

# Every Student Succeeds Act in Virginia: Stakeholder Survey Findings and Recommendations

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Virginia Department of Education  
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## Executive Summary

The *Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015* (ESSA) was signed into law on December 10, 2015. The new law reauthorizes the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965*, and replaces the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB). ESSA includes increased requirements for stakeholder involvement for states as they plan and implement new federal accountability plans. Specifically, Section 1111 of ESSA requires each state to submit a plan developed with timely and meaningful consultation with policymakers and stakeholders. This includes the Governor, members of the state legislature and state board of education, local educational agencies, representatives of Indian tribes located in the state, teachers, principals, other school leaders, charter school leaders, specialized instructional support personnel, paraprofessionals, administrators, other staff, and parents.

The ESSA survey is one of several methods used to seek public feedback and inform the development of Virginia's federal accountability plan. To balance the depth of input received through focus groups, roundtable discussions, and meetings with other stakeholders, the intent of the survey was to capture high-level trends among a larger group of parents, educators, and other interested stakeholders across the commonwealth.

The web-based ESSA survey was open for stakeholder completion from October 26, 2016 through November 9, 2016. During that time, the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) received 15,708 responses. Parents and education professionals responded most frequently to the survey. Survey respondents represented all regions of the commonwealth.

Survey respondents identified high school graduation rates, college and career readiness, and teacher qualifications as the most important accountability indicators. State assessments ranked lowest among all stakeholder groups, though student growth ranked moderately important overall. College and career readiness was the most important indicator for each individual stakeholder group.

Under ESSA, in addition to academic indicators, states must include an indicator of school quality or student success in federal accountability plans. Survey respondents indicated that student growth measures and other indicators of learning environment are important in Virginia.

## Survey Content and Structure

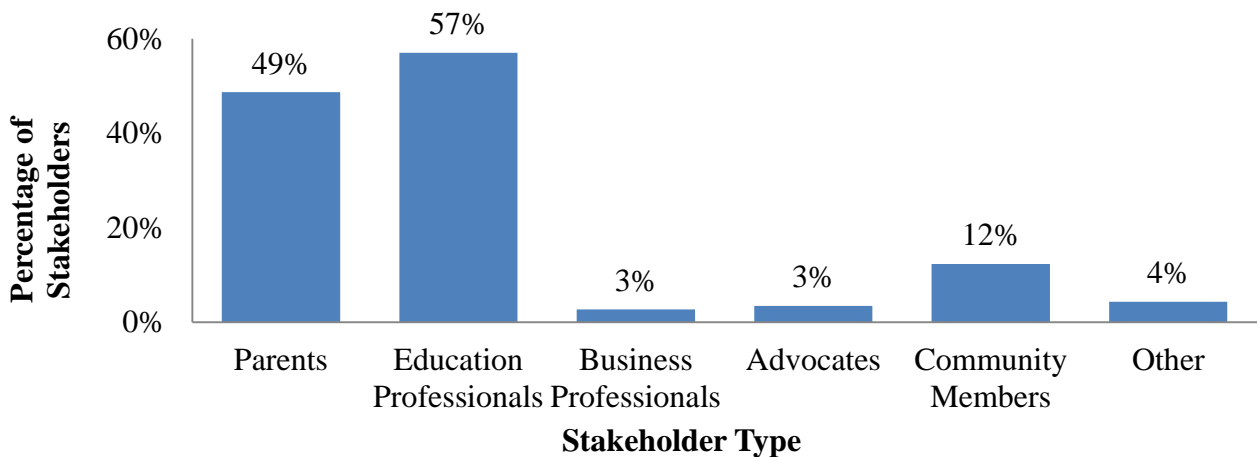
Stakeholders rated 16 accountability indicators by their degree of importance from “Not Important at All” to “Extremely Important” on a five point Likert scale. This methodology provided the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) and Board of Education (BOE) information regarding which indicators align with the values of stakeholders in the Commonwealth. The VDOE and BOE will consider these results as they work towards designing Virginia’s federal accountability plan. The full survey is presented in Appendix A.

The survey was available through a web-based survey platform from October 26, 2016 through November 9, 2016. VDOE’s Office of Communications announced the survey through a press release and social media, and featured a link to the survey on the VDOE website. The press release was distributed to all school divisions via a Superintendent’s Email. Communications staff within school divisions and teacher and parent stakeholder groups also distributed information about the survey.

