

**BOARD OF EDUCATION  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: 2012-2017**



**Board of Education  
Commonwealth of Virginia**

**Adopted  
October 2012**

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As of October 25, 2012**

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# BOARD OF EDUCATION COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: 2012-2017

## *Executive Summary*

### **Purpose of the Comprehensive Plan**

The Board of Education's *Comprehensive Plan: 2012-2017* updates the Board's previous plan, which covered the years 2007-2012. The Comprehensive Plan provides the framework for the policy development and leadership needed to achieve the Board's mission.

### **Board of Education's Mission: Improve Student Achievement and Ensure College and Career Readiness**

The mission of the Board of Education and Superintendent of Public Instruction, in cooperation with their partners, is to develop policies and provide leadership that improve student achievement and prepare students to succeed in postsecondary education and the workplace.

### **Priorities and Goals for Public Education: 2012-2017**

The Board of Education's goals are a roadmap for providing exceptional educational opportunities for all public school students in Virginia. In pursuing these, the Board has designated the following overarching priorities:

#### **Priority 1: Accountability in Student Achievement**

Ensuring that Virginia's accountability system sets benchmarks to gauge the academic achievement of Virginia's students and schools compared to their peers across the state, the nation, and internationally, is a top priority of the Board. It is important to expand the method used for school accreditation to a multi-dimensional and multi-tiered system that recognizes the differences in student achievement. Achieving a minimum level of proficiency for all students will remain a top indicator for accountability, but accountability should also incorporate student academic progress and decreases in achievement gaps.

#### **Priority 2: Educator Professionalism**

The Board of Education places a high priority on strengthening the level of professionalism of our educators, including highly effective teachers, principals, superintendents, and other school division personnel. The Board recognizes the importance of recruiting and retaining the best and brightest educators and the need for more professional development opportunities. The Commonwealth must find better ways to encourage, reward, and support our educators. The Board will set policies with this in mind and provide leadership to achieve this critical goal.

#### **Priority 3: Community Engagement**

Engaging the public and all major stakeholders in the actions of the Board is another top priority. Community engagement helps to ensure transparency, improve decision making, and ensure proper understanding and implementation of Board policies. Parents, teachers, superintendents, school boards, education advocacy organizations, business leaders, the General Assembly, and the public must be engaged early in the process with clear and understandable communications from the Board. The Board will use a variety of media sources to reach out to the public regarding its goals and activities.

In addition to these priorities, the Board has developed the following seven goals to help achieve its mission of improving student achievement and college and career readiness:

**Goal 1: Accountability for Student Learning**

The Board of Education will support accountability for all public schools by establishing policies that help schools increase the academic success of all students, especially those who are at-risk or in underperforming school systems. Incorporating student academic progress and narrowing of achievement gaps into the accountability system will provide for a more comprehensive identification of student achievement at each school.

**Goal 2: Rigorous Standards to Promote College and Career Readiness**

The Board of Education will continue to raise the bar on academic performance standards to ensure global competitiveness. Our schools will lead the nation in rigor and quality, and our students will excel in postsecondary education and/or in the global workplace. Building on the success of the Standards of Learning (SOL) program, more rigorous and relevant expectations will continue to be implemented that meet or exceed national and international benchmarks for college and career readiness. Particular emphasis will be placed on supporting the attainment of literacy and mathematics skills for all students, pre-K through grade 12.

**Goal 3: Expanded Opportunities to Learn**

The Board of Education will put in place policies and initiatives that expand learning opportunities for all children. These policies and initiatives will include high-quality charter schools, college partnership laboratory schools, online learning programs, and Governor’s Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) academies. Such learning opportunities provide options for parents and students while allowing communities and educators to create innovative instructional programs that can be replicated elsewhere in the public school system.

**Goal 4: Nurturing Young Learners**

The Board of Education will work cooperatively with partners to promote new and innovative partnerships that help to ensure that all children enter kindergarten with the skills they need for success in school.

**Goal 5: Highly Qualified and Effective Educators**

The Board of Education will establish policies and standards that strengthen the preparation, recruitment, and retention of the best and brightest educators, including meaningful and ongoing professional development, especially in teacher shortage areas and in hard-to-staff schools.

**Goal 6: Sound Policies for Student Success**

The Board of Education will provide leadership to implement the provisions of state and federal laws and regulations in effective and efficient ways that expand opportunities for all of Virginia’s school children to excel academically.

**Goal 7: Safe and Secure Schools**

The Board of Education will provide leadership to create safe and secure school environments.

### **Assessment of the Extent to Which the Goals are Being Met**

The Board believes that accountability in Virginia's public schools begins at the top. Accordingly, the Board will publish and regularly update a report card on the extent to which its goals are being met, as evidenced by certain performance measures.

## A Report Card on the Board's Performance Measures

Performance Measures to Gauge Progress in Meeting Goals	Results 2011-2012	1 Year Trend	3 Year Trend Change from 2009-2010
Percent of third-grade students reading on grade level	86%	↑ (3)	↑ (3)
Percent of 8th grade students taking Algebra I or higher in middle school	52.5%	↑ (3.7)	↑ (7.6)
Virginia on-time graduation rate	88%	↑ (1.4)	↑ (2.5)
High school dropout rate	6.5 %	↑ (-0.7)	↑ (-1.7)
Federal graduation indicator (students earning Advanced Studies or Standard Diplomas in at least four years)	82.9%	↑ (1.3)	↑ (3.1)
Percent of graduates earning advanced studies diplomas	48.6% <sup>1</sup>	↑ (1.3)	↑ (2.9)
Percent of students scoring advanced proficient on statewide assessments English (Reading and Writing)	35.1%	↓ (1.2)	↓ (1.4)
Mathematics	11.1%	NA <sup>2</sup>	NA
History and Social Science	29.1%	↑ (0.5)	NA <sup>3</sup>
Science	29.2%	↑ (0.7)	↑ (0.4)
Number of at-risk four-year-olds served by Virginia Preschool Initiative	16,618	↑ (737)	↑ (717)
Percentage of teachers Nationally Board Certified	1.96%	↑ (0.14)	↑ (0.27)
Number of CTE students who earned one or more Board-approved credential(s)	42,218	↑ (11,605)	↑ (17,963)
Percent of schools rated fully accredited	93%	↓ (3) <sup>4</sup>	↓ (5) <sup>5</sup>
Number of innovative options reviewed by the Board Charter School Applications	3	↑ (3)	X <sup>6</sup>
College Lab School Applications	0	↔	X <sup>7</sup>
Governor's STEM or Health Science Academies	5	↑ (4)	↑ (5)
Percent of schools that maintain a passing rate on Virginia assessment tests of 95% or above in each of the four core academic areas	0.6%	↓ (3.02)	↓ (4.22)
Number of schools earning recognition under Virginia Index of Performance	447 <sup>8</sup>	↓ (281)	↓ (275)
Number of schools that are chronically low performing by state and federal standards <sup>9</sup>	8 schools	↓ (1 school)	↑ (1 school)
Percent of schools and divisions meeting or exceeding federal accountability measures	68%	NA <sup>10</sup>	NA

Performance Improving ↑  
 Performance Declining ↓  
 Performance Maintained ↔  
 Data Not Available X

1 Represents 9th grade cohort.

2 New, more rigorous Mathematics tests were implemented in 2011-2012.

3 New, more rigorous History and Social Science tests were implemented in 2010-2011.

4 Results of the new college-and career-ready mathematics tests, first introduced during 2011-2012, are included in the accreditation ratings

5 The Board introduced a "graduation and completion index" in 2010-2011 as a new accountability factor for high schools, in addition to student achievement on state tests

6 Process for Board review of charter school applications was not in place until January 2011

7 Process for Board review of college lab school applications was not in place until January 2011

8 The Board revised the criteria for awards in 2012 to promote an increasing focus on college and career readiness and STEM

9 Schools accredited with warning, denied accreditation, or conditional accreditation (not new) for 3 or more years

10 The Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) and related accountability requirements were established by the Board as part of the Commonwealth's No Child Left Behind (NCLB) flexibility waiver in 2012.

