



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

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Superintendent of Public Instruction

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February 7, 2024

The Honorable L. Louise Lucas, Chair
Senate Finance and Appropriations
General Assembly Building
201 North 9th Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

The Honorable Luke E. Torian, Chair
House Appropriations
General Assembly Building
201 North 9th Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Dear Senator Lucas and Delegate Torian:

Enactment Clause 3 of Chapter 653, 2023 Session of the General Assembly, contains the following reporting requirement which states:

3. That a work group is hereby established for the purpose of advising the Board of Education on the criteria for and process of procuring the goods and services necessary to implement the Virginia Parent Data Portal as set forth in the first enactment of this act. The work group shall be composed of representatives from each state-sponsored assessment, including the Virginia Kindergarten Readiness Program, the pre-kindergarten through grade three literacy screener (PALS), and the Standards of Learning; at least six but no more than eight parents of public school students who represent a diverse array of school settings, including by grade level, region of the Commonwealth, availability of technology in the local school division, and Title I status; at least four but no more than six public school teachers who represent a similarly diverse array of school settings; school division-level data managers; a school division-level community or parent engagement representative; representatives of the Department of Education with a focus on technology and assessments; a representative of the Virginia Information Technologies Agency; a representative of the Virginia Longitudinal Data System; a representative of the Office of the Secretary of Education; a representative of the Virginia School Counselor Association; one member of the House of Delegates to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates, giving preference to a member with a child enrolled in a public elementary or secondary school in the Commonwealth; and one member of the Senate of Virginia to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules, giving preference to a member with a child enrolled in a public elementary or secondary school in the Commonwealth. The two members of the work group from the House of Delegates and the Senate shall jointly coordinate the meetings and activities of the work group. The work group shall submit a report containing its findings and any

The Honorable L. Louse Lucas
The Honorable Luke Torian
January 16, 2024
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recommendations to the Board of Education and the General Assembly no later than November 1, 2023.

Attached are the findings of the workgroup which met between August and October of 2023.

If you have any questions or require additional information relative to this transmittal, please contact me, or Melissa Velazquez, Assistant Superintendent of Policy and Government Relations, at (804) 750-8724.

Sincerely,

Lisa
Lisa Coons
Coons

Digitally signed by
Lisa Coons
Date: 2024.02.07
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LC/rd

C: The Honorable Aimee Rogstad Guidera, Secretary of Education



**RECOMMENDATIONS
OF THE
SECRETARY OF EDUCATION
AND THE
SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION**

To Establish The Virginia Parent Data Portal
In Response to Senate Bill 1329 & House Bill 1629

December 2023

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In its 2023 term, the Virginia General Assembly enacted Senate Bill 1329 and House Bill 1629, which commissioned a Work Group “established for the purpose of advising the Board of Education on the criteria for and process of procuring the goods and services necessary to implement the Virginia Parent Data Portal.” This report summarizes the activities, findings, and recommendations of the Work Group.

The Work Group met four times between August and October 2023. In each meeting the group discussed the following:

- In the first meeting, Secretary Guidera and Superintendent Coons framed purpose and objectives of the Work Group. Superintendent Coons then led the Work Group through a discussion on what features they most value in a parent portal.
- In the second meeting, Secretary Aimee Guidera brought two leading experts Brennan Parton from the Data Quality Campaign and Christine Pitts from the Center of Reinventing Public Education.
- In the third meeting, Ethan Young presented research about two implementation options for the Work Group’s consideration. The Work Group broke out into smaller discussion groups to consider these options and to discuss additional “must haves” for inclusion in the finished product.
- In the final meeting, the Work Group reviewed an initial draft of the recommendations highlighted in this report and offered comments and feedback. Representatives from the Secretary of Education’s office and the Virginia Department of Education, as well as Katie Ryan, and Ethan Young, responded to and answered the Work Group’s questions.

After meeting over a period of three months, conducting surveys, and evaluating additional nationwide research, the Work Group concludes and recommends that:

- The Virginia Parent Data Portal (“the Portal”) would support parents to better understand and engage with educators about the specific academic needs of students by providing them with uniform access to their children’s assessment data;
- Local school divisions are best equipped to utilize existing technology to administer the Portal directly to parents;
- The Virginia Department of Education should partner with local school divisions to provide uniform access to state-supported assessment data through a “tunnel” of existing division-level student information systems (SIS);
- The Virginia Department of Education should negotiate with state-supported assessment vendors to provide high-quality contextual information that ensures parents understand their children’s scores on each assessment; and,
- The Virginia Department of Education should procure high-quality professional development programs to promote a Commonwealth-wide emphasis on data-driven instruction and parental engagement.

LETTER TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The Honorable Louise Lucas
Chair, Senate Education and Health
P.O. Box 700
Portsmouth, VA 23705-0700

The Honorable John Avoli
Vice Chair, House Education
P.O. Box #1942
Staunton, VA 24402

Dear Senator Lucas and Delegate Avoli:

We are pleased to submit the following recommendations to the General Assembly to establish the Virginia Parent Data Portal (“the Portal”). House Bill 1629 created the Portal to ensure that all parents across the Commonwealth enjoy timely, uniform, and accessible access to their children’s state-supported assessment data. To this end, the legislation mandated the development and submission of recommendations to the General Assembly “for the purpose of advising the Board of Education on the criteria for and process of procuring the goods and services necessary to implement the Virginia Parent Data Portal.”

