VASS Conference

Welcoming Remarks

Secretary of Education

Dr. Jeffery Smith

October 27, 2026

Agenda

- Grounding
- Journey of a Superintendent
- Early Progress
- Our Priorities
- Our Ask

Grounding

Grounding:

We must be bold enough to continue building…

- **A culture that *puts young people first*.**
- **A culture that is *caring*.**
- **A culture of *competence*.**
- **A culture of *commitment*.**
- **A culture of *high expectations*.**

Thank you for your boldness!

Governor Spanberger's Mission:

Build a durable future with opportunity for all Virginians.

This is accomplished by:

- Ensuring affordable healthcare, utilities, housing, and more;
- Ensuring strong schools, safe and healthy communities, and good jobs in every corner of Virginia; and
- Making government work for Virginians.

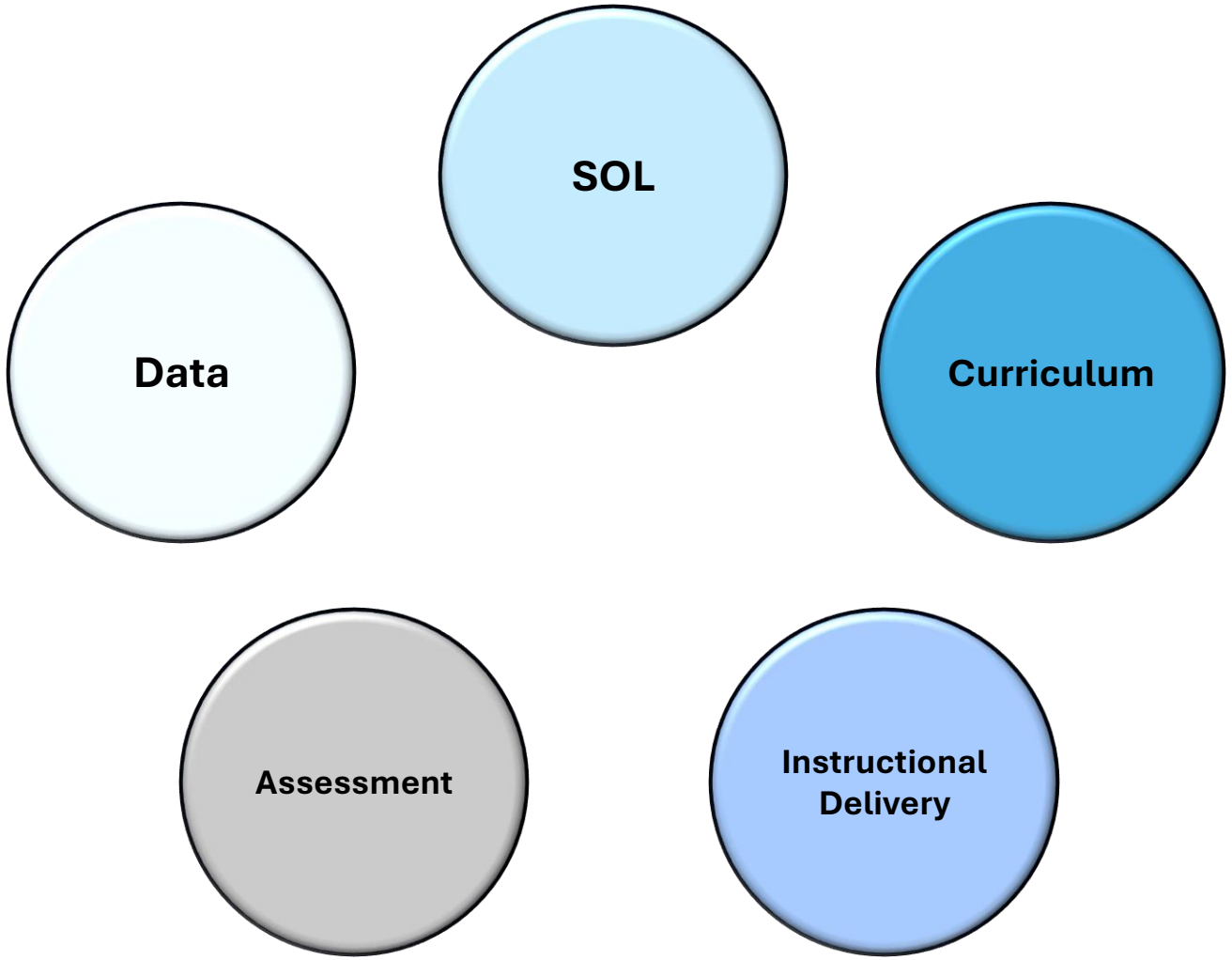
The Education Secretariat will ensure strong schools, contribute to safe and healthy communities and prepare young people for postsecondary and workforce opportunities (enrollment, enlistment, employment).