## **Strategies for Improving Student Achievement**

Setting high goals for public education in the Commonwealth is important to achieving the Board's mission, but equally important is identifying the strategies to achieve these goals. These strategies are described below:

### ***Goal 1: Accountability for Student Learning***

- Review and revise the *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia* (SOA)
- Report the accreditation status of each school in the Commonwealth
- Establish and monitor the requirements of schools not meeting full accreditation status
- Set new annual measurable objectives (AMOs) and monitor each school's and division's progress in meeting them, pursuant to Virginia's *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965* (ESEA) waiver
- Monitor school improvement interventions
- Revise graduation requirements to promote college and career ready standards
- Revise criteria for the Virginia Index of Performance
- Review requests for alternative accreditation plans
- Identify cost-effective ways to measure Virginia students' achievement on recognized international benchmarks

### ***Goal 2: Rigorous Standards to Promote College and Career Readiness***

- Review and revise the Standards of Quality (SOQ) and the Standards of Accreditation (SOA)
- Continue to review and revise the Standards of Learning (SOL)
- Adopt rigorous cut scores for SOL assessments
- Adopt lists of approved textbooks
- Approve substitute tests for verified credit
- Approve lists of industry certification examinations, occupational competency assessments, and licenses
- Approve courses to satisfy graduation requirements
- Review and approve increased graduation requirements from local school divisions

### ***Goal 3: Expanded Opportunities to Learn***

- Review and approve innovative programs
- Revise the criteria, application and procedures for charter school applicants
- Revise the criteria, application and procedures for college partnership laboratory school applicants
- Review charter school applications and determine if they meet the Board's criteria
- Review and approve college partnership laboratory school applications
- Review and revise criteria for multidivision online providers
- Develop regulations for full-time virtual schools
- Approve the establishment of Governor's Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Academies

***Goal 4: Nurturing Young Learners***

- Collaborate with education partners to improve and expand pre-K educational opportunities
- Support the Virginia Preschool Initiative, the Title I Preschool Program, the Early Childhood Special Education Program, the Smart Beginnings Local Coalitions, Virginia's Star Quality Initiative, and the Head Start programs
- Review and revise Virginia's Foundation Blocks For Early Learning: Comprehensive Standards for Four-Year-Olds
- Support coordination and alignment between early childhood programs and the K-12 system

***Goal 5: Highly Qualified and Effective Educators***

- Approve strong education preparation programs of Virginia's colleges and universities
- Review and revise the *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria* and effectively implement
- Support professional development opportunities for educators
- License highly qualified and effective educators
- Support educator recognition programs

***Goal 6: Sound Policies for Student Success***

- Support reform of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965* (ESEA)
- Monitor progress of schools, divisions, and the state in meeting ESEA annual measurable objectives
- Publicly report status of Virginia public schools in meeting state and federal accountability measures
- Regularly update and publish report card on selected Board performance measures
- Respond to the increased demand for data related to the State Fiscal Stabilization Funds (SFSF) and other programs under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)
- Conduct periodic review and revision of Board of Education regulations that have not undergone such review in significant years
- Review and revise guideline documents to comport with state or federal legislative changes

***Goal 7: Safe and Secure Schools***

- Conduct periodic review and revision of Board of Education regulations that have not undergone such review in significant years
- Review and revise guideline documents to comport with state or federal legislative changes
- Continue collaborations for prevention programs in schools



### **Forecast of Enrollment Changes**

Over the past decade, Virginia's population has grown 13 percent. The urban crescent of Northern Virginia, the Richmond region, and Hampton Roads witnessed the vast majority of this growth, and Northern Virginia alone accounted for more than half of the state's total growth.

Not only is Virginia changing in size, but also in composition. Over the past decade, all eight regions saw increased diversity through growing Hispanic and Asian populations. Statewide, the number of Hispanic Virginians nearly doubled, while the number of Asian Virginians increased by almost 70 percent.

Enrollment in Virginia's public schools has also increased steadily for the past ten years, and projections for the next five years indicate this trend will continue, especially in elementary grades and along the urban crescent, mirroring the growth witnessed by the state's overall population changes.

The challenges for our public schools become more acute in light of Virginia's changing demographics, which show that its population is increasingly diverse and includes more limited English proficient students and economically disadvantaged students.

### **Assessment of the Needs of Public Education**

The Board of Education sees challenging years ahead as school divisions and the Virginia Department of Education continue to face limited resources and higher expectations. Schools and administrators are under tremendous pressure to reduce costs, trim programs, streamline work, and redefine how work gets done, while increasing student achievement, decreasing achievement gaps, and better preparing students for post-secondary education and careers. Finding ways to maintain momentum and do more with less has been, and will continue to be, a challenge. The support and active involvement of our partners, from parents and local boards to businesses and lawmakers, will be vital.

Current economic conditions remind us more than ever that the key to economic recovery is a strong education system. The Board of Education will continue to think creatively and work collaboratively to make sure that its goals and strategies are relevant, practical, and effective.

## Statutory Requirement for Updating the Comprehensive Plan

§ [22.1-253.13:6](#). Standard 6. Planning and public involvement.

A. The Board of Education shall adopt a statewide comprehensive, unified, long-range plan based on data collection, analysis, and evaluation. Such plan shall be developed with statewide participation. The Board shall review the plan biennially and adopt any necessary revisions. The Board shall post the plan on the Department of Education's website if practicable, and, in any case, shall make a hard copy of such plan available for public inspection and copying.

This plan shall include the objectives of public education in Virginia, including strategies for improving student achievement then maintaining high levels of student achievement; an assessment of the extent to which these objectives are being achieved; a forecast of enrollment changes; and an assessment of the needs of public education in the Commonwealth. In the annual report required by § [22.1-18](#), the Board shall include an analysis of the extent to which these Standards of Quality have been achieved and the objectives of the statewide comprehensive plan have been met. The Board shall also develop, consistent with, or as a part of, its comprehensive plan, a detailed comprehensive, long-range plan to integrate educational technology into the Standards of Learning and the curricula of the public schools in Virginia, including career and technical education programs. The Board shall review and approve the comprehensive plan for educational technology and may require the revision of such plan as it deems necessary...

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**BOARD OF EDUCATION  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: 2012-2017**

**Preparing Today's Students for Success**

*Economists have long seen a connection between the strength of nations' education systems and their long-term economic prosperity. While myriad factors, including the stability of a country's economic, political, and legal institutions, can contribute to national productivity, researchers say, an educated workforce is widely regarded as critical to producing innovations and allowing businesses to make use of them.*

"The Global Challenge - Education in a Competitive World"  
Quality Counts 2012, an annual report published by  
Education Week

The latest edition of Education Week's Quality Counts "The Global Challenge - Education in a Competitive World," is just one in a handful of reports and publications that states this clear fact - an educated work force is critical to a nation's long term economic prosperity.

While the Commonwealth and the United States continue to make progress and increase the educational attainment of its citizens, the Quality Counts 2012 report notes that our moderate increases or maintenance of efforts may not be enough. The report goes on to say,

*"From a statistical standpoint, "there is no decline on any measure that we have for the United States," says Andreas Schleicher, the head of education indicators and analysis for the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the Paris-based group that administers PISA. The issue, he says, is that "the rate of improvement in other countries, in terms of getting more people into school and educating them well, is steeper."*

The status quo is not enough. The questions for the Board of Education as it sets its goals for the coming years are clear: *Will Virginia's young people be ready? Are our students advancing at a high enough rate to keep pace with global competitors? Will they be equipped with the knowledge and skills they need to be successful in the global economy? What is the role of the Board of Education in leading the charge for academic excellence?*

With these questions about the future sharply in mind, the Virginia Board of Education has set its mission and goals for the next several years. By working with its many partners, the Board of Education intends to move Virginia's education system dramatically forward by fostering the development of a 21st century skills pipeline that will prepare today's students to be tomorrow's working adults in our increasingly complex and diverse global society.

## **Board of Education's Mission**

The mission of the Board of Education and Superintendent of Public Instruction, in cooperation with their partners, is to develop policies and provide leadership that improve student achievement and prepare students to succeed in postsecondary education and the workplace.

The Board of Education's mission and goals for public education support lifelong academic and career achievement for all students in the Commonwealth. Virginia's young people are the hope of a bright future not only for themselves and their families, but for the state, the nation, and the rapidly expanding international economy. It is clear we are not only preparing our students to succeed in postsecondary education and the workplace, but to be globally competitive in the 21st century. By creating an exceptional statewide system of public education and meeting the increasingly diverse needs of students, our youth will thrive as they live and work in an expanding and complex global economy.

The reality is that our economic future depends on the graduates of today. A public education system that prepares students to be capable, responsible and self-reliant citizens in the global society is no longer an aspiration, but is a necessity.

The Board of Education's mission statement and goals for public education provide the framework for a world-class statewide system of public schools that elevate students in every zip code of the Commonwealth. The Board's mission is forward-looking and clear - increase student achievement and ensure college and career readiness - and the policies of the Board acknowledge the programs and services provided by Virginia's public schools to meet the increasingly diverse needs of students who will live, compete, and work in an expanding and complex worldwide economy.

The goals, strategies, and performance measures within this document describe how the Board of Education intends to accomplish its mission.

## **Priorities and Goals for Public Education: 2012-2017**

The Board of Education's goals are a roadmap for providing exceptional educational opportunities for all public school students in Virginia.

