# HB585 Work Group on the Future of Assessment

**Meeting 3** 

May 25, 2023

#### Introductions

Aimee Rogstad Guidera, Secretary of Education, Office of the Governor

Dr. Lisa Coons, Superintendent of Public Instruction

McKenzie Snow, Deputy Secretary of Education, Office of the Governor

**Shelley Loving-Ryder**, Assistant Superintendent of Student Assessment, Accountability & ESEA Programs, Virginia Department of Education

Sarah Susbury, Director, Office of Student Assessment, Virginia Department of Education

#### Supported by Watershed Advisors:

- Jessica Baghian, President
- Jill Pinsky, Managing Director
- Jamie Dollinger, Director
- Sara McClafferty, Senior Analyst

# **Work Group Timeline**

**Meeting 1 Meeting 2 Meeting 3 Meeting 4 Meeting 5** March **April** May July August Understand Virginia's Weigh in on initial Understand the Understand the Consider final assessment system purpose of state national landscape recommendations recommendations, and best practices, as assessments currently, contrasted including the timeline with the national context for Virginia's Review a preliminary for implementation generally assessment system timeline for piloting landscape Understand how and implementation Begin to define goals Virginia's state Consider how national and objectives for the assessment system best practices and Understand the future of VA works currently innovations do or do legislative and not address the regulatory changes assessments Consider the challenges with the VA needed, if relevant challenges with assessment system Virginia's current assessment system

Based on the recommendations developed by this Work Group, VDOE will submit its initial plan for the implementation of Virginia's revised summative assessment to the General Assembly by November 1, 2023.

# **Agenda & Meeting Objectives**

- Welcome and Revisiting Guiding Principles with Superintendent Coons (~10 minutes)
- 2. Evaluating Test Items (~80 minutes)
- 3. Assessment Coherence (~15 minutes)
- 4. Shifting from Challenges to Solutions (~10 minutes)
- 5. Closing and Next Steps (~5 minutes)

#### **Meeting 3 Objectives**

Understand Virginia's assessment system currently, in relation to the national landscape

Begin to define goals and objectives for the future of Virginia's assessments

# **Housekeeping & Meeting Norms**



Please mute your microphone



If possible, turn on your video



Two ways to participate: (1) Type via chat, (2) Unmute to share



Parking Lot: Jot ideas for future consideration in the Zoom chat



This meeting will be recorded



Be ready for small group discussion

# HB 585 Work Group

# **HB 585 Purpose & Objectives**

**Purpose.** Recommend changes to the statewide summative assessments and develop a plan for implementation of the revised assessments.

**HB 585 Required Considerations.** The Secretary of Education and the Virginia Superintendent of Public Instruction shall convene and consult a work group, which shall consider:

- Best practices and innovations in summative assessments of proficiency from across the nation;
- Alternative approaches to current and new assessment items, including subject areas and methods of grading such items;
- Assessment items that include open-ended questions, long-form writing, and other tasks, with student responses scored by the Department according to statewide scoring rubrics;
- 4) Plan for pilot implementation of such assessment items prior to the 2027-2028 school year as necessary to determine the validity of such items;

- 5) The process for the development of a bank of vetted sample assessment items that include a comprehensive representation of knowledge and skills being assessed;
- 6) The legislative and regulatory changes and funding necessary to implement alternative approaches considered by the work group;
- 7) The effectiveness of assessments for students with disabilities, including the Virginia Alternate Assessment Program for those students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, and the use of those assessments to improve and individualize instruction; and
- 8) A proposed timeline for implementation of such new assessments, giving consideration to implementation prior to the 2027-2028 school year.

Source: Virginia Acts of Assembly - 2022 Reconvened Session: Chapter 760 (Approved April 27, 2022)

