ESEA Flexibility
Request
Virginia Department of Education

Original Application Approved by the
Virginia Board of Education
on February 23, 2012

REVISIONS SUBMITTED JANUARY 11, 2013
EXTENSION APPLICATION SUBMITTED MARCH 31, 2014
EXTENSION APPLICATION APPROVED BY USED JULY 3, 2014
RENEWAL APPLICATION SUBMITTED JANUARY 28, 2015
REVISIONS TO RENEWAL APPLICATION SUBMITTED MARCH 16, 2015

Revised February 10, 2012
U.S. Department of Education
Washington, DC 20202

OMB Number: 1810-070
Paperwork Burden Statement

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 1810-0708. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 336 hours per response, including the time to review instructions, search existing data resources, gather the data needed, and complete and review the information collection. If you have any comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimate or suggestions for improving this form, please write to: U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C. 20202-4537

TABLE OF CONTENTS: ESEA FLEXIBILITY REQUEST

Introduction	iii
General Instructions	iv
Table of Contents	1
Cover Sheet for ESEA Flexibility Request	3
Waivers	4
Assurances	8
Consultation	11
Evaluation	17
Overview of SEA's ESEA Flexibility Request	17
Principle 1: College- and Career-Ready Expectations for All Students	21
Principle 2: State-Developed Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, and Support	54
Principle 3: Supporting Effective Instruction and Leadership	135

INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Department of Education (Department) is offering each State educational agency (SEA) the opportunity to request flexibility on behalf of itself, its local educational agencies (LEAs), and its schools, in order to better focus on improving student learning and increasing the quality of instruction. This voluntary opportunity will provide educators and State and local leaders with flexibility regarding specific requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) in exchange for rigorous and comprehensive State-developed plans designed to improve educational outcomes for all students, close achievement gaps, increase equity, and improve the quality of instruction. This flexibility is intended to build on and support the significant State and local reform efforts already underway in critical areas such as transitioning to college- and career-ready standards and assessments; developing systems of differentiated recognition, accountability, and support; and evaluating and supporting teacher and principal effectiveness.

The Department invites interested SEAs to request this flexibility pursuant to the authority in section 9401 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), which allows the Secretary to waive, with certain exceptions, any statutory or regulatory requirement of the ESEA for an SEA that receives funds under a program authorized by the ESEA and requests a waiver. Under this flexibility, the Department would grant waivers through the 2013–2014 school year, after which time an SEA may request an extension of this flexibility.

REVIEW AND EVALUATION OF REQUESTS

The Department will use a review process that will include both external peer reviewers and staff reviewers to evaluate SEA requests for this flexibility. This review process will help ensure that each request for this flexibility approved by the Department is consistent with the principles described in the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*, which are designed to support State efforts to improve student academic achievement and increase the quality of instruction, and is both educationally and technically sound. Reviewers will evaluate whether and how each request for this flexibility will support a comprehensive and coherent set of improvements in the areas of standards and assessments, accountability, and teacher and principal effectiveness that will lead to improved student outcomes. Each SEA will have an opportunity, if necessary, to clarify its plans for peer and staff reviewers and to answer any questions reviewers may have. The peer reviewers will then provide comments to the Department. Taking those comments into consideration, the Secretary will make a decision regarding each SEA's request for this flexibility. If an SEA's request for this flexibility is not granted, reviewers and the Department will provide feedback to the SEA about the components of the SEA's request that need additional development in order for the request to be approved.

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

An SEA seeking approval to implement this flexibility must submit a high-quality request that addresses all aspects of the principles and waivers and, in each place where a plan is required, includes a high-quality plan. Consistent with ESEA section 9401(d)(1), the Secretary intends to grant waivers that are included in this flexibility through the end of the 2013–2014 school year. An SEA will be permitted to request an extension of the initial period of this flexibility prior to the start of the 2014–2015 school year unless this flexibility is superseded by reauthorization of the ESEA. The Department is asking SEAs to submit requests that include plans through the 2014–2015 school year in order to provide a complete picture of the SEA's reform efforts. The Department will not accept a request that meets only some of the principles of this flexibility.

This version of the *ESEA Flexibility Request* replaces the document originally issued on September 23, 2011 and revised on September 28, 2011. Through this revised version, the following section has been removed: 3.A, Option B (Option C has been renamed Option B). Additions have also been made to the following sections: Waivers and Assurances. Finally, this revised guidance modifies the following sections: Waivers; Assurances; 2.A.ii; 2.C.i; 2.D.i; 2.E.i; Table 2; 2.G; and 3.A, Options A and B.

High-Quality Request: A high-quality request for this flexibility is one that is comprehensive and coherent in its approach, and that clearly indicates how this flexibility will help an SEA and its LEAs improve student achievement and the quality of instruction for students.

A high-quality request will (1) if an SEA has already met a principle, provide a description of how it has done so, including evidence as required; and (2) if an SEA has not yet met a principle, describe how it will meet the principle on the required timelines, including any progress to date. For example, an SEA that has not adopted minimum guidelines for local teacher and principal evaluation and support systems consistent with Principle 3 by the time it submits its request for the flexibility will need to provide a plan demonstrating that it will do so by the end of the 2011–2012 school year. In each such case, an SEA's plan must include, at a minimum, the following elements for each principle that the SEA has not yet met:

1. Key milestones and activities: Significant milestones to be achieved in order to meet a given principle, and essential activities to be accomplished in order to reach the key milestones. The SEA should also include any essential activities that have already been completed or key milestones that have already been reached so that reviewers can understand the context for and fully evaluate the SEA's plan to meet a given principle.

2. Detailed timeline: A specific schedule setting forth the dates on which key activities will begin and be completed and milestones will be achieved so that the SEA can meet the principle by the required date.

3. Party or parties responsible: Identification of the SEA staff (*e.g.*, position, title, or office) and, as appropriate, others who will be responsible for ensuring that each key activity is accomplished.

4. Evidence: Where required, documentation to support the plan and demonstrate the SEA's progress in implementing the plan. This *ESEA Flexibility Request* indicates the specific evidence that the SEA must either include in its request or provide at a future reporting date.

5. Resources: Resources necessary to complete the key activities, including staff time and additional funding.

6. Significant obstacles: Any major obstacles that may hinder completion of key milestones and activities (*e.g.,* State laws that need to be changed) and a plan to overcome them.

Included on page 19 of this document is an example of a format for a table that an SEA may use to submit a plan that is required for any principle of this flexibility that the SEA has not already met. An SEA that elects to use this format may also supplement the table with text that provides an overview of the plan.

An SEA should keep in mind the required timelines for meeting each principle and develop credible plans that allow for completion of the activities necessary to meet each principle. Although the plan for each principle will reflect that particular principle, as discussed above, an SEA should look across all plans to make sure that it puts forward a comprehensive and coherent request for this flexibility.

Preparing the Request: To prepare a high-quality request, it is extremely important that an SEA refer to all of the provided resources, including the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*, which includes the principles, definitions, and timelines; the document titled *ESEA Flexibility Review Guidance*, which includes the criteria that will be used by the peer reviewers to determine if the request meets the principles of this flexibility; and the document titled *ESEA Flexibility Frequently Asked Questions,* which provides additional guidance for SEAs in preparing their requests.

As used in this request form, the following terms have the definitions set forth in the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*: (1) college- and career-ready standards, (2) focus school, (3) high-quality assessment, (4) priority school, (5) reward school, (6) standards that are common to a significant number of States, (7) State network of institutions of higher education, (8) student growth, and (9) turnaround principles.

Each request must include:

- A table of contents and a list of attachments, using the forms on pages 1 and 2.
- The cover sheet (p. 3), waivers requested (p. 4-6), and assurances (p. 7-8).
- A description of how the SEA has met the consultation requirements (p. 9).
- Evidence and plans to meet the principles (p. 10-18). An SEA will enter narrative text in the text boxes provided, complete the required tables, and provide other required evidence. An SEA may supplement the narrative text in a text box with attachments, which will be included in an appendix. Any supplemental attachments that are included in an appendix must be referenced in the related narrative text.

Requests should not include personally identifiable information.

Process for Submitting the Request: An SEA must submit a request to the Department to receive the flexibility. This request form and other pertinent documents are available on the Department's Web site at: http://www.ed.gov/esea/flexibility.

Electronic Submission: The Department strongly prefers to receive an SEA's request for the flexibility electronically. The SEA should submit it to the following address: ESEAflexibility@ed.gov.

Paper Submission: In the alternative, an SEA may submit the original and two copies of its request for the flexibility to the following address:

Patricia McKee, Acting Director
Student Achievement and School Accountability Programs
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Room 3W320
Washington, DC 20202-6132

Due to potential delays in processing mail sent through the U.S. Postal Service, SEAs are encouraged to use alternate carriers for paper submissions.

REQUEST SUBMISSION DEADLINE

SEAs have multiple opportunities to submit requests for the flexibility. The submission dates are November 14, 2011, February 28, 2012, and an additional opportunity following the conclusion of the 2011–2012 school year.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE MEETING FOR SEAS

The Department has conducted a number of webinars to assist SEAs in preparing their requests and to respond to questions. Please visit the Department's Web site at: http://www.ed.gov/esea/flexibility for copies of previously conducted webinars and information on upcoming webinars.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

If you have any questions, please contact the Department by e-mail at ESEAflexibility@ed.gov.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Insert page numbers prior to submitting the request, and place the table of contents in front of the SEA's flexibility request.