## Participation and Demographics

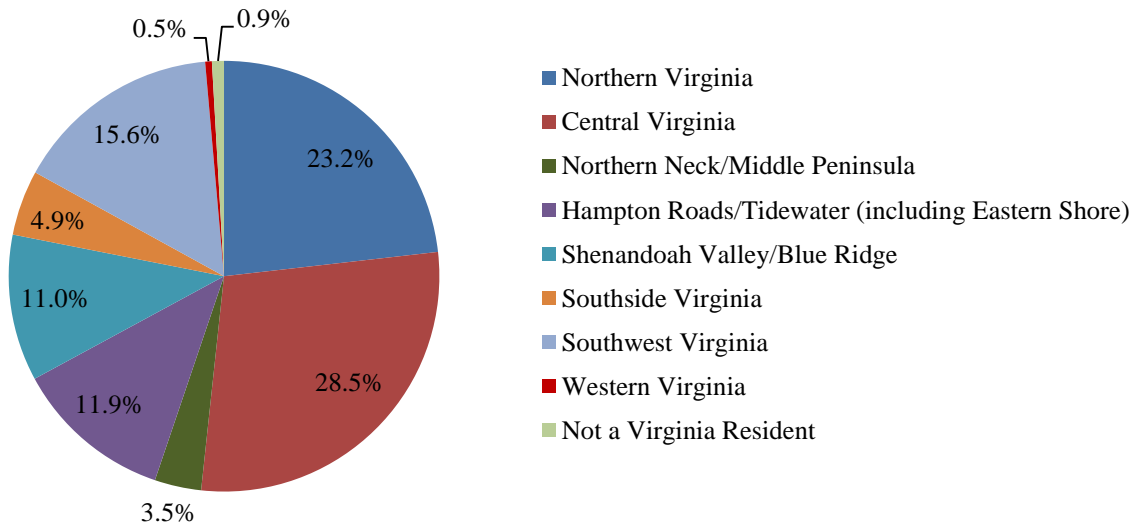
VDOE received 15,708 responses to the survey. Survey respondents most frequently identified as education professionals (teachers, school board members, or school administrators) (57 percent), followed by parents (49 percent). Only fourteen percent of respondents identified themselves as both an education professional and a parent. Figure 1 shows the identification of all survey respondents. Survey respondents represented all regions of the commonwealth. Larger percentages of respondents were from the most populated areas in the state including Central Virginia (28.5 percent) and Northern Virginia (23.2 percent). Figure 2 shows the percentage of respondents from each region.

*Figure 1. Stakeholder Survey Respondent Identification*



\*Note: Respondents were allowed to select multiple identifiers, therefore percentages do not sum to 100.

**Figure 2. Stakeholder Respondent Location of Residency**



### Key Findings

Stakeholder responses were reviewed to determine the most important accountability indicators to stakeholders who participated in the survey. VDOE calculated and ranked the average rating for each indicator for the entire group of respondents. High school graduation rate was the highest ranked indicator with an average score of 4.46 (on a five-point scale, where five is “extremely important”). Table 1 illustrates rank results for the top five overall indicators.

**Table 1.** Top ranked accountability indicators by all participants.

Accountability Indicators	Overall Rank	Average Rating
<b>High School Graduation Rate</b>	1	4.46
<b>College &amp; Career Readiness</b>	2	4.45
<b>Teacher Qualifications</b>	3	4.45
<b>Student, parent and teacher satisfaction with the quality and character of school life (e.g., school learning environment and safety)</b>	4	4.40
<b>High School Drop-out Rate</b>	5	4.38

Among the lowest ranked indicators were those that included state assessments. Stakeholders who responded to this survey ranked the five indicators that mentioned state assessments with an average score of 3.15 or lower; however, student growth was ranked favorably overall by the stakeholder respondents ( $M = 4.32$ ). Respondents mentioned student growth 603 times in the open-ended response section at the end of the survey. One parent and educator, who indicated that state assessments were extremely important, echoed the sentiments of multiple respondents by responding that “measurements of growth for diverse learners” are an important indicator of school accountability. A full listing of survey results for all indicators is presented in Appendix B.

To assure representation of all stakeholder groups, VDOE also calculated and ranked the average rating for each indicator by group. College and career readiness was ranked as the most important indicator by business professionals ( $M = 4.58$ ), advocates ( $M = 4.56$ ), and community members ( $M = 4.51$ ). College and career readiness and high school graduation rate tied for the highest ranked indicators among education professionals ( $M = 4.51$ ). Parents indicated a three-way tie among college and career readiness, teacher qualifications, and student, parent and teacher satisfaction with the quality and character of school life ( $M = 4.53$ ) for their top ranked indicators.

Table 2 illustrates the top five ranked indicators for each stakeholder group. Any indicator not included in the top five for a given stakeholder group is indicated with an X. This means that the particular indicator was not among the top five for that stakeholder group but is included in the table because it was in the top five of another stakeholder group.

