

SOL INNOVATION COMMITTEE: UPDATE AND FEEDBACK

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Committee Members

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State Board of Education,
Committee on School and Division Accountability



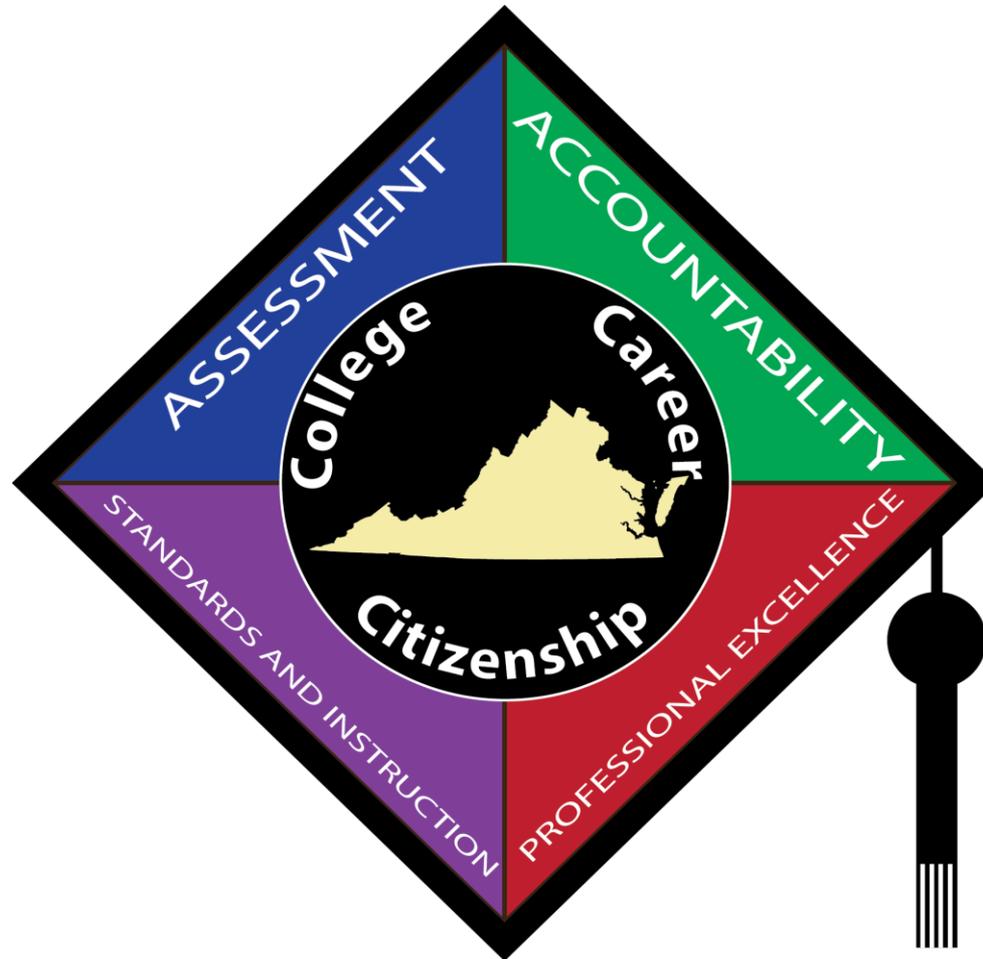
Overview

"Students need and deserve an education that inspires and capitalizes on their curiosity and natural desire to learn, so that each student is prepared for responsible citizenship and success beyond high school"

- SOL Innovation Committee Vision Statement

- **Timeline:**
 - Accountability 2.0 and Assessment 2.0 subcommittees combined after final fall meeting
 - Subcommittee met three times, working group met in between meetings
 - Document voted and approved by subcommittee members
- **Purpose:** Build Committee's work out into a system as all parts of system must move or risk of failure is high

A New Virginia Framework for Future-Ready Students

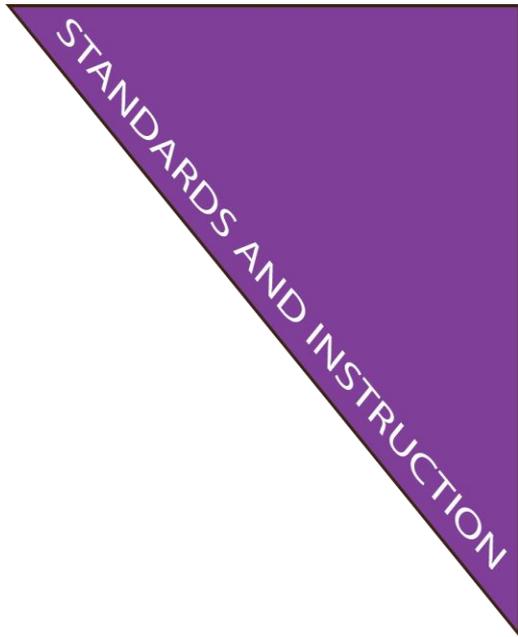


Profile of a Graduate



Virginia students must graduate from high school prepared to succeed in the economy and their communities.

Innovation Driver: Standards and Instruction



The Virginia Standards of Learning should be revised to align with the Profile of a Graduate, integrating and reaching beyond subject areas to include explicit college, career, and citizenship learning goals.

Innovation Driver: Assessment



The assessment system must assess both rigorous content standards and relevant skills students need to master for success in college, career, and citizenship.

Innovation Driver: Accountability



The School Quality Profile should provide descriptive information using multiple measures that are evidence-based, useful in school improvement efforts, and relevant to educators, parents, communities, and the Commonwealth.

Innovation Driver: Professional Excellence



All schools should be engaged in continuous pursuit of professional excellence. Varied models and strategies should be available so that all schools can access the support they may need.

