind of work with all of our public private partners you know as a as a reminder it is always a choice to take public funds to serve early childhood children and that because of some of the

[03:01:41] priorities for those funds it is by design children and families who are furthest from opportunity the commonwealth has never served more children than before uh in its history with public dollars and so to be able to roll out a rigorous measurement system while continuing to grow access and to do that in partnership with providers who always have the option to walk away represents a significant accomplishment for the team for our ready regions our our partners in in the field who help us build these relationships, complete these observations, gather all this data, engage our families.

[03:02:21] There's a family council in each of our regions and all of the improvement partners. At the end of the day, this is about changing levels to create, as we just talked about in the prior presentation, greater urgency, but as Dr. Bridges noted, with resources, with capacity and with strategy and to improve.

[03:02:41] so year over year you see that floor being lifted and what that means is if you need to rely on a public dollar to access early childhood in the commonwealth you can count on it being quality and being an experience that will prepare your child for kindergarten thank you all so very much thank you dr dorland um reiterating comments here from my colleague um i think in terms of the feedback that we received one of the things that stuck out to me was this visual media we're seeing such a backlash against small children being exposed to visual media at such a young age

[03:03:17] i obviously honestly haven't gone through detail through your long document um but to me you know they're they're suggesting media use up to two hours per day um not more than you know if they are

in operation for more than six no more than total of two hours per day for children two years of age and older i'm like yes like my goodness let's not be putting kids two and three years old hours on end in front of visual media so if that's not in there i'm not saying it is or isn't but just do continue to encourage you to get as specific as you can about the dangers of too

[03:03:52] much media at such a young age yep superintendent conway uh that is actually related to the child care licensing regulations coming later in the agenda so it will be done it will be deputy superintendent carol again but i just you know we are bringing you two giant documents okay um any question board members any question okay uh then is there a motion to approve the guidelines for 26 27 of the early childhood unified measurement and improvement system vqb5

[03:04:31] so moved there's second second oh okay we're very excited here okay dr bridges hi miss mcpherson mr hanson dr northern dr wilson hi mr robinson hi mrs kilgore and chair votes aye thank you okay we get a couple more and before lunch here uh we have up the final review of the virginia textbook and high quality instructional materials process welcome came out of nowhere in the holding

[03:05:11] room back there you know just here so good morning president ashton superintendent conway and members of the board of education um and just prior to me getting started i just want to tie in an update for dr bridges um and the board and the recent mou item and as related to this high quality instructional materials, but we have Region 8 is actually having some training today on high quality instructional materials as related to their math innovation grant. So here's your timely update of the ongoing support that those divisions are still receiving, and Greenville and Prince Edward are participating in that today as part of the regional training. So that support is still ongoing

[03:05:50] as Dr. Ballard mentioned. And so as you've been hearing through various presentations over the last two days, Virginia is moving in the direction to ensure that students have access to high quality instructional materials, commonly referred to as HQIM. These materials are curricula and educational materials that are aligned to standards, our standards of learning, and reflect evidence-based practices for teaching and learning. Standards and HQIM work together to fulfill the many expectations defined by the Code of Virginia and the priorities set forth by the Board of Education.

[03:06:22] Virginia legislation now defines textbooks in HQIM and has directed the board to review and revise the existing process to align with such definition and expectations. Through a series of feedback, we had overwhelming support for the existing process and then to also expand that process to bring in the tenants of high quality instructional materials, as well as to provide additional support to the field in how they should process and how the process should be run in their local school divisions as they look to make their final adoptions locally. Since the last meeting, there

[03:06:59] were no recommendations from the field. However, there was a recommendation shared by a board member, which was reviewed and considered. Those final recommendations can be found in attachment one, which should have been updated this morning, and also in your packet. So, I'll kind of point you to where those recommendations are and where we landed with those recommendations. Page 10, which actually might be page 12 of the PDF, but page 10 of the document at the footer, is just a slight wording change that focuses on the impact of student outcomes and then a slight

[03:07:39] rearrangement of the phrase, building on the understanding and rationale for curriculum components, kind of shifted that language up. It's highlighted in a blue color, like that seafoam blue color for you to see on page 12 which would be possibly page 14 of your pdf is we added in the review of

evidence of effectiveness and that this would be formally included in the review but as you look down at the second part near the end of page 12

[03:08:13] Section 3 information. We felt that evidence of effectiveness would be best to be shared with board members upon the recommendations for adoption, as well as with division leaders as they consider when they are reviewing and adopting materials locally. We felt that evaluating that level of the research that's already taken place might be a little difficult for our teachers to do our teacher committees as they're not really trained in that, but we know that divisions have

[03:08:49] experts that do that, and then we have experts on staff that can kind of review that, and then we provide that to the board so that you could see what research was presented in relation to the adoptive materials. We felt that was a nice compromise to the recommendation. We like the recommendation and certainly love the support of the evidence of effectiveness, but just want to make sure that we put that in the appropriate place for division leaders to consider.