CONTENTS		PAGE
Cover Sheet for ESEA Flexibility Request		3
Waivers		4
Assurances		8
Consultation		11
Evaluation		17
Overview of SEA's Request for the ESEA Flexibility		17
Principle 1: College- and Career-Ready Expectations for All Students		21
1.A	Adopt college-and career-ready standards	21
1.B	Transition to college- and career-ready standards	21
1.C	Develop and administer annual, statewide, aligned, high-quality assessments that measure student growth	51
Principle 2: State-Developed Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, and Support		54
2.A	Develop and implement a State-based system of differentiated recognition, accountability, and support	54
2.B	Set ambitious but achievable annual measurable objectives	65
2.C	Reward schools	73
2.D	Priority schools	77
2.E	Focus schools	91
2.F	Provide incentives and supports for other Title I schools	113
2.G	Build SEA, LEA, and school capacity to improve student learning	124
Principle 3: Supporting Effective Instruction and Leadership		135
3.A	Develop and adopt guidelines for local teacher and principal evaluation and support systems	135
3.B	Ensure LEAs implement teacher and principal evaluation and support systems	155

TABLE OF CONTENTS, CONTINUED

For each attachment included in the *ESEA Flexibility Request*, label the attachment with the corresponding number from the list of attachments below and indicate the page number where the attachment is located. If an attachment is not applicable to the SEA's request, indicate "N/A" instead of a page number. Reference relevant attachments in the narrative portions of the request.

LABEL	LIST OF ATTACHMENTS	PAGE
1	Notice to LEAs	173
2	Comments on request received from LEAs	184
3	Notice and information provided to the public regarding the request	317
4	Evidence that the State has formally adopted college- and career-ready content standards consistent with the State's standards adoption process	320
5	Memorandum of understanding or letter from a State network of institutions of higher education (IHEs) certifying that meeting the State's standards corresponds to being college- and career-ready without the need for remedial coursework at the postsecondary level (if applicable)	329
6	State's Race to the Top Assessment Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) (if applicable)	331
7	Evidence that the SEA has submitted high-quality assessments and academic achievement standards to the Department for peer review, or a timeline of when the SEA will submit the assessments and academic achievement standards to the Department for peer review (if applicable)	332
8	A copy of the average statewide proficiency based on assessments administered in the 2010–2011 school year in reading/language arts and mathematics for the "all students" group and all subgroups (if applicable)	333
9	Table 2: Reward, Priority, and Focus Schools	334
10	A copy of the guidelines that the SEA has developed and adopted for local teacher and principal evaluation and support systems (if applicable)	335
11	Evidence that the SEA has adopted all of the guidelines for local teacher and principal evaluation and support systems	336
12	Virginia's Student Growth Percentiles	341
13	Report Cards	343
14	Virginia's Former NCLB Title I Reading and Mathematics Annual Measureable Objectives and Current Title III AMAOs	344
15	Virginia Index of Performance Criteria, Indicators, and Award Requirements	345
16	Measures of Student Academic Progress	348
17	Virginia Standards of Accreditation – Accountability and Support	351
18	Teacher and Principal Evaluation − Professional Development and Technical Assistance	353
19	Technical Assistance Plan for the Implementation of Virginia's Standards of Learning in English, Mathematics, Science, and History and Social Science	355

COVER SHEET FOR ESEA FLEXIBILITY REQUEST

Legal Name of Requester: Dr. Steven R. Staples, Superintendent of Public Instruction	Requester's Mailing Address: Virginia Department of Education P.O. Box 2120 Richmond, VA 23218-2120
State Contact for the ESEA Flexibility Request Name: Ms. Veronica Tate Position and Office: Director, Office of Program Administration and Accountability Contact's Mailing Address: Virginia Department of Education P.O. Box 2120 Richmond, VA 23218-2120 Telephone: (804) 225-2870 Fax: (804) 371-7347 Email address: veronica.tate@doe.virginia.gov	
Chief State School Officer (Printed Name): Dr. Steven R. Staples	Telephone: (804) 225-2023
Signature of the Chief State School Officer: X	Date: Original: February 23, 2012 Revisions: January 11, 2013 Extension: January 22, 2014 Renewal: January 28, 2015 Renewal Revisions: March 16, 2015
The State, through its authorized representative, agrees to meet all principles of the ESEA Flexibility.	

WAIVERS

By submitting this updated ESEA flexibility request, the SEA renews its request for flexibility through waivers of the nine ESEA requirements listed below and their associated regulatory, administrative, and reporting requirements, as well as any optional waivers the SEA has chosen to request under ESEA flexibility, by checking each of the boxes below. The provisions below represent the general areas of flexibility requested.

☒ 1. The requirements in ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(E)-(H) that prescribe how an SEA must establish annual measurable objectives (AMOs) for determining adequate yearly progress (AYP) to ensure that all students meet or exceed the State's proficient level of academic achievement on the State's assessments in reading/language arts and mathematics no later than the end of the 2013–2014 school year. The SEA requests this waiver to develop new ambitious but achievable AMOs in reading/language arts and mathematics in order to provide meaningful goals that are used to guide support and improvement efforts for the State, LEAs, schools, and student subgroups.

☒ 2. The requirements in ESEA section 1116(b) for an LEA to identify for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring, as appropriate, a Title I school that fails, for two consecutive years or more, to make AYP, and for a school so identified and its LEA to take certain improvement actions. The SEA requests this waiver so that an LEA and its Title I schools need not comply with these requirements.

☒ 3. The requirements in ESEA section 1116(c) for an SEA to identify for improvement or corrective action, as appropriate, an LEA that, for two consecutive years or more, fails to make AYP, and for an LEA so identified and its SEA to take certain improvement actions. The SEA requests this waiver so that it need not comply with these requirements with respect to its LEAs.

☒ 4. The requirements in ESEA sections 6213(b) and 6224(e) that limit participation in, and use of funds under the Small, Rural School Achievement (SRSA) and Rural and Low-Income School (RLIS) programs based on whether an LEA has made AYP and is complying with the requirements in ESEA section 1116. The SEA requests this waiver so that an LEA that receives SRSA or RLIS funds may use those funds for any authorized purpose regardless of whether the LEA makes AYP.

☒ 5. The requirement in ESEA section 1114(a)(1) that a school have a poverty percentage of 40 percent or more in order to operate a school-wide program. The SEA requests this waiver so that an LEA may implement interventions consistent with the turnaround principles or interventions that are based on the needs of the students in the school and designed to enhance the entire educational program in a school in any of its priority and focus schools that meet the definitions of "priority schools" and "focus schools," respectively, set forth in the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*, as appropriate, even if those schools do not have a poverty percentage of 40 percent or more.

☒ 6. The requirement in ESEA section 1003(a) for an SEA to distribute funds reserved under that section only to LEAs with schools identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring. The SEA requests this waiver so that it may allocate section 1003(a) funds to its LEAs in order to serve any of the State's priority and focus schools that meet the definitions of "priority schools" and "focus schools," respectively, set forth in the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*.

☒ 7. The provision in ESEA section 1117(c)(2)(A) that authorizes an SEA to reserve Title I, Part A funds to reward a Title I school that (1) significantly closed the achievement gap between subgroups in the school; or (2) has exceeded AYP for two or more consecutive years. The SEA requests this waiver so that it may use funds reserved under ESEA section 1117(c)(2)(A) for any of the State's reward schools that meet the definition of "reward schools" set forth in the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*.

☒ 8. The requirements in ESEA section 2141(a), (b), and (c) for an LEA and SEA to comply with certain requirements for improvement plans regarding highly qualified teachers. The SEA requests this waiver to allow the SEA and its LEAs to focus on developing and implementing more meaningful evaluation and support systems.

☒ 9. The limitations in ESEA section 6123 that limit the amount of funds an SEA or LEA may transfer from certain ESEA programs to other ESEA programs. The SEA requests this waiver so that it and its LEAs may transfer up to 100 percent of the funds it receives under the authorized programs among those programs and into Title I, Part A.

Optional Flexibilities:

If an SEA chooses to request waivers of any of the following requirements, it should check the corresponding box(es) below:

☒ 10. The requirements in ESEA sections 4201(b)(1)(A) and 4204(b)(2)(A) that restrict the activities provided by a community learning center under the Twenty-First Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) program to activities provided only during non-school hours or periods when school is not in session (*i.e.*, before and after school or during summer recess). The SEA requests this waiver so that 21st CCLC funds may be used to support expanded learning time during the school day in addition to activities during non-school hours or periods when school is not in session.

☒ 11. The requirements in ESEA sections 1116(a)(1)(A)-(B) and 1116(c)(1)(A) that require LEAs and SEAs to make determinations of adequate yearly progress (AYP) for schools and LEAs, respectively. The SEA requests this waiver because continuing to determine whether an LEA and its schools make AYP is inconsistent with the SEA's State-developed differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system included in its ESEA flexibility request. The SEA and its LEAs must report on their report cards performance against the AMOs for all subgroups identified in ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(C)(v), and use performance against the AMOs to support continuous improvement in Title I schools.

☐ 12. The requirements in ESEA section 1113(a)(3)-(4) and (c)(1) that require an LEA to serve eligible schools under Title I in rank order of poverty and to allocate Title I, Part A funds based on that rank ordering. The SEA requests this waiver in order to permit its LEAs to serve a Title I-eligible high school with a graduation rate below 60 percent that the SEA has identified as a priority school even if that school does not otherwise rank sufficiently high to be served under ESEA section 1113.

