



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

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November 10, 2022

MEMORANDUM

TO: President Dan Gecker and the Virginia Board of Education Members

Recommended Topics for Review and Discussion:

- NAEP Scores
- Timeline for accreditation and accountability
- Emergency rulemaking
- Proficiency scores
- History and Social Science Standards

NAEP Scores

On October 24, statewide NAEP data were released, and it was devastating for Virginia. The Commonwealth saw the steepest declines in the nation from 2017-2022 in grade 4 reading and math. For the first time in 30 years, Virginia's 4th grade students have fallen below the national average in reading and are barely above the national average in math.

The Board will receive a presentation on the 2022 NAEP scores. On the October 24 release, Governor Youngkin emphasized the important role that the Board has in raising expectations for student learning. Currently, Virginia has the lowest standards for proficiency, or cut scores, in the nation. Moving our cut scores from the lowest in the nation to the highest in the nation is a responsibility of the Board.

Timeline for accreditation and accountability

Anne Hyslop will join us during this month's work session to talk about essential considerations in accountability and transparency in the work of schools and school districts.

VDOE staff will also present a timeline and work plan for accomplishing:

- Separation of accountability and accreditation
- A plan for implementing an accountability system for the 2023-2024 school year

At this month's meeting, we will recommend that you approve this timeline.

Emergency Rulemaking

In order to implement a new accountability system for the 2023-24 school year, the Board is asked to review and approve a letter to Governor Youngkin requesting the authority to promulgate rules on a faster timeline than the regular rulemaking process. "Emergency

rulemaking” does not circumvent the regular rulemaking process or public comment – it only expedites the timeline. The VDOE will undergo regular rulemaking simultaneously.

Proficiency “Cut” Scores for SOL Assessments

As the Board develops a new accountability system, it will consider proficiency “cut” scores. As mentioned, according to NAEP, Virginia has the lowest standards for proficiency in the nation. This can be remedied by raising our cut scores to what we believe is the content and skill mastery needed to be on track for readiness for college and career. I will recommend that the Board vote at this meeting to commit and support moving our cut scores from the lowest to the highest in the nation as part of the new accountability system.

Between now and the February 2023 meeting, VDOE will embark on a study to support any cut score changes. We will also determine changes and growth that need to occur within VDOE to better support schools and students, including:

- Restructuring the work within the Office of School Quality and other teams to support schools with common challenges
- Implementing the *Bridging the Gap* pilot that fosters data sharing and transparency, interventions, and parental engagement
- Promoting funding opportunities and state models for evidence-based after-school, weekend, and summer programs and tutoring to address learning loss
- Developing professional development informed by evidence

The VDOE staff will present an update on the findings of the study and a proposed implementation timeline in early 2023.

Update on History and Social Sciences (HSS) Standards

The 2022 NAEP scores are a wake-up call for the Board, the Department, and every education division to double down on math and literacy teaching and learning. The 2018 NAEP history and civics results should have set off similar alarm bells. Only 24% of 8th graders nationwide were proficient in civics. The results reflect a prior de-emphasis on history and civics that resulted in reduced instructional time, the omission of assessments, and minimal teacher training.

Our collective goal is to deliver the nation’s leading standards for History and Social Science. We will convey that comprehensively teaching our nation and our commonwealth’s extraordinary history includes, at times, truly abhorrent realities and continuously emphasizing the rights and duties that come with the incredible opportunities bestowed with American citizenship. Our mission includes creating and adopting a rigorous set of comprehensive standards to ensure our students have access to a high-quality history and civics experience as a foundation understanding the American journey.

The Virginia History and Social Science standards are on track for approval this winter; the attached draft is on the agenda for first review this month. **Continued review and edits to the standards over the past several months have strengthened the content at each grade level. The edits honor the work done previously by Virginians, and national and state experts. Based on this input from additional experts, a focused set of comprehensive standards have been developed, and curriculum frameworks that support the standards will follow.**

Technical changes made to ensure a more complete, easier to understand and use standards document include:

- Corrected errors and omissions
- Removed repetitive and vague language to clarify content
- Moved useful instructional guidance to its proper place in curriculum

- Edited language to make the standards tighter and more coherent
- Reordered content in some places to support a grade-by-grade and chronological progression
- Incorporated new content in some places based on feedback
- Emphasized facts and in the standards document and moved opportunities for critical thinking and inquiry into the curriculum frameworks
- Incorporated “essential skills” standards into the standards
- Checked for accuracy of facts
- Emphasized the most important content with additional details and standards

Content changes made to ensure that broad learning goals about history, civics, economics, and geography are comprehensive include:

- Adding more specific and thorough treatment of the issue of slavery, particularly by requiring more content in earlier grades
- Adding more specific and thorough treatment of the issue of segregation, particularly by requiring more content in earlier grades
- Adding more specific and thorough treatment of the issue of Reconstruction
- Adding more clear and thorough treatment of the issue of the Civil Rights Movement in Virginia
- Requiring the examination of important Supreme Court cases like *Dred Scott v. Sanford*, *Plessy v. Ferguson*, *Korematsu v. U.S.*, *Loving v. Virginia* and others
- Further examining the critical role of the Founding Fathers and the principles of liberty expressed in the Declaration of Independence and codified in the U.S. Constitution
- Further explaining the importance of Women’s Suffrage and key events in history that led to the Nineteenth Amendment
- Providing more thorough treatment of the Constitution, the branches of government, the rule of law, how a bill becomes a law, and the role of courts, judges, and juries in grades K-3
- Examining the influence that the U.S. Declaration of Independence and Constitution have had on other countries throughout history
- Providing a thorough examination of the Electoral College and Federalist Papers
- Adding more clear and thorough treatment of the issue of the economic systems and philosophies
- Adding more American history content and more world history content in grades K-3
- Reverting to the 2015 grade 8 geography standards because of the deficiency in content in the August 2022 draft
- Adding a staircase of standards that build students’ understanding of what citizenship is, detailing its rights and responsibilities

After the Board accepts the standards for first review, the following timeline will guide our actions:

- November 17, 2022
First review of standards document
- November 28 - December 16, 2022
Public engagement sessions*
- January 9-13, 2023
Board public hearings
- January 2023
Review public comments and incorporate warranted changes
- February 2023
Review and adoption by the Board

*Public engagement sessions are smaller and more interactive than public comment meetings. Participation may need to be capped, and attendees will have “homework” before their session(s). The VDOE staff will present information about the standards to attendees and divide participants into small discussion groups depending on interest for each session.

At this November meeting we also will present several examples of curriculum frameworks for review and feedback from the Board. These include representative units on 1) the foundational role of the Constitution to our government and way of life; 2) the role of slavery in causing the Civil War; and 3) the defeat of communism.

The Board is not statutorily required to vote on the curriculum frameworks. We will take the time to build out a rich set of curriculum frameworks that are aligned to these content-rich standards and these frameworks will guide local school boards and educators as they choose materials and curricula.

Once the standards are finalized, our team will continue to engage with a variety of entities and individuals to build a high-quality and rigorous assessment, a menu of high-quality curriculum, and teacher training focused on content and pedagogy.

I am eager for the Board to offer a robust and contemplative discussion about this topic and how it will positively impact student achievement and school quality, as we have seen in the past.

As always, it is an honor to serve Virginia education alongside all of you.