We only use cookies that are necessary for this site to function to provide you with the best experience. The controller of this site may choose to place supplementary cookies to support additional functionality such as support analytics, and has an obligation to disclose these cookies. Learn more in our Cookie Statement. ×

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Subscribe to updates from Virginia Department of Education
Email Address
e.g. name@example.com
SUBSCRIBE
Share Bulletin

#2026-05 Virginia Education Update for February 12, 2026

Virginia Department of Education sent this bulletin at 02/12/2026 05:09 PM EST

View this message online

VIRGINIA
EDUCATION
UPDATE
Virginia Department of EDUCATION

#2026-05 | Update for February 12, 2026

Download Superintendent's Briefing Note (To-Do & Article List)

This Week's To-Dos:

- Article 2026-05-077
  Virginia Literacy Act Advisory Workgroup Reconvenes Under Executive Order 4 – Apply by March 2
- Article 2026-05-076
  Seeking Additional Innovative Assessment Workgroup Members – Apply by March 2
- Article 2026-05-075
  Virginia Mathematics Task Force Application Open – Apply by March 2
- Article 2026-05-074
  Parent Notification Requirement and Webinar for Selecting Caregiver Materials Related to Student Safety Concerns – March 4
- Article 2026-05-073
  Review of the K-12 Fine Arts Standards of Learning: Seeking Input from Parents, Students, Educators, and Other Virginia Arts Education Stakeholders – Closes March 30
- Article 2026-05-072
  Review of the K-12 Fine Arts Standards of Learning: Review Committee Interest Form – Responses Due March 30

This Week's Articles:

- Article 2026-05-071
  VDOE received approval of the VDOE Waiver request from the U.S. Department of Education of Section 421(b) of the General Education Provisions Act
- Article 2026-05-070
  AI Part II: Into the Classroom
- Article 2026-05-069
  Upcoming 2026 School Health Profiles Survey
- Article 2026-05-068
  School and Community Nutrition Programs Procurement Reminders and New Resources

Superintendent's Message

A Winning Start for the Class of 2039

Virginia's investments in our youngest learners are paying off. The latest VKRP Data Snapshot shows that our newest kindergarteners are more school ready this year as compared to fall 2024.

Roughly 6% more kindergarteners met the overall benchmark for school readiness, meaning they entered kindergarten ready in literacy, math, social skills and self-regulation. Kids who enter ready are more likely to be successful in K-12 and beyond.

Thanks to your efforts with Virginia's new literacy screener, VALLSS, we saw the largest gains in literacy, an 8% improvement from last fall. We are especially excited about growth for students who may need greater support, including students from low-income households, English Language Learners, and students with disabilities.

Taken together, these results show the positive impact of Virginia's investments in early childhood, and the dedicated work of educators in all types of child care settings across the Commonwealth.

Parents often tell me they want to be sure their young children are ready for school. And kindergarten teachers say they can see firsthand the impact of quality early childhood. On behalf of families and educators alike, thank you to everyone who helped make this growth happen for our youngest learners.

Highlights

News from Across the Commonwealth

The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) is proud to celebrate Newport News Public Schools (NNPS) Fine Arts Department that hosted a Gallery Gathering on Thursday, February 5, 2026, at the Downing-Gross Cultural Arts Center in downtown Newport News. This exclusive preview event was held prior to the public opening of the Citywide Student Art Gallery and welcomed city and school leaders, community partners, supporters, and arts advocates.

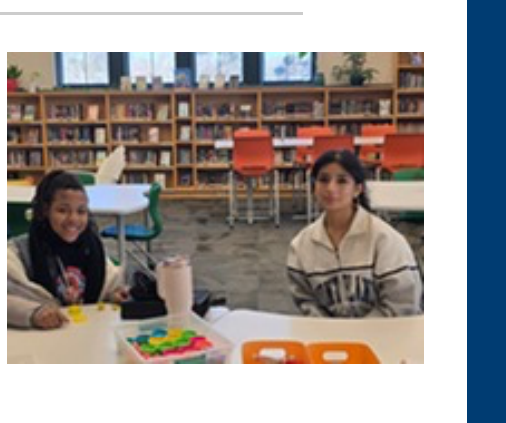
Guests engaged directly with NNPS visual arts teachers to learn about the planning, curriculum alignment, and technical skill development behind each student project. The experience allowed guests to understand the breadth and depth of student artwork in an intimate and curated setting. The gathering also fostered meaningful dialogue on the relevance of arts education as a critical component of workforce readiness, emphasizing creativity, problem-solving, and communication skills.

