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Virginia Board of Education, Work Session (Part 2), Wednesday, September 23, 2026

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- Official meeting video (VDOE, YouTube): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5jk9cnZ8jHM>
- Board of Education meetings, agendas and minutes (VDOE): <https://www.doe.virginia.gov/state-board-data-funding/virginia-board-of-education>

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[00:04:01] We convened today in a closed meeting pursuant to a recorded vote on the motion above and in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act section 2.2-3712 of the Code of Virginia requires that the board certify that to the best of each member's knowledge, only public business matters lawfully exempt from open meeting requirements under this chapter and only such public business matters as were identified in the motion by which the close meeting was convened were heard, discussed, or considered.

[00:04:33] Any member who believes there was a departure from these requirements shall so state prior to the vote, indicating the substance of the departure that in his or her judgment has taken place. The statement of the departure will be recorded in a minute. Motion, is there a second?

[00:04:52] Second. Great, I will do roll call. Ms. Reinhart? Aye. Ms. McPherson? Aye. Mr. Robinson? Aye. Dr. Bridges? Aye. Dr. Northern? Aye. Mrs. Kilgore? Aye. And Chair votes aye.

[00:05:12] I'm just going to go through. Great. In case, board members, are you ready? We're going to just go in order. In case number 2632, the Chair will entertain a motion to issue the license. Move.

[00:05:28] Is there a second? Second. Ms. Reinhart? Aye. Dr. Bridges? Aye. Mrs. McPherson? Aye. Mr. Robinson? Aye. Dr. Northern? Aye. Mrs. Kilgore? Aye. And Chair votes aye.

[00:05:44] Thank you. In case number 2628, the chair will entertain a motion to issue the license. Is there a second? We'll call. Ms. Reinhart? Aye. Dr. Bridges? Aye. Ms. McPherson? Aye. Mr. Robinson? Aye. Dr.

[00:06:05] Northern? Mrs. Kilgore? Aye. And chair votes aye. In case 202631, the chair will entertain a motion

[00:06:16] to issue the license? I moved. Is there a second? Great. Ms. Reinhart? Aye. Dr. Bridges? Aye. Mrs. McPherson? Aye. Mr. Robinson? Aye. Dr. Northern? Mrs. Kilgore? Aye. And chair votes aye. In case 20-26-30, the chair will entertain a motion to issue the license? Moved. Is there a second? Great. Mrs. Reinhart? Aye. Dr. Bridges? Aye. Mrs. McPherson?

[00:06:54] Mr. Robinson, Dr. Northern, Mrs. Kilgore, and Chair Rhoads, aye. Thank you. We're now going to go to our transition to our work session on the Virginia Literacy Act updates and overview.

[00:07:14] Welcome. Thank you. Good morning. Almost afternoon. Dr. Emily Solari and I are here today to give you an update on the Virginia Literacy Act and also want to try to put our VLA efforts within the larger context of our vision for high quality instruction in Virginia.

[00:07:33] So as you all may know, we also want to kind of level set for folks as we know we have some new board members that are perhaps not as familiar with the work that's been done, the extensive work that's been done over the last several years. Over the last several years, Virginia has put really critically important pieces of a literacy system in place: evidence-based instruction, high quality materials, screening, intervention, professional learning, and stronger expectations for educator preparation.

[00:08:02] And we want to talk today about how all of those pieces fit together, as well as how they've evolved, and just name that increasingly we're thinking about those pieces as part of a larger instructional vision for literacy K-12, and that the VLA has given us a really strong foundation for that work. So today we will walk through some of the key components of VLA, review our current implementation efforts as monitored by the department identify future implementation efforts for this school year and beyond and then review relative research professional development curriculum review process literacy screener information and resources provided by the

[00:08:41] virginia literacy partnership at university of virginia which is obviously a key partner within this work so um i'm not going to go through all of these pieces in great depth now because dr Solari is the expert on a lot of these pieces and she will get us into those, but I do want to give a quick overview. VLA is not a single intervention. It is intentionally an interconnected system of multiple components that establish what we mean when we're saying evidence-based literacy instruction and science-based reading research within the state. So it helps us define what

[00:09:16] students are going to be taught. It aligns the core curriculum that's being used in K-5 classrooms as well as the screening and intervention methods. It requires the use of K-5 instructional materials from a list that we vet that VLP supports with and it requires that that is set out publicly in their division-wide literacy plan. We use a screening model to identify students in need of intervention and really the purpose of that is to help understand what students need to to become better readers.

[00:09:51] And it also added a division-wide staffing ratio of one reading specialist per 550 students in K-5 and one reading specialist per 1,100 students in grade 6-8. VLA requires continuing professional development and training, so it requires principal teachers and reading specialists to be provided with professional development in science-based reading research and evidence-based literacy instruction.

[00:10:20] Additionally, VLA helps us kind of codify partnership with families in the reading journey of children. So it ensures that parents are engaged in the development of student reading plans and that they have access to resources to support literacy development at home. And then lastly, one small other piece, it helps us align educator preparation and licensure.

[00:10:43] So there are requirements within the act that require certain educator preparation programs to ensure candidates have a program of coursework and that they demonstrate mastery in science-based reading research and evidence-based literacy instruction. It stipulates that the assessment for licensure or alternative route to licensure include a test of science-based reading research, and it requires every person seeking initial licensure with certain endorsements to complete study in science-based reading research.

[00:11:13] It also established a micro-credential program for earning an add-on reading specialist endorsement as needed. So the individual provisions of VLA matter, but the key power here is really in the alignment of these pieces. And so when we think about VLA, rather than thinking of the components as a list of activities or compliance metrics, we're increasingly really trying to start with what is the experience that we want students to have in classrooms every day, and thinking about how are all these pieces actually making it into the daily classroom where students are having these experiences. So we want to make sure that kids are getting access to grade-level

[00:11:51] content through high-quality instructional materials and that their instruction is grounded in the best evidence we have about how students learn to read. That means consistent access to explicit systematic phonics instruction, complex knowledge-building text, and opportunities to think, write, talk, and read about high-quality text every day. And then when a student struggles, what we ultimately hope is that teachers have the information they need to help them understand why a student is struggling and respond with targeted support that moves that student forward.

[00:12:22] I think where we are right now is that we must ensure that all of these pieces are reaching students consistently in the classroom and that we really understand the degree to which students are experiencing what the intent of the law was. So moving here a little bit into the Virginia Literacy Act implementation. I'm going to walk through some of the infrastructure that we put in place. You're also going to hear Dr. Solari expand on the research base of a lot of this.

[00:12:53] So I'm going to keep it a little bit high level here. So as I mentioned before, evidence-based literacy instruction is a requirement set out by the law. School divisions are required to provide core literacy instruction using the adopted materials to every student in kindergarten and through grade five. And supplemental and intervention instruction should also be aligned with reading research in grades K through eight and should be utilizing approved materials from those separate lists. So we, in partnership with BLP, produced three different lists that

[00:13:28] folks can choose for different parts of the day as needed. Additionally, divisions are required to submit a division literacy plan. They submitted their initial division-wide literacy plans in the summer of 2024. They were given feedback and they revised their plans in December 2024 to meet the unique needs of each division. And then these are submitted moving forward on a biennial basis.

[00:13:53] So the next submission date will be, the next date was June 30th, 2025. And then the next time that we will get them is this upcoming June, 2027. The plans are really intended to detail how the division intends to implement the components of VLA in a way that leads to a coherent student experience. And so each individual division publishes their plans on their website. And so any family member or community

member can view those plans. They're also all housed on VDOE's website so that anyone could see or compare across. They all use the same template.

[00:14:30] And so you can kind of look across and see how different divisions are implementing the components of the LA. The LA also expanded the role of the reading specialist to ensure that the person in the school or division with the depth of knowledge about how students learn to read are the ones that are overseeing the development and implementation of the student reading plans. So we want to ensure that all students that need support in reading have the right targeted intervention and having the reading specialist intimately involved in the creation and execution of those plans helps

[00:15:08] ensure that kids are getting what they need based on the assessment data that we have, the screener data that we have from valves. Student reading specialists are funded by the standards of quality, and division leaders, as a result of the Virginia Literacy Act, collaborate with their finance folks to figure out how they're going to meet the allocation that is required through VLA.

[00:15:34] I mentioned this earlier, but we also have established a micro-credential program because of the expansion of the reading specialist role. was a need for more reading specialists, and so we created a micro-credential program for reading specialists that assists schools in training folks that are positioned to become a reading specialist so that they can step into those roles sooner and do their training alongside of their clinical practice.

[00:16:03] It's a five-year provisional license, and they would need to meet the credentials of a reading specialist as laid out in our code within those five years in order to get a renewable license as a reading specialist. Another key piece of the Virginia Literacy Act is screening, universal screening for all kids K3 and recently expanded to a subset of kids in four through eight.

[00:16:32] So this means that, and Dr. Slurry will talk in more depth about this, but VALS is not meant to sit separate from instruction. The screening data in this assessment is extremely helpful in the sense that it gives instructional indicators to the teams at school so that they can better understand what kids need.

[00:16:52] So they don't just have data that is sitting here in this one place that only some folks can understand or that is telling them, you know, something that may not be actionable. The data can be translated such that teachers, reading specialists, and division staff can act upon that data and get kids the intervention or the support that they need to meet the specific reading needs that they have.

[00:17:14] So the goal is that the data from VALS, as needed, is utilized to create those student reading plans so students are getting the support that they need when they are struggling. So students who score in the basic or below basic range on their end of year SOL assessment for reading in grades three through seven are also screened using the VALS four to eight screener in the fall of the following school year. So any kid that is not showing proficiency on our reading standards is then given this screener so that we can again understand what that child needs in order

[00:17:50] to get the right support to catch up and get the reading instruction that they need. School divisions also have leeway to administer vows to students who do not fail the SOL or that fail basic or below basic. So if there are kids that they might have concerns about or that they think might potentially slip through the cracks, they're also welcome to screen those kids as well.

[00:18:15] For our older students, I think this piece really matters because if a student is struggling with grade level text, we really need to understand whether, you know, what that barrier is and make sure that

they are getting timely and targeted support so that they can catch up before the, you know, gap widens between them and their peers. And at the same time, we want to be sure that intervention does not become a substitute for strong core instruction. And so it's really helpful for us to have this data. And what we're thinking about is how can we help schools and

[00:18:49] divisions understand how they can use this data to not immediately put students into intervention if that is not what the data is telling us they really need. And so Dr. Salari will talk more about kind of the depth of that data and what we could think about doing with it. But the goal here is that strong tier one instruction for all should allow less kids to be in that category of needing reading intervention.

[00:19:11] And for those kids that truly need it, we have good data that tells us what they need so that we can target that instruction and meet their needs. Student reading plans are designed for students that fall in K-3 in the high risk band.

[00:19:27] and for students in four through eight who failed their SOL. So all students who are screened for VALS four through eight are required to have a student reading plan outlining the appropriate intervention. And then in K through three, any students who are in that high risk band on VALS would also get a student reading plan. Again, all of this text is saying you can also screen other children that do not fail if you have concerns about them, which we actually have heard in our VLA work groups that districts are doing and that they are they're actually casting a wider net for kids that they don't want to fall through the cracks and so they're getting that data and

[00:20:04] understanding that as well. Students in kindergarten through grade three who are designated high risk on vowels are required to receive an additional 2.5 hours of instruction and it's outlined in the early intervention reading initiative so it's not just about getting the right instruction that's one piece of it, but it's also about dosage and making sure that they're getting enough of that instruction so that they are able to catch up. Localities make decisions about master schedule staffing and resources available, but the expectation is that they're getting that additional

[00:20:38] time to with the right targeted intervention so that they can get to mastery. In grades four through eight, local school divisions are determining how they meet the additional instructional time for intervention. So, there's not necessarily a requirement in code written out here, but those local decisions will depend on, you know, master schedule, staffing resources, and ideally prioritizing individual student need. So, in terms of intervention delivery models,

[00:21:15] school divisions do have flexibility here in using a combination of options to ensure that students are receiving literacy intervention. So, for middle grade teams, they can collaborate to figure out the best support for students based on their schedules and staffing situations.

[00:21:31] It could look like instruction from a reading specialist, a trained aide, a computer-based reading tutorial program or a classroom teacher with support from an aide. It could look like an extended instructional time like tutoring or something that's happening after school or an intervention group happening after school or an extended school year. It could look like an additional course outside of the required SOL English course. So this could look like an optional course that's being added to a middle schooler's schedule so that they are getting an additional block of reading that is more targeted to their inner their needs. Intervention

[00:22:06] materials for K through 8, so for middle schoolers as well, must be selected from the board approved intervention list. And this is the same for K through 8. They all need to be selected from this list so we're not um recreating the wheel as we think about what kids need here we're really making sure that their core instruction is tied to high quality instructional materials and whatever they're receiving an intervention is also tied there i think we have an opportunity here to think about coherence across these materials and how we're moving the field in that space and i think that's something that dr slurry and i have talked about as well that it doesn't always have

[00:22:43] to be additional materials, it can also be higher dosage of certain materials so that, you know, depending on student need, they're getting what they need in that way. So when we look at curriculum implementation today, we know that 100% of divisions have reported that they adopted K-5 core literacy programs. And 2026 is our baseline year for adopted 612 English materials.

[00:23:11] We just collected that data recently to see which divisions have adopted 612 English materials. They are required by HB 2777 to adopt something from our list or to go through their own board-approved process that mirrors our process in order to adopt something.

[00:23:30] VDOE has also developed walkthrough tools. So we really see walkthroughs as a way that we can get into the phase of implementation that we want to look at next. So we know that adoption of high-quality instructional materials is really just the first step in a division's journey towards a strong literacy program.

[00:23:48] Teachers and leaders need support to implement those materials and the underlying practices that those materials are built on. And they need that support in a timely fashion and in a way that is connected to the materials that they're using so that they can see the research reflected in those materials and that those practices actually make it to students.

[00:24:08] So, we see this as sort of the next phase of our work is getting into classrooms and understanding to what degree are these materials being implemented as designed. And notice I didn't say implemented with fidelity. It is important that they're following the scope and sequence of those materials, but it is also important that they're being implemented with integrity.

[00:24:27] That means that there are lots of choices that educators are making every day within these materials. They are not all scripted materials, so there are still lots of choices that teachers and educators have to make. We want to make sure they're making the right choices that are rooted in a strong understanding of what the science tells us kids need.

[00:24:44] So one of the ways that we are supporting that is through a grant that we got from the federal government, the Comprehensive Literacy State Development Grant, that is intended to support schools with curriculum-based professional learning. We've done two rounds of competitive grants for this larger grant that we received.

[00:25:02] We're in the third round now, and we will be funding schools that are looking to support curriculum-based professional learning for their teachers and making sure that we are aligning those funds with our instructional vision. So wanting to make sure that whatever school divisions are receiving those funds are using that to support teachers getting the kind of support they need to implement their materials well so that we're really helping the provisions of the act make it to students.

[00:25:32] on a day-to-day basis. So additional professional learning will be offered to school divisions to support their literacy implementation efforts. Some of that is through our CLSD work.

[00:25:48] We are targeting, as a department, our professional development to be focused on high-quality instructional materials and our English standards, which are rooted in the science of reading. And we really want to focus on those students that are furthest from opportunity and making sure that they're getting support that is aligned with what they need. Year three of our CLSD grants and moving forward, we are going to do a multi-year sustained support in literacy curricula implementation. So that means instead of doing a yearly competitive grant, we are going to extend it for three years because we know that this work takes time and that we don't want divisions to

[00:26:25] have to be constantly reapplying for the funding here. We want them to be able to focus their efforts on the actual support that teachers need. And having that consistent access to professional learning over the course of those three years, we think will deepen their teacher's ability to implement these materials well, to be able to get some real coaching and on-the-ground support, to be able to put into action the things that we know are right for kids. And ultimately in the future, we would like to be able to collect walkthrough data from those CLSD school divisions as a starting point to better understand what our statewide implementation of instructional materials

[00:27:01] look like. So we want to be able to understand at a classroom level, at scale, what do we understand about kids' access to grade-level learning, kids' access to explicit systematic phonics instruction with the right kind of corrective feedback and modeling that they need in order to learn to read? Are teachers using the materials as designed, using those text-dependent questions and rooting the discussions in the classroom in what's happening in that text and understanding that text at a deep level. And we think that this walkthrough data will give us a better understanding of where we stand within implementation so that we know where to direct

[00:27:36] future efforts and resources to be able to support kids that need it most. I'm going to turn it over to Dr. Solari now, and she's going to talk a little bit about VLP's role in some of this work. Thank you. Thank you, everyone. Thanks for having me. My name is Emily Solari. I work at University of Virginia and I direct the VLP, Virginia Literacy Partnerships Office. We do several things in our office. We work on federally funded research and also part of our job with in collaboration with the VDOE is implementation of the Virginia Literacy Act. We've been working

[00:28:13] with them since day one, well pre-day one probably. And so thank you for having me. I apologize to those of you who have heard me talk before because I've been asked to go back a little bit and talk a little bit about why are we doing all of this why are we investing so much money in literacy so i'm going to talk a little bit about the research base um and then i'll move forward and let you know a little bit more about how the implementation is going from our end the stuff that we are responsible for implementing um so you know i think it's important to for those of you who aren't as familiar with the vla to understand that the vla was written sort of on the heels of the pandemic

[00:28:51] understanding that children had been out of school they had lost school time and there was great concern for literacy development but also understand that our data in virginia around literacy started to dip before the pandemic and so this wasn't this is is exacerbated exacerbated by the pandemic but we were having issues in literacy and reading development before the pandemic hit um i came to uva in 2018 and i was given the charge of making sure that university of Virginia's reading offerings were all

evidence-based and based in scientifically-based reading research to make sure that we were training teachers

[00:29:29] adequately and then also eventually started to work with the screening system that was formerly known as PALS which I think everyone probably knows the name PALS and we have since made a new screening system that's based in the most recent evidence base called VALS and I'll talk a little bit about that as well. So why are we doing this? So we know from cognitive science research that we are not wired to learn how to read. That is not the way that our brains develop. Most individuals are wired to learn how to speak orally and develop language skills, but we are not hardwired and we have to

[00:30:04] be explicitly taught how to read. And this is true for the majority of children. We also know that all students benefit from explicit and systematic instruction and early reading. So what we mean by that is that we have to explicitly teach the relationship between sounds and the letters on the page and those explicit rules that children have to learn early in their reading experience in order to read fluently. We know that reading words is not the goal of reading, it's reading comprehension, but it's really hard to get to reading comprehension if you can't read fluently.

[00:30:36] And so those early skills are really, really important. We know that literacy skills develop over time, you know, literacy skills start before children are born with language exposure and, you know, through pre-k and into kindergarten, we explicitly start to begin teaching early literacy skills really in pre-k and much more in kindergarten, right? So we have to provide students with multiple years of exposure and meaningful opportunities to engage in the reading process. We have to teach them to crack the code efficiently. That's that relationship between letters and sounds and we also know that reading comprehension is really really complex so once a

[00:31:13] kid knows how to read fluently it doesn't mean that they're automatically going to comprehend what they read they also have to have understanding of the words they're reading so that's their language comprehension and they have to be able to put sentences together in order to to maintain comprehension and understanding so when we work with teachers around the vla we are and principals and leaders of all sorts, these are the things that we are talking about probably ad nauseum to them over and over and over again around their professional development. So we know that reading development is the product of both decoding, so really how to read fluently, and also language

[00:31:51] comprehension. So being able to understand the language that you are being exposed to while reading. So things like vocabulary. We've all had the experience where we come across a word, even as adults, you're like, oh, I don't, what does that mean? And you have to be able to sort sort of figure that out and use clues to figure it out.

[00:32:08] We know there is a framework and theoretical model that's empirically validated called the simple view of reading. I don't love the name because reading is not simple, it turns out. And that is that the coding and language comprehension equal reading comprehension. You have to have both of those to have reading comprehension.

[00:32:26] But it's also much more complex. And so when you look at the different sub skills necessary for language comprehension and word recognition, are a bunch of things that are targetable skills in the classroom that teachers need to be teaching in order to get kids to learn how to read and comprehend. So the VLA through our professional development, through our curriculum review, through our screening

hits all of those targetable skills and I'm going to talk in depth about that a little bit here. So first I'm going to talk about

[00:33:02] professional learning. When the VLA was passed, the K-3, the first one, K-3, we were asked to develop the professional learning model for all reading specialists and teachers and principals across Virginia. And so we did that at UVA and the VLP office.

[00:33:26] And we did a few different things to reach the masses, because you can imagine that this is a big lift and we did some in-person trainings and we also have some online ongoing professional development we know from the research that these sort of one-and-done professional development opportunities don't tend to work out for teachers or the students that they serve so we want to make sure that we are continuing with the professional development over time we have multiple courses at this point because we knew that not one model would fit everybody So you can see the courses listed, starting with K-3 specialists, all the way down to content area teachers.

[00:34:04] When we moved to the 4-8 space, we knew that we also needed to make sure we had special literacy training and professional development for our content area teachers, because they also have a role in this process. We've had over 100,000 people enrolled in these courses across our reading specialists and our teachers.