Over the past several months, the Virginia Department of Education convened this Work Group to leverage a wide variety of educational and technical expertise. Along with presentations from national experts and in-depth research on the state of data access in Virginia, this Work Group discussed critical use cases and evaluated different options for implementing the Portal. This report contains the culmination of these efforts and recommends the creation of a Portal that best meets parental needs, promotes cost efficiency, and sets Virginia apart by developing the most comprehensive, best-in-class Portal.

This Administration is committed to restoring excellence to education and making Virginia the most transparent, accountable state in the nation. Providing uniform access to each child’s *individual assessment* results plays a critical role in that larger initiative. Parents and families are children’s first and most important educators. For Virginia students to thrive, parents must have access to information and understand how to use that information to support their child’s success.

Please contact [Superintendent Coons](#) if you have any questions or if you need additional information regarding the recommendations in this report.

SIGN

Lisa Coons, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Public Instruction

OVERVIEW OF SB 1329/ HB 1629

This legislation amends three distinct sections of the Code of Virginia, giving rise to six changes in the Commonwealth’s education law. The relevant changes are highlighted below. A complete copy of the statutory language may be found in Appendix A.

- First, the bill adds the following title-wide definition: “**State-supported assessment**” means any assessment made available statewide by the Board for administration by local school divisions to students in pre-kindergarten through grade 12, including any (i) Standards of Learning assessment described in § 22.1-253.13:3, (ii) grades three through eight reading or mathematics through-year growth assessment described in § 22.1-253.13:3, and (iii) screeners provided by the Department.
- Second, the bill creates a new obligation under Standard of Quality 3, which encompasses accreditation, standards, and assessments:

The Board shall, on or before July 1, 2025, create and maintain the **Virginia Parent Data Portal** (the Portal).

The Board shall ensure that the Portal:

1. Displays individualized student assessment data on all state-supported assessments (i) in a format that shows both current and cumulative data over time and (ii) within 45 days of a state-supported assessment window closing for each state-supported assessment;
2. Provides (i) a description of the purpose of each state-supported assessment, (ii) an explanation of how to interpret student data on each state-supported assessment, and (iii) a comparison of a student's performance on each state-supported assessment with the performance of the student's school, the student's school division, and the Commonwealth;
3. Is viewable from a mobile device in addition to a desktop computer;
4. Includes language translation to the extent practicable and accessibility features to ensure universal access;
5. Complies with relevant privacy standards, including §§ 2.2-3802 and 22.1-287.02 and 20 U.S.C. § 1232g;
6. Provides functionality to enable school division personnel to manage and restrict user access to students and their parents as defined in § 22.1-1; and
7. Provides functionality to enable local school divisions to upload additional, non-state-supported assessment data for inclusion in the Portal at the discretion of each local school division.

To support implementation of the Portal:

- a. The Board shall provide guidance regarding governance of the Portal, including authorized users, user roles, data security, and division-level user management; and
- b. The Department shall within 45 days of a state assessment window closing update the Portal with individualized student assessment results on all state-supported assessments and a comparison of a student's performance on each state-supported assessment with the performance of the student's school, the student's school division, and the Commonwealth.

- Third, the bill adds a new **professional development** requirement under Standard of Quality 5, which addresses classroom instruction and educational leadership. Specifically, the Board of Education must provide professional development for “teachers and principals in parent engagement on and interpretation of student assessment data for state-supported assessments available through the Virginia Parent Data Portal.”
- Fourth, the bill ensures **Departmental support to local school divisions** as they implement the Parent Portal by an additional amendment to Standard of Quality 5: “The Department shall provide technical assistance to local school divisions to provide professional development to teachers and principals in parent engagement on and interpretation of student assessment data for state-supported assessments available through the Virginia Parent Data Portal.”
- Fifth, the bill imposes a similar **professional development requirement on local school divisions**, which must provide teachers and principals with training around “parent engagement on and interpretation of student assessment data for state-supported assessments available through the Virginia Parent Data Portal.”
- Sixth, and finally, the bill **conditions its provisions on reenactment** by the 2024 Session of the General Assembly. In the interim, it established the **work group** which authored this report, whose charge includes, “advising the Board of Education on the criteria for and process of procuring the goods and services necessary to implement the Virginia Parent Data Portal as set forth in the first enactment of this act.” The membership of the work group must include: “representatives from each state-sponsored assessment, including the Virginia Kindergarten Readiness Program, the pre-kindergarten through grade three literacy screener (PALS), and the Standards of Learning; at least six but no more than eight parents of public school students who represent a diverse array of school settings, including by grade level, region of the Commonwealth, availability of technology in the local school division, and Title I status; at least four but no more than six public school teachers who represent a similarly diverse array of school settings; school division-level data managers; a school division-level community or parent engagement representative; representatives of the Department of Education with a focus on technology and assessments; a representative of the Virginia Information Technologies Agency; a representative of the Virginia Longitudinal Data System; a representative of the Office of the Secretary of Education; a representative of the Virginia

School Counselor Association; one member of the House of Delegates to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates, giving preference to a member with a child enrolled in a public elementary or secondary school in the Commonwealth; and one member of the Senate of Virginia to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules, giving preference to a member with a child enrolled in a public elementary or secondary school in the Commonwealth.” Finally, the Work Group was required to submit this report by no later than November 1, 2023.

ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

UNDERSTANDING THE DATA ACCESSIBILITY GAP

We know parents and guardians want to be actively engaged in their child’s academic career, but many parents lack access to and an understanding of data that highlights the academic preparedness of their child. As a result, many parents are not only unaware of their child’s assessment results but also misunderstand their child’s learning more broadly. According to one nationwide survey, nine in ten parents, regardless of race, income, geography, and education levels, believe their child is achieving at or above grade level in math and reading.¹ Yet National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) data released just before the surveyed period indicates only 36% of U.S. fourth-grade students demonstrate proficiency in math and 33% in reading.² Eighth-grade data is even worse: only 26% of U.S. students demonstrate proficiency in math and 31% in reading.³ During her remarks to this Work Group (captured in Appendix C), Dr. Christine Pitts demonstrated that this misalignment between parents’ understanding of their child’s performance and student performance on national achievement tests has worsened each year following the COVID-19 pandemic. Parents and guardians not only need access to the data, but support to make it understandable and actionable so they can support their child.

Like most states, Virginia lacks a uniform system to provide parents with timely access to their children’s state-supported assessment results. In the absence of uniform requirements and guidance, local school divisions have implemented various approaches to distribute student assessment results to parents. This, in turn, has led to disparities across the Commonwealth in terms of when and how parents receive their children’s assessment data. Moreover, most local school divisions do not provide parents with access to the information and support that is necessary for them to understand and engage with their children or teachers about those scores and how they relate to specific academic standards. As a result, many parents have only a vague understanding of what state assessment scores mean in terms of their children’s learning.

Virginia’s data accessibility gap is exacerbated when parents move. The process of transferring assessment data from one division to another in Virginia can be time consuming, for both parents and school division staff. Because parents cannot access state assessment data themselves, they must rely on individual school divisions to transfer their children’s data. As a result, parents too often do not have timely access to assessment information necessary to understand a student’s academic performance and needs when they enroll in a new school division.

¹ Learning Heroes, “Parents 2023: Go Beyond Grades,” <https://bealearninghero.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Parents-2023-Go-Beyond-Grades.pdf>.

² The Nation’s Report Card, “NAEP Report Card: Mathematics,” <https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/mathematics/nation/achievement>; The Nation’s Report Card, “NAEP Report Card: Reading,” <https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/reading/nation/achievement>.

³ *Id.*

THE IMPORTANCE OF PARENT ENGAGEMENT WITH STUDENT DATA

Despite the difficulties that most parents have accessing student achievement data, considerable evidence suggests that when parents receive timely, actionable student achievement data, students enjoy numerous benefits. Non-governmental organizations, including the Data Quality Campaign, NWEA, and Edutopia, have extensively researched the potential for parent engagement with student data.⁴ Secretary Aimee Guidera brought national experts to the Work Group meetings to present on key findings. According to research presented by Brennan Parton to this Work Group (captured in Appendix C), 93% of surveyed parents felt that easier access to information would help them feel more confident about their ability to support their child’s post-high school decision-making. Another recent study found that regular text-based alerts to students’ parents reduced academic failures by 28%, increased class attendance by 12%, and increased student retention.⁵

The promotion of parent engagement with student data is not just sound policy—it is also embedded in federal law. The Every Student Succeeds Act requires timely, uniform, and understandable assessment data reporting to parents as a condition of its federal education funding to states.⁶ In response to comments about this provision, federal regulators noted that assessment information is “essential for meaningful parent engagement and involvement in decision-making related to their child’s education.”⁷ For all these reasons, Virginia must seize this opportunity to close data accessibility gaps.

NATIONWIDE REVIEW OF EXISTING PRACTICES

Several states have developed noteworthy approaches to bridging the parent data gap. Members of the Work Group evaluated several examples.

- **Georgia’s** SLDS allows parents to access a “student’s historical academic data” through local school districts’ parent portals.⁸ The Georgia Tunnel is a virtual “tunnel” that links data from a single state system directly to district-level student information systems and allowed parents and educators to access state data through their districts existing

⁴ Data Quality Campaign, “Show Me the Data 2022,” <https://dataqualitycampaign.org/resources/flagship-resources/show-me-the-data-2022/>; Rodriguez (2019), “Sharing Assessment Data with Parents Just Got Simpler,” <https://www.nwea.org/blog/2019/sharing-assessment-data-with-parents-just-got-simpler/>.

⁵ Peter Bergman & Eric W. Chan, *Leveraging Parents through Low-Cost Technology*, 56 J. HUM. RES., 125, 158 (2021).

⁶ See 20 U.S.C. § 6311(b)(2)(B)(x).

⁷ U.S. Dep’t of Educ., 34 C.F.R. 200 (Dec. 8, 2016), 88895.