# **Group Discussion Protocol**

#### Make space, take space

Step into the conversation to participate, and step back to let others share

#### Assume the best

• Foster a positive, supportive environment for discussion

#### Speak from an "I" perspective

Share personal thoughts, reflections, and feedback

#### Be open to learning and taking risks

- Embrace new ideas
- Encourage creativity

# **Guiding Principles**

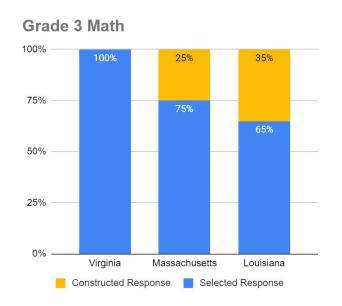
- 1. **The North Star is high expectations for every student.** Proficiency definitions will be set by benchmarking against the demands of Virginia employers and higher education, as well as against states who have the most rigorous definitions of proficiency in the nation.
- 2. **Proficiency definitions and cut scores** should reflect skills, knowledge, and competencies needed by grade to be on track for postsecondary success.
- 3. Student academic growth and proficiency are both vital measures, but the system must **prioritize getting every student to proficiency.**
- 4. Actionable information regarding student educational outcomes is critical for students, teachers, parents, and policymakers so that they can use timely data to improve outcomes as quickly as possible.
- 5. **Schools identified as low performing need effective and strategic support and resources** to make meaningful improvements.
- 6. Virginia deserves best-in-class, aligned assessment and accountability systems.

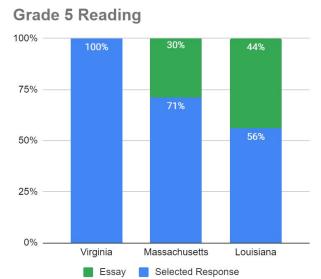
# Whole Group and Small Group Activities: Evaluating Test Items

## **Challenge 2: Assessment Quality and Rigor**

Students have limited opportunities to demonstrate critical thinking through rigorous item types (e.g., writing, constructed response). Assessments should be closer aligned to high quality classroom instruction, classroom experience and real world application.

# Distribution of Item Types - Virginia, Massachusetts and Louisiana





Most states have included constructed response and essay questions into their state assessments.

Virginia's assessments are 100% selected response – meaning students choose from a list of possible answers rather than writing their own.

As pre-reading, you were asked to complete and evaluate several assessment items from Virginia, Massachusetts, and Louisiana to consider the following:

- How rigorous is the test item?
- How might the test item influence classroom instruction?
- What information does the test give to educators and families about student learning?
- What do the standards ask of students? How is that reflected in the test item?

We will dig into two test items together as a full group, and then we will evaluate another test item in small groups.

## **Grade 3 Math: Part 1, Test Items**

For the Virginia and Massachusetts examples, read the question and complete the test items as if you were a student. Jot down your answer to the question.

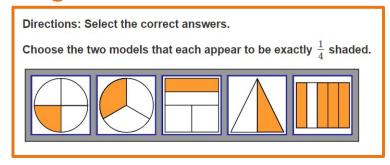
**VA:** Answer the question on page 3.

**MA:** Answer the questions on pages 3-4.

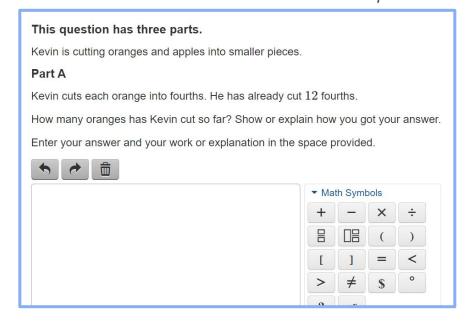
#### Grade 3 Math

**Virginia Standard:** Represent fractions and mixed numbers, with models and symbols. (3.2b) **Massachusetts Standard\*:** Determine the fraction model that represents a given fraction in the form a/b. (3.NF.A.1)

#### Virginia - Selected Response



#### Massachusetts - Constructed Response



<sup>\*</sup>Full text of standard on the next slide

#### **Grade 3 Math: Part 2, Standards**

What do these standards ask of students? How is that reflected in the assessment items?

**VA**: 3.2

Students name and write fractions and mixed numbers represented by a model; represent fractions and mixed numbers with models and symbols; and compare fractions having like and unlike denominators.

**MA:** 3.NF

view fractions in general as being built out of unit fractions, and they use fractions along with visual fraction models to represent parts of a whole. Students understand that the size of a fractional part is relative to the size of the whole. For example, 1/2 of the paint in a small bucket could be less paint than 1/3 of the paint in a larger bucket, but 1/3 of a ribbon is longer than 1/5 of the same ribbon because when the ribbon is divided into 3 equal parts, the parts are longer than when the ribbon is divided into 5 equal parts. Students are able to use fractions to represent numbers equal to, less than, and greater than one. They solve problems that involve comparing fractions by using visual fraction models and strategies based on noticing equal numerators or denominators.