[03:09:17] There were no other changes. So the attachment one would be the version that we would be considering today. And so you have before you the final review for the Virginia textbook and high quality instruction materials process. The superintendent of public instruction recommends that the board of education approve the revisions as outlined in the boilerplate. And I'm not going read all of them because it's many. But you can see what those recommendations are to the Virginia textbook high quality instruction materials review process. And then action by the board today allows

[03:09:55] the department to proceed with informing school divisions on the updated adoption process for textbook and high quality instruction materials in Virginia as required by the code of Virginia. and then also the process will inform current ongoing adoptions for materials to support the Virginia Literacy Act as well as future adoptions which we plan to bring to you a timeline a couple of timelines at our August board meeting wonderful thank you board members are there questions Mr. Robinson virtual thank you for your responsiveness to the field and to the board

[03:10:32] love the and love the thoughtful process that you've laid out here my question is in the In the superintendent's recommendations, and this was in your presentation April as well, the process includes in one, bullet three, assessments to monitor student mastery of curriculum content.

[03:10:50] I wanted a quick clarification for comment on whether that's new in the past, after we passed the higher standards in literacy and math, and if so, what's new about that compared to prior adoptions?

[03:11:05] So, great question. Prior adoptions really focused on textbooks themselves, just really the teacher's edition and the student's edition of textbooks. The bullet that you're referencing is actually part of the Code of Virginia, the legislation that was passed last year in 2025 through House Bill 2777.

[03:11:25] And what it does is, you know, when we talk about HQIM, we've already been training divisions on HQIM over the last six months. And when we talk to divisions about this, you know, you think about the teacher's edition and the student edition. It's really for teachers. It's just the book, right? The textbook.

[03:11:43] But the high quality instructional materials components come in when we add in those layers of support for teachers. The assessments would be those ongoing assessments that support the lessons that teachers are teaching. And so that is new. We're looking at a package. We will be looking at a package to evaluate versus just that standalone textbook.

[03:12:05] And so it's like it's like the whole kit and caboodle. Right. But it's it's everything that the teacher would need, including supports for them to learn more about the curriculum and the content. Well, I'm all in favor, particularly as legislatively required, of curriculum-based assessments that align to high standards and that provide teacher support, et cetera.

[03:12:32] I just want to notice the Commonwealth Listening Tour finding about modernizing and reducing assessments is important to stakeholders across the community. And so, again, I've seen in many schools these type of curriculum-based assessments be incredible tools to help.

[03:12:53] But I've also seen many schools that the addition of these curriculum-based assessments further reduce clarity about what's most important with standards, further enhance confusion about when do I use diagnostics versus other formulas versus interims versus versus.

[03:13:11] And so I think based on your comments in April, your team's already doing a great job of this, but want to further encourage specifically as I fear that more divisions will have more confusion with more assessments that they think are fully required towards how do we help divisions in schools provide them with templates and guidance and other advice about how to streamline and make coherent their assessment strategy.

[03:13:38] Yeah, so that's actually part of some of the training that we've been doing around instructional coherence and ensuring that once a division has selected those HQIM, that they are looking at those materials. They're looking at our standards of learning. I want to, you know, just point out no core instructional program is going to be 100% aligned to our standards of learning all the time.

[03:14:01] You can look at other states that also have other standards and they've adopted these materials. They also have to kind of fill in where the core does not meet their standards. And so when we're talking with school divisions, we're encouraging them. I mean, this is the whole kit and caboodle, but their local curriculum is going to their local adoption and then their local implementation will really inform which assessments they're going to use from those products or from, you know, that textbook and HGAM package.