The Board of Education's goals support holding schools accountable for student achievement, expanding learning opportunities for all students, and sustaining a public school system in which all students learn at high academic levels and are prepared for college and career success. The goals reaffirm the Board of Education's desire to see each child as a unique learner and to ensure that Virginia's schools and teachers are equipped to tailor instruction to each child's needs. Finally, the goals, taken as a whole, embrace the student-centered approach that is instrumental in helping all of Virginia's children, regardless of their personal circumstance, make great strides in achievement.

While all the goals are important to provide a comprehensive system of effective and safe public education, the Board has designated the following overarching priorities:

**Priority 1: Accountability in Student Achievement**

Ensuring that Virginia's accountability system sets benchmarks to gauge the academic achievement of Virginia's students and schools compared to their peers across the state, the nation, and internationally is a top priority of the Board.

Virginia's accountability system supports teaching and learning by setting rigorous academic standards – known as the Standards of Learning (SOL) – and through annual assessments of student achievement. A school's state accreditation rating reflects overall achievement in the four core academic areas of English, history/social science, mathematics and science. In addition, high schools must meet a minimum benchmark for graduation and completion.

The federal *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965* (ESEA) requires states to establish annual measurable objectives (AMOs) for raising overall reading and mathematics achievement and the achievement of student subgroups. Virginia, under ESEA flexibility waivers, has established AMOs designed to reduce proficiency gaps between high- and low-performing schools within six years. The Commonwealth no longer issues Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) ratings but does report on the performance of schools and student subgroups in meeting the AMOs. Schools must develop and implement improvement plans to raise the achievement of student subgroups not meeting annual objectives. Low-performing schools identified as Priority and Focus schools are subject to specific interventions.

It is important to expand the method used for school accreditation ratings to a multi-dimensional and multi-tiered system that recognizes the differences in student achievement. One of the most pressing education-policy challenges that Virginia currently faces is the persistent achievement gaps that exist among subgroups of students. The disparity is evident on statewide and national measures of achievement, including on-time graduation rates, dropout rates, Standards of Learning test performance, NAEP, SAT, and Advanced Studies diploma rates.

Achieving a minimum level of proficiency for all students will remain a top indicator for accountability, but accountability should also incorporate student academic progress and decreases in achievement gaps. An accountability system that takes into account goals, such as college readiness, AP enrollment, graduation rates, and other achievement measures creates a more comprehensive picture of school performance.

While the state accountability system helps compare schools within the Commonwealth, it lacks sufficient data to benchmark the performance of its students on international tests such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). Recognizing the reality that our graduates must compete successfully in a global economy, the Board will identify cost-effective ways to measure the achievements of Virginia students on recognized international benchmarks.

## **Priority 2: Educator Professionalism**

The Board of Education places a high priority on strengthening the level of professionalism of our educators, including highly effective teachers, principals, superintendents, and other school division personnel. The Board recognizes the importance of recruiting and retaining the best and brightest educators, and the need for more professional development opportunities. The Commonwealth must find better ways to encourage, reward, and support our educators, and the Board will set policies with this in mind, and provide leadership to achieve this critical goal.

The Board of Education had made it a priority to provide leadership and develop policies to support recruiting and retaining the best and brightest educators. Through policies related to preparation, certification, evaluation, and licensing, the Board will emphasize the need to support, encourage, and reward our education leaders. The Board also acknowledges the need for more training and professional development opportunities. The Board will continue to elevate the status of the professional through their leadership and advocacy.

## **Priority 3: Community Engagement**

Engaging the public and all major stakeholders in the actions of the Board is another top priority. Community engagement helps to ensure transparency, improve decision making, and ensure proper understanding and implementation of Board policies. Parents, teachers, superintendents, school boards, education advocacy organizations, business leaders, the General Assembly, and the public must be engaged early in the process with clear and understandable communication from the Board. The Board will use a variety of media sources to reach out to the public regarding their goals and activities.

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The Board of Education will continue to raise the bar on academic performance standards to ensure global competitiveness. Our schools will lead the nation in rigor and quality, and our students will excel in postsecondary education and/or in the global workplace. Building on the success of the SOL program, more rigorous and relevant expectations will continue to be implemented that meet or exceed national and international benchmarks for college and career readiness. Particular emphasis will be placed on supporting the attainment of literacy and mathematics skills for all students, pre-K through grade 12.

### **Goal 3: Expanded Opportunities to Learn**

The Board of Education will put in place policies and initiatives that expand learning opportunities for all children. These policies and initiatives will include high-quality charter

schools, college partnership laboratory schools, online learning programs, and Governor's Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) academies. Such learning opportunities provide options for parents and students while allowing communities and educators to create innovative instructional programs that can be replicated elsewhere in the public school system.

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The Board of Education will establish policies and standards that strengthen the preparation, recruitment, and retention of the best and brightest educators, including meaningful and ongoing professional development, especially in teacher shortage areas and in hard-to-staff schools.

**Goal 6: Sound Policies for Student Success**

The Board of Education will provide leadership to implement the provisions of state and federal laws and regulations in effective and efficient ways that expand opportunities for all of Virginia's school children to excel academically.

**Goal 7: Safe and Secure Schools**

The Board of Education will provide leadership to create safe and secure school environments.

**Assessment of the Extent to Which the Goals are Being Met**

The Virginia Board of Education is committed to assessing its progress in meeting its goals. A multitude of factors can impact students' learning, from unhealthy behaviors to high poverty or poor nutrition. In addition, it will take years for the impact of many of the actions taken by the Board to be seen in achievement measures. Therefore, measures related to student outcomes will be considered over time and in conjunction with metrics that provide immediate information about the Board's progress in achieving its goals.

There are several key indicators of student outcomes that provide critical information on the successes and challenges our schools face. A report card on the Board's performance measures includes current results, one year trend, and three year trend of certain indicators.



## A Report Card on the Board's Performance Measures

Performance Measures to Gauge Progress in Meeting Goals	Results 2011-2012	1 Year Trend	3 Year Trend Change from 2009-2010
Percent of third-grade students reading on grade level	86%	↑ (3)	↑ (3)
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Percent of graduates earning advanced studies diplomas	48.6% <sup>11</sup>	↑ (1.3)	↑ (2.9)
Percent of students scoring advanced proficient on statewide assessments English (Reading and Writing)	35.1%	↓ (1.2)	↓ (1.4)
Mathematics	11.1%	NA <sup>12</sup>	NA
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Percentage of teachers Nationally Board Certified	1.96%	↑ (0.14)	↑ (0.27)
Number of CTE students who earned one or more Board-approved credential(s)	42,218	↑ (11,605)	↑ (17,963)
Percent of schools rated fully accredited	93%	↓ (3) <sup>14</sup>	↓ (5) <sup>15</sup>
Number of innovative options reviewed by the Board Charter School Applications	3	↑ (3)	X <sup>16</sup>
College Lab School Applications	0	↔	X <sup>17</sup>
Governor's STEM or Health Science Academies	5	↑ (4)	↑ (5)
Percent of schools that maintain a passing rate on Virginia assessment tests of 95% or above in each of the four core academic areas	0.6%	↓ (3.02)	↓ (4.22)
Number of schools earning recognition under Virginia Index of Performance	447 <sup>18</sup>	↓ (281)	↓ (275)
Number of schools that are chronically low performing by state and federal standards <sup>19</sup>	8 schools	↓ (1 school)	↑ (1 school)
Percent of schools and divisions meeting or exceeding federal accountability measures	68%	NA <sup>20</sup>	NA

Performance Improving ↑  
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 Performance Maintained ↔  
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<sup>11</sup> Represents 9th grade cohort.

<sup>12</sup> New, more rigorous Mathematics tests were implemented in 2011-2012.

<sup>13</sup> New, more rigorous History and Social Science tests were implemented in 2010-2011.

<sup>14</sup> Results of the new college-and career-ready mathematics tests, first introduced during 2011-2012, are included in the accreditation ratings

<sup>15</sup> The Board introduced a "graduation and completion index" in 2010-2011 as a new accountability factor for high schools, in addition to student achievement on state tests

<sup>16</sup> Process for Board review of charter school applications was not in place until January 2011

<sup>17</sup> Process for Board review of college lab school applications was not in place until January 2011

<sup>18</sup> The Board revised the criteria for awards in 2012 to promote an increasing focus on college and career readiness and STEM

<sup>19</sup> Schools accredited with warning, denied accreditation, or conditional accreditation (not new) for 3 or more years

<sup>20</sup> The Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) and related accountability requirements were established by the Board as part of the Commonwealth's No Child Left Behind (NCLB) flexibility waiver in 2012.

## Strategies for Improving Student Achievement

Setting high goals for public education in the Commonwealth is important to achieving the Board's mission, but perhaps equally important is identifying the strategies to achieve these goals. The Board of Education meets at least ten times a year to discuss and take action on critical policies which provide a framework for our education system.

