



VIRGINIA
IS FOR
LEARNERS

COVID AND PREK-12 EDUCATION IN VIRGINIA

Presented to
**The House Appropriations
Committee**

May 17, 2021

Dr. James F. Lane,
Superintendent of Public Instruction



Virginia Department of Education



Our **vision** is that Virginia will maximize the potential of all learners.

The **mission** of the Virginia Department of Education is to advance equitable and innovative learning.

“

Those who write the history of these times will tell about how **we responded to the needs of teachers, students and families.** Let's make sure we leave evidence of not only our recognition of the needs but also the determination, fervor and excellence with which we intervened.

- Dr. Rosa Atkins
Charlottesville Public Schools

”

State Action and Support for Schools

State Support for Schools

- Health and safety guidance for schools in collaboration with Va. Dept. of Health and Governor's Office
- Comprehensive **best practice resources** for divisions:
 - Virginia Learns Anywhere (April 2020)
 - Recover, Redesign, Restart (July 2020)
 - Virginia LEARNS (April 2021)
- Expansion of **Virtual Virginia**
- Regular standing calls and communications with Superintendents and School Leaders



Policy Waivers

EO51 (March 2020) and State of Emergency allows for regulatory waivers

State Superintendent waivers pursuant to language in the Appropriation Act (applicable during the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years and renewed for the 2021-2022 school year).

All waivers and relief measures issued to date are posted on the [VDOE website](#), including:

- State Accreditation
- Class Size Caps in certain circumstances
- Alternative Assessment Options for History/Social Science SOL Tests
- Locally Awarded Verified Credits
- VPI Funding and Enrollment
- Teacher Licensure
- Student Vision and Hearing Screening

Existing waivers will expire on July 1, 2021; new waivers issued under new authority will be considered for the 2021-2022 school year

Operational Overview of the 2020-2021 School Year

Enrollment Trends and ADM Projections

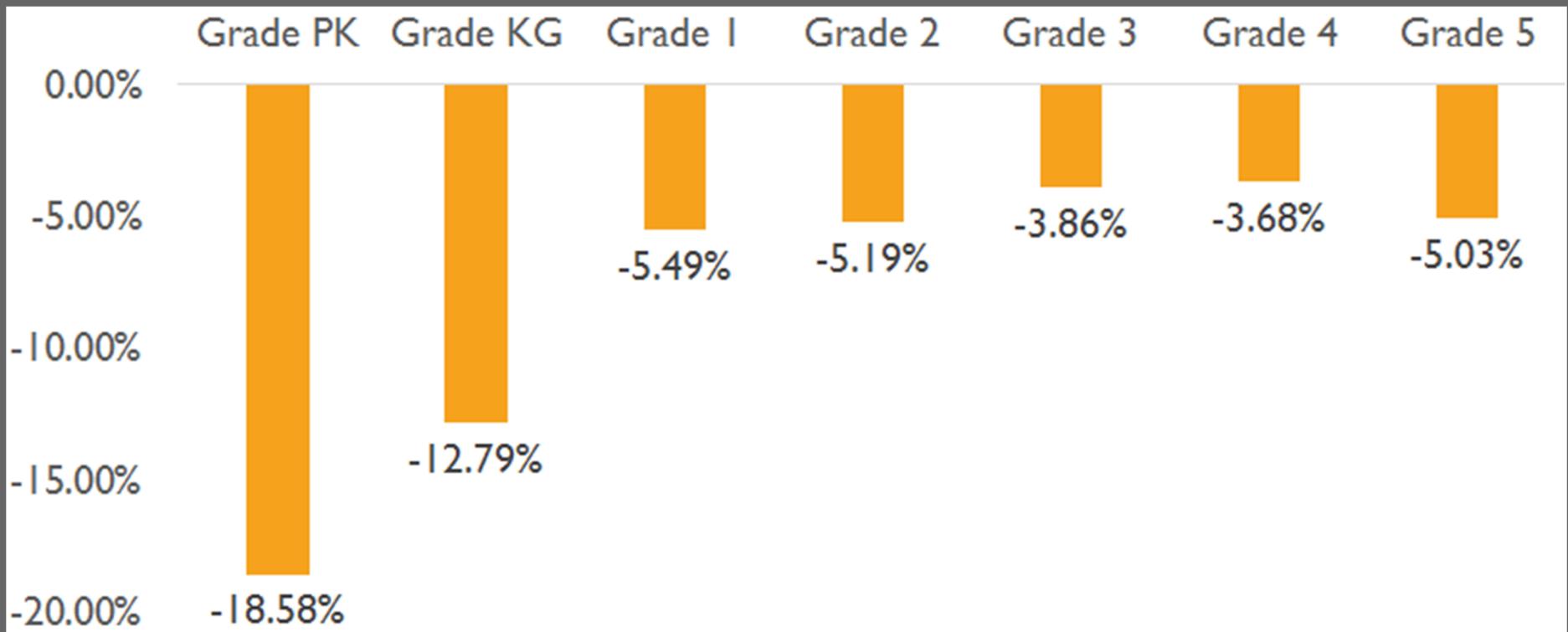
March 31, 2021 Average Daily Membership (ADM) Projections for FY2021 Funding