☐ 13. The requirement in ESEA section 1003(a) for an SEA to distribute funds reserved under that section only to LEAs with schools identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring. The SEA requests this waiver in addition to waiver #6 so that, when it has remaining section 1003(a) funds after ensuring that all priority and focus schools have sufficient funds to carry out interventions, it may allocate section 1003(a) funds to its LEAs to provide interventions and supports for low-achieving students in other Title I schools when one or more subgroups miss either AMOs or graduation rate targets or both over a number of years.

If the SEA is requesting waiver #13, the SEA must demonstrate in its renewal request that it has a process to ensure, on an annual basis, that all of its priority and focus schools will have sufficient funding to implement their required interventions prior to distributing ESEA section 1003(a) funds to other Title I schools.

☒ 14. The requirements in ESEA sections 1111(b)(1)(B) and 1111(b)(3)(C)(i) that, respectively, require the SEA to apply the same academic content and academic achievement standards to all public schools and public school children in the State and to administer the same academic assessments to measure the achievement of all students. The SEA requests this waiver so that it is not required to double test a student who is not yet enrolled in high school but who takes advanced, high school level, mathematics coursework. The SEA would assess such a student with the corresponding advanced, high school level assessment in place of the mathematics assessment the SEA would otherwise administer to the student for the grade in which the student is enrolled. For Federal accountability purposes, the SEA will use the results of the advanced, high school level, mathematics assessment in the year in which the assessment is administered and will administer one or more additional advanced, high school level, mathematics assessments to such students in high school, consistent with the State's mathematics content standards, and use the results in high school accountability determinations.

If the SEA is requesting waiver #14, the SEA must demonstrate in its renewal request how it will ensure that every student in the State has the opportunity to be prepared for and take courses at an advanced level prior to high school.

The Virginia Board of Education ensures that every student in the state has the opportunity to be prepared for and take courses at an advanced level prior to high school through a provision in the Standards of Accreditation which requires that instructional programs in all middle schools offer at least one level of a foreign language and an Algebra I course. (Part C of 8VAC20-131-90) Testing data show that 51 percent of Virginia 8th grade students took the Algebra I, Geometry, or Algebra II assessment in the 2013-2014 school year. When such students are enrolled in high school, the students are assessed on one or more additional advanced, high-school level mathematics assessments, consistent with the state's mathematics content; and the students' results on the additional advanced, high-school level mathematics assessment(s) administered during high school are included in federal accountability determinations for the students' high school.

All Virginia high school graduates are required to have at least three standard credits in mathematics from a list of Board of Education approved courses. The minimum approved course is Algebra I. Standard diploma recipients must verify at least one of the three courses by receiving a proficient score on the corresponding end-of-course assessment. Advanced diploma recipients must have a least four standard credits in mathematics and must verify at

least two of the four required courses by receiving a proficient score on the corresponding end-of-course assessment. End-of-course assessments are available for Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II. While many students take these classes and the corresponding end-of-course tests in high school, there are a significant number of students who complete the course content in the middle school. Such students take the corresponding end-of-course test when they complete the course. For example, a grade 8 student who completes Algebra I would take the end-of-course Algebra I test instead of the grade 8 mathematics test. The student's score on the Algebra I test would count towards that middle school's pass rate in mathematics for federal accountability. Students who complete Algebra I in middle school and take the end-of-course Algebra I test take the Geometry and Algebra II test in the high school when they complete the corresponding courses.

Virginia requires that students take assessments that are aligned to and measure the content standards that comprise the curriculum of the course, regardless of the student's assigned grade level. *The Standards for Accrediting Public Schools* require that "No student shall take more than one test in any content area in each year." (8VAC20-131-30-B) Further, Superintendent's Memo #292-09 dated October 16, 2009, states "Where students are accelerated (i.e., studying content in a subject area that is typically taught above their grade placement level such as a student taking Algebra I in grade 7), students are to take the test for the higher level content. Schools are prohibited from testing students more than once in a content area per school year." Student results for first-time test takers on Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II end-of-course assessments are included in federal accountability determinations for the school in which the student is enrolled. In addition, Virginia has an extensive list of substitute tests such as AP Calculus and IB Mathematics which accelerated students often take in high school. Scores for students who take these tests are also included in federal accountability determinations.

ASSURANCES

By submitting this request, the SEA assures that:

☒ 1. It requests waivers of the above-referenced requirements based on its agreement to meet Principles 1 through 4 of ESEA flexibility, as described throughout the remainder of this request.

☒ 2. It has adopted English language proficiency (ELP) standards that correspond to the State's college- and career-ready standards, consistent with the requirement in ESEA section 3113(b)(2), and that reflect the academic language skills necessary to access and meet the State's college- and career-ready standards. (Principle 1)

☒ 3. It will administer no later than the 2014–2015 school year alternate assessments based on grade-level academic achievement standards or alternate assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities that are consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 200.6(a)(2) and are aligned with the State's college- and career-ready standards. (Principle 1)

☒ 4. It will develop and administer ELP assessments aligned with the State's ELP standards, consistent with the requirements in ESEA sections 1111(b)(7), 3113(b)(2), and 3122(a)(3)(A)(ii) no later than the 2015–2016 school year. (Principle 1)

☒ 5. It will report annually to the public on college-going and college credit-accumulation rates for all students and subgroups of students in each LEA and each public high school in the State. (Principle 1)

☒ 6. If the SEA includes student achievement on assessments in addition to reading/language arts and mathematics in its differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system and uses achievement on those assessments to identify priority and focus schools, it has technical documentation, which can be made available to the Department upon request, demonstrating that the assessments are administered statewide; include all students, including by providing appropriate accommodations for English Learners and students with disabilities, as well as alternate assessments based on grade-level academic achievement standards or alternate assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 200.6(a)(2); and are valid and reliable for use in the SEA's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system. (Principle 2)

☒ 7. It will annually make public its lists of reward schools, priority schools, and focus schools prior to the start of the school year as well as publicly recognize its reward schools, and will update its lists of priority and focus schools at least every three years. (Principle 2)

If the SEA is not submitting with its renewal request its updated list of priority and focus schools, based on the most recent available data, for implementation beginning in the 2015–2016 school year, it must also assure that:

☒ 8. It will provide to the Department, no later than January 31, 2016, an updated list of priority and focus schools, identified based on school year 2014–2015 data, for implementation beginning in

the 2016–2017 school year.

☒ 9. It will evaluate and, based on that evaluation, revise its own administrative requirements to reduce duplication and unnecessary burden on LEAs and schools. (Principle 4)

☒ 10. It has consulted with its Committee of Practitioners regarding the information set forth in its ESEA flexibility request.

☒ 11. Prior to submitting this request, it provided all LEAs with notice and a reasonable opportunity to comment on the request and has attached a copy of that notice (Attachment 1) as well as copies of any comments it received from LEAs. (Attachment 2)

☒ 12. Prior to submitting this request, it provided notice and information regarding the request to the public in the manner in which the SEA customarily provides such notice and information to the public (*e.g.*, by publishing a notice in the newspaper; by posting information on its website) and has attached a copy of, or link to, that notice. (Attachment 3)

☒ 13. It will provide to the Department, in a timely manner, all required reports, data, and evidence regarding its progress in implementing the plans contained throughout its ESEA flexibility request, and will ensure that all such reports, data, and evidence are accurate, reliable, and complete or, if it is aware of issues related to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of its reports, data, or evidence, it will disclose those issues.

☒ 14. It will report annually on its State report card and will ensure that its LEAs annually report on their local report cards, for the "all students" group, each subgroup described in ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(C)(v)(II), and for any combined subgroup (as applicable): information on student achievement at each proficiency level; data comparing actual achievement levels to the State's annual measurable objectives; the percentage of students not tested; performance on the other academic indicator for elementary and middle schools; and graduation rates for high schools. In addition, it will annually report, and will ensure that its LEAs annually report, all other information and data required by ESEA section 1111(h)(1)(C) and 1111(h)(2)(B), respectively. It will ensure that all reporting is consistent with *State and Local Report Cards Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as Amended Non-Regulatory Guidance* (February 8, 2013).

Principle 3 Assurances

Each SEA must select the appropriate option and, in doing so, assures that:

Option A	Option B	Option C
☒ 15.a. The SEA is on track to fully implementing Principle 3, including incorporation of student growth based on State assessments into educator ratings for teachers of tested grades and subjects and principals.	If an SEA that is administering new State assessments during the 2014–2015 school year is requesting one additional year to incorporate student growth based on these assessments, it will: ☐ 15.b.i. Continue to ensure that its LEAs implement teacher and principal evaluation systems using multiple measures, and that the SEA or its LEAs will calculate student growth data based on State assessments administered during the 2014–2015 school year for all teachers of tested grades and subjects and principals; and ☐ 15.b.ii. Ensure that each teacher of a tested grade and subject and all principals will receive their student growth data based on State assessments administered during the 2014–2015 school year.	If the SEA is requesting modifications to its teacher and principal evaluation and support system guidelines or implementation timeline other than those described in Option B, which require additional flexibility from the guidance in the document titled *ESEA Flexibility* as well as the documents related to the additional flexibility offered by the Assistant Secretary in a letter dated August 2, 2013, it will: ☐ 15.c. Provide a narrative response in its redlined ESEA flexibility request as described in Section II of the ESEA flexibility renewal guidance.