While the Board is just one partner in the education of our youth - from revising the Standards of Learning and setting cut scores for state assessments, to seeking flexibility from ESEA - the Board's actions play an important role in our public education system. However, it is also important to note that the Board's goals, as well as the strategies to implement them, are tied closely to the requirements of state and federal statutes and regulations, and the availability and appropriation of funding for public education from the General Assembly.

### ***Goal 1: Accountability for Student Learning***

*The Board of Education will support accountability for all public schools by establishing policies that help schools increase the academic success of all students, especially those who are at-risk or in underperforming school systems. Incorporating student academic progress and narrowing of achievement gaps into the accountability system will provide for a more comprehensive identification of student achievement at each school.*

The Board has a number of ways to support school accountability including the following specific strategies:

- Review and revise the *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia* (SOA) - The Standards of Accreditation were developed to ensure that an effective educational program is established and maintained in Virginia's public schools. The accreditation standards provide an essential foundation of educational programs of high quality in all schools for all students; encourage continuous appraisal and improvement of the school program for the purpose of raising student achievement; foster public confidence; assure recognition of Virginia's public schools by other institutions of learning; and establish a means of determining the effectiveness of schools.

There are a number of revisions to the SOA currently underway pursuant to legislation from the 2012 General Assembly session including:

- Accreditation of virtual schools (HB 1215)
- New diploma requirements (HB 1061/SB 489)
- One year delay in implementing the Academic and Career Plan (HB 96)

The Board would also like to conduct a comprehensive review of the SOA to expand the method used for school accreditation to a multi-dimensional and multi-tiered system that recognizes the differences in student achievement amongst the school age population. Achieving a minimum level of proficiency for all students will remain a top indicator for accountability, but it should also incorporate student academic progress and decreases in achievement gaps.

- Report the accreditation status of each school in the Commonwealth - School accreditation ratings reflect student achievement on SOL tests and other approved assessments in the four core academic areas of English, history/social science, mathematics and science. Ratings are based on the achievement of students on tests taken during the previous academic year or may reflect a three-year average of achievement. Schools receive one of the following ratings: Fully Accredited, Provisionally Accredited-Graduation Rate, Accredited with Warning, Accreditation Denied, or Conditionally Accredited. Each school's accreditation status is reported publically on their school report card, published on the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) Web site.
- Establish and monitor the requirements of schools not meeting full accreditation status - A high school or combined school with a graduating class is "Provisionally Accredited-Graduation Rate" if students achieve adjusted pass rates of 70 percent or more in all four content areas and a GCI from 81 to 84 points. Schools with a rating of "Provisionally Accredited-Graduation Rate" are subject to an academic review.

A school receives an "Accredited with Warning" rating if its adjusted pass rates for the four core subjects are below the achievement levels required for full accreditation. Schools that receive this rating undergo academic reviews and are required to adopt and implement school improvement plans. Schools that are warned in English and/or mathematics are also required to adopt instructional programs proven by research to be effective in raising achievement in these subjects. A school may hold this rating for no more than three consecutive years.

A school is rated "Accreditation Denied" if it fails to meet the requirements for full accreditation for four consecutive years. Any school denied accreditation must provide parents and other interested parties the following:

- Written notice of the school's accreditation rating within 30 calendar days of the announcement of the rating by the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE);
- A copy of the school division's proposed corrective action plan describing the steps to be taken to raise achievement to state standards – including a timeline for implementation – to improve the school's accreditation rating; and
- An opportunity to comment on the division's proposed corrective action plan prior to its adoption and the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the local school board and the Board of Education.

The local school board – within 45 days of receiving notice of the status – must submit to the Board of Education the proposed corrective action plan. The Board of Education will consider the proposal and develop a memorandum of understanding with the local school board, which must be implemented by November 1. The local school board must submit status reports detailing the implementation of actions prescribed in the memorandum of understanding; and the principal, division superintendent and local school board chairman may be required to appear before the Board of Education to present status reports. Additionally, in any school division where one-third or more of the schools have been denied accreditation, the local school board is required to evaluate the division superintendent and submit a copy of the evaluation to the Board of Education by

December 1. The Board of Education may take action – as permitted by the Standards of Quality – against the local school board due to the failure of the local board to maintain accredited schools.

- Set new annual measurable objectives (AMOs) and monitor each school's and division's progress in meeting them pursuant to Virginia's ESEA waiver - Under the provisions of the two-year flexibility waiver granted by the US Department of Education, the Board of Education has set new AMOs for raising achievement in the commonwealth's lowest-performing schools. These new annual objectives in reading and mathematics replace the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) targets schools were previously required to meet.

Under the flexibility waiver, information on schools and school divisions meeting and not meeting the new, annual federal benchmarks for raising achievement and narrowing achievement gaps is reported on the VDOE website. Schools and school divisions, however, no longer receive Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) ratings.

School and division report cards indicate whether subgroups and proficiency gap groups met AMOs in reading and mathematics. In addition, report cards for divisions and high schools show whether the annual ESEA objective for graduation – known as the Federal Graduation Indicator – was met. The graduation indicator is met if 80 percent or more students graduate in four, five or six years with a Standard Diploma or Advanced Studies Diploma.

All public schools – including schools that do not receive Title I funds under the ESEA – must develop and implement improvement plans to raise the achievement of student subgroups not meeting the annual benchmarks. The following must use a Web-based, school-improvement tool approved by VDOE for assessing, planning, implementing and monitoring progress:

- Title I schools (not identified as focus or priority schools) not meeting one or more AMO targets or participation rates
- All schools (including non-Title I schools) not earning full state accreditation

Title I high schools not meeting the Federal Graduation Indicator rate must use the Virginia Early Warning System (VEWS) to identify students at risk of dropping out or not graduating on time with a Standard or Advanced Studies Diploma and to develop and implement a plan for improvement.

- Monitor school improvement interventions - Priority and focus schools are subject to state-approved and monitored school-improvement interventions. Priority and focus schools, however, are not subject to previous ESEA improvement sanctions, such as having to provide public school choice or private tutoring.

Five percent of Virginia's Title I schools (36) are identified as priority schools based on overall reading and mathematics achievement and graduation rates in the case of high schools. Schools meeting one or more of the following criteria are identified as priority schools:

- Title I schools and other schools receiving federal School Improvement Grant (SIG) funds and identified as a Tier I or Tier II school
- Title I high schools with a federal graduation indicator of 60 percent or less for two or more of the most recent consecutive years
- Title I schools that fail to test 95 percent of students overall and in all subgroups in reading and mathematics for three consecutive years
- Title I schools in which overall achievement in reading and/or mathematics does not meet annual benchmarks – as needed to identify a number of schools equivalent to five percent of the state’s Title I schools.

Priority schools must engage a state-approved turnaround partner to help implement a school-improvement model meeting state and federal requirements.

Ten percent of Virginia’s Title I schools (72) are identified as focus schools based on reading and mathematics achievement of students in the three proficiency gap groups. Focus schools must employ a state-approved coach to help the division develop, implement and monitor intervention strategies to improve the performance of students at risk of not meeting achievement standards or dropping out of school.

Title I schools that are high achieving or demonstrate significant improvement are recognized as Reward Schools if they earn recognition through one of the following state or federal programs:

- Virginia Index of Performance
  - National Blue Ribbon School
  - Title I Distinguished School
- Revise graduation requirements to promote college and career ready standards - The Board establishes proficiency standards for students to obtain a standard diploma, advanced studies diploma, or general achievement adult high school diploma, pursuant to § 22.1-253.13:4. The requirements for each diploma are included in the Board's *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia*.
  - Revise criteria for the Virginia Index of Performance - The Virginia Index of Performance (VIP) program recognizes schools and school divisions for the achievement of excellence goals established by the governor and Board of Education and provides incentives for continuous improvement. Schools and school divisions earn one of the following awards based on performance during the previous academic year:
    - Governor's Award for Educational Excellence
    - Board of Education's Excellence Award
    - Board of Education's Competence to Excellence Award
    - Board of Education's Rising Star Award

Only schools and school divisions that have met all state and federal accountability requirements for two consecutive years — and have not experienced significant irregularities in the administration of state assessments — are eligible to earn VIP awards. VIP awards criteria are revised by the Board of Education to include new performance

measures and excellence goals.

- Review requests for alternative accreditation plans - The SOA set the minimum standards public schools must meet to be accredited by the Board of Education. Subject to the provisions of the SOA, special purpose schools, Governor's schools, special education schools, alternative schools, or career and technical schools may seek approval of an alternative accreditation plan from the Board of Education. Schools offering alternative education programs and schools with a graduation cohort of 50 or fewer students may request that the Board approve an alternative accreditation plan to meet the graduation and completion index benchmark.

