

# Assessment and Accountability Roadmap

2026-2027 and Beyond

WVPEC Hot Topics

June 22, 2026

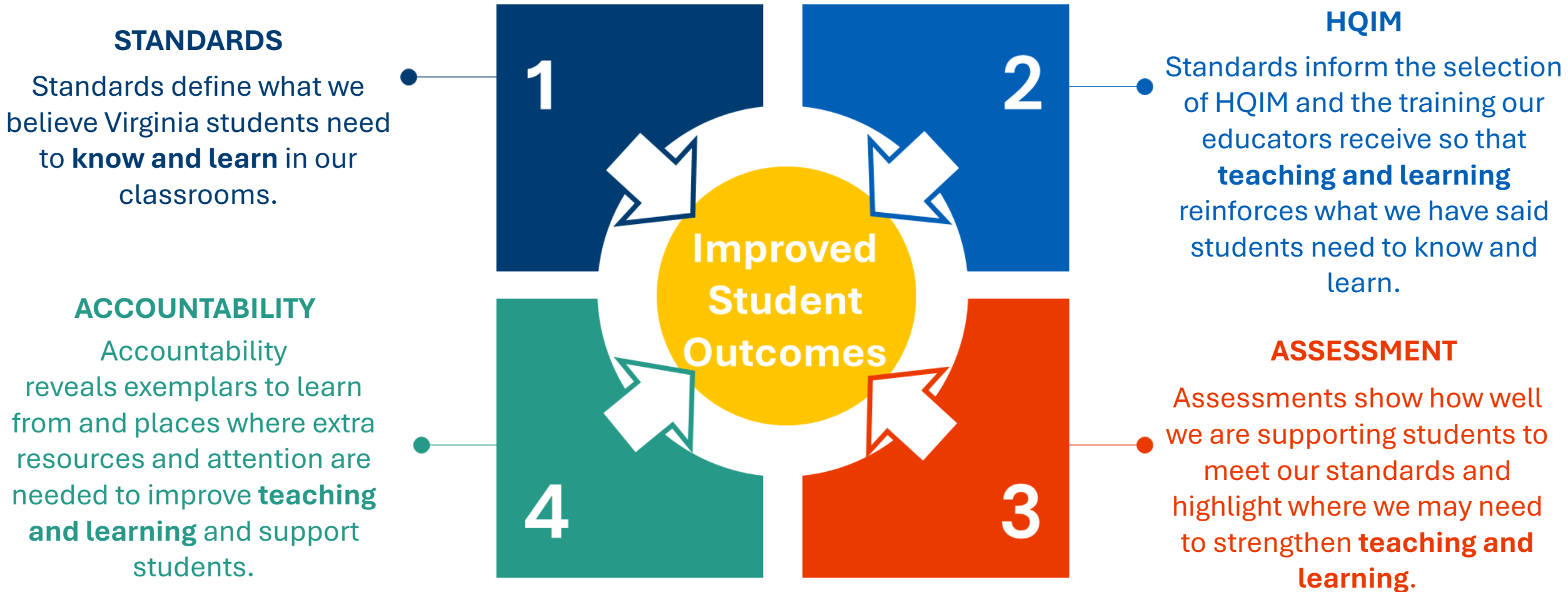


# Vision for Virginia's Measurement System

**Virginia's students are as capable as any in the nation and have high aspirations for their futures.**

- Every student deserves an excellent education that ensures they can achieve these aspirations and graduate ready for life.
- Assessment and accountability are foundational pieces of a measurement and improvement system that supports our students by *informing, supporting, and motivating* educators, leaders and families to take actions necessary to improve student outcomes, with a focus on those furthest from opportunity.

# Theory of Change: Teaching and Learning



# Core Values for Virginia's Measurement System

## Virginia Must Build a Trusted Measurement and Improvement System

Raising Expectations – Strengthening Instruction – Improving Outcomes

### High Expectations

Sets a standard of excellence for what students must know and be able to do to succeed in the next grade, next course, higher education, and Virginia's workforce

### Focused

Includes a strategically chosen set of high-quality statewide assessments and accountability measures that value both proficiency and progress

### Instructional Coherence

Encourages the instructional practices Virginia wants in every classroom, with measurement and instruction reinforcing one another

### Opportunity for Every Student

Includes all student groups and prioritizes students furthest from opportunity, making high expectations non-negotiable and achievable

### Actionable Improvement

Provides valid and clear information that families, educators, schools, and divisions can understand and use to drive improvement



To achieve this vision, Virginia must consider how to phase in and synchronize important changes in both assessment and accountability.