[03:14:31] And they have to really carefully think about the assessments that they are already given students. You know, these assessments with the HQIM are really intended to inform instruction on a regular basis, on that formative regular basis, rather than the summative at the end of the year assessments.

[03:14:50] And while I do agree the listening tour pointed out the need to reform assessments, I think that most of the field is talking about the end-of-year SOL assessments related to those reformations.

[03:15:05] And so certainly divisions have lots of assessment policies that they have locally adopted, and we would encourage them always to look at them as they're looking at this implementation at the local level for that instructional coherence.

[03:15:18] Superintendent Conway. Thank you, Dr. Wallace. I'd also like to add, Mr. Robinson, that this law, which is incredibly explicit about the importance of HQIM and the requirements for it, is also very specific about that focus on coherence, ensuring that it's used in a way that is aligned with promoting student mastery of content, prioritizing our schools in greatest need. And so going back to the point you made previously about

[03:15:53] the 108 essential items or action items and the risk that that then does not create a clear path forward, I also think you will hear us come back to this body and talk about when we think about agency-wide school improvement and that mandate from another law, that tying these two laws together and thinking about what that means in each of our classrooms, not just our systems, but each of our classrooms in our federally identified schools and that HQIM and how it's used and the extent to which the system understands how it's being used and is giving that feedback to educators will be a key piece of it. And so you'll see these different pieces of law

[03:16:32] coming together, but ultimately towards the end of school improvement. Dr. Northern? So thank you for integrating the evidence a bit. I really appreciate that. And I the way that you guys did that I think it was important because we kept talking about evidence space but then we didn't say like that we're actually looking at evidence um so that's key just three quick things I just would caution us generally to keep the list tight you know

[03:17:05] louisiana has five k5 core programs at tier one uh let's see tennessee has five core programs across K-5. And these are two states that have generally taken a more restrictive approach to curriculum quality reviews, and they tend to have made pretty significant gains on NAEP.

[03:17:25] To your point about coherence, you know, not to plug a recent study that my organization did, but we recently did a study on a nationally representative sample of literacy teachers across the country. And they're telling us they're doing, you know, looking at three and four curriculum right and so there's not coherence and even though they say they're just using supplemental or intervention like teachers are just you know oftentimes they don't they're not really doing what we want them to do between like just using intervention supplemental in this limited tiny way um so anyway I think we should keep the list tight and I think over the years

[03:18:04] as continued research comes out on these curricula we should continue to tighten the bolts um I just feel like we need to start separating the wheat from the chaff like hqim is like oh hqim is like this national thing now and the evidence hasn't caught up with it yet so just quickly another little plug um when we actually looked at the knowledge of the standards of the knowledge of the science of reading and the curriculum um letters which is not a curriculum but it's a pd letters uh the the teachers who took letters knew far and away more about the science of reading than other teachers who, I mean, they're all correlations. It's not a random study. UFLY, the teachers who

[03:18:44] participate in UFLY knew more. So letters, UFLY, CKLA, AMPLIFY. So like to me, like I think CKLA AMPLIFY is on our list. So great. I don't know how many of our divisions are participating in letters or UFLY, but like that's what's now pushing, that's what evidence is showing us, is making teachers at least correlated with more knowledge. And the last thing I'll say is just that the the uh where was my last point oh actually no oh the alignment you can have alignment but it can still be a crummy curriculum right because you have no evidence of effectiveness

[03:19:22] even though it's a lot thank you thank you thank you uh any questions for board members if not is there a motion to approve the revisions to virginia's textbook and high quality instructional materials review process as described in the item presented to the board second okay uh we'll do roll call dr bridges aye mrs mcpherson aye mr henson dr northern aye dr wilson aye mr robinson

[03:19:58] all right mrs kilgore and chair votes aye thank you thank you all right we have we're gonna keep going until we so we have to break here we go um so now we're considering final review of the

revisions and two guidelines for the school construction assistance program for the 2024-26 biennium thank you president ashton good morning or good afternoon good afternoon board members and good afternoon superintendent conway this item was presented to you in your april board meeting

[03:20:32] there have been no changes to the proposed revisions to the 2024-26 biennial school construction assistance program guidelines for reference by the way i am christina bird a chief operations officer sorry i forget to do that all the time just for the public and for you all as a reminder the key changes and highlights to the proposed guidelines are adjustments to the points to score for poor but building conditions to enable some of our divisions that were slightly short of the qualifying points previously to potentially qualify for new funding

[03:21:06] considerations. We have added, based on feedback from you all, a criteria for division enrollment trends using our VDOE fall enrollment numbers, allowing divisions to score five points for increased enrollment or if their enrollment remains unchanged from the previous year.

