



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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June 1, 2025

The Honorable Luke E. Torian, Chair
House Appropriations Committee
General Assembly Building, Room 659
201 North 9th Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

The Honorable Sam Rasoul, Chair
House Education Committee
General Assembly Building, Room 910
201 North 9th Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

The Honorable L. Louise Lucas, Chair
Senate Finance and Appropriations
General Assembly Building, Room 1404
201 North 9th Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

The Honorable Ghazala F. Hashmi, Chair
Senate Education and Health Committee
General Assembly Building, Room 616
201 North 9th Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Dear Chairs Lucas, Hashmi, Torian, and Rasoul:

Please accept the Virginia Department of Education's (the Department) Office of School Quality Report on the implementation progress of the goals defined in the initial 2024 report to the General Assembly and pursuant to the requirements of [Item 120.C.3 \(Chapter 2, 2024 SS1 Acts of Assembly\)](#)

The Department of Education shall submit an initial report that contains: (i) the level of staffing, amount of funding, and opportunities and challenges of the Office for FY 2023 and FY 2024; (ii) the planned organizational structure, staffing, and resource needs of the Office over the next five years; (iii) the goals and expected outcomes of the Office and how the Office will collaborate with staff and units within the Department of Education to support schools based on their specific needs; and (iv) a plan to evaluate the effectiveness of the Office, including feedback from school divisions and stakeholders to determine both the impact and quality of the assistance received.

The Superintendent shall submit the initial report by July 1, 2024, to the Chairs of the Senate Education and Health and Finance and Appropriations Committees, and the Chairs of the House Education and Appropriations Committees. The Superintendent shall

submit a report on the progress of implementing the goals of the Office by June 1, 2025. Funding for the first year and second year shall be unallotted and the Department of Planning and Budget shall transfer funds allocated to the Office in the corresponding year upon submission of the reports.

As you know, the Department has experienced a recent leadership change. In my first 60 days, I implemented a parallel process to both assess and accelerate progress. The dedicated team at the Department have spent numerous hours ensuring the more robust, transparent, and academically honest system of accountability and operations is being implemented with fidelity in time for the 2025-2026 school year. We are working fast and with focus on behalf of students and will report out again this fall on the ongoing and exciting updates regarding student and school improvement coming out of the Department in our partnership with the Virginia Board of Education (the Board).

The agency, in partnership with the Board of Education, parents, educators, principals, and the brilliant staff at the Department are delivering on promises to implement the Virginia Literacy Act, [the Virginia Support Framework](#), and the [School Performance and Support Framework](#) to ensure school accountability, instruction, innovation, and accreditation work seamlessly to spark learning, support educators, and keep Virginia at the top of the list for workforce and postsecondary readiness. Thank you for supporting this work and watch for a follow-up update in the fall of 2025.

If you have questions or require additional information relating to this transmittal, please contact me at emilyanne.gullickson@doe.virginia.gov.

Sincerely,



[Emily Anne Gullickson \(Jun 2, 2025 21:38 EDT\)](#)

Emily Anne Gullickson, M.Ed. J.D.
Superintendent of Public Instruction

c: The Honorable Aimee Guidera
Virginia Secretary of Education

2025 OFFICE OF SCHOOL QUALITY

A report on the progress of implementing the goals of the Office of School Quality (OSQ) as defined in the 2024 OSQ Report submitted to the General Assembly pursuant to Item 120.C.3 (Chapter 2, 2024 SS1 Acts of Assembly).

June 1, 2025



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INTRODUCTION TO JUNE 1, 2025 UPDATE

Since July 1, 2024, the Office of School Quality (OSQ) has continued to ground its work in the Virginia Support Framework. This comprehensive framework includes Academic Supports, Staffing Supports, Professional Learning Supports, and Supports to Remove Academic Barriers.

Specifically, OSQ is focused on expanding the supports and services of the office in the four areas of the framework.

For example, we have partnered with the Office of Teaching and Learning to ensure that struggling schools have the strongest supports as the state implements Virginia Literacy Act (VLA).

Additionally, the OSQ has a working partnership with the Office of Behavioral Health and Wellness (OBHW) to provide meaningful resources and support for those schools and divisions that struggle with chronic absenteeism, helping them receive coaching and support to develop individualized plans that reflect recommendations from the OBHW.

OSQ also continues to work with divisions and schools to implement the new School Performance and Support Framework and to empower educators with the Road to Readiness Resource Hub. This work will receive continued review by the Board of Education (Board) over the summer months. An update to the General Assembly will follow.

