

# Virginia Board of Education Agenda Item



Agenda Item: E

Date: October 23, 2014

<b>Title</b>	First Review of Proposed Plan to Develop an A-F School Grading System in Response to the 2014 Acts of the Assembly		
<b>Presenter</b>	Mrs. Shelley Loving-Ryder, Assistant Superintendent, Division of Student Assessment and School Improvement		
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**Purpose of Presentation:**

Action required by state or federal law or regulation.

**Previous Review or Action:**

No previous review or action.

**Action Requested:**

Action will be requested at a future meeting. Specify anticipated date below:  
November 20, 2014

**Alignment with Board of Education Goals: Please indicate (X) all that apply:**

X	Goal 1: Accountability for Student Learning
	Goal 2: Rigorous Standards to Promote College and Career Readiness
	Goal 3: Expanded Opportunities to Learn
	Goal 4: Nurturing Young Learners
	Goal 5: Highly Qualified and Effective Educators
	Goal 6: Sound Policies for Student Success
	Goal 7: Safe and Secure Schools
	Other Priority or Initiative. Specify:

**Background Information and Statutory Authority:**

Goal 1: The approval of a school grading system will support accountability for student learning.

The 2014 General Assembly enacted legislation regarding the school grading formula that delayed the reporting of school grades required by the 2013 Act of the Assembly from October 2014 to October 2016. The legislation further directed the Virginia Board of Education to consider: 1) the inclusion of additional factors in deriving the school grades and 2) the provision of multiple grades for each school rather than a single grade in the development of the school grading formula. According to the legislation, by January 1, 2015, the Board must develop and submit to the Chairman of the House Committee on Education and the Chairman of the Senate

Committee on Education and Health a preliminary plan for an A-to-F school performance grading system. By December 1, 2015, the Board must finalize the school performance grading system, make a summary of the system available to the public, and submit a summary of the system to the General Assembly. By October 1, 2016 and each October 1 thereafter, the Board shall assign individual school grades to each public school and make the assigned grades available to the public. The specific requirements of the 2014 legislation are provided below.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia that § 2 of Chapters 672 and 697 of the Acts of Assembly of 2013 is amended as follows:

*“§ 2. The Board of Education, by October 1, 2016, shall report individual school performance using a grading system that ~~includes the standards of accreditation, state and federal accountability requirements, and student growth indicators in assigning grades. The grading system shall be~~ is based on an A-to-F grading scale. The Board, by October 1, 2014, shall (i) assign a grade from A to F to each public school in the Commonwealth; (ii) make both the system and the grade assigned to each school in the Commonwealth available to the public; and (iii) report to the General Assembly a summary of the system and the assigned grades. No later than January 1, 2015, the Board shall develop and submit to the Chairman of the House Committee on Education and the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Education and Health a preliminary plan for an A-to-F school performance grading system. The Board, in developing the school performance grading system, can consider (i) the standards of accreditation, (ii) state and federal accountability requirements, (iii) state-mandated assessments, (iv) any alternative assessments developed or approved for use by the relevant local school board, (v) student growth indicators, (vi) student mobility, (vii) the experience and qualifications of school staff, (viii) total cost and funding per pupil, (ix) school safety, and (x) any other factors that the Board deems necessary to produce a full and accurate grade for each public elementary and secondary school in the Commonwealth. As part of its preliminary plan, the Board shall also determine, in consultation with the House Committee on Education and the Senate Committee on Education and Health, whether to (a) assign a single letter grade to each school or (b) assign a series of letter grades to each school based on some or all of the factors in clauses (i) through (x) or any combination of such factors. No later than July 1, 2015, the Board shall provide notice and solicit public comment on the preliminary school performance grading system plan. No later than December 1, 2015, the Board shall finalize the school performance grading system, make a summary of the system available to the public, and submit a summary of the system to the Chairman of the House Committee on Education and the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Education and Health. No later than October 1, 2016, and each October 1 thereafter, the Board shall assign a grade or a series of grades to each public elementary and secondary school in the Commonwealth and make such grades available to the public.”*

**Summary of Important Issues:**

A proposed plan to develop a school grading formula that meets the requirements of the 2014 legislation may be found in Attachment A.

**Impact on Fiscal and Human Resources:**

Costs will be absorbed within the Department of Education's existing resources.

**Timetable for Further Review/Action:**

The proposed plan to develop an A-F School Grading System is expected to come before the Board of Education for final review on November 20, 2014.

**Superintendent's Recommendation:**

The Superintendent of Public Instruction recommends that the Board receive for first review the proposed plan for the development of an A-F school grading system.

**Proposal for an A - F School Grading System for Virginia Public Schools  
to be Presented to the Chairman of the House Committee on Education  
and the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Education and Health  
by January 1, 2015**

**Legislative Requirement: 2014 Acts of the Assembly**

The 2014 General Assembly enacted legislation regarding the school grading formula that delayed the reporting of school grades required by the 2013 Act of the Assembly from October 2014 to October 2016. The legislation further directed the Virginia Board of Education to consider: 1) the inclusion of additional factors in deriving the school grades and 2) the provision of multiple grades for each school rather than a single grade in the development of the school grading formula. The requirements of the 2014 legislation are provided below.

