



VIRGINIA ASSOCIATION
OF SECONDARY SCHOOL
PRINCIPALS

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The Professional Association of Middle and High School Administrators

October 29, 2025

President Grace Turner Creasey
Virginia Board of Education
P.O. Box 2120
Richmond VA, 23218

Dear President Creasey and Members of the Board:

Members of the Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals (VASSP) appreciated the opportunities to provide feedback to the Virginia Department of Education on the proposed implementation of revised proficiency standards for Virginia students. Virginia's secondary principals share the Board's commitment to maintaining high academic standards and preparing every student for success beyond high school. However, we are deeply concerned that these significant changes are being advanced without the necessary time, communication, and resources to ensure effective implementation across divisions. Proceeding prematurely would jeopardize the credibility of the state's accountability system and create inequities for students and schools.

Planning Year Recommendation

VASSP strongly urges the Board to designate the 2025–2026 school year as a planning year with no proficiency changes. This time is essential for meaningful stakeholder engagement, professional learning, and resource alignment. Without a planning year, divisions will be forced to implement new expectations without adequate preparation, leading to confusion, inconsistency, and possible unintended harm to students. Implementing new cut scores during the current academic year would place schools in a difficult position and undermine the thoughtful, strategic rollout Virginia students deserve.

Graduation Requirement Consistency

VASSP strongly supports that the current proficiency and graduation requirements remain in effect for all students currently enrolled in high school, not only seniors. As clearly stated in 8VAC20-132-51, the graduation requirements established when a student enters ninth grade must remain consistent throughout that cohort's four-year period. Any mid-cohort change to proficiency cut scores would, in effect, alter graduation conditions—creating inequities, confusion, and potential legal challenges.

Communication and Support

Finally, secondary principals emphasize the importance of clear, consistent statewide communication and resource alignment during this transition. Divisions will need ready-to-use communication tools to help educators, families, and students understand the revised proficiency scale and its

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implications. Transparent messaging and equitable supports will be critical to maintaining trust and ensuring smooth implementation statewide.

Virginia's secondary principals remain deeply committed to high expectations for every learner. We support raising proficiency standards when it is done with purpose, clarity, and the resources necessary for success. VASSP looks forward to continued collaboration with the Board as we work together to strengthen outcomes for all students across the Commonwealth.

Sincerely,



Melanie Patterson, Ed.D.
VASSP President



Randy D. Barrack, Ed.D., Ph.D.
VASSP CEO