[00:34:23] And we have a pretty good completion rate, 88%. we are working. We work. If people have not completed, we are bothering them to complete. It's probably the nice way to say it. And then this also provides you an idea of the different topics that we go over. So what is reading science? What does the science say about reading development? What is explicit instruction? How does that science drive actual instructional practice? When I talk to my team about this, we always talk about the why and the how. So why are we doing this and how do we do it? The professional learning model is really about those two

[00:34:57] things and making sure that everyone in the building understands their role around literacy. We actually had one, two school divisions I met with, I don't know, probably a year and a half ago now said to me, we really want our specialist teachers to know about literacy. They're not teaching literacy, but they're part of the equation. And so we developed professional learning modules for them as well. So people come to us to ask for things and we try our very hardest to respond. So we also have completed some in-person statewide training. So when we began

[00:35:31] this process a few years ago, we started with summer institutes for the reading specialists across Virginia. And we did in-person training with all of them. We basically went to every region of Virginia and provided in-person training. It was a two-day training, basically a kickoff, like, hey, this Virginia Literacy Act has passed. You have a really significant role in this.

[00:35:54] And we are going to need your help. First of all, we need to make sure that you all know the content on scientifically based reading research and evidence based literacy instruction and also have a role in ensuring that our teachers are getting trained as well. So we started with the reading specialist and then we rolled out to the teachers and the principals.

[00:36:13] We have trained over 5,000 people in person, and that includes over 2,000 administrators, which is, I think, really important because they need to know what's happening in their schools around evidence-based literacy instruction. We also have a series of professional learning structures called VALUE.

[00:36:34] These are free and openly available to anybody who wants to look at them or use them. The origin of these was not the Virginia Literacy Act, actually. It was before the Virginia Literacy Act passed, we were already in the process of updating the screening system.

[00:36:51] So we had been working with the department around that, and we redeveloped the literacy screening system. And I said to the team at UVA, I said, we cannot just give teachers a new screening system and tell them to do that. We have to tell them why it's changing. And we have to make sure they understand the different data that they're collecting so that they can be able to use it in the context of their own classroom or their own school.

[00:37:14] So these are available to anyone and anyone can pick up. It's like a package. They pick up a package. An ELA director could pick one up and they can do their own professional learning series in the context of their own school or their own division. We have heard from people all over the country who are using these now because they're just out and available and they're public.

[00:37:33] They're accessible. So we have different things and we continue to add to this professional learning series and we really encourage our ELA directors, our special ed directors, our principals, whoever reading specialists to pull them down and use them. It's kind of a choose your own adventure. You pull one down. There's some of them are like, hey, if you have two hours, do this.

[00:37:52] If you have six hours, do this. And they can get as deep into the topic as they need because they they know better than us where their folks are in this content development. So the types of coaching support. The VLA also provides coaches for each region in the Commonwealth. And so those coaches are at University of Virginia. They are VLP employees. They work alongside our screening system folks, which is wonderful. So everyone is on message. Everyone is working together to ensure really good implementation. And so our coaching supports include reading institutes, which I talked about. Those are those in-person institutes.

[00:38:31] The Canvas courses, which I also went over, principal training, so working with the principals, it was required in the VLA that the principals have training, and we provided that training as well. We provide office hours, so coaches who interact with people in the field, we interact with people in the field every single day, but we have a time where they can call in if they just have questions.

[00:38:57] and often what happens is you'll have maybe 20 or 30 people from different divisions calling in and they all have the same question and that's great because we're addressing it to a larger crowd it's they can call in and and we work with them for individual support and then we also have on-campus support so if divisions call us or email us and say we really need help interpreting Val's data we will go and we will do that with them we will work alongside them to help them in in that process. And our goal here, this is kind of a weird thing to say, but I tell the coaches, our goal is to make your job not a job anymore. And the reason I say that is because we really

[00:39:37] want to build infrastructure within the divisions. We want to make sure that they understand the law, what they're supposed to be implementing, and how to do all these things, like interpretation of data, for example. Okay, curriculum and instruction, our role in that. So our role in the curriculum piece here is that VLP provides expert review of programs. That's core programs, supplemental, and intervention programs. When VLA first launched or before VLA first was implemented,

[00:40:14] we set up a review process in collaboration with the department. And we have been following essentially the same review process the whole time um this gives you a timeline we started in 2022 with k-3 core materials um and then 2023 we moved to k-5 materials and supplemental intervention materials because all of those it is required by the law that schools pull from those approved lists to implement um instruction with their students um in 2024 we did six to eight supplemental

[00:40:47] intervention programs and um in 2025 we did another review because we all know that um curriculums update they update themselves they're different versions so we did another review and then in 2026 we're doing k-5 core again um i believe if that uh k-5 core revised list will become before the board in october um so i just wanted to i'm sorry this is so small but i know you all have access to it i just wanted you to give a little bit of an overview of the process so that when we come and talk to you about the review you understand what has happened

[00:41:25] before they get to you so we do the work of interviewing and selecting review teams i remember when we first sent out a call the department sent it out for us for review teams for this curriculum review process we got over 150 people applied and that's teachers reading specialists administrators and we were kind of shocked by this but people wanted to be engaged We continuously get applications to people who want to be engaged in the curriculum review process, which is great.

[00:41:52] We also established a rubric that was vetted by outside experts as well as folks at the department. I sat in a windowless room at the VDOE building with some of my VDOE colleagues for, I don't know, a while, developing the original rubric.

[00:42:08] And then we made sure it got reviewed by outside folks as well before we implemented it. Review teams consist of teachers, reading specialists, of administrators, and other literacy expert folks in school divisions, and they're led by a facilitator.

[00:42:25] So a facilitator is someone who has a lot of experience in evidence-based literacy instruction, and they lead these review teams. They are assigned particular programs as they come in. We put out a call to vendors, and the programs come in, and then they are under review.

[00:42:40] so the facilitators meet weekly and that's really important because we want to make sure that they are aligned in their review process and each reviewer on the review team fills out the rubric independently and then they all come back together to talk through if there is you know discrepancies or issues and stuff like that before an initial score gets sent out to the program results are then shared with the providers or the program or the vendor, whatever you want to call them,

[00:43:16] and they have an opportunity to appeal. This is also really important because it is a big task. If you're looking at a K-5 core literacy program, it's a lot of content. There's a whole year of content. It's a big task. And so if providers think that we have missed something or they have an unfair score on something, they have the opportunity to provide a written appeal to us of the areas that they think that we missed, and then we go back and re-review. Same review team, so they have expertise on that particular curriculum and same facilitator. Once that is over,

[00:43:52] some appeals turn out a positive for the vendor and some do not. Once we have gone through that whole process, we provide our recommendations from the group that we have reviewed to the Department of Education. And then after that, it comes to you all for approval. So our role is really

recommendation and to explain our process and to make sure we are making sure that everything that is going to land in the front of students is evidence-based and doesn't include some of those

[00:44:27] popular teaching strategies or reading that we know are not evidence-based. That's a really critical piece here if it contains stuff that we know is not evidence-based it is a no it has to include evidence-based practices and then it comes to you for review and if the board agrees with the review with the recommended guide then it becomes it then is on the list of of curricula or

[00:44:57] supplemental intervention programs that divisions can adopt there when you see the materials for review you'll also see that along with an approval comes a guide for division so they can understand the strength and weakness of each program there's a large guide if you haven't seen before they are publicly available you can look at them now for the ones that have already been approved so we have 129 total approved programs we've reviewed well over 300 programs and during over the last

[00:45:32] few years. With the ones that are coming in next, it'll be over 300. So 55K-5 supplemental, 40K-5 intervention, 15K-8 supplemental, and then 9K-8 intervention and 10K-5 core programs have been approved. And it's probably important, I'm saying supplemental intervention, maybe some folks want to know what's the difference what am I talking about so core is obviously core that's your general education program that's what you're getting in a regular first grade ELA block time

[00:46:09] supplemental are programs that could be used in that ELA block time maybe there is a program where the the program guide says this program is super strong in explicit phonics but might need some help in language development they can they can put in a supplemental program and intervention programs are used for kids who are having a difficult time learning how to read and they need additional time so that's the difference between a supplemental and an intervention program okay screening and assessment so as i mentioned before the state has moved away from the pals assessment and we are now using the vowels for all students which is really very exciting pre-k

[00:46:49] three-year-olds through grade eight um so it is wonderful and there's important to also note that that there is a spanish version pre-k to grade three so we have an english and spanish version pre-k to grade three and an english version um pre-k to grade eight so four to eight there is not a spanish version um we started the process of redoing the screener before vla was passed because we knew it needed to be revised we were working with a 20 plus year old screening system that wasn't still it was not aligned with the most recent evidence-based and reading instruction

[00:47:22] And so this just gives you an idea of the evolution here. We have worked closely with the department around this, with our pre-K colleagues and also our literacy colleagues in K-8. And this has rolled out over the last few years. So now every student is getting the VALs, not the previous PALs.

[00:47:45] So a little bit of the purpose here, in the K-3 space, the screener serves as an early warning system. So it's what we would call a universal screener. So every single kid is getting screened because we want to be able to make sure that we are identifying the kids who are going to need more help.

[00:48:07] And as Jessica said, it is required by law that the kids who are at highest risk get 2.5 hours of extra instruction and literacy. And we identify those kids through this screening system. That's how they're identified. In four to eight, it's a little bit different.

[00:48:26] In four to eight, we are only assessing kids who have failed the SOL. And that is because we want to know why they're failing. So the standards of learning assessment is essentially a comprehension

assessment, right?

[00:48:43] They are reading passages, you're answering questions. If you cannot comprehend what you're reading, you're not going to do well in that assessment. That goes for social studies, for other content areas as well, not just the English one. So basically, we need to know why kids are not comprehending.

[00:49:02] And so what we do is we pull those kids who have not passed the SOL and we assess them on both decoding and language comprehension to make sure that we can target the skills that they need in order to do better on the SOL moving forward.

[00:49:17] So this gives you an outline. It looks really long, but I promise it's not. It is a screening system. And these subtests take, some of them take less than a minute. And we assess these at different grades, developmentally appropriate, of course.

[00:49:34] So we start with code-based skills, phonological awareness, really important, alphabet knowledge. So do kids have knowledge of the alphabet sounds and letters? We ask them to decode real words and non-words. So they're words that are not real English words, but they have the same spelling rules.

[00:49:53] And this is important because those are all words that they've never seen before. So they can't rely on memory to read them. And so those are really good tests for whether or not a child has a phonological processing deficit, which we know makes it difficult for them to learn how to read.

[00:50:11] Encoding is spelling. And then oral reading fluency is just reading connected text. One thing that the PALS did not assess was language comprehension. And as I said before, language comprehension is super important in reading comprehension. So when we redid the screening system for literacy, we made sure to add subtests that test vocabulary and their passage comprehension because we wanted to make sure that we had a gauge on those kids.

[00:50:36] Because some kids will decode just fine, right, but they don't comprehend what they're reading. If you've been a teacher, you all know these kids. They are reading, reading, reading, reading, and then they cannot tell you what they just read. And in a lot of those kids, it's because they have a language comprehension difficulty.

[00:50:55] And so for that reason, we had to make sure that we added that construct, language comprehension, into the early screening system, because if not, we would be losing those kids. We wouldn't know that we need to do explicit and systematic instruction in those areas. And then we also test RAN, which is a processing score.

[00:51:16] Essentially, we know from the research that RAN is a flag. And what I mean by that is if you score poorly on RAN, which is the speed at which you can identify letters or a picture or a color, in pre-K we use colors, we know that those kids are sometimes more likely to have reading difficulties and often goes hand in hand with dyslexia. And so we do not talk to teachers about teaching RAN. We do not want them to be sitting with kids and teaching them how to read words or letters really quickly. That is not a good

[00:51:52] instructional practice it is just a flag and it's in the system if they have poor processing it is information for the school to have about that child's profile for reading all the other things that we assess are instructional targets so if a child is doing poorly in phonological awareness we have approved

curriculum that we've reviewed that we know follows evidence the evidence base that schools can use to intervene in that space so all is connected um so i don't probably don't

[00:52:28] need to spend too much time to go on this because we talked a little bit about who takes grade of four to eight vowels but again it's those who fall below basic or fail below basic on the reading sol and then students who also have a reading accommodation for the sol so if they're being read to aloud it means that they likely have a reading difficulty and so they also take the screening system so we can better identify targetable skills for them targetable instructional goals and then anyone else who the school would like it was who would like to take it was interesting we were developing the vowels for 48 there was a

[00:53:05] lot of concern that they were going to have to take this assessment because it is one more thing right it is truly i think it's important to recognize we were asking them to do one more assessment in the school and that does in reality take away from instructional time we try to keep this really really brief um but it does and but it's also interesting to me after schools got access to the screen screen systems how many came and said well can we just use this with other kids and of course we allow that in the system so anyone who wants to use it in four to eight is allowed to use it um this is just a little bit about what we're accessing in four to eight of course we want

[00:53:44] I want to keep this developmentally appropriate. So kids are getting fluency, spelling, word reading, morphology, and sentence comprehension on the language comprehension side. So these are not the same assessments you would put in front of a first grader. They are more developed. They are more difficult.

[00:54:00] OK, data and student reading plans. So the K-3 screener uses what we call bands of risk. And kids get assigned a risk category after they take the first assessment in the fall, OK?

[00:54:19] So-- oh, sorry, that got cut off a little bit. But the red one is high risk. So these are the kids who are scoring the lowest on the screening system. And they are at very high risk for reading difficulties.

[00:54:37] They're most likely to have ongoing reading difficulties unless there is intervention provided to them. And they qualify-- these kids in this group qualify for that 2.5 hours of additional instruction. And they must, according to the VLA, have a student reading plan. So it is only this group of kids that is required to have a student reading plan. It's not every single kid in the school, only if they're showing significant risk. And then we have the kids in the yellow who, they are not at high, high risk, but they're

[00:55:12] still showing some risk. These kids are really interesting because they're often the most confusing to researchers and teachers, because sometimes we just don't know what's going to happen with these kids. Sometimes, you know, a year later, they're doing fine, and sometimes a year later, they're in the high-risk category. So the reason why we split them into three groups is because we want teachers and administrators and reading specialists to be paying attention to this middle group. There are really, there are a substantial number of kids in this group, and they're a really important group. We do not want to be ignoring them. So the way we provide

[00:55:49] professional learning and information to teachers around this is that they require some more explicit instruction. It's not so much instruction they need to be in that 2.5 hours a week, but we need to be paying attention to them in the context of your ELA core instruction to make sure that they are staying, that they're keeping up and their trajectory is moving up. And then the low-risk groups, they're at lowest

risk for reading difficulties, and they are probably going to be fine with just that core instruction. For the four to eight, remember that it's already a sub-sample

[00:56:25] of the larger four to eight sample, right? So this is only the kids who have failed the SOL, and we have well below approaching inadequate. So even within that lower group, there are different profiles of students. Some of them have decoding difficulties. Some of them have language-based difficulties. Some of them have both. And so we ask them to reading specialists who are in the middle school context is mostly responsible for the assessment of vowels and other things to understand why aren't they comprehending? Is it language-based? Is it decoding-based? And make sure that they're getting intervention or supplemental instruction in those spaces.

[00:57:05] We also provide a lot of data interpretation resources, both to schools and to parents. We want parents to be actively involved in their reading plans, and that means that parents have to understand the data. So we do a lot of outreach in that space around, you know, how do we use this data to drive instruction that if we should not be collecting data just to collect data. If a kid is really having a hard time learning how to read, look at that VALS data. It is telling you a story and there is, there are actionable things that you can do in the context of a classroom or an

[00:57:43] intervention to improve reading for the majority of these kids. So we often get, we have a hotline that's open. We have a hotline that has amazing people working on it. They are a group of very dedicated women who answer calls all day long from the field about vowels, about the screening system, and also about professional learning now and all the things. We also have parents that call hotline because they can't it's public we know we um and so uh if anything has gone wrong are they

[00:58:20] with the either simple data collection to i don't know how to interpret this one sub test in the context of all these other ones for this kid help me they will call and ask us and we help them um so we get thousands thousands of requests a year last year when we opened up the um the new screening screening in VA Connects and the year before, VALS was actually in VA Connects the year before, we would get thousands of calls a month. It was wild, but, you know, also it was great because we were hearing from the field and we know exactly the issues that they're having so we can

[00:58:58] respond. And so they will ask us for things like, tell me what the heck I do with word reading in 48. And so then we provide them this information and we figure if one person's asking, there's probably 100 people with the same question, so we just start putting stuff out to the field. That's how we know what's going on and what we need to respond on. Just a little bit about completion numbers. We had 1.3 million student instances of data collection last year, which is great. That means because kids are getting assessed in the fall, mid, and spring for most students. 4 to 8

[00:59:33] does not do the spring assessment window because they're taking the SOL. 3 to 8, really. You can make the choice in third grade um but yeah there's a lot of kids in the system there's a lot of data coming in and um i only show this to to sort of say like hey we actually do have a tracking system for how the vla is working because we have student level data multiple times across the year that is reliable it's evidence based in the evidence um that you know we can analyze to see different trends across different divisions or the commonwealth as a whole and we do that we after everything every

[01:00:14] window we do a report it is publicly available it's on our website about how kids are doing how they compare to last year at this time because it's important to look at those trends over time especially since we're investing so much in literacy right now we also provide support of course for teachers to be

trained so there's certification tutorials there's the hotline there's office hours for vowels as well so we have an office hours for professional learning we have office hours for the screening system people call in they ask questions and then we have the hotline which is chat email and phone so they can send us a chat they can send us a message

[01:00:51] essentially through email through chat or they can call us and we will respond last year even at the height of our um of our craziness with all the calls coming in um 97 of things got responded to in the same day. That's how efficient this team is and how dedicated they are. Because we know that if a teacher is calling us because they have a technical issue, it means they're trying to collect data at that second, and they have planned their day around that. And we do not, and we want them to be able to do that. So that's what's really important for us to be responsive. And then we

[01:01:30] also have a family resource center. This is part of the VLA as well, that families should be centered in these literacy practices and the student reading plans and the instruction that their kids are getting and we provide them in multiple languages that list is getting a lot longer the multiple languages list and then multiple formats so we have videos we have webinars we have one pages infographics we often will see school divisions to pull out these infographics and stuff and they'll put them up at a back to school night for example so that they can so that parents understand why they're implementing certain practices why they're screening kids and

[01:02:07] all things like that okay i am done i think i'm going to pass it back over i can it's okay i would say hold on wow that was a lot of really awesome information so take a take a breather but uh superintendent absolutely thank you uh and thank you to deputy superintendent prophet and uh dr salari for an incredibly uh in-depth presentation um uh before jumping into questions one just want

[01:02:41] to kind of acknowledge the collective work that this presentation kind of accounts for. Virginia Literacy Partnerships has been such a key partner to the department over the course of the last eight years from the early childhood work all the way through what is now through eighth grade and is just so important in terms of enabling the department to do this work but also to make sure that the work is continually guided by the best possible research both nationally as

[01:03:20] well as using our own Virginia data. As a reminder VA Connects is the system that we've built in partnership with the University of Virginia that is Link B5 so that is you know 12,000 early childhood classrooms and all of the classroom quality curriculum and teacher data next to vkrp which is uh literacy vows math social skills and self-regulation for pre-k3 pre-k4 and all 80 000 of our of our kindergartners each year and then vows right all the way through so this idea that

[01:03:55] virginia has a comprehensive system from when you're a baby through eighth grade and that what is really important. The numbers are big. It's 1.3 million assessments or screens on VALS, 500,000, half a million kids in the fall. But those are also by design, the kids who are at greatest risk. So when you think about the 37,000 pre-K-3 and pre-K-4, pre-K is designated for kids who are at risk of not coming to kindergarten ready. When you look at the 157,000, 160,000 kids that are screened 3 through 8, that's also kids who are not passing their SOLs, right?

[01:04:34] So building a system that is looking at kids' experiences, kids' growth, and kids' outcomes from whence they're very little until all the way through 8th grade with a focus on those kids at greatest risk. It is comprehensive, as you have heard.

