

Governor Spanberger's Executive Order 4

Delivering on the Call to Strengthen Public Education in Virginia



Overview

On January 17, 2026, Governor Abigail Spanberger issued **Executive Order 4 (EO4)**, establishing a clear, statewide commitment to academic excellence and high-quality public education for every student in Virginia. The Executive Order directed state education leaders to strengthen support for students, families and educators, lead a Listening Tour, and take action by **prioritizing high-quality literacy and math instruction, aligned assessment and accountability systems, and meaningful stakeholder engagement.**



EO4 emphasizes key focus areas, both as topics for the Listening Tour and as separate actions for the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE). These are: literacy instruction and continued implementation of the Virginia Literacy Act, math instruction, innovative assessment work, and the accountability and accreditation system.

2026 Commonwealth Listening Tour

The Commonwealth Listening Tour: Speak Up for Virginia's Future has been successfully completed, fulfilling EO4's directive to conduct a statewide listening effort within the first 100 days. The VDOE and the Secretary of Education engaged stakeholders **across all regions through in-person sessions**, complemented by **targeted virtual sessions and a statewide survey** to ensure broad access and participation.

"Thank you again for taking the time to set the groundwork and tone for the next four years. It is incredibly important and has the potential to be a true game changer when we know we are all leaning in together for the greater good of Virginia's education system."

-A Participating Superintendent

Each regional stop included multiple engagement opportunities—student roundtables, small stakeholder discussions with teachers, school leaders, parents and community members, site visits, and large public listening sessions—designed to capture diverse perspectives from educators, families, students, and community members. In total, **more than 2,200 participants** contributed feedback across more than **50 hours of engagement**. Input from the tour has been synthesized into a report to the Governor and will inform ongoing work across literacy, mathematics, assessment, and accountability priorities.

Commonwealth Listening Tour by the Numbers – 2,282 Participants

562

Participants in
Roundtable Sessions

967

Survey Respondents

422

Participants in Public
Evening Sessions

218

Virtual Session
Participants

113

Students Participated
in Student
Roundtables

Fulfilling the Charge of EO4

In addition to the Commonwealth Listening Tour, EO4 directed VDOE to expand membership on key advisory bodies, sustain and refine the implementation of the Virginia Literacy Act, issue a report to the Governor on Mathematics Instruction in Virginia, and contemplate refinements to Virginia’s assessment and accountability systems.

Virginia Literacy Act

EO4 directed VDOE to sustain literacy progress and strengthen implementation of the Virginia Literacy Act.

Completed - Opened membership to a broad range of stakeholders, drawing 338 applications. - Selected 24 people to establish new Statewide Literacy Advisory Workgroup, which convened for the first time on April 16 in partnership with Virginia Literacy Partnerships.	Continuing - Gathering stakeholder input to identify operational challenges and practical improvements. - Continuing Virginia Literacy Act implementation while refining tools and supports. - Improving VAConnects, Virginia’s new integrated data system, in time for the 2026-27 school year.
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Mathematics Instruction

EO4 required continued focus on rigorous math instruction, stronger stakeholder input, and faster action to expand access to advanced math teaching and learning.

Completed - VDOE submitted a report on mathematics education to the Governor in February 2026. - Received 247 applications and selected 12 new members for the Math Task Force. - Awarded \$10 million in Mathematics Innovation Grants to 27 school divisions.	Continuing - Utilizing state funds to expand advanced math opportunities, teacher learning, and credentialing supports. - Expanding the VDOE mathematics unit to provide more targeted support to schools and teachers. - Continuing Task Force work to develop recommendations on student pathways and teacher licensure changes.
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Innovative Assessment

EO4 called for stronger assessment system that supports high-quality teaching and learning.

Completed - Expanded membership of the Innovative Assessment Workgroup by 19 individuals, after receiving 188 applications. - Continued work with national experts to shape recommendations for new statewide system.	Continuing - Planning the next generation of Virginia’s assessment system, including accessibility and better reporting. - Issuing an RFP for a new statewide assessment vendor. - Implementing legislative reforms for the 2026-27 school year.
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School Accountability

EO4 required an after-action review of the first year of Virginia’s new school measurement system, known as the School Performance and Support Framework (SPSF), and a plan for improvement.

Completed - Corrected 2025 SPSF results for 26 schools. - Produced after-action report on VDOE’s rollout of the SPSF in 2025, used findings to inform internal processes and launched 2026 processes with new internal governance structures and operating protocols. - Gathered feedback during the Commonwealth Listening Tour about refinements needed to SPSF, including feedback related to JLARC’s recommendations.	Continuing - Incorporating stakeholder feedback into proposals under consideration by the Board for the fall 2026 results. - Using JLARC and stakeholder feedback to inform proposals that will be brought to the Board for future year changes to SPSF (fall 2027 results and beyond). - Collaborating with divisions and offering additional opportunities for public input as changes are considered.
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