[03:21:24] Also allowing to make that change, we had to make some reductions in three areas, One being a reduction for ADA, an ADA question, a debt capacity maximum score, and condition of all school buildings score. We have made adjustments to the individual student percentage in our school nutrition programs, fiscal stress designation, and poverty percentages, also to enable some school divisions that were slightly short of the qualifying point requirements to potentially qualify.

[03:21:55] We have also added language in the procedures on the final project cost that are below what the estimated costs were to make sure that we are ensuring that we get funds back if we over award at the beginning of the process and the actual project does not result in that cost that you have approved.

[03:22:13] They have to achieve a minimum score of 65 points out of 100. Upon your adoption, we will issue the award notification to you and hopefully at your August board meeting be bringing back proposals for you to consider. So with that, I'm happy to answer any questions, but we are asking you today to approve the changes in the guidelines so that we can issue our grant application process.

[03:22:38] Thank you. Board members, are there any questions? Okay. Oh, Dr. Northern? I just, there were two small things I just wanted to bring to discussion. One, we talked about last time the enrollment issue, the fact that we have just dropping enrollment everywhere. And I do see, thank you, that you guys added an indicator in there for three points for building enhancements and flexible space concepts after schools consolidate or close.

[03:23:08] I was just wondering if we could bump that up a little bit. I feel like that should be six or seven. I feel like that should give more weight than maybe some of these other things. Maybe that's just a judgment. But I feel like we, you know, it would be nice if we'd give them a little bit. The other place that I thought that might be helpful is I think they got the same points for unchanged enrollment and dropping enrollment.

[03:23:33] And to me, unchanged shouldn't be the same. It's unchanged and increasing. five points for unchanged and increasing three for unchanging um we looked at that but it's hard for us to program that in the back end um for us to have variable and quite honestly there are not that many that are unchanged most of them are either a positive or a negative there aren't very many that are unchanged certainly we can look at that and to your first point what I would recommend is school construction assistance program funding is in the budget for 27 and 28 so we're going to

[03:24:08] to go through this process again i would recommend with these changes let's see what it results in see how we can impact school divisions and then potentially we could consider that as a change for the the next iteration if that's acceptable to you any other questions okay is there a motion to approve the proposed amended guidelines for school construction assistant program for the 24-26 biennium as shown in attachment one to the item as presented to the board so moved

[03:24:40] is there a second okay okay dr bridges hi mrs mcpherson mr hanson dr northern dr wilson hi mr robinson hi mrs kilgore and chair votes aye thank you we're gonna go one more lunch okay oh yeah there we go um we have the final final review of the virginia school accreditation system

[03:25:14] report for school year 2526 good afternoon mark good afternoon oh good afternoon board president ashton superintendent conway and board members today i will be presenting the final review for virginia's school accreditation report for 2526. this is available to the public as item g attachment one in addition the board is going to be asked to accept for final review the accreditation appeal process also for school year 2526 available as item g attachment two at the april 23rd board

[03:25:50] meeting we requested first review of this item and since then there has been an addition to the report this follows well after dr wallace's report we are asking school divisions in accordance with house bill 2777 and the standards of quality one that goes into effect july 1st 2026 to provide for the department the high quality instruction materials that they are using we are very clear in the report this is strictly for informational purposes it does not affect a school's accreditation status it does not affect a division uh sort of you know any of the findings it's simply for information gathering and it's a good way to do it because the superintendents are signing off on

[03:26:27] this and collecting it so that was a revision since the april uh report that we shared with you and it is on the red line version available to the public from here if the board adopts this we'll be sending communication out to the schools to the superintendents and their designees with the timeline the materials they would need and then the window for them to complete this report so at this time i turn to you for any questions and just request the public the superintendent public instruction would recommend that the board would receive for final review virginia's school accreditation system report and appeal process for the 25-26 school year

[03:27:02] thank you remember so there are questions okay uh then is there a motion to approve i'm sorry oh yeah go ahead dr on the literacy plans remember you guys showed it us last year just make sure we're not duplicating the hboi excellent so excellent point that that did come up given sort of when the literacy plans were developed in sort of the years of when the textbooks were adopted and that was strictly for literacy we're looking for all content areas and we're looking for all grade levels so this would be more expansive so for this part we're looking to see