CONSULTATION

An SEA must meaningfully engage and solicit input from diverse stakeholders and communities in the development of its request. To demonstrate that an SEA has done so, the SEA must provide an assurance that it has consulted with the State's Committee of Practitioners regarding the information set forth in the request and provide the following:

1. A description of how the SEA meaningfully engaged and solicited input on its request from teachers and their representatives.

Throughout the development of its ESEA flexibility application, the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) apprised the public of its plan to apply for the flexibility via posting of information on the Department's Web site, mass communication to superintendents and other practitioners, and information shared during public meetings where various stakeholder groups were represented. The VDOE also invited diverse stakeholders to provide input in a variety of ways, including: 1) providing comment at meetings of the Board of Education and meetings of the Board Committee on School and Division Accountability; 2) providing input during face-to-face forums such as Round Table discussions and Committee of Practitioners meetings; and 3) submitting written comments for review and consideration. The public at large was provided online access to streaming video of the Board of Education and Board Committee on School and Division Accountability meetings during which ESEA flexibility was discussed, as well as to the meeting agendas, reports, minutes, and materials referenced during those meetings.

To solicit input from diverse stakeholders, the VDOE scheduled a series of meetings to which participants representing a cross-section of administrators, teachers, parents, and student groups were invited. Specifically, principals and teachers representing all regions of the state, grade levels, subject areas, and special interest areas such as students with disabilities, English language learners, gifted children, and career and technical education were invited to participate in the meetings bolded and underlined in the schedule of stakeholder meetings below. Additionally, these representatives were asked to bring to the table the voices of their constituents.

Date	Forum	Stakeholders Providing Input
10/26/11	**Board Committee on School and Division Accountability**	Representatives from the following organizations: • Virginia Association of School Superintendents (VASS) • **Virginia Parent Teacher Association (VPTA)** • Virginia School Boards Association (VSBA)
10/27/11	Board of Education Meeting	Public Comment
10/31/11	Accountability Round Table	Selected division personnel required to implement accountability provisions
11/8/11	***No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB) Committee of Practitioners Meeting**	**Selected educators representing various segments of Virginia's education community, as outlined in the ESEA**

Date	Forum	Stakeholders Providing Input
11/16/11	**Board Committee on School and Division Accountability**	1. Representatives from the following organizations: • **Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals (VAESP)** • **Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals (VASSP)** • Virginia ESL Supervisors' Association (VESA) • Virginia Council of Administrators for Special Education (VCASE) • **Virginia Education Association (VEA)** **2. Selected teachers**
11/17/11	Board of Education Meeting	Public comment
11/18/11	**Written Comment***	**Selected special interest groups**
11/21/11	Teacher and Principal Round Table	**Principals and teachers nominated by VEA, VAESP, and VASSP**
11/21/11	Superintendents Round Table	Superintendents, and one division personnel versed in NCLB accountability requirements, nominated by regional representatives of the Superintendent's Leadership Advisory Council (SLAC)
12/19/11	***No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB) Committee of Practitioners Meeting**	**Selected educators representing various segments of Virginia's education community, as outlined in the ESEA**
1/11/12	Board Committee on School and Division Accountability	Public Comment
1/12/12	Board of Education Meeting	Public Comment
9/27/12	Board of Education Meeting	Public Comment
10/25/12	Board of Education Meeting	Public Comment

* In addition to the face-to-face meetings shown above, the VDOE invited written comment from the following organizations representing teachers:

1. Virginia Association for Career and Technical Education
2. Virginia Association for Early Childhood Education
3. Virginia Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
4. Advisory Board on Teacher Education and Licensure
5. Virginia Council of Administrators for Special Education
6. Virginia Educational Technology Advisory Council

As well, members from those organizations representing superintendents, school boards, and federal program administrators advocated for the interests of teachers. Attachment 2 contains summaries of the comments provided at each of the meetings and letters submitted by interest groups. The response to Question #2 below contains a summary of the recommendations incorporated into Virginia's ESEA flexibility request.

2. A description of how the SEA meaningfully engaged and solicited input on its request from other diverse communities, such as students, parents, community-based organizations, civil rights organizations, organizations representing students with disabilities and English Learners, business organizations, and Indian tribes.

The VDOE invited input from parents, community-based organizations, civil rights organizations, organizations representing students with disabilities and English language learners, and business organizations through the schedule of stakeholder input described in #1 above. The stakeholder meetings in bold and underlined below denote the opportunities for these diverse communities to provide input:

Date	Forum	Stakeholders Providing Input
10/26/11	**Board Committee on School and Division Accountability**	Representatives from the following organizations: • Virginia Association of School Superintendents (VASS) • **Virginia Parent Teacher Association (VPTA)** • Virginia School Boards Association (VSBA)
10/27/11	**Board of Education Meeting**	**Public Comment**
10/31/11	Accountability Round Table	Selected division personnel required to implement accountability provisions
11/8/11	***No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB) Committee of Practitioners Meeting**	**Selected educators representing various segments of Virginia's education community, as outlined in the ESEA**
11/16/11	**Board Committee on School and Division Accountability**	1. Representatives from the following organizations: • Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals (VAESP) • Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals (VASSP) • **Virginia ESL Supervisors' Association (VESA)** • **Virginia Council of Administrators for Special Education (VCASE)** • Virginia Education Association (VEA) 2. Selected teachers
11/17/11	**Board of Education Meeting**	**Public Comment**
11/18/11	**Written Comment***	**Selected special interest groups**
11/21/11	Teacher and Principal Round Table	Principals and teachers nominated by VEA, VAESP, and VASSP
11/21/11	Superintendents Round Table	Superintendents, and one division personnel versed in NCLB accountability requirements, nominated by regional representatives of the Superintendent's Leadership Advisory Council (SLAC)
12/19/11	***No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB) Committee of Practitioners Meeting**	**Selected educators representing various segments of Virginia's education community, as outlined in the ESEA**
1/11/12	**Board Committee on School and Division Accountability**	**Public Comment**
1/12/12	**Board of Education Meeting**	**Public Comment**

Date	Forum	Stakeholders Providing Input
9/27/12	**Board of Education Meeting**	**Public Comment**
10/25/12	**Board of Education Meeting**	**Public Comment**

* In addition to the face-to-face meetings above, the VDOE invited written comment from the following organizations representing diverse communities of stakeholders:

1. JustChildren Program
2. Virginia Association of Federal Education Program Administrators
3. Virginia Council of Administrators for Special Education
4. Virginia Latino Advisory Board
5. Virginia National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)

As well, teachers, principals, administrators, and members from those organizations representing superintendents, school boards, and federal program administrators advocated for the interests of the diverse student groups they serve.

Summary of Stakeholder Recommendations Included in Virginia's ESEA Flexibility Request

All stakeholder input pertinent to the waivers available under, or the requirements of, the ESEA flexibility offer was considered in the creation of the ESEA flexibility proposal. Preferences expressed by multiple groups of stakeholders received the strongest consideration and likelihood of being included in Virginia's ESEA flexibility request if they were received in time to be included in the version reviewed by the Board of Education. The following recommendations from stakeholders have been incorporated into Virginia's proposal:

General

- Provide additional professional development and technical assistance in the implementation of the revised *Standards of Learning*.
- Provide additional technical assistance and guidance in the implementation of the new assessments that correspond with the revised *Standards of Learning*.
- Design annual measurable objectives that are easy to understand and achievable for most schools.
- Reset annual measurable objectives at such time that sufficient growth data are available to use as a factor in determinations.
- Increase training and resources available for the local design and implementation of the principal and teacher evaluation systems.

Subgroups

- Maintain visibility and attention on subgroup performance.
- Limit subgroup accountability to reading and mathematics only.
- Combine subgroups where duplication of students is common so that schools with smaller populations of low-performing subgroups can be so identified and receive appropriate support.
- Set annual measurable objectives for each subgroup that are reflective of the group's

performance trends and do not measure their performance against a 100 percent proficiency expectation or against the average performance of all students.

Ongoing Involvement of State's Committee of Practitioners and other Stakeholders

The Virginia Department of Education continues to engage the Committee of Practitioners, division superintendents, principals, and teachers while responding to U.S. Department of Education (USED) and peer reviewers' questions. The April 17, 2012, letter to the superintendent of public instruction was distributed to all stakeholder groups and the Committee of Practitioners met on May 1, 2012, to discuss Virginia's response to USED concerns. The Committee and other stakeholder groups were consulted thereafter as needed based on ongoing discussion with USED.

Substantive changes to Virginia's ESEA flexibility request were approved by the Virginia Board of Education at its May 24, 2012, meeting. Based on ongoing discussion with USED, the Virginia Board of Education approved additional changes at its October 25, 2012, meeting. Public comment is welcomed at all Board meetings. The meetings are accessible to the public via video streaming and related documents are available on the Board's webpage.

During ongoing implementation of Virginia's ESEA flexibility plan, the Virginia Department of Education will continue to monitor implementation and solicit feedback of teachers and principals during planned technical assistance activities.

In preparation to submit a request in 2014 to the U.S. Department of Education to extend Virginia's ESEA flexibility application for the 2014-2015 school year, the Virginia Department of Education, on behalf of the Board of Education, solicited stakeholder input on proposed additions and revisions to its application as indicated in the chart below. The Committee of Practitioners was expanded to strengthen representation for school-level personnel such as principals and teachers, as well as to strengthen representation for special interest areas such as students with disabilities, English language learners, gifted children, and career and technical education. As well, an ESEA stakeholder e-mail distribution list was established that includes the stakeholders that provided input on the state's original application and many additional individual practitioners and interest groups that have expressed an interest in ESEA flexibility provisions since the state began implementing the plan. A sample of the communication updates on the ESEA flexibility extension distributed to stakeholders is available in Attachment 1. A copy of the revised Committee of Practitioners (COP) list and a copy of the minutes from the COP meetings are available in Attachment 2. Comments submitted by stakeholders in response to the proposed additions and revisions to Virginia's ESEA flexibility application for the extension through the 2014-2015 school year are also available in Attachment 2.

