




August 10, 2022

MEMORANDUM

TO: Virginia State Board of Education President Gecker and Members

FROM: Jillian Balow, Superintendent of Public Instruction 

SUBJECT: Superintendent's Update

It is a pleasure to welcome five new board members to the Virginia Board of Education. In a news release on June 30, Governor Youngkin said, "I'm delighted to appoint this group of proven leaders in their respective fields to help ensure every student has a best-in-class education. I have tasked these innovators to bring their expertise as parents, industry leaders, educators, and policymakers to ensure our classrooms and our campuses prepare students for success in life. This includes providing equal access to educational opportunities regardless of background or zip code, protecting and promoting free speech, restoring the ability to have civil discourse, keeping tuition affordable, and ensuring that all Virginians have access to in-demand career pathways. Together, we will make Virginia the best place to learn across a lifetime."

Indeed, there is good work ahead in Virginia education! Adding to the expertise and experience that exists, the five new board members bring skill sets that include state and national leadership, data expertise, STEM education leadership, early education, school accountability development, school choice within public schools innovation, and much more.

During this meeting Secretary Guidera and Deputy Secretary Snow will present information about lab schools. The final budget from the 2022 Virginia General Assembly included \$100 million for the effort and the State Board is instrumental in shepherding the work from incubation to maturity. The board has two formal decision points and an opportunity to discuss and recommend members for the standing committee that will review lab school applications. You will note that I recommend that the Board waive first review to approve the planning grant guidelines during this meeting. I make this recommendation with the understanding that potential applicants are eager to start planning.

I would like to acknowledge the work of the VDOE staff over the course of the last month as they navigated the rescheduling of the board meeting. This truncated agenda includes items with a timeline; other items from July's agenda will be included in subsequent meetings. Again, it is my honor to lead Virginia education alongside this Board.

Thank you for your work and service.