Through events like the Gallery Gathering, the Visual and Performing Arts Department of Newport News Public Schools continues to elevate and empower students and educators while strengthening community connections in support of arts education. VDOE staff members, Dr. Angela Byrd-Wright, VDOE Director of Humanities and Sherry Hatton, VDOE Fine Arts Specialist, were among the guests to support and celebrate the exceptional work of the educators and students of Newport News Public Schools.

SHAPE
TEACHER
YEAR

Congratulations to Sharon Gregory, Adapted Physical Education teacher and Adapted Activities Director for Greene County Public Schools for being named the Society of Health and Physical Educators (SHAPE) America Southern District's Adapted Physical Education Teacher of the Year for 2026! Her passion and dedication to student fitness and wellness is inspiring.

Virginia Beach Middle School students hosted a Buddy Up mentoring program during National Mentoring Month. Each Friday, student mentors met with their 6th grade buddies to provide academic support and build positive connections that strengthen a welcoming school community.



School Finance

VDOE received approval of the VDOE Waiver request from the U.S. Department of Education of Section 421(b) of the General Education Provisions Act

Article: 2026-05-071
Audience: Superintendents, Directors, Finance, Public stakeholders
Contact: Staci Longest, Deputy Superintendent of Budget & Finance, staci.longest@doe.virginia.gov

The VDOE received the waiver for the periods of Federal Fiscal Year 2023 for the following:

- Title I, Part A of the ESEA (Improving Basic Programs Operated by LEAs), including the portions of the SEA's Title I, Part A award used to carry out section 1003 school improvement, section 1003A direct student services, if applicable, and Title I, Part D, Subpart 2
- Title I, Part B of the ESEA (State Assessment Formula Grants)
- Title I, Part C of the ESEA (Education of Migratory Children)
- Title I, Part D, Subpart 1 of the ESEA (Prevention and Intervention Programs for Children and Youth Who Are Neglected, Delinquent, or At Risk)
- Title II, Part A of the ESEA (Supporting Effective Instruction)
- Title III, Part A of the ESEA (English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement)
- Title IV, Part A of the ESEA (Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants)
- Title IV, Part B of the ESEA (21st Century Community Learning Centers)
- Title V, Part B, Subpart 2 of the ESEA (Rural and Low-Income School Program)

The request to extend the obligation period was approved. This will extend certain Federal Funding (as indicated above) to allow LEAs with unexpended funds to fully reimburse on these funds, and this will provide the SEA additional time to use state set aside funds to provide supplemental support to maximize student performance in the Commonwealth.

The Title Coordinators will be reaching out to school divisions with additional information, please ensure that you are reimbursing on the oldest funds first to ensure we follow our first in first out best practices.

Instruction Implementation, Support & Evaluation

Virginia Literacy Act Advisory Workgroup Reconvenes Under Executive Order 4

Article: 2026-05-077
Audience: Superintendents, Directors, School Principals, Child Care Center Operators, Teachers, Non-teaching staff
Contact: Jill Nogueras, Associate Director of K-12 English & Literacy, jill.nogueras@doe.virginia.gov or vla@doe.virginia.gov

Executive Order 4 directs the Superintendent of Public Instruction to convene a state advisory workgroup to strengthen implementation of the Virginia Literacy Act. The workgroup shall:

- Recommend improvements to the student reading plan process and implementation, especially in the middle grades;
- Provide input to the Department of Education as they update student reading plan guidance and templates to align specific Virginia Language & Literacy Screening System skill deficits with evidence-based interventions;
- Advise the Department of Education on ways to continue to strengthen VAConnects to ensure that the technology meets the needs of the field and that data are being used to improve student outcomes; and
- Help the Department of Education elevate the importance of early literacy in partnership with associations, divisions, parents, and others.

The groups outlined to participate in the advisory workgroup in Executive Order 4 are noted below.

- Local school divisions
- Special education experts
- English language learner experts
- Higher education
- Education associations
- K-8 teachers
- Literacy researchers

The Virginia Literacy Act Advisory Work Group is anticipated to be a short-term working group, with the establishment of the work group taking place in March 2026, and the conclusion of the work group taking place on or before December 31, 2027. The first meeting will take place Thursday, April 16, 2026, from 3:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m., with the expectation that there will be quarterly meetings going forward. All meetings will take place in Richmond or hosted virtually.

Educators, administrators, system leaders, advocates, associations and community members are invited to submit applications for these positions. Applicants who speak a language other than English are encouraged to apply.

Applications may be submitted by completing this form online or emailing the completed pdf application to VLA@doe.virginia.gov.

All applications must be received by March 2, 2026.

Seeking Additional Innovative Assessment Workgroup Members

Article: 2026-05-076
Audience: Superintendents, Directors, School Principals, Teachers, Non-teaching staff
Contact: Mark Jennings, Assistant Superintendent of Assessment and Accountability, student_assessment@doe.virginia.gov

In response to Executive Order 4, the Virginia Department of Education is opening up the legislatively-required Innovative Assessment Workgroup for additional members. This Workgroup serves as an advisory board to the Department and helps inform the development of a new, innovative statewide assessment system.

