COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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November 15, 2026

Delegate Luke Torian
Chair of House Appropriations Committee
General Assembly Building
201 North 9th Street, Room 1223
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Senator Louise Lucas
Chair of Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee
General Assembly Building
201 North 9th Street, Room 1404
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Delegate Sam Rasoul
Chair of House Education Committee
General Assembly Building
201 North 9th Street, Room 1107
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Senator Barbara Favola
Chair of Senate Education and Health Committee
General Assembly Building
201 North 9th Street, Room 509
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Dear Chair Torian, Chair Rasoul, Chair Lucas, and Chair Favola:

HB 30 requires the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) to develop and submit a comprehensive plan for the state's school improvement program by November 15, 2026, to the Board of Education and the chairs of the House Appropriations, House Education, Senate Finance and Appropriations, and Senate Education and Health Committees.

This work is central to the implementation of recently enacted legislation establishing clear expectations for the VDOE and the Board of Education to provide comprehensive, effective support to low-performing schools. Specifically, the law directs the Superintendent of Public Instruction to:

- Consistently and effectively implement a state program to support the improvement of low-performing schools, based on school accountability standards established by the Board within the Standards of Accreditation.
- Ensure that the Department is appropriately organized and employs qualified staff to effectively support these schools.

The law further directs the Board to ensure that the Superintendent and the Department administer an effective school improvement program to support low-performing schools.

In late October, the VDOE presented its school improvement plan to the Board of Education. We are now sharing that same presentation with you in fulfillment of the legislative reporting requirement. The presentation outlines the challenges and opportunities associated with this work, explains how the plan aligns with Virginia's accountability framework, describes what school divisions can expect to experience differently as a result of this effort, and details the VDOE's approach to implementation and measuring progress.

We appreciate your interest in this important work and welcome any questions you may have. Please feel free to contact Holly Coy, VDOE's Chief of Staff, with questions at Holly.M.Coy@doe.virginia.gov.

Sincerely,



Jenna Conway
Superintendent of Public Instruction

Agency-Wide School Improvement Plan

Building A Sustainable Path Forward

October 28, 2026

Objectives and Areas Covered

Objective:

- Review VDOE's new mandate and plan for unifying and strengthening school improvement efforts

Areas Covered:

- Codifying School Improvement
- Challenge and Opportunity
- Alignment with Accountability
- School Improvement: Unified Experience
- Approach, Implementation and Measurement
- School Improvement within VDOE Strategic Plan

Codifying School Improvement

New state law mandates that VDOE and Board support school improvement in comprehensive and impactful manner:

- *The Superintendent shall consistently and effectively implement a state program to support the improvement of low-performing schools based on school accountability standards established by the Board within the standards of accreditation.*
- *The Superintendent shall ensure that the Department is appropriately organized and employs qualified staff to effectively provide this support to such low-performing schools.*
- *The Board shall ensure that the Superintendent and the Department administer an effective school improvement program to support such low-performing schools.*

Key Takeaways



Shared Understanding:

How Virginia's school improvement work has operated, and why change is needed now



Path Forward:

How VDOE will coordinate its team, funding, and resources for identified schools



Unifying Framework:

Moving from fragmented, compliance-driven activity to one coordinated system of capacity building



Partnership:

