



# VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION

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# AGENDA ITEM

**Agenda Item:** D

**Date:** July 25, 2024

**Title:** First and Final Review of Standards of Accreditation (SOA) Regulations at the Final Stage

**Presenter:** Katie Carroll, Deputy Superintendent of Student Performance and Support

## **Purpose of Presentation**

Action required by state or federal law or regulation.

## **Executive Summary**

The Board of Education (“Board”) began discussing a revision to Virginia’s current accreditation and accountability systems in the summer of 2022 following the publication of [Our Commitment to Virginians](#) and the release of the 2022 Nation’s Report Card. These reports illuminated for the Board that Virginia’s students are experiencing declines in both reading and mathematics performance. An accountability system, or school performance framework, is a key element in driving student outcomes because it sets performance targets and incentivizes school-level practices. By revising Virginia’s school performance framework, the Board will take a necessary action to address student achievement.

As a note, the following principles have guided the school performance framework work over the past year and will continue to inform the Board as it revises the school performance framework.

1. **The North Star is high expectations for every student.** Proficiency definitions will be set by benchmarking against the demands of Virginia employers and higher education as well as against states who have the most rigorous definitions of proficiency in the nation.
2. **Transparency and access to actionable information** will be a hallmark of our approach and our new system.

3. Student academic growth and proficiency are both vital measures, but the **system must prioritize getting every student to proficiency/mastery.**
4. The purpose of accountability is **to build trust between schools, parents, and students through transparent, concrete, and easy to understand reporting.** We must provide necessary supports and work alongside schools in need of help.
5. **Stakeholder input is critical.** Teachers, parents, students, and education leaders will inform the Board’s process to build a best-in-class accreditation and accountability system.

Since the fall of 2022, the Board has held a series of work sessions where it explored Virginia’s current school performance framework and its difficulties addressing the challenges experienced by students since the pandemic. These discussions focused on bifurcating the current accreditation system and school performance framework, so that the accreditation system focused on “inputs” and the school performance framework focused on “outputs.” Additionally, during the summer of 2023, the Superintendent of Public Instruction ("Superintendent") conducted a series of meetings with stakeholder groups on revisions to the school performance framework. During those sessions, three themes surfaced: achievement/mastery; growth, and career readiness.

At a special meeting in August 2023, the Board approved a Notice of Intended Regulatory Action (“NOIRA”) to repeal [8VAC20-131](#) and replace with a new chapter in order to bifurcate accreditation and school performance and revise the school performance framework to increase transparency on school performance. At the September 2023 meeting, the Board voted on several key decisions for the school performance framework regarding mastery, readiness, and a summative measure. These decisions allowed the Department of Education to release the NOIRA for public comment and then engage in a series of stakeholder listening sessions across the commonwealth.

Between November and December 2023, the Superintendent and the Board conducted eight regional listening sessions. There was a total of 375 attendees, including legislative members, parents, teachers, principals, school board members, Division Superintendents, and Division Directors of Testing. Attendees provided feedback on the mastery, growth, and readiness indicators as well as other matters related to school performance. At the January 2024 meeting, the Board received a summary of the feedback. The Board also reviewed and discussed language regarding regulatory language for weighting of indicators.

At the March 2024 meeting, the Board received a proposed draft of regulations of the Standards of Accreditation and reviewed weighting models for the new school performance

framework. The Board reviewed and voted on the proposed draft regulations and the weighting models that will allow the Virginia Department of Education to further develop the school performance framework under the Every Student Succeeds Act (“ESSA”).

The proposed draft regulations included the following:

- Creates one school performance framework aligned to federal requirements, that provides transparent school performance information through performance labels and identifies schools for support.
- Creates an accreditation system that is aligned to state requirements and is focused on inputs/minimum operating requirements.
- Allows the Board to shift the school performance framework in the future by using ranges for weights and the ability to add indicators.
- Aligns actions for divisions and schools to take based on identification to federal requirements.

The following school performance framework weighting models were presented and approved by the Board:

<b>School Level</b>	<b>Weighting</b>
Elementary	Mastery: 65% Growth: 25% Readiness: 10%
Middle	Mastery: 60% Growth: 20% Readiness: 20%
High	Mastery: 50% Graduation: 15% Readiness: 35%

At this meeting, the Board received a final draft of regulations of the Standards of Accreditation (Attachments 1 and 2) for the new school performance framework. The review and vote on the final draft regulations will allow the Virginia Department of Education to further develop the school performance framework under ESSA and model different systems results during future meetings.