[01:04:50] I think it is also really trying to get to coherence, right? So that as both Jessica and Emily talked about, that whether it's from the kind of early childhood system through middle school, right? That we're sort of, we have the same criteria from our standards to our approved curriculum to how we evaluate children and then students, right? So a lot of folks will say, well, your early childhood system is completely disjointed, right? From your K-3 system, from your middle school system. What that means for kids, beyond being confusing for adults, is that often then there's repetition, right? You're sort of repeating the content with the kids because you're not actually using

[01:05:30] the same criteria, expectations, language, way of screening. And so just want to kind of acknowledge it so much, but there is this intentionality around coherence. And by sort of having both expert partners, but also consistency in the system, we're trying to kind of support and reinforce that. I would note that this is still very, very new, right? So even kind of vows four through eight you're like well you know you know why aren't we seeing more gains and you think about the sol presentation that you saw last month like we literally just rolled out four eight last year so um just to kind of acknowledge if you look at areas across the

[01:06:10] country including really important efforts in mississippi louisiana tennessee like it truly takes a decade to kind of move the needle we feel like what has been put in place is comprehensive is coherent um it is a critical foundation but there is still much work to be done but this if you think about the totality of this this is why it's so important for both this board the conversations we've had with the general assembly as well as the governor around staying the course because you finally got the pieces in place you know the kind of the last thing that you would

[01:06:46] want to do is to kind of dramatically shift but there is real work in front of us as you raise those expectations in line with the plan approved by this board right and sort of say that kind of we go from here to here in terms of those cut scores as you think about really using this data every day if we just rolled out four eight as we talked about last year there's still a lot of work be done to making sure it's used every day and then ultimately i just want to emphasize a point that that jessica made around the kind of the curriculum work is the kind of getting figuring

[01:07:24] out how we build a system similar to what we've done in early childhood that kind of gets into every classroom right and is really looking at not just the kind of the key structural pieces but is it resulting in effective instruction um and i just that is so important when we think about walkthroughs and building infrastructure to make sure that's happening every day and that that that instruction is both rooted in appropriate choices around those that hqim and rooted in what we know about those kids when it kind of comes from the data having an apples to apple screener

[01:08:01] across the board having the kind of the technology and the capacity in place having an approved list right a student will have an improved list for curriculum-based professional learning all of those are the necessary but not sufficient the sufficient comes from every classroom every day how are we using the kind of instructional materials to meet the individual needs of those students and to promote maximum growth but it is just a tremendous amount of work um and one uh in which we are incredibly appreciative for our pre-k k-3 and then all of our elementary and and middle schools who supported this over the course of the last few years we have come a very

[01:08:41] long way and there's still great work to be done thank you i'm going to ask board members if they have some questions and i'll start first this time one just thank you for the thoroughness of this and it

is i appreciate your point around it is early but it's very clear a very solid foundation has being is being established and i'm particularly excited by just the focus on like real data not just data for data's sake but data that everyone can take action whether it's a teacher or a parent and so i'm really excited to see where this goes just a couple of quick questions where um there's

[01:09:18] a slide around the micro credentials like slide 10. wondering what that entails like the micro credentialing for teachers like how much does it take how long does it take for a professional to go through to actually get the training needed to have a strong foundation and then my other my second quick question said um that is an additional two and a half hours that's required is that outside of what's required for your regular like ela class or it's so and i saw that you said if

[01:09:53] flexible scheduling and all the things but this is you get your basic reading plus an additional okay great thanks for clear yep yes and that has actually was in place k-2 before the vla which is probably important to note so that eri has been around since the early 2000s in virginia um and kids who score scored as at risk on the then pals assessment were also getting that 2.5 but what the vla has done though is that um with the curriculum approval process it's required that what they're getting in the intervention is evidence-based we did not have a good we weren't

[01:10:30] tracking very well before that what okay you get 2.5 hours of instruction but is that an evidence-based intervention program you're using or not now it's required that it is so it's a little bit different but that has been in place for a while in virginia and it's and it's a week i think it's a week yeah yeah and that really goes to the research on dosage yep so like some kids are just about 10 to 50% of kids in the classroom, sometimes 20, 25, they need more dosage. And they just do. And that's just because we all learn to read at different rates. And it doesn't mean that child is going to have a reading disability. It just means that they need more dosage, that the data

[01:11:09] supports that. Great. And let me just add one more thing about the micro-credentialing. I saw there it's like core content teachers could also get. It's not just reading teachers, not just ELA teachers so it is open to all teachers to be able to learn the science of reading is that right the from the for the one that we're yes all teachers are required to learn because of the law they are required to to take the professional development all the teachers okay all teachers yeah and that up through like our content area middle school teachers as well yeah so the micro credential is separate from the the classes at the asynchronous courses i think that might be yes

[01:11:49] okay can you just say a little bit more about the micro credential and then just flush out the courses and how much does it take how long does it take and when do teachers do this yep so the micro credential is an option for so um we needed more reading specialists frankly and so this is an option for folks who already have a renewable license to be able to go and get additional training that would support them in offering the services of a reading specialist As you can see, there's, you know, 1,400 people enrolled, but in terms of completion, I think there's room to grow there.

[01:12:23] And so it's online coursework. I'm not sure the exact number of hours off the top of my head, but I can get that for you. But I think that we would agree that we would like to see a higher completion right there. And they do still need to meet the requirements of becoming a reading specialist.

[01:12:39] This is essentially just being able to get them in the door. It's getting them that first dosage of understanding, that first dosage of learning, and then buying them some time to do an approved program

for a reading specialist credential. My only question is, it's so important, it's like, when do teachers have time to do it?

[01:12:58] What's the incentive for them to do it? Is it accessible for them? Getting more reading specialists, imagine people sign up, but then they're doing their day job and so just thinking about how we can make sure that it is accessible and the right um incentives are in place for teachers to do it i mean so i can speak about the professional learning piece so um you know some divisions are doing this differently my my children are in elmeral county and they um you know some they're just on their professional learning days they are a lot of especially last year they were engaging in literacy content the teachers were

[01:13:36] because it was required by law that everybody get this training and so they fix their other divisions are doing it you know on their half i mean just kind of depends they're trying to provide space for teachers to do this work is it all done within the context of the school day and it can't be um but it is they they they have um they will maintain access to the content forever after the course is done so we've we've worked to make that happen um and so the way that is set up right now the special learning out of UVA is that they take a school year to get through it. So they are given the full nine months, and then some people don't finish on time, and so we're still working with

[01:14:13] those folks to extend their licenses to be able to have access to the content, and then afterward they have access to the content as well. So yeah. First of all, Dr. Solari, Dr. Profit, Superintendent Conway, I just want to again express enthusiasm and appreciation for how comprehensive and thoughtful and long-term this effort is. And my question, I think you're about to get to it with this enabling conditions inventory, but I'm curious about what we're

[01:14:52] learning about systems. I agree it will take a decade for this to have the impact we want to have statewide. And I'm so excited about our later presentation where Rockingham Public schools and Clark County schools in, I want to make sure I'm saying them, Northampton County schools, you know, we're seeing not only great growth of literacy, but in both what's written here, a lot of it, they're citing the supports they've gotten from VLA. And I know that's my

[01:15:22] experience with Danville as well. And so I'm curious how our learning from these systems is impacting how we're getting system leaders involved or enabling conditions? Because I know we require training of principals, but as we think about having a more systemic impact, what are we learning from these systems that might influence how we engage with other systems?

[01:15:53] So, sorry, we didn't go get to the last slide that you were talking about, but we are looking to learn more about that at scale i think that we do have strong data about um where kids are and we have really reliable data about what kids understand i think where we have a gap in our data is understanding what what's the instruction that's happening that that kid is experiencing right and and to your point i think the what are the conditions within the school or division that are either enabling teachers to do this work well and creating the time and space for for them to do that or not.

[01:16:31] And I think that's a gap in our data right now. And so that's what we would seek to understand better so that we can make sure that we are providing the right kind of support for that. This isn't all about teachers, right? There are things that leaders must do to set the conditions for teachers to do this work well.

[01:16:50] And we have the right learning for teachers to do. We have the right materials, but school leaders and district leaders must make this a priority in order to see it happening at scale. And so I think that we have anecdotal evidence of what is happening, but I don't think that we have a systematic way to capture if there's enabling conditions and if that instruction is meeting what we expect to see across the board.

[01:17:15] We don't know exactly why kids are moving or not moving. We can make pretty good educated guesses, but we kind of want to see what's happening and have better data about that. - My curiosity, first of all, I love that. I love how the BDOE and VLA are working in coordination, you know, to, you know, I think, as we see in Mississippi, a lot of the support is coming from the Department of Education itself.

[01:17:39] And I'm excited for that answer. And it makes me curious just on the plans that have to be submitted in 2027 for the biennial plans.

[01:17:52] You know, if there is an opportunity to consider how we might heighten the review or expectations in those plans for either divisions that are at a certain level or divisions that are going backwards in their literacy rates just to because we may not have all the answers, but we can raise the bar on expecting the divisions to say that what's what we have in doing is not working.

[01:18:20] we're going to do something different yeah we were we were just talking about this while you all were in um closed session so yeah i i agree i think there's a way to perhaps use the the literacy division literacy pens to get more of that information than it's currently coming in i will i will say just on facilitators and barriers we did a study for two years in a row on the facilitators and facilitators and barriers and implementation of the vowel screening system that paper is published there's a couple papers published on this now and really and that's kind of like one piece of this but we surveyed a lot of teachers we did focus groups we were just because

[01:18:58] we wanted to know like are you actually using this data and if you're not why and how can we provide professional learning to get you to use the data so we are doing outreach in that particular space but we could follow a similar model for other things like the professional learning for the systems doing we could follow that model as well dr northern and then mrs mcpherson uh just a quick comment and quick question um i would just continue to encourage us to keep our core lists tight you know when i look at which i did tennessee louisiana alabama all these states that we're

[01:19:37] seeing making strong gains in reading they have no more than 12. we're at 10 now it's like we may maybe at 12. Like, we know that the evidence has not caught up with HQIM, so I would just encourage us to keep it tight so that we can support, we're not going to be able to support 50 different four curricula. I feel like the evidence is only just building around bookworms, CKLA, and Wit & Wisdom. Honestly, when I look at the other ones, they just don't have it.

[01:20:07] We have an opportunity to actually help the entire field because we now know what each division is adopting. So I would encourage us to do rigorous research. I can see a sort of staggered rollout type of design where we can begin to see which one of these are, you know, if it's not correlational, I mean, there may be some kind of causal study we could do on impacts given all this data that we're now collecting. And I'd also just say on the professional learning piece, same thing, right? Like you fly in letters. They're the only two that I am personally aware of that have strong evidence behind them. So I would keep it tight on the vendors and the professional learning

[01:20:46] because let's not get ahead of the evidence. And my question is just, do we know or are we studying whether performance on vowels predicts third grade reading? We do. Yes. Thank you for asking that question. Yes, for sure. Unfortunately, we've only gone through two years of everyone doing vowels so we need those k-8 kindergartners to get to third grade um we need them to go faster no i'm just kidding um but we are looking now like the second the kids that started in second grade at third and fourth grade so we are looking at those trajectories and looking at how

[01:21:22] well the bands of risk predict outcomes and so we are analyzing those data as we speak and we are in we often are in contact with the superintendent around those analyses and just again we are the national exemplar like this work that we've had been going on um and the fact that we just used one screener thank you yeah it's what yeah thank you because like obvious states are using five different screeners it's right it's yeah it's really hard to tell what's happening

[01:21:59] mrs mcpherson all right so thank you again because i do think that it's really wonderful And clearly, we're headed in the right direction with the assessments.

[01:22:14] Do we have any research that tells us that the 2.5 hours of additional dosage of instruction is really going to make the difference? And I think it will depend upon how far back the students are as it relates to grade level reading and whether the number of credential teachers or those headed towards being reading specialist or micro-credential, whether our numbers are looking like we're going to have enough resources to make an impact before fourth grade.

[01:22:53] A lot of the information that we have about success stories around the country, especially in Mississippi, since they stepped up and they now are a clear model, they're honing in on making sure that students, not being held back per se, because that's not the model that they're promoting, but that by third grade, they have it right, that the reading is up to par by third grade. So I'm just wondering, how does the 2.5 hours factor into testing out, are our students going to be ready by fourth grade with us putting that

[01:23:31] in place with the number of reading specialists and micro-credential people? So I can speak a little bit to the research on dosage there. There are several papers published around dosage for kids who have reading difficulty showing that a bump in 40 instructional hours essentially is where you start to see especially for kids who are very far behind is where you start to see the changing of trajectories in literacy that's the average right and so some kids it's fewer some kids it's more so one of the reasons why kids are screened

[01:24:06] three times a year because sometimes what happens with kids kids are individuals so sometimes you get a kid in there who's swerved really poorly, is a very high risk, and you give them that supplemental, importantly, evidence-based intervention, and they just take off. And by the mid-year, they are out of that high-risk group. And some kids, it takes two or three years.

[01:24:28] So it is, everybody learns at a different rate, but the data is really showing now that around 35 to 40 is where you start to see trajectories change, but it has to be evidence-based instruction, and that's why those adoption lists are so important in the in the review 40 per year yeah yeah um so the 2.5 gets you there if it's done consistently right and if it's done in an evidence-based way and Dr. Sly can you talk a little bit I know that we work closely on this but just how unique it is that Virginia not only looks at literacy but language right because yeah

[01:25:05] part of what I understand can sometimes happen I am the non-expert on this is that there's been such an emphasis on some of the decoding skills which can in some ways for certain kids be gained earlier but the underlying kind of vocabulary and kind of language understanding even as sort of proxied by verbal language is such an important predictor and you know adding literacy and language allows us to make sure that we're emphasizing in particular in early childhood and early elementary not just the phonics, but that underlying kind of language development in addition to the literacy piece.

[01:25:42] Yeah, I mean, thank you. I think it's important to note that the overwhelming majority of early screening systems used across the country only measure decoding, and so that's just reading words. And that is only one side of the equation for reading comprehension outcomes. So when we redid it, we made sure to add the language piece because it's vitally important.

[01:26:01] And again, like I said earlier, you will lose kids because then what happens with these kids is they can decode, decode, decode, and then when texts get really complex, as you move to third, fourth, fifth grade, they don't understand what they're reading. And it turns out that they've had, perhaps have had a language comprehension difficulty the whole time. So if you can screen for that in pre-K, starting in pre-K, which we are, and into kindergarten, you can also catch those kids. Is that helpful? Yeah. Yeah, and I think the other kind of key piece too, I think on the flip side, you also have kids who have very strong oral comprehension, right,

[01:26:35] Oh, yeah. Decoding. Decoding. Yeah. Recognizing that. But I think what it means is it helps us ensure as we work backwards towards these goals for kids that we're not just saying, hey, can you write letters and sound out letters? But really making sure, because one of the biggest challenges I know we face in the early childhood world is getting educators to support kids to think, right?

[01:26:58] Open-ended questions, kind of, you know, sort of if they answer it and pushing them on the why, right? And getting them to put together even two or three sentences. And that is kind of that critical thinking and that kind of concept development that then is tracking. And if you don't track that, then you sort of your assessment or your screener can incent a behavior that's much more around if I can get you to write, you know, these letters and do the sound and we're done.

[01:27:22] And that's part of why we see some of that fade out. Right. If you're not really focusing on the deeper underlying skills. Yeah. And the one thing. Understanding is, you know, because if you're reading without an understanding, you're not reading. Right. It's like they talk to me about some of the colleges where students read a book, but they could not tell you anything like from page to page.

[01:27:47] So they don't have comprehension. Right. That's a college level. They can't write a couple of paragraphs to explain what they just read. Right. So, yeah. So I obviously we're on the same page with that. It's got to be reading with understanding.

[01:28:02] Yeah. And I think, importantly, when you assess a kid on the vowels and you do all the language on the decoding side, you get a printout and it basically shows you. This child has these individual strengths and needs some help in this space. Is it decoding? Is it language? What is it?

[01:28:19] And then you can take an approved intervention program and align that with the instruction that they need. And that's how it's all aligned. Before we had VALS, we didn't know one of the areas of the sort of the areas for greatest growth in early childhood is expressive comprehension, right?

[01:28:36] So really making sure across our classrooms that we are supporting educators to support kids to put together thoughts, right? Because it goes back to if you can read it but not able to comprehend it, right, then you're probably not going to be able to write and to kind of put together kind of a set of thoughts.

[01:28:55] And so that was a really interesting insight that we could never get from pals or anything else. But it was like, okay, this is actually our biggest gap. We're not, it has nothing to do with even letters, right? We're sort of reading something to a kid and their ability to kind of, you know, express to us what has been read to them is a gap.

[01:29:11] We got to solve for that in addition to those letters and sounds. I think importantly with that, the coherence here also comes from the list looking at core instructional materials that do both of those things. So while there are strong programs on the supplemental list for phonics, we wouldn't want a district to adopt just that.

[01:29:31] We want them to make sure that they're adopting core instructional materials that do the whole rope. They do the language comprehension and the decoding so that we know that all kids can have access to that. And now we just need to make sure that all kids are getting access to that. I think I would just say, Dr. McPherson, to your question, I don't think I answered was in terms of the reading specialist.

[01:29:53] I think this plays a part as well. We don't, that 2.5 hours does not have to be provided by a reading specialist. And because of the depth of training that folks have gone through, it's important to note that a lot of times that can happen within the regular classroom. For some kids, it's going to need to happen with a reading specialist or, you know, divisions will do that different ways.

[01:30:13] But the goal here is that teacher, classroom teachers also have the skills to be able to intervene as needed with kids and that the reading specialist is really supporting the kids who are at highest risk and at most need or that you know how that works within a division I think question a comment just want to support Dr. Northern's push and your own push there not only to keep the list tight but maybe even consider over time having a preferred list of the approved ones so you know the super approved for those that are that we're seeing demonstrate

[01:30:47] results across the state that maybe we could put we just seen incentive systems in other states where divisions may be more likely to select certain materials if there's more professional development with them. And I think you're already doing that through the grant. And so I'm just curious over time, doubling or tripling down on not just a proof list, but trying to get people to use certain materials.

[01:31:11] And then my question is about the, do we know anything about the research behind notification of parents regarding where their students are in the early grade levels.

[01:31:28] Because I've at least read some articles that suggest that what's happening in Mississippi and Tennessee is not necessarily the act of the retention of the students in third grade. It's the urgency that that creates and the amplification of attention that it brings to students who are far behind.

[01:31:44] And I'm just so excited about what VALS provides us in terms of knowledge on where students are at a high risk and just wondering if, you know, for a state that's, you know, I would assume unlikely to do the retention policy, if there's something about the urgency of it by notification of high risk that we might consider. But I don't know what the research says about that.

[01:32:06] There's actually not a lot of research in this space because it's really hard to randomize groups, families, it turns out. But, you know, we do know that parental involvement, so the law says that if your child scores a high risk, parents have to be notified.

[01:32:22] And then they are invited to be involved in the student reading plan. They're not required, but they're invited to be involved. And along with that also comes a whole host of resources that parents can get. Just generally speaking, we know educational outcomes that parental involvement is really important, right?

[01:32:39] And we wanna make sure that parents understand why their child might be getting 2.5 hours of extra instruction. I can't tell you how many parents I talk to, like my, just my friends, my children's friends' parents around literacy and, you know, how surprised they are about the state of literacy in our country and just the whole thing.

[01:33:04] And so it's eye-opening for a lot of the parents, I think. And, you know, simple parent notification is, you know, there's really no research to show that that does much, but we are trying to get and work with, the coaches are working with the school divisions specifically on how do you involve parents in this process?

[01:33:21] also something that could be researched while, you know, while we're doing it. But yeah, there's not a ton specifically on literacy, but we do know in general, when parents are involved, there's better educational outcomes. Yeah. And I want to note again, we're kind of two, three, three years in on this, but for two decades, PALS only indicated high risk, right? And so I know Dr. Slarnab often talked about this, where like I would have the playground conversation, the parent would come up to me and say, oh, I passed the PALS. I was like, but how far? Right? Because the idea was

[01:33:55] it wasn't, it didn't, you know, passing the PALS did not necessarily mean that your kid was on track for success. So I really think there's both the importance of the parental notification on high risk, because as we know, even from PALS, that if you're at high risk, that like, you know, there is a significant risk, like it is predictive, but even the moderate risk, right, for a set of parents that before two years ago thought that their kids were on track and that was not necessarily so, as Dr. Solari described, that moderate risk group. So I think that's a really, really important shift for the Commonwealth to say there's folks who look very,

[01:34:34] very, very sort of solidly on track. There's folks at moderate risk. It doesn't mean that, you know, that there needs to be great alarm, but it does need to get high quality tier one instruction. And that sort of raises sort of awareness for parents. And then there's parental notification for high risk. And I think we continue to work with VLP on kind of how to make these resources more and more parent-friendly and kind of making sure that they're getting to every parent through, there's kind of the reports that they do, the letter, and then also now as more school

[01:35:11] divisions use these digital resources like ParentSquare, making sure that that's getting to all parents. And I would say, just a comment for a second, is also working with the division level leaders and principals and reading specialists to understand that a child who is at third grade at moderate risk is different than a child in kindergarten at moderate risk. Speaking about that urgency, right? If you're still at moderate risk in third grade, I'm a little bit more concerned about you than if you're a kindergartner. And so what does that mean as far as how we set up systems at the school level to support those kids? Because

once they're getting into fourth grade we all know that text is becoming much more complex and there's less time to catch up and so

[01:35:48] there are nuances there as well depending on the age of the child i was looking at some of the data that we provide into the public and it from our website it says and this kind of highlights how critical it is 83 percent of the students that are at high risk if they cannot read by third grade proficiency yeah that's correct i mean if they're a great area of proficiency ability to read the

[01:36:20] comprehension is critical yeah so early notification is really important right yeah i was just going to say the other thing the other thing the screening system does is it connects if your child is in publicly funded pre-k a kindergarten teacher can see how they did in literacy pre-k three and pre-k four so they understand that child a little bit more as they come into their door because they have the vows data for three and three year three and year four before they get to kindergarten um board members any other questions any final comments any final comments

[01:36:58] for you guys have been on the stage for a while now so okay thank you so much we appreciate this time okay now we will break for lunch um for about a half hour so we'll be back

[01:37:14] at two o'clock thank you thank you all we are now back from lunch we are going to be is that right

[02:21:03] the update on alternative pathways work group update. Wonderful, you're back. Back again. All right, so today we are going to update you on the alternative routes to licensure work group and also give sort of a high-level overview of licensure in general because I think that's important to understand if you want to understand the context of alternative routes to licensure. So we will look at the legislative mandate that we have to kind of study alternative

[02:21:38] routes to licensure as well as what our timeline is for that and then like I said kind of overview of licensure in general and then share some data with you around our current state. So in the most recent general assembly session we received the mandate at the department to convene a stakeholder workgroup for the purpose of conducting a comprehensive review of and making recommendations on the alternate licensure pathways for public school teachers in the Commonwealth.