[03:27:39] the divisions you know from what they offered at that time that this would be the most updated information and with any new uh revised list that the board has adopted right this will include your reading math science and history whereas the literacy plan was strictly around literacy just one quick follow-up when they have to report all this is this all just yes or no like when they get to the question it's yes or no if they answer no then they give us more information about why they were out of compliance they tell us which schools and then what they're going to do to be in compliance for obviously for the hqim it's open

[03:28:16] response they're able to put information there and they can designate by school level division level grade level for that part yes absolutely so you'll see there at the end the superintendent will need to certify with a wet ink signature and that was something coordinating with the office of attorney general to make sure they've seen this reviewed and signed off in coordination with this we also do a report for the standards of quality i mean that's separate than this this is standards of accreditation and that's a separate report division superintendents are asked to do and you see in the red line where some of these items were removed for that reason that they're

[03:28:52] also certifying there but we want to be specific that these are regulations the board has adopted for accreditation for other schools um superintendent conway yeah thank you uh mr jennings so dr northern just to lay this out it is in the literacy plans but it sort of it's not just the name it's sort of how it's being used and a broader explanation so our team under the leadership of dr wallace has gone back and hold we have for example an internal spreadsheet of everything being used and so we'll go back and look for ckla uh and and and you fly and can come back to you

[03:29:28] on that um so but this will be in one place in spreadsheet format from the outset and again it will not be asked in the same way in the literacy plan but the literacy plan is really about the how you're using it and kind of the the the sort of the more narrative description so we'll double check that there's not redundancy because i know we heard from the superintendents association this morning and the desire for streamlining reporting to the department but there's slightly different contexts um uh and this will be our uh source of truth on hqim going forward dr bridges can you

[03:30:04] just talk about um the timeline for collecting once this is adopted or approved by the board how soon do you think that you'll be able to get the data? And then how do y'all publicly report out this report? So once, if this is adopted by the board, we'll send communication in two weeks to the division superintendents and their designees. We open the window for around five weeks for them to complete this. We realize, you know, we have new superintendents to start July 1st. We'll make sure they get acclimated. They have to, you know, get their reports settled.

[03:30:35] We then give a time to collect the data, analyze it, and then we have part of this appeal process We share back with them our initial preliminary results. If there's misunderstanding on the questions, sort of, you know, they scored it this way, we're seeing it this way. That happened last year based on interpretations of the regulations.

[03:30:53] So we do all of that before we even submit to preliminary reports that's in our internal system. And that's their first look to see it. And then again, once they go public, we're anticipating that for part of our joint release with the school performance support framework in October.

[03:31:10] Then it's on the school quality profiles. And what you see on that report there is by each school, you will see the status of accreditation. If they're not accredited, we have a coding system to show that they might be conditionally accredited and why, which specific area of the 11 items. And if the school had to submit additional information, we show that as well. So, you know, sort of approaching progress. There's an icon that we use. It's like a little yellow symbol to say the school was not in compliance, but they have a corrective action plan they're making efforts in this area so they are fully accredited uh but it's something the department and the school are monitoring and so that is public facing it's one of the first

[03:31:49] pages on this the school quality profiles it would be in october but again part of this appeal process before you is to make sure there are multiple feedback loops before we get there so divisions can

appeal um they can you know make sure we're all in the same understanding and if it goes to go to the october then the official appeal will go to the board to say they want to submit more information to you thank you um with that is there a motion to approve virginia's school accreditation system report and appeals process for school year 2025-26 is there a second roll

[03:32:27] call dr bridges hi mrs mcpherson hi mr hanson dr northern dr wilson mr robinson hi mrs kilgore and share words i thank you great this will be your last one before we uh break for lunch uh and this is for final review of amendment nine to virginia's oh we're okay great so we'll break for lunch now okay wonderful we're gonna uh go ahead and break for lunch it is 12 24 i'll say

[03:33:02] we'll come back at 1 30. wonderful we're gonna have our students join us oh no okay 1 12 1 15. Okay. 1:15. We're going to go for lunch. Sorry. Math. Yes. Okay. And our students from our panel, we invite you to join us for lunch upstairs. We'll be back at 1:15 on the dot.



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