The final draft regulations will:

- Create one school performance framework aligned to federal requirements, that provides transparent school performance information through performance labels and identifies schools for support.

- Create an accreditation system that is aligned to state requirements and is focused on inputs/minimum operating requirements.
- Allow the Board to shift the school performance framework in the future by using ranges for weights and the ability to add indicators.
- Align actions for divisions and schools to take based on identification to federal requirements.

This item supports Priorities 1 (to set and help every learner meet high expectations) and 2 (to support learning loss recovery) of the Board’s Comprehensive Plan 2024–2029 by ensuring the school performance framework holds schools accountable for actual performance.

**Action Requested**

Final review: Action requested at this meeting.

**Superintendent’s Recommendation**

The Superintendent of Public Instruction recommends that the Board of Education approve the Standards of Accreditation regulations at the final stage.

**Rationale for Action**

The Board must adopt final regulations in order to continue moving forward the regulatory action started on August 31, 2023, when the Board approved a NOIRA.

**Previous Review or Action**

The Board voted in August 2023 to approve a NOIRA and then voted in September 2023 on the following:

- A mastery indicator;
- Chronic absenteeism and a college, career, and civic measure for the readiness indicator; and
- A summative measure, based on multiple indicators for the school performance framework.

**Date:** [August 31, 2023](#)

**Action:** [Notice of Intended Regulatory Action as Adopted by the Board](#)

**Date:** [March 28, 2024](#)

**Action:** [First Review and Approval to Move Regulations to the Public Comment Process](#)

## **Background Information and Statutory Authority**

Section [22.1-16](#) of Code of Virginia establishes the Board of Education’s authority to promulgate regulations that are necessary to fulfill its powers and responsibilities generally:

The Board of Education may adopt bylaws for its own government and promulgate such regulations as may be necessary to carry out its powers and duties and the provisions of this title.

The Board’s authority to promulgate regulations governing standards for accrediting public schools is found in § [22.1-253.13\(A\)](#) of the Code of Virginia:

The Board of Education shall promulgate regulations establishing standards for accreditation pursuant to the Administrative Process Act (§ [2.2-4000](#) et seq.), which shall include student outcome measures, requirements and guidelines for instructional programs and for the integration of educational technology into such instructional programs, administrative and instructional staffing levels and positions, including staff positions for supporting educational technology, student services, auxiliary education programs such as library and media services, requirements for graduation from high school, community relations, and the philosophy, goals, and objectives of public education in Virginia.

## **Stakeholder Engagement**

Between June and August 2023, the Superintendent conducted stakeholder engagement meetings across Virginia, including the following:

- Eight regional superintendents’ meetings in June;
- Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals (VAESP);
- Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals (VASSP) conferences; and
- Weekly superintendents meeting throughout July and August.

Between November and December 2023, the Superintendent and the Board conducted eight regional listening sessions. There was a total of 375 attendees, including legislative members, parents, teachers, principals, school board members, Division Superintendents, and Division Directors of Testing.

During April 2024, the Board hosted a series of listening sessions. The in-person listening sessions were in each of Virginia’s eight Superintendent regions, with 211 attendees (i.e., parents, teachers, principals, school board members, division superintendents). The

Department of Education also hosted virtual listening sessions with the Virginia School Boards Association, the Virginia Middle School Association, the Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals, The Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals, the Virginia Association of School Superintendents, and the Virginia Parent Teacher Association. Over 600 participants attended virtual sessions. Lastly, the Department of Education also gathered public comment and received 170 comments.

On May 6, 2024, the proposed draft regulations of the Standards of Accreditation was published by the Virginia Registrar in the Virginia Register of Regulations ([Volume: 40 Issue: 19](#)). VDOE held an online public hearing on June 4, 2024.

The Virginia Town Hall hosts the space for public comment forums which allow all Virginia's citizens to participate in the making and changes to state regulations. This [Public Comment Forum](#) opened May 6, 2024, and closed at 11:59 pm on July 5, 2024, with 34 comments. These comments are summarized in Attachment 1.

### **Implementation and Communication**

Once approved by the Board, the regulations will be published in the Virginia Register of Regulations in accordance with the Administrative Process Act.

### **Impact on Fiscal and Human Resources**

The revisions can be managed by the agency's existing resources at this time. If the agency is required to fulfill additional responsibilities related to this activity, other services may be impacted.