How the Board's accountability decisions connect to the support schools receive

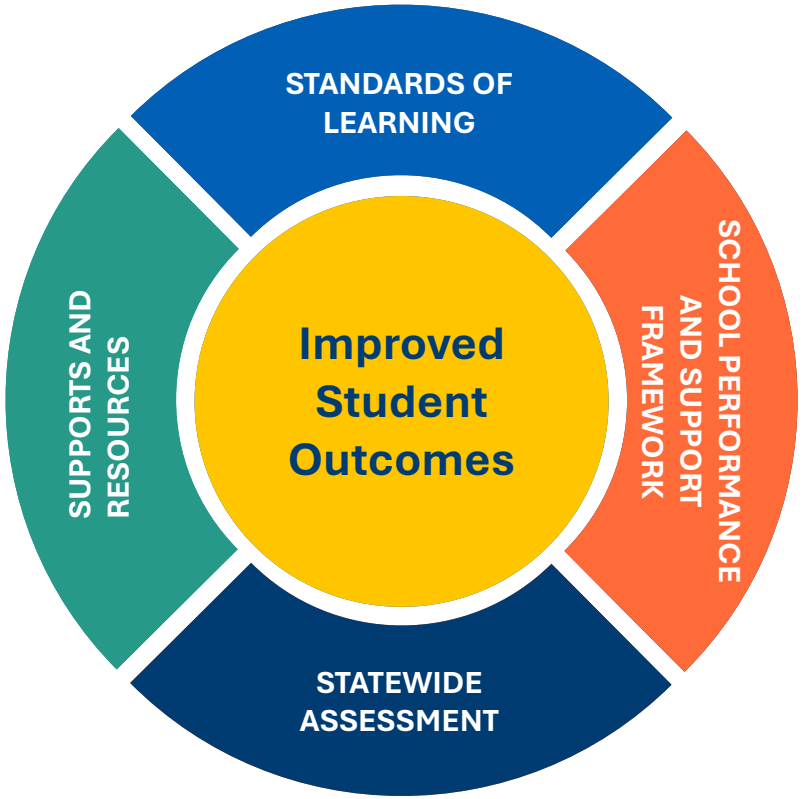
The Challenge and Opportunity

School improvement is hard but critically important work. Our goal is to make it a better experience while ensuring a relentless focus on improving student outcomes.

	WHERE WE HAVE BEEN	WHAT WE HEARD	WHERE WE ARE GOING
FOR VDOE	Supports grew office by office, each with its own team, timeline, and requirements.	Our staff work hard, but our systems were not designed to work as one.	**One team working from shared goals, reviewing our own processes first.**
FOR SCHOOL DIVISIONS	Many VDOE contacts, applications, and data requests for the same schools.	Time spent on compliance pulls leaders away from teachers and students.	**One clear path to timely, aligned and impactful support, and more time for teaching and learning.**

How Improvement Aligns With Other Efforts

VDOE, in partnership with Board, is implementing a measurement and improvement system where each component works with the others to improve student outcomes.



Standards of Learning

Sets high expectations for what students should know and be able to do and serves as the basis for student assessments.

Supports and Resources

Prioritizes students, educators, and schools in need of the most supports to improve and meet high expectations.

Statewide Assessment

Measures how well students meet the high expectations in our standards, highlighting strengths and identifying gaps.

School Performance and Support Framework

Measures how well schools support students to meet our high expectations and identifies schools needing support to guide targeted resources that lead to student improvement.

Accountability and Support, Together

ACCOUNTABILITY (SPSF)

The SPSF identifies which schools need support and guides the level of support, with clear, time-bound expectations for improvement.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT connects both sides

SUPPORTS AND RESOURCES

VDOE should allocate, appropriate and provide the resources divisions need to build capacity and drive effective change including:

- Funding
- Professional Learning
- Tools and Templates
- Data and Analysis
- Regional Connections

School Improvement As A Unified Experience

Virginia will have one unified school improvement experience where divisions spend less time navigating and more time on teaching and learning.

WHAT IT MEANS FOR EVERY DIVISION

1

One Team

OUR COMMITMENT

Every office that touches school improvement, working from shared goals, backed by senior leadership.

DIVISIONS EXPERIENCE

One clear voice and fewer, better-coordinated messages.

2

One Improvement Framework

OUR COMMITMENT

One shared way to assess needs, plan, and monitor, built on continuous improvement.

DIVISIONS EXPERIENCE

One planning calendar. Plan for data and clear communications.

3

One Funding Pathway

OUR COMMITMENT

One needs-based application that aligns school improvement funds to each school's plan.

DIVISIONS EXPERIENCE

A simpler process, with timelines to plan well.

4

One Resource Hub

OUR COMMITMENT

One trusted place to find vetted supports and professional learning, matched to need.

DIVISIONS EXPERIENCE

The right support, with follow-up to see whether it is helping.

Clear the path. Strengthen the support. Protect instructional time. Deepen learning.