Implications

- Need additional resources to support work, yet must also be strategic, efficient, and prudent

- We encourage two simultaneous efforts:
 1. Reduce burden of testing and provide flexibility for schools
 2. Develop clear Profile of a Graduate with broad participation by stakeholders and align the innovation drivers moving forward



Committee Feedback on Profile of a Graduate Schematic

Introduction

- As recommended in the 2015 Committee recommendations, consider the “5 Cs:”
 - Critical thinking, creative thinking, collaboration, communication, and citizenship
- Include the student voice in the process as we strive to do what’s best for all students
- Recognize this process will take time and professional development
- Scale up and learn best practices from schools and stakeholders across the state

1. What is already being done in high schools that aligns well with the Profile of a Graduate?

- Examples of profiles/plans already exist
(see *FCPS Portrait of a Graduate*; *HCPS College and Career Readiness Skills Profile*)
- Economics/Personal Finance requirement teaches life skills
- Vocational schools already exist
- High quality alternatives are being developed where SOLS are being replaced
- Schools are strong in the content knowledge pillar

2. What key changes are needed to improve the alignment of the high school experience in helping students to make successful transitions to life beyond high school?

➤ **CURRICULUM:**

- Need to focus more on career pathways
- Weave the Profile into the standards to ensure a natural fit with curriculum
- Encourage students to continue taking math/science, so they don't forget fundamentals when entering college/workforce
- Emphasize problem solving, independence, and critical thinking
- Need time for true electives
- Better integrate college and career preparation, as these are not distinct

➤ **STANDARDS:**

- Weave the Profile into the standards to ensure a natural fit with curriculum
- Revise standards to allow for more depth and exploration

2. What key changes are needed to improve the alignment of the high school experience in helping students to make successful transitions to life beyond high school?

(Continued)

➤ **PATHWAYS:**

- A high school redesign means a middle and elementary school redesign
- Create a flexible plan that allows students multiple entry and re-entry points
- Remember not all students are college bound: Redesign needs to be strong for both CTE and college-bound students as we serve ALL students
- Make sure students in the fine arts aren't lost in the redesign
- Rethink the traditional model that relies on courses and credits and replace with more modern and flexible thinking

➤ **ASSESSMENT:**

- Assess students with authentic tasks
- Check existing SOLs for relevancy to existing careers

3. What supports are needed for teachers, students, schools, and central offices to make implementation of the “Profile of Graduate” achievable across all high schools in Virginia?

➤ RESOURCES:

- Additional school counselors
- Financial support
- Staffing to help in setting up/monitoring internship

➤ PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

- Share best practices through conferences, webinars, or websites
- Give professional development to help understand changes brought by Profile
- Create common language and definitions (Ex: definition of “career ready”)

3. What supports are needed for teachers, students, schools, and central offices to make implementation of the “Profile of Graduate” achievable across all high schools in Virginia?

➤ LEARNING SYSTEM:

- Make sure schools aren't operating under two systems
- Encourage risk-taking
- Don't rush implementation

➤ TEACHER DEVELOPMENT:

- To teach students autonomy, give teachers autonomy
- Change the teacher evaluation to give flexibility to teachers, so they are not just focusing on content pillar

➤ ACCESS:

- Ensure students have access to meaningful internships regardless of where they live in Commonwealth

4. Are there any additional things we should add to the Profile of a Graduate that are important for successful adult life but not already noted in the DRAFT Profile?

- Inclusion of environmental literacy
- Emphasis on community service/volunteering
- Consider SOL Innovation Committee's recommendation and language surrounding the "5 Cs":
 - Critical Thinking
 - Creative Thinking
 - Collaboration
 - Communication
 - Citizenship

Thank you!



For SOL Innovation updates and resources:

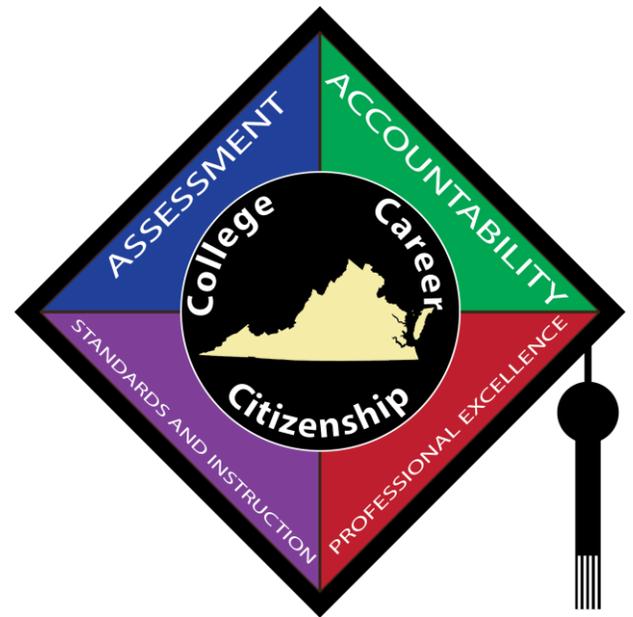
Visit <https://education.virginia.gov/initiatives/sol-innovation/>

To join the SOL listserv or submit public comment:

Email Stefani Thachik (stefani.thachik@governor.virginia.gov)

A New Virginia Framework for Future-Ready Students

"Students need and deserve an education that inspires and capitalizes on their curiosity and natural desire to learn, so that each student is prepared for responsible citizenship and success beyond high school" ([Innovation Committee Vision Statement, 2015](#)). In order to ensure that this vision is a reality for Virginia students, it is our contention that systemic change is essential. For the past 18 months, the Innovation Committee has studied, discussed, analyzed, brainstormed, and reached consensus on multiple recommendations related to educational policy and practice. These recommendations are enumerated in two reports, approved by the Committee in [November 2014](#) and [October 2015](#), and they have been important starting points for this report. As our work continues to evolve, we recognize that our recommendations, though important, may not adequately convey in and of themselves the larger, more foundational shifts in teaching and learning that we envision.



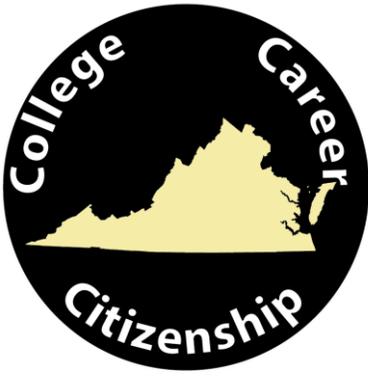
The overuse of high-stakes multiple-choice tests and the negative effects of the accountability system on teaching and learning are problems that have garnered a great deal of attention recently, and these have been the main focus of the Committee's discussion. The Virginia Board of Education, Department of Education, General Assembly, and school divisions throughout Virginia have all made significant progress and continue to work to reduce the burdens of testing and accountability while maintaining quality and encouraging innovation. Now, new federal legislation allows states increased flexibility, Virginia's Standards of Accreditation are soon to be updated, and there is widespread support for change.