⁸ Ga. Dep’t of Educ., *Georgia’s SLDS Parent/ Student Portal*, <https://www.gadoe.org/Technology-Services/Enterprise-Systems-and-Applications/SLDS/Documents/Parent/Overview.pdf> (last accessed Sep. 15, 2023).

program.⁹ Given the Work Group’s interest in leveraging existing, division-level parent portals to facilitate user access, Georgia’s model seems particularly useful.

- **Michigan’s** MiLearn “delivers state assessment data electronically to student, parents, and educators directly through the district’s Student Information System (SIS).”¹⁰ This service works with local school division’s parent portal providers to provide statewide assessment data.
- **Oklahoma’s** and **Tennessee’s** Parent Portals, developed by eMetric, provide centralized, statewide access to student performance on the Oklahoma School Testing Program and the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program, respectively.¹¹ These results are expressly intended to help parents and classroom teachers work together to support student growth.
- **Kansas** leveraged its state higher education system by tasking it with the creation and management of statewide assessments. Pursuant to this duty, the University of Kansas has also developed an online Parent Portal, called KITE, which releases reports detailing a student’s performance on that year’s assessments.¹² KITE is billed as a secure, online repository for parents and guardians to access their student’s entire history of KAP score reports, and it is also currently used by **New Mexico**.
- In 2013, **Utah** enacted legislation creating “student achievement backpacks” that would provide a student-centered data record for each K-12 student across the state.¹³ After encountering technical challenges to the centralized management of all parent users, legislators passed additional measures in 2019 compiling all state school data into a single database for the purpose of improving data security and streamlining statewide accountability.¹⁴

While several states have made progress to provide parents more data, no state has yet required a statewide parent portal that provides access to multiple assessments in a single resource. Oklahoma’s portal provides uniform access to all parents, but that access is limited to the state’s primary annual assessment (Virginia’s SOL equivalent). Georgia and Michigan have achieved similar ends to those proposed in SB 1329/ HB 1629 by leveraging existing division-level infrastructure in their respective states. The Georgia tunnel, while successful at bringing state level information to where parents can easily access it, is not mandatory. Developing the Portal as recommended would set Virginia apart from its peer states by providing best-in-class access that ensures parents are fully informed and engaged stakeholders in their child’s education.

⁹ Horne, C. (2021) *Georgia Information Tunnel linking district ingenuity with state resources to make Data matter, Data Quality Campaign*. Available at: <https://dataqualitycampaign.org/resource/georgia-information-tunnel-linking-district-ingenuity-state-resources-make-data-matter/>.

¹⁰ Mich. Data Hub, *MiLearn*, <https://www.midatahub.org/pub/stories/view/milearn> (last accessed Sep. 13, 2023).

¹¹ Okla. Dep’t of Educ., *Parent/ Student Portal*, <https://okparentportal.emetric.net/login> (last accessed Oct. 18, 2023); Tenn. Dep’t of Educ., *TCAP Family Portal*, <https://familyreport.tnedu.gov/login> (last accessed Oct. 18, 2023).

¹² UNIV. OF KAN., *Assessment & Technology Solutions*, <https://ats.ku.edu> (last accessed Oct. 18, 2023).

¹³ Utah Code Ann. § 53E-3-511; *see also* Schencker, THE SALT LAKE TRIBUNE (March 13, 2013), “Utah Lawmakers Approve Creating Online ‘Backpacks’ of Student Data,” <https://archive.sltrib.com/article.php?id=55998703&itype=CMSID>.

¹⁴ Utah Code Ann. § 53E-3-511.

SURVEYING VIRGINIA’S EXISTING PARENT PORTAL AND DATA LANDSCAPE

To better understand existing technology resources across the Commonwealth and the Work Group’s perspectives, the Department administered multiple surveys during the Work Group’s convening. The following survey results are followed by a review of existing data resources at the Departmental level in Virginia.

Local School Division Student Information System (SIS) Survey

On September 15, 2023, the Virginia Department of Education administered a survey to all 131 local school divisions to better understand the existence and current vendor(s) of parent portals. All 131 local school divisions stated they use a parent portal to provide weekly grade updates and other division-level information to parents. Of the 131 divisions, 104 indicated they share a common vendor to deliver their parent portal. Thirteen others, including several of Virginia’s largest divisions, share a second common vendor. Eight use a third common vendor, while two use other providers. Although the proposed Portal data should be electronically transferred in a vendor-agnostic manner, the fact that more than 98% of local school divisions use the same three vendors opens the possibility for an even better data experience for parents.

Work Group Wish List Survey

Following the Work Group’s third meeting, the Department facilitated a brief survey to ascertain the Work Group member’s perspectives about, the information, components, and features that will make the Portal useful, relevant, and somewhere you or the parents in your schools go for information. Respondents repeatedly emphasized the need for assessment explanations, including

- “actionable items based on the data,”
- “helpful resources for improvement or recovery,”
- “contextualizing data for parents,” and
- “parent resource[s].”

When asked what three items were most essential to the Portal, every respondent mentioned assessment explanations (e.g., “actions needed by parents based on the data for the student”). Respondents also stressed the importance of accessibility features, including “translation options,” “minimal clicks,” and “easy to navigate.”