Approach to Implementation

FALL 2026 THROUGH SUMMER 2027: EACH STEP BUILDS ON THE PRIOR STEP

STEP 1
Listen

Use insights from divisions, superintendents, and staff to revise and strengthen processes.

EVIDENCE OF PROGRESS

Processes will be less compliance-oriented, more aligned with instructional vision and reflect stakeholder feedback.

STEP 2
Build

Bring the unified team together and design the framework, application, and hub with division input.

EVIDENCE OF PROGRESS

Divisions have opportunity to review and pilot components of the unified experience (e.g., application, hub, implementation networks).

STEP 3
Launch

Provide unified supports to divisions and learn from early utilization.

EVIDENCE OF PROGRESS

Divisions are using the application, hub, and learning supports.

STEP 4
Reflect and Report

Review what worked, adjust, and set the plan for the next year.

EVIDENCE OF PROGRESS

Components of the unified experience are consistently used, divisions report increased satisfaction and the Board receives regular updates.

Measuring Implementation and Outcomes

Success is 1) divisions experience one coordinated VDOE, and 2) student outcomes improve.

ARE DIVISIONS EXPERIENCING ONE VDOE?

Implementation signals for each element

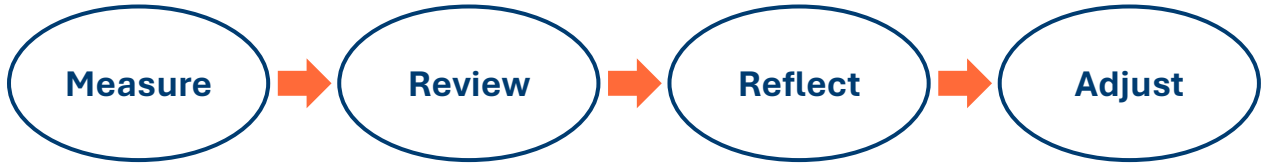
1. **One Team:** Fewer, clearer messages; division report a more coordinated VDOE
2. **One Framework:** Fewer steps and fewer duplicate data requests
3. **One Funding Pathway:** Funds awarded through one application and aligned resources.
4. **One Resource Hub:** Division use of the hub and learning supports, with follow-up

ARE STUDENTS IMPROVING?

Student outcomes in identified schools:

- ✓ Interim indicators for selected schools
- ✓ SPSF results: mastery, growth, and readiness
- ✓ Attendance and graduation
- ✓ Schools exiting CSI, TSI, and ATSI status

VDOE will use different types of data and division voice to continually evaluate and improve.



School Improvement within Strategic Plan

Achieving unified school improvement experience will require integrating these efforts within multiple priorities of VDOE's Strategic Plan.

PRIORITY 1

Expand Early Learning

All children have access to affordable, high-quality early care and education that prepares them to enter kindergarten.

PRIORITY 2

Cultivate Educators and Environments

All students have access to well-prepared educators, quality instructional materials, and safe and supportive learning environments that foster student achievement, well-being, and lifelong success.

PRIORITY 3

Resource Students and Systems

All students benefit from a strengthened education system in which resource allocation aligns with strategic priorities and relies on data to efficiently and effectively improve learning and outcomes

PRIORITY 4

Strengthen Operational Excellence

All stakeholders receive consistent, coherent, and high-quality agency service, resources, and information.

STRATEGY: AGENCYWIDE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN (SY 2026-27)

One unified, agencywide school improvement process, so every identified school and all divisions experiences one team, one improvement framework, one funding pathway, and one resource hub.

Summary: One Path Forward

THE CHALLENGE	Divisions navigate separate VDOE processes, and compliance crowds out time for teaching and learning.
OUR GOAL	One unified school improvement process: one team, one improvement framework, one funding pathway, and one resource hub.
HOW WE GET THERE	Four steps this year: Listen, Build, Launch, and Reflect and Report, each built with divisions.
HOW WE WILL KNOW	Evidence at each step, division voice, and student outcomes, with a year-end update to the Board.

Clear the path. Strengthen the support. Protect instructional time. Deepen learning.

Thank You

Dr. Melanie Kay-Wyatt, Ed.D.

Senior Advisor for Agencywide School Improvement

Virginia Department of Education

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