Journey of a Superintendent

Keep the Main Thing the Main Thing:

Teaching and Learning

Hampton City Schools
Visual Representation of Reality, 2015-2017



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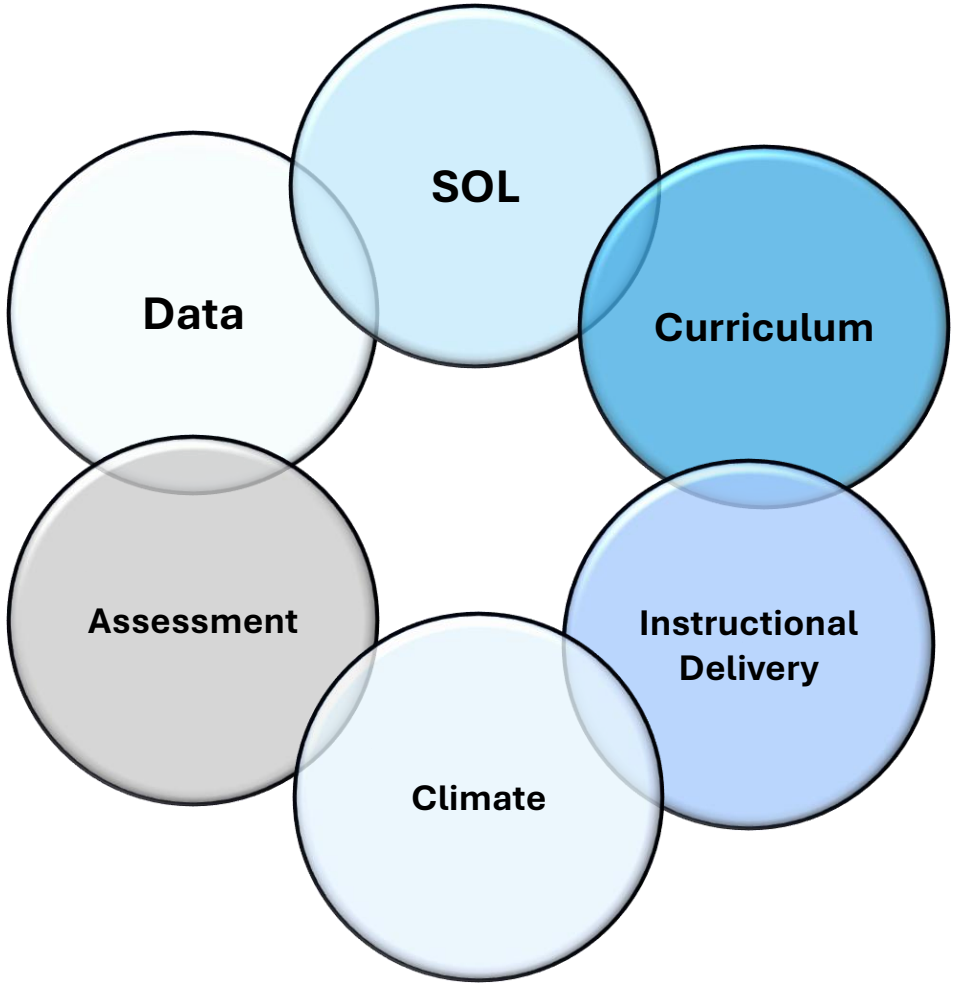
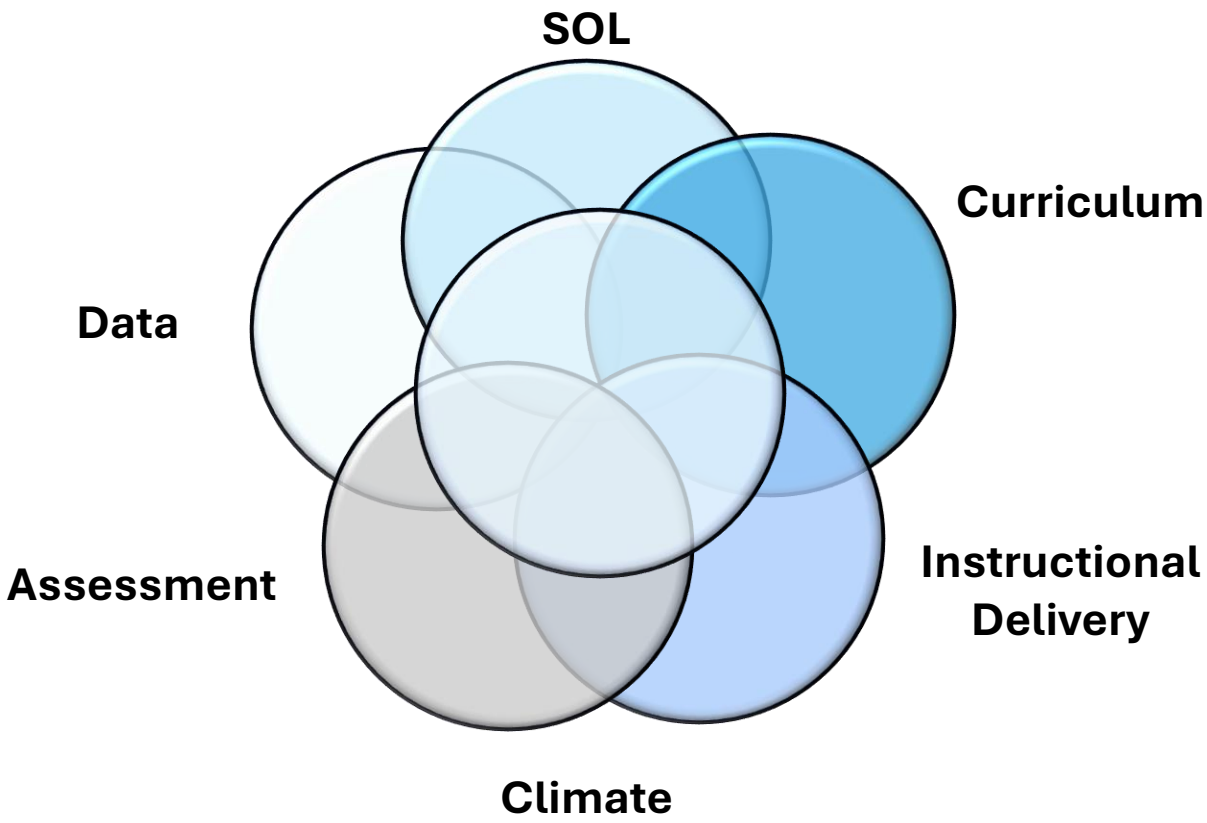
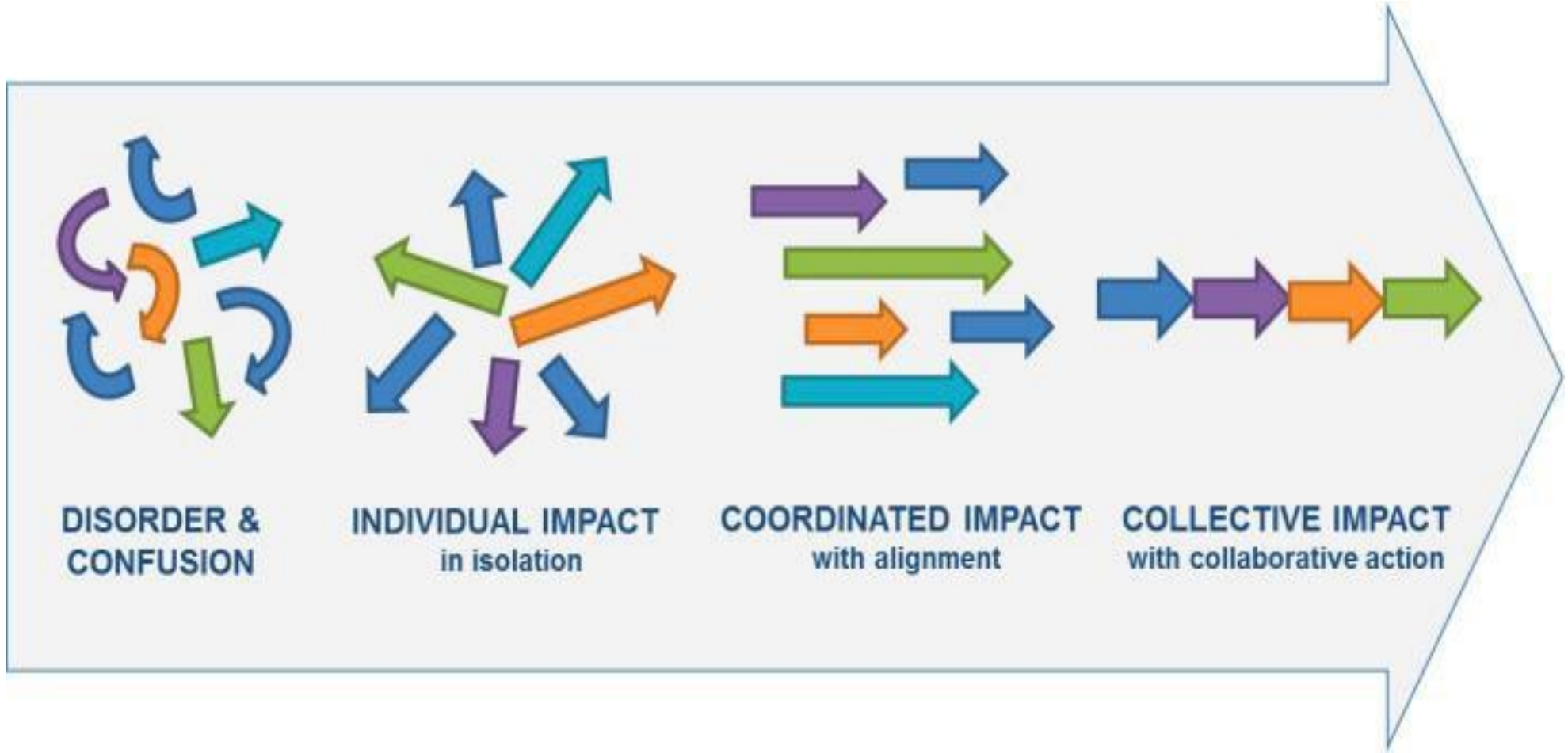