In addition, pursuant to § 22.1-253.13:3 of the *Code of Virginia*, any school board, on behalf of one or more of its schools, may request the Board of Education for release from state regulations and for approval of an Individual School Accreditation Plan for the evaluation of the performance of one or more of its schools.

- Identify cost-effective ways to measure Virginia students' achievement on recognized international benchmarks - While the state accountability system helps compare schools within the Commonwealth, it lacks sufficient data to benchmark the performance of its students on international tests such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). Recognizing the reality that our graduates must compete successfully in a global economy, the Board will identify cost-effective ways to measure the achievements of Virginia students on recognized international benchmarks.

***Goal 2: Rigorous Standards to Promote College and Career Readiness***

*The Board of Education will continue to raise the bar on academic performance standards to ensure global competitiveness. Our schools will lead the nation in rigor and quality, and our students will excel in postsecondary education and/or in the global workplace. Building on the success of the SOL program, more rigorous and relevant expectations will continue to be implemented that meet or exceed national and international benchmarks for college and career readiness. Particular emphasis will be placed on supporting the attainment of literacy and mathematics skills for all students, pre-K through grade 12.*

The Board is intent to lead the country in the rigor and quality of standards for our youth. This clarity of intent is especially important in light of the national discussion on Common Core State Standards. VDOE and the Board of Education are using the Commonwealth's established process for adopting and revising academic standards to incorporate content from the Common Core State Standards into the Standards of Learning (SOL). In doing so, the Board and Department are ensuring that expectations for teaching and learning in Virginia schools are comparable to, or in some instances exceed, those of the voluntary national standards.

To develop rigorous standards to promote college and career readiness, the Board will:

- Review and revise the Standards of Quality (SOQ) and the Standards of Accreditation (SOA) - The Constitution of Virginia requires the Board of Education to prescribe

standards of quality for the public schools of Virginia, subject to revision only by the General Assembly. These standards, found in the *Code of Virginia* §§ 22.1-253.13:1 through 22.1-253.13:9, are known as the Standards of Quality (SOQ) and encompass the requirements that must be met by all Virginia public schools and divisions. Every two years – as required by the *Code* – the Board of Education reviews the SOQ for necessary revisions. In conducting the review, the Board seeks public comment including suggestions and concerns of educators, parents, students, employers, civic and community leaders, and other interested citizens in addressing the needs, priorities, and programs in public schools across Virginia. The Board accepts comments in writing – by mail, fax or e-mail – and during public hearings held across the state.

- Continue to review and revise the Standards of Learning (SOL) - The Standards of Learning for Virginia public schools establish minimum expectations for what students should know and be able to do at the end of each grade or course in English, mathematics, science, history/social science, technology, the fine arts, foreign language, health/physical education and driver education. Annual assessments – including SOL tests and alternative assessments – provide information on individual student achievement including those with special needs.

Building on the success of the SOL program and to better prepare students to compete in today's global economy, more rigorous English, mathematics and science standards and expectations are being implemented that meet national and international benchmarks for college-and-career readiness. Students will be tested on the more rigorous content standards, adopted by the Board of Education, as follows:

- Mathematics beginning with the 2011-2012 school year
- English beginning with the 2012-2013 school year
- Science beginning in the 2012-2013 school year

The Board will review and revise the standards as follows:

- Computer/Technology (2012)
- Fine Arts (2013)
- Foreign Language (2014)
- Health, Physical Education, and Driver Education (2015)
- History and Social Science (2015)
- Mathematics (2016)
- Science (2017)
- English (2017)

- Adopt rigorous cut scores for SOL assessments - SOL assessments in English reading, mathematics, science and history/social science are made up of 35-50 items or questions that measure content knowledge, scientific and mathematical processes, reasoning and critical thinking skills. English writing skills are measured with a two-part assessment that includes multiple-choice items and an essay.

Student performance is graded on a scale of 0-600 with 400 representing the minimum level of acceptable proficiency and 500 representing advanced proficiency. On English

reading and mathematics tests, the Board of Education has defined three levels of student achievement: basic, proficient, and advanced, with basic describing progress towards proficiency.

Minimum scores – also known as "cut" scores – for each proficiency level are set by the Board of Education based on the recommendations from committees of teachers and other educators following a widely used standard-setting procedure. Separate cut scores for literacy and numeracy are set by the Board on the grade-8 mathematics and reading assessments for students with disabilities seeking a Modified Standard Diploma.

- Adopt lists of approved textbooks - The Board of Education has the responsibility under the state constitution to approve textbooks for use in Virginia's public schools. Local school boards may adopt textbooks that are not on the Board-approved list provided the school board selects such books in accordance with regulations promulgated by the Board. The alignment of textbooks and instructional materials with the state's academic standards provides a foundation for student success. VDOE – with the assistance of experienced classroom teachers and other educators – reviews textbooks and instructional materials for alignment with the SOL and makes recommendations to the Board of Education on state adoption.
- Approve substitute tests for verified credit - The Board of Education approves a number of substitute tests that students may take to earn verified credits toward graduation. The Board also approves a schedule of career and technical examinations for licensure or certification that may be substituted for SOL tests to earn student-selected verified units of credit.
- Approve lists of industry certification examinations, occupational competency assessments, and licenses - Pursuant to the *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia*, the Board shall approve industry, professional, trade association certification examinations, or occupational competency assessments meeting the Board's requirements for the Career and Technical Education Seal, the Seal of Advanced Mathematics and Technology, and student-selected verified credit.
- Approve courses to satisfy graduation requirements - The SOA sets forth the requirements for high school diplomas. Those requirements specify which level of courses and/or subject area disciplines students must complete to earn either a standard or verified unit of credit in the areas of mathematics, laboratory science, and history and social science, as well as the credit requirements in other content disciplines. The regulations also specify that the Board of Education shall approve courses (other than those specifically named in the standards) to satisfy the requirements in those areas.
- Review and approve increased graduation requirements from local school divisions - The Standards of Quality, in § 22.1-253.13:4, authorizes the Board of Education to prescribe graduation requirements and to approve any other graduation requirements prescribed by local school boards. The SOA include a provision that requires Board of Education approval of all additional requirements above those prescribed in the standards. In 2006,



the Board adopted *Guidelines Governing Certain Provisions of the Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia*, which includes guidance about additional graduation requirements prescribed by local school boards.

**Goal 3: Expanded Opportunities to Learn**

*The Board of Education will put in place policies and initiatives that expand learning opportunities for all children. These policies and initiatives will include high-quality charter schools, college partnership laboratory schools, online learning programs, and Governor's Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) academies. Such learning opportunities provide options for parents and students while allowing communities and educators to create innovative instructional programs that can be replicated elsewhere in the public school system.*

A goal of the Board of Education is to support a variety of learning opportunities that hold promise for increasing student academic success, such as charter school programs, Governor's schools, online learning programs, career and technical industry certification programs, and college partnership laboratory programs. The Board has also expressed its support for the Governor's Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Academies, which are partnerships among school divisions, postsecondary institutions and business and industry designed to expand options for students to acquire STEM literacy and other critical skills, knowledge and credentials.

To increase opportunities to learn, the Board will:

- Review and approve innovative programs - *The Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia* permit local school boards to seek approval to implement experimental or innovative programs by submitting a waiver request to the Board for evaluation and approval prior to implementation. In 1998, the Board adopted the following definitions for experimental and innovative programs in the *Guidance Document Governing Certain Provisions of the Regulations Establishing Standards of Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia*:
  - "An experimental program shall be a program which is operated under controlled circumstances and which is designed to test and to establish, by objective measures, the positive cognitive effect of an educational theory."
  - "An innovative program shall be a program shown to produce a positive educational effect but which does not meet standard operating or procedural requirements."
- Revising the criteria, application and procedures for charter school applicants - Pursuant to § 22.1-212.9 of the *Code of Virginia*, the Board of Education establishes procedures for receiving and reviewing charter school applications. The Board has established criteria to include a review of applications for feasibility, curriculum, financial soundness, and other objective criteria consistent with existing state law. Revisions to the criteria, application and procedures may be necessary with further legislative action or to meet the needs of the charter school committee members and charter school applicants.

- Revising the criteria, application and procedures for college partnership laboratory school applicants - With the establishment of college partnership laboratory schools pursuant to legislation in the 2010 General Assembly session, the Board of Education adopted criteria, an application, and procedures for receiving, reviewing and ruling on college partnership laboratory school applications. Revisions to the criteria, application and procedures may be necessary with further legislative action or to meet the needs of the college lab committee members and applicants.
- Review charter school applications and determine if they meet the Board's criteria - As a result of legislation approved by the 2010 General Assembly, the *Code of Virginia*, § 22.1-212.9, requires that all charter school applications be submitted to the Board prior to being submitted to the local school board. Applications must adhere to the format prescribed by the Board and address the application elements stated in the *Code of Virginia*, § 22.1-212.8. The Board is required to render a decision on whether the application meets its approval criteria. A decision by the Board that an application meets its approval criteria does not guarantee that the local school board will approve a request for a charter.