Existing Departmental Data Initiatives

Over the past few years, leaders throughout the Commonwealth have recognized the need for improved access to education data and have launched significant projects to this end. Four

projects, in particular, are worth highlighting and distinguishing from the Portal discussed in this report.

- The Virginia Longitudinal Data System (VLDS), launched via 2009 federal grant funding, “provides state policy makers, authorized researchers and citizens with access to educational and workforce training data from multiple sources while protecting the privacy of Virginia students.”¹⁵ VLDS differs from the Portal insofar as it does not provide access to individualized assessment data or user accounts for parents.
- Learning Analytics to Support Education and Reporting (LASER), which began in the fall of 2020, will provide “a suite of reporting tools and dashboards which will allow teachers, school leaders, and division administrators to better understand the performance of their students and make data-informed decisions.”¹⁶ LASER differs from the Portal as it provides near real-time divisional and state student data analytics for teachers and administrators. It does not provision accounts for parents.
- Virginia’s Visualization and Analytics Solution (VVAAS) was announced by the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) in the fall of 2022. This “web-based tool displays measures of students’ academic growth over time (Value-Added), diagnostic reports for student groups, and student projections to help educators improve classroom instruction.”¹⁷ VVAAS differs from the Portal because it will not provide parents with access to its diagnostic reports, nor does it provide a web-based parental portal enabling access to their child’s data. Currently, the Department sends student assessment summary to parents via a local school division’s parent portal, a student’s backpack, or by mail.
- The Bridging the Gap initiative was announced by the VDOE in 2022 to address learning loss stemming from the pandemic.¹⁸ It includes a plan for the state to provide partner school divisions with access to individualized student data reports that they can then share with teachers and parents in participating schools and programs. While this is an important step forward, it does not create a Portal through which every parent across the Commonwealth can access student assessment data as required by ESSA.

While these other data-related programs promise important stakeholder benefits, they do not address the key problem identified by the Work Group: all parents require, and are entitled to, timely access to *individualized* student assessment data and sufficient support to understand and make decisions about their children’s education based on that data.

¹⁵ Virginia Department of Education, “Virginia Longitudinal Data System (VLDS),” https://doe.virginia.gov/info_management/longitudinal_data_system/.

¹⁶ Lane, “An Update on LASER,” Supt.’s Memo #103-21, https://doe.virginia.gov/administrators/superintendents_memos/2021/103-21.pdf.

¹⁷ Balow, “Virginia’s Visualization and Analytics Solution (VVAAS),” Supt.’s Memo #244-22, https://doe.virginia.gov/administrators/superintendents_memos/2022/244-22.pdf.

¹⁸ Virginia Department of Education, “Bridging the Gap,” <https://www.doe.virginia.gov/teaching-learning-assessment/instructional-resources-support/bridging-the-gap>.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the research presented and deliberation, the Work Group makes the following recommendations to the General Assembly pursuant to its statutory charge:

1. Ensure uniform parent access by partnering with local school divisions to provide “tunnel” access to the Portal.

Considering research about the powerful effect of parent engagement with their child’s education data, the Work Group affirms this legislation and its goal to ensure uniform, timely parent access to state-supported assessment data. To accomplish that goal, the Work Group recommends that Virginia follow a similar path to Georgia where a virtual “tunnel” connects Departmental data to district-level student information systems and allow parents and educators to access state data through their districts existing parent portal program. This division-focused approach should save millions in development costs, continue local management of parent/ child relationships, and build on parent familiarity with existing division portals.

Survey data demonstrates that every local school division in Virginia already uses an SIS with a parent portal feature. Those systems can be updated to provide parent access to state-supported assessment data and state-provided content that explains that data without need for the Department to invest in building its own system. The nationwide review of best practices revealed that many state departments of education have tried and failed to establish and manage a centralized statewide portal, particularly given the need for the primary relationship between the family and school to be at the school/local division level. Additionally, most Virginia families are already familiar with their local portal; so, providing data through these local systems would reduce the burden on parents because they will not have to create an additional, redundant account. Parents in the Work Group strongly expressed their desire to use local portals for this ease and usability.

2. Create and maintain resources that accompany assessment data and build parents’ understanding of their children’s learning.

Research, conversations with Virginia parents, and survey results collected from this Work Group have highlighted that access to test scores alone is insufficient to build parent capacity to support their children’s learning. Federal education requirements echo this concern and impose a higher burden on state departments of education to provide assessment reports “as soon as is practicable after the assessment is given, in an understandable and uniform format, and to the extent practicable, in a language that parents can understand,” so that parents can “understand and address the specific academic needs of students.”¹⁹

¹⁹ 20 U.S.C. § 6311(b)(2)(B)(x).

In brief, scores alone are inadequate. The Department should create and circulate to all local school divisions explanatory and interpretive resources for parents pertaining to each state-supported assessment. At a minimum, these resources should provide “(i) a description of the purpose of each state-supported assessment, (ii) an explanation of how to interpret student data on each state-supported assessment, and (iii) a comparison of a student’s performance on each state-supported assessment with the performance of the student’s school, the student’s school division, and the Commonwealth.”²⁰ Additionally, the VVAAS Student Success Summary Report, which provides diagnostic reports for students, should be distributed by the Department through the Portal.