The work of the Department and the Board is grounded in setting high expectations for every student and providing transparent actionable information to the public while also aiming to create one system of intentional support for schools. The new School Performance and Support Framework is aligned to federal requirements, which is the primary source of funding for the OSQ. The new Framework combines the federal and state systems and provides easier navigation for divisions and schools in developing support plans, and for parents and communities to understand what is happening at their community schools. The Superintendent is currently adapting OSQ's structure, functions and key activities to align with these shifts and improve use of evidence-based practice.

Divisions that are under an existing Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) will also be identified based on clear entry and exit criteria, tied to the number of schools receiving support in their division, and ensuring divisions with the highest need are receiving support. A modified MOU is due to the Board later this summer. The Department is in various stages of supporting these significant shifts statewide, including ensuring the right staff are at the helm of critical Offices within the Department.

Please see below for updates on each of the priorities articulated in the [July 1, 2024](#), report.

Priority 1

The purpose for the OSQ is to directly coach and support schools and divisions to improve school performance outcomes for all students. Recognizing the new School Performance and Support Framework is the primary driver of improving academic outcomes, the Department has modified the organizational structure to ensure that efforts meaningfully help improve outcomes.

To help shift the office from dual accreditation compliance to the new School Performance and Support Framework, the OSQ staffing for 2024-2025 was organized and partially implemented to be as follows:

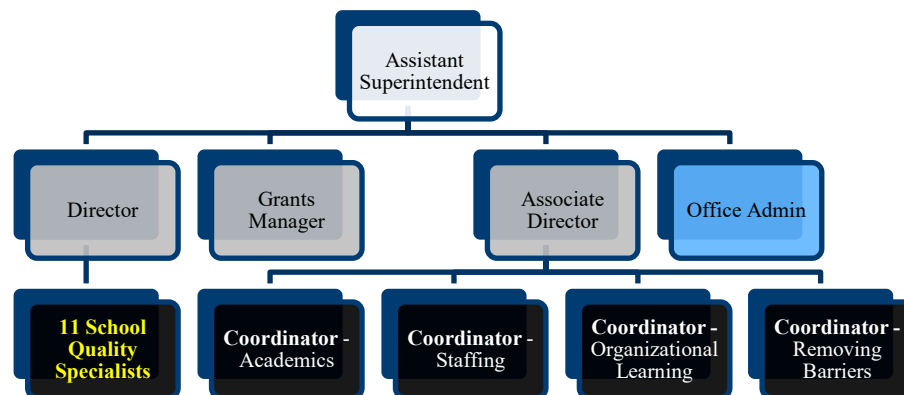


Figure 4: Updated OSQ Office Structure as of 2023-2024

Upon review by the new Superintendent, with input from Department staff and external stakeholders, the current structure does not yet have the evidence to show effectiveness of MOU divisions and schools in need of support. However, the office as a whole has largely operated separately from other offices limiting meaningful collaboration and shared priorities. The Director and Associate Director structure as operating misses on vertical alignment of priorities, and grants have been largely executed in silos without input or information sharing from other critical teams across the agency. This also means that the data and outcomes from support monies has been isolated largely in OSQ without effectively capturing best practices that could be scaled to other similar schools and communities.

Department restructuring in May and June 2025 moves school support and interventions under the new Chief of Academics and Innovation within the evolved Division of Student Outcomes and School Quality to ensure more strategic alignment. This Division will have four critical offices including:

- Office of Excellence and Best Practices,
- Office of School Performance (formerly Accountability),
- Office of Student Performance and Metrics (formerly Assessments), and
- Office of Student and School Improvement,

collectively these ensure we move from diagnosing schools in need of support to meaningfully supporting them. Leadership is currently evaluating pay bands and job descriptions for specialists and coordinators within the Office of Student and School Improvement to ensure the Department can attract top talent with demonstrated track records in school improvement and evidence-based school design.

The new Office of Excellence and Best Practices is a critical addition to build off the 2024-2025 school year efforts by OSQ and will further elevate the Road to Readiness Resource Hub which launched Fall 2024 to identify, and make easily accessible, effective practices that can be replicated by teachers, instructional coaches, principals, and school leaders. This focus on scaling excellence is a mindset shift for the agency from slight improvements in scores to a goal of true achievement and postsecondary readiness through personalized learning, meaningful postsecondary pathways, and greater student engagement and agency.

The other divisions under the Chief of Academics and Innovation are the Division of Learning and Educator Workforce, which finally brings together the offices with our licensure and talent pipeline team to inform aspiring teachers on what they need to know for Day One.

Finally, we have added a whole new division of work – the Division of Innovation, Student Pathways and Opportunities- which includes the Office of Innovation, Office of Accelerated Learning, and Office of Student Pathways and Opportunities to better support the new School Performance and Support Framework as well as new flexibilities for innovation and school redesign. This division and readiness supports were a top request by the field.