[02:22:10] And to go into a bit more detail about what it said, really, it's charging us to conduct a comprehensive review of where we stand currently to convene a stakeholder workgroup and also to use that work group as well as our research to understand the quality, efficacy, and outcomes of alternative pathways. And through that analysis, to be able to identify some opportunities to strengthen and improve pathways. We have to provide some interim reporting this next month, and then we will provide a final report October 1st of 2027. So this work is just now, the work of

[02:22:50] work group is just now kicking off but it will happen across the next year and so we felt like it was helpful to loop you in on the front end so that you can help weigh in in terms of thinking about and you'll see this when we get to this part but just what data we might need and what analysis we might need to do as we're thinking about where the problems really lie here so the charge of the work group is really three things understand the current landscape in particular who's entering through alternative pathways and who is completing licensure who stays in the field

[02:23:23] where do they teach and then kind of understanding how our system currently works when our workforce demands exceed our supply what you'll see in the data coming up is not this is improving

second we want to think about comparing we want the work group to think about what are the different preparation pathways what does mentoring and support look like across those pathways what are costs associated, how ready are teachers to enter the profession on day one, and what are the outcomes ultimately for kids across a variety of these solutions. So how are these different solutions

[02:24:01] showing up in the experience of children? And then ultimately recommend some essential criteria for effective pathways and perhaps some standards for partnerships as we think about the path forward, as well as any policy legislative and funding changes within the work group they'll meet five times over the course of the year we had our first meeting in september and we really tried to dig into some of the same data that you're looking at here so that we could understand what the data that we currently have access to says about our current state we are across the next

[02:24:38] several months have identified what we will be doing next which will kind of progress us through so that we can ultimately make some recommendations about what should change. I think, if anything, I think an important piece here is really understanding what our evidence tells us, but also where our gaps are, where we don't have good information about what is happening so that we can identify where and how we might want to collect that information, as well as looking across other states and understanding the landscape outside of our state so that we can understand better how other folks are dealing with some of the challenges

[02:25:15] with staffing and with paths to licensure. So in order to understand some of the complexities of this issue, I think it's helpful to understand licensure in general. And I know we're all at different places, and it is I myself am learning this system as I'm new to this job and all of the complexities of it outside of navigating it myself as a teacher.

[02:25:37] And so I wanna give kind of a high level overview here so that we're all on the same page around terminology. So ultimately in Virginia, a teaching license includes two major components. So a candidate has to first, or one thing a candidate has to do is get an endorsement.

[02:25:55] And this tells us what this candidate is qualified to teach. So this is where you might get an endorsement in elementary education or mathematics. They have to, a candidate has to demonstrate the required content knowledge competency for the particular endorsement area sought.

[02:26:10] The other piece of the license is the professional studies component. So in this piece, a candidate has to demonstrate that they know what they need to be able to do as a teacher. This includes preparation related to human development and learning, curriculum and instruction assessment.

[02:26:26] It's more generally applicable content that a teacher would need to know. And these courses and learning experiences are designed to prepare candidates across those areas. those two pieces that play into actually receiving a license. When we say license, what we mean is Virginia's authorization for an individual to serve as a licensed school professional. And like I said, the endorsement on that license tells you which subjects, grades, or roles that person is licensed to teach. You can have multiple endorsement areas. You can continue to add on endorsements over time if you're expanding your learning and learning to teach new things. A provisional license, which we

[02:27:04] we often hear folks talk about, is a non-renewable license, and it's valid for up to three years. It allows an individual who meets specific entry requirements to complete the remaining of their professional studies or licensure requirements while they are employed. So they have to have some

baseline qualifications met, but then they can add on additional qualifications as they are teaching. The goal is for our candidates to get this renewable license, which is the license that you can renew every 10 years once you're doing your continued learning and, you know, renewing that license. And another piece of language that we wanted to clarify for the work group, I think

[02:27:44] you all are probably very familiar with this, is an educator preparation program, or what we often call an EPP. These are defined programs that are responsible for preparing teachers or other school personnel. And Virginia has two sets of regulations that govern this field. So there are the program approval regulations that define what our EPPs must do. And then there are the licensure regulations that define what a person that wants to teach or serve in a school, a licensed position in a school must do. So the EPPs are governed by our program regulations. Let's get into that a little further.

[02:28:21] Those licensure regulations for school personnel are the set of regulations that tell us what an individual must do to become licensed, where the regulations that govern the review and approval of education programs tell us what an approved preparation program must demonstrate. We try really hard to make sure that any change in one of these is reflected in the other so that we are giving consistent expectations to our candidates and EPPs, and the team is really good, has been really good about doing that, but there are times when there's something to work out or something

[02:28:55] that may not speak exactly to each other, and so that's something to note as well. There are ultimately, and I am simplifying a little bit, but there are three license types that you can get in Virginia. There is that fully licensed or renewable license, and within that there are a couple different forms of that. There's a collegiate professional license, a postgraduate professional license, which is essentially a collegiate license with a graduate degree, and then there's a technical professional license, which is a path to renewable licensure that is based on technical or occupational expertise and does not require a bachelor's degree where the others do.

[02:29:33] A provisional license, like I said, is generally giving a candidate three years to satisfy those requirements. Many roots can get a candidate here. So I teach or career switcher programs, division-led programs that prepare teachers. A lot of higher ed institutions also have alternative preparation programs that get teachers into a provisional license or Teach for America.

[02:29:54] These are all types of provisional licenses that we issue. And then a newer license type is what we call a local eligibility license. This is only a one-year license and it is issued by a local school division. It allows a school division to employ someone who has a bachelor's degree and relevant experience but doesn't yet meet the requirements for a Virginia license. So they wouldn't have to go and get a provisional license necessarily. They could start off on a local eligibility license. There are rules around this so it's only valid in the issuing division. It can't be used for certain endorsement areas like special education. And divisions also have rules

[02:30:32] around what percentage of their teaching force can hold a local eligibility license in any given year. So with all of that in mind, then we seek to define alternative pathways. And I will say as a field, this has evolved greatly over the last several years, right? So, you know, 10 years ago, we were seeing that alternative pathways were quite new to the field, and we were seeing some unique things happening and now I think it is quite common that many teachers are entering the profession through alternative what we would consider alternative pathways to licensure and and many are still

[02:31:06] also in Virginia entering through traditional educator preparation programs so the work of this group is to really understand um all the the different modalities of those alternative pathways to licensure and there are many and understand um it makes some recommendations about if we want to set any specific standards that are outside of what we have right now around, you know, what that means or what we would expect that those programs do. So, when we think about alternative routes in Virginia, all of these things would fall under alternative routes. All of these are outside of a traditional educator preparation program. Local eligibility licensure, career switchers, Teach for

[02:31:46] America. Oftentimes, folks will kind of piece their own path together and take classes or do things in their own sort of way outside of an approved program. I teach is another pathway here as well as, like I said, there are many higher ed institutions that are also providing alternative pathways, residency models, or the like that are preparing teachers in our classrooms. So sort of a kind of beginning framework that we have not yet defined in Virginia and that we are seeking to define through this work group is, you know, how are we talking about this? How are we talking about

[02:32:23] those alternative preparation pathways. And I think we're really talking about these two pieces. We're not talking about traditional programs where someone would go through that program, do their clinical experience, and then step into a classroom that all of their preparation is done ahead of the classroom. We're really talking about anything that would be delivered through a non-traditional model or that could be offered through a non-traditional provider.

[02:32:50] So this could be truly non-traditional preparation programs, or it could be alternative routes to meeting the licensure requirements. So the next thing that I think is helpful for us to think about is just considering what we know about Virginia's teacher pipeline, because we should keep this in mind as we're thinking about all of the decisions that people may be making about how they enter the classroom.

[02:33:15] So on this slide, you'll see the statewide teacher vacancy rate. and this is really you know high level good news the vacancy rate is declining and it has been declining over the last four years um the at the most recent uh collection of this data which was the end of last school year this was at a 2.54 vacancy rate um but these staffing challenges are unevenly distributed as you can see here so that dark orange is areas where there is a higher rate of vacancy and the lighter into the gray or lighter colors are lower rates of vacancy. So you can see

[02:33:54] that there is concentration in some areas of the state that is a little bit more, little higher levels of vacancy, but even at those highest levels we're looking at still below five percent. We also see variance in vacancy by endorsement area. So not every endorsement area has similar vacancy rates. So Title I schools, as well as special education schools, tend to have the highest rates of vacancy. And Title I is not an endorsement area, but it is an important

[02:34:30] distinction that we make about where these vacancies tend to be concentrated. Special education and world languages are our highest vacancy or our, sorry, special education and elementary are our highest vacancy rates across the state. And Title I schools remain to be above 5% vacancy rates. So what we're looking at here is what we call out-of-field or inexperienced teachers. So out-of-field teachers refers to teachers that are teaching a subject or course outside of their endorsement area. So remember one part of that license is naming the subjects

[02:35:08] and grade levels that you're allowed to teach. Sometimes teachers get put into, while they might have a valid license, they're teaching something that is outside of their endorsement area. That's

what we mean by out of field. Inexperienced teachers refers to first-year teachers. And so what you can see in these graphs, that first graph on the left is looking at all schools.

[02:35:30] The blue line shows us where the percentage of out-of-field teachers are. The pinkish purple line is our inexperienced teachers or our first-year teachers. And then the greenish line is showing a combined. So those are teachers that are both teaching out of their endorsement area and first-year teachers. And you can see that there is a higher concentration. There appears to be a higher concentration of inexperienced out-of-field and both inexperienced and out-of-field

[02:36:00] teachers in high-poverty schools. Here we look at teacher retention rates. So it's one thing to get teachers in the door and to fill those vacancies, but we also want to make sure that we are keeping good teachers in the classroom. And so the good news here is that teacher retention has rebounded post-pandemic to almost pre-pandemic levels. And the other piece of information to know here is that gaps remain for first-year teachers. So we tend to see a higher rate of

[02:36:36] leaving the classroom for our first-year teachers. I think it's really interesting how these trend lines really, I mean, they really mirror each other and we just see a little bit of a gap for those first year teachers? A great question. And that's going to come, I have a graph coming right up that'll show you where they're going. Yep. When we look at teacher retention, because they're

[02:37:10] going different places. We look at teacher retention by cohort. Most teachers remain at their school from one year to the next, but that mobility, that leaving, it does accumulate over time. So only about two thirds remain at the same school after three years and just about half remain after five years. There is good evidence to suggest that a stable set of teachers in a school building can have effects on student achievement. And so it is the, you know, we want teachers to be happy in their profession and to be in a place where they can thrive. And we know that stability in that workforce does impact student outcomes. And so to the extent that we can keep folks in

[02:37:49] the building where they are, we know that that does have an impact. And to your question, Reinhardt, where are teachers going when they leave? We see that the highest percent of teachers are actually going to other schools in the same division. So, or sorry, the highest percent of teachers, the departure rate is there in blue. Sorry, purple. Pause. The departure rate is in purple. The light blue line is showing the amount of teachers that are going to other schools in their same division. The darker blue line beneath that, so a slightly lower rate, are going across

[02:38:27] divisions. So they're going to schools in other divisions. And then that orange line is showing us folks that change to non-teaching roles. That is actually the lowest percentage of folks that are leaving. So I think it's important to note that we can't talk about alternative routes into teaching without talking about what is the other option. So when schools have vacancies, they can fill them with licensed teachers. They can fill them with teachers that have gone through different preparation pathways and maybe on a provisional license. But if they cannot get either of those,

[02:39:03] then likely they are turning to a long-term substitute. And so I want to start by caveating that we do not have the strongest data collection around where long-term subs are. This is the best that we have right now. It is something that we are actively working on integrating into other data collection methods so that we can get more reliable data about where there are teachers that are serving at in a vacancy for long periods of time where a kid is having access to this teacher for a long period of time that we know does not necessarily have the preparation that we would

[02:39:36] want um so there are 89 000 unique teachers across 131 divisions in the state and in our most recent data collection there were a thousand long-term substitutes reported this data is reported as a point in time so that is the amount of long-term subs that were occurring at this point in time when this data was collected it is not reflective of all those long-term subs that served in a school division over the course of that year or that may have served and then you know that position was filled so it doesn't capture the full experience here ultimately that equates to about a

[02:40:10] one percent statewide ratio of long-term subs to unique teachers so you can see here that divisions with the highest reported long-term substitute shares are noted, and also the highest number of reported long-term subs by in size, by actual number. This is important because while a division may not have as many teachers, if a large share of their teachers are long-term subs, obviously that can impact what the student is experiencing day to day. And also look at this overlay on the

[02:40:49] map. This is the same dark orange is higher rate of long-term subs, higher percentage of long-term subs versus the lighter colors are lower percentage. So you can see that there is some concentration. And then we also want to contrast that too. So I think it's important to look at here. Here's where we see long-term subs being concentrated. And then if we look at provisional licenses, remember those teachers that are in the process and they could be anywhere in that process

[02:41:24] of obtaining their renewable license, this is looking at the distribution of those folks across the state. And so again, you can see the dark orange is getting up closer to 14% versus the lower end of the range in Region 7 is 6%. And then this same or this map is mapping out by division.

[02:41:51] So you can see even more specificity here. Provisionally licensed teachers are currently part of every division's staffing strategy across the Commonwealth. So I want to be clear that we're not equating provisionally licensed with not a good teacher. We actually don't have data right now that tells us student outcomes in comparison to the type of license that a teacher has.

[02:42:12] But we do know that these are teachers that have not yet met the bar that we've set for obtaining a license. And so there's a possibility that they may not have all the preparation that we would expect that they have. But the reality is that this is a staffing strategy that everyone is currently using in order to lower those vacancy rates.

[02:42:31] And I think where we do not have good data and where I am really pushing our work is to think about of those provisionally licensed teachers, how many of those are actually converting into a renewable license?

[02:42:50] How many of those folks are we seeing complete the required things that need to be completed so that they can obtain their full licensure. And I think that is a measure of how well these alternative programs are working because it's one thing to get them in the door. It's another thing to successfully convert that provisional license into a long-term renewable license. So we want to have better information about how many are successfully converting, how long it's taking, where they're getting stuck within certain programs or within our system if we want to look at if there are differences by preparation pathway so are there different preparation pathways that are getting more

[02:43:28] folks to renewable licensure and then we also want to understand what happens to teachers after licensure where are they teaching and are they staying so when we factor them into our data are we seeing that if we disaggregate that that are there any trends around where they stay and how long, nice

day. If we look across license types, across, you know, there are thousands of teachers that are entering the classroom while they are completing their licensure requirements. So if you're, if there's a teacher on a provisional license, that means that they are still completing or in some phase of completing the requirements to become a teacher. So we have, you can see on

[02:44:08] the far left, the amount of teachers that we have across school year 23-24, then 24-25 and 25-26 on provisional special education licenses. That is separate from the provisional license, and those are not, that is a distinct set of folks.

[02:44:24] The provisional license does not include the provisional special education license because that is a different license type. There are also showing you where the collegiate professional licenses are and where postgraduate professionals are. And these are the licenses issued that year.

[02:44:43] So not all of the folks that are working on one of those licenses, but those are the issuing of those licenses. And then this chart is looking more closely at our short-term license types. So that local eligibility license, the Teach for America license, we have a special license type for international educators, technical professionals, career switchers, and iTeach. The local eligibility and iTeach, you can see they came into effect in school year 24-25, so that would be the first year of those being available, and then this most recent school year

[02:45:20] was the second. So obviously, as you can imagine, stakeholder engagement around licensure is a very critical piece of this work. So ABTEL, the Advisory Board for Teacher Education and Licensure, which is an advisory board to this board, meets a minimum of five times per year to discuss and weigh in on licensure and teacher education matters. And so often you'll hear when we bring you something with a licensure recommendation or something for you to review related to licensure, we try to bring anything that's coming to you to Aptel first so that they can weigh in there. And

[02:45:59] you can see in your appendix the members of Aptel and who they represent. The Alternative Route to Licensure Workgroup, as I mentioned earlier, has just recently formed and will meet at least five times this year. And they are preparing to make recommendations on more clearly defining and measuring the quality of our alternative routes and deciding if there does need to be more clarity around any of those. ABTEL and the Alternative Route to Licensure Workgroup both met this month to review the same data and information that you're looking at here, and we were able to get a lot of great perspectives. There are teachers, legislators, school leaders, division staff that

[02:46:38] handle the licensure of their teachers, all represented on that workgroup, as well as community members. And so, as you can expect, everyone has a different lens there around what matters most as it relates to licensure. I forgot to say this, we also have traditional EPPs and alternative certification providers. And so, it's a really, you know, to me, it is a very important place for us to be bringing and having these discussions about what the data tells us. And also, frankly, what data we don't have that we really need to have in order to have the robust

[02:47:12] conversations that we want to have about all of this, the complexity of this issue. So our next steps here are, oops, sorry, our next steps here are to continue that engagement with those two groups, the ABTEL and the Alternate Route Work Group. And we really want to encourage discussions there around recruitment, retention of teachers, potential barriers to entry, but also really importantly, supports that are needed to ensure that these preparation pathways are really preparing teachers for the reality of the

classroom and administrators for the reality of their jobs and that we have good data to suggest that that's true.

[02:47:49] To that end, we want to refine our areas of data collection to ensure that we have really reliable data to understand this landscape and lastly but probably importantly we are beginning the process of modernizing our licensure system. The current system that we utilize to process licenses is very old and requires a lot of manual steps and relies heavily on cross checking of information that we think that we can modernize and produce a better customer experience for that and that that may be a barrier that's within our control at the department to help eliminate for folks as they're going through

[02:48:26] all of the steps to become teachers in our classrooms. The appendix will list out the members of those work groups and then we also included for you the organizations that are represented within um within that those work groups as well if you don't know all these names by heart that's what i have for you today wonderful thank you superintendent thank you deputy superintendent prophet so um uh again as a uh tying together uh what we discussed um about kind

[02:49:04] of the the role of the board here the department has been charged with a specific ask from the the General Assembly around convening and making recommendations. As we embarked on that work, noting, as Deputy Superintendent Profitt did, that we will continue to go to the explicit advisory body to the board on these topics, ABTEL, as well as have this work group, which is broadly representative.

[02:49:33] What our goal was this afternoon was to make sure, number one, that you were aware of this work that was assigned by the General Assembly, and then number two, to ascertain from this body, you know, what is of interest to you, are there particular things that you want us to focus on, or perspectives that you want to share as we engage in this work?

[02:49:56] This won't be the only opportunity to provide feedback here, but we wanted to do that early in the process as we comply with this legislative mandate. you board members do you have questions dr northern oh someone down here i just want to know on the long-term subs you measured that were you measuring whether or not it was a vacant position and it just continuously got filled by sub or were you measuring that it was a sub who was

[02:50:33] in a position for them you know what is the same sub to make a difference because they become almost like a teacher, you know, that position is vacant and people just keep going through. Yeah. So that particular data collection measured at a point in time, how many positions in your division are filled by a substitute that is the same substitute that has been there. I believe it was 90 days. The definition has since changed in data collection to be 180 days. And so our upcoming data we'll look at subs that have actually been there a little bit longer um

[02:51:12] and like i said we're trying to get a better data collection integrated into our consistent data routine so that that we're getting good data on um not just at a point in time but at any point this year have you had positions filled by long-term subs and what are those positions that's another piece of data that's missing here is actually knowing what positions they're filling it is pretty much a long term it is yes it's not looking at the vacant positions it is looking at positions that are filled by a long-term sub over 90 days yeah superintendent conway um and

[02:51:49] and although that was not explicitly set forth in the the language of the law we think it is important to consider as part of these recommendations right so that you're not just thinking about

strengthening uh uh the efforts around these alternative pathways which as deputy superintendent profit noted you know there are multiple and are you know are have a fairly strong foothold here in the commonwealth but you're also recognizing the trade-offs right um in terms of you know it's not just comparing alternate certified educators to fully you know

[02:52:26] to sort of educators with a renewable license, it's also realizing, and particularly in some of these schools, and particularly those that serve our low-income students and their families, that there can be a large number of those, and really thinking through how do we tackle ensuring that there's an effective instruction in every classroom, regardless of the kind of preparation

[02:52:56] Mr. Robinson? No? Dr. Bridges? I thought we were just going on. Okay, we're good. Well, first, a question. I see on the one-year local eligibility license. Did I hear somewhere that it says one year? Did I hear that the legislators shortened that to six months or it is still one year?

[02:53:30] uh i love that this is being looked into i love how both you and um spoke about um attention to the quality of instruction and i guess my my two curiosities as the group goes into this is number one i'm concerned that even as the vacancy rates have gone down um the high poverty amount of inexperience has gone up and it just makes me curious as we look at not just breaking it down by title one but as our body is considering issues related to school improvement uh also

[02:54:06] perhaps breaking it down by um whether it's i don't know what the right level is whether it's the needs intensive improvement schools or whether it's the csi or whether you i i don't know which metric to use but i'd like to see a metric that goes that helps inform our school improvement work or the video e-school improvement work. And then just a strong encouragement to do exactly what you and Superintendent Conway just said, like as we're collecting this data, again, we don't yet have data on effectiveness of teachers, that we're really paying attention to whatever evidence we can

[02:54:46] collect on what is the gap we're seeing in preparation related to instructional quality. I just worry a little bit about anecdotal worries driving recommendations as opposed to evidence-based worries.

[02:55:02] I think there probably are legitimate worries out there, and I want to gravitate towards those, but just want to be humble that we don't actually know the outcomes, right? I think that's exactly right. And I think because alternative pathways are newer, I think there are perceptions that are out there that we do want to make sure we're rooting in the data. And so I think one of the goals of modernizing licensure is also to be able to connect our licensure data to other sets of data that we have to be able to look at, are there any trends around preparation pathway and student

[02:55:40] outcomes or teacher quality? And we simply don't have the infrastructure to do that right now. But that is a vision of this work is that we could actually speak more clearly about if there are actually trends in that or not. I think right now we just only have anecdotal data as it relates to that piece. 100% agree, Mr. Robinson. I think if you think about that comment in light of the very comprehensive presentation that we saw earlier on the Virginia Literacy Act and some of the evolving expectations, for instance, for our K-5 educators, right, you have to kind of

[02:56:18] acknowledge this is a part of the puzzle. We want to understand so that we have good information and data to provide back to traditional education prep programs, as well as these alternative pathways that we're ultimately building in feedback loops, right, so that you have an understanding of when your candidates come out, where they're strong, where there are gaps, but it also, it would be a

misservice, right, to say that you're done once you've completed your prep program, right, where this, we're really trying to sort of help folks understand that there's continual learning, and in particular as we talk about the additional work to be done

[02:56:54] around that more sophisticated understanding and use of curriculum on the choices that Deputy Superintendent Prophet talked about earlier today, like, you know, that those are going to come with time with educators. We're trying to kind of think about that same point around enabling conditions, but not assume that the answer here is a binary, this pathway versus that pathway, but in shades of gray around recommendations. I appreciate that, sir.