# Virginia's Measurement Roadmap

Timeline and Key Milestones for  
Assessment and Accountability

# Virginia's Measurement Roadmap



**Educators, leaders, and families need a clear, consolidated transition plan with multiple opportunities to learn about and prepare for changes before they take place in the 2028-2029 school year.**

**1** Build from strengths

Virginia's transition plan should:

- Build from places of strength and recognize progress already made.

**2** Make one transition

- Aim for one major transition across multiple components in the 2028-2029 school year, rather than implement big changes every year.

**3** Signal high expectations

- Continually signal the importance of high expectations and the ability of schools and students to meet these high expectations.

**4** Communicate and support

- Allow time for consistent communication about what is changing, why it is changing, and when changes will take effect, as well as for providing the guidance, tools, and supports stakeholders need to prepare.

**5** Drive school improvement

- Drive better agency and division resource allocation, targeted support, and instruction in all schools, but especially in struggling schools.

# Build from Strengths



We have already completed significant steps to strengthen Virginia’s measurement system, and more work is underway, **all with a relentless focus on how measurement supports stronger teaching and learning.**

- 1** Build from strengths
- 2 Make one transition
- 3 Signal high expectations
- 4 Communicate and support
- 5 Drive school improvement

Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Current assessments reflect revised, more rigorous standards from 2023 and 2024.</li><li>• VDOE will release test items in fall 2026 to support instruction.</li><li>• Testing requirements are being reduced or streamlined to focus on what matters most.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Removal of Virginia Growth Assessments (VGA) through HB299/SB200 and HS Integrated Reading and Writing (IRW) in 2026-2027</li><li>• HB1957/HB299/SB200 changes coming: faster reporting, reporting scores on a 100-point scale, testing for grades 7-12 in last two weeks of school, and more.</li></ul></li><li>• VDOE will release an RFP for a statewide assessment vendor in summer 2026.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• First time contract will have been competed since 2005.</li></ul></li></ul>
Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• SPSF is more effective and useful than the prior system.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• New law (HB643) requires Board to consider JLARC recommendations and VDOE to produce a plan and timeline.</li></ul></li></ul>

# Making One Major Transition



The **proposed transition timeline** ensures divisions are prepared for full implementation, without the lift of preparing for multiple, significant changes every year.

1 Build from strengths

2 Make one transition

3 Signal high expectations

4 Communicate and support

5 Drive school improvement

	Prepare	Preview	Implement
School Year*	2026-2027 Performance	2027-2028 Performance	2028-2029 Performance
Proficiency Cut Score Changes	No change Provide divisions with “what if” data preview of new cut scores	No change Provide divisions with “what if” data preview of new cut scores	<b>Proficiency Cut Scores Increase</b>
SPSF Changes	Ongoing SPSF policy and regulatory updates and modeling	Provide divisions preview of SPSF 2.0 results without stakes attached	<b>SPSF 2.0 Full Implementation</b> + federal identification

\*Note: Assessment data will be released 45 days after spring testing ends, in the summer following each school year. SPSF data will be released in the fall following each school year. That means – for the 2028-2029 school year – test data released in summer 2029 and SPSF data released in fall 2029 would reflect new cut scores and the updated SPSF 2.0.

# Proposed SPSF Transition Timeline



The **proposed transition timeline** ensures divisions are prepared for full implementation, without the lift of preparing for multiple, significant changes every year.

