



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA  
Department of Education

July 29, 2016

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: Steven R. Staples, Superintendent of Public Instruction

**SUBJECT: Announcement of Conference: *Assessing for Deeper Learning: A Transformative Pathway to Prepare Virginia Students for the Future***

The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) is partnering with Jobs for the Future's (JFF) Students at the Center initiative with generous funding from The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, to convene an all-day forum on September 26, 2016, focused on the use of performance assessments as a lever for transformative teaching and learning as Virginia prepares for the implementation of the Every Student Succeed Act (ESSA). The conference, entitled *Assessing for Deeper Learning: A Transformative Pathway to Prepare Virginia Students for the Future*, will be hosted by the Curry School of Education at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville. Divisions are invited to bring a team of three to five individuals to experience professional development tailored to assist your school division's needs in moving toward the use of performance assessment to support teaching and learning.

A major focus of this conference will be on using the Framework for Local Alternative Assessment Implementation to determine where your school division is in moving toward the use of performance assessments and determining next steps in this process. The Framework is an outgrowth of VDOE's work with school divisions in 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 to provide support and professional development in the implementation of performance assessments and reflects lessons learned in the last two years. The framework, which was developed by Dr. Chris Gareis, Professor of Educational Leadership at the College of William and Mary in consultation with regional representatives, may be found at [www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/local\\_assessments/index.shtml](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/local_assessments/index.shtml).

School division staff are encouraged to review the Framework prior to the conference and to make a preliminary judgement as to where their division falls within the stages described in the Framework. The Framework is not intended to be an evaluative tool. Rather, it is an opportunity for all regions to utilize the same language and bring consistency and fidelity to the use of local alternative assessments. This framework can be used for the areas of the removed Standards of Learning assessments as well as other alternative assessment work within the division. Use of this Alternative Assessment Framework to self-assess the current stage of work in each in school division will aid divisions in developing plans for the next stage of the work and will also allow VDOE to understand where critical technical support can be targeted

An audio walkthrough of the Framework may be found at this link <https://wm1693.box.com/s/0u4qlrigevto3tb0x482asxs5pnlhjok>. This tool can be used by superintendents, administrators, and teacher teams to more clearly understand the stages of implementation and artifacts that would represent each stage. The audio walkthrough provides language and definitions that will be commonly used in framework and in the implementation. Because it is likely that a school division may fall across several stages of the Framework, use of the audio walk through will help assist staff in looking at where their division is now and in making plans for the 2016-2017 year, based on the indicators within the framework.

More details about the conference including registration information may be found at <http://www.event.com/d/vvqmrj>. Logistical questions about the conference should be directed to Stephanie Krauss at [skrauss@jff.org](mailto:skrauss@jff.org). Other questions should be directed to [student\\_assessment@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:student_assessment@doe.virginia.gov).

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