[02:57:21] I think I'm building off of both of the previous lines of questioning. I have more musings than questions, but the specific question I had early on in your early slide, you talk about division-led and local eligibility, as if those are two different things. And if so, what's the distinction?

[02:57:43] Sure. So a local eligibility license is really just the administering of the license to be able to let them teach. It doesn't necessarily come with preparation or training alongside of it, but many divisions are starting kind of their own alternative pathways where they are providing support to teachers as they are in that provisional stage, and they're kind of guiding them through that process so that they're getting that wraparound support from the division, and we see some really strong examples of that across divisions in the state. We also see sometimes divisions pairing with another provider and providing wraparound support alongside of that,

[02:58:18] So they may have teachers. That's division lead. Yes. Thank you. Another way of sort of slicing and dicing your framing about this that I have found helpful from my grad students have done, I've been part of dissertation supervision, working on the issue of alternative licensure and the international teachers, by the way, which is a whole other fascinating realm.

[02:58:42] But the big dichotomy that they drilled down on was field placements and that. And so whether it's a long-term sub or a provisionally licensed teacher who went through iTeach, I hope folks realize they are coming into the classroom without ever having student taught.

[02:59:02] I mean, that's the big difference is they're coming in cold on actual experience teaching. And this is not a criticism of the preparation per se, but hopefully, here comes one question.

[02:59:18] Y'all are doing a review of the literature where you will see that that lack of field-based preparation is where you see the classroom consequences from behavior management to high-quality instruction to HQIM.

[02:59:33] Like, is that going to be a piece of this? Yeah, I think we want to look across what the programs offer, and certainly mentorship and sort of where what field placement looks like is a part of that equation. I think, I do think that preparation takes many forms. And so I think what we see, you know, people are different when they enter the classroom. I think you're right that there is something to understand there about what is the expectation around mentorship and field placement. And we don't currently have very strict guidelines around that.

[03:00:03] And looking at what are the what what does the literature show about the implications of that? And you've got that that umbrella term of classroom readiness. But I think there's there's a lot of nuance within that that I've seen just in reviewing my students work.

[03:00:20] And then related to the international teacher, the licensure. Those are the folks with the H-1B visas that come in when a school division has them. Some of the interesting things I learned from, again, my wonderful students was those are really highly prepared teachers, often some of the best from their home countries.

[03:00:47] They have higher levels of requirements. It's almost the opposite of what we just talked about. And so certainly there are other implications of that one. And I'm assuming that trend line is related to the visa and, you know, some of our national challenges more than anything, because the divisions I've talked to that have these teachers and have a robust program, it's a really good way of putting high quality instructors into vacancy.

[03:01:16] They have a five-year limit, so they wouldn't be able to stay longer than that. So, yeah, you're right. It's not that they're leaving at a certain point because of we don't know why they're leaving exactly but we know for sure that their visa ends after okay so that's that was that was not a I thought there was a trend line of declining absolute numbers of those folks the 270 I'm sorry the slides on oh slide 29 down where it looked like that's a declining trend compared to maybe yeah the lower the lower numbers of license type by that perhaps is because of these external

[03:01:54] landscape challenges where it's well international yes it's not so that's just the amount issued in that year so that's not the current number that are operating on that license that's the amount that were issued in that year and it has declined yeah I know one division alone that has that many plus international writing years yeah working right now um but I would so so again getting to that idea with that population of of classroom readiness and looking at how some of those requirements, I mean, those folks are veteran teachers many times coming in highly experienced

[03:02:28] that are getting these jobs. And so looking, you know, sort of across the different types at how we could push some of those requirements into some of these other licensure. Yeah, I think that is the goal is to kind of understand the landscape and understand what's working and where do we see, you know, what are different program qualifications that they're putting out there and where might we see trends related to outcomes.

[03:02:52] And then last, I think, but not least for now, you know, that issue of a couple of some of these school divisions that have nearly a third of their teachers as either provisionally licensed or long term subs should be alarming to everyone.

[03:03:12] And that's where I look at our constitutional authority to geographically move things around, because you can see that it's very clearly concentrated in our cities. know we're the only state in the nation that has cities not embedded in counties this separation we've concentrated need and I'm not saying this board has done that but really looking at as a as a board and as a state how can we help to de-concentrate that dynamic because we can overlay to your point William schools that are in improvement situations we can overlay poverty

[03:03:50] We can overlay race. There's, you know, we can do all of those things. And it's very visible to us. And thinking about how do we, how do we, as a board, you can't, you know, sort of regulate the problem because, again, folks have, they are getting teachers in those roles, which is wonderful. But how do we think differently about reducing those numbers?

[03:04:13] And so here's the wondering that comes with that musing, which is in accreditation, do we, you know, our inputs, so to speak, do we have things like limits on the numbers of the percentages of long-term subs you can have or the percentages of provisionally licensed, not to be punitive, but to, you know, try to help drive alternatives for those high, I don't know what to even call them, high short-term experience teachers yeah that have a higher concentration of early career teachers or

[03:04:53] provisionally licensed teachers is there any kind of accreditation or other kind of regulatory way of getting at trying to reduce those benefits yeah we'll all get the we'll pull the accreditation uh the the kind of report that the superintendents uh complete i would encourage us to really think about trade-offs here yes right because i think the reality is is that if you don't have you know

[03:05:27] the sort of the preferred renewable license then your alternative is either no teacher and therefore no class right and and some of these are required classes yeah right or classes of 60 right and so i just you know and and um and so as we think through this work even though they're across the state sort of small percentages. Like, it's very real if you are, in fact, you know, either the sort of making the decision about that school, the parent or the student. And so what we do is sort

[03:06:04] of to first, I would say to FLAG, and we can do this as part of this group, is to look at what classes are we talking about, right? And sort of in what grades and sort of what patterns are we seeing because i do think that oftentimes like these the the the the what you all want to see is sort of it's it is it is leading to these trade-offs as a law we're required to offer more advanced math like that is absolutely you know a friction around right as we want you know and i know there's a real challenge for our eighth you know our middle schools are trying to find enough uh educators who are certified to teach geometry and they've you know that's that's a big deal and

[03:06:44] you're sort of you're then between the place and i'll say this is you know again you know where you're sort of like do i bring in a long-term sub do i you know have the kids go into a classroom and sit on device that's not my favorite but then that at least on the other end of that chromebook is a certified educator who knows what they're doing you know or am i you know sort of seeking somebody's really good at math but has to the point you made earlier has zero classroom experience but at least knows math and i just think what we really want to achieve with this work is sort of the kind of laying out some of the trade-offs in that in that data because i think

[03:07:19] we absolutely can look at the accreditation but i just want to kind of recognize that each of these uh these sort of these scenarios presents these kind of really challenging sort of trade-offs and to kind of understand um and potentially almost to the point you raised earlier that like this isn't about saying it should absolutely be all one pathway or not i think that the cat is out of the bag there but if you think about it how might we make recommendations right so if we're sort of seeing for instance that the teachers the international teachers might have very strong content knowledge might struggle a little bit with classroom management united states which

[03:07:57] might look very different from their home country right we might see that folks that are coming in you know local eligibility are very well known to their community right might sort of represent the same demographics that their community do and might lack in this and i think you know what i think that's what deputy superintendent profit and my team imagine that this sort of end report will be will be more around sort of you know less of a like it should be this not that and more around here are the options yes here are the kind of considerations as we are advising policy makers because it's a little bit like

squeezing the bag right if you sort of say no provision license whatsoever or no this then we're like well then that means that kids can't get geometry right as

[03:08:36] for instance we're just trying to think through those do you mind a quick response just just to yes thank you and sort of a it's got to be this mosaic approach one of the things i did notice in um in looking at at the all of the agreements around supporting those teachers without the field-based experience that the local school divisions have to make and they present those to this board um it appeared to me and i can't pretend that i've looked at all of them i probably looked at five to seven of them that there were fairly boilerplate and one of the things i would

[03:09:11] ask that you look at is sort of what are the ways that divisions truly are providing those wraparound supports and services um to shore up that lack of field-based experience and not just a give me a 130 page document that looks just like another school division's 30 page time yeah so there are teachers that have gone through these programs represented on the the work group. So it is our goal to get their perspectives about what they experienced and what the, you know, variability between divisions might have looked like across different programs where they were. Yeah. It's exciting work. Thank you so much. I know it's not a one-size-fits-all anything.

[03:09:50] Thank you. Ms. McPherson? Yes. So I was looking at the, I think it's page 17 and this would be 19.

[03:10:06] So the concentration of out-of-field and inexperienced teachers, so the slide says that basically, as was highlighted by the vice chair, that inexperienced teachers refer to teachers in their first year teaching, and the out-of-field teachers refer to teachers teaching a subject of course outside the endorsement area.

[03:10:30] And those are the ones that are predominantly teaching in high poverty areas and low poverty areas and looking at, well, you did high poverty areas for sure. So what I'm wondering is whether or not you've considered what the incentive would be for a credential program for teachers who teach in high risk areas.

[03:10:57] Okay, because as we all know, if money follows where the problem is, then it will raise other people, other teachers with credentials to want to go to those schools. But if what we do is we continue to send inexperienced teachers to areas that need the highest level of credentials for meeting these type of challenges, why don't we then raise what we're going to do, put the money there so that you get the best of the best to go to the place where you need them the most?

[03:11:35] and then the teachers will follow but we're doing just we're doing the opposite we're sending the inexperienced people to where the greatest need is for the teaching and i mean that just that's fraught so why don't we put the incentives in place where we need the greatest help so why why don't we could have a credential program that deals with teaching in high-risk areas the title one students and the advisory sorry go ahead yeah i'm just i mean region two the whole

[03:12:08] area is in orange, okay, the entire region is highlighted, okay, with vacancies, unfilled positions, long-term subs, and we have to do something. So I don't want us to wait until these students get far down the line before we as a board put something in place that will fix it.

[03:12:32] That's also where we send the money to improve those schools. Well, I was just going to say the advisory board brought up the same thing and they talked about how in their experiences in kind of the

southwest part of the state the teaching jobs represented well-paying jobs in that region and folks were more likely to stay in them because they were stable well-paying jobs whereas in our more urban centers there were much more there were more options for jobs and so it didn't represent as clear of a trajectory for them. And so, I think that's an important thing

[03:13:11] for us to consider. Yeah. Absolutely. And I think the other piece, too, as part of this work is we can highlight where folks are taking initiative to do that. So, there's nothing that prohibits that, at least as I understand it in the code right now. And I do understand that some divisions are doing that, right? And whether it's kind of teacher residency programs, as Deputy Superintendent Prophet noted, some of the wraparound services around educators and ultimately creating those financial incentives to work in our Title I schools or otherwise more disadvantaged and

[03:13:47] thinking both about signing bonuses and ongoing compensation. So back to what Susan was talking about earlier, there's sort of what the bare minimum that a locality is expected to kind of do and contribute and then there are places where they're going above and beyond that and i think you could see in this in our i like the word mosaic and our mosaic of recommendations we could sort of highlight places where they have done that um and and and basically to solve for what you're describing uh mcpherson dr northern guys i've made a lot of my own points which is awesome

[03:14:23] um i will just say that i just want to make sure that this work group doesn't misdiagnose the problem, because I don't think we have a teacher shortage problem statewide. I think we have a very targeted problem, as my folks have pointed out here on the board, in terms of high poverty, high risk areas. So we need to just keep that in mind. And vacancies don't equal shortages.

[03:14:51] 2.6% vacancy is one of the lowest in the entire nation. Nevada's got 11% vacancy, by the way. And our student to teacher ratio, that's another vital statistic that we need that we don't have. The salaries at district levels, division level is something we don't have that patients have.

[03:15:13] When I look on NCES, which is the, you know, the national data for states and districts, our statewide average, and this sort of blew my mind, our statewide average student to teacher ratio is 13.6 students per teacher. Now, why is that interesting? Because not only Virginia, every single place in the country decides instead of paying teachers more, which is what we've been saying, to go to high-risk, high-poverty schools, we hire more people. So our non-teaching staff is

[03:15:48] going off the route. I mean, so you can see a division, the General Assembly, like if somebody actually wanted to try to incentivize divisions instead of hiring more people, so then our student teacher we should go down to 12 students not hire as many people and let's put those funds into a variety of things as some people have mentioned I jotted some down targeted bonuses for teaching in high poverty high risk areas loan forgiveness and repayment housing assistance childcare assistance expert teachers actually get to get more money for teaching larger classes of kids I

[03:16:26] I mean, there are a lot of ways that we can be thinking about this in ways that would help. And the salary is huge. You know, I mean, that's the biggest thing that, I mean, it's no surprise how we get teachers to move is we pay them. Sometimes, honestly, it's \$20,000 worth.

[03:16:46] \$1,000 doesn't move the needle. \$2,000 doesn't move the needle. So if you're serious about it, and, you know, our General Assembly should be, like, following Texas' lead. i mean there are other states that are making real way to do teacher performance for high need high risk areas and individuals oh so

now i'll jump in because i'm hoping my my teachers are not watching me now it is half day so they might be well first so i'm saying that you said yeah there's so many things that you all said and again this is this is giving us the data that

[03:17:24] is asking even more questions so i think that is exactly um the point of this work session so thank you um i the the two things that right now i have three middle school math teacher openings i have three long-term short-term subs like i don't know if they're going to be one week two weeks 180 days like right now it's six weeks into the school year and that's really tough um so but i also just had got a text from a teacher who's like I'll teach a double math block to cover and so now it's like what kind of compensation would incentivize a teacher

[03:18:01] to have the lose their prep period but teach to mass this is one of my most effective teachers who cares about kids who's now going to teach a double math block but now how can I compensate them to be able to do that and I think leaders need to be able to be flexible and creative and innovative enough to be able to do that. The two things that I always understood around why teachers either come or stay or leave is because of their leader and because of compensation. And so the question is, you know, when I look through this data, it's specifically talking about alternative

[03:18:37] paths, alternative paths to licensure. You know, I, what I would want to know is it's the bigger picture, right? It's like, what are, what is the big problem? It's not just about the path. It's like who comes here and why and who wants to be a teacher i will tell you i will take a recent college grad who has got a master's in math and who's never taught and will put them right in front of a group of kids because they love math and they will at least try and we can coach them on classroom management those things but teaching adults the math of today not the way that we

[03:19:15] learned it to deep conceptual math is is a real gap um and so my my question is like what are we doing as a system to recruit to keep but then i'm also wondering like are people leaving earlier or can they stay even a little bit more um what makes teachers leave on the on the inside because because teaching is hard um particularly teaching students and families who have the least amount of resources is even harder so what's the incentive for them to stay and so it's really just how do we make

[03:19:50] sure we have the whole picture and we're solving the right problem what i appreciate about this is we do need more information and a fast track to get people to be certified to have licensure to have the training the support so they stay a long time um but uh this this is uh and it looks like an urban problem so i agree like we shouldn't be calling this a statewide problem it is when you see the dark orange on the bottom left of the state yeah we we can't i don't we can't um can't

[03:20:30] discount that and so how do we come back with an approach that addresses the real root of the problem with the with the big picture but this data is at is the data that's presented today is really asking asking more questions to a very important and most complicated uh problem so thank you thank you mr robinson thank you again um the two precise challenges i wanted to ask the committee to to look at are one that the special education they have special recommendations about

[03:21:04] that um kind of harder but it's seemingly harder to staff area that'd be great and and i just wanted to build on the last two comments three comments to say if i'm reading the data right in petersburg right now i think we have over 50 percent either long-term sub or provisionally licensed and that is a division that we as a board have a special responsibility to as mou division and if um and so you

know now's not the time to solve without because we don't have their voices here informing us um but it seems like we should have an even greater boldness and urgency for the

[03:21:42] type of solutions that have been talked about today and getting their voices and what what they want to try uh and advocating to the legislature to fund boulder support there because that is a seemingly urgent and um shocking challenge yeah i don't disagree with you the only caveat i would give is that that long-term sub data is a point in time so we don't exactly know what they have today but i i would anticipate that it is likely similar um perhaps it's improved which would be great but i agree with you that that's a um certainly something that we need to look into

[03:22:20] okay wonderful thank you for this uh very rigorous presentation and opportunity to ask ask and answer questions um i think you're off the hot seat so let's see

[03:22:58] good afternoon good afternoon it's good to be here with you all and so i think we're just gonna do I will be speaking less than this and I think really want you to hear from Assistant Superintendent Wallace and Deputy Superintendent Hollins about some of the bright spots for particular groups of students. But I did just want to sort of ground us to start with a recap of what we talked about at the last board meeting so that you have that kind of fresh in your mind and you've heard a lot

[03:23:34] of content today before we dive into some of the particulars around the bright spots from of the SOL results from last year. So just again, sort of the big top line picture here, we maintained or made incremental progress across the board.

[03:23:54] Our reading pass rates were at 74.5%, which is a 0.4 percentage point increase from last year. I should say the 24, 25 to 25, 26 school year math at 72.9%. This is for three through 12, as well as our high school courses as well.

[03:24:14] That was also a 0.4 percentage point gain. Science at 70.9, that was a 0.2 percentage point decline in history at 69.6, which was a 3.2 percentage point increase. So really saw this sort of broad progress across the board.

[03:24:29] And importantly, our assessments are more and more starting to reflect the more rigorous content standards that this board has adopted over the last several years. We also saw that incremental progress, those incremental gains shared across most student groups with sort of the notable outliers here.

[03:24:48] Students disabilities had light, less than one point declines in both subjects. It was 0.07 points in reading and 0.76 in math and a similar sort of 0.7 point decline for our Asian students in reading as well.

[03:25:05] but generally speaking, consistent gains or small gains, and I think you can see here some of the differences between student groups, of course, as well. We're not cognizant of that, where we see our economically disadvantaged students, our students' disabilities, our English learners, which are some of the groups that Assistant Superintendent Wallace and Deputy Superintendent Hollins are gonna focus on.

[03:25:28] Also wanted to bring back this slide at your request just to show you all of the years between the 2021 school year and 2024-2025 and 2025-26. So this is just kind of showing we have made sort of this steady climb since COVID where we have increased our reading pass rates by five points and our math pass rates by 19 points.

[03:25:53] Of course, we also know that we are still behind where we were before the pandemic. So this just is, again, is that reminder of, While we have made that 5-point gain and that 19-point gain, we are still not back at the 78% that we saw in 2018-19 in reading and 82% in math.

[03:26:12] So there's still work to be done. We have to accelerate that recovery as we move forward. And I think some of the examples that my colleagues are going to share will help maybe illuminate some folks that we should look to for how we might be able to do that. So with that, I'm going to turn it over to Assistant Superintendent Wallace.

[03:26:29] Good afternoon, everyone. I'm going to continue with kind of a recap before we dig into the data and the highlights, just to kind of give you an overview of kind of the field's perspective over the last few years. I'm in 2022, and you've heard a great presentation already on the Virginia Literacy Act, so that was when that act was passed. And then the subsequent years that followed,

[03:27:03] you see that the general assembly expanded the VLA. This board took action to revise the math standards of learning in August and then divisions started implementing those math standards either in that school year or they were they could do like a crosswalk year where they implemented both standards which has been the historical practice to do kind of a crosswalk year where teacher where teachers are looking at both sets of standards as they prepare for the next year your full implementation. And then this board in 2023 also approved the first set of core

[03:27:38] instructional materials. That's what you heard about this morning with regard to the Virginia Literacy Act. 2024 continued with the approval of the English Standards of Learning in March, and then divisions, going back to the math and the literacy, they were to begin using those new standards in August of 2024 or September, whenever they started their school year.

[03:28:05] And then divisions also fully implement division literacy plans, which included the training and all of the components that you heard this morning. So just trying to give you that timeframe. And then the board approved intervention and supplemental programs in April and September, and then English textbooks for six through 12 in December.

[03:28:27] And then Virginia enacted improvements in specialized instruction and parent supports for students with disabilities. So that gives you an idea of the supports that have been offered to around students with disabilities as well in that time frame.

[03:28:42] Last year, in 2025, the board approved math textbooks and HQIM in February and March, an initial list of literacy intervention and supplemental programs for six through eight in March. And then all divisions submitted biennial division literacy plans in 25-26 for implementation in that next school year. And the biennial plans, of course, are due again at the end of this year. And then the board approved some literacy and intervention supplemental materials for K-8 in November. So you can see that we've continued to add resources to their bank over the

[03:29:19] years prior. And then they have also been implementing based on their division literacy plans. But you also can see where the new standards and literacy and math were implemented and just that kind of compressed time frame of implementation for our school divisions. And so this is the best part of the presentation because we get to highlight our bright spots. And by bright spots, we look not at perfection, right? We're looking at where divisions are making real, true gains. So the instructional team, as well as others at the agency, have been looking at this

[03:29:57] data, the SOL data, and the trends over the last three years. And we focused on those last three years because that's where we saw a lot of the changes with the new standards of learning. And so on the left of the screen, you will see Rockingham County, which is a mid-sized county, whose student population is 16.8% English learners. They show consistent improvement across all grade levels with notable gains in grades three, four, and seven. When we track the same cohort of students, and so you'll notice the different colors, right? So the yellow is tracking that cohort of students.