To meet the intent of the legislation, the Board of Education has appointed a charter school committee to examine charter school applications submitted to the Board of Education and ensure they are consistent with existing state law.

- Review and approve college partnership laboratory school applications - Pursuant to § 23-299.5 of the *Code of Virginia*, the Board of Education shall establish procedures for receiving, reviewing, and ruling upon applications to establish college partnership laboratory schools. The Board has appointed a College Partnership Laboratory Schools Committee responsible for developing procedures for receiving, reviewing and ruling on applications from Virginia public and private colleges and universities to establish laboratory schools.
- Review and revise criteria for multidivision online providers - Legislation in the 2010 General Assembly session directed the Board of Education to establish criteria for the approval of virtual school programs that provide instruction to students in multiple school divisions. Criteria for approving and monitoring multidivision online providers were approved by the Board of Education in November 2010. These criteria and processes are designed to ensure that Virginia students receive high quality educational services and that instruction and courses offered by multidivision online providers are aligned with the Standards of Learning and presented by highly qualified teachers. Revisions to the criteria and processes may be necessary with further legislative action.
- Develop regulations for full-time virtual schools - the Board must establish standards governing public virtual schools that will maintain a level of student achievement commensurate with high-quality instruction delivered in traditional “brick and mortar” schools. The Board’s *Regulations Establishing the Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia* (SOA) are designed to ensure that an effective educational program is established and maintained in Virginia's public schools. These regulations are applicable

to all public schools in Virginia and are geared to the traditional “brick and mortar” public school. Consequently, the regulations do not specifically address differences in service delivery that exist between a “brick and mortar” public school and a virtual public school that enrolls students full-time.

- Approve the establishment of Governor's Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Academies - Governor's STEM Academies are programs designed to expand options for the general student population to acquire STEM literacy and other critical skills, knowledge and credentials that will prepare them for high-demand, high-wage, and high-skill careers in Virginia. Each academy is a partnership among school divisions, postsecondary institutions and business and industry.

STEM literacy is an interdisciplinary area of study that bridges the four areas of science, technology, engineering and mathematics. STEM literacy does not simply mean achieving literacy in the individual strands. STEM classrooms shift students toward investigating and questioning the interrelated facets of the world.

Governor's STEM Academies can be viewed as the practical complement to academic year Governor's Schools. They may be new centers or existing ones where the standards are raised and efforts are refocused to align with Virginia's STEM goals. Academies are defined by program content, not location or delivery system. Courses may be held at a high school, technical center or community college campus or may be delivered online, or through other innovative methods. However, all programs must include opportunities for internships, job shadowing, mentorships, projects, service learning or a combination.

Developing and implementing the program and administrative arrangements for a Governor's STEM Academy involves extensive planning and discussions among the participating partners. Each proposed Academy must be reviewed by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) and approved by the Virginia Board of Education.

#### ***Goal 4: Nurturing Young Learners***

*The Board of Education will work cooperatively with partners to promote new and innovative partnerships that help to ensure that all children enter kindergarten with the skills they need for success in school.*

This goal reflects the commitment of the Board to ensure that all children are adequately prepared for school when they enroll in kindergarten. Research shows that from the time of birth to the first day of kindergarten, childhood development proceeds at a pace exceeding that of any subsequent stage of life. The value of early education is imperative to the future academic success and the growth of children’s intellectual development.

To further advance this goal the Board will:

- Collaborate with education partners to improve and expand pre-K educational opportunities - The Board will continue to collaborate with other entities in maintaining

and enhancing learning standards for preschool education, preparation programs for preschool teachers, and professional development opportunities for preschool teachers.

- Support the Virginia Preschool Initiative, the Title I Preschool Program, the Early Childhood Special Education Program, the Smart Beginnings Local Coalitions, Virginia's Star Quality Initiative, and the Head Start programs - The Board of Education will seek new and effective ways to work cooperatively with other agencies and organizations concerned with the development of children of pre-school age.

The Virginia Preschool Initiative distributes state funds to schools and community-based organizations to provide quality preschool programs for at-risk four-year olds unserved by Head Start. A study by Virginia's Joint Legislative Audit Review Commission found that "test results indicate that Virginia Preschool Initiative students gain in literacy skills during the pre-K year and outperform other kindergarteners. Longer term student-level data are needed to assess VPI's impact on test scores in later grades. A survey of kindergarten teachers and principals indicates that most at-risk pre-K graduates are well prepared for kindergarten and later elementary grades."

Title I Preschool Programs use federal funds to improve the teaching and learning of children in high poverty schools and enable children to meet challenging academic content and performance standards.

Early Childhood Special Education (Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) and Early Intervention (Part C of IDEA), in Virginia, provide services for children from birth to kindergarten age who qualify according to state and federal law. All localities in the state have services available for children in this age group who are eligible.

Smart Beginnings is a network of locally operated coalitions that are working to improve the quality of care and education for children from birth until kindergarten. Smart Beginnings partners across the state are working with parents and early childhood professionals to ensure that each child will be ready to succeed in school and in life.

Virginia's Star Quality Initiative and the Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) is a method to assess, improve and communicate the level of quality in early care and education settings that families consider for their children. Virginia's Star Quality Initiative not only defines standards for early childhood education and creates a framework for accountability, but it also establishes a network of support and outreach for programs and practitioners. QRIS provides incentives linked to achieving and maintaining quality standards, and improves information available to parents.

- Review and revise Virginia's Foundation Blocks for Early Learning: Comprehensive Standards for Four-Year-Olds - Virginia's Foundation Blocks – Comprehensive Standards for Four-Year-Olds describes specific indicators for pre-kindergarten children in the content areas of reading and mathematics. The current document provides early childhood educators a set of minimum standards in literacy, mathematics, science, history

and social science, physical and motor skill development, and personal and social development with indicators of success for entering kindergarten that are derived from scientifically-based research. The standards reflect a consensus of children's conceptual learning, acquisition of basic knowledge, and participation in meaningful and relevant learning experiences.

- Support coordination and alignment - the Board will provide leadership by encouraging coordination and alignment between early childhood programs and the K-12 system, including the inclusion of school readiness in school assessment criteria.

***Goal 5: Highly Qualified and Effective Educators***

*The Board of Education will establish policies and standards that strengthen the preparation, recruitment, and retention of the best and brightest educators, including meaningful and ongoing professional development, especially in teacher shortage areas and in hard-to-staff schools.*

The Board of Education will take a strong leadership role to advocate for and develop new and innovative partnerships with school systems and the colleges and universities that prepare, develop, and support classroom teachers, administrators, and school personnel. At its heart, teacher and administrator education is a shared responsibility. Partnerships between school systems and the higher education community are critical in providing the training and clinical practice experiences that educators need to improve student learning.

To advocate for highly qualified and effective educators, the Board will:

- Approve strong education preparation programs of Virginia's colleges and universities - *The Regulations Governing the Review and Approval of Education Programs in Virginia* require colleges and universities that offer programs for the preparation of professional school personnel to obtain education program (endorsement) approval from the Board of Education. Pursuant to Section 22.1-305.2 of the *Code of Virginia*, the Advisory Board on Teacher Education and Licensure (ABTEL) reviews and makes recommendations to the Board of Education on approval of Virginia education programs for school personnel. Final authority for program approval rests with the Board of Education. The approval of the education programs at Virginia institutions of higher education include the review of partnerships and collaborations, biennial reporting of accountability measures, and program alignment with competencies.
- Review and revise the *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria* - In response to the 1999 Education Accountability and Quality Enhancement Act (HB2710 and SB1145) approved by the Virginia General Assembly, the Board of Education approved the *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers, Administrators, and Superintendents* in January 2000. At the July 2010 meeting, the Board of Education received a report from the Virginia Department of Education that provided a work plan to study and develop model teacher and administrator evaluation systems that would result in revisions to the Board's uniform performance standards and evaluation criteria for teachers (approved April 28, 2011), principals (approved February 23, 2012), and superintendents (currently under review by Board).

- Support professional development opportunities for educators - The Board will provide leadership and encourage a range of professional development and technical assistance opportunities for educational personnel, working with professional education associations, school divisions, and the Department of Education.
- License highly qualified and effective educators - The responsibility for teacher licensure is set forth in section 22.1-298.1 of the *Code of Virginia*, which states that the Board of Education shall prescribe by regulation the requirements for licensure of teachers. *The Licensure Regulations for School Personnel* will be reviewed and revised by the Board regularly. The Board also has responsibility for approving pass scores on professional teacher's assessments such as the Praxis.