## Prepare.

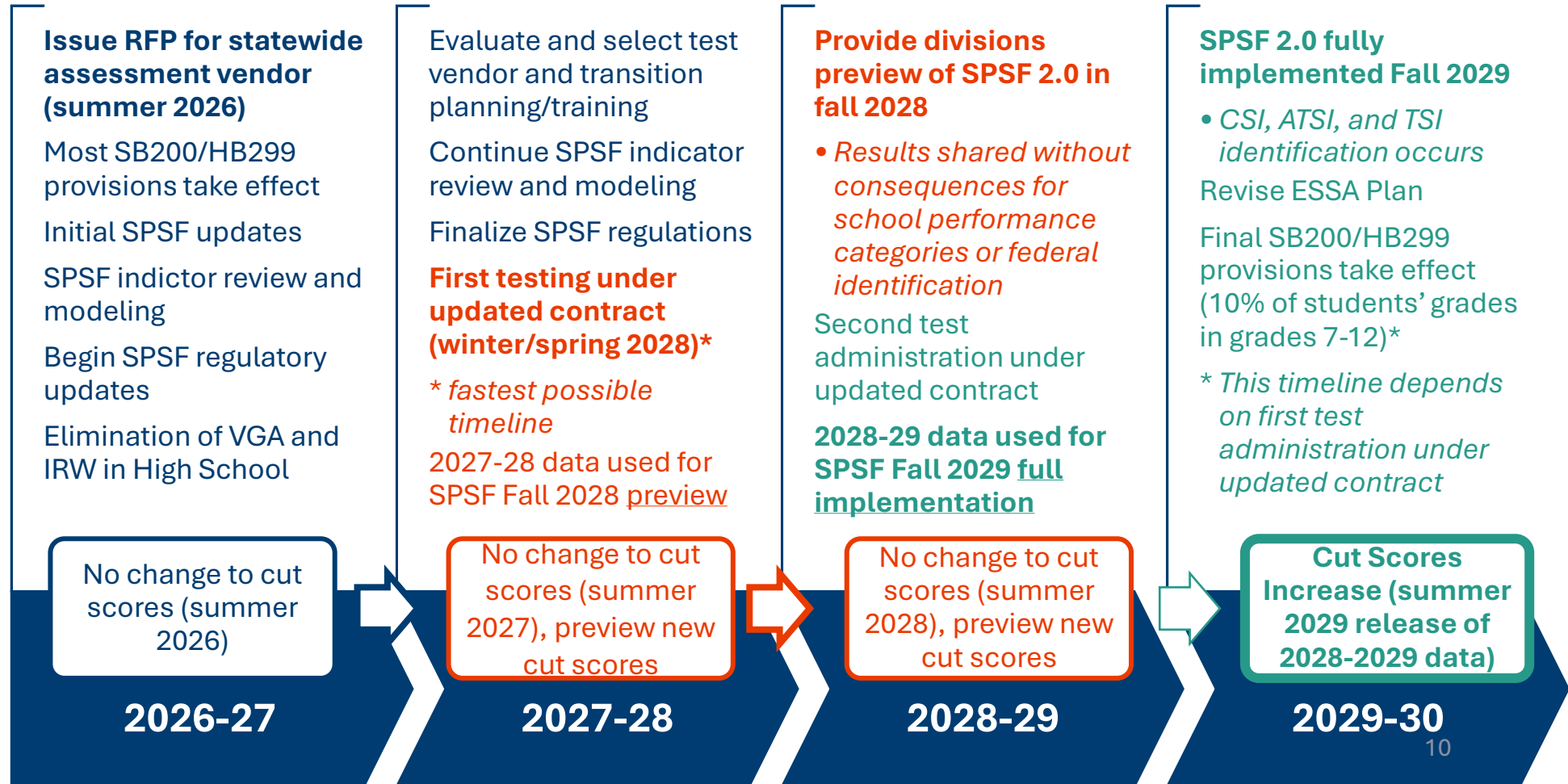
2026-2027 school year performance.

## Preview.

2027-2028 school year performance.

## Implement.

2028-2029 school year performance.



# Continually Signal High Expectations



Virginia's students are as capable as any. **While Virginia's measurement system is changing, our commitment to excellence and high expectations is not.**

**Keeping the bar high for students and schools:** Virginia will continue to set rigorous expectations for what students should know and be able to do. Our plan to strengthen the SPSF ensures these rigorous expectations for students will be met with similarly rigorous expectations for schools.

**Strengthening implementation:** Adjusting the proficiency implementation plan does not lower expectations; it gives divisions a clearer, more manageable path to align instruction and support students.

**Better outcomes for educators and students:** A stronger transition helps schools use assessment and accountability information to drive real improvement.

