

VIRGINIA PUBLIC EDUCATION COALITION



Virginia Association of Colleges for
Teacher Education
Virginia Association of Elementary
School Principals
Virginia Association of School
Superintendents
Virginia Association of Secondary School
Principals
Virginia Congress of Parents and
Teachers

Virginia Counselors Association
Virginia Education Association
Virginia Middle School Association
Virginia Professors of Educational
Leadership
Virginia School Boards Association
Virginia School Counselors Association
Virginia Association for Supervision and
Curriculum Development

October 19, 2020

Daniel A. Gecker
President, Virginia Board of Education
Richmond, Virginia

Dear Mr. Gecker,

The Virginia Public Education Coalition (VPEC) is grateful for our continued partnership with the Virginia Board of Education. We are encouraged when practitioners and stakeholders are brought to the table as the BOE considers revisions to any of the Standards established for our public schools. Below are recommendations as you revise the Standards of Accreditation. Many of these were sent you last Spring by the Taskforce on School Accreditation. As we discussed these recommendations, our groups wanted to reaffirm the work you are doing on student growth models and on the need to include equity measures as you make your revisions. Like you, we believe Virginia should continue to evaluate our current student growth model to determine how effectively it measures real growth over time versus year to year. We know this has been a focus of this Board and we appreciate that work. The VPEC would also like to see the continued efforts of this Board to extend an equity lens to these revisions.

- 1) Given the changes in school schedules experienced this year, rethinking what constitutes a “school day” and what defines an absence.
- 2) Define and use methodologies that recognize student growth in lieu of seat time and attendance-related requirements for accreditation.
- 3) Incorporate student growth as a primary means of assessing student performance for accreditation, using tools that inform instruction and that are designed to measure growth rather than using Standards of Learning tests as proxies for growth.
- 4) Reduction of required SOL assessments to the minimum required under ESSA.

- 5) Provide state financial support in the identification and procurement of growth assessment tools that also inform instruction.
- 6) Provide plans for accreditation in the event of prolonged interruptions to learning in the future.
- 7) Conduct a review of the chronic absenteeism and dropout rate indicators as part of accreditation in response to how schools will operate after the pandemic. Consider use of school climate, school engagement, parent engagement, extra-curricular participation.
- 8) The indicators should be tied closer to the 5 C's. If the SOL assessment does not accomplish this, then a different kind of indicator should be considered. This could include inputs as well as outcomes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Baldwin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "B".

Jim Baldwin
Executive Director, VAESP
Chair, VPEC