# **Grade 3 Math Example Summary**

#### Virginia

#### Massachusetts

Standards	Focused on specific, isolated skills that do not require conceptual understanding.	Require students to demonstrate conceptual understanding of fractions through visual models and demonstrate the ability to solve problems involving comparing fractions.
Test Items	Students answer one question, selecting from a list of possible answers.	Students construct a three-part, open-ended response illustrating their logic. Students must visualize the actions in the story problem and relate these actions to mathematical operations.
Implications for Instruction	Teachers may focus on procedural understanding only and do so using only multiple choice problems. They are not required to prioritize opportunities for students to demonstrate conceptual understanding, use fraction models, or explain their thought processes.	Teachers can prepare their students by ensuring students have a conceptual understanding of how fractions work and how to apply them in real life. Additionally, students must have opportunities to build procedural understanding.

## **Grade 5 Reading: Part 1, Test Items**

For the Virginia and Massachusetts examples, read the passage and answer the question as if you were a student.

**VA:** Read the passage "Born in the Desert" (<u>pages 5-6</u>). Answer the question on page 6.

**MA:** Read the passage "My Favorite Words" (pages 6-9). Briefly outline the evidence and argument that would best answer the question page 9.

#### **Grade 5 Reading**

**Virginia Standard :** Draw conclusions and make inferences with support from the text. (5.5j) **Massachusetts Standard:** Make an inference about a character based on details from a passage. (RL.5.1)\*

#### Virginia - Multiple Choice

In "Born in the Desert," the reader can tell that Rahim first becomes nervous when he —

- A. feels his palms become damp
- B. wishes his classmates understood him
- O. spends a long time writing his speech
- D. forgets what to say next

#### Massachusetts - Essay

For this question, you will write an essay based on the passage(s). Your writing should:

- · Present and develop a central idea.
- · Provide evidence and/or details from the passage(s).
- · Use correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

Based on the passage, write an essay that explains why Lewis and Seaman's relationship was special. Be sure to use information from the passage to develop your essay.

In the box below, the total space provided is equal to about one page.



<sup>\*</sup>Full text of standard on the next slide

## **Grade 5 Reading: Part 2, Standards**

What do these standards ask of students? How is that reflected in the assessment items?

**VA:** <u>5.5</u>

Students will read and demonstrate comprehension of fictional texts, literary nonfiction, and poetry. Students will draw conclusions and make inferences with support from the text.

**MA:** RL 5.1 - 5.3

Students will **determine a theme** of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text, including **how** characters respond to challenges or **how** the speaker in a poem reflects on a topic. For example, students explore the theme "Heroism demands courage and taking risks" in traditional stories such as *The Merry Adventures of Robin Hood* by Howard Pyle and modern novels such as Bud, Not Buddy by Christopher Paul Curtis. Students will **compare and contrast** two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., how characters interact). Finally, students will **quote or paraphrase a text accurately** when explaining what the text states explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

# **Grade 5 Reading Example Summary**

#### Virginia

#### Massachusetts

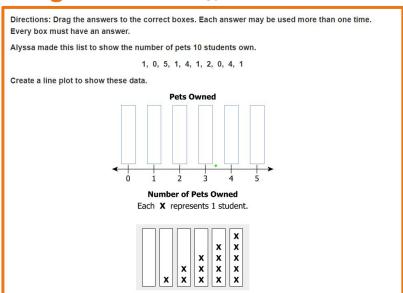
Standards	Students will read and demonstrate comprehension. They must do this by drawing conclusions and making inferences with support from the text.	Students will determine a theme with support from the text. The standards specify how students will do this, including "compare and contrast," considering "how characters interact," and "quote or paraphrase a text accurately."
Test Items	Students need to make an inference about the character, but they can match answer choices against the text without constructing an independently-created argument or demonstrating how their thinking was informed by evidence in the text.	Students must construct an essay about the relationship of two characters, citing appropriate textual evidence and developing a coherent argument that explains their reasoning.
Implications for Instruction	There is no pressure to practice independent writing. Though teachers may focus on reading and drawing conclusions with support from the text, they may not have consistent expectations for students using supporting evidence. They may practice selecting inferences from a list of options, rather than generating inferences independently.	Instruction focuses on deeply studying a text to find evidence and make meaning. Teachers have consistent expectations for the type of evidence students use to demonstrate comprehension. Teachers give students opportunities to practice long form writing.