Chapter 1289 (2020) based on September 30, 2019 data	Chapter 552 (2021) based on September 30, 2020 data	Final Enrollment Count for March 31, 2021 ADM
1,257,189	1,213,093	1,210,463

March 31, 2021 actual = (46.726) from Chapter 1289 projection

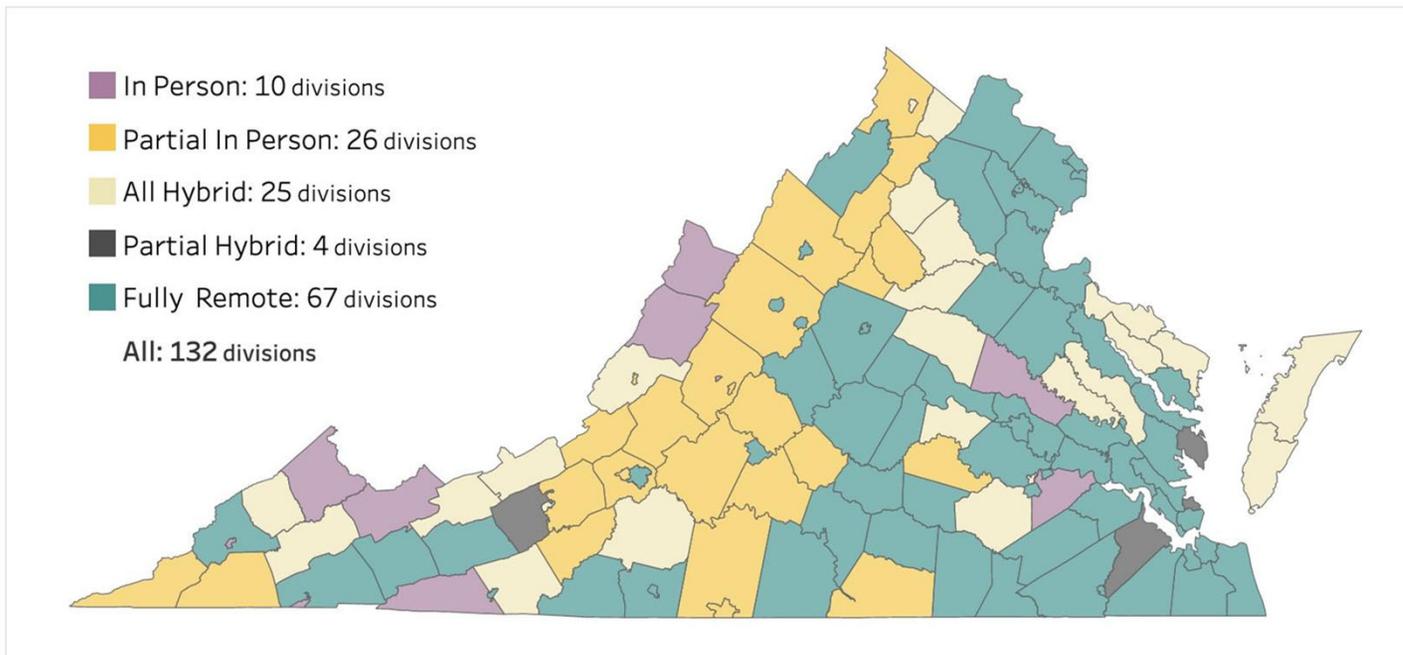
Enrollment Declines - Fall 2020

Changes in enrollment between 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years