**Table 2.** Top five ranked accountability indicators, by stakeholder group.

Accountability Indicators	Rank by Stakeholder Group				
	Parents	Education Professionals	Business Professionals	Advocates	Community Members
College & Career Readiness	1	1	1	1	1
High School Graduation Rate	4	1	4	2	2
Teacher Qualifications	1	3	2	5	4
Student, parent and teacher satisfaction with the quality and character of school life (e.g., school learning environment and safety)	1	X	3	3	5
High School Drop-out Rate	5	4	5	4	3
Student Growth	X	5	X	X	X

*Note: X for any indicator represents that the particular indicator was not part of the given stakeholder group Top 5.*

## **Recommendations**

*College and Career Readiness is a priority for stakeholders.* Survey respondents consistently ranked College and Career Readiness as a moderately to extremely important accountability indicator. The inclusion of a measure of college and career readiness in the state's accountability system would reflect stakeholders' priorities.

*Student growth is an important component of achievement assessment.* Survey respondents rated state assessments among the least important school accountability indicators; however, student growth measures ranked favorably among stakeholders. Exploration of student growth indicators for the purpose of accountability would more accurately reflect stakeholder interest in student academic achievement outcomes.

*Stakeholders are interested in outcomes that are not currently part of school accountability.* Despite the varying scores by multiple stakeholder groups, many of the outcomes ranked as most important to respondents are not currently part of Virginia's federal accountability plan. Indicators for consideration by policymakers should include measures of learning environment and school progress and completion.

## Appendix A

### ESSA Accountability Indicators Survey

#### Instructions

The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) is asking for feedback about Virginia's plan to implement the new federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015. School accountability systems evaluate schools based on multiple factors and provide important information to school administrators, teachers, parents, and the community about school performance on various indicators. The purpose of this survey is to identify those factors, also referred to as accountability indicators, that you think are important to know about schools. This survey should take approximately 5-10 minutes to complete and your answers are anonymous. Thank you for your feedback.

If you have questions about Virginia's federal accountability plan, please email [ESSA@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:ESSA@doe.virginia.gov).

If you have any questions about this survey, please contact VDOE's Director for Research, Dr. Jennifer Piver-Renna at 804-225-3698 or [jennifer.piverrenna@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:jennifer.piverrenna@doe.virginia.gov).

For media inquiries, please contact Charles Pyle at 804-371-2420 or [Charles.Pyle@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:Charles.Pyle@doe.virginia.gov).

1. Select the statement that best describes your interest in Virginia's federal accountability plan.
  - I am a parent
  - I am an educator, school board member, or school administrator
  - I am a business professional
  - I am an advocate
  - Community member
  - Other (please describe) [text box]
  
2. Select the location that best describes where you reside.
  - Northern Virginia
  - Central Virginia
  - Northern Neck/Middle Peninsula
  - Hampton Roads/Tidewater (including Eastern Shore)
  - Shenandoah Valley/Blue Ridge
  - Southside Virginia
  - Southwest Virginia
  - Western Virginia
  - I am not a Virginia resident



Please indicate how important it is to you that Virginia measure each of the following factors for federal accountability purposes. Mark the degree of importance to you by using the scale provided, ranging from not at all important to extremely important.

	Not at all Important	Slightly Important	Neutral	Moderately Important	Extremely Important
Percentage of students passing the Standards of Learning (SOL) state assessments for reading	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pass rates on SOL state assessments for math	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pass rates on SOL state assessments for science	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pass rates on SOL state assessments for history/social science	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
SOL pass rates reported by groups of diverse learners (e.g. race, students with disabilities, English learners, economically disadvantaged students, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Student year-to-year academic growth and progress	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Progress towards English language proficiency of English Learners.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
High school graduation rate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Middle school dropout rate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
High school dropout rate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
College and career readiness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Not at all Important	Slightly Important	Neutral	Moderately Important	Extremely Important
<b>Average percentage of students who are present at school</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Percentage of students who are absent 10% or more of the school year (chronic absenteeism)</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Percent of students disciplined by the school, by types of students</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Teacher qualifications</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Student, parent and teacher satisfaction with the quality and character of school life (e.g., school learning environment and safety)</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

3. What other factors do you think should be considered in Virginia’s accountability system?

Thank you for completing this survey!

## Appendix B

### Accountability Indicator Ratings, All Participants

Accountability Indicators	Average Rating
High school graduation rate	4.46
College and career readiness	4.45
Teacher qualifications	4.45
Student, parent and teacher satisfaction with the quality and character of school life (e.g., school learning environment and safety)	4.40
High school dropout rate	4.38
Student year-to-year academic growth and progress	4.32
Middle school dropout rate	4.30
Average percentage of students who are present at school	4.04
Percentage of students who are absent 10% or more of the school year (chronic absenteeism)	4.02
Progress towards English language proficiency of English Learners.	3.98
Percent of students disciplined by the school by types of students	3.42
Percentage of students passing the Standards of Learning (SOL) state assessments for reading	3.15
Pass rates on SOL state assessments for math	3.13
Pass rates on SOL state assessments for science	2.90
Pass rates on SOL state assessments for history/social science	2.86
SOL pass rates reported by groups of diverse learners (e.g. race, students with disabilities, English learners, economically disadvantaged students, etc.)	2.77