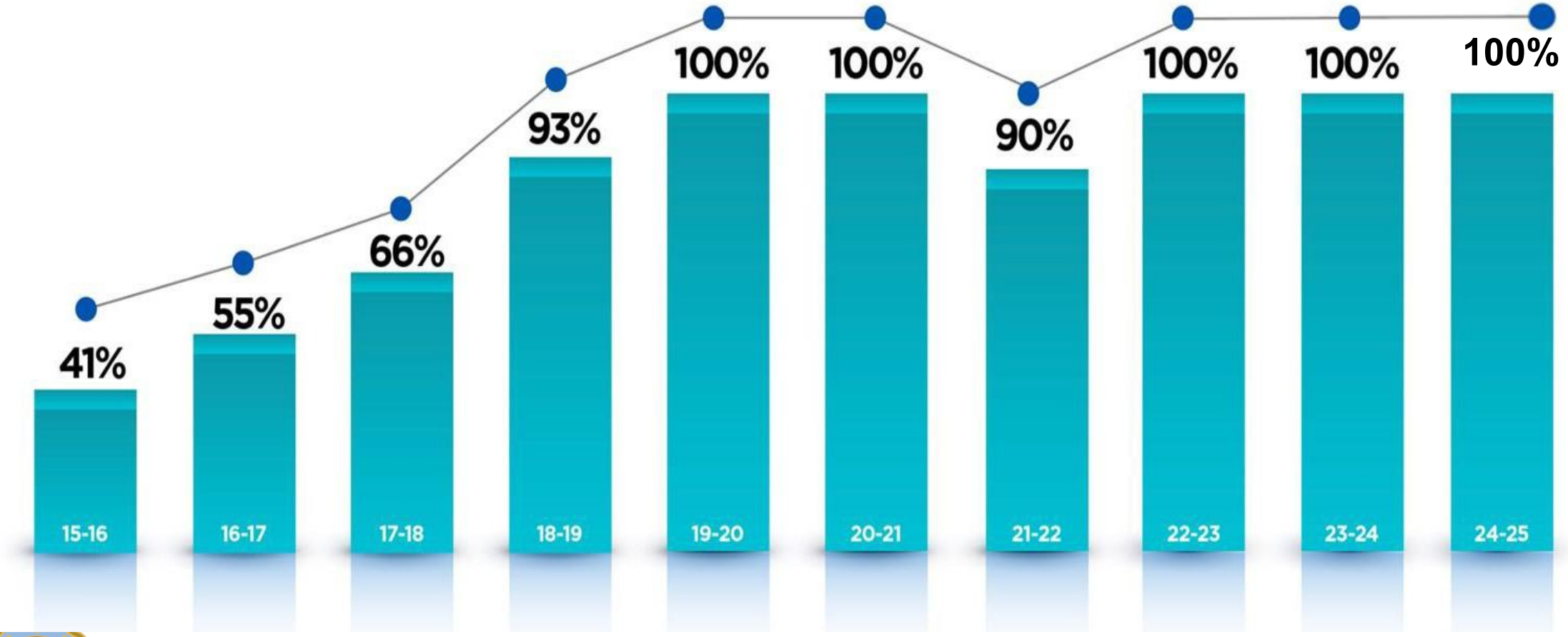
Hampton City Schools Desired State, 2018-2023