- You will be automatically assigned to a breakout group:
  - Group 1: Alan (captain), Amber, Thomas, Sheryl, Mychael, Rebekah (+Jill notetaker)
  - Group 2: Grace (captain), Susan, Wendy, Karen, Kris, Tracy (+Jamie and Shelley notetakers)
  - Group 3: Supt. Coons (captain), Jenna, Matt, Amy, Kristy, Jamie S. (+Jessica and Sarah S. notetakers)
- In your group, you will review additional assessment items, following the same format we used in the whole-group discussion. Using the <u>sample items</u>, discuss Grade 5
   Math Question 1 on page 12. (15 minutes)
  - How rigorous is the test item? How might the test item influence classroom instruction?
     What can the test item demonstrate about student learning?
  - What do the standards ask of students? How is that reflected in the test item?

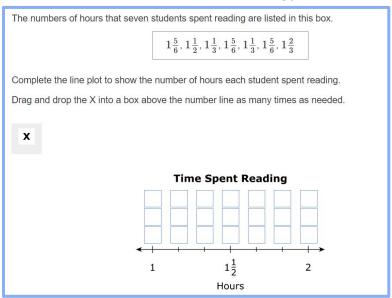
#### **Grade 5 Math**

**Virginia Standard:** Represent data in line plots and stem-and-leaf plots. (<u>5.16a</u>) **Massachusetts Standard:** Represent and interpret data: Make a line plot (dot plot) to display a data set of measurements in fractions of a unit. Use operations on fractions for this grade to solve problems involving information presented in line plot (dot plot). (<u>5.MD.B.2</u>)

#### Virginia - Technology Enhanced



#### Massachusetts - Technology Enhanced



#### **Grade 5 Math: Part 2, Standards**

What do these standards ask of students? How is that reflected in the assessment items?

**VA:** <u>5.16</u>

The student, given a practical problem, will represent data in line plots and stem-and-leaf plots; interpret data represented in line plots and stem-and-leaf plots; and compare data represented in a line plot with the same data represented in a stem-and-leaf plot.

**MA:** <u>5.MD</u>

Students convert among different-sized measurement units within a given measurement system allowing for efficient and accurate problem solving with **multi-step real-world problems** as they progress in their **understanding** of scientific concepts and calculations. Students will **make a line plot** (dot plot) to display a data set of measurements in fractions of a unit, and **use operations on fractions** for this grade to **solve problems** involving information presented in line plot (dot plot). For example, given different measurements of liquid in identical beakers, find the amount of liquid each beaker would contain if the total amount in all the beakers were redistributed equally.

# **Grade 5 Math Example Summary**

#### Virginia

#### Massachusetts

Standards	Students must represent data in line plots, interpret those data, and compare data in a line plot with the same data in a stem and leaf plot.	Students must use a line plot to display data in fractions of a unit and solve problems using the information in a line plot.
Test Items	Students plot points on a line with only whole numbers. The line plot is created for them and data are pre-arranged.  They need not interpret the data, nor compare it to a different graphical representation for this item.	Students must compare fractions with unlike denominators in order to correctly place them on a line plot. The data are not organized least to greatest.  They need not perform additional operations on the data for this item.
Implications for Instruction	The standard does not necessitate interacting with fractions. The item does not clarify the depth of knowledge/skill required to "interpret" or "compare," as is required by the standard.	Teachers must have students practice operations on fractions, comparing fractions without a visual cue, and arranging numbers on a line plot.  NOTE: Like VA, the item does not reflect the full standard but the MA standard is much clearer about the overall expectation (e.g., the example re: redistributing liquids).

# Whole Group Discussion: Solutions

We just had a powerful conversation about the importance of standards and assessment as we compared Virginia's assessment items with peer states.

Rigorous learning standards set a minimum bar of quality for test items. Items are often only as good as the standard they measure. If the standards are low, the items will follow suit. By comparison, when standards ask students to apply their knowledge in real-life scenarios and demonstrate conceptual understanding, test items must follow suit.

The quality of items (and the standards behind those items) will drive classroom practice - for better and for worse. Test items that require students to show their thought process (e.g., explain their reasoning, select the correct evidence to support an inference, or demonstrate application of knowledge/skills in a multi-step problem) require teachers to build students' deep understanding of standards, not simply focus on process of elimination, test taking strategies.

#### Consider the following reflection questions:

- 1. What were your other takeaways from this activity?
- 2. If you had to make recommendations for the future of VA's assessment, what would they be?

#### **Presentation and Reflection:**

# **Assessment Coherence**

## **Challenge 4: Assessment System**

Virginia students take multiple assessments, including the summative and growth tests required by the state, and several other tests required by divisions or schools. Students and educators deserve a coherent system of assessments to minimize unnecessary or duplicative testing.