We support individual policy changes designed to improve our current practice, such as reducing the length and number of SOL tests. These changes provide short-term improvements in the current system, but are not sufficient. We believe now is the time for broader, more long-range, systemic strategies to provide the education that will prepare our students for success.

In the proposed framework, we address four innovation drivers that are essential to a quality education system. These drivers are interdependent; they support each other in a structure designed to produce career, college and citizenship-ready students. Updating the innovation drivers together and aligning them with each other is essential; a model in which any component is lacking will fail our students. For example, efforts to improve teaching and learning by manipulating the accountability system alone are unlikely to achieve their intended outcomes without aligned efforts in instruction and assessment.

The four innovation drivers, shown in the graphic at the beginning of this document, are **standards and instruction, assessment, accountability, and professional excellence**. **Standards** are at the heart of creating a strong, relevant Virginia workforce and citizenry. The standards-setting process should begin with the backwards mapping of the Profile of a Virginia graduate to a framework of teaching and learning that produces engaged learners who can thrive in the global economy that they will enter. Fair and balanced **assessments** inform instruction, helping teachers to address students' diverse learning needs. An effective assessment framework aligns to standards as well as accountability measures that are identified in the School Quality Profile. In addition, an effective assessment framework provides clear information to guide supports provided to individual schools and school divisions. The **School Quality Profile** uses assessment data to provide checkpoints for schools as they work towards achievement of the standards, and helps determine the supports for teachers and schools which create a climate for **Professional Excellence** needed to positively impact student learning.

We continue to support increased flexibility for school divisions and teachers to determine their curriculum, assessment and instructional designs and practices. We know, however, that flexibility does not mean "going it alone"; nor does it mean "anything goes". Flexibility must reside within clear parameters that direct our efforts toward that which we agree is most important for students to achieve.



Virginia students must graduate from high school prepared to succeed in the economy and their communities.

Learning content in core academic areas is essential but not sufficient as a foundation for success beyond school. Students need to learn content and skills in environments that mirror those they will see outside of school in college and careers.

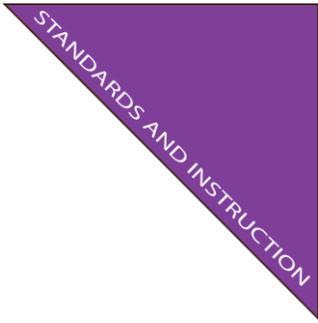
In traditional, factory-model schools, students often chose or were counseled into either college or career "tracks". These choices had significant consequences, both for students' educational opportunities and for the options open to them after graduation. In the current century's economy, education, training and employment are much more fluid. Multiple careers over the course of a lifetime or even simultaneously are common.

The concept of "college" is changing as well. Students now have educational opportunities that are not bound by time or place, and that can be customized to meet their individual needs. These opportunities span content from the liberal arts and integrate it with technology applications, real-world experiences, and the qualities, habits and attitudes (often referred to as "soft skills") necessary for success in communities and workplaces.

Preparation for "good citizenship" is a traditional role of public schools. Today, readiness for citizenship has new, added meaning. Virginia graduates must not only recognize the importance of productive participation in communities and our democracy, but should also understand the potential impact of their decisions in a global, connected society.

We support the Virginia Board of Education's initiative to develop a "Profile of a Graduate" (see the [Innovation Committee's 2015 Report, Principle I](#)), which will describe the understandings and skills that form a strong foundation for college and career success as well as engaged citizenship. This profile should drive decisions about standards and instruction, assessment, accountability and supports; we are optimistic that the result will be a high-quality, aligned system that prepares future-ready students.

The following sections of this report describe each of the four innovation drivers, enumerate our recommendations related to each, and explain what we believe the driver can help to achieve. A final section contains a brief discussion of some of the implications of our recommendations, and includes a suggested timeline of actions that we perceive as necessary for success.



The Virginia Standards of Learning should be revised to align with the Profile of a Graduate, integrating and reaching beyond subject areas to include explicit college, career, and citizenship learning goals.

What do we mean by rigorous, relevant, engaging and personalized standards and instruction?

The Virginia Standards of Learning Program has brought needed consistency to learning expectations statewide. Now it is time to build on this strong foundation by revising the standards so that they reflect the nature and complexity of the knowledge and skills needed for students to participate in the global community and economy of the future. The Innovation Committee has recommended a transition to a new framework that reflects fewer, deeper standards (see the Committee's [2014](#) and [2015](#) Reports).

Standards refer to the core content knowledge and skills that students are expected to learn. In order for students to be college, career, and citizenship ready, the standards must emphasize students' ability to solve problems, make decisions, and communicate effectively using their knowledge base. These skills should be embedded in every content area and taught through pedagogy that reflects real life college and career demands. **Rigorous** standards demand the use of inquiry, critical thinking, and creative processes. **Integrated** standards call for an interdisciplinary approach to learning, fostering cross disciplinary content and context. Standards are considered **relevant** when they provide authentic, real life experiences that structure the opportunity for individual and group problem solving.

Standards are best learned through **instruction** that is **engaging**, meaning that content and instruction is relevant and interesting to lives and futures of students, and **personalized** - differentiated according to student needs and incorporating student choice.

Joint Subcommittee Recommendations

Recommendation 1.1 Develop a five year timeline for creation, development and deployment of standards that reflect the Profile of a Graduate. It will take both the state and local divisions time and resources to evolve in the new, extremely important vision of rigorous and relevant teaching and learning.

Recommendation 1.2 Plan and promote professional development for teachers that supports regions and districts to align programs and practices with revised standards.

Recommendation 1.3 Create long range plans with higher education partners for changing pre-service teacher training aligned with the next expectations for students and teachers.

What will this Innovation driver help achieve?

A New Virginia Framework that is aligned with the Profile of a Graduate will explicitly move the Commonwealth towards an educational system that is focused on teaching and learning for college and career ready students. It is clear that students must be taught and assessed in a variety of ways that cannot be measured by multiple choice tests. Revision of standards that contain content knowledge as well as skills, and the development of high quality tasks and assessments are important next steps for Virginia teachers and students. Important academic learning outcomes that have fallen through the cracks with the focus on multiple choice tests can be restored. This important driver will allow creative thinking, collaborative teamwork, multi-media communication and use of information technologies to become part of essential education in the Commonwealth.