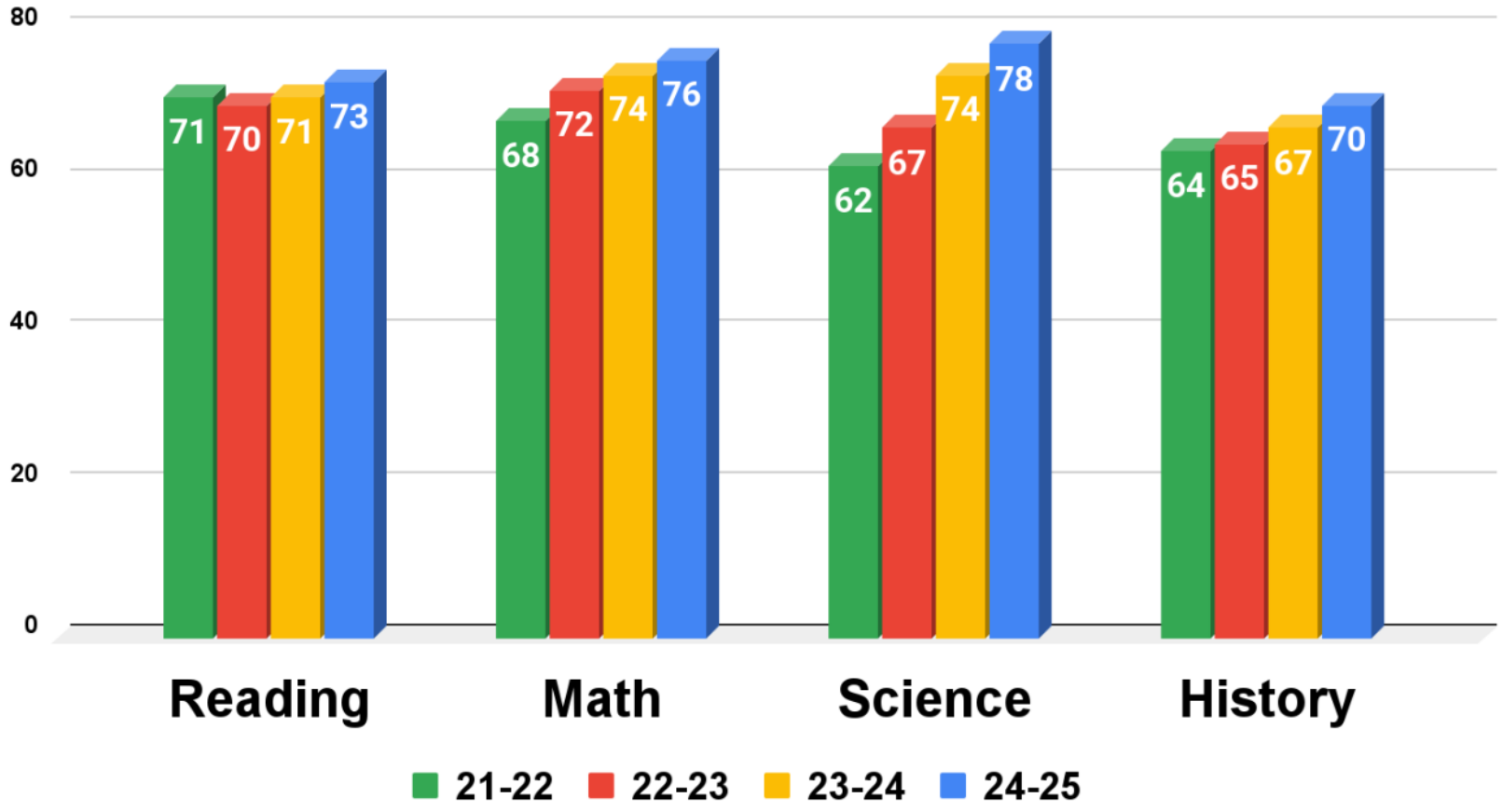
Collective Impact



Percentage of HCS Schools Accredited Without Conditions

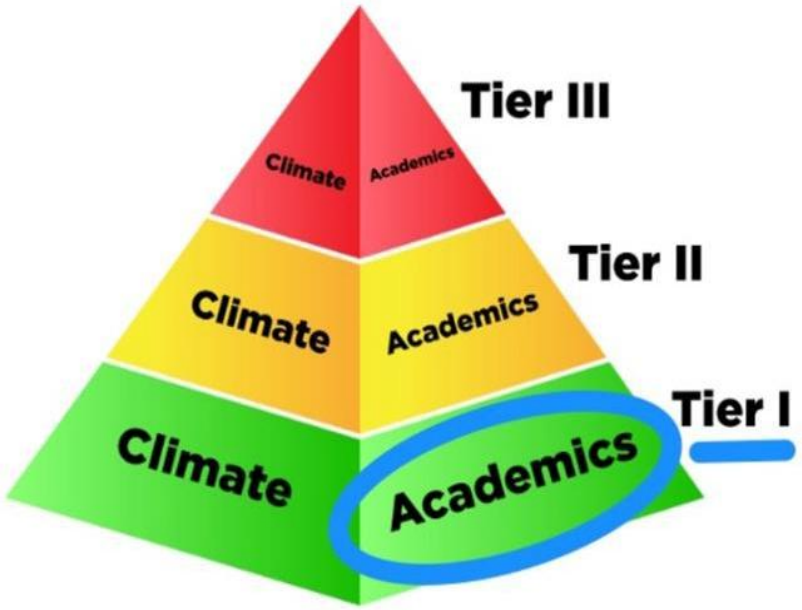