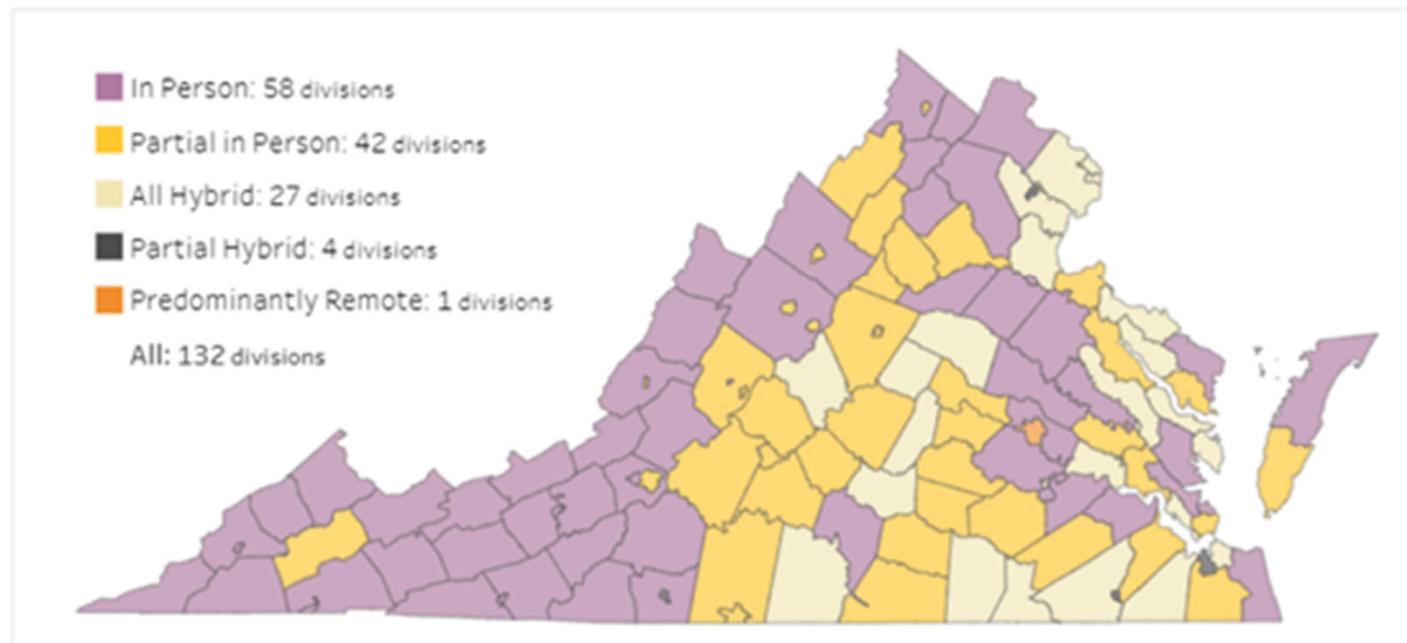
September 8, 2020

Virginia's Return to School Instructional Schedules School Year 2020-2021



May 3, 2021

Virginia's Return to School Instructional Schedules School Year 2020-2021



Student Health and Academic Impacts

Health and Mental Health Impacts on Children (As reported by Pediatricians to the Virginia AAP)

Significant Increases in:

- child and adolescent anxiety
- increases in depression
- changes in suicidal ideation
- child behavior problems
- parental stress

Smaller Increases in:

- adolescent drug, alcohol, or marijuana use
- eating disorders
- child abuse

Decreases in:

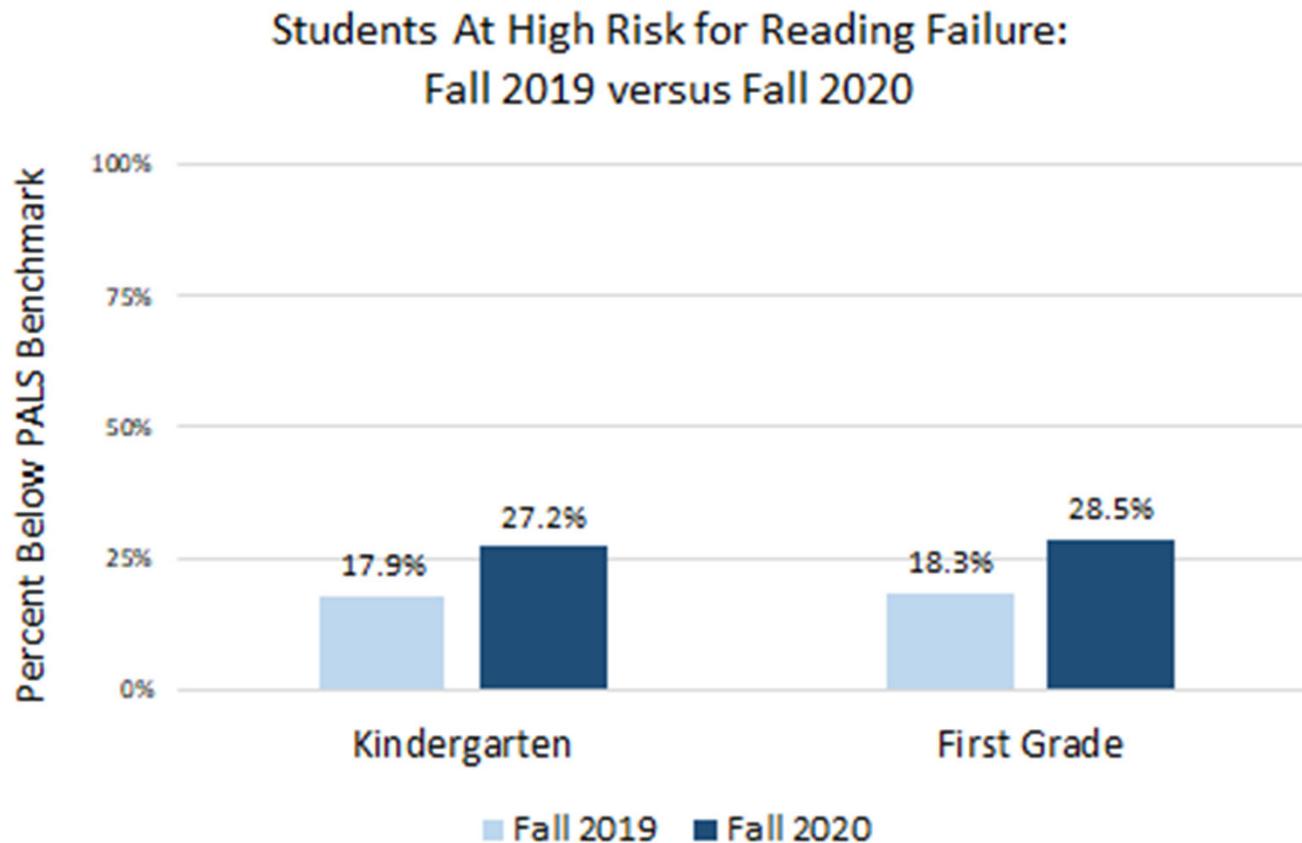
- child and adolescent physical activity
- quality sleep
- social and behavioral progress in children and adolescents with autism

Phonological Awareness Literacy (PALS) Screening Data



- The PALS K-3 screening tools identify students at-risk in early reading and this guides the allocation of EIRI funding to support early intervention.
- Students falling below the PALS benchmark are identified as being at high-risk for third-grade reading failure, in the absence of intervention.
- PALS data show significantly more kindergarten and first grade students starting the school year at high risk for reading failure compared to last year.
- The increase in kindergarten and first grade students starting the school year at high risk for reading failure was largest among students who are Black, Hispanic, economically disadvantaged and English learners (EL)

PALS Data



Young Learners

Fall 2020 data show a significant impact of COVID 19 on Virginia's youngest learners. Here are estimates of children entering kindergarten not ready:

When only using literacy (PALS)

- 26%



Using VKRP— literacy, math, self-regulation and social skills

- 45%



For students from low-income backgrounds

- 56%



Fall Growth Measures

Proportion Proficient Reading

grade	term	
	FL '19	FL'20
	Proj Prof	Proj Prof
3rd	0.55	0.61
4th	0.66	0.67
5th	0.68	0.67
6th	0.69	0.69
7th	0.69	0.68
8th	0.64	0.65

Proportion Proficient Math

grade	term	
	FL '19	FL'20
	Proj Prof	Proj Prof
3rd	0.75	0.74
4th	0.85	0.79
5th	0.79	0.73
6th	0.82	0.80
7th	0.73	0.71
8th	0.63	0.65

"...initial findings reveal students stayed relatively the same in reading, whereas math indicated substantially more unfinished learning."