[03:30:37] When we track those cohorts, we see that the group who were third graders in 23-24 continued to grow as fourth graders and then again as fifth graders in 25-26. That sustained upward trend reflects not just one year of success but a pattern of cumulative growth, evidence that instructional practices are sticking and building over time.

[03:31:00] Growth that was supported by an eight-point gain for English for the English Learner subgroup over the same three years. Rockingham County's division level literacy leaders attribute this growth to the division's early adoption of science-based reading research and evidence-based literacy instruction for all educators. Over the past three years, Rockingham has increased visibility of their building-level administrators who are involved in data meetings, walkthroughs, that'd be classroom walkthroughs, and also conversations around instructional resources

[03:31:35] that they're utilizing in their classrooms. Finally, student reading plans brought a new level of the intentionality to guide those instructional conversations and to also consider in monthly data meetings, which was anchored in the superintendent's Going for the Green initiative, creating a cohesive system of support across all stakeholder groups. And so you can see those incremental gains, and then you can also see the gains across the grade level over those three different years. And we had such a delight talking to divisions, I must say, when we were

[03:32:13] interviewing and finding out what has really caused these increases. On the right-hand side, you will see Clark County. It's a smaller division. It's on the northern edge of the state. Also, it demonstrates a steady upwards trend, particularly in grades four and eight. With nearly a 20-point increase in grade 8 reading proficiency. Cohort tracking here tells a powerful story as well. The same group of students who were fifth graders in 23-24 continue to show growth through middle school, suggesting that the division's systematic approach is producing

[03:32:49] lasting results. Results that are especially evident in the students with disabilities subgroup who saw a 14-point gain on their reading SOL over the same three-year time period. In conversations with Clark County, the team attributes their success that stems from strategic use of partnerships, a relentless focus on student data, I think you'll hear that as a recurring theme, and a systematic division-wide approach to ensure consistency and cohesiveness.

[03:33:20] Clark's emphasis on strong Tier 1 instruction and clear communication of roles and expectations across the division has kept all educators aligned around this student growth. And so with that, we'll take you to another set of divisions. But I do just want to point out that these two divisions really show that when you have intentional leadership at the division level and apply that with data-driven practices and systemic use of programs that are effective, then you can see that

[03:33:53] incremental change. Next, we will show some highlights from division mathematics gains. All of the divisions highlighted for mathematics spoke of intentionality, consistency, and strategically working to have all stakeholders aligned in beliefs and instructional implementation.

[03:34:18] What we see with Colonial Heights, it's on the right, and Nelson County on the left. Both schools have shown a five-point growth in overall mathematics pass rates from 23-24 to 25-26. Both divisions have also demonstrated significant growth in pass rates for students with disabilities and English learners, with Colonial Heights having 14-point gains for both students with disabilities and English learner subgroups, and Nelson County having a 14-point growth for students with with disabilities, and 16-point growth for EL students.

[03:34:56] Nelson County attributes much of their success to having an intentional focus on visible learning and student engagement. Nelson developed division expectations for the use of learning intentions, success criteria for students, and student engagement.

[03:35:14] And they also ensure that tier one instruction is aligned to those division goals. They strategically used curriculum resources to empower teachers in effectively collecting and analyzing, and guess what? Using the data to inform instruction, and strategically used human resources to offer targeted and very purposeful support and instruction for students, as well as very structured coaching for the educators, for the teachers that were implementing the resources.

[03:35:47] Colonial Heights attributes much of their success closing achievement gaps to an intentional focus on tier one instruction. As part of this focus on tier one instruction, the division implemented consistent use of academic vocabulary and representations, problem-solving strategies, and schema in all grade levels. Colonial Heights work strategically with our TTAC to support teachers in working with students with disabilities, and they hold monthly professional learning community meetings that include all stakeholders

[03:36:19] where they focus on instructional practices and data analysis. Moving on to another division to show how there has been dual growth in two areas, Northampton County Public Schools has spent the last three years working towards alignment of their adopted curriculum with best instructional practices. And to support this work, the superintendent specifically utilized local and federal budget dollars to support new staffing structures, to ensure that literacy

[03:36:55] is a focus, as well as additional reading specialists were added to the elementary and middle schools. Northampton educators engaged in professional learning and worked to restructure their master schedules at both the elementary and middle levels with addition of reading strategies, a reading strategies course for the middle school. That was the course that was spoken about during the Virginia Literacy Act presentation. So this middle school actually did put that extra course into play in their middle school. It's not a requirement. It is an option

[03:37:30] for middle schools to do. And so with that, they have seen positive gains in student achievement. From the use of grant funds to support non-evaluative coaches, Northampton has added intentional professional learning communities to focus on, guess what, data analysis and the literacy needs of students. And so you can see by looking at their data, they've made significant gains in the last three years, looking at that 19-point gain with all students in mathematics. And then they've made some significant gains, particularly looking at grade three, pre-VLA to post-VLA,

[03:38:09] they've made over 19 point gains in their grade three literacy. And so we just really want to commend these divisions for the intentional practices that they have put into place. And the next slide, we're going to look at Richmond City. And actually, let me transition a little bit further on special

populations. And this is where we're going to look at English learner growth. And so, as we transition into looking at the special populations, we focus first

[03:38:44] on our English learner group with Richmond City Public Schools. Now, this data looks a little different. On the left, you have our WIDA access data. WIDA is an assessment that we use with our EL students to kind of gain their progress made over the year. It is not tied directly to the Standards of Learning Assessment. And so, it is more about the language acquisition skills that these students are gaining from their entry into the country or into that division and then each year afterwards until they what we call level out of needing the EL services. And so what this shows

[03:39:23] us is the percent of progress over time from 23-24. You can see that they have increased that EL progress. The number of English learner students that are really passing that assessment or getting gains on that assessment from one level to the next. And so they have been making those steady gains not only with their WIDA access assessment, but also on SOL assessments. Over the last two years, they have implemented a program which embeds strategies and scaffolds directly into

[03:39:57] the Tier 1 curriculum, and this is a very specific program to EL populations. They have trained key stakeholder groups to strengthen structured conversations as well as structured reading and writing activities across all content areas, and this is specifically to help target those language acquisition skills with our English learners. They have also hired 55 new language instruction educational program teachers. We call that the LEAP model, and they expanded co-teaching and co-planning where those teachers are working together with regular classroom teachers to

[03:40:35] deliver instruction to students, and it is now required in all master schedules. There is, they are guided by the passion for reading vision, and they also, you know, with the implemented curriculum specific to EL, they have been aligned in their literacy efforts, and this has led to those gains that you see on the screen. This intentional collaboration between multiple stakeholder groups has ensured success with those student groups. And sometimes that's what it takes, those very intentional conversations that break down the silos that we have often seen in education

[03:41:13] between general education and then other special populations such as English language learners. Several divisions that performed, we have not highlighted today, but we do have some other divisions that have performed over the three-year period above the state progress on the WIDA assessment. And so we can attribute some other gains to that intentional focus on the EL, the English language acquisition learner skills, like making sure that those English learners are

[03:41:49] acquiring those language skills. And so we've seen some gains in other places like Prince George County, which is another smaller rural division, Richmond County, Washington County, and Lexington City. These divisions not only consistently remained above the state progress, they exceeded it by at least 10 points for the 25-26 years. So they also should get some kudos and some shout outs as well. When I tell you the team digs into the data, the team really does dig into the data and really looks at some trends and some highlights across the state.

[03:42:23] And we'd like to connect with those divisions. And now I'm going to turn it over to Deputy Superintendent Hollins to continue the discussion around students with disabilities. Thanks so much, Dr. Wallace. It's a pleasure to bring you home with this presentation, really taking a moment to recognize growth and that there is more work to be done.

[03:42:46] And for no population is that probably more important and critical than for our students with disabilities and so i will ask your flexibility to kind of shift the lens a little bit obviously our direct connection with school divisions is important hearing from them how they kind of unpack their data but in thinking about conversations that we've had previously all the way back to last november and january of this you're talking about the levers that the state education agency can utilize to move student data i wanted to kind of take that approach to walking you through some improvement for our students with disabilities subgroup and you'll see a lot of divisions listed here that you probably picked up earlier in the conversation that's to help you give some continuity to the folks that we're recognizing and why they stand

[03:43:25] out i do want you to think about some of the things that we talked about previously helping to support high quality instruction helping to support educators family engagement and that's where we see the tools that we've implemented over the last three years in partnership with school divisions really start to pay off and you can see by the data here that the growth for students with disabilities is is marketable and how do we kind of take these models and where things have been successful and grow them and so thinking for example looking at Bottetot County Public Schools who works closely with our Virginia Tech TTAC on specially designed instruction and co-teaching supports the growth that they've seen particularly in their classrooms that are a high level of

[03:44:04] inclusion for students with disabilities as we look at Colonial Heights and their work with the VCU TTAC particularly focused on the math network to support special education, how they have seen growth across their math content area. When we look at Greene County and their work with James Madison University TTAC, multiple school years now that they've been working with structured literacy training to augment the implementation of the Virginia Literacy Act.

[03:44:31] So thinking about how that implementation of training, but also using the classroom observation walkthrough tool you saw earlier today, and helping to do that work alongside a coach from the TTAC so that administrators understand that and can replicate that work with their teachers has obviously proven to be very successful and that's been done with a lot of work across our TTACs and the literacy network that we have, but looking at Madison County and their work on supporting teachers and paraprofessionals through George Mason TTAC.

[03:45:00] The one special shout out I want to give on this page isn't going to be captured in data that you guys probably ever look at, but if you look at Cumberland and the growth that they have experienced. Cumberland is one of our Virginia tiered systems of support divisions, which a few of these other folks are as well. Last year, Cumberland Middle School in the 2324 school year, they had 131 office discipline referrals for students with disabilities. Last year, they had seven. And so thinking about the impact of approaching this work from a multi tiered systems of support lens to support not only academic achievement, but behavioral support, attendance and engagement for students pays dividends and academic outcomes.

[03:45:40] And so thinking about how we can maintain our conversation moving forward about comprehensive student supports is critically important. And you guys didn't ask, but in keeping with my typical fashion, you know, I love to bring up graduation, right? Because assessments are important. Academic skills and development is important.

[03:45:57] But we know the goal is meaningful graduation for all of our students, particularly for our students with disabilities. And when I say that, I mean them leaving us with a standard advanced studies

diploma that translates into post-school outcomes and that is a huge focus for our division in particular but I would be remiss if I didn't take this opportunity to brag on one of our divisions. Norfolk City Public Schools under the leadership of Dr. Glenda Walter who is one of one of our longest tenured special education directors in the Commonwealth has made such significant progress on these indicators for students with disabilities so this is federal graduation so that's within four years for a standard or

[03:46:34] advanced studies diploma. And these are students that have significant disability types. We're talking students with intellectual disabilities, students with autism, students with behavioral disabilities. Look at what they have managed to do over a three-year period. And I actually heard about this because I saw an email from their division director of testing sent to our special ed director who's there. And to see the fact that they are tracking this, that they are rewarding staff and talking about how impressed they are with applying some of the tools and scaffolding and professional development that we help them to provide is really key.

[03:47:09] So if you think that I'm not using Dr. Walter now to speak to all the SPED directors and to continue serving as a mentor for us, you definitely don't know me well enough. But that is a great example of how we can continue to learn and build capacity for local school divisions based on practical data and outcomes for students happening in classrooms across the state. And so I will I will pause there and just say thank you for giving us the opportunity to recognize the amazing work happening in school divisions and the incredible growth that's happening for students. But there is more work to be done that can be informed by the data that we've shared today, many other stories of success and challenge, and thinking about the

[03:47:47] experience today and how that can continue to move us forward. So with that, I will pause. I'm sure I speak for the team when I say we're happy to answer any questions or follow up. But just really great to be able to brag on a few of our folks today that just present a small slice of some of the great work happening in classrooms across the commonwealth thank you thank you superintendent combine wonderful thank you so much deputy superintendent hollins assistant superintendent wallace and deputy superintendent heyslop for this body wanted to make sure when some of these questions came up and in last month's meeting that we presented the full picture in terms of

[03:48:23] every year for the last five years, that top line result of proficiency, you know, with kind of two important caveats for this group. You know, one is there has been this incremental improvement, but you know, there is some plateauing. If you look at the literacy results and the need, as we talked about earlier today, to kind of really sort of stay the course and sort of intensify the effort. I also think, as we acknowledged, you know, putting side by side, that each year improvement next to where we were pre-pandemic, and as Dr. Solari noted,

[03:49:02] that even sort of the trends there predate the pandemic in terms of, you know, are we doing everything we can do to make sure that our Virginia students, who we know are capable as any in the nation are kind of you know being supported to achieve at levels that are comparable to high standards set anywhere in the nation i also um wanted us to present some bright spots um i think with sort of two key takeaways one is a real focus on growth as this body has called on meaningful uh raising of these expectations and these cut scores over the next four years really

[03:49:40] looking at how how quickly folks can move right and that that recognition that it is possible within different uh communities within all regions of the commonwealth and with all types of students

right and so kind of really trying to make sure that there's no um there's no kind of uh inadvertent uh sort of setting of lower expectations for any area or any student group you know as we look forward and can say everybody can grow and can grow um in in significant fashion and i think the second point is just to note that paying attention to the data matters

[03:50:15] right we see a bright spot in graduation in the very same community that in the prior presentation we saw some real challenges around long-term subs right and so you know we as we continue to sort of carry forward with this very important effort to raise expectations using the data not just kind of paying attention to the state averages uh you know is going to be so important to support each division in turn to support every school and as you've heard me say on repeat every classroom um you know to move kids as far as possible is going to be a really really important lever for

[03:50:52] us in this four-year effort to raise expectations so thank you to the team for highlighting these this is just a sample but we want to kind of continue to bring back data to you as we are working together to raise expectations. Thanks, Superintendent. I'm going to go to the right this time. We all, my left is getting busy. Dr. Norton. Question on page 12, Northampton County, they said one of the things they did in a reading was to support new staffing structures.

[03:51:24] Do you have any idea what they did to support new staffing structures? Yeah, so I think that that has to do with the reading specialists that they hired within the division, and then also the coaching supports that they brought into the division. They probably didn't have those before. It's a small rural school division, so not all middle schools had reading specialists. A lot of middle schools in the state did not have reading specialists

[03:51:57] prior to the Virginia Literacy Act. And then just I think with the emphasis from the Virginia Literacy Act when we began training divisions back in 2024 on how they should implement high quality instructional materials. I'm really thinking about the shift in their professional learning communities. Many divisions, I would say not just Northampton, have shifted to a focus of how they use their staff to coach other teachers through what they need to learn versus always with students. And so you'll see a shift in those coaching. I think that's what they probably mean

[03:52:37] by coaching structures, in particular in our rural school divisions, we have to be very creative sometimes and support each other. And so they oftentimes will highlight, you know, teachers that have strengths and use them as lead teachers to support other teachers and help them learn and grow.

[03:52:56] And so I would think that that was a big piece. That's what they talked about. Great. Ms. McPherson and then Dr. Bridges. Yes, so I wanted to thank the staff for the increased information and also always cheers us up when we see the success.

[03:53:16] I wanted to go back, though, last time, because I also wanted to ask for the additional data for transparency. So one of the things is that we've had the five-point increase over the one, two, three. What slide are you referring to? Six.

[03:53:35] It's repeated on two. You can be on six or seven, probably, and see it. So as we analyze the data, the biggest increase in the five points happened actually between the year 2020 and 2021 and the following year, 2021-22.

[03:53:55] And in reading, we bumped up from 69% pass rate to 73%. And the same thing on the math slide in 2020-2021 school year to the following year, we went from 54% pass rate to, is that a 66?

[03:54:13] 66, yes. Yeah, 66. So that's the beauty of looking at each year, because the incremental change between last year and this year is only a 0.5 percent, 0.5 percent of 1 percent, if you follow me, increase.

[03:54:33] So do we know why we had the significant increase? What was so different in 2020, 2021 school year, both in reading and math, that the scores went up significantly? So when we talk about the five points and the 19 points overall, that is attributable to those two years, both on the reading scale and on the math.

[03:54:58] Yeah, I mean, I think there's a lot that a lot that we can unpack. A lot has changed. The world has changed since 2020, 2021. So that first school year, as you can see, we have our blank bar because the blank bar for 2019, 2020 was when schools closed.

[03:55:15] Right. The following year, we still had not was not normal, a normal school year for many parts of the Commonwealth. We had a lot of students that were still in hybrid learning. It was sort of a, you know, we were getting back to normal, but I think it didn't quite feel normal yet.

[03:55:31] if you can recall I still remember I think I got my vaccine in 2021 you know we were still very much in a COVID mindset and coming out of that so I think but by the 2021 2022 school year I think if you were to pull many Virginia educators they would say that felt like the year that we sort of got our schedule back to normal the practice got back to normal and then I think it's important to keep in mind in those intervening years, 2022, 2023, 23, 24, 24, 25, that is when this board started to raise standards as well. So I think even the assessments that we are using now in 25,

[03:56:10] 26 are not the same as they were in 2020, 2021. We have changed the content to reflect the higher expectations of this board. So I think all of those things are there, but you're absolutely right that between the 2020-2021 school year that sort of hybrid year coming out of the pandemic a little bit where things felt kind of tenuous and 2021-2022 that is the single biggest gain that we saw so are you saying what we should be expecting since you implemented some of the higher testing

[03:56:49] parameters that we should be expecting next year because between last year and this year we had a 0.5 percent gain in reading and we have in the math we've got a 0.9 percent gain so is that the range we shall be looking for in terms of increases so that we know going forward that that's kind of are you saying because now you got the three years of data after the pandemic that yeah we've leveled out. And that's what we're going to be kind of measuring against, as opposed to thinking that

[03:57:25] we got a 4 or 5% gain in reading and a 19% gain in math. You follow me? So we can always go back to that. We think it's always still going to be helpful for the next several years to go back to that pre-pandemic and that post-pandemic. But I think we also recognize that our assessments this spring are reflecting different cut scores. All of the data here is based on a 400 on the SOLs being the passing score. So we know that things are going to change. And I think when it comes time to next year, when I'm hopefully back here presenting to you all, we're going to have to

[03:58:02] explain that data to you, but also to the public as a whole with that context in mind as well. Just as we say, you know, here's when the new reading standards were incorporated into the assessments. Here's when the new math standards were incorporated. So I think, you know, our hope is that we can continue to see this progress. But I think over time, as we get further and further down our journey of raising expectations, that 2018-19 point may become slightly less relevant for us to consider because so much will have changed in large part because of this board's

[03:58:39] actions you know that it's just it's no longer the same useful comparison it is now because we still have that 400 is the you know this 400 is proficient for all of these years here so i think we are going to need to take that into account and we're trying to help our educators and our divisions and our teachers you know as many of my colleagues were talking about like the real work that's happening in our school divisions with students in collaboration to raise expectations to help, especially our students furthest from opportunity, those English learners, those students with disabilities, to, you know, it's possible.

[03:59:15] I think that's also really why we wanted to start here, but then go into those bright spots to say, even as we are raising the bar, our kids can meet it. Our educators can help them meet it. The parents had a clear understanding, and if you put the information, everybody understands where that five points is.

[03:59:38] Absolutely. So, no, I think we agree, Mr. President. I think, I mean, a couple of points that we wanted to make very clear and transparent in response to last month's conversation. I mean, I think the first is it was a significant drop as a result of the pandemic, right? Whether from the spring of 2020, which is obviously not reflected there because as a system, we couldn't even assess students until the very, you know, the very disrupted, you know, including my kindergartner who spent the entire year learning via screen, you know, that year.

[04:00:11] But I think there's, as you look at it, there's both a recognition of heroic efforts to get us back to where we are, but also, you know, a need to continue the push, right, as I think is number one, right, is that you just, we just, we have, you know, and if you contrast this with some of the bright spots, like we just, we know more growth is possible.

[04:00:34] And so we've just got to continue to partner with our school divisions and our educators to do that. I think the second point that's useful to see this is, as you contemplate the discussions that this board has had previously around, if that standard of proficiency, and, you know, as a reminder, this is a binary, right, who's above or above that point, right, when really the scores are distributed from below basic to advanced students, you know, you also recognize that we're sort of, we've plateaued.

[04:01:04] and we've plateaued at a place that many of the folks on this body are not comfortable with, right? That we're sort of saying that that point is lower than all of the other states' kind of cut scores or points. And so I think where you're going, Mr. Pearson, where we agree is we're sort of, you know, we're a little stuck.

[04:01:24] I think we're sort of saying that we're closer back to pre-pandemic, But still, like, where we really want to be is knowing that our students are kind of meeting levels of proficiency that are comparable to any state in the nation.

[04:01:40] And so that's why kind of understanding where we are, I think, you know, as we will continue to engage this body and work with the field over the course of the next year, like, we might see some drops, right, in terms of as we kind of roll out these higher expectations. But then we also will work very closely with the governor, the legislature, this body to sort of, you know, to address and how we sort of continue to support our educators and students.

[04:02:05] So, you know, I think it's just important that we're transparent, important that we recognize that we have seen a flattening of growth, that it's been incremental or modest, as you've heard us use those words, and that as we go forward, we believe in our kids, we believe in our educators, and we think there's capability in the nation.

[04:02:23] And that means we have to, even if it means we don't consider that pattern, you know, you know, exactly in this way, if we have to take a step back in order to do what's right for kids, there's a commitment to doing that. Dr. Bridges. Thank you. Thank you all for this.

[04:02:39] It is so exciting, not just as a feel-good exercise, but for y'all to be sort of pulling back. And it was. Thank you for that. But pulling back the curtain on how do you get to high expectations? What kinds of supports are you providing?

