

Frequently Asked Questions:

School Performance and Support Framework



1. Why does Virginia need a new accountability system?

Virginia’s current accreditation system fails to provide parents, educators, and communities with timely, accurate, and actionable insights into how their students are *actually* performing academically. In fact, no school has ever not been accredited under the previous system, regardless of its academic performance.

Prior to the pandemic, 93% of Virginia’s schools were accredited and after the pandemic 90% of schools were accredited. Yet, while 90% of schools were receiving the system’s highest rating, our students were struggling and not able to master grade level content after missing so much school. The accountability system should show when students are struggling and what supports they need; Virginia’s system did not do that.

This sharp disconnect in accreditation ranking versus academic performance is why the Virginia Board of Education has moved to the new School Performance & Support Framework for the 2024-25 school year.

2. I have heard that it’s likely that 70% of Virginia Schools will be declared “Off Track” or “Needs Intensive Support” under the new system. Is that true?

That is not true. Based off performance data from the 2023-24 school year, Virginia schools would have been categorized as follows under the new School Performance and Support Framework:

	Elementary		Middle		High		Unique School	
	Schools	Percent	Schools	Percent	Schools	Percent	Configurations	Percent
Distinguished	177	16%	23	7%	62	22%	11	19%
On Track	569	51%	155	49%	127	45%	32	55%
Off Track	248	22%	60	19%	89	31%	12	21%
Needs Intensive Support	117	11%	81	25%	7	2%	3	5%
Total	1111		319		285		58	

*2023-24 school year federal identification was used for this chart. The Board of Education’s previous models did not include these designation rules, nor include 3E Readiness high school data.

**CSI schools are federally identified for having low academic performance, or low graduation rates compared to other schools. They can also be identified for not exiting ATSI status. TSI schools are identified for having one or more student groups with low academic performance. ATSI schools are identified for having one or more student groups consistently lower than CSI schools. 8VAC20-132-270. F states that any school identified for TSI or ATSI shall have their overall performance category lowered by one level.

3. Why is VDOE not allowing for a longer transition period for schools to prepare to make the change to the new Framework?

The Board of Education began the development process for the School Performance and Support Framework in the summer of 2022. The Framework was put in place following two years of development, including public hearings held across Virginia, with ten engagements last winter and 20 this spring bringing together more than 1,000 participants to discuss the proposed Framework, as well as multiple rounds of public review

of the Framework and additional public comment periods. The full development schedule is available on the [Framework Resource Hub](#).

VDOE has spent much of the second half of 2024 working with superintendents, school leaders, school counselors, and key partners on the Framework implementation. These trainings are ongoing and frequent and will continue in the months ahead. VDOE has published a listing of the work done at the division and school level on the [Framework Resource Hub](#).

Extending the wait to have the new Framework fully in place causes greater gaps to expand between those schools performing and those not. There are no excuses as to why current students should not be given meaningful supports to reach their potential. Moreover, schools which need additional support to provide opportunities for each student must be identified as soon as possible so that resources can be focused on the schools and students who need them most.

4. Does the new School Performance and Support Framework label schools as “failing”?

No. The new [School Performance and Support Framework](#) separates student accountability from the past accreditation system, and has four performance categories: Distinguished, On Track, Off Track, and Needs Intensive Support. The Framework **does not** categorize any school as failing.

5. Are there additional supports for schools that need assistance?

Yes. By aligning the state and federal accountability systems, we are reducing the burden on schools and ensuring a more focused, cohesive strategy for improvement. This streamlined approach not only reduces administrative complexity, but also ensures that every dollar and resource is directed toward meaningful interventions that support student growth and mastery of grade-level content. The Framework and new tiered support structure also helps to better target existing resources to the students who need them most.

The Virginia Board of Education does not appropriate funds for education. That role is filled by the General Assembly, and they ultimately will decide on the additional financial supports for schools in need of support.

6. Why does the new system now include the scores of English Language Learners after three semesters when Virginia has not included them previously for eleven semesters?

Virginia has long refused to include English Learners in its state accreditation system after they have attended a U.S. school for three semesters, as it already does when it reports its federal accountability results per federal law. Instead, Virginia has excluded English Learners for five-and-a-half years (eleven semesters), putting them at a significant disadvantage to their peers. That means for five and half years, these students, their families, their teachers, and their schools do not know if that student is learning grade level content or even mastering grade level content. We estimate that the current five-and-a-half-year exclusion means 35,000 English Learners in Virginia are not currently being included in the state’s outdated accreditation system.

The Framework ensures that schools measure how every student is doing including sharing how English Learner students are growing and mastering grade level skills, and more importantly, ensuring that they get

the early support they need if they are not performing up to grade level. This change to include English language learning students is supported by groups as diverse as [EdTrust](#), [Migration Policy Institute](#) [National Center on Immigrant Integration Policy](#), and [UnidosUS](#).

7. Is this new system specifically designed to have the state take over the schools it is now labelling as “off track” and “needs intensive support” and privatize them?

No. The Virginia constitution gives authority over a local division’s schools to the local school board. The Constitution does not give any state authority to “take over” schools, and the Board of Education has repeatedly affirmed that local school divisions will continue to oversee day-to-day operations of their schools, not the state.

8. Does the new system penalize school divisions for enrolling students with unique needs who need more than the typical four years to graduate?

No. The School Performance and Support Framework calculates four-year cohort graduation and includes another measure that supports students who take more time to graduate as well under High School Readiness. High school students who take more time to graduate such as students with disabilities, English Learners, or struggling students who need more time to graduate, are included in the Readiness graduation component.

9. Isn’t the new system going to result in students being tracked to certain occupations or into the military? Why is the system forcing seventh graders to decide what they want to major in or what field of work they want to pursue after graduation?

No. The outdated accreditation system only gave students one pathway and one option, forcing students and guidance counselors to focus on either career, JROTC programs, or college bearing courses (such as AP or dual enrollment). Students could only be “counted” for participating in postsecondary opportunities one time. Simply put, students were not given the opportunity to explore more than one option, and the system did not incentivize schools to help them do so.

The new Framework encourages students to explore options by recognizing their successfully completed advanced college coursework, industry recognized pathways, **AND** military readiness assessments. Many of the college-bound courses (e.g., AP Art and Design) and industry recognized credential pathways (e.g., Culinary Arts) recognize creativity and fine arts coursework. Now, students can be “counted” three times instead of once. This change encourages students to have more diverse experiences, incentivizes schools to offer more programs, and widens partnerships with businesses and community entities.

The 3E Readiness model in the new Framework encourages schools to change the traditional schedule model to ensure that students have more opportunities to explore enrollment, enlistment, and employment opportunities, and schools are rewarded for this **“AND”** approach.