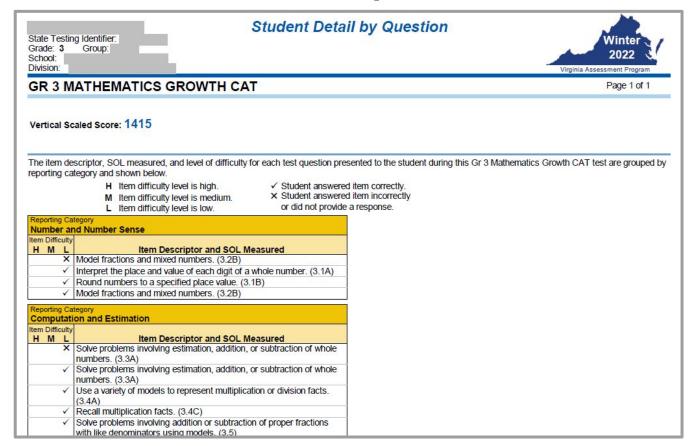
# The Virginia Growth Assessment (VGA)

HB 2027 required that VDOE "establish, in lieu of a one-time end-of-year assessment and for the purpose of providing measures of individual student growth over the course of the school year, a through-year growth assessment system, aligned with the Standards of Learning, for the administration of reading and mathematics assessments in grades 3-8." The VGA is given in the fall and winter each year, beginning in the 2022-23 school year.

Like the SOL test, the VGA is computer adaptive. It uses test items from the SOL test item bank and is developed by the same vendor (Pearson).

When surveyed, most divisions reported using one or more additional assessments beyond the VGA to assess students' growth over the course of the school year.

# **VGA: Student Test Report**



Teachers can receive the results within 24 hours. The reports mirror the SOL test results but include only an overall score, no summative rating.

# **Division Assessment Survey**

VDOE designed a survey to better understand the overall assessment experience of students and educators.

The optional survey was sent directly to all division test directors.

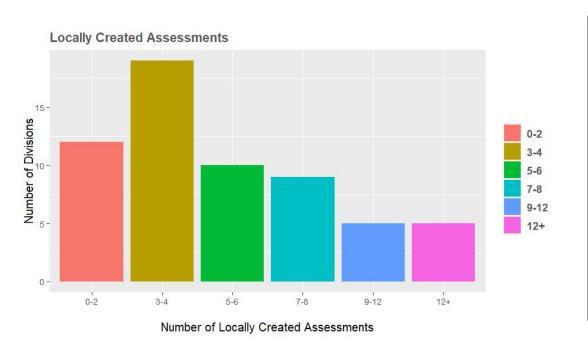
Divisions were asked to input information for each assessment they administer, <u>in addition</u> to state-mandated assessments.

As of May 10, **83 of 132 of divisions** completed the survey (63%).

#### **Types of Data Collected:**

- Assessment name
- Grades tested
- Subjects tested
- Students tested
- Testing time (total minutes per year)
- Test frequency (times per year)
- Type of assessment (e.g., diagnostic, interim/formative, summative)
- Assessment vendor
- Item types
- Intended uses of the assessment
- Intended end-users of the assessment
- Assessment usefulness (rating on scale 1-4)

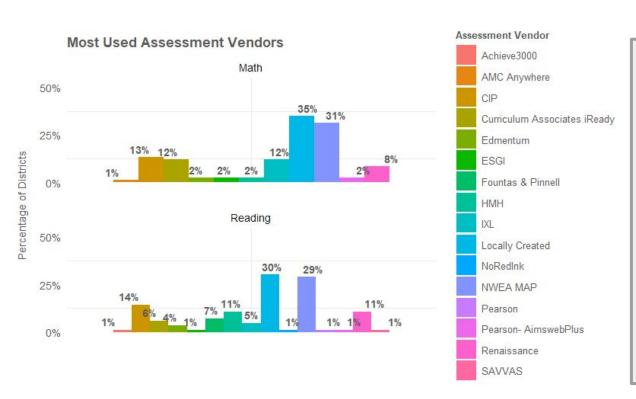
# **Locally Created Assessments**



Most divisions (70%) are implementing local assessments, in addition to the SOL and VGA.

Almost half of those districts (29 of 58) administer five or more locally-created tests.

#### **Assessment Vendors**



In addition to locally-created tests, Comprehensive **Instructional Program** (CIP), iReady, and NWEA are also popular, with 60% of divisions reporting using these tests in at least one grade or subject. 46% of divisions use another assessment vendor in at least one grade and subject.