In preparation to submit a request in 2015 to the U.S. Department of Education to renew Virginia's ESEA flexibility application for four years through 2018-2019 school year, the Virginia Department of Education, on behalf of the Board of Education, solicited stakeholder input on proposed revisions to its application as indicated in the chart below. A sample of the communication updates on the 2015 ESEA flexibility renewal distributed to stakeholders is available in Attachment 1. Minutes from the COP meetings are available in Attachment 2.

Comments submitted by stakeholders in response to the proposed additions and revisions to Virginia's ESEA flexibility application for renewal through the 2018-2019 school year are also available in Attachment 2.

Date	Forum	Stakeholders Providing Input
10/22/2013	NCLB Committee of Practitioners Meeting	Selected educators representing various segments of Virginia's education community, as outlined in the ESEA Executive summary of proposed additions and updates was distributed and discussed.
10/23/2013	Board Committee on School and Division Accountability	Public Comment
10/24/2013	Stakeholder E-mail	Selected educators, parents, and community and interest groups representing various segments of Virginia's education community Link to video recording of 10/23/2013 Committee meeting and executive summary of proposed additions and updates was distributed. Input was solicited.
11/20/2013	Board Committee on School and Division Accountability	Public Comment Revised Process for Requesting an Extension for ESEA Flexibility report was presented and discussed.
2/12/2014	Superintendent's E-mail	E-mail update to division superintendents and others regarding the status of the state's extension request, including a description of the proposed change to the AMO methodology and a request for comments to be submitted to the state
2/26/2014	Board Committee on School and Division Accountability	Public Comment Extension for ESEA Flexibility and Proposed Amendments report was presented and discussed.
2/27/2014	Board of Education Meeting	Public Comment First Draft of Amended ESEA Flexibility Application presented to the Board of Education for First Review
3/26/2014	Board Committee on School and Division Accountability	Public Comment Extension for ESEA Flexibility and Proposed Amendments report was presented and discussed.
3/27/2014	Board of Education Meeting	Public Comment Final Draft of Amended ESEA Flexibility Application report was presented to the Board of Education for Final Review.
1/12/2015	Public Posting	Red-lined version of the ESEA Flexibility Renewal Application was posted on the Department's website. Input was solicited.
1/12/2015	Superintendent's E-mail	E-mail distributed to division superintendents and school division instructional leaders and federal program staff describing the ESEA Flexibility renewal process and proposed revisions to the state's application. Red-lined version of the renewal application was shared. Input was solicited.

Date	Forum	Stakeholders Providing Input
1/12/2015	Stakeholder E-mail	E-mail was distributed to selected educators, parents, and community and interest groups representing various segments of Virginia's education community describing the ESEA Flexibility renewal process and proposed revisions to the state's application. Red-lined version of the renewal application was shared. Input was solicited.
1/15/2015	NCLB Committee of Practitioners Meeting	Selected educators representing various segments of Virginia's education community, as outlined in the ESEA Red-lined version of the renewal application was shared and discussed. Input was solicited.
1/22/2015	Board of Education Meeting	Public Comment ESEA Flexibility Renewal Process and Application was presented and discussed.

EVALUATION

The Department encourages an SEA that receives approval to implement the flexibility to collaborate with the Department to evaluate at least one program, practice, or strategy the SEA or its LEAs implement under principle 1, 2, or 3. Upon receipt of approval of the flexibility, an interested SEA will need to nominate for evaluation a program, practice, or strategy the SEA or its LEAs will implement under principles 1, 2, or 3. The Department will work with the SEA to determine the feasibility and design of the evaluation and, if it is determined to be feasible and appropriate, will fund and conduct the evaluation in partnership with the SEA, ensuring that the implementation of the chosen program, practice, or strategy is consistent with the evaluation design.

☒ Check here if you are interested in collaborating with the Department in this evaluation, if your request for the flexibility is approved.

OVERVIEW OF SEA'S REQUEST FOR THE ESEA FLEXIBILITY

Provide an overview (about 500 words) of the SEA's request for the flexibility that:

1. explains the SEA's comprehensive approach to implement the waivers and principles and describes the SEA's strategy to ensure this approach is coherent within and across the principles; and
2. describes how the implementation of the waivers and principles will enhance the SEA's and its LEAs' ability to increase the quality of instruction for students and improve student achievement.

Virginia consistently ranks as one of the top states in the nation in overall educational quality and performance in *Education Week*'s annual *Quality Counts* report. Although the state is nationally acclaimed for its effective educational policies and practices, additional reforms to the state accountability system would further enhance academic achievement and educational opportunities for all students and subgroups. The ESEA flexibility extension offer provides Virginia the opportunity to continue implementing a cohesive accountability system that holds schools and divisions accountable for high achievement for all students and subgroups, while

preventing the misidentification of schools as underperforming. Virginia's ESEA flexibility application is premised on the state's:

1. Revised college- and career-ready standards for all students and subgroups;
2. Next-generation assessments corresponding to the revised standards;
3. Enhanced subgroup reporting to provide more meaningful performance data for traditionally underperforming groups of students;
4. Additional accountability determinations that allow supplemental federal resources to support interventions in Title I schools demonstrating the greatest need; and
5. Revised performance standards and evaluation criteria for teachers and principals.

Background

Of Virginia's 1,839 schools, only 38 percent, or 697 of Virginia's 1,839 schools, made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) based on results from the 2010-2011 assessments, compared to 61 percent of schools that made AYP in the previous year. The AYP targets in 2010-2011 were five points higher (86 percent) in reading and six points higher in mathematics (85 percent) than the targets for assessments taken by students during 2009-2010. As a consequence, 342 schools that made AYP in the previous year, and would have made AYP had the targets not increased, were identified as not meeting AYP. Because AYP targets were scheduled to increase an additional five points in both reading and mathematics for the 2012 assessment cycle, an even greater disproportionate percentage of schools would have been misidentified as underperforming during the 2012-2013 year if the NCLB accountability requirements remained in place. Additionally, under NCLB, schools were required to meet each of 29 targets in order to make AYP. If a school missed one target by even one point, it did not make AYP unless it met safe harbor.

The flexibility to establish federal annual performance expectations and classifications that are appropriate for Virginia's schools allows for proper identification of those schools that need either comprehensive or targeted interventions. Five percent of the state's lowest-performing Title I schools are identified as "priority" schools, and 10 percent of the state's Title I schools with the most significant subgroup performance gaps are identified as "focus" schools; and, as a result of the identification, extensive support has been provided to these schools to ensure continuous improvement. Virginia's revised accountability plan supplements state accreditation ratings with a prominent "dashboard" on each school's report card that clearly and graphically shows progress – or the lack thereof – of all students, proficiency gap groups, and each individual subgroup toward closing proficiency gaps in reading, mathematics, and graduation rates.

Virginia's Innovative Educational Reform Efforts

It is important to note that Virginia had already advanced significant reform in each of the three reform areas outlined in the flexibility requirements. Below is a summary of the ways Virginia excels in the three principles of the ESEA flexibility agreement.

Principle #1: College- and Career-Ready Standards and Assessments

In 2007, with the support of the Governor's Office, the Virginia Department of Education launched a College- and Career-Readiness Initiative. A hallmark of this initiative has been the raising of standards and expansion of learning opportunities to ensure Virginia students become competitive in the global market. Some of the significant accomplishments under this initiative include the adoption of revised content standards that reflect national and international college- and career-ready expectations in mathematics and reading and are fully aligned with the Common Core State Standards. New and more rigorous technology-enhanced next-generation assessments in mathematics, reading, writing, and science were implemented in 2011-2012 and 2012-2013, respectively.

As the revised standards and corresponding assessments have been implemented, the Virginia Department of Education has offered extensive professional development for teachers and school leaders to ensure effective implementation. In particular, Virginia has devoted substantial resources to provide enhanced support and professional development in the areas of English Language Learners and special education to ensure optimal learning outcomes for these subgroups. Additionally, significant enhancements have been made in the area of early childhood education to provide a strong foundation for students as they enter school to optimize academic success and assure college-and-career readiness. As recognition of this commitment, the state recently received a $17.5 million federal preschool expansion grant to offer services to an additional 1,400 at-risk pre-kindergarten students, in addition to the approximate 14,000 students already supported through the Virginia Preschool Initiative.

Principle #2: Differentiated Accountability Systems

The Virginia Department of Education has developed a nationally-recognized comprehensive support system that focuses on building division-level capacity to support schools in need of interventions. The system includes a variety of support methods and tools, including:
1) school and division-level academic review processes; 2) coaches in schools and school divisions requiring assistance; 3) an electronic platform for school improvement planning; and 4) extensive professional development through face-to-face and electronic venues. The existing rewards and recognition system includes the Board of Education's Virginia Index of Performance (VIP) incentive program for all schools and divisions. Title I high-achieving schools and divisions also are recognized under NCLB provisions.