The Department is appreciative of the 17 current members and is looking to expand membership.

Workgroup participants should have expertise in one or more of the following areas: assessment design and administration, using assessment outcomes to improve instruction, implementation and change management, testing accommodations, teaching and assessing a variety of student groups (multilingual learners, students with disabilities, advanced learners, etc.), or supporting students to improve academic outcomes.

The Innovative Assessment Workgroup will have monthly meetings beginning in March 2026. A full list of dates is shared in the application. All meetings will take place in Richmond or will be hosted virtually.

Educators, administrators, advocates, professional associations, parents, and community members are invited to submit applications. Applicants who speak a language other than English are encouraged to apply.

Applications may be submitted by completing this form.

All applications must be received by March 2, 2026.

Virginia Mathematics Task Force Application Open

Article: 2026-05-075
Audience: Superintendents, Directors, School Principals, Teachers, Non-teaching staff, Higher Education, Parents, Business, School Board members
Contact: Victoria Bohidar, Mathematics Coordinator, Victoria.bohidar@doe.virginia.gov or vdoe.mathematics@doe.virginia.gov

Chapter 725 of the Code of Virginia requires the Virginia Department of Education (the Department) to establish and oversee a Mathematics Advisory Task Force. The Task Force is charged with providing recommendations to improve mathematics education in elementary, middle, and high school. The recent signing of Executive Order Four by the Governor reinforces the Commonwealth's focus on academic excellence and high-quality public education for all students. This directive closely aligns with the purpose of this Task Force and emphasizes the importance of ensuring our efforts are fully aligned with statewide priorities and expectations.

There are currently 13 members on the Task Force. The Department is looking to expand its membership to incorporate a broader range of stakeholder perspectives and expertise in alignment with requirements in Executive Order 4 and Chapter 725.

The stakeholder representatives for the Mathematics Advisory Task Force indicated in Chapter 725 are noted below.

- K-12 Mathematics teachers
- Mathematics coaches and instructional leaders
- School administrators
- Higher education
- Parents
- Business leaders
- Division Superintendents
- Division School Board members
- Other stakeholders

The Mathematics Advisory Task Force will meet monthly, beginning in April after selection of additional members in March 2026. All meetings will take place in Richmond or be hosted virtually.

Educators, administrators, system leaders, advocates, associations, and community members are invited to submit applications for these positions. Applicants who speak a language other than English are encouraged to apply.

Applications may be submitted by completing this form online or emailing the completed pdf application to vdoe.mathematics@doe.virginia.gov.

All applications must be received by Monday, March 2, 2026.

Review of the K-12 Fine Arts *Standards of Learning*: Seeking Input from Parents, Students, Educators, and Other Virginia Arts Education Stakeholders

Article: 2026-05-073
Audience: Superintendents, Directors, School Principals, Educators, Parents, Students
Contact: Kelly Bisogno, Fine Arts Coordinator, vdoe.finearts@doe.virginia.gov

At the November 13, 2025, Board of Education meeting, the Virginia Department of Education was authorized to proceed with the K-12 Fine Arts *Standards of Learning* review process. It is anticipated that the review will be completed by June 2027.

An important part of the review process for the Fine Arts *Standards of Learning* is the solicitation of comments from classroom teachers, students, parents, administrators, curriculum supervisors, fine arts educators, and other stakeholders who have worked with the current standards. Comments may be submitted via the **2020 Fine Arts SOL Public Comment Form.** Public comments will be received for Visual Arts, Music, Theatre Arts, and Dance Arts from February 12- March 30, 2026.

Review of the K-12 Fine Arts *Standards of Learning*: Review Committee Interest Form – Responses Due March 30

Article: 2026-05-072
Audience: Superintendents, Directors, School Principals, Educators, Parents, Students
Contact: Kelly Bisogno, Fine Arts Coordinator, vdoe.finearts@doe.virginia.gov

At the November 13, 2025, Board of Education meeting, the Virginia Department of Education (the Department) was authorized to proceed with the K-12 Fine Arts *Standards of Learning* review process. It is anticipated that the review will be completed by June 2027.