**We are keeping expectations high AND clearing a path for divisions and schools to meet them.**

1	Build from strengths
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2	Make one transition
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3	Signal high expectations
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4	Communicate and support
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5	Drive school improvement
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# Useful Communication and Resources



Divisions will have the time, information, and resources they need to prepare for change. **No surprises.**

1	Build from strengths
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2	Make one transition
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3	Signal high expectations
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4	Communicate and support
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5	Drive school improvement
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VDOE will support the field by:

**Listening and learning:** continue the work of the Listening Tour by engaging with school and division leaders, families, educators, and community members.

**Equipping the field with clear communications:** provide guidance, tools, and resources to explain what's changing, why it's changing, and when it takes effect.

**Modeling and previewing changes:** share data early so divisions can understand what changes mean before they “count.”

Ultimately, division leaders will be **equipped to explain these changes** to their stakeholders and to **drive the work needed** within their divisions to successfully meet higher expectations.

# Agencywide School Improvement



The outcome of an improved measurement system is **improved schools**. A strong measurement system is the launching point to support improvement.

**An agencywide priority**, not a single office.

*“VBOE currently has statutory responsibility to develop the state’s accountability framework but no express responsibility related to the state’s school improvement program.” (JLARC 2025)*

**Informed by measurement**, with data as the foundation.

1 Build from strengths

2 Make one transition

3 Signal high expectations

4 Communicate and support

5 Drive school improvement

**Trusted Measurement and Improvement System**  
Raising Expectations – Strengthening Instruction – Improving Outcomes

Using these results, **divisions** will align curriculum, instruction, educator support, and interventions to student needs.



Using these results, **VDOE** will target resources, technical assistance, and attention to the schools and divisions with the greatest need.

**These combined efforts accelerate the improvement of ALL schools in Virginia.**

# Five Actions for First Review



At its June 2026 meeting, VDOE is presenting the following actions to the Board of Education for first review:

1. Adopt one change to increase expectations for proficiency on state tests that is synchronized with other system-wide changes.
2. Update SPSF school rating names this fall.
3. Use more timely data to calculate mastery in high school.
4. Treat elementary and middle schools fairly in the SPSF regardless of English Learner (EL) enrollment.
5. Maintain focus on teaching and learning, not testing, for recently arrived English Learners.



**Change will take time, but the work is vital for our students.**

With a modernized assessment system that supports strong teaching and learning and an SPSF that leads to meaningful actions across schools and divisions, Virginia will continually improve student outcomes.

# Appendix A.

# Commonwealth Listening Tour:

Key Themes We Heard on Assessment and Accountability

# Key Listening Tour Themes: Assessment



## Cut Score Concerns

- Broad support for higher standards, but no clear consensus on implementation.
- Significant concern about how cut scores are set, adjusted, and interpreted.
- Potential impacts on student outcomes and school accountability.



## Concerns About Testing Culture and Student Well-Being

- Frustration with assessment fatigue and over-testing across multiple regions.
- High-stakes testing contributes to anxiety and a “teaching to the test” culture.



## Desire to Measure Skills, Not Just Knowledge

- Strong interest in assessing applied skills (e.g., critical thinking, problem-solving).
- Concerns about fairness for English learners
- Appropriate use of new VAAP tool and testing implications for students with disabilities.
- Schools value CTE credentialing and local alternative assessments.
- Growing interest in systems that move beyond single-test measures of achievement.

# Key Listening Tour Themes: Accountability

## Improved Approach

- Combined state and federal accountability into one framework
- Better differentiates school performance
- Solid framework with positive components, but needs refinement
- Broad support for 3E Framework

## Communication Challenges

- Lack of knowledge about SPSF and what it means.
- "On Track" and "Off Track" imply trajectory, not absolute performance; four labels caused stakeholder confusion
- Delayed rollout made communication at all levels difficult

## Too Little Emphasis on Growth

- Virginia weights proficiency 2–2.5 times more than growth
- Most school leaders and communities were clear in their desire for growth to be weighted more

## Lack of Transparency and Collaboration with Divisions

- Business rules not published; modeled data not available
- Divisions were not included as collaborators
- Delayed SPSF release delayed grants, which limited potential positive impact of data and supports

## Desire Revisions for English Learners

- Concern about how quickly English Learners are expected to take assessments
- Interest in ensuring that English Learners' scores are fairly incorporated into the framework
- For schools missing English Learner Progress indicator, results should be proportionately redistributed

# **Appendix B.**

## **Detailed Actions for Board First Review in June**

# 1. One Shift: Proficiency Implementation

## **Action 1. Adopt one change to increase expectations for proficiency on state tests that is synchronized with other system-wide changes.**

Update proficiency implementation plan from a year-by-year shift over four years to a single increase in cut scores using 2028-2029 data.