The assessment system must assess both rigorous content standards and relevant skills students need to master for success in college, career, and citizenship.

What do we mean by a balanced assessment framework?

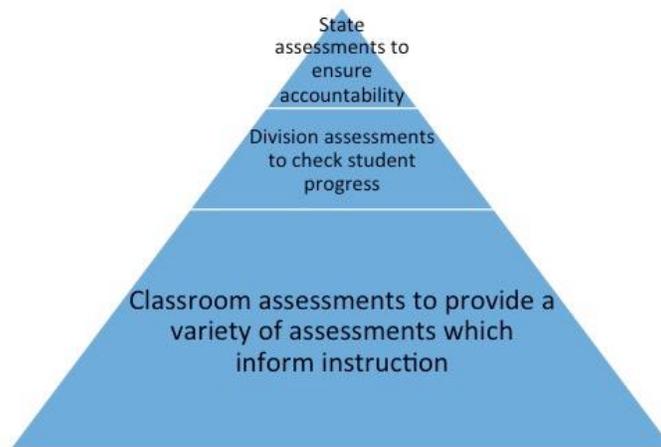
Assessment of student performance is essential and serves multiple purposes. Within classrooms and schools, assessment provides feedback to teachers and students about progress and gaps in learning, with results informing teacher pedagogical choices for the future. At the school and school division, teachers and leaders examine assessment data to inform choices about curriculum, instructional programs, and professional development. Aggregated assessment results are used by the Commonwealth for accountability purposes. One type of assessment tool can not serve this range of purposes effectively (see the Committee's [2014](#) and [2015](#) Reports).

The proposed Balanced Assessment Framework (see Appendix A or page 11 of the Committee's [2015 Report](#)) is an overarching system of assessments that incorporates the roles of student assessments at the state, local, school, and classroom levels. This is represented in the following graphic that shows accountability at the state and local level, and assessment for learning at the classroom level.

The Balanced Assessment Framework employs multiple types of assessments in order to accurately measure student growth and achievement and assess mastery of both content and essential skills. It also incorporates assessments that can be appropriately used for accountability purposes (see Ace Parsi and Linda Darling Hammond's [Performance Assessments: How State Policy Can Advance Assessments for 21st Century Learning](#)). Currently several states as well a variety of Virginia districts are utilizing multiple types of assessments in combination to meet a variety of purposes (see, for example, New Hampshire, [Virginia Beach](#), [Albemarle](#), [Newport News](#), and [Goochland](#)).

Since the mid-nineties, student assessment in Virginia (including classroom-level assessment) has been dominated by fixed-response, multiple choice tests that mirror SOL tests. In order to move towards a more balanced system, it is important to incorporate performance assessment and other alternative formats (see Appendix B for a glossary of assessment types). The Virginia General Assembly's 2014 action allowed school divisions to replace selected existing SOL tests with alternate formats, and the Board of Education and Department of Education staff worked to support these efforts through incentive grant funding. Virginia's eight superintendents' regions are now organized to provide professional development, technical assistance, and time for teachers to collaborate as they design, test, and analyze alternative assessments. Knowledge of assessment types helps to ensure common understanding about assessment and instruction.

The graphic below is intended to describe how classroom, division, and state assessments serve different purposes while working together in a system. In the New Virginia Framework, there is a recognition that high-quality classroom assessment embedded in instruction is a powerful influence on learning. Accountability measures are an important part of the assessment system as they **ensure accountability**. Division assessments provide data that is used to **check student progress**, so that schools and teachers can make needed adjustments to instruction. Further, these assessments help to ensure equity and access within a school division. The importance of varied, rich classroom assessments cannot be overstated. They **inform instruction**, are the most important driver of student learning.



Joint Subcommittee Recommendations

Recommendation 2.1 Adopt a multi-metric framework that values statewide, district, and classroom level assessments. Attach a timeline for implementation that is aggressive but reasonable. It has taken 15 years to solidify a multiple choice testing culture. Teachers, schools, and school divisions are at various levels of readiness for change of this magnitude, and will need time to make needed adjustments.

Recommendation 2.2 Ensure that the framework includes both (1) assessment types that can measure skills not easily tested in multiple choice format, and (2) assessment types that can practically and legitimately be used for accountability purposes.

Recommendation 2.3 Ensure that the framework includes performance assessments at key points. These assessments should be scored regionally by teams of teachers rather than by an outside vendor, although a company might be contracted to assist with validity and reliability checks, professional development, and/or reporting.

Recommendation 2.4 Build a state assessment site populated with teacher made exemplars of quality classroom assessments. This site will host relevant tasks that engage students with associated assessments that require demonstration of content and skills.

What will this innovation driver help achieve?

The recommended revisions of the Standard of Learning will result in fewer, deeper standards, which will lend themselves to a balanced assessment framework. This framework will allow for a variety of assessment types which yield information beyond that which can be obtained on multiple choice tests. This information will be the centerpiece of whole child and whole school initiatives that can promote strong student achievement and academic growth.

One of our recommendations includes a proposal that selected performance assessments (one component of the Balanced Framework) be scored by regional teams of teachers. We believe that reliability (the degree to which the accuracy of scores can be trusted) need not be compromised in order to involve teachers in scoring. Scorers must thoroughly understand the assessment, interpret the rubric accurately, and employ processes designed to achieve acceptable levels of reliability. This learning builds expertise that applies in schools and classrooms; the investment in teacher scoring is an investment in quality assessment practice within Virginia schools as well.



The School Quality Profile should provide descriptive information using multiple measures that are evidence-based, useful in school improvement efforts, and relevant to educators, parents, communities, and the Commonwealth.

What do we mean by a School Quality Profile?

The public is interested in and has a right to clear and accessible information about the quality of their schools. Demographics, economic conditions and other factors vary widely across Virginia's communities, as do the needs of students. Still, there are measures that are widely accepted as indicators of school quality across diverse populations.

The School Quality Profile is a user-friendly data dashboard that is intended to replace and differs in several ways from the School Report Card. In Virginia's current model, the School Report Card is released annually and is primarily a summary of students' results on high-stakes tests for the previous year. Though student achievement is appropriately a centerpiece of school quality, overreliance on test scores combined with once-a-year reporting render these traditional reports of little use, either to schools as indicators of continuous improvement or to stakeholders seeking to understand something about how the school works.

