



# VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION

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# AGENDA ITEM

**Agenda Item:** P

**Date:** July 25, 2024

**Title:** First and Final Review of Long-Term Assessment Contract

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

## **Purpose of Presentation**

Action required to ensure the future sustainability of the Commonwealth’s assessment system.

## **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.

Since the fall of 2022, the Board has held a series of work sessions where it explored Virginia’s current school performance framework and challenges experienced by students since the pandemic. 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 readiness.

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. During these listening sessions, the idea of a performance task in elementary school was proposed by stakeholders. The performance task would provide a measure of readiness on the [5 C's](#) (critical thinking, creative thinking, collaboration, communication, and citizenship). At the January 2024 meeting, the Board received a summary of the feedback.

Then, at the March 2024 Board meeting, the Board received and approved a proposed draft of regulations of the Standards of Accreditation and the weighting models for the new school performance and support framework. Following the March Board meeting, the Superintendent and the Board conducted a second round of eight regional listening sessions on the school performance and support framework. 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.

During these listening sessions, there was consistent feedback on the concept of a 5 C's performance task in 5<sup>th</sup> grade. Stakeholders also proposed a performance task in 8<sup>th</sup> grade that would also measure a student's ability with the 5 C's and the career exploration that is required to occur in middle school.

At this meeting, the Board received a final draft of regulations of the Standards of Accreditation for the new school performance framework. The Board also received for first review the readiness component indicators and weighting for elementary and middle school. The review and vote on the final draft regulations, along with the first review of the readiness component, allows the Virginia Department of Education to further develop the school performance framework under ESSA and model different systems results during today's meetings.

The Virginia Department of Education, to meet the expected requirements of the school performance and support framework, will need to begin developing the 5<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade performance tasks. Additionally, to guarantee continuity in results, the performance tasks will need to remain consistent over several years. To ensure the development and continuity of the performance tasks, as well as the continued improvement of the Virginia Assessment Program as detailed by the [House Bill 585 Workgroup](#), the Virginia Department of Education is seeking to extend the current contract with Pearson to an additional 5 years. This will provide the

Commonwealth of Virginia with an estimated, potential savings of \$60 million dollars in operating costs over 5 years.

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 students are learning the critical skills to be ready for life.

**Action Requested**

First and Final review: Action requested at this meeting.

**Superintendent’s Recommendation**

The Superintendent of Public Instruction recommends that the Board of Education waive first review and approve the Virginia Board of Education in granting the Board President and Superintendent of Public Instruction the authority to extend the current Virginia assessment contract for 5 years.

**Rationale for Action**

This action will allow for the future sustainability and continuity of the Commonwealth’s assessment system, including the use of a performance task in fifth grade and eighth grade. Additional benefits include the potential for significant operational savings of approximately \$60 million over the course of the next five year.

**Previous Review or Action**

No previous Board actions.

**Background Information and Statutory Authority**

The Virginia Board of Education is the constitutional body vested with the general supervision of Virginia’s public school system. The Article VIII, Section 2 of the Constitution of Virginia (Constitution) vests the Board of Education with the authority to prescribe standards for all school divisions, subject to revision by the General Assembly. Article VIII, Section 4 of the Constitution, as state previously, vests the Board with the general supervision of the public school system. Under such authority, among many other responsibilities, the Board approves the standards and the administration of Virginia’s state assessment system, including the approval of all contractors and vendors providing services to the Commonwealth.

**Stakeholder Engagement**

Between June and August 2023, the Superintendent conducted stakeholder engagement meetings across Virginia on the school performance and support framework. At these sessions

the Superintendent and Board consistently heard positive feedback regarding the inclusion of a performance task. The stakeholder engagement meetings included 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.

### **Implementation and Communication**

Once accepted by the Board, the Superintendent of Public Instruction and President of the State Board of Education will work to execute a contract extension.

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

The contract extension can be managed by the agency's existing resources at this time.