# Superintendent’s Memo #026-21


**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education**

DATE: January 29, 2021

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: James F. Lane, Ed.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction

## SUBJECT: Opportunity to Comment on an Addendum and Waiver to Virginia’s *Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015* (ESSA) State Plan

Due to the continued implications of COVID-19, many states will have difficulty implementing the federal accountability provisions outlined in their Consolidated State Plans under the *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)* in the 2020-2021 school year. Section 1111 of ESSA requires states to submit significant changes to their Consolidated State Plans to the United States Department of Education (USED) for review and approval. In recognition of the continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the USED has created a streamlined addendum process for states to amend their Consolidated State Plans. Using the addendum process, states may request modifications for one year in current year calculations and may also request permission to shift forward by one year their interim measures of progress and school identification timelines.

The Virginia Department of Education is seeking input on an addendum and waiver to its [ESSA Consolidated State Plan](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/federal_programs/esea/virginia-essa-plan-amendment-3-redline.pdf) as a result of USED’s approved process. The proposed addendum and waiver items are summarized below.

Long Term Goals and Yearly Measures of Interim Progress

The addendum includes a request to revise Virginia’s long-term goals and measures of interim progress by shifting the timeline forward by one year for academic achievement indicators in reading and mathematics, federal graduation rate, and progress in achieving English language proficiency for English Learners.

Indicator Calculation Adjustment

For the Academic Achievement indicators in reading and mathematics, Virginia’s Consolidated State Plan under ESSA allows a school to meet the measures of interim progress through either the current year rate or a three-year rate that includes the current year and the two previous years. The addendum requests the modification of the three-year calculation to include the current year and the previous two years where data are available.

The addendum also allows a state to request flexibilities in indicators if the loss of data in 2019-2020 will impact accountability calculations in the fall of 2021, based on 2020-2021 data. Virginia is asking to exclude the following indicators involving data in the 2020-2021 school year in these calculations: growth, chronic absenteeism, and state accreditation rating.

Timeline for Identification of Schools

Virginia’s Consolidated State Plan describes the identification of Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) and Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI) schools to take place every three years. This timeline would result in the identification of new CSI and ATSI schools in the fall of 2021 using data based on the 2020-2021 school year. Virginia will request that this timeline be shifted forward by one year so that the next identification of CSI and ATSI schools would take place in the fall of 2022. The streamlined addendum process does not allow for changes to the timeline for the identification of Targeted Support and Improvement Schools (TSI). Because yearly identification of TSI schools is specifically cited in ESSA, states did not define the timeline for this identification in their Consolidated State Plan. Therefore, in addition to the addendum, Virginia intends to submit a waiver to the USED to allow the next identification of TSI schools to take place in the fall of 2022, rather than the fall of 2021.

The timeline in Virginia’s Consolidated State Plan for a school to exit from these designations is annually for ATSI schools and after two years (and each subsequent year if applicable) for CSI schools. The change in the identification timeline would not affect the opportunity for currently identified schools to exit federal improvement status in the fall of 2021. The addendum would modify the exit criteria for CSI schools to exclude student growth, chronic absenteeism, and state accreditation status.

The Department welcomes comments on this proposed addendum and waiver. Comments may be submitted electronically by Wednesday, March 3, 2021 to Accountability@doe.virginia.gov.

Questions regarding Virginia’s ESSA Consolidated State Plan may also be submitted to Accountability@doe.virginia.gov.

JFL/JM/as