The School Quality Profile provides school effectiveness data- key information about how well students are being prepared for responsible citizenship and the world beyond school. This information is shown along with complementary data that describes the school's students, community, and programs; it "tells the story" of the school and the context in which it operates, using graphics and tables to show current data and trends over time (see Appendix C for an example from Pulaski County Schools and [Salem City Schools' online Quality Profile](#)). The dashboard should be easily located and accessed online, taking viewers to a landing page where data is described and summarized using clear language and easily interpreted graphics. Summary data should be downloadable and printable as a pdf document, which schools will be able to provide to interested parties who may not have convenient online access. Each information source is connected to a link which takes users to more detailed data along with background information intended to help users interpret the data. The Profile makes clear, important information accessible to the public, and is a useful tool for the school staff and community. Although just a subset of School Quality Profile data is recommended to be used in determining school accreditation, every school will be able to use Profile data in the continuous improvement of teaching and learning for all students.

Joint Subcommittee Recommendations

The School Quality Profile we envision is an online dashboard for each school and division, updated throughout the year as data from identified sources becomes available

Recommendation 3.1 Determine content and design of the complete School Quality Profile and a set of incremental steps for implementation. The following elements are recommended.

- School Quality data, which should include:
 - graduation rates for schools with graduating classes and attendance rates for those schools without graduating classes;
 - results of a periodic (perhaps triennial) school climate survey; and
 - academic indicators based on the assessments shown in the Balanced Assessment Framework (see Appendix A or page 11 of the Committee's [2015 Report](#))

- Descriptive data, which should include:
 - demographics of the students, faculty, and community, including student population by federally defined reporting categories;
 - mobility;
 - class size; and
 - one or more measures of equity.
- Self-reported information at links where schools may choose to provide data and/or descriptive information regarding, for example:
 - points of pride;
 - school improvement goals; and
 - whole-child programs and services available.

Recommendation 3.2 Implement a strategy (multi-year if necessary) for providing a platform and data system sophisticated enough to support the intended School Quality Profile.

Recommendation 3.3 Design and approve multiple pathways to and criteria for multi-year school accreditation based on the three accreditation components above (see the [Innovation Committee's 2015 Report](#)). Combine a multi-year accreditation cycle with validated sampling methodologies so that selected alternative assessments may be included.

What will this innovation driver help to achieve?

Overreliance on SOL test scores as the major determiner of school quality and student success has contributed to narrowing a curriculum that should be deeper, limiting teacher creativity that should be celebrated, and dampening student enthusiasm that should be encouraged. Student achievement must continue to be the centerpiece of any system for measuring school quality. At the same time, when we include slightly broader data points, provide multiple pathways to accreditation, and provide important contextual information about schools, we are acknowledging that there is not just one avenue to success.

Though it represents only a small slice of a true multimetric, whole-child accountability system, the School Quality Profile that we describe is a significant departure from the current school report card. It enables a broader and richer conversation about teaching, learning, and continuous school improvement. Along with data that relates to their individual goals, schools will be able to use the School Quality Profile as a tool for community engagement and meaningful school improvement work.

The Virginia Board of Education has already put considerable effort into updating its system for reporting of school data, and is moving forward with the design of a data dashboard. It is clear that implementation of the School Quality Profile will require time, careful planning, and resources. The effort is worthwhile. Combining more reasonable accountability with a balanced assessment system, fewer and deeper standards, and effective support will create opportunities for schools to be thoughtful about and focused on quality teaching and learning.



All schools should be engaged in continuous pursuit of professional excellence. Varied models and strategies should be available so that all schools can access the support they may need.

What do we mean by professional excellence?

Our belief is that all schools, regardless of their students' achievement levels, must continually be engaged in improvement efforts in pursuit of professional excellence. Achieving accreditation currently indicates that a school meets a clearly-defined statewide standard. It is an important checkpoint but not an endpoint in the continuous improvement process. Even a cursory look at the exemplary work being done in schools across the Commonwealth provides evidence that school improvement efforts are moving many schools toward the Innovation Committee's vision to "inspire, engage, and personalize learning for every student in the Commonwealth" (see the [Innovation Committee's 2014 Report](#)). Indeed, any number of schools and divisions across the Commonwealth have begun successfully implementing innovative performance-based practices (see, for example, [Virginia Beach](#), [Albemarle](#), [Newport News](#), and [Goochland](#)).

In cases where schools or divisions do not meet the criteria for accreditation, the Commonwealth has an obligation to respond. The Innovation Committee has emphasized that these responses should be in the form of supports rather than sanctions (see the [Innovation Committee's 2015 Report](#)). These supports, which could include site visits, must be prompt, collaborative, and provide meaningful, actionable feedback. Supports are in service of a drive towards Professional Excellence through continuous improvement. Interventions should be grounded in research, where necessary resources accompany recommended changes. Further, such assistance can only lead to substantive reform when we acknowledge that such transformation cannot occur absent the engagement of those directly working with students. Professional excellence portrays the desire that the focus be on the development of a culture of improvement and the desire to use professional learning to continuously increase the expertise of professionals delivering services to students. In addition, professional excellence must be approached in partnership with pre-service organizations such that professional excellence extends from pre-service to experienced practitioner.

Effective assistance from experts outside the school, e.g., feedback provided during a site visit, consulting services, or video-based coaching, will be important for some schools. However, "support" should not be interpreted to mean only "intervention". As educators embrace new modes of instruction and assessment, on-going professional development and increased time to collaborate remain imperative. These supports are needed in all schools, regardless of their accreditation status. For example, developing, evaluating and modifying new alternative, performance-based assessments is a time-consuming endeavor requiring esoteric skills not previously taught to many teachers.

Joint Subcommittee Recommendations

4.1 Create a differentiated system of supports that includes:

- recommended practices and resources to support accredited schools' improvement efforts.
- recommended practices and resources for schools that are accredited but not meeting benchmarks for student growth.
- recommended practices and resources for schools that are accredited but not meeting benchmarks for student achievement.