As an important part of the review process for the Fine Arts *Standards of Learning*, review teams will meet in the summer of 2026 to review proposed revisions to the *Standards*. Educators, leaders, and additional stakeholders interested in taking part in the review process must complete the **2027 Fine Arts Review Committee Interest Form** to be contacted when the official application process opens. Dates, locations, compensation information, and the official application process will be provided in April 2026 to those who complete the form and qualify to serve on a review team. Interest form responses are due by **March 30, 2026.**

AI Part II: Into the Classroom

Article: 2026-05-070
Audience: Superintendents
Contact: Calypso Gilstrap, Executive Director of Innovation, calypso.gilstrap@doe.virginia.gov

The Virginia Association of School Superintendents (VASS), in partnership with Virtual Virginia and Advanced Learning Partnerships, has launched **AI Part II: Into the Classroom**, a statewide initiative designed to expand AI literacy and instructional confidence among educators across all school divisions in the Commonwealth.

Building on the AI Year of Learning, this next phase focuses on practical, safe, and classroom-ready applications of artificial intelligence, aligned with Virginia Department of Education guidance and local division needs.

Starting in spring 2026, educators will gain access to a three-tiered asynchronous learning pathway through the Virtual Virginia LMS, including foundational AI literacy, instructional integration strategies, and advanced practices such as teaching student AI literacy and evaluating AI tools.

To support long-term sustainability, VASS will also implement a train-the-trainer model, equipping divisions with local leaders who can guide ongoing implementation. All materials will meet accessibility standards and transition to VASS/VDOE ownership for continued use.

Superintendents can confirm participation through the VASS certification form.

Behavioral Health & Student Safety

Parent Notification Requirement and Webinar for Selecting Caregiver Materials Related to Student Safety Concerns – March 4

Article: 2026-05-074
Audience: Superintendents, Directors, School Principals, Teachers, Non-teaching staff, School Mental Health Professionals, School Resource Officers, K-12 Crisis Management Teams, and Behavioral Threat Assessment Teams
Contact: Sarah Bazemore, Behavioral Health and Instructional Supports Coordinator, Sarah.Bazemore@doe.virginia.gov

On January 8, 2026, the Virginia Board of Education approved the *Guidelines for Selecting Parent Materials Related to Student Safety Concerns*. The creation of these guidelines was driven by two bills passed in the 2025 General Assembly (HB2055 and HB2679) which update § 22.1-79.4 and § 22.1-272.1. It requires behavioral threat assessment and suicide risk assessment teams to provide parents or guardians with materials that help them recognize and respond to behaviors suggesting a student may pose a risk to self or others. It mandates that this information be shared either immediately upon initial parental notification or as soon as practicable following notification.

This bill also requires that parents be informed of the legal requirements regarding children's access to firearms under § 18.2-56.2. Approved caregiver materials can be located on the VDOE's Parent & Caregiver Resources for Self-Harm, Suicide, & Violence Prevention web page.

To assist Behavioral Threat Assessment and Suicide Risk Assessment Teams in implementing these notification requirements, a webinar will be held on March 4, 2026, from 2:30-3:15 p.m. Those interested in attending can register using the Selecting Caregiver Materials Related to Student Safety Concerns Webinar Registration Form. A recording will be sent to those who register.

Upcoming 2026 School Health Profiles Survey

Article: 2026-05-069
Audience: Superintendents, School Principals and Assistant Principals, Lead Health Educators
Contact: Joseph Wharff, Director of Behavioral Health and Student Safety, Joseph.Wharff@doe.virginia.gov

The VDOE and the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) continue to collaborate to improve health and educational outcomes for students across the Commonwealth. This spring (February-May), approximately 376 randomly selected schools will participate in the biennial VDH School Health Profiles Survey. It assesses school health education practices, policies, and activities. **This survey does not involve student participation.**

The data collected is vital to improving the quality and delivery of health services for Virginia's students. The VDOE remains committed to working with agency partners to ensure students stay healthy, safe, and ready to learn.

What to Expect: In the coming weeks, principals or assistant principals of selected schools will receive an email from the VDH containing a unique survey link. This link is intended specifically for the school principal and lead health educator. Contact Freda Williams, VDH Surveys Supervisor, at (804) 864-7863 or Freda.Williams@vdh.virginia.gov with any questions.

School Nutrition

School and Community Nutrition Programs Procurement Reminders and New Resources

Article: 2026-05-068
Audience: School Food Authorities and/or community sponsors
Contact: Sara Bennett, Director, Virginia Department of Education, Office of School and Community Nutrition Programs, sara.bennett@doe.virginia.gov

The Virginia Department of Education, Office of School and Community Nutrition Programs is committed to supporting sponsors' procurement efforts by providing guidance, reminders, and resources. Please review SCNP (Dir.) Memo #2025-2026-26 for more information on:

- the recent increase in federal purchasing thresholds,
- the Virginia law that requires public school divisions to give preference to Virginia goods and Virginia residents, and
- new and updated SCNP procurement resources available in SNPWeb Download Forms.

VDOE Careers

The Virginia Department of Education is hiring. Access the list of our current job openings to learn more and apply.