HCS Annual Pass Rates: SY21-22 to SY 24-25



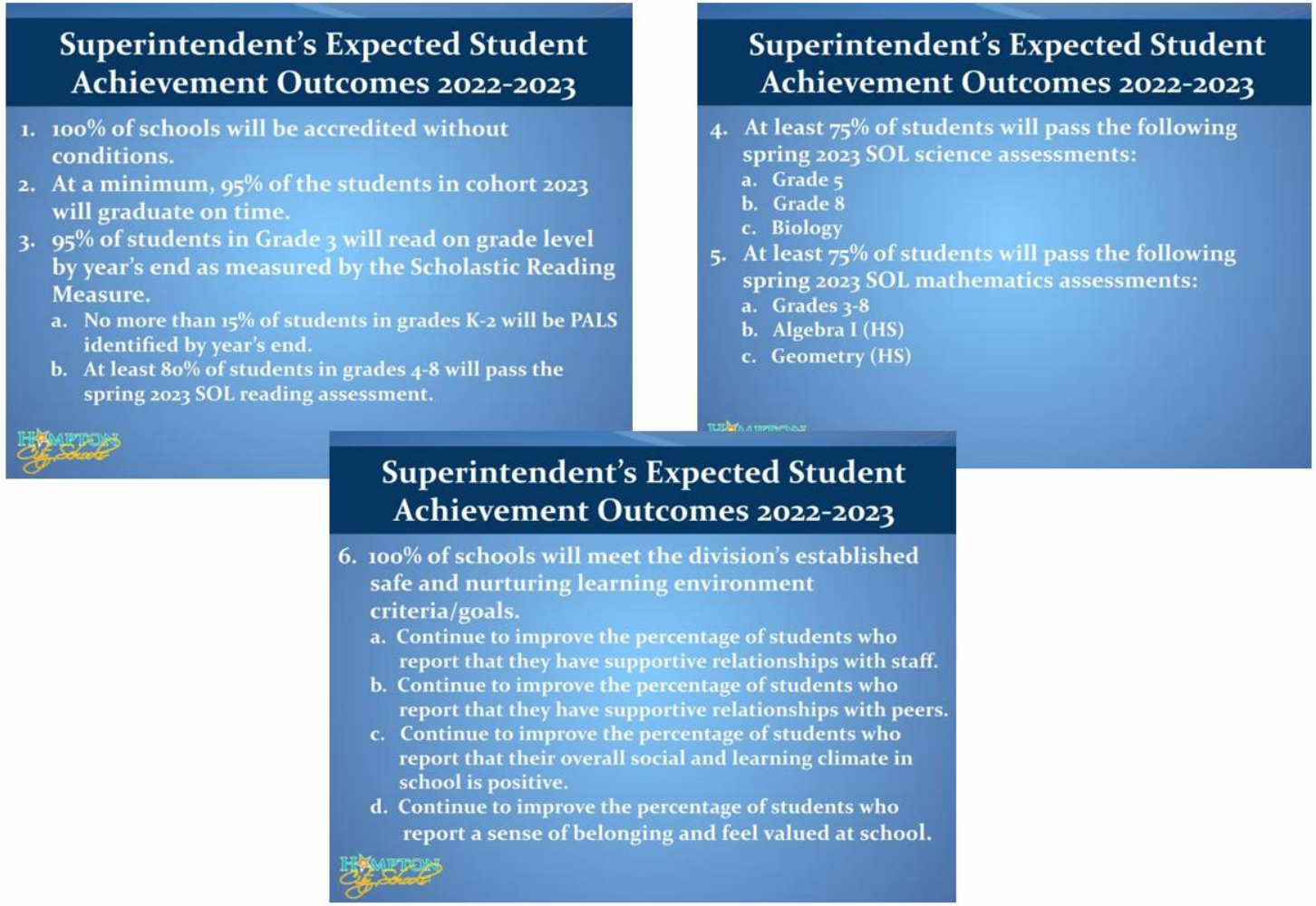
Structures, Tools, and Resources for Student and Staff Safety and Success