VDOE Mid-year Report - Key Findings

- As compared to the first periodic report (November 2020), divisions report more elementary students at or above expected achievement levels.
- However, in both middle and high school, most divisions continue to report more students are failing 2 or more classes as compared to this time last year.
- Externally-provided data indicates that while we are seeing student growth in reading and mathematics over time, the growth is lower than in previous years.

SOL Testing

Federal Testing Policy

- Federal testing waivers were issued in the spring 2020
- No outright federal assessment waivers in the 2020-2021 school year, some flexibility offered

State Policy Waivers and Flexibilities:

- SOL tests will not be used for school accreditation
- Option for local assessment in Virginia-mandated history/social studies and writing (SOL option)
- New remote testing option for virtual students, will be reported separate from SOL test scores

Why?

- Consistent and reliable perspective on learning loss and unfinished learning
- Critical to informing recovery strategies at state and local levels
- Testing and reporting on student performance is still required by USED

Addressing Unfinished Learning

Virginia L.E.A.R.N.S.

Developed by statewide educational leaders in spring 2021

Resources and best practices for divisions related to:

- equitable response to the pandemic,
- curricula – especially in literacy and mathematics,
- remediation and intervention strategies,
- assessments,
- data analysis,
- student and staff wellness, and
- technology to support instruction and learning.

Recommendations on \$30M learning loss (from ESSER II) per the 2021 Session



<https://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/learns/index.shtm>

Summer 2021 Goals

- Spring assessment data will capture what students have mastered and what remains unfinished
- Prioritize opportunities for students who need the most support with recovery of unfinished learning
- Offer expanded summer opportunities, year-round opportunities and adding days to the next school year
- Simultaneously address social and emotional supports for students and staff
- Build confidence around in-person learning for those communities that have been the most hesitant to return



Looking Ahead to 2021-22

Through-Course Assessments

- Fall 2021 begins phased implementation of HB2027 /SB1357
- Grades 3- 8 math and reading
- Fall 2021 assessment will be shortened version of previous year's content
- Off grade level and mid-year assessments will be offered in 2022-2023

In-Person Instruction

- SB1303 requires divisions to offer in-person instruction to all enrolled students
- Full and part time virtual options may be offered by the division
- Allows for short term fully-remote experience if health conditions necessitate
- VDOE Benchmarks for Success coming soon on TownHall

Federal Relief Funding

Statewide Pandemic Response - Federal Relief Spending Priorities

Spring and Summer 2020

- Devices and MiFis for students
- Expansion of Virtual Virginia content
- Early childhood care and learning supports
- School nutrition
- Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) supports and screener
- Partnerships with PBS and Radio Poder

2020-2021 School Year and Beyond

- High quality instructional supports to address unfinished learning (learning loss)
- Expanded learning time for students
- Mental health and social emotional supports
- Continued support for Virtual Virginia (including statewide Learning Management System)
- LASER - statewide early intervention system
- Through course assessments

GA Action on COVID Relief for Schools

No Loss Funding

- \$278M in FY21 and \$164M in FY22 (general fund and COVID-19 Relief Fund)
- Ensures that no school division loses state funding in the 2020-2022 biennium, compared to the 2020 Special Session budget.

Learning Loss

- \$40M the first year from the Lottery Fund to support the state share of a set per pupil amount in support of one-time programs and initiatives.
- An additional \$30M the second year from CRSSA (CARES 2) for grant funding pursuant to stakeholder workgroup on remediation and recovery needs (Virginia LEARNS).

Other Investments from CRSSA (CARES 2)

- \$6M in FY22 to provide the state share of one additional year of high school attendance for students with disabilities.
- \$8.8M in FY22 to support Through Course Assessments
- \$7M in FY 22 to support Virtual Virginia and the statewide learning management system

Federal Relief Packages

Coronavirus Aid, Recovery, and Economic Security (CARES) Act (March 2020)

Award period: March 13, 2020 through September 30, 2022.

