

Recommendations and Options: Virginia’s K–12 School Accountability System

JLARC staff typically make recommendations to address findings during reviews. Staff also sometimes propose policy options rather than recommendations. The three most common reasons staff propose policy options rather than recommendations are: (1) the action proposed is a policy judgment best made by the General Assembly or other officials, (2) the evidence indicates that addressing a report finding is not necessarily required, but doing so could be beneficial, or (3) there are multiple ways in which a report finding could be addressed and there is insufficient evidence of a single best way to address the finding.

Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION 1

The Virginia Board of Education should develop new terminology for the performance labels in the School Performance & Support Framework that more clearly communicate school performance as part of a continuous scale. (Chapter 4)

RECOMMENDATION 2

The Virginia Board of Education should develop new scoring thresholds for assigning the School Performance & Support Framework performance labels that are unique to each school level and result in relatively comparable proportions of elementary, middle, and high schools receiving each label. (Chapter 4)

RECOMMENDATION 3

The Virginia Board of Education should amend 8-VAC-20-132-280 A.1 of the Virginia Administrative Code to state that any school with a federal Comprehensive Support and Improvement designation shall be labeled as a school in the lowest performance category in the School Performance & Support Framework. (Chapter 4)

RECOMMENDATION 4

The Virginia Board of Education should reduce points awarded in the School Performance & Support Framework’s mastery index calculations from 0.75 to 0.5 for students who score “Fail/Does Not Meet Proficiency” on assessments with three performance levels. (Chapter 5)

RECOMMENDATION 5

The Virginia Board of Education should change the scoring of the 3Es indicator in the School Performance & Support Framework by either capping the total number of points (i) a school can be awarded for an individual student or (ii) a school can receive for the indicator. (Chapter 6)

RECOMMENDATION 6

The Virginia Board of Education should change the “enlistment” category of the 3Es indicator in the School Performance & Support Framework so that points awarded for student achievements are more commensurate with the time and effort required to earn points in the enrollment and employment categories. (Chapter 6)

RECOMMENDATION 7

The Virginia Board of Education should change the English language proficiency progress indicator used in the School Performance & Support Framework to be scored based on a performance index. (Chapter 7)

RECOMMENDATION 8

The Virginia Board of Education should modify the business rules in the School Performance & Support Framework so that the weight for the English language proficiency (ELP) progress indicator is proportionally redistributed across all other indicators for all schools without sufficient English learners to include the ELP progress indicator in their summative score. (Chapter 7)

RECOMMENDATION 9

The Virginia Board of Education should amend 8-VAC-20-132-270 F of the Virginia Administrative Code to state that (i) no school with a federal Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI) designation for one year shall be labeled in the highest performance category and (ii) no school with a federal Additional Targeted Support and Improvement designation or TSI designation for two consecutive years and scoring in the second highest category shall be labeled in the two highest performance categories in the School Performance & Support Framework. (Chapter 8)

RECOMMENDATION 10

The General Assembly may wish to consider including language in the Appropriation Act directing the Virginia Department of Education to (i) develop and submit a one-time, detailed plan for the state’s school improvement program by August 1, 2026, and (ii) annually develop and submit a status report that includes updates on key program activities, available and needed resources, program performance, and student and school outcomes. (Chapter 9)

RECOMMENDATION 11

The General Assembly may wish to consider amending §22.1-23 of the Code of Virginia to direct the superintendent of public instruction to consistently and effectively implement the state’s program to support improvement of low-performing schools. (Chapter 9)

RECOMMENDATION 12

The General Assembly may wish to consider amending §22.1-253.13.3 of the Code of Virginia to direct the Virginia Board of Education to ensure the state administers an effective school improvement program to support low-performing schools. (Chapter 9)

RECOMMENDATION 13

The Virginia Board of Education should contract with a qualified expert to conduct an independent evaluation of the effectiveness of the state's school improvement program on a regular basis and use the evaluation results to direct changes to the program as needed. (Chapter 9)

Policy Options to Consider

POLICY OPTION 1

The Virginia Board of Education could increase the weight assigned to growth indicators in the School Performance & Support Framework to more fully account for schools' contribution to student learning. (Chapter 5)

POLICY OPTION 2

The Virginia Board of Education could direct the Virginia Department of Education to modify the state's Every Student Succeeds Act plan so that elementary and middle schools are subject to Exception B for excluding recently arrived English learners from schools' proficiency and growth calculations under the School Performance & Support Framework. (Chapter 7)