This updated organizational structure blends Department expertise into robust hubs that deliver promising and effective practices to ensure student and school support is grounded in what works, uses and shares intentional data, has effective grants management and transparency, and infills new positions to support critical areas of work and recognize gaps in expertise. Particularly in those areas that the school divisions have expressed needing more meaningful support in (such as accelerated coursework in middle school).

Job postings for the [Deputy Superintendent of Student Outcomes and School Quality](#) who will oversee the enhanced Division of Student Outcomes and School Quality and the new [Executive Director of the Office of Excellence and Best Practices](#) are currently available on the Virginia jobs site and play a critical role in supporting our highest need schools grounded in proven practices.

Priority 2

In recent weeks, the OSQ has been working to align all division and school support with the new School Performance and Support Framework.

Through careful analysis of statewide performance data in the 2023-2024 school year Standards of Learning assessments, and an indexed analysis of the 2024-2025 school improvement Needs Assessments, it became clear that, on a statewide basis, schools in Virginia were struggling to isolate supports to improve student performance in the following three categories:

- Literacy supports for English Language Learners and Students with Disabilities
- Middle School Supports
- Improving Attendance Supports

OSQ partnered with the Office of Teaching and Learning to provide professional learning in the areas of literacy for English Language Learners and Students with Disabilities and middle school coursework beginning with science.

Priority 3

The Division of Student Outcomes & School Quality is part of three new divisions focused on Excellence within the Division of Academics & Innovation. As part of this effort, the Office of Excellence and Best Practice will address a notable gap in the current organization structure to ensure schools and divisions are using and have access to scalable evidence and success-based models to reach their full potential on behalf of students as quickly as possible.

As we grow the cadre of School Quality Specialists, they will use the Road to Readiness School Performance and Support Framework Resource Hub to support and coach divisions and schools on the use of evidence-based practices.

This redesign is the foundation of tiered, evidence-based interventions for schools and divisions using federal funds to draw from what works. The Department will use learning data and other evidence of impact to ensure public funds used for school improvement accelerate learning and engage students.

This will also ensure the Department can more meaningfully capture emerging and exemplar practices underway as a result of federal and state funding support.

Priority 4

The new [School Performance and Support Framework](#) is based on four performance categories of support: These are:

- *Distinguished and On Track*: supports are available to all divisions as well as studying and replicating effective practices at these high-performing schools.
- *Off Track*: supports are available to schools that need targeted, school-wide or student group supports.
- *Needs Intensive Supports*: supports, coaching, and technical assistance are available to schools that need schoolwide supports and MOU Divisions.

As schools transition to higher performance levels, they need fewer supports as they demonstrate sustained progress with students.

Our team is working with school divisions that currently have a Memorandum of Understanding with the Board of Education to ensure existing supports that are effective and new supports for innovation and best practices are made available. This includes:

OSQ aligned School Quality Specialists and Coordinators to:

- Create a directory or organizational chart mapping specialists and coordinators to their assigned departments.
- Develop clear communication channels (email groups, Teams, etc.) for interdepartmental collaboration.
- Ensure alignment with the new School Performance and Support Framework.

Under the guidance of the School Quality Coordinators:

- Identify and assign experts from multiple Department offices to designated teams based on their expertise.
- Schedule regular cross-departmental meetings to discuss and refine differentiated support strategies.
- Develop a shared digital platform for team collaboration and tracking support efforts.

In Fall 2025, the Road to Readiness Resource Hub support listings will:

- List expanded resources and interventions available for each category.
- Build a plan for broad distribution of school redesign flexibilities and best practices support and awareness.

Priority 5

Since July 1, 2024, OSQ established its first regional support model using the effective implementation models of our Early Childhood and Special Populations teams. It is a priority to accelerate this work. Moving forward:

- Regional convenings will be a hybrid of virtual and in-person sessions with the intent of allowing school and division teams to work together and network with other school divisions in their region on specific problems of practice and implementation of their school and division support plans. Schools and divisions will develop in their knowledge and implementation of evidence-based interventions.
- Regional convenings will be focused around the six stages of the Virginia Continuous Improvement Process: (1) Building Build a Team, (2) Identify and prioritize Needs (3) Select a research-based or evidence-based Intervention, (4) Develop a Support Plan, (5) Implement the Support Plan, and (6) Evaluate the Support Plan. The intended audience will be schools that are federally identified and/or schools that are Off Track and Needs Intensive Support.
- Schools and divisions will be networked within the superintendent regions to sustain the implementation of their support plans, evidence-based interventions, and analysis of impact on student performance.

Priority 6

The revised Standards of Accreditation have outlined a new means of identification for Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) status of the Board's new School Performance and Support Framework. This area of work of is being accelerated to ready for the upcoming changes to accountability in the fall.