- recommended practices and resources for schools that are accredited but not meeting benchmarks for school climate.
- recommended practices and resources for schools that are accredited but not meeting benchmarks for graduation rates.
- recommended practices and resources for schools that are accredited but not meeting benchmarks for attendance.
- optional “outside supports” (such as site visits, consulting, or coaching) for schools that are accredited but not meeting benchmarks in one area.
- a required process for assistance to unaccredited schools, with built-in flexibility allowing for customization to the needs of the school.

4.2 Ensure that the differentiated system is inclusive of supports from a variety of sources, including but not limited to those in the Virginia Department of Education. For example, consider resources available from Virginia’s colleges and universities, professional associations, and schools/divisions who may choose to serve as resources to each other.

4.3 Provide incentive funding to test innovative designs and identify existing exemplars for professional development that are built upon evidence related to effective professional and adult learning. These projects might inform questions such as:

- In what ways can time be restructured during and outside the school day to allow for professional development to occur?
- How can professional development be best embedded in teacher/leader practice through models such as peer and/or video-based coaching and lesson study?
- How can professional development be best differentiated to meet teachers’ and leaders’ individual learning needs, and through what types of tools or assessments are these needs identified?

4.4 Include resources, structures, and personnel within the Department of Education to give it the capacity to provide timely and effective technical assistance to schools.

What will this innovation driver help to achieve?

We know that improved performance requires engagement. This is as true for schools as it is for individual learners. In order for schools to be meaningfully engaged in school improvement, the people who work and learn in those schools must perceive the process as useful and relevant to them, rather than as a compliance activity to be completed. The system of supports we envision relies on this engagement and encourages it by building in evidence-based practices as well as opportunities for collaboration and choice.

In a few cases the school’s level of engagement, the capacity of the staff, and/or a combination of other limiting factors render the system of supports insufficient to leverage improvement. When schools neither reach accreditation, come close to the criteria, nor show improvement over time, the Board of Education is proactive in working with both divisions and individual schools. A Memorandum of Understanding provides a structure and process for school improvement that is carefully monitored by the Board, defining responsibilities and actions by the school, division, and Board that will lead to improvement. We support the Board’s intention to build upon the existing MOU process so that it aligns to the Profile of a Graduate.

Implications of a New Virginia Framework

At times during the Innovation Committee’s discussion, we have used the catchphrase “taming the pendulum” to express our desire to generate recommendations that (1) are legitimately innovative, (2) will result in positive effects on student learning, and (3) may be challenging, but are also attainable. The Committee’s [2014](#) and [2015](#) reports focused primarily on assessment and accountability changes, since concerns about these systems have been widespread. The recommendations in these reports included both bold, long-range, changes as well as shorter- term “fixes” intended to address specific concerns within the current system.

In this report, we have attempted to take a step back from the immediate issues in order to think more holistically about the four innovation drivers (standards, assessment, accountability, and professional excellence) as a complete system. It is clear to us that picking out and changing individual pieces of this system without simultaneously adjusting the connected parts is not a strategy for success. At the same time, we acknowledge that resources of all kinds are severely limited at all levels, from the individual classroom to the Department of Education.

Most of our recommendations require time, energy and funding to implement, and we think it is vitally important to bring additional resources to these efforts so that our goals can be achieved. At the same time, the constraints under which we work call upon us to be strategic, efficient, and prudent. They require us to plan for substantive change through incremental steps that have been carefully considered and designed with the involvement and support of the education community as well as other stakeholders. This would be our preferred approach regardless of resource availability.

In order to achieve the Innovation Committee’s desire to “inspire, engage, and personalize learning for every student in the Commonwealth” ([see the Innovation Committee’s 2014 Report](#)), we strongly encourage two simultaneous efforts. The first is to continue to enact policies that reduce the burden of testing and provide flexibility for schools as they seek ways to better serve students. Examples are the expanded number of accreditation ratings and the reduction of certain SOL tests and the elementary and middle school grades. While these actions are helpful for the time being, they are not driven by nor do they accomplish our broader goals.

The second effort is more complex, yet more impactful. It begins with a clear description of the Profile of a Graduate, which should be designed with broad participation by stakeholders. The Board of Education and staff of the Department of Education have this work well underway. The subsequent steps, whose purpose is to align the innovation drivers with the Profile of a Graduate, should be planned and implemented with all four drivers and their interactions moving forward in concert.

Achieving the Innovation Committee’s vision demands:

- leadership at the school, division, regional and state levels that demonstrates commitment to the four innovation drivers.
- collaborative efforts across teachers, schools, divisions, and regions to learn from and support one another.
- explicit communications plans that help stakeholders understand the importance of the innovation drivers in achieving strong student learning outcomes.

We have considered and discussed the concrete actions that are needed in order to achieve the systemic changes we have recommended. The timeline below presents one picture of the way forward. It considers how various actions could be sequenced and layered in order to provide needed support for recommendations to become realities. Each action is color-coded to indicate the innovation driver to which it relates.