*An Act to amend and reenact § 2 of Chapter 672 and § 2 of Chapter 692 of the Acts of Assembly of 2013, relating to a grading system for individual school performance; delay.*

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 2 of Chapter 672 of the Acts of Assembly of 2013 is amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 2. The Board of Education, *by October 1, 2016*, shall report individual school performance using a grading system that *is based on an A-to-F scale. No later than January 1, 2015, the Board shall develop and submit to the Chairman of the House Committee on Education and the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Education and Health a preliminary plan for an A-to-F school performance grading system.*

*The Board, in developing the school performance grading system, can consider (i) the standards of accreditation, (ii) state and federal accountability requirements, (iii) state-mandated assessments, (iv) any alternative assessments developed or approved for use by the relevant local school board, (v) student growth indicators, (vi) student mobility, (vii) the experience and qualifications of school staff, (viii) total cost and funding per pupil, (ix) school safety, and (x) any other factors that the Board deems necessary to produce a full and accurate grade for each public elementary and secondary school in the Commonwealth.*

*As part of its preliminary plan, the Board shall also determine, in consultation with the House Committee on Education and the Senate Committee on Education and Health, whether to (a) assign a single letter grade to each school or (b) assign a series of letter grades to each school based on some or all of the factors in clauses (i) through (x) or any combination of such factors. No later than July 1, 2015, the Board shall provide notice and solicit public comment on the preliminary school performance grading system plan.*

*No later than December 1, 2015, the Board shall finalize the school performance grading system, make a summary of the system available to the public, and submit a summary of the system to the Chairman of the House Committee on Education and the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Education and Health. No later than October 1, 2016, and each October 1 thereafter, the Board shall assign a grade or a series of grades to each public elementary and secondary school in the Commonwealth and make such grades available to the public.*

## Compare Requirements of 2014 Legislation to Grading Formula Adopted in 2013

As a first step, the requirements of the 2014 legislation will be compared to the A-F school grading formula adopted by the Virginia Board of Education in 2013 to determine similarities and differences and action steps necessary to meet the requirements of 2014 legislation.

The requirements of the 2013 Acts of Assembly are provided below.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

**1.** § 1. *The Board of Education shall approve student growth indicators by July 31, 2013. The Department of Education shall provide a report to the Governor and the General Assembly on the approval of the student growth indicators and their uses by December 1, 2013. The growth indicators shall be used in the standards of accreditation of schools and in teacher evaluations.*

§ 2. *The Board of Education shall report individual school performance using a grading system that includes the standards of accreditation, state and federal accountability requirements, and student growth indicators in assigning grades. The grading system shall be based on an A-to-F grading scale. The Board, by October 1, 2014, shall (i) assign a grade from A to F to each public school in the Commonwealth; (ii) make both the system and the grade assigned to each school in the Commonwealth available to the public; and (iii) report to the General Assembly a summary of the system and the assigned grades.*

§ 3. *As used in this act, for purposes of assigning grades, "student growth" means (i) whether individual students on average fall below, meet, or exceed an expected amount of growth based on a statewide average or reference base year on state assessments or additional assessments approved by the Board; (ii) maintaining a proficient or advanced proficient performance level on state assessments; or (iii) making significant improvement within the below basic or basic level of performance on reading or mathematics assessments as determined by the Board.*

The Virginia School Grading System adopted in 2013 assigned a single letter grade, A-F, to Virginia public schools that are part of the state accreditation system. The grading system incorporated the legislative requirements by combining three primary focus areas that are important for students' long-term school and life success:

- 1) Proficiency of a school's students in core content areas of mathematics, English (reading and writing), science, and history and social science as measured by passing rates on statewide assessments
- 2) Growth or learning gains of an elementary or middle school's students in reading and mathematics as measured by year-to-year ("growth") on state assessments
- 3) College and career readiness of a high school's students as measured by indicators that students have graduated with college and career ready credentials, or are progressing on a pathway to graduating from high school prepared for college and careers.

**Research Other States' A - F School Grading Formulas**

Department staff will identify states that have implemented A - F school grading systems, including those which assign one overall grade and those which assign multiple grades. These systems will be reviewed to determine relevance to Virginia's plan.

**Evaluate Potential Inclusion of Additional Data Elements**

Virginia Department of Education staff will 1) determine the availability of additional data elements required in the 2014 legislation through existing data collections and 2) identify those elements that would require the collection of additional information from school divisions. In addition, the Department staff will review current research on indicators of school quality to determine the relevance of the data elements included in the 2014 legislation to school success. Finally, the Board will secure legal advice on any issues associated with the use of data not maintained by the Virginia Department of Education in the grading formula.

**Consult with Education Committees of the General Assembly**

As required by the 2014 legislation, the Board will consult with the House Committee on Education and the Senate Committee on Education and Health to determine whether to assign one grade or multiple grades. The results of this consultation will be used to further refine the plan.

**Engage Stakeholders**

By July 1, 2015, the Board will provide notice and solicit public comment on the school grading system from stakeholders, such as school division staff, educational organizations, parents, students, citizens, businesses, and representatives from higher education.

**Finalize the A - F School Grading System and Report Grades**

By December 1, 2015, the Board will finalize the school grading system, make a summary of this system available to the public, and submit a summary of the system to the Chairman of the House Committee on Education and the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Education and Health. By October 1, 2016, and each October 1 thereafter the Board will report a grade(s) for each public school.