- \$44M from Governor's Discretionary Fund for PreK-12 (GEER I)
- \$214M formula driven to divisions (ESSER I)
- \$23.9M for state set-aside (ESSER I)

CARES Act - Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) (October 2020)

- \$220.8M to public school divisions on a per pupil basis

Federal Relief Packages Cont'd

Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSA) Act (aka CARES 2) (December 2020)

Award period: March 13, 2020 through September 30, 2023

- \$46.6M for non-public schools (EANS)
- \$30M Governor's Discretionary Fund (GEER II)
- \$845M formula-driven to divisions (ESSER II)
- \$101M state-set aside

American Recovery Plan Act (March 2021)

Award period: March 13, 2020 through September 30, 2024

- \$1.9B formula-driven to divisions (ESSER III)
- \$211M state set-aside

Utilization of CARES Act Funds

- \$214.7 M formula driven to divisions (ESSER I)
- \$16.1 M ESSER I state set-aside grants to LEAs
- \$43.4 M from Governor's Discretionary Fund for PreK-12 (GEER I; from \$66 M total GEER fund)

CARES Act Award	Award Amount	Percent Obligated	Percent Reimbursed
ESSER - Formula	\$214.7 million	100%	29.4%
ESSER - Grants to LEAs	\$16.1 million	100%	24.1%
ESSER - State Initiatives to Support LEAs	\$7 million	100%	6.6%
GEER - Grants to LEAs	\$29.9 million	100%	23.6%
GEER - Early Childhood	\$10 million	100%	7.5%
GEER - Virtual Virginia Expansion	\$3.5 million	100%	70.2%

Eligible ESSER I, II & III LEA Expenses

There are a wide variety of eligible expenses that Divisions can seek reimbursement for from ESSER I, II and III formula funds, including but not limited to:

- Activities authorized under federal programs like ESEA, IDEA, Perkins & McKinney-Vento;
- Developing and implementing procedures and systems to improve Division preparedness and response efforts;
- Cleaning, sanitizing, and associated training and planning;
- Educational technology;
- Mental health services and supports; and
- Planning and implementing activities to address the unique needs of low-income children or students, children with disabilities, English learners, racial and ethnic minorities, students experiencing homelessness, and foster care youth

CRSSA (ESSER II) and ARP (ESSER III) extended eligible uses to include school construction projects, facility repairs, improvement and air quality upgrades directly related to the COVID-19 pandemic..

CRSSA (CARES 2) and ESSER II

GA Action During 2021 Session

- Through Growth Assessments
- Learning loss grants (Virginia LEARNS Grants)
- Virtual Virginia and statewide LMS

State Set Aside

- Virtual Virginia expansion and assessment tools
- Social emotional supports and screener
- Statewide literacy initiative
- Teacher recruitment and retention
- LASER (statewide data analytics tool)

Division Allocations

- Same allowable expenses by divisions as ESSER I
- Extended uses for school facility repairs, improvements, and air quality upgrades

Emergency Assistance for Non-Public Schools (EANS)

Private schools were eligible to apply for funds directly from the VDOE for:

- Health and safety supplies, materials, and mitigation training for staff
- Educational technology for students and staff

ESSER II - Virginia LEARNS Grants

\$62.7M for Virginia LEARNS Recovery Grants

Includes \$30M, informed by Virginia LEARNS stakeholder workgroup, for:

- Increased in-person instruction and small-group learning;
- Targeted remediation, extended instruction, and enrichment;
- Strategic virtual learning, technology, and staff training;
- Social-emotional, behavioral, and mental health supports for students and staff;
- Alternate learning opportunities; and
- Student-progress monitoring and assessment.

Additional \$25M from ESSER II and \$7.7 in general funds for planning and implementation of year-round schools or extended calendars.

Additional Requirements of ARP and ESSER III

Division allocations:

- Two-thirds of funds available now, remaining will be available after U.S. Ed approves Virginia's ARP Plan
- Allowable expenses include ESSER I and II uses; however additional requirements have been added.
- Divisions must reserve 20% to address learning loss
- We are still awaiting additional guidance on capital expenses beyond those explicitly listed
- With 30 days of receiving funds, Division must post in-person instruction plan on its website
- Within 90 days, Division must post public plan for using ARP funds
- Local maintenance of equity requirement - divisions must not reduce per-pupil funding in FY22 or FY23 that disproportionately impacts high-poverty schools

ARP State Set Aside and State Priorities

Parameters of ARP State Set Aside

- 5% for learning loss - \$105 M
- 1% for evidence-based summer programs - \$21 M
- 1% for evidence-based after school programs - \$21 M

Other Requirements:

- State plan developed in consultation with stakeholders
- State maintenance of effort and maintenance of equity requirements (can't disproportionately impact high-poverty schools)

State Needs and Priorities:

- Unfinished learning, particularly early math and literacy
- Target those students most impacted
- Workforce support - including teacher recruitment and retention
- Addressing mental health needs of students
- Building confidence with safe in-person instruction

Questions and Discussion