Principle #3: Teacher and Principal Evaluation and Support Systems

Virginia has adopted revised uniform performance standards and evaluation criteria for teachers and principals and guidelines for implementing a comprehensive evaluation system. Student

academic progress is a significant component of the evaluation standards for teachers and principals. The new standards and evaluation model were initially implemented in 25 schools participating in former Governor Robert McDonnell's performance-pay pilot initiative. All schools in the state fully implemented the standards and evaluation model by July 2013. The state provided and will continue to provide school personnel with training and resource materials to assist in the implementation of the performance evaluation standards, criteria, and processes.

In addition, former Governor McDonnell's "Opportunity to Learn" K-12 legislative agenda included initiatives and funding to increase college and workforce readiness, expand educational options for Virginia students, and strengthen the teacher workforce. The "Opportunity to Learn" agenda also provided structured support for initiatives in career and technical education, STEM activities, and expanded community and business involvement in local educational efforts, all of which are expected to continue under Governor Terry McAuliffe's administration, along with enhanced efforts around preschool programs and addressing achievement gaps for at-risk student populations. The Governor's agenda is funded through additional substantial K-12 funding over the next biennium. Additional details about the Governor's K-12 agenda are included in the introduction to Question 1.A.

Virginia's innovative efforts in the three ESEA flexibility principles, coupled with the Governor's supportive reform agenda, position the state to continue implement a more effective accountability system for schools and divisions. Based on a summer 2012 initial approval of Virginia's ESEA flexibility application, new accountability determinations were implemented for the 2012-2013 school year based on 2011-2012 assessment results. Based on Board of Education actions in October 2012, and U.S. Department of Education approval in March 2013, adjustments were made to the state's methodology for establishing annual measurable objectives (AMOs) as described in Principle 2. Based on impact data and stakeholder input, Virginia's 2014 ESEA Flexibility extension application included a revision to the AMO methodology.

Following Virginia's 2014 ESEA Flexibility extension approval, the Virginia Department of Education has worked closely with school divisions and schools across the state to provide quality technical assistance and professional development to ensure effective implementation of the enhancements and revisions within each of the three principles. The state's 2015 ESEA Flexibility renewal application includes minor refinements made to the state's ESEA flexibility plan to improve implementation processes in a meaningful way for the state's school divisions and schools.

PRINCIPLE 1: COLLEGE- AND CAREER-READY EXPECTATIONS FOR ALL STUDENTS

1.A ADOPT COLLEGE- AND CAREER-READY STANDARDS

Select the option that pertains to the SEA and provide evidence corresponding to the option selected.

Option A	Option B
☐ The State has adopted college- and career-ready standards in at least reading/language arts and mathematics that are common to a significant number of States, consistent with part (1) of the definition of college- and career-ready standards. i. Attach evidence that the State has adopted the standards, consistent with the State's standards adoption process. (Attachment 4)	☒ The State has adopted college- and career-ready standards in at least reading/language arts and mathematics that have been approved and certified by a State network of institutions of higher education (IHEs), consistent with part (2) of the definition of college- and career-ready standards. i. Attach evidence that the State has adopted the standards, consistent with the State's standards adoption process. (Attachment 4) ii. Attach a copy of the memorandum of understanding or letter from a State network of IHEs certifying that students who meet these standards will not need remedial coursework at the postsecondary level. (Attachment 5)

1.B TRANSITION TO COLLEGE- AND CAREER-READY STANDARDS

Provide the SEA's plan to transition to and implement no later than the 2013–2014 school year college- and career-ready standards statewide in at least reading/language arts and mathematics for all students and schools and include an explanation of how this transition plan is likely to lead to all students, including English Learners, students with disabilities, and low-achieving students, gaining access to and learning content aligned with such standards. The Department encourages an SEA to include in its plan activities related to each of the italicized questions in the corresponding section of the document titled *ESEA Flexibility Review Guidance*, or to explain why one or more of those activities is not necessary to its plan.

Virginia is proud of the steps that have been taken to strengthen its *Standards of Learning*; the Virginia Assessment Program; school accreditation policies including accountability measures for high schools to be accountable for the graduation of their students; and other initiatives intended to assist schools and teachers in preparing students to meet expectations for postsecondary studies and careers. Attachment 4 provides a comprehensive overview of the educational reform that has occurred in the Commonwealth since 1994-1995.

Additionally, Governor Robert McDonnell proposed and the General Assembly approved a bold legislative agenda for the 2012-2014 biennium. Specific to college- and career-readiness, the General Assembly approved actions to:

- Consolidate the high school diplomas available in the Commonwealth from seven to three with more rigorous and meaningful requirements, and raise the rigor of a Standard Diploma to require a career and technical education credential.
- Require the establishment of written agreements between school divisions and their local community colleges specifying the pathway for students to complete an associate's degree or a one-year Uniform Certificate of General Studies from a Virginia Community College concurrent with a high school diploma.
- Establish new regulations for accrediting virtual schools that enroll students full-time as well as alternative licensure for virtual school teachers.
- Allow for a partnership with local school boards and institutions of higher education in which both have shared accountability and funding for students. Both public and private institutions of higher education would be allowed to establish a college partnership laboratory school in partnership with one or more local school boards.
- Strengthen teacher and principal evaluation processes.
- Provide $80,000 in FY13 to provide planning and first year start-up funding in for Governor's Health Sciences academies, which are partnerships among high schools, community colleges, and the business sector.
- Revise Virginia's *Standards of Quality* to ensure local school divisions use funds appropriated for prevention, intervention, and remediation to create reading intervention services to students in grades 3 and 4 who demonstrate reading deficiencies prior to promoting the student from grade 3 to 4. A $4.1 million FY13 budget amendment for additional funding to Virginia Early Intervention Reading Initiative to assist with the reading interventions was also passed.

Specific to the question posed for Principle 1, Question 1.B. of this waiver application, the narrative in this section describes how Virginia has:

- Developed college- and career-ready *Standards of Learning*, with full implementation and assessment in mathematics in 2011-2012 and in English in 2012-2013;
- Provided all students with access to college- and career-ready standards and the opportunity to achieve to those standards;
- Conducted significant outreach to apprise stakeholders of its college- and career-ready *Standards of Learning*;
- Provided and will continue to provide substantial instructional materials and professional development to help teachers teach and administrators provide instructional leadership for all students in the content and skills contained in the *Standards of Learning*;
- Ensured that each school division's use of Title II, Part A, funds is aligned with a local needs assessment, derived from multiple sources of student and educator data;
- Monitored school divisions' use of Title II, Part A, funds for evidence-based professional development activities;
- Developed a plan to ensure a smooth transition to college- and career-ready *Standards of Learning* and assessments (Attachment 18); and

- Continued to expand access to college-level courses for high school students.

It also describes how external measures of student achievement document the positive impact of Virginia's rigorous college- and career-ready *Standards of Learning* on student learning and success in college-level courses in high school as well as their postsecondary studies and career preparation.

Update on Virginia's Implementation of College- and Career-Ready Standards

Virginia has fully implemented its college- and career-ready *Standards of Learning* and assessments in reading and mathematics as described in its ESEA Flexibility request. Unlike states that have adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) to replace their prior standards, Virginia's college- and career-ready *Standards of Learning* are an extension of earlier *Standards of Learning* that have been enhanced to ensure students are prepared for successful entry into postsecondary education and the workplace. While the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE), schools, and school divisions have had to realign instructional resources and assessments to support and meet the increased rigor of the new college- and career-ready standards, this approach to strengthening standards and assessments created the least amount of disruption for teachers and students.

The *Code of Virginia* requires local school boards and division superintendents to comply with certain quality standards for K-12 education. These statutory Standards of Quality are recommended by the Virginia Board of Education and approved by the General Assembly. Included in the Standards of Quality is a requirement that local school boards align local curricula with the *Standards of Learning* and certify annually they are in compliance with the standards. School division superintendents must submit an annual Standards of Quality report to the Department of Education and Board of Education that verifies the divisions' compliance with requirements under the Standards of Quality. The Virginia Board of Education submits to the Governor and General Assembly an annual report that identifies areas of noncompliance by school division.

The Department of Education monitors implementation of the *Standards of Learning* primarily through analysis of *Standards of Learning* assessment results. Any failure of or intentional delay in standards implementation would be immediately evident in assessment results as the *Standards of Learning* assessments administered in 2013 reflect fully the content of the revised college- and career-ready standards. As anticipated, the implementation of new and more rigorous assessments in 2012 and 2013 resulted in significant declines in passing rates and proficiency levels in mathematics and reading. These results indicate that school divisions need to continue curriculum alignment efforts and teachers will need continued assistance in improving their content knowledge and pedagogical skills to increase the rigor within their own classrooms. These data analysis results provide the basis for extensive professional development and instructional resources and materials provided by the Division of Instruction and the Division of Special Education and Student Services, and the technical assistance provided by the Office of School Improvement.