The Work Group further recommends that these resources include questions that parents or guardians can ask themselves, their students, or their school/teachers to support their student, and clear action steps parents or guardians can take to support their student. All content should keep language simple, limit academic terminology as much as possible or provide definitions where applicable, and be translated into the languages parents speak.

3. Notify testing vendors about descriptive and explanatory assessment resources required under this legislation.

The Work Group affirms the assessment reporting requirements under this legislation and recommends that the Department inform each of its state-supported assessment vendors of these requirements to ensure that descriptive, explanatory, and comparative resources should be provided to the parent(s) of every test-taker in elementary, middle and high school.²¹ Any assessment vendor wishing to retain or enter into a Commonwealth contract must ensure that it satisfies the requirements laid out by this legislation, including the provision of high-quality explanatory material to supplement assessment results.

4. Provide technical support and high-quality professional development programs.

While using the current infrastructure of local parent portals to provide state level information should annually save millions, it does place a greater staffing and technical burden on the local school division. Moreover, many smaller divisions do not have the staffing or technical expertise to ingest and accurately distribute state data to their parents. To successfully implement the Portal, the Work Group recommends that the General Assembly fund additional positions for the implementation and ongoing support of the Portal. One group of departmental full-time equivalents (FTEs) would curate Portal content, prepare data for transfer to all local school divisions, and provide technical support. Additional staff would serve as “field” support, traveling throughout the Commonwealth to ensure that each local school division can accurately ingest and disseminate all Portal data in the appropriate format and in a timely manner. Each of

²⁰ H.B. 1629, 2023 Leg., 163rd Sess. (Va. 2023).

²¹ *Id.*

these potential roles would provide critical support to the development, implementation, and management of the Portal.

Relatedly, the Work Group recommends professional development programming that supports “parent engagement on and interpretation of student assessment data for state-supported assessments available through the Virginia Parent Data Portal.”²² The Work Group further recommends that this training include tools to broaden parent access to existing local school division portals, ensuring that a greater proportion of parents have regular access to a wide variety of data about their child’s educational progress.

5. Leverage parent stakeholder and feedback groups throughout the Portal’s development and implementation.

Through its study of local school division’s current use of parent portals, the Work Group identified that many local portals are underutilized by parents even when they already provide access to student grades, attendance, and other individualized information. To ensure the Portal meets parent needs and achieves high usage rates, the Department must consult parent stakeholders throughout the development and implementation of the Portal and establish a post-implementation system for regular feedback. The Work Group notes that other states that have successfully developed parent portals deploy similar feedback models.

²² *Id.*

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: FULL TEXT OF SB 1329/ HB 1629

An Act to amend and reenact §§ **22.1-1**, as it is currently effective and as it shall become effective, **22.1-253.13:3**, and **22.1-253.13:5**, as it is currently effective and as it shall become effective, of the Code of Virginia, relating to Board of Education; creation and maintenance of Virginia Parent Data Portal; report.

[S 1329]

Approved March 26, 2023

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That §§ **22.1-1**, as it is currently effective and as it shall become effective, **22.1-253.13:3**, and **22.1-253.13:5**, as it is currently effective and as it shall become effective, of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted as follows:

§ **22.1-1**. (For expiration date, see 2022 Acts cc. 549, 550, cl. 2) Definitions.
As used in this title, unless the context requires a different meaning:

"Board" or "State Board" means the Board of Education.

"Department" means the Department of Education.

"Division superintendent" means the division superintendent of schools of a school division.

"Elementary" includes kindergarten.

"Elementary and secondary" and "elementary or secondary" include elementary, middle, and high school grades.

"Governing body" or "local governing body" means the board of supervisors of a county, council of a city, or council of a town, responsible for appropriating funds for such locality, as the context may require.

"Middle school" means separate schools for early adolescents and the middle school grades that might be housed at elementary or high schools.

"Parent" or "parents" means any parent, guardian, legal custodian, or other person having control or charge of a child.

"Person of school age" means a person who will have reached his fifth birthday on or before September 30 of the school year and who has not reached twenty years of age on or before August 1 of the school year.

"School board" means the school board that governs a school division.

"State-supported assessment" means any assessment made available statewide by the Board for administration by local school divisions to students in pre-kindergarten through grade 12, including any (i) Standards of Learning assessment described in § 22.1-253.13:3, (ii) grades three through eight reading or mathematics through-year growth assessment described in § 22.1-253.13:3, and (iii) screeners provided by the Department.

"Superintendent" means the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

§ 22.1-253.13:3. Standard 3. Accreditation, other standards, assessments, and releases from state regulations.