# Whole Group Discussion: Solutions

As illustrated by the division assessment survey, Virginia students participate in a variety of assessments: the SOL test, the VGA, division-created tests, and vendor-created tests.

These tests all signal different, sometimes conflicting, expectations for student learning – and therefore, classroom instruction.

#### Consider the following reflection questions:

- What assessments do you see being implemented in your division or part of the state, in addition to the state test? How do teachers and parents use those assessments?
- If you had to make recommendations for the future of VA assessment today, what would they be?
- What shifts would most generate positive outcomes for students and student learning?

# Whole Group Discussion: Shifting from Challenges to Solutions

# **Discussion: Visualizing the Future State**

We've discussed a lot today.

- 1. **Individually**, take 2 minutes to reflect on what most resonated and where Virginia should go next.
- 2. We will reconvene to **discuss as a group,** identifying themes and any additional issues.

# Discussion: Visualizing the Future State

If the challenges were fully resolved, what would this look like in classrooms? What would be different for students and teachers? Where should Virginia go next? What types of solutions should the state prioritize?

**Challenge 1, Rigorous Standards:** Virginia's standards do not align with what students need to prepare for college and career, resulting in assessments that often fail to reflect gaps in student learning. At the same time, Virginia students are falling behind students in other states.

**Challenge 2, Aligned Assessments:** Students have limited opportunities to demonstrate critical thinking through rigorous item types (e.g., writing, constructed response). Assessments should be closer aligned to high-quality classroom instruction, classroom experience and real world application.

**Challenge 3, Actionable Reporting:** Assessment result reports, though detailed, may not be user-friendly. It is paramount that both educators and families have access to clear, actionable information. All families should be supported in understanding and acting on their student's results. Teachers need training to leverage assessment results to inform instruction and to support individual students.

**Challenge 4, System Coherence:** Virginia students take multiple assessments, including the summative and growth tests required by the state, and several other tests required by divisions or schools. Students and educators deserve a coherent system of assessments to minimize unnecessary or duplicative testing.

# **Next Steps**

# **Work Group Timeline**

**Meeting 1 Meeting 2 Meeting 3 Meeting 4 Meeting 5** March **April** July August May Weigh in on initial Understand the Understand the **Understand Virginia's** Consider final recommendations purpose of state national landscape assessment system recommendations. and best practices, as assessments currently, contrasted including the timeline context for Virginia's with the national Review a preliminary for implementation generally assessment system timeline for piloting landscape Understand how and implementation Virginia's state Consider how national Begin to define goals and objectives for the assessment system best practices and Understand the works currently innovations do or do future of VA legislative and not address the regulatory changes assessments Consider the challenges with the VA needed, if relevant challenges with assessment system Virginia's current assessment system

Based on the recommendations developed by this Work Group, VDOE will submit its initial plan for the implementation of Virginia's revised summative assessment to the General Assembly by November 1, 2023.

# **Next Steps**

Following this meeting, you will receive a brief exit survey (via e-mail).

• Responses requested by May 30, 2023

#### Before our next meeting, you should expect the following (via e-mail):

- Outreach to schedule 1:1 calls
- Agenda for meeting 3
- Suggested pre-reading

#### The Work Group will reconvene in person on Thursday, July 27 from 9:30am – 12:00pm EST. In this meeting, we will:

- Weigh in on initial recommendations
- Review a preliminary timeline for piloting and implementation
- Understand the legislative and regulatory changes needed, if relevant

# Appendix A: Work Group Details

# **Work Group Members**

#### **Chairs**

Aimee Guidera, Virginia Secretary of Education Dr. Lisa Coons, Superintendent of Public Instruction

#### Virginia Board of Education Members

Alan Seibert Grace Creasey

#### **Division Director of Testing**

Tracy LaGatta
Wendy Chandler

#### **Division Leadership**

Dr. Thomas Taylor
Dr. Kristy Somerville-Midgette
James Soltis
Amy McClure (VSBA)

#### **School Leadership**

Karen Dickenson

#### **Educators**

Rebekah Amato

#### **Parent Voices**

Mychael Willon Jenna Alexander

#### Content Experts

Kristen Amundson Matt Hurt Sheryl Lazarus Dr. Amber Northern Susan Patrick

# **Meeting Expectations**

#### **Every meeting you should expect the following:**

- Ahead of meeting, via e-mail:
  - Outreach to schedule 1:1 calls
  - Agenda for meeting
  - Suggested pre-reading
- In meeting:
  - Recap of previous meeting
  - Focused discussion
  - Closing/next steps