[04:02:56] So I have a quick question about, methodology is a strong word I know, but y'all pulled the data, got this list of bright spots, and then did you just informally interview people, the little check marks, did they come from informally talking to a couple of representatives in the divisions?

[04:03:12] Yes, that's exactly what we did. Okay. So we looked at the data, all of this data is publicly available, you can use a Build-A-Table on our website, and you can get the same data. So these are the things they told you? And these are what, yes, we talked specifically with division leaders and asked, including, you know, the Northampton superintendent.

[04:03:31] And what did you see? You know, what do you attribute these gains to over the last three years? What practices have you put in place over the last few years that you think have really made a difference? As someone alluded to earlier, you know, it's hard to pinpoint exactly one factor that makes a difference in the data.

[04:03:51] And so. Right. Right. You can't you can't just say it's because we got this or because we hired this. Yeah. So we we really wanted to find out from division leaders, what are you seeing as the gains and why they why they occurred?

[04:04:06] And actually, some of them hadn't even thought about it. They've just gone on about their day and didn't realize that, you know, you know, they just didn't look at it the way that we were looking specifically at cohort data. And so, you know, it was a reflection time for them as well to sit back and really think, oh, wait, maybe we are doing some things the right way.

[04:04:27] And not just looking at this final number, as Dr. Holland said, you know, there's still work to be done in all of these divisions and in our state and with the supports that we're providing to the school divisions as a whole. Dr. Bridges, it was actually different for the special ed group.

[04:04:43] We did not interview school divisions because we were embedded with these divisions either through Virginia tiered systems of support or through our provision of special ed technical assistance. We have a little bit of a closer look. And as part of VTS and the TTAC work, we collect data not only on frequency and provision of training, but also on outcomes and evaluation line to both of those.

[04:05:04] And so this was data that we were able to pull from our system. So we we did not reach out to school divisions. OK, well, that's OK. No, I actually think, I mean, no disrespect, this is helpful for us because one of the things you brought up is being able to connect this work. And to Dr. Wallace's point, you need to have time and skills for that, right?

[04:05:24] Part of our support to divisions who work with us directly is to provide some of those services to them. And so through our coaching and through our provision of tiered systems of support, those systems build in those requirements and collect and report on that data so that they have those ready-made evaluation outcomes that they can then use for their planning and preparation.

[04:05:43] So that's an interesting distinction, but I was driving towards a point with my question, and I think you still helped illustrate the point, which was even amongst the ones where the checks are coming from the division level leaders, I noted TTAC, I noted being part of VTSS. For sure they're in the one that you did, Dr. Hollins, but they're noted in the other ones too. And so that's a, not a long way, but that's a way of getting at now, how do you help spread the learning? Because that's why bright spots make you feel good, but unless we're able to scale and,

[04:06:19] you know, replicate in other places. And so, you know, those mechanisms of TTAC and VTSS and the Implementation Science Academy, like that's where BDOE, I see, can add so much value in bringing together, you see the PLC that was so successful in Northampton, it's just that idea at a bigger scale is the network improvement community idea. And so, you know, hearing that they themselves saw those as helpful to them was really exciting. And Dr. Hollins, I got to say

[04:06:55] another thing. I'm dangerous because my students do these great projects and then I learn a little bit and think I'm the expert. But one of the dissertations I was just reading this week talked about a special ed director vacancy average nearing 20 percent. 23 percent for the nation.

[04:07:16] Dr. Bridges, 16 percent for the Commonwealth of Virginia. I will know. I hope they got the most up-to-date literature. Yes, Journal of Special Education Leadership, I believe, a recent publication. Very, very appropriate and very true, I think, to link back to our conversation about collaboration.

[04:07:31] I just wanted to highlight that for us, because we were just talking about teacher vacancies and how hard that is. And we don't give enough credit to the fact that it takes leaders at the school and division level. And that kind of not even understanding that that kind of turnover can be happening in some places, too, is part of that we got to peel back the curtain and help people understand how much of a difference it makes when you're in a division that has a longer, more experienced educator in that leadership role.

[04:08:00] like in Norfolk. That's a huge differentiator that we have to help other places understand as well. So thank you. I think I made all my points disguised as question. Mr. Robinson. Well, first of all, as Dr. Hollis just demonstrated with very precise data, thank you for bringing a data-driven conversation about student outcomes to the board. And as much as I know that the millions of people watching right now uh are learning about these great divisions uh my question but for my point

[04:08:31] is like how are we as a vdoe how's vdoe um further is there any mechanism to celebrate these divisions beyond today's recognition so i'll say from the instructional side of things we use opportunities like this to um when we have gatherings like we'll have a literacy network convening later this year we'll highlight bright spots. Last year, we did a whole series where we highlighted some other content area bright spots that were happening across the agency, I mean, across the region or across the Commonwealth. And it really just depends on the content area. We have regular

[04:09:10] monthly meetings with division-level leaders of English or math or history or science or EL, and that's where we like to do a lot of our bright spots and let them share. And in some of those meetings, those director meetings, we give them opportunities of open mic where they share best practices and they share questions with each other about what their struggles are and how they can come to common ground. So we try to model that and have some conversations with division leaders that are real conversations about what's working, what's not, how are you handling this, and then when we do have opportunities in conferences or even, you know, when we plan school improvement efforts later

[04:09:49] training later in this year utilizing some of these divisions to be part of that or some some other divisions that maybe we haven't highlighted for you today but are also showing growth and to highlight what are you doing to make a difference and and let them tell the conversation because divisions certainly like hearing from each other more than they like hearing from us i think that's those are all excellent practices um what i'd highlight is that you know aj aj Crabill has done some research on local school boards and his research finds that student outcomes are discussed less than 5% of the time on average across the country and in

[04:10:29] most school boards across the country and so what I what I see is an opportunity is we have a state's opportunity and a team that's pushing us to talk more about outcomes here is how can we get outcomes spoken more about at local boards and I'm wondering if they're And again, I bet your team's already doing some things in this area, but is there more we could do to ensure whether it's a letter to these boards or eventually as we do a good job of spotlighting these districts, perhaps also spotlighting the districts that are going in reverse and ensuring that, again, I don't want to shame them publicly here, but ensuring

[04:11:07] that there's a um a transparency and a recognition you know what is our role in getting outcomes discussed more frequently because i think until we see that what i see across the country is districts like rockingham and clark after two or three years of growth like this they're just as likely to go right back down as they are to continue going up if there's not shared ownership at the community level deeply caring about outcomes and we have a role to play in that and I think you're doing the right work to do that and I would just want us to see

[04:11:42] us do even more of that Ms. Reinhart I just want to respond to that in a more in a more systematic fashion while Dr. Wallace is exactly right and we want to kind of celebrate think about from all of the various communication vehicles how we recognize I would posit that this body's systematic way of addressing it is the school performance and support framework right and so as you think through when we are in in the midst of supporting that rollout to go out in early october as committed

[04:12:18] on time and and and with accuracy as we come back as a body and discuss those results in october thinking through not only you know what are the changes that we're working on together in response to that state law calling for the the 10 considerations coming from jClark but what other things might you want to see so i know for example other states have in addition to um the kind of ratings of all those sort of of things like recognizing gains right or sort of highlighting those that have who've made the most gains last year on our website right we did buy kind of

[04:12:54] superintendent region top five for growth and like you know middle school reading medical math right there's a lot of ways to do that but i think as you strengthen the school performance and support framework that becomes your way right of saying here is we're going to have these ratings that make sense to stakeholders and families we're going to kind of agree these are the things that we want the adults to be doing in order to drive better outcomes for students and that you know for folks who do well and grow significantly in that those are the ones that we want to really to really highlight and I know we've talked a little bit in the space of the early childhood right those kind of honor roles are that way so it's not a

[04:13:32] separate thing it's kind of part of a coherent system around and of in our case accreditation and accountability measurement and improvement but I would encourage us to sort of bring that conversation back mr. Williams mr. Robinson to October as we think about doing exactly that but doing it

in sort of a systematic way that will kind of keep coming back to the key importance of the school performance and support framework thank you ms reinhart thank you um first of all thank you as well for this great information it's always nice to see successes and to know that what

[04:14:09] you're doing is working and i'm sure our school systems love that as well um and following on william's comments you know we you've gleaned a lot of information from this process on one end and follow up as well. I often feel that sometimes you learn as much or more looking at the other end of the spectrum, which you all probably have already done, but looking at what is so different, if anything, whether it's these checkpoints that you put side by side for comparison's sake,

[04:14:48] or whether it's something totally outside of that realm that may end up showing itself and not for the sake of shame or anything like that. But I think what we learn makes us better on both ends of that. So that would be really interesting, I think, to look at what we glean from that.

[04:15:10] Thank you. Dr. Northern? I wanted to sort of piggyback on Ida's comments. Ms. McPherson, As I look at slide six, I say that if we really do our job and we align to NAEP proficient, which is the rigor that we're looking to get, never in the history has any state scored 75% proficient on NAEP. It is unheard of. It probably wouldn't be believed if it happened.

[04:15:45] The only state that got anywhere near that was Massachusetts in its heyday, and it got 51% on fourth grade math. So part of what we need to keep in mind here is that 39% is what we're seeing on average as proficient on NAEP. And we're seeing 75% of our kids achieving at the lowest bar in the nation. Let's just remind ourselves of that. So it's not that 75% doesn't sound great, but it's 75% on the lowest bar in the entire nation, okay? So if we don't see these numbers go down, we didn't do our job. Like, let me just be blunt about it. And it's not that kids can't, of course, kids can

[04:16:25] exceed a very low bar that we've set for them. But if we raise the bar, and it may be when we get a new test, because we're kind of getting a new test, right? Like, we hope we are, because how can an old test align to such a higher bar? And in that case, we may actually break our trend line. I think we've talked about this before. And, you know, staff may come back to us and say, this test is so different than what we used to have is we can no longer trust this trend line because it's comparing apples to oranges. Yes, that's right. So anyway, this is why the communications is so important

[04:17:01] around this issue to our parents. We've said before, like, it's not that your kids are doing worse. It's that we've raised the bar and now we're going to support them to get to that higher bar too. So anyway, I just didn't want us to lose that sort of reality check around what we're doing, and that we would expect scores to fall, given that reality.

[04:17:26] Okay, Chair's going to jump in now. That's okay. I am, one, just so appreciative of this data, and each of you have said it, like, multiple times, which is there's growth, but there is still much more work to be done, and what I hope that we all, and look, there's only 22 people watching us right now, so 26 million, But hopefully they'll go back and look at the video family ministry.

[04:17:57] What I really hope is that that this increases the sense of urgency around like actually it can be done. It is being done. And I, well, Superintendent Wallace, you were going through the list of things that the vision said.

[04:18:15] I actually went back to my MOU notes and it's exactly the same thing. they talked about data data bringing the community in as part of the problem-solving process they talked about being on the

ground and seeing exactly what's happening in classrooms having high quality instructional materials the um the last thing that i'm wondering about um i remember and i can't remember which school division they talked about communications and i think that's what a lot of folks are saying is like what is the communication plan

[04:18:49] what are what is our communication plan what's the division communication plan because um as dr northern's shared you know what i want folks to know is that we will have drops if we have drops that will be good because we've raised the bar our kids can do it our teachers can do it and we don't want people to panic um because they say oh well now we now what's going on and so i think the over-communication around this is incredibly important. Something else that you said that I

[04:19:20] think could be valuable is the data analysis part. You know, Dr. Hollis, you said this, and I am so victim of this. When I got my school data, I looked at the overall picture, and I was bummed about it, but then I looked at individual kids and saw what individual kids did, and then we put a plan in place but then more data came out and then you get more data comparing where you are compared to other kids and someone else but not me texted me and said hey did you know your kids to ten points compared to somebody else I was like oh no I didn't do that now I can go look at that person so I wouldn't

[04:19:59] underestimate our capacity to give the bright spots to divisions and districts because they've done analysis and things are moving so I just don't want to underestimate that um the two things that i am wondering about is um attendance and so it would be helpful to kind of look at this compared to like has attended as as in seat attendance also improved which i think the trend is saying kind of post pandemic we are seeing more kids who are coming to school who feel safe about coming to school and so how we look at our attendance

[04:20:36] matters were compared to the results. And then, you know, the, I don't know if this is too controversial, but I know for our school, we had to pull out teachers who had the best results and we spotlighted on them and we asked them to tell us exactly what you did so that you, and it was just a proof of it's being done. Like this is not, it's not rocket science. We actually have teachers across the commonwealth in this data who are really getting outstanding results and so what i would it would be i think it would be so helpful if we actually could talk to

[04:21:16] teachers or there's a presentation that says like hey it's a way to recognize them but they could actually share what what did you do you know the standards were raised you've got these tools you've got these resources what worked what didn't work so that more people can feel like hey what they're doing is actually possible so I don't know if that's too controversial but I think just the way that we have put the data out and have I think have are trying to be honest about the gap and transparent it would be so helpful to hear from teachers around what they're doing because they

[04:21:53] are doing it um as both the bright spot but also to just increase the urgency that it can be done mou divisions absolutely i mean again it appropriately because i mean teachers are teaching right now i guess it's can't take them out away from the kids but i do think even if it is in a work session we could have a you know a couple of teachers really share again i think it

[04:22:31] would be helpful to not just us but to the public to say like actually it's being done miss mcpherson yeah i just can't i want to thank staff you do a great job especially with the bright spots i was looking at something i thought about our cell phones you know when we used to have the older type phones the minute a new phone came out everybody had to have a new phone but the makers of those

phones were all competing against themselves to be the best so i was looking at something actually um it's called the color effect that humans have an innate ability

[04:23:08] an innate drive to evaluate themselves by comparing their capabilities to others so when they're competing against one another there is this innate drive that the baseline of it of acceptable performance shifts to a higher level because everybody wants to be at that higher level and so yeah i think when we start spotlighting people i've seen a whole department change when you started rewarding those at least just acknowledging those that were doing well so i kind of also wanted to say good job to norfolk and let you know that they have like a teacher

[04:23:46] association that's always on them about the special education department so i know that department does well i know some of the people that work in that department so a good job to everybody that's on the list, but especially in that area. Ms. Reinhart? Sorry, and not to belabor this, because I think celebrating these systems for their work is tremendous. It's what drives us all to do what we do every day. You get some, you're not working for that, but it is nice when you get recognized. But I think about when you said about attendance, how does that factor

[04:24:23] in here. And then I go back to the concept of what if you looked at the schools who struggled the most or lost points and you put them side by side again with this other end of the spectrum. What if they said we did those same things? What if? And you all may already know these answers, but what if you looked at them and they all said we did that also, independent of seeing these. They said we did all these things. So then what is the, where's the point that, or what do we need to look at to really figure out why some do and some don't? And you all may already do

[04:25:03] this, so forgive me if I'm preaching to the choir here, but I do think about attendance as one of those things. And I think it will just, what it gleans I think is what we need to know. Superintendent? Yeah, absolutely. I think that you raise an important point, my heart um attendance right is a key part of the school performance support framework and so one of the advantages of the system that this body has adopted is that you were you were looking at those things and creating a very clear incentive um at the school rating level right because it is really

[04:25:40] hard to move kids if they are are not present um i also want to acknowledge the importance of learning from all types of programs as part of our back to school tour this year, Secretary Smith and I have prioritized visiting some of our comprehensive support and improvement schools, right, not as you know, as a way of really understanding the depth of those challenges, and thinking through how can we, as you as you know, Ms. Reinhardt, learn from those, right, you know, it is about edification is about

[04:26:16] strengths, right? We don't want to kind of create any form of a sense of shame, but there are real challenges there. And so it is this balancing act for this body between recognizing growth as possible, you know, setting very high expectations. And as Dr. Northern noticed, noting that there might be some real kind of challenges as we sort of take the steps to get there and to sort of be thoughtful and sensitive to, okay, what are the needs and how do you sort of set a high bar and also provide individualized, targeted resources to support those students to raise it. I think

[04:26:56] about this, and you've heard me talk about it before, and the work around early childhood. How do you get the levers right, right, to incent all the adults in the system to kind of every day be little bit better tomorrow than they are today and maybe maybe the most important work i've done in louisiana and virginia is to raise the floor right so no matter where you go with the public dollar in either louisiana

or in the commonwealth of virginia that you are getting a higher quality experience and so it truly is that that both and thinking about where the bright spots are thinking about how you learn from those bright spots and paying attention to your floor as a way

[04:27:32] of saying okay what do they really need and as both miss mcpherson and ms reinhardt have noted um you know being real about the supports needed to kind of change the needle there if kids are not there it's very hard for them to learn from high quality instruction material from a highly prepared teacher who's got a reading specialist and a coach because they're at home definitely it makes it tough okay um no it's okay miss mcpherson's i do want to take into consideration

[04:28:04] because madam superintendent that um there there has been a shift when we started talking about at-risk kids so years ago teachers taught as if there were no parents at home they did not expect students to be able to get homework done at home i mean at yeah at home in the evening they fed students as if they were not going to eat when they got home. What I'm seeing by doing a lot of

[04:28:39] work with children and children in their homes is that there is the absence of a lot of parents, either one parent or no parents or external family members raising children. I think we've got to understand that the new dynamic is for the time that you have them in school, that is it.

[04:29:03] that is it and this expectation that the parents are going to do to go online and do that's a misnomer to the extent that we have parents that are doing that great or external family members that are doing it i think we got to be real about what we're expecting because what i'm seeing is that there is that that back framework that we used to have even with grandparents and extended family members. That's a weak system right now for at-risk kids. When they come to school,

[04:29:40] you must own them because it may be the only thing that they get. That's a new shift. Mr. McPherson, I appreciate you saying that. I think there's the education gap and then there's the opportunity gap that happens after school in terms of athletics and clubs and sports, which it means kids don't get knowledge and exposure to all those things, which then impact how they read and how they do math. And so, you know, that's why I think it's not just what happens

[04:30:16] at schools. This is where the whole community has to come together after school clubs and programs and, you know, chambers of Congress have to do partnerships with schools because kids need not just their eight hours of great teachers, which we have in Virginia, and food, which all kids really, really want food, all of them, and just opportunities to engage and learn and to be busy. So that is where it's not one person. It's really us all coming together. So I appreciate you sharing that. Okay, you're off the hot seat. Thank you very much. Bio break for,

[04:30:56] We're going to go a real 10 minutes so that we can do a real fast 40 minutes. How about that? Okay. A real 10 minutes.

[04:44:05] We don't want our 22 guests. It really went down at the break. Great. Thank you. All right. Okay.

[04:44:28] Okay, great. We will now transition to work session D, discussion about our board norms and protocols. Chief Koi. Thank you, President Ashton. Pleased to be joining you this afternoon as you consider your own board norms and protocols.

[04:44:46] So the purpose of my presentation is really just to help facilitate a shared understanding around the role that board norms and protocols may play in supporting the board's collective work should

you decide to pursue them. And I'll be sharing some initial considerations for your discussion and deliberation.

[04:45:04] These slides and the presentation is designed really just to spur your thinking and discussion as you reflect on your current practices and protocols and consider formalizing ways of operating that provide clarity about expectations for interactions with one another, collaboration with agency staff and stakeholder engagement.

[04:45:23] By no means is this list of suggestions exhaustive or required, but rather it is intended to serve as a starting point for your discussion together. So why consider establishing norms and protocols?

[04:45:39] generally speaking creating and agreeing to board norms and protocols can serve as a means of communicating expectations with one another agency staff and stakeholders as i mentioned it can also be a mechanism for identifying and agreeing to shared processes outside of your formal bylaws they can provide transparency with the public and build trust amongst various parties they can also just support well functioning and efficient meetings and serve as a tool for onboarding new members to the culture and expectations of the board. Each board navigates

[04:46:13] these decisions differently and your various experiences obviously on this and other boards will lend themselves to a productive conversation I'm sure as you contemplate together whether or which of the norms and or protocols are of interest to this body. So just to do a little bit of level setting, norms typically refer to the shared expectations underlying interactions and communication, and there are a few sample topics listed here. They may seem obvious, but many boards choose to list them explicitly as a means of naming shared expectations with one

[04:46:49] another and articulating them transparently with each other, the agency, and again the public. Protocols, on the other hand, tend to be more tactical. They cover detailed operational components not included in board bylaws or state statute, and they can help ensure that board members and agency staff have clear shared understanding about any number of different topics including but not limited to those that you see on the slide.

[04:47:18] Again, these are not meant to replace bylaws but rather to complement them with additional detailed operational expectations. So there are four areas listed here that we'll run through very briefly again just by way of some examples that you may decide to add to that list or eliminate categories from this list.

[04:47:42] So the first topic has to do with agenda setting and meeting preparations. Obviously your bylaws provide broad procedures, noting that items may be added to the agenda by the superintendent or any member of the board through the president. But to supplement the formal bylaw, the board could choose to establish more detailed protocols related to the process and timeline of notifying the president of these requests, the role of the president in communicating said request to other board members, and if needed, reaching consensus on those items placed on the agenda. So this could include a process for selecting work session topics of interest to

[04:48:21] various members, expectations for maintaining long-term work plans, and ensuring that the process is clear to all. Another area of consideration would be related to information requests and collaboration with the DOE. Again, this is a topic that is not covered in your bylaws currently. So, articulating protocols for developing consensus on data and research requests, work session topics, and

dissemination of that information back to board members can, again, just ensure that there are clear processes in place so that agency staff can fully support the

[04:48:59] work of the full body. The board's bylaws provide some detailed information about and encouragement of public participation in formal board meetings. To complement that, you could consider protocols for engagement with public comment, media, communication between members, and/or agency staff.