Among the most notable VDOE efforts to respond to the needs of the field in the area of instruction are the following:

- The VDOE created a dynamic teacher information Web site called TeacherDirect that provides information to teachers on a weekly basis. Currently, over 26,700 individuals subscribe to a weekly e-mail update from the VDOE, in addition to those who access the information directly from the static Web site.
- Staff members in the Divisions of Instruction and Special Education have worked especially closely to develop instructional resources and recommend policies that provide greater support for students with disabilities and English language learners (ELLs).
- Additional assistance to ELLs and their teachers is included on the VDOE's English as a Second Language (ESL) Web page, including comprehensive information on the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) English Language Development (ELD) standards and corresponding English language proficiency assessment, technical assistance to teachers, schools, and school divisions, and other resources. Additionally, throughout the year, the VDOE provides numerous opportunities for teachers to gain additional expertise in working with ELLs.
- Through the federal program application review and monitoring process, VDOE ensures school divisions: 1) align the use of Title II, Part A, funds with the findings of a local needs assessment conducted in collaboration with the division's teachers and principals, and that multiple sources of data are used; and 2) use funds for evidence-based professional development efforts that deepen educators' subject-matter knowledge of instructional practices for all students and subgroups.
- In recognition of the need for all content areas to address ESL instruction, the VDOE has made this topic a priority in requesting assistance from the Appalachia Regional Comprehensive Center (ARCC), the federally-funded assistance center assigned to work with Virginia. During the next five years, the ARCC will work with the VDOE to build the capacity of state-level staff to support the use of promising instructional strategies to assist ELLs in the core content areas.
- The Virginia General Assembly continues to support initiatives mentioned in Virginia's approved ESEA Flexibility application that are intended to provide additional support to all at-risk students, which includes students with disabilities and English language learners. These initiatives include Project Graduation, the Algebra Readiness Initiative, the Virginia Preschool Initiative, the Early Intervention Reading Initiative, and the Virginia Early Warning System.

Virginia has developed college- and career-ready Standards of Learning, with full implementation and assessment in mathematics in 2011-2012 and in English in 2012-2013.

***Standards of Learning* for All Content Areas**

In 2010, Virginia completed a full cycle to review and revise its *Standards of Learning* (SOL) as required by Section § 22.1-253.13:1-2 of the *Code of Virginia*. The last review cycle began in 2007 when the Virginia Board of Education revised *Foreign Language SOL* followed by revised *History and Social Science*, *Health Education*, *Physical Education*, and *Driver Education SOL* in 2008; revised *Mathematics* and *Economics and Personal Finance SOL* in

2009; and revised *English* and *Science Standards of Learning* in 2010. The 2010 *English* and *Science SOL* were fully implemented and assessed in 2012-2013. In 2013, the Board adopted revised *Computer Technology* and *Fine Arts SOL* which include Visual Arts, Music, Dance, and Theatre.

United States Secretary of Education Arne Duncan has acknowledged in conversations with Virginia Governor Robert F. McDonnell and State Superintendent of Public Instruction Patricia I. Wright, as well as in public meetings that a strong case has been made that Virginia's *Standards of Learning* represent content and skills required of students to be prepared for college-level courses. Additionally, in *The State of Science Standards 2012*, the Thomas B. Fordham Institute recently recognized Virginia's *Science Standards of Learning* as being among the best in the nation by awarding them an A-. Only five states received a grade of A- or above, with 75 percent of states receiving a C or below. The report noted that the "the high school [life science] materials could likely be used for an Advanced Placement course but are certainly appropriate for the regular course offering, given the excellent background established in middle school." Virginia is confident that all its content standards will stand up to such scrutiny. In fact, the 2013 report from the National Center on Educational Statistics, *The Nation's Report Card: U.S. States in a Global Context: Results From the 2011 NAEP-TIMSS Linking Study*, indicated that Virginia students ranked well above average in both mathematics and science in comparison to other states and countries around the world.

2014-2015 Update: In 2014, the cycle to review and revise the SOL started again. The Board adopted revised *Foreign Language Standards of Learning*. The process for the revision to the *History and Social Science, Health, Physical Education,* and *Driver Education SOL* is underway and anticipated to be adopted in early 2015.

Virginia's 2009 Mathematics *Standards of Learning* (Full Implementation and Assessment in 2011-2012)

In an effort to ensure rigorous standards that prepare students for college and work, Virginia's *Standards of Learning* review process calls for significant input from a wide variety of stakeholders, including higher education and the business community. The review timeline approved by the Virginia Board of Education provides evidence of the broad stakeholder input that is required. Additionally, to inform the *Mathematics SOL* revision work (most of which occurred during 2008 in advance of actual adoption of the *Mathematics SOL* in February 2009), Virginia considered a number of recommendations and reports, including those from Achieve and The College Board, as well as studies from ACT, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Frameworks, the *Curriculum Focal Points* from the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM), *Principles and Standards for School Mathematics* from NCTM, the Singapore Curricula, the *Guidelines for Assessment and Instruction in Statistics Education (GAISE) Report* from the American Statistical Association, and the *Report of the President's National Mathematics Advisory Panel.*

In 2007, Virginia joined Achieve's American Diploma Project (ADP) network to support its work related to revision of the *Mathematics* and *English SOL* in 2009 and 2010 respectively. Additionally, The College Board and ACT assisted Virginia by conducting alignment studies of Virginia's *Mathematics* and *English SOL* with its *Standards for College Success.*

In November 2008, Achieve completed its final Quality Review of the alignment of the first draft of Virginia's proposed *Mathematics SOL* to the ADP Benchmarks, determining that: "The Virginia proposed revised *Mathematics Standards of Learning (SOL*) present student learning expectations that are intellectually demanding and generally well aligned with the ADP benchmarks." In the results of its alignment study, The College Board noted: "Overall, it is The College Board's perspective that the proposed *Mathematics Standards of Learning* are aligned well to the *College Board Standards for College Success* and students who complete a course of study aligned to the revised *Mathematics Standards of Learning* will be college and career ready."

The Virginia Board of Education adopted the revised *Mathematics SOL* in February 2009. (See the Board of Education's final review of the *Mathematics SOL*. Attachment B of the hyperlinked Board item contains the documentation from Achieve and The College Board.) When the final *Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for Mathematics* were available to states in June 2010, Virginia conducted a comparison of the 2009 *Mathematics SOL* to the *CCSS for Mathematics*. The comparison was made using Virginia's complete standards program for supporting teaching and learning – including the *Mathematics Curriculum Framework*. Reviewers of the two documents determined that some content from the *CCSS for Mathematics* was not evident in either the 2009 *Mathematics SOL* or the accompanying *Mathematics Curriculum Framework*. As a result, in January 2011, the Board of Education adopted a *Supplement to the Mathematics Curriculum Framework* to ensure that expectations for teaching and learning in Virginia schools are comparable to, or in some instances exceed, those of the voluntary CCSS. Taken together, the *Mathematics SOL* and *Curriculum Framework* form the basis for mathematics curriculum development in the Commonwealth and are used to determine the content to be tested in Virginia's mathematics assessment program. More information about Curriculum Frameworks is provided later as it relates to resources developed to support the SOL.

Virginia's 2010 English *Standards of Learning* (Full Implementation and Assessment in 2012-2013)

The 2010 revision of Virginia's *English Standards of Learning* (SOL) followed a similar path to that described for the *Mathematics SOL*. The timeline approved by the Board of Education for the review of the *English SOL* again provides evidence of the broad stakeholder input that is required, including feedback from the higher education and business communities. To inform the review of the *English SOL,* Virginia considered recommendations and reports from Achieve, The College Board, ACT, as well as the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), the International Reading Association (IRA) Standards, the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) Standards for the 21st Century Learner, and the NCTE 21st Century Skills Map. By the time the *English SOL* review was conducted, the *CCSS for English/Language Arts* were already available to states. Thus, any additional content,

concepts, or skills from the CCSS were able to be incorporated into Virginia's revised *English SOL*, such that they are comparable to or exceed the CCSS, and no curriculum supplement was required. A comparison of Virginia's new *English SOL* to the *CCSS for English/Language Arts* was completed to ensure the two sets of standards were convergent.

The Virginia Board of Education adopted the revised *English SOL* in January 2010. (See the Board of Education's final review of the *English Standards of Learning*. Attachment A of the hyperlinked Board item contains the results of alignment studies conducted by Achieve and The College Board.) Achieve determined that "The proposed revised Virginia *English Standards of Learning Curriculum Framework* presents student learning expectations that are intellectually demanding and well aligned with the ADP Benchmarks. If Virginia students master the state standards, they will likely be prepared for both college and career success." The College Board noted: "General alignment between the Virginia English Standards and the College Board English Standards is strong. In the sub-disciplines of reading, writing, and research, almost every language arts performance expectation included within the College Board Standards has been addressed at some level from grades 6 through 12."

Virginia's College- and Career-Ready Performance Expectations in English and Mathematics

Similar to the College and Career Readiness (CCR) anchor standards that provided additional specificity to the skills and understandings of the *CCSS for English/Language Arts*, Virginia developed *College- and Career-Ready Mathematics* and *English Performance Expectations* that define the level of achievement students must reach to be academically prepared for success in entry-level credit-bearing college courses. The *Performance Expectations* were developed through a process that involved faculty from Virginia's two- and four-year colleges and universities, members of the business community, and high school educators. (See additional information in Attachment 4 about the process used to reach consensus among faculty from institutions of higher education on the content, skills, and rigor defined in Virginia's *English* and *Mathematics Performance Expectations*.) They are based on the Virginia *Standards of Learning* (as aligned to the CCSS), with consideration given also to Virginia's Competencies for Career and Technical Education courses, the Virginia Community College System's learning goals and student outcomes, and other standards identified as important or critical for success. These *Performance Expectations* form the basis for Virginia's College and Career Readiness Initiative (CCRI).

In February 2011, the Virginia Department of Education, the State Council of Higher Education, and the Virginia Community College System approved an agreement to endorse the specific English and mathematics achievement and performance levels outlined in the Performance Expectations high school graduates must meet to be successful in freshman-level college courses or career training.