NEW VIRGINIA FRAMEWORK RECOMMENDED ACTION STEPS

Innovation Driver 1: Standards

Innovation Driver 2: Assessment

Innovation Driver 3: Accountability

Innovation Driver: 4 Professional Excellence

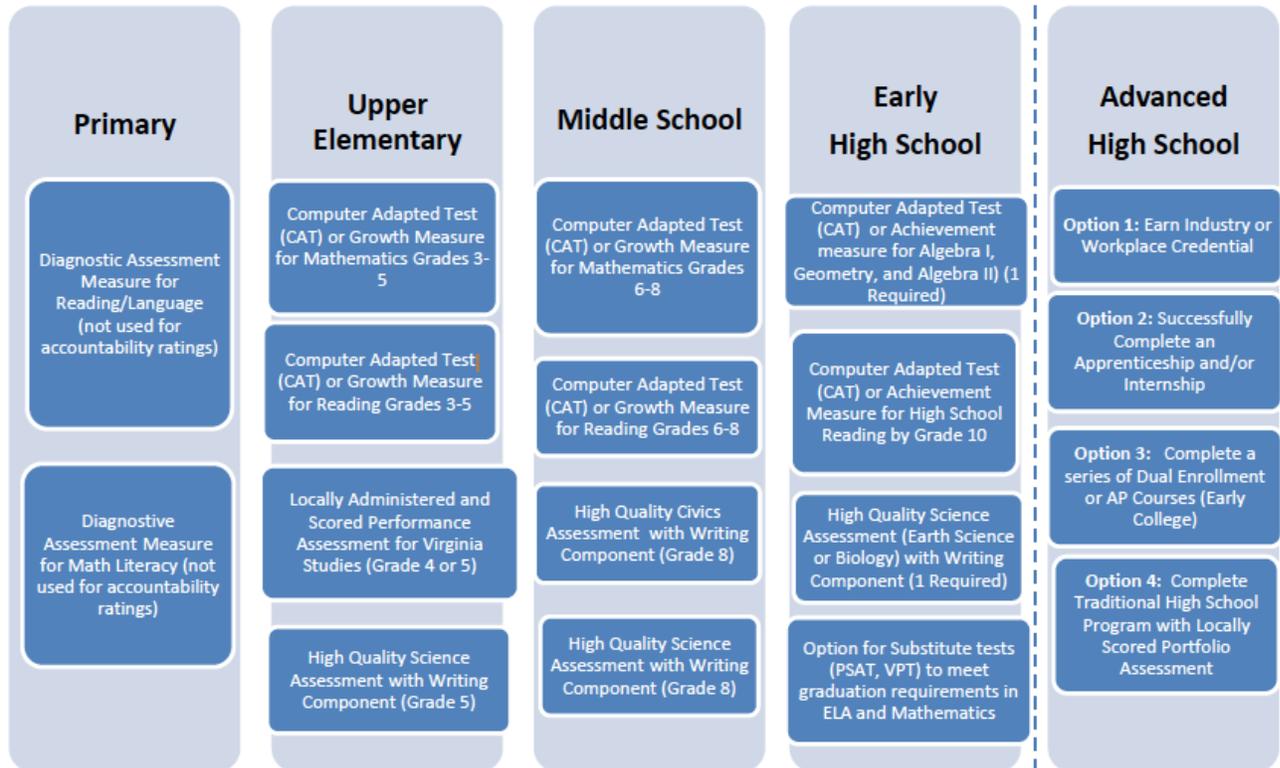
Action Step Descriptors

1. Profile of a Graduate: Virginia graduates must graduate from high school prepared to succeed in the economy and in their communities.
2. New Virginia Framework: The Virginia standards be revised to align with the profile of a Virginia graduate integrating and reaching beyond subject areas with explicit college, career, and citizenship objectives.
3. Teacher Professional Development: The Profile of a Virginia graduate must be supported by professional learning for Virginia teachers and administrators.
4. Pre-Service Teacher Alignment: Teachers leaving pre-service training organizations must be prepared with new sets of skills to support the new standards and expectations.
5. Revised School Accountability Profile: Schools and students become more than a single score. Rather, the new accountability measures indicate multiple measures that encompass the whole.
6. State Dashboard: Clear digital communication of school profiles with the ability to update measures as they naturally occur.
7. Communication Plan: Rigorous, intentional communication to all stakeholders with the opportunity for feedback and involvement.
8. Regional Assessment Development: Regional think tanks to support new teacher skills encouraging innovation, fidelity of expectations, building on the best thinking and work already present.
9. Teacher-created Bank of Exemplars: Assessments that are teacher made, state vetted and digitally accessible.
10. Regional Assessment Leaders meetings: Regional leaders meet to gain knowledge, share work and promote high standards across regions.
11. Focus on Professional excellence with new partnerships for school improvement: Supports for teachers, leaders and schools that are relevant to their needs and those of their students.
12. Innovation Committee: State committee to support a new vision for education in the State of Virginia advising BOE and VDOE.
13. ESSA Alignment: Ongoing VDOE work to align changes with changes in federal accountability accessing new opportunities afforded by these changes.

Appendix A: Balanced Assessment Framework

Possible Model for Assessment System for pre-K through Graduation

Revised: October 13, 2015



*It will be necessary to refer to the work of the Accountability 2.0 Subcommittee to determine how these assessments factor into accreditation ratings for schools.

**In order to fully implement these recommendations, significant changes must be made to the state assessment and accountability system.

***The high school options will require a strong partnership with community colleges and post-secondary institutions across the state.

Appendix B: Types of Assessments

Alternative (or alternate) Assessments—Alternative assessments are used primarily to determine what students can and cannot do, in contrast to what they do or do not know. In other words, an alternative assessment measures applied proficiency more than it measures knowledge. There are multiple types of alternative assessments, of which performance assessment is one.

Authentic Assessments—An alternative assessment that asks students to perform real-world tasks. The student will typically have to employ critical thinking and problem-solving skills to successfully address the challenge presented. The more authentic an assessment task is, the more closely it approximates the way a similar task would be done in a setting outside the classroom (a workplace or community for example). Student performance on a task is typically scored on the basis of a list of desired outcomes (known as a rubric).

Criterion-Referenced Assessments—A test or assessment that is designed to measure students against a fixed set of predetermined criteria or learning standards. In K-12 education, these are typically aligned to the curriculum taught in a particular course, academic program, or specific content area.

Formative Assessments—The overall goal for formative assessment is to collect detailed information in an informal manner that can be used to improve instruction and student learning during the learning process. It is used to “inform” the learning process so that the teacher can make in-process adjustments and learning modifications based on the data collected from students. Formative assessments are generally referred to as assessments “for” learning.

Integrated or Interdisciplinary Assessments—An assessment that measures student performance on content and/or skills across content areas.

Norm-Referenced Assessments—A standardized test that is designed to compare and rank students (test takers) in relation to other students who participated in the assessment. Norm-referenced tests report how a particular test taker performed in comparison to the hypothetical average student, which is determined by comparing scores against the performance results of a statistically selected group of test takers, typically from the same age group and grade level, who have already taken the assessment.

“On Demand” Testing—This type of testing allows flexibility to assess students when they are ready to be tested on required content rather than testing students according to an established testing window that does not account for student readiness.

Performance Assessments – An assessment activity that requires students to construct a response, create a product, or perform a demonstration (J. McTighe and J. Arter). A type of alternative assessment in which students demonstrate the use of their acquired knowledge and skill. Performance assessments typically include, but are not limited to, exhibitions, investigations, demonstrations, written or oral responses, journals, and portfolios. Performance assessments are typically scored using rubrics (see Rubrics), which explicitly describe levels of performance and designate which levels meet standards.

