

## Study Resolution

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### K-12 Accreditation

Authorized by the Commission on November 7, 2024

WHEREAS, the Constitution of Virginia directs that the General Assembly “shall seek to ensure that an educational program of high quality is established and continually maintained;” and

WHEREAS, the General Assembly has granted the Virginia Board of Education statutory authority to provide general supervision of the public school system, and established the Standards of Quality consisting of seven standards related to instruction, staffing, student achievement, and accreditation; and

WHEREAS, JLARC’s Virginia’s K-12 Funding Formula (2023) addressed funding and the staffing components of the Standards of Quality, but did not address accreditation; and

WHEREAS, the Standards of Accreditation are intended to ensure an effective educational program in all of Virginia’s public schools; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Education’s “Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia” were adopted in 2024, replaced the previous accreditation standards in place since 2017, and will be fully implemented in the 2025-2026 school year; and

WHEREAS, Virginia public K-12 schools are also subject to Federal accountability requirements as outlined in the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA); and

WHEREAS, some school officials have expressed concern about the new Standards of Accreditation, including how they will be implemented and the implications of a school not being fully accredited; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission that staff be directed to review Virginia’s recently revised accreditation standards for public K-12 education. In conducting its review, staff shall determine: (i) the appropriate role and purpose of school accreditation in ensuring a quality education system and incentivizing school performance; (ii) whether Virginia’s system uses appropriate criteria, and is sufficiently transparent and understandable; (iii) whether the implications and consequences of accreditation results strike the appropriate balance between accountability, assistance, and improving educational quality; and (iv) whether Virginia’s school accreditation standards and process are sufficiently aligned with federal and other applicable accountability frameworks.

JLARC may make recommendations as necessary and review other issues as warranted.

All agencies of the Commonwealth, including the Board of Education, Virginia Department of Education, and all public school boards and divisions, shall provide assistance, information, and data to JLARC for this study, upon request. JLARC staff shall have access to all information in the possession of agencies pursuant to § 30-59 and § 30-69 of the Code of Virginia. No provision of the Code of Virginia shall be interpreted as limiting or restricting the access of JLARC staff to information pursuant to its statutory authority.