VDOE Update: VASS Fall Conference

Jenna Conway
Superintendent of Public Instruction
October 26, 2026

Agenda Overview

- VDOE Senior Leadership: Building a Better VDOE
- *Commonwealth Listening Tour* and *Strong Schools Tour*: Listening and Learning from Students, Educators, Leaders and Families
- VDOE's New Strategic Plan: A Roadmap for the Path Forward
- Commitment to Higher Expectations: Ensuring Virginia Students are Fully Prepared for Future Success

VDOE Senior Leadership

Building a Better VDOE

VDOE Senior Leadership

Jenna Conway
Superintendent of Public Instruction

- Agency vision, mission, and strategy
- Partner with divisions to drive student success

Holly Coy
Chief of Staff

- Comms
- Policy
- Board of Ed
- External Partnerships

Christina Berta
Chief Operations Officer

- Finance
- Budget
- HR
- Info Security
- Operations

Anne Hyslop
Dep. Sup. of Assessment, Performance, & School Improvement

- Assessment
- Accountability (SPSF)
- School Improvement

Melanie Kay-Wyatt
Senior Advisor on School Improvement

- Agency-wide school improvement strategy

Jessica Proffitt
Dep. Sup. of Instructional and Educator Excellence

- Instruction
- HQIM
- Teacher Licensure
- Educator Preparation

Sam Hollins
Dep. Sup. of Special Ed & Specialized Populations

- Special Education
- Behavioral Health and Safety

Erin Carroll
Dep. Sup. of Early Childhood

- VQB5
- Child Care, Head Start, VPI, ECSE
- Child Care Health and Safety

Dewayne McClary
Dep. Sup. of Innovation, Tech, & Student Pathways

- IT
- Ed Tech / AI
- CTE
- Lab Schools and MOPS

Staci Longest
Dep. Sup. of Budget & Finance

- Finance
- Budget
- Procurement
- ESEA Programs
- ARMICS/ Internal Audit

Commonwealth Listening Tour and Back-to-School Tour

Listening and Learning from Students, Educators, Leaders and Families

Spring 2026: *Commonwealth Listening Tour*

"The Secretary of Education and the Superintendent of Public Instruction shall host a statewide listening tour within the first 100 days of this order to hear directly from students, parents, educators, school leaders, superintendents, school board members, and community members about the challenges and successes facing their schools."

Executive Order Four from Governor Spanberger

Read the Commonwealth Listening Tour report on the EO4 webpage.

Listening Tour By the Numbers

113 students participated in a student roundtable

562 individuals participated in an in-person stakeholder roundtable session

422 individuals participated in a public evening sessions

967 survey responses

218 individuals participated in a virtual session

53 hours of listening sessions

74 VDOE staff volunteers

Fall 2026: *Strong Schools Tour*

SITES VISTED

18

FEDERALLY IDENTIFIED SCHOOLS FOR SUPPORT VISTED

10 OUT OF 15

EVERY LEARNING ENVIRONMENT VISITED

- ☑ EARLY CHILDHOOD SETTINGS
- ☑ K-12 SCHOOLS
- ☑ CTE LABS

LONGEST MILES TRAVELED

231

ONE WAY

TOTAL MILES TRAVELED

1,878

Developing a New VDOE Strategic Plan

A Roadmap for the Path Forward

Strategic Plan Need and Objectives

VDOE has consistently heard the need for and value of an agency-wide strategic plan to establish:

- Durable **mission, vision, and values** that can stand the test of time
- Focused set of **clear strategic priorities** to achieve key outcomes over the next four years
- **Coherent internal structures, processes, and plans** to guide agency's daily work
- Inclusion of **diverse stakeholder perspectives** to balance **aspiration and innovation** with operational **realities**

VDOE Strategic Plan Approach

In July 2026, VDOE launched the development of a strategic plan to set direction for the next four years. **Key milestones to date:**

- Hired a Director of Strategic Initiatives;
- Led internal focus groups to draft preliminary framework of vision, mission, core values, and priorities;
- Surveyed all agency staff and revised framework based on staff results;
- Established internal priority working groups to define key goals, strategies, and measures of progress;
- Gathered feedback from stakeholders across Commonwealth; and
- Coordinated with Governor's Office and Secretary of Education.

VDOE Strategic Plan Framework

FEEDBACK SURVEY

Vision	Every Virginia learner achieves their full potential.				
Mission	The mission of the VDOE is to ensure high-quality education across Virginia that empowers every learner to thrive, supports educators and staff, and engages families and communities as essential partners.				
Values	Integrity	Excellence	Learner Focus	Collaboration	Purpose
Priorities	1. Expand Early Learning				
	2. Cultivate Educators and Environments				
	3. Resource Students and Systems				
	4. Strengthen Operational Excellence				

Note: *More detailed version of the framework is available at your tables.*

Commitment to Higher Expectations

Ensuring Virginia Students are Fully Prepared for Future Success

Why Higher Expectations Matter for Virginia Kids

Higher expectations benefit *all* students, teachers, and schools — **especially students furthest from opportunity**.

Virginia's children **are as capable as any in the nation** and deserve expectations that fully set them up for success**.**

Virginia has a long history of leading. With some of the lowest cut scores in the nation, Virginia must act urgently to raise the bar.

Rising to this challenge for our students needs **all of us, working together.** VDOE commits to help you prepare teachers and communicate with students and families.

Preparing for Higher Expectations: What This Means Now

Starting in the 2026-27 school year, Virginia is phasing in new cut scores for each Standards of Learning (SOL) assessment as the bar for student proficiency is raised.

- Each assessment will have a **new threshold for passing** (rather than the 400 currently used).
- There will be a new **“Pass/Approaching”** Category.
- Full chart on the VDOE website under Assessments **provides specifics by grade, assessment and school year** for the phase in through the 2029-30 school year.

Preparing for Higher Expectations: Immediate Changes to SPSF

In addition to implementing mandated changes to the SPSF, VDOE is currently working on three key changes for the 2026-27 school year that would be reflected in the fall 2027 results:

1) Update the **Mastery Index** that measures student performance on reading, math, and science assessments.

2) Update the **Growth Component** in elementary and middle schools to include the new "Pass/Approaching" performance level.

3) Update **federal identification for school improvement** is calculated and how it affects a **school's performance category**.

Preparing for Higher Expectations: Tools, Support and Engagement

VDOE is committed to providing resources to support implementation:

- **Practical tools** to identify instructional gaps, deliver targeted feedback and coaching, and strengthen daily instructional rigor.
- **Communications support** for division-level leaders to develop clear, proactive messaging for families and stakeholders.
- **Direct access to VDOE senior leaders** for ongoing communication, guidance, and support.
- **Got additional ideas?** Please send recommendations for tools, resources and communications to superintendent@doe.virginia.gov

Thank you!