[04:49:26] And then the last topic for your consideration here relates to board committees and assignments. So again, the board bylaws do provide for different types of board committees, special standing and advisory, and some of the different parameters and differences around those three types of committees.

[04:49:44] And the Board of Ed website currently lists the existing list of those advisory and standing committees, I should note. However, some boards choose to go beyond those bylaws and establish protocols related to how and when board member assignments are made to those committees and/or what the expectations are for how board members report back to the full body on the work of those committees outside of formal updates that may be presented to the board.

[04:50:15] So again, I hope this is a helpful starting point for your discussion, just to spur some thinking about topics you may wish to consider as a body. Certainly we are happy to help capture discussion notes and/or draft documents should you be interested in formalizing norms and protocols of any kind.

[04:50:36] That's all I have. - Thank you, Chief Coy. Superintendent, do you have some? - Absolutely, thank you, Chief Coy. So I think as you all think through what is most important to your sort of expectations as a body, we stand ready to support in whatever way necessary.

[04:51:04] You know, there is, I'm just going to reiterate what Chief Koi said, there is no requirement or even recommendation here, right? we've just looked in in in partnership with the uh attorneys kind of you know thought through uh you know what are areas of consideration um and uh you know and so that we kind of that is a it is a starting point um i think the the one piece i would note is i i what i would kind of recommend is that you all kind of contemplate these think about what what would be of importance to you come back to us let us know and say like here's the things that we'd like to see and then we can

[04:51:43] then layer in okay how do we make that happen right in terms of the the staffing capacity i don't want to set an artificial uh expectation or limit up front until we understand what you want if you were to come back and say every board member will suggest a work session topic um you know considering we've got through about three today and we're you know we're at we're at 4 30 i probably see this maybe not operationally feasible and can kind of present back what is but i think that the right sequence here is you consider what you would like to see we you share that with us we think through what's kind of what is possible with our uh staffing and capacity come

[04:52:22] back and then uh can formalize it thank you um good dr bridges are you gonna jump in okay great i'm just gonna say a couple couple thoughts um i i think what i think good boards good leaders set very clear goals for what we're trying to achieve and i would like for us to be grounded there could be many many things but for me top among them are that we are always rounded in the

[04:52:57] focus on student outcomes and that that really guides the way that we interact um i think ideally at as required as outlined by the constitution as outlined by our bylaws that we do have some clear

goals that we're working towards as a way to guide us because there are a number of topics that we could discuss we have individual interests individual expertise but i think if we collectively have some general goals that we are working to achieve that that will

[04:53:34] allow us to stay focused um and then the last thing for me is that we we commit to positive communication amongst one another on behalf of the students and behalf of the goals and behalf of the constituents we serve so i think if we set those as guidelines then it will allow us to agree to disagree to challenge directly to care personally but but also you know i am incredibly sensitive as a school leader of the work that the staff is doing every single day it is a privilege

[04:54:13] to serve and when i think about the staff and the team who wake up every single day trying to support our kids and our families i think it's incredibly important that we respect their work um and and take action to build trust and build positivity amongst us which doesn't mean we don't disagree and it doesn't mean that we won't have difficult conversations but if we keep our student achievement up front and our goals in mind then we will be able to move the work forward so that's

[04:54:49] the only comments that i have but i would again welcome dr bridges or others to make comments around norms and protocols we can get into some specifics if there are concerns or things that we've run up against but for me that's the general tenor around which i'd love for us to um operate but again open to additional comments and suggestions the purchase here thank you um so i do a lot of work with local school boards on on areas issues like this and one of the one of my

[04:55:23] mantras is you have norms and protocols whether you make formal formalize them or not it's just the way the body operates and so to me a good starting place for discussion about these is just like are we clear on how this currently works and then maybe we improve things if there's areas of improvement but it's a lot about it's particularly on a board like this where there are staggered terms and you continually have new members coming in just putting some practices down on paper so that folks understand oh if you want to get an item on the agenda here's how you do it or you

[04:56:00] You know, if you have something, the public comment engagement piece, I think, keeps coming up from folks of like, how do we ensure people feel heard without getting into that tit for tat? And so I think there's, I've talked to a lot of folks one-on-one about these.

[04:56:16] I think there's some real clear areas where we're just sort of writing down how things generally work. And then there's a couple areas like the public comment issue where we just kind of need to talk through, you know, what could that look like? Do we want to move towards more of a, there's actually a couple of scholarly terms for that, deliberative public body in terms of public engagement, or do we want to keep things as is?

[04:56:41] And that's the norm then. So that's the way that we were approaching this was just let's try to sort of get a shared consensus on how things are working and where they could work a little better. You know, what should we improve and update?

[04:56:57] And so I've got sort of a working document of people's comments. Now I just added goal-centered. And so I'm happy to have that be sort of the foundation that we ultimately pass off to you all as we talk through this a little bit more.

[04:57:17] What prompted this? So I'm just trying to understand the backdrop of this. Honestly, I mean, I won't say I'm the sole person, but as a new member coming on, I had some of these questions.

[04:57:33] How does how does this work? And there's no there's no guidance document or anything. I read as a new member, I read the bylaws and I was like, that's helpful. I read, you know, our provisions in the Constitution of what our roles are. But but it's more about how do we how do we pass along how things work to other other members and to the public?

[04:57:55] Honestly, being clear to the public about how things work is really helpful as well. So nothing more than that, unless you have other thought, really. No, I think the only additional point is that, you know, we're a new group.

[04:58:12] And so just as we've, I think, consistently done when we've had new board members is just make sure there is that continuity, that there is over communication around how things work. So I don't think there's anything more than that, except that we want to stay focused on our goals.

[04:58:28] We want to stay focused on student outcomes. And so how do we in, you know, quite honestly, the short time that we have together working, make it more effective and clear? Mr. Robinson? Well, first of all, I've been incredibly impressed with both my time on the board, both the positivity I've experienced so far from other board members, as well as the quality of work and presentation from the staff.

[04:58:56] And to Dr. Bridges' point, you know, I was longing when I joined the board for more training to make sure I was doing learning and doing what I was supposed to do for the Commonwealth. So that is part of was part of my interest. And I appreciated that this morning. And I do think norms can be very helpful for helping us all with our own North Star and helping with the Commonwealth North Star of achievement and outcomes.

[04:59:21] And so the two areas that, you know, that I see as at least most interesting to me as we think about norms to help with the student outcome goals are, number one, this piece about information and work session requests in terms of, like, how do we work in partnership with one another and with the BDOE team on what we need to cover, knowing we can't cover everything.

[04:59:49] to uh and longing for more dialogue and discussion on what not william's opinion is but what the nine of us collectively have energy in and where does that align to what the video has energy in because if we if we assume that there's certain things we have to cover because of all the legislation because of all the reports that superintendent conway covered uh earlier there's only so much um but i also know that uh there's a lot of urgent things out there uh and and there's also like information that we may not have so you know i know dr maxwell and some others on this board are

[05:00:26] very interested in this this you know ai and and and and and technology etc but that may not be something the board needs to take on because there may be other bodies taking that on that that perhaps we could support or uh uh you know we have a representative on or something like that but if we're not having those discussions we won't figure out what's a productive role for us to play and what are the items for us to collectively project so that's uh and no part of that would be our board um and i think there's a plan in the future to talk about our our what's

[05:01:00] called our board our board comprehensive plan and that may be the the systemic way to um to cover that but there's also things that emerge that aren't in a plan so that's that's my my number one and then my number two is i had there was a topic earlier uh in my tenure where i gave feedback in the first review and in the second review it came back and it went the opposite direction of my feedback and

it's less about that and more about like i don't think perhaps it was clear what the you know feedback was and maybe that was on me and my communication maybe you know

[05:01:38] but the point is like there wasn't clarity on what the path forward was and i know that the board i know that the videoe would be too much work and too circumspect to write down every single comment that that we make but i think there could be a path to figure out what are the uh and superintendent conway does a great job of inviting her feedback inviting open dialogue and often naming in a meeting here's what she wants her and the staff to do and i wish there was a way to capture that like capture systemically not again what every board member says but what when when they're going to return more information or consider things from first to second review or

[05:02:17] respond to a request if there's a way to just capture that whether it's in minutes or somewhere else and we have a chance to see that transparently and respond to it again each individual board member's opinion is only each individual's board member's opinion but there's something about our collective that it can be better captured and followed up and i think that speaks a little bit to policies and procedures and doesn't speak to norms okay um and i don't have any problems with policies and procedures so like there can be a new board member training there can be a policy

[05:02:56] about how one of the issues I raised how do we select the the vice chairman or when there's a vacancy on board so I think yes we ought to have some policies and procedures when something goes out on first review or final review and a vote that we should capture what the intent of the board was so that going back we could look at what the board said was the direction we were taking okay such that if it comes back there is something that's written and i think there can be a procedure

[05:03:30] for when the board wants to request information from staff you know how do we do that do we need to submit that in writing are we going to consider you know i mean we can't put a limit on how much the board can ask the staff to do because the board has the ultimate authority but i mean if you want to keep track of how many requests for information a board member asks the staff to do and then maybe the superintendent wants to talk to that person individually like you requested too much information so yeah i'm all for some policies and procedures i'm more concerned about

[05:04:04] the effective governance coming from respectful debate i think we all have been very respectful each other i think you just put a revision and it says all board members shall respect all other board members and their opinions you know as a part of coming to a shared understanding of our vote we're going to always have that because we can't limit people from having their own professional opinions the direction that we as a board should take so i mean i think we're all

[05:04:42] adults i don't think we would have gotten appointed to the board if we weren't respectful people that's just the kind of character that board members have anyway why they shouldn't be on the board um but anyway so if you think like i said the norms when you talk about handling the disagreements i don't think you could ever write a rule that would cover that i don't think you could ever you know you could just say we expect that the board would debate you know and be respectful to each other but that's pretty much all you can say about that otherwise you're trying

[05:05:21] to stifle somebody's you know freedom of speech and ability to you know come to a collective decision that's how you do it through debate so that the board's going to always be open in that regard i'm all for some policies and procedures on some very basic issues dr northern just gonna say that um so i i wear the other hat too right like i have to prepare things for my own fordham

[05:05:54] board and one thing they love to do is they love to sink their teeth into a burning question right around education policy things we're struggling with um and i don't think you know it can be just to 30 minutes every other meeting or every quarter and we could brainstorm what those could be like right now yes i think how we should be thinking about ai guidance in schools i think we should be talking about that as a board um how is our cell phone policy working in schools on the ground because i talked to principals they're telling me it's not working too good in my school so i'm like

[05:06:29] okay let's talk about that um how can we put some high quality teachers in front of kids in high high risk settings like so i can like all of us can brainstorm questions that we think are front and center that are important for this commonwealth and i think that we should spend 30 minutes every how often um with a pointed question in front of the public and engage not only us but others on these really vexing questions and difficult for all of us so that's one thing uh and i think they could be tied in some way to our um agenda you know loosely um so anyway um and i think the other

[05:07:08] one i think that resonated with me that one of my colleagues talked about was the the feedback right so um i'm i'm the same way like i i think like all of us i try to do my homework for this board try to read what y'all send me i try to write stuff down and all this and i don't know sometimes like okay does is that was that good feedback do they not like that can they not do that because there's just 10 things going on behind the scenes that we don't know about as a board um so to the extent that there's some high level things you can come back to us and say out of all the things we heard you know here's three areas we think that you know we're probably going to

[05:07:45] make some improvements to would be helpful and sometimes there's times that like i really feel y'all know like there's some things i feel pretty passionately about i think all of us do and maybe that one sort of hobby horse like i don't know i'm like should i make a motion to have that done because i really want to see that done but i don't do that because i just say okay well maybe everybody agrees with me that we should have a seat time flex policy tied to our ct or maybe they don't but i don't know like right like what i should do should i be trying to convince the rest of my board members that this is important should they be trying to convince

[05:08:21] me, what their favorite thing is, is important. So I think if we could have a little bit more guidance around like how we, when we really do want to see something done versus just suggesting it, how do we actually see that it gets done? So I think the conversation I have with the superintendent that I think would be helpful is that we do our very best to just look at the calendar year around when key decisions, whether they're because it's the Fed or it's because of

[05:08:58] the legislature or there's just understanding the calendar of the year would help us understand when we are making, when we need information to be informed to make a decision. And then when there are opportunities to say, hey, let's bring up a topic because we don't have any like major decisions we need to be made so we can like talk about ai in schools um but knowing when those spaces are is going to help both the board and the staff be prepared to be thoughtful in those conversations

[05:09:33] again to the extent that we can predict everything that's going to come up with with an understanding that we're not going to be able to cover everything but if there is a space to share at least what's going on, then again, I think that makes sense. My understanding, I don't know how many months I've been in this role, is that it is the president and it is the superintendent who collaboratively set the agenda. And the public should know that the superintendent and I do talk

[05:10:09] and we do try to think about where there's clarity around decision making, what has been shared previously that the board may have asked for that's connected to it. And so I think it would be helpful for me as we know the calendar.

[05:10:24] But if what I would also encourage board members to really take advantage of the time with the superintendent when the materials have gone out to ask questions, to share insights so that we can maximize the time that we're in person to be as effective and deliberative as a body as possible.

[05:10:48] But I think you said this, like we do have norms. They're just not written. We do have protocols. They're just not written. And I think, as Ms. McPherson said, I think we do have really some very, very good board members who are respectful, who are thoughtful, which made me think, man, what happens one day we get somebody who is not um and what do we do then um and so i don't know if there's protocols around that uh or if there's you know guidelines that we have around that when someone is actually

[05:11:25] not following our protocols or is not following our norms besides like you know quick private conversation does the the body have any authority quite honestly not again i don't know if that's ever happened but um i do generally believe that this group operates in good spirits and so that's that's good now but what happens when when you for whatever reason a board member violates protocol i think we should probably have some uh expectations there like the chair will have them

[05:12:00] talk to them at dinner i don't know are you taking notes okay well just just on the things that could go in the document minute i'm not doing minutes no no yeah i'm wondering what you're because you are uh what you're hearing and what note you're you don't have to do it verbatim or if um chief koi you're hearing any trends to kind of wrap us up i would love for that unless any other board members have any other questions right anything you jump in first okay dr bridges go ahead

[05:12:35] and give us high level some things you've heard in terms of trends and then chief koi chime in we can talk next steps. I think I've heard some consensus around, you know, this idea that we're a body focused on student outcomes. That's clear in the bylaws and that, you know, goals driven, this idea of having a more predictable schedule based on calendaring now, you know, just so people can see, oh, every February we have to do McKinney-Bento, not being surprised by those kinds

[05:13:15] of things and allowing for the opportunity to have some of those more um i wrote hot topics but that wasn't the word dr northern used just sort of how do you balance the regular things that have to happen with the issues of um of specific concern especially as they're aligned to the board's comprehensive plan and goals which we'll talk more about next time um and then the lingering issues that i hear that i haven't heard sort of well how then how do we want to proceed is um how do you move from um suggestions to actions um you know the the easy answer to that

[05:13:53] is robert's rules counts for that and that is motion making but but i'm hearing some some want desire to to flesh that out a little bit more and the idea about um you know how do we ensure that that public comment we know which things have been followed up on are going to be followed up on um i feel like that's not quite resolved yet but there's a lot of interest in me that that happens i'm sure i'm missing some no that's good people have been putting it different ways uh dr maxwell who couldn't be here today but had told me we want one band one sound which to me is the same thing

[05:14:30] as you you saying we're we are all focused on student outcomes um so uh i don't want to speak out eternal yeah but i think that makes a lot of sense and then from what from this morning's discussion it sounded like you know before we can talk about how we assign board members to committees can we talk about the committees themselves and and how we think those are are those the ones we're keeping in place are there new ones to add are there others that need reinvigoration like the one tomorrow and so there's still some some flesh to put on the bones but i think there's definite bones of a starting document here let me add uh the committee

[05:15:10] email that i i sent out is because there are some those committees need to come together because there's some decisions that need to be made but to the extent that we know what the committees are and all of them have different roles and responsibilities and time commitments but they're in the coming months are some time sensitive nature and i think the specific requests around committees particularly the that's the lab schools or the charter schools is that there is representation from this body on those committees which isn't always the case there are some committees where we um we have other members who kind of share out but on those two specific

[05:15:48] committees there is um a desire to have representative um from this board and i think as we get the list clarity around like where do we want board members to be on or where is it okay that it's a committee that's an extension of the board that reports to the board Chief Coy I think the only other thing I would add to that that I heard loud and clear from my staff perspective was making sure the feedback loops are closed on what's happening with feedback and suggestions when they aren't as formal as motions and certainly can think about some ways to operationalize that

[05:16:22] request along with the things that Dr. Bridges mentioned great I think it's it's said but I want to also always make sure is that if there is a request brought from the staff it should go through the superintendent should keep that uh protocol in place if we need information is that that's at least i understand how we do it we're not doing so does that mean if something comes up in the meeting and you want more information on it we shouldn't bring that up in the open session you're saying that we should wait and till after the meeting is over and then tell you or no no i'm saying outside of the meeting if you're like hey can you give me some

[05:17:01] data yeah that should go down to go through the superintendent no i'm not saying that thank you for clarifying and the related one that was kind of already in uh and um chief coy slides is if there's information that's shared to a board member the other members get it too just because it's a corporate body and that's a fairly standard protocol i think governance board public governance Ms. Bridges shared something through Jim maybe a couple months ago. If there's something that we think would be of interest to the board, Jim.

[05:17:37] Oh, like materials. Materials. No, I just did it. Okay, and then he sent it to us, but I didn't know if that was, or whether we could just send it to BCC. I think for ease of communication, you should go through Jim, Superintendent.

[05:17:54] Ms. Reinhard? The only thing I would add, Dr. Bridges, and I spoke about all the things. Thinking about the public comment piece, and I heard, I think everybody else heard in here, a little bit of heartburn that, and we see it happen in our local school boards, local city councils, where you don't respond to your point, the tit for tat, kind of back and forth.

[05:18:24] And our chairman does respond with a very thankful, thank you for being here and taking the time. And do we come up with some sort of, is it one thing that I see happen sometimes, if there is a real, like, how is this being addressed? Here's an issue that we're seeing, is someone taking care of this? And if everyone just sits there and stares at them, and then we walk away and nod.

[05:18:54] One way I've seen that addressed is that, for example, a mayor would ask a city manager, can you follow up on that? And then that person knows that we didn't just nod and thank them for being there, but that there was some action.

[05:19:10] And that follow up doesn't mean that we're asking the superintendent to go dog something down. It could be that afterwards the superintendent can notify folks this has been dealt with and here's the result.

[05:19:27] So it's not putting more work necessarily. That's not appropriate asks. And if there's a way we do it and being careful of setting a precedent as well and how we handle that. I think I think this one is a good, tricky one with the spirit of we want to be responsive in public comment.

[05:19:51] We want to be open to feedback and we don't want to go down a rabbit hole that doesn't protect us legally or isn't our right. And so what I'm going to suggest is maybe Chief Coy and Superintendent Conway, you kind of come back to us with what's the and actually talking to our legal counsel as well around what's the right balance to both hear to acknowledge and to kind of close the loop to make sure that it's not kind of an open item, particularly that we don't know the answer to.

[05:20:26] but that one um we should probably do a little bit of um fleshing out does that sound okay yeah great superintendent conway um appreciate all this and uh we can follow up as we as we think about uh some of these norms protocols and procedures i think the other one and and just thinking about how we want to uh grapple with this um as we think about transparency and i just go back to

[05:20:58] what uh susan shared with us this morning um you one of the the dilemmas that we face as a as a staff is we have multiple bosses right and so i mean and the line here is perfect you know subject to the ultimate authority of the general assembly the board shall have the primary responsibility and authority for effectuating educational policy right i mean in that and that sentence really defines like the essential dilemma of um of our work and so i just you know what we can also talk with our attorneys about is how to uh be transparent with you all right around you know the sort of

[05:21:38] you know the the you know we do a kind of legislative report we talk about um you know the different responses but i know that kind of continues to come up with um but i wanted to see this but if it's in conflict with that or if they're not resources for divisions to do that again those decisions coming from a very different elected um body and just at the core of that is is ultimately separations of power right like we you are an executive board i uh like you all are appointed by the governor right um and they're sort of intentionally in the very very very very very old virginia state government like that they have some powers and then there's checks and

[05:22:17] imbalances, right, which is the legislative body. And, you know, I think the department as, you know, sees itself as an executive body. And then, you know, you've got this dilemma on those kind of checks and balances. And so just thinking through how can we be, in addition to, as Chief Coy noted, thinking about kind of more transparency on that feedback. But as a part of that, I don't want to assume

that's just about staff capacity, right? A lot of it also has to do with very real legal, fiscal, and operational constraints that we operate on, and just trying to think through

[05:22:57] how we can find a way to communicate so it doesn't feel like anybody's being intentionally non-responsive, or there's not enough, you know, resources, but we're trying to kind of present that to you in a way that is clear and understandable, because I think I will just share uh chief coin i have conversations with legislators who have very many the same sentiments right that they would like to see either the department or the board do things as they would like and you know and you know part of uh you know as i think of myself as a steward of this role for this this short period of time is how do i sort of you know say to both this what this body is saying this is an executive branch body this is what this body is saying it's a legislative

[05:23:36] branch you know we're you know there are places where we're kind of the the go-between but i do we can get better at uh that transparency and that communication that has come up and continues to come up with with both sides wonderful thank you and thank you for the presentation for the agenda for the training today today was very productive um and we are now i'll take a motion to um end our meeting for the

[05:24:08] day is there a motion to adjourn i moved second all in favor aye okay we are adjourned we'll see you



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