In closed executive sessions, the Board also discusses and acts on records relating to the denial, suspension, or revocation of teacher licenses.

- Support educator recognition programs - The Board of Education recognizes exceptional educators through the Virginia Teacher of the Year Program and the Milken Family Foundation Educator Awards Program.

***Goal 6: Sound Policies for Student Success***

*The Board of Education will provide leadership to implement the provisions of state and federal laws and regulations in effective and efficient ways that expand opportunities for all of Virginia's schoolchildren to excel academically.*

The Board will focus on ways to help school divisions meet state and federal requirements with limited resources by reviewing state standards and expectations and with an eye towards effectiveness and efficiency. The Board also strives to give flexibility to local schools so that alternative and effective approaches to problems may be utilized.

Much of what the Board does during the course of its work is either directly or indirectly related to its constitutional, statutory, or regulatory requirements. The Board plays a key role in assuring the smooth functioning and administration of state and federal requirements and is keenly concerned about efficient and effective implementation and communication of such rules. Consistent with Governor McDonnell's Executive Order No. 14 (2010), the Board intends that its regulations shall be designed to achieve their intended objectives in the most efficient, cost-effective manner and in a way that enhances student achievement.

To ensure sound policies, the Board will:

- Support reform of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965* (ESEA) - The Board will continue to push for a reauthorization of ESEA that respects state authority for public education while ensuring policies are implemented at the state and local levels that address closing achievement gaps.
- Monitor progress of schools, divisions, and the state in meeting ESEA annual measurable

objectives - ESEA, known since 2001 as No Child Left Behind (NCLB), requires states to set annual measurable objectives for increasing student achievement to ensure that all children have an opportunity to obtain a high-quality education. Under the provisions of the two-year flexibility waiver granted by US Department of Education on June 29, 2012, the Board of Education has set new annual measurable objectives (AMOs) for raising achievement in the commonwealth's lowest-performing schools. These new annual objectives in reading and mathematics replace the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) targets schools were previously required to meet.

- Publicly report status of Virginia public schools in meeting state and federal accountability measures - The Board will continue to support the publishing of annual report cards on progress of students in meeting state standards, graduation rates, schools needing improvement, professional qualifications of teachers, and other information as required by ESEA and the SOQ.
- Regularly update and publish a report card on selected Board performance measures - The Board believes that accountability in Virginia's public schools begins at the top. Accordingly, the Board will publish and regularly update a report card on the extent to which its goals are being met as evidenced by certain performance measures.
- Respond to the increased demand for data related to the State Fiscal Stabilization Funds (SFSF) and other programs under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) - As a requirement to accepting federal grants under ARRA's SFSF program, Virginia assured the US Department of Education (USED) that it would comply with all accountability, transparency and reporting requirements. This includes the posting of data or information related to a set of federal assurance indicators and descriptors. The Master Schedule Collection (MSC) collects data required to satisfy federal assurances of the SFSF. The MSC of data is required to satisfy federal assurances for Indicators (b)(1), (b)(2), and (b)(3) of the SFSF – including the reporting of student growth data to teachers of reading/language arts and mathematics in grades 3-8 and Algebra I through grade 9. To meet the requirements of those indicators, it will also provide data previously collected through Instructional Personnel (IPAL) and Math and Science Course Enrollment (CEDC). The MSC also incorporates enrollment reporting of nontraditional students in designated Career and Technical Education classes.
- Conduct periodic review and revision of Board of Education regulations that have not undergone such review in significant years.
- Review and revise guideline documents to comport with state or federal legislative changes.

### ***Goal 7: Safe and Secure Schools***

*The Board of Education will provide leadership to create safe and secure school environments.*

Every student deserves to attend a safe school in which students, teachers and support staff can concentrate on learning and not have to worry about disruption due to misbehavior, crime, or

violence.

The Board of Education supports programs and policies for school wide and division wide safety and prevention plans that consistently address the needs of all students and encourage a safe and healthy learning environment. Through partnerships, resources, data collection, and evaluation, the Board of Education can do much to address the needs of children as well as those who are providing services that protect our children.

To further advance this goal, the Board will:

- Conduct periodic review and revise Board of Education regulations that have not undergone such review in significant years.
- Review and revise guideline documents to comport with state or federal legislative changes. For example, the Board provides guidelines and model policies to aid local school boards in the development and implementation of codes of student conduct and related policies. The guidelines and model policies include:
  - Criteria for the removal of a student from a class, the use of suspension, expulsion, and exclusion as disciplinary measures, the grounds for suspension and expulsion and exclusion, and the procedures to be followed in such cases, including proceedings for such suspension, expulsion, and exclusion decisions and all applicable appeals processes;
  - Standards, consistent with state, federal and case laws, for school board policies on alcohol and drugs, gang-related activity, hazing, vandalism, trespassing, threats, search and seizure, disciplining of students with disabilities, intentional injury of others, self-defense, bullying, dissemination of such policies to students, their parents, and school personnel; and
  - Standards for in-service training of school personnel in and examples of the appropriate management of student conduct and student offenses in violation of school board policies.

The Board also developed *Guidelines for the Prevention of Sexual Misconduct and Abuse in Virginia Public Schools* to help local school boards create and implement policies and procedures that deter misconduct, provide accountability, and establish clear and reasonable boundaries for interactions among students and teachers, other school board employees, and adult volunteers.

- Continue collaborations for prevention programs in schools - The Board supports the Department's ongoing collaborations with other state agencies to provide resources and strategies for schools to prevent drug and alcohol abuse, child neglect and abuse, teen suicide, dropout and truancy, gang-related activity, and support bullying prevention.



## Forecast of Enrollment Changes

With the release of the 2010 Census data, many of the ways in which Virginia's population is changing were illuminated. According to the Virginia Institute of Government's fall 2011 publication of *Virginia's Changing Population*, the Commonwealth grew 13 percent between 2000 and 2010, significantly faster than the national growth rate of 10 percent. The urban crescent of Northern Virginia, the Richmond region, and Hampton Roads witnessed the vast majority of this growth - more than 80 percent. Northern Virginia alone accounted for more than half of the state's total growth. While the state as a whole grew significantly, not all localities saw population growth over the past decade. More than one in five localities, predominantly in Eastern Virginia (Eastern Shore and Northern Neck), Southside, and Southwest experienced population loss.

Not only is Virginia changing in size, but also in composition. According to the Demographics & Workforce Group at UVa's Cooper Center for Public Service, one in 10 Virginians is foreign-born, representing a wide variety of languages and cultures. Over the past decade, all eight regions saw increasing diversity through growing Hispanic and Asian populations. Statewide, the number of Hispanic Virginians nearly doubled, while the number of Asian Virginians increased by almost 70 percent.

The Weldon Cooper Center's *Enrollment Projections for Virginia Public Schools, 2009-10 to 2014-15* goes on to say enrollment in Virginia's public schools has increased steadily for the past ten years, and projections for the next five years indicate this trend will continue. Nearly ten thousand additional students will enroll each year, amounting to an increase of over 50,000 by the end of the projection period. Total enrollment will increase from 1.21 million to 1.27 million students in the 2014-15 school year.

Excerpts from the 2010 report show the following variance in enrollment across the state:

- Enrollment Projections - The Weldon Cooper Center's forecast indicates that most enrollment growth will be confined to the elementary grades. Two-thirds of total statewide growth will occur in elementary grades. Increases in the number of middle school students will account for nearly a third of total student growth, and only two percent of school population growth will be due to an increase in the number of high school students.
- Local Trends - Statewide school enrollment growth over the next five years is attributable largely to growth in a relatively small number of metropolitan and suburban school divisions. Most school divisions are not growing. Particularly rapid growth in several northern Virginia divisions account for much of the statewide growth. The report states that three northern Virginia divisions—Loudoun, Prince William, and Fairfax—will experience large student increases next year. Other school divisions in northern Virginia, around Richmond, and in Tidewater will experience moderate growth.

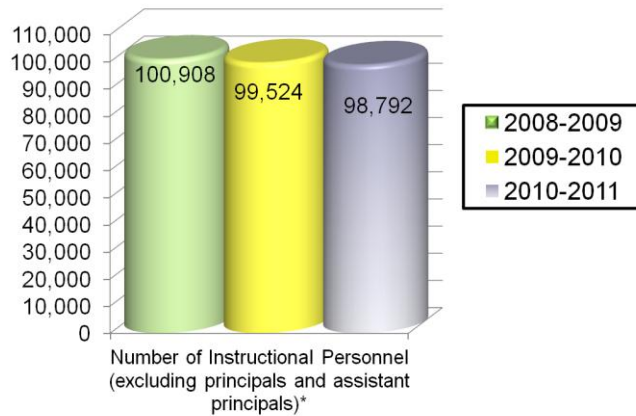
The challenges for our public schools become more acute in light of Virginia's changing demographics, which show that its population is increasingly diverse. Important demographic trends that have powerful implications for our public school system include:

- Limited English Proficient (LEP) students - In Virginia, the LEP population has almost doubled since 2003, and this trend is expected to continue. In 2003-2004 the number of LEP students was just 60,291. By 2011-2012, that number had almost doubled to 119,394.
- Economically disadvantaged students - The economically disadvantaged student population has grown significantly from 331,088 in 2003-2004, to nearly 466,000 in 2011-2012, based on the fall membership count.
- Students with disabilities - The number of students with disabilities, according to the Department's fall membership count has actually decreased from 157,929 in 2003-2004 to 156,736 in 2011-2012. The highest number was reported in 2007-2008 with 163,368 students with disabilities.