[Subsections A through H omitted]

I. The Board shall, on or before July 1, 2025, create and maintain the Virginia Parent Data Portal (the Portal).

The Board shall ensure that the Portal:

- 1. Displays individualized student assessment data on all state-supported assessments (i) in a format that shows both current and cumulative data over time and (ii) within 45 days of a state-supported assessment window closing for each state-supported assessment;*
- 2. Provides (i) a description of the purpose of each state-supported assessment, (ii) an explanation of how to interpret student data on each state-supported assessment, and (iii) a comparison of a student's performance on each state-supported assessment with the performance of the student's school, the student's school division, and the Commonwealth;*
- 3. Is viewable from a mobile device in addition to a desktop computer;*
- 4. Includes language translation to the extent practicable and accessibility features to ensure universal access;*
- 5. Complies with relevant privacy standards, including §§ 2.2-3802 and 22.1-287.02 and 20 U.S.C. § 1232g;*
- 6. Provides functionality to enable school division personnel to manage and restrict user access to students and their parents as defined in § 22.1-1; and*
- 7. Provides functionality to enable local school divisions to upload additional, non-state-supported assessment data for inclusion in the Portal at the discretion of each local school division.*

To support implementation of the Portal:

- a. The Board shall provide guidance regarding governance of the Portal, including authorized users, user roles, data security, and division-level user management; and*
- b. The Department shall within 45 days of a state assessment window closing update the Portal with individualized student assessment results on all state-supported assessments and a*

comparison of a student's performance on each state-supported assessment with the performance of the student's school, the student's school division, and the Commonwealth.

§ **22.1-253.13:5**. (For expiration date, see 2022 Acts cc. 549, 550, cl. 2) Standard 5. Quality of classroom instruction and educational leadership.

[Subsection A and B omitted]

C. The Board of Education shall provide guidance on high-quality professional development for (i) teachers, principals, supervisors, division superintendents, and other school staff; (ii) principals, supervisors, and division superintendents in the evaluation and documentation of teacher and principal performance based on student academic progress and the skills and knowledge of such instructional or administrative personnel; (iii) school board members on personnel, curriculum and current issues in education; ~~and~~ (iv) programs in Braille for teachers of the blind and visually impaired, in cooperation with the Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired; *and (v) teachers and principals in parent engagement on and interpretation of student assessment data for state-supported assessments available through the Virginia Parent Data Portal specified in subsection I of § 22.1-253.13:3.*

The Board shall also provide technical assistance on high-quality professional development to local school boards designed to ensure that all instructional personnel are proficient in the use of educational technology consistent with its comprehensive plan for educational technology.

The Department shall provide technical assistance to local school divisions to provide professional development to teachers and principals in parent engagement on and interpretation of student assessment data for state-supported assessments available through the Virginia Parent Data Portal specified in subsection I of § 22.1-253.13:3.

[Subsection D omitted]

E. Each local school board shall provide a program of high-quality professional development (i) in the use and documentation of performance standards and evaluation criteria based on student academic progress and skills for teachers, principals, and superintendents to clarify roles and performance expectations and to facilitate the successful implementation of instructional programs that promote student achievement at the school and classroom levels; (ii) as part of the license renewal process, to assist teachers and principals in acquiring the skills needed to work with gifted students, students with disabilities, and students who have been identified as having limited English proficiency and to increase student achievement and expand the knowledge and skills students require to meet the standards for academic performance set by the Board of Education; (iii) in educational technology for all instructional personnel which is designed to facilitate integration of computer skills and related technology into the curricula; and (iv) for principals and supervisors designed to increase proficiency in instructional leadership and management, including training in the evaluation and documentation of teacher and principal

performance based on student academic progress and the skills and knowledge of such instructional or administrative personnel.

In addition, each local school board shall also provide teachers and principals with high-quality professional development programs each year in (a) instructional content; (b) the preparation of tests and other assessment measures; (c) methods for assessing the progress of individual students, including Standards of Learning assessment materials or other criterion-referenced tests that match locally developed objectives; (d) instruction and remediation techniques in English, mathematics, science, and history and social science; (e) interpreting test data for instructional purposes; (f) *parent engagement on and interpretation of student assessment data for state-supported assessments available through the Virginia Parent Data Portal specified in subsection I of § 22.1-253.13:3*; (g) technology applications to implement the Standards of Learning; and (h) effective classroom management.

[Subsection F omitted]

G. Each local school board shall annually review its professional development program for quality, effectiveness, participation by instructional personnel, and relevancy to the instructional needs of teachers and the academic achievement needs of the students in the school division.

2. That the provisions of the first enactment of this act shall not become effective unless reenacted by the 2024 Session of the General Assembly.

3. That a work group is hereby established for the purpose of advising the Board of Education on the criteria for and process of procuring the goods and services necessary to implement the Virginia Parent Data Portal as set forth in the first enactment of this act. The work group shall be composed of representatives from each state-sponsored assessment, including the Virginia Kindergarten Readiness Program, the pre-kindergarten through grade three literacy screener (PALS), and the Standards of Learning; at least six but no more than eight parents of public school students who represent a diverse array of school settings, including by grade level, region of the Commonwealth, availability of technology in the local school division, and Title I status; at least four but no more than six public school teachers who represent a similarly diverse array of school settings; school division-level data managers; a school division-level community or parent engagement representative; representatives of the Department of Education with a focus on technology and assessments; a representative of the Virginia Information Technologies Agency; a representative of the Virginia Longitudinal Data System; a representative of the Office of the Secretary of Education; a representative of the Virginia School Counselor Association; one member of the House of Delegates to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates, giving preference to a member with a child enrolled in a public elementary or secondary school in the Commonwealth; and one member of the Senate of Virginia to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules, giving preference to a member with a child enrolled in a public elementary or secondary school in the Commonwealth. The two members of the work group from the House of Delegates and the Senate shall jointly coordinate the meetings and activities of the work group. The work group shall submit a report containing its findings

and any recommendations to the Board of Education and the General Assembly no later than November 1, 2023.