- + Prevents multiple, disruptive cut score changes occurring simultaneous with changes in timing of state tests, reporting of state tests, and a potential change in vendor and test platform.
- + Maintains Board's commitment to increasing expectations and rigor.
  - This action does not reopen discussion on what the cut scores will be.
- + Gives divisions, educators, and families several years to understand how student results – and school results on SPSF – would compare between current and new cut scores.
  - Will enable VDOE to model multiple scenarios and more effectively implement other JLARC recommendations over time.

# 2. Name Change: School Performance Categories

## Action 2. Update SPSF school rating names this fall.

Update “Off Track” and “On Track” to “Approaching Expectations” and “Meets Expectations,” to take effect for Fall 2026 SPSF results.

- + Addresses JLARC’s recommendation 1 and a top concern from Commonwealth Listening Tour.
- + Can be done quickly and independent of changes to indicators, weighting, and federal identification.
  - *“For example, changing the label terminology to describe school performance could be done immediately. Other changes, though, should be made so that schools have sufficient time to prepare.” (JLARC, 2025)*
- + Does not preclude future Board action to the number or names of performance categories for future years as SPSF evolves.
- + More intuitive and more aligned with performance categories used in VQB5, early childhood measurement and improvement under the Board of Education.

# 3. More Timely Mastery Data for High School

## **Action 3. Use more timely data to calculate mastery in high school.**

Modify the Mastery index calculation in high schools from a cohort-based measure to an annual measure.

- Mastery is the most weighted component for high schools. Yet this data lags by several years and does not reflect current performance.
  - High school mastery uses test results of a high school's 12<sup>th</sup> grade cohort – at the end of their time in high school. This may be years after when many in the cohort took those tests in 9th or 10th grade.
  - Mastery would shift from how did all students in a particular grade do over the course of high school? to how did all students in this high school do last year?
- + Encourages schools to pay attention to students in every grade level, every year.
- + Improves ability of SPSF to drive timely supports, interventions, and resources to high-need schools where students are not meeting expectations on state tests.
- + Directly responds to stakeholder feedback, providing a more accurate depiction of performance at the school in the last year, rather than a group of students over time.

# 4. Fairness in Treatment for English Learners

## **Action 4. Treat elementary and middle schools fairly in the SPSF regardless of English Learner (EL) enrollment.**

For schools missing the EL Progress indicator, reallocate its weight proportionately to all other indicators not solely to the growth component.

- + Addresses JLARC recommendation #8.
  - *“Modify the business rules...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.” (JLARC, 2025)*
- + Improves fairness and comparability: the relative importance of growth in academic subjects like reading and math should not depend on whether a school serves a larger population of English Learners.
  - Can be accomplished prior to potential regulatory changes to reconsider the weight of growth for all schools, not just those missing an EL Progress indicator.

# 5. Supporting Recently Arrived ELs

## Action 5. Maintain focus on teaching and learning, not testing, for recently arrived English Learners.

Maintain Recently Arrived EL “Exception A” in the 2026-2027 school year to avoid over-testing of new English Learners for sole purpose of showing growth.

- Exception A and B are different in only two ways.
  1. Exception B requires recently arrived ELs to take state Reading tests in their 1st year in US schools. Exception A permits these students to skip that testing.
  2. Exception B: recently arrived EL students’ test results used in the growth component in their 2nd year in US schools, but not mastery. The reverse is true in Exception A.
- Encourages better instructional practice and supports by signaling schools should focus on English language attainment in addition to academic content.
- Maintains consistency in SPSF. SPSF will use a different growth measure for 2025-2026 results.
- Preserves inclusion of students, many of whom are those furthest from opportunity.
  - Both exceptions require recently arrived ELs to be fully included in mastery and growth by their 3rd year in US schools.
  - Neither exception can directly address stakeholders, as most desired a return to prior state policies that are inconsistent with federal requirements.
  - VDOE can request permission from USDOE to pilot growth measure to understand impact.