Portfolio Assessments—A type of assessment that is a systematic collection of student work and artifacts that demonstrate mastery of course and/or subject knowledge and skills.

Project-Based Learning/Assessments—Project-based learning or PBL is a teaching approach that engages students in sustained, collaborative real-world investigations. Projects are organized around a driving question, and students participate in a variety of hands-on tasks that seek to meaningfully address this question (Buck Institute).

Student Portfolio Assessments—A type of assessment that is a collection of student work and artifacts that demonstrate mastery of course and/or subject knowledge and skills. The collection should include evidence of student reflection and self-evaluation, guidelines for selecting the portfolio contents, and criteria for judging the quality of the work included in the portfolio (Venn, 2000, pp. 530-531).

Summative Assessments—Assessments that are used to evaluate student learning, skill acquisition, and academic achievement at the conclusion of a defined instructional period. Summative assessments typically are administered at the end of a unit, project, course, semester, program, or school year. These are frequently described as assessments “of” learning.

All of the assessment types above have a place in a Balanced Assessment Framework. The different assessment types provide different pieces of information related to student growth and achievement. In addition to including various assessment types, it will be important to create a balance in the assessments that occur at the state, district, school, and classroom level. Assessments at all levels serve in important purpose. Currently, the majority of assessments in Virginia occur at the state level.

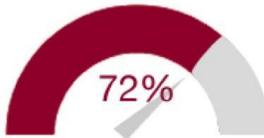
Appendix C: Description of Pulaski County's School Quality Profile

These screenshots are from Pulaski's prototype dashboard, a web-based platform designed to share information and data in a visually compelling manner and bring attention to important information beyond standardized test scores. A dashboard is updated regularly and aids in the facilitation of a meaningful two-way "conversation" with all stakeholders that encourages transparency, engagement, and ownership in the educational process. All data points on the dashboard can be "clicked" to access more detailed information and the ability to drilldown for data specific to a subgroup or grade level. The dashboard also provides the ability to review previous data by days, weeks, months, and years.



The four gauges shown across the bottom of the screen are simple tools that make it easy for the public to consume key information. The data can be presented as a number, total number count, or percentage. They can be reported daily, weekly, monthly, or annually. All gauges link to a detail page with more key information. For example, see the following screenshot of the weekly perfect attendance gauge. Instead of reporting average daily attendance, this dashboard example reports the percentage of students achieving perfect attendance over the past week. This makes attendance data relevant and provides a call to action for students, families, and teachers.

PERFECT ATTENDANCE



Weekly Perfect Attendance

Pulaski County Public Schools celebrates perfect attendance every week.

Attendance is important and everyone can achieve perfect attendance for a week.

Check back every Monday to see last week's perfect attendance.

[View last week's data.](#)

Research has proven that there is a high correlation between school attendance and academic performance and success, while absence from school is often the greatest single cause of poor performance and achievement.



Pulaski County High School student, Sara Jones, share how her two consecutive years of perfect attendance have helped her in school and in life.

Why is it so important to attend every day?

- Learning is a progressive activity; each day's lessons build upon those of the previous day(s).
- Many classes use lectures, discussions, demonstrations, experiments and participation as part of the daily learning activities, and these cannot be made up by those who are absent.
- Regular student participation in daily classroom activities plays a significant role in a student's school success.

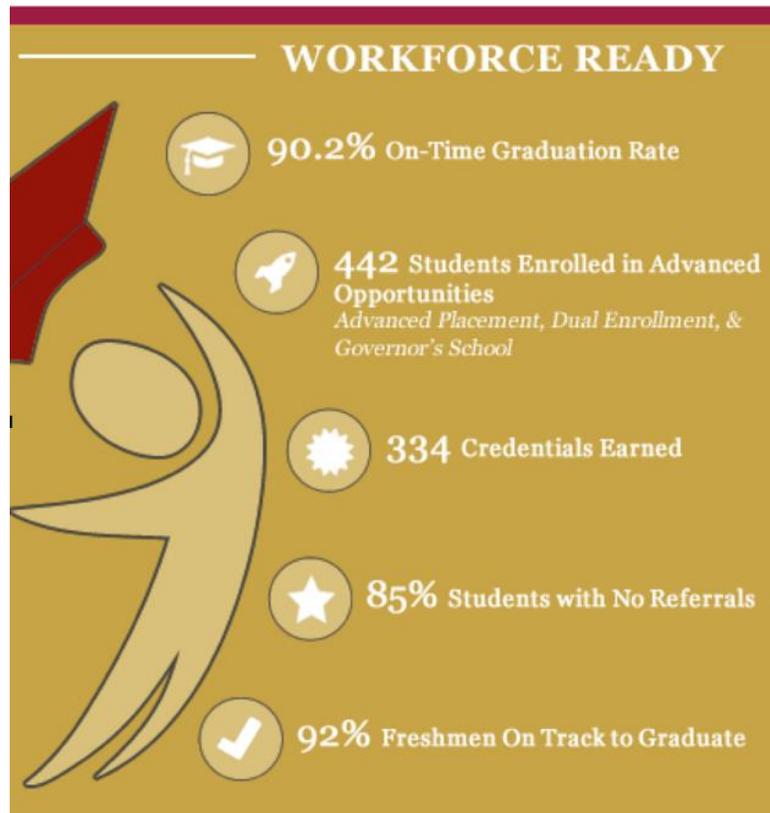
Are there other benefits for my child?

- Students with good attendance records generally achieve higher grades and enjoy school more.
- Having a good education will help to give your child the best possible start in life.
- Students who develop an "on the job" attitude toward school will be more desirable to future employers.

What can parents do to help?

- Parents must model the value of education, including the importance of regular attendance.
- Make sure that your child goes to school regularly and arrives on time-you will establish a good habit that will carry through life.
- **Remember**, regular attendance is necessary for success in school. Help ensure that your child has the best opportunity for success by making sure he/she is in school every day.

The section of the dashboard shown below incorporates multiple data points supporting the goal of being college and career ready. Each icon/data point is a hyperlink to a detail page with additional information regarding the data, collection method, and significance of each measure, collectively, for workforce and economic development.



The Student Data, Reading, STEM, and SOL Results sections of the dashboard incorporate and supplement the assessment data that is required by the state for accountability purposes.