APPENDIX B: WORK GROUP MEMBERSHIP

Delegate Carrie Coyner, Co-Chair

Secretary of Education Aimee Guidera, Co-Chair

Superintendent of Public Instruction Lisa Coons, Co-Chair

Jenna Alexander, Parent

John R. Aughenbaugh, Teacher at New Kent High School

Britney Blackman, Coach at The New E3 School

Eric Bond, Superintendent of Augusta County Public Schools

Sarah Calveric, Superintendent of Caroline County Public Schools

Paul Cormal, Assistant Superintendent & Chief Technology Officer at Virginia Department of
Education

Vronique Day, Teacher at East Jefferson High School

Shawn DeRose, President Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals; Principal of
Annadale High School

Parthy Dinora, Parent

Katie Gifford, Albemarle County Public Schools

Jennifer Greif, Assistant Superintendent for Instructional Leadership & Chief Academic Officer
at Hanover County Public Schools

Kevin Harrison, Data Manager at Bedford County Public Schools

Cindy Jackson, Principal of Valley Institute Elementary

Andrea Johnson, Assistant Principal at Andrew Lewis Middle School

Kelly Kitchen, Principal of Chesapeake Career Center

Brian Maddox, Director of Technology for Henrico County Public Schools

Hamid Munir, Virginia PTA

Dave Myers, Assistant Superintendent of Data, Research, and Technology at Virginia
Department of Education

Andrea Payne, Reading Specialist at Salem Elementary School

Jeremy Raley, Chief of Staff at Virginia Department of Education

Melissa Rickey, Executive Director of Parental Engagement at Virginia Department of
Education

Rosina Simmons, Reading Specialist at Francis C. Hammond Middle School

Vic Shandor, Superintendent of York County School Division

Jeff Shelton, Chief Technology Officer at Bristol Public Schools

Emily Solari, Edmund H. Henderson Professor of Education at the University of Virginia School
of Education and Human Development

Marcey Sorensen, Deputy Superintendent of Teaching & Learning at Virginia Department of
Education

Harry Thomas, Superintendent of Essex County Public Schools

Michael Watson, Chief Information Security Officer for the Virginia Information Technologies
Agency

APPENDIX C: WORK GROUP MEETING RECAPS

Meeting One: August 17, 2023

Several presenters, including Britney Blackman, Sarah Calveric, and Emily Solari, shared examples of how data reports can support parents to understand their child’s performance. Superintendent of Public Instruction Lisa Coons then led the Work Group through a discussion on what features they most value in a parent portal. Among the topics considered were: visualization features; translation and accessibility features; connections between assessment data and student learning; streamlined user interface (e.g., reduce the number of clicks); longitudinal data enabling longer-term review of student achievement; and, uniform and consistent data across school divisions (i.e., portable data). At the conclusion of this session, the Work Group expressed an interest in seeing concrete examples of data portals, as well as empirical evidence of what local school divisions currently use for their parent portal needs.

Meeting Two: September 14, 2023

The meeting began with opening remarks from Melissa Rickey, Executive Director of Parent Engagement at VODE and Dave Myers, Assistant Superintendent of Data, Research, and Technology at VDOE regarding Virginia’s existing data tools and landscape.

Secretary Aimee Guidera then framed the conversation and introduced two leading experts Brennan Parton from the Data Quality Campaign and Christine Pitts from the Center of Reinventing Public Education. Brennan Parton presented best practices for the Work Group’s consideration, including parent-centered design, simply and understandable language, and straightforward navigation. This presentation also included specific examples from Georgia and Oklahoma, both of which provide a statewide parent portal. Christine Pitts presented about the urgency of this solution given alarming data about low parental data engagement and its effects on student achievement. This presentation highlighted North Carolina, Indiana, Louisiana, and Mississippi as models for various aspects of parent portals. At the conclusion of this session, the Work Group resolved to review the presentation materials ahead of the next session.

Meeting Three: October 5, 2023

After introductory remarks by Secretary Aimee Guidera, Ethan Young presented research about two implementation options for the Work Group’s consideration. Under one approach, Virginia could leverage local school divisions’ pre-existing parent portals to authenticate user accounts and link to a centralized view of each child’s state-supported assessment data. State-supported assessment vendors would be required to provide contextual information alongside each child’s numerical results, including, e.g., the state reading standards with which they most struggled on an SOL. The Department would provide critical oversight of this system by working with vendors to establish interoperability of the assessment data and providing the requisite funding,

technical support, and other guidance necessary for divisions to maintain division-level student information systems (SIS) and ensure parent access through a local parent portal. The Work Group broke out into smaller discussion groups to consider these options and to discuss additional “must haves” for inclusion in the finished product.

Meeting Four: October 24, 2023

In this final session, the Work Group reviewed an initial draft of the recommendations highlighted in this report and offered comments and feedback. Representatives from the Secretary of Education’s office and the Virginia Department of Education, as well as Katie Ryan, and Ethan Young, fielded questions regarding the drafting of this report and its connection to the broader legislative objectives.