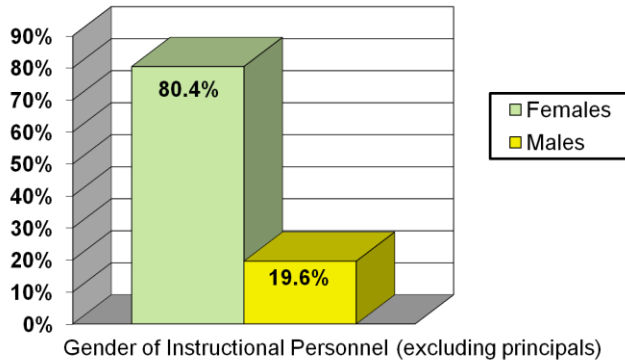
### Virginia's teacher work force

A profile of Virginia's instructional school personnel was given to the Board of Education at their annual planning session in April 2012. The following data highlights the changes in the educator work force in the Commonwealth.

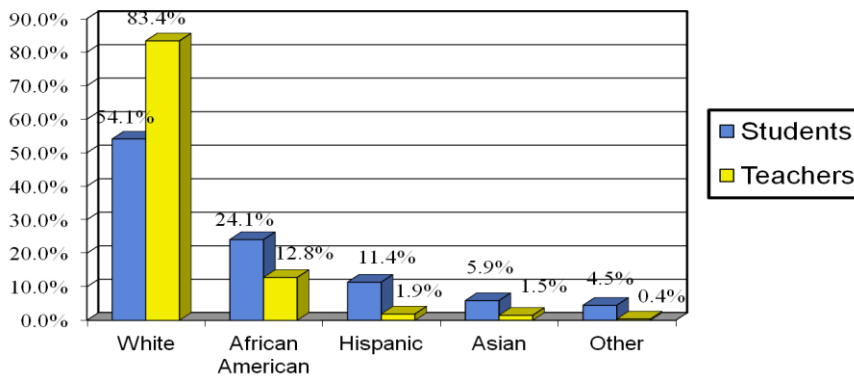
### Instructional Personnel Employed in Virginia Public Schools (Excluding Principals and Assistant Principals)



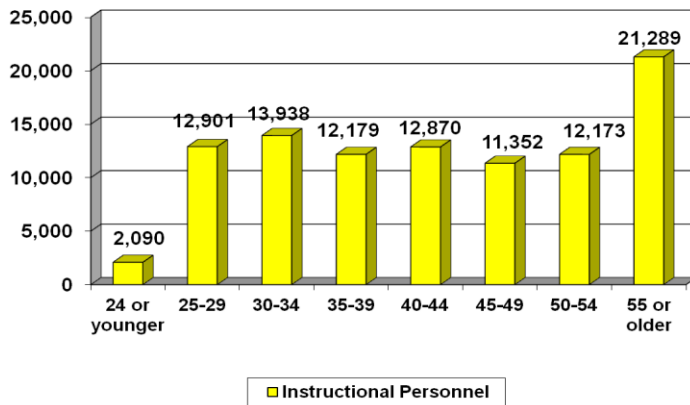
Gender: Virginia Public Schools' Instructional Personnel  
(Excluding Principals and Assistant Principals): 2010-2011 School year



Race/Ethnicity: Virginia Public Schools' Instructional Personnel  
(Excluding Principals and Assistant Principals) and Students: 2010-2011 School year



Age: Virginia Public Schools' Instructional Personnel  
(Excluding Principals and Assistant Principals) and Students: 2010-2011 School year



Highest Degrees Reported for Instructional Personnel (Excluding Principals and Assistant Principals) and Students: 2010-2011 School year

- Bachelor’s Degree – 47,838
- Graduate Degree – 50,954

Number of Provisional Licenses Held by Instructional Personnel (Excluding Principals and Assistant Principals) and Students: 2010-2011 School year

- Number of three-year provisional licenses – 3,320
- Number of three-year provisional (Special Education) licenses – 1,235
- Number of one-year provisional (Career Switcher) licenses – 242

Number of Initial Licenses Issued

- Number of initial licenses issued from July 1, 2010 to June 30, 2011 – 7,750

Number of Licenses Renewed

- Number of license renewed from July 1, 2010 to June 30, 2011 – 23,695

Highly Qualified Teachers

- “Highly qualified,” as defined by the NCLB legislation means that the teacher:
  - ✓ Has obtained full state licensure as a teacher (including certification obtained through alternative routes to certification) or passed the state teacher licensing examination and holds a license to teach in the state;
  - ✓ Holds a minimum of a bachelor’s degree; and
  - ✓ Has demonstrated subject matter competency in each of the academic subjects that the teacher teaches, in a manner determined by the state and in compliance with the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA)*.

- Percentage of “Highly Qualified” Teachers in Virginia:

School Year	Percentage Designated Highly Qualified
2002-2003 (Baseline)	83 %
2006-2007	96.8%
2007-2008	97.9%
2008-2009	98.35%
2009-2010	98.87%
2010-2011	99.33%

Percentage of Sections Taught by Teachers Appropriately Endorsed and Sections Taught by Teachers Teaching “Out of Field” in Virginia: 2010-2011 School Year

- Percentage of sections taught by teachers teaching “out of field” – 0.84%
- Percentage of sections taught by teachers endorsed – 99.15%

## Assessment of the Needs of Public Education

The Board of Education anticipates a number of critical issues arising during the upcoming years that will need to be addressed. Emerging issues that must be addressed include the following:

- Raising the rigor of Virginia’s academic standards to reflect the Board’s focus on college and career readiness standards—including workplace skills and knowledge—that are internationally competitive creates communications and other challenges. As schools implement more rigorous standards and tests, as evidenced by mathematics this year, which will be followed by English during 2012-2013, there may be further declines in accreditation.
- Identifying and decreasing persistent achievement gaps among subgroups of students.
- Continued investment in resources that are integral to improving student performance, closing achievement gaps, and graduating all students college and career ready.
- Supporting reform of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965* (ESEA) that respects state authority for public education while ensuring policies are implemented at the state and local levels that address closing achievement gaps.
- Assistance and resources to implement new learning opportunities for students, including an emphasis on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) programs; charter school programs; college partnership laboratory programs; and online learning programs.
- Decreasing achievement gaps between the academic performances of students in the United States compared to other countries. Virginia lacks information, however, on the performance of its students on recognized international tests.
- The ability of VDOE staff to review and the Board to approve textbooks and instructional materials in the digital age, as textbooks and instructional materials are changing at rapid pace.
- Promoting high-quality preschool programs and increasing the number of children served by the VPI program.
- Dealing effectively with the reality that many children face difficult personal circumstances such as high poverty, high crime in their neighborhoods, high rates of unhealthy behaviors, poor nutrition, lack of parental support, limited English proficiency, and other circumstances that obstruct their learning at school.
- Attracting the best and the brightest individuals into the teaching profession, and retaining those who excel at the profession.

- Maintaining the capacity of the VDOE staff to provide background data, advice, and expertise, all of which are essential for the Board of Education to make solid and informed policy decisions. In these hard economic times, department staff may be adversely impacted by recruitment freezes, staff reductions, and elimination of some programs. More services must be provided by fewer persons, putting increased pressure on already thin resources.
- Continuing the interventions and technical assistance by the VDOE to assist divisions previously identified as low-performing, especially in this time of agency budget and staffing restrictions.
- Anticipating the impact of the fiscal climate on local school divisions that is destined to become even more difficult as the flow of federal stimulus funds ends.
- Keeping up with increasingly burdensome and time-consuming federal reporting and accountability requirements, especially those related to ESEA, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund.

A more detailed expression of the needs of public education is contained in the Board's Annual Report on the Condition and Needs of the Public Schools in Virginia. The annual report is available at <http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/reports/index.shtml>.

Current economic conditions remind us more than ever that the key to economic recovery is a strong education system. The Board of Education will continue to think creatively and work collaboratively to make sure that its goals and strategies are relevant, practical, and effective. The support and active involvement of all partners will continue to be vital.