Because a high proportion of schools identified for support within a single division may be indicative of a division-level failure to implement the Standards of Quality or other division-level action or inaction, school divisions with at least 40% of their schools identified for Comprehensive (CSI) or Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI) or 10 or more schools identified for Comprehensive Support will be required to undergo a division-level academic and resource allocation review conducted by the department. CSI schools are identified in three areas:

- 1) the lowest five percent of Title I schools;
- 2) any high school with a federal graduation rate below 67 percent; and
- 3) Title I -ATSI schools that do not exit after three consecutive years. ATSI schools are identified from all schools if one or more student groups in the school is consistently underperforming based on thresholds set by the highest-performing CSI school.

This change will help to ensure that struggling schools and divisions are guaranteed the most intensive support, resources, and technical assistance from the Division of Student Outcomes and School Quality and its Office of Student and School Improvement as well as other offices. Data will be available by September 2025 which will inform which divisions fall under these categories. As the Board finalizes a revised MOU for review, the Division of Student Outcomes and School Quality will put out a Request for Proposals for external vendors specializing in school improvement evaluation to be secured to assist the Department in Fall 2025 to conduct division level reviews. We will provide an update on this priority in a Fall 2025 update for the General Assembly.

Currently there are five school divisions operating under a MOU that are receiving existing support offerings by OSQ focused on improving student outcomes. This includes:

- Support with recruitment and retention of Division Superintendent or Interim Superintendent in the event of a vacancy.

- Support with review of administrative licensed staff.
- Bi-annual meeting with State Superintendent, Virginia Board of Education President, Division Superintendent, and Local Board Chair.
- Proper use of federal school improvement grant funds.
- Participate with Local Board and Division Superintendent in annual training/professional development.
- Participate in OSQ required technical assistance and/or professional development
- Receive priority placement in relevant Department professional development opportunities.
- Provide frequent check-in meetings with OSQ Superintendent Support on a monthly or weekly basis with State Superintendent and/or OSQ leadership.
- Provide Division and School Planning Support aligned to the Virginia Support Framework.

The final School Performance and Support Framework, along with the modified and new offices under the enhanced Division of Student Outcomes and School Quality, will further ensure schools are getting the technical support, collaborative input, resources, and toolkits, and access to a robust set of effective practices to scale quickly and easily beginning in the 2025-2026 school year.

EVALUATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE OFFICE

For the 2024-2025 school year, the overall goal of OSQ was to sustain improvements for student achievement in every school across the Commonwealth and to ensure every student has a high-quality learning experience that allows them to reach their postsecondary goals. To ensure that the Department meets these goals, the Superintendent is establishing a stronger program evaluation component that will better align with the new School Performance and Support Framework.

New leadership is evaluating progress and will provide an update to the General Assembly in the Fall of 2025.

As currently designated, these steps are as follows:

Step 1: Develop a continuous evaluation process to learn more about the successes or challenges of school improvement within Virginia schools

The work is heavily driven by data from the accountability system, and there is a myriad of school-level data in addition to the Framework that can identify the need for school improvement efforts and implementation of instructional best practices beyond a moment in time. With the new School Performance and Support Framework coming online this fall, the Department will be better positioned to become more data-driven in understanding how schools and students are or are not improving year-over-year and long-term. Successful practices will finally be catalogued for greater use and scale in the new Office of Excellence and Best Practices and will further inform the work of the Office of School Performance and Office of Student and School Improvement within the Division of Student Outcomes and School Quality.

Step 2: Evaluate and report the frequency of schools achieving goals

As the new School Performance and Support Framework is fully implemented this fall, the Division of Student Outcomes and School Quality, along with the Office of School Performance and Office of Student and School Improvement, will set annual programmatic goals as well as outcome-driven,

measurable goals that align with the new Framework.

Starting in FY26, the Office of Student and School Improvement in partnership with the Office of School Performance, Office of Student Performance and Metrics, and Division of Student Outcomes and School Quality will establish annual expectations for the percentage of schools attaining their goals and spotlight best practices from schools that have exited intervention/improvement status, closed student gaps, meaningfully targeted monies to direct student support, demonstrated a return-on-investment and captured proven practices with state and federal school improvement funding, and improved student overall performance.

Step 3: Gather and evaluate division and school feedback on OSQ supports

The Department is committed to providing high-quality customer service to divisions and schools grounded in evidence-based school improvement practices. The new Superintendent is gathering input from existing OSQ staff, other Department leaders, and national experts on what practices are most effective and grounded in data, areas to improve, and new approaches to add while designing a comprehensive system of stakeholder engagement that augments our recently launched rapid response outreach to the field.