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support: Academics Tier I



- Guaranteed & Viable Curriculum
- HCS High-Yield Strategies
  - Instructional Technique Library
- CIA Headquarters
- Three-Year Professional Development Plan
  - UbD Learning Modules
- Student Achievement Game Plan Website

Student Achievement Indicators of Success



Early Progress

Accomplishments To-Date

Completed a Listening Tour in all 8 regions with feedback from 2,282 individuals (including 113 students) and 53 hours of listening.

Accomplishments To-Date

Reviewed over 200 bills and provided technical support on over 100 education bills that were passed into legislation.

Accomplishments To-Date

Expanded Virginia's talent pipeline by securing $7.3 million annually to launch Internships Virginia (InVA) and opening new pathways for students through a streamlined three-year renewable license for CTE teachers.

Accomplishments To-Date

Historic budget investments in education, including $2 billion in new education funding…the largest investment in public education in Virginia's history.

Accomplishments To-Date

4% raises for teachers and school support staff each year of the biennium.

Accomplishments To-Date

Released a Request for Proposal to modernize and deliver a high-quality K-12 assessment system that uses more interactive questions designed to evaluate students' critical thinking skills, and provides better, more timely feedback to teachers and families.

Accomplishments To-Date

Launch of K-12 Funding Formula Task Force, with representation from many stakeholders across each region to support the development of a new funding formula.

Our Priorities

K-12 Education Administration Priorities

Childcare & Education

Kindergarten Readiness, Affordable Options for All

Teaching & Learning

HQIM, Science of Reading (VLA), and Science of Math

College & Career Readiness

Dual Enrollment, Career Pathways, and Postsecondary Success

Assessment & Accountability

High Expectations, Meaningful Support, and SPSF 2.0

Teacher Recruitment & Retention

Attract and Retain Greater Numbers of Effective Educators

Wraparound Supports

Supporting Student Well-Being and Readiness to Learn

AI & Technology Usage

Safe, Responsible Use to Enhance Teaching and Learning

Funding Formula Reform

A More Equitable, Student-Centered Funding Formula

Our Ask

Our Ask: Continue to be Bold

Focus on Student Achievement and Success

Stretch Goals in Reading and Math

Two Final Questions:

1. What is your North Star?

What *ambitious, measurable stretch goal* could you set for your division next year? What would it look like to *challenge your team to achieve* something that might feel out of reach today, but that you believe is possible with the right focus and support?

2. What do you need from us to get there?

What do you need from the Department of Education and our administration to help you achieve your goals? Whether it's resources, technical assistance, greater flexibility, or removing barriers, *we want to hear directly from you.*