Virginia's College and Career Ready Initiative

The Virginia CCRI is comprised of five components:

1. Define college- and career-ready performance expectations aligned to national and international college and career ready standards;
2. Develop elective "capstone courses" to support students who need additional instruction to meet college- and career-ready performance expectations before leaving high school;
3. Provide technical assistance and professional development to Virginia's educators to support implementation of the revised *English* and *Mathematics SOL* and the *College- and Career-Ready Performance Expectations*;
4. Align state assessments to measure student mastery of the more rigorous mathematics and English standards adopted in 2009 and 2010, and for certain high school end-of-course tests, include college and career readiness indicators that show whether students have met the achievement levels needed to be successful in introductory mathematics and English courses in college; and
5. Identify incentives for schools to increase the percentage of students who graduate high school having demonstrated the academic skills needed to be successful in postsecondary education programs.

Based on the *College- and Career-Ready Performance Expectations*, the Department of Education developed the course content for "capstone" courses in English and mathematics for students who are on track to graduate, but may not be fully prepared for college-level work. The English capstone course is intended for 12th-grade students who have passed English 11 and the end-of-course *SOL* reading and writing tests but may not be prepared for the amount of reading, research, and writing required during the first year of college. The mathematics capstone course is intended for high school seniors who have passed Algebra I; Geometry; and Algebra, Functions, and Data Analysis or Algebra II along with the associated *SOL* tests required to earn a Standard or Advanced Diploma, but who still need additional coursework to be college ready or enter the work force directly after graduating. Both capstone courses were piloted in several school divisions in 2011-2012 and 2012-2013. Both courses are available to all students, including English language learners, students with disabilities, and low-achieving students, and will assist them in gaining access to and learning content aligned with Virginia's standards.

As part of the work to implement the revised *English* and *Mathematics SOL* and the *College- and Career-Ready Performance Expectations*, the Department of Education and its higher education partners are providing professional development that enables teachers to have a better understanding of the knowledge and skills required for more students to meet or exceed the *Performance Expectations*. Since summer 2011, four public universities have been working with teachers of the capstone courses to align and improve their instruction so it is focused on the *Performance Expectations* and the *SOL* that directly support college and career readiness. The College of William & Mary and James Madison University conducted a Capstone Academy during the summer of 2011 to familiarize English teachers with the *English Performance Expectations* and have continued to provide support to teachers as they piloted the courses. The University of Virginia and Radford University worked with

mathematics teachers to develop course syllabi, instructional modules, and problem-based units to support the mathematics capstone course in school divisions that piloted the course in 2011-2012 and 2012-2013.

School divisions have implemented the capstone courses either through modifications of existing senior-year courses or by offering a new course. All of the instructional materials developed to support teachers reside in the public domain and are available to all Virginia teachers (and others). These materials are available as follows:

English Capstone Course Instructional Resources

- Toolbox for Replicating Professional Development to Support the Senior English Seminar Elective (Word)

Mathematics Capstone Course Instructional Resources

- University of Virginia's School of Continuing and Professional Studies Office of Mathematics Outreach 21st Century Grant Project
- Radford University's Southwest and Southside Virginia Secondary Mathematics Professional Development Center

Virginia's Index of Performance Incentive Program

The Virginia Index of Performance (VIP) Incentive Program also recognizes schools and school divisions that meet or exceed minimum state and federal accountability standards. The program provides incentives for continuous improvement and the achievement of excellence goals established by the Board of Education. Included are goals related to preparing students for college and career success, such as increasing the percentage of:

- Students passing reading and writing assessments;
- Students enrolled in Algebra I by Grade 8;
- Students enrolled in Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, or dual enrollment courses;
- Students earning industry credentials or participating in advanced coursework in the STEM areas;
- Students who graduate with a standard or advanced studies diploma;
- Students enrolled in Governor's STEM Academies or Academic Year Governor's Schools;
- Graduates who have taken calculus, chemistry, or physics; and
- Graduates who earned advanced proficient scores on each of the end-of-course assessments in reading, writing, and Algebra II.

Assessments Aligned with College- and Career-Ready Standards

Information about Virginia's state assessment program and the alignment of state assessments to Virginia's *Standards of Learning* is available in the response to Question 1.C.

All students in Virginia have access to college- and career-ready standards and the opportunity to achieve to those standards.

All students are expected to achieve the same college- and career-ready *Standards of Learning*, sometimes with accommodations as permitted by policy. Those in tested grade levels and courses are expected to participate in Virginia's assessment program. Virginia's assessment system includes students with disabilities and limited English proficient (LEP) students. Students with disabilities and LEP students may take *Standards of Learning* tests with or without accommodations or they may be assessed through alternate or alternative assessments as prescribed by their Individualized Education Program (IEP) or school-level LEP team. The tests that comprise the Virginia assessment program are offered in English only; administration of the tests in other languages is not permitted. Additional information about Virginia's assessment program is available in the response to Question 1.C.

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities in Virginia are expected to achieve the same standards as their non-disabled peers, through the Virginia *Standards of Learning*. A small number of students with significant cognitive disabilities participate in alternate assessments based on alternate achievement standards as provided for in NCLB. The assessments are based on Aligned *Standards of Learning*.

The Virginia Board of Education's Regulations Governing Special Education Programs for Children with Disabilities in Virginia require transition planning as part of the IEP for students with disabilities beginning with the first IEP to be in effect when the student turns 14. The Virginia Department of Education also assists students with disabilities in developing self-advocacy skills through the "I'm Determined" initiative. Through this program, students with disabilities are provided knowledge and skills to not only participate in, but also to lead their IEP meetings. Additionally, these skills assist students to actively participate in their education as well as planning for careers.

For students with disabilities who have the most intensive support needs, there are two model initiatives supported by the Virginia Department of Education: Project SEARCH and the Post-High School Community College Program. Project SEARCH, a business-led model, is a collaborative between school divisions and local businesses that provide employability skills training and workplace internships that occur entirely in the workplace. The Post-High School Community College Program is a supported education model that provides individualized supports to students with significant disabilities seeking postsecondary education to enhance their skills for employment, in an age-appropriate setting. The Department of Education provides support and technical assistance to increase the number of partnerships between school divisions and institutions of higher education.

English Language Learners

English Language Learners (ELLs) in Virginia are expected to achieve the same college- and career-ready content *Standards of Learning* as their English-proficient peers. In addition to

achieving content standards, ELLs must also achieve proficiency in the English language.

On September 26, 2007, the Virginia Board of Education adopted the ACCESS for ELLs (Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners) as the statewide English language proficiency (ELP) assessment for Virginia. The ACCESS for ELLs was developed by the World-Class Instructional Design Assessment (WIDA) consortium through a United States Department of Education (USED) Enhanced Assessment grant. On March 19, 2008, the Board adopted the WIDA English Language Proficiency (ELP) standards as the ELP standards for the Commonwealth. Since then, WIDA has released its enhanced version of the ELP standards, referred to as the 2012 Amplification of English Language Development (ELD) Standards. Virginia has continued to use the amplified 2012 WIDA ELD standards as its state ELP standards.

The WIDA ELD standards emphasize the need for academic language to support the four core content areas and thus reinforce the linguistic demands required for LEP students to be successful in Virginia's *Standards of Learning* program. The five WIDA ELD standards are as follows:

- Standard 1: English language learners communicate in English for **Social and Instructional** purposes within the school setting.
- Standard 2: English language learners communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of **Language Arts**.
- Standard 3: English language learners communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of **Mathematics**.
- Standard 4: English language learners communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of **Science.**
- Standard 5: English language learners communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of **Social Studies**.

The WIDA ELD standards support the English language development of ELLs to provide the foundation for them to achieve academically in all content areas. The five WIDA ELD standards are represented in the following grades/grade clusters: K, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9-10, 11-12. Additionally, each standard encompasses five levels of English language proficiency as well as the four language domains. The levels of English language proficiency are: entering, emerging, developing, expanding, and bridging. The four language domains are: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

In 2009, Virginia prepared both a PreK–5 and a Grades 6 – 12 crosswalk showing the alignment between the WIDA ELD standards and the Virginia *Standards of Learning* in English, mathematics, science, and history and social science. Professional development opportunities are provided annually to train educators of ELLs in creating lesson plans that align the 2012 amplified ELD standards with recent revisions to the *Standards of Learning*.

Additional information about professional development for teachers of ELLs is provided later in this section.

Economically Disadvantaged Students

Virginia is keenly aware that statewide data indicate that students who are economically disadvantaged may need additional academic support to succeed. Because the economically disadvantaged subgroup overlaps with all of the other subgroups, it is clear that addressing the needs of economically disadvantaged students helps to address the needs of students in other subgroups as well. Data indicate that, in particular, a high percentage of black, Hispanic, and LEP students are also economically disadvantaged, thus placing them at risk of not succeeding in school.

Percentage of Students* Who Are Economically Disadvantaged							
Year	**All Students**	**Asian**	**Black**	**Hispanic**	**White**	**LEP**	**Students with Disabilities**
2011-2012	37	23	61	59	23	66	47
2012-2013	38	22	64	60	24	66	48
2013-2014	40	24	66	64	25	71	50
2014-2015	40	24	64	64	25	71	50

*Some student may be counted in more than one subgroup.

Assistance to All At-Risk Students

- **Project Graduation**, which provides remedial instruction and assessment opportunities for students at risk of not meeting the Commonwealth's diploma requirements. Project Graduation includes remedial academies during the school year and summer.
- **Algebra Readiness Initiative**, which provides assistance in preparing students for success in algebra. School divisions receive incentive payments to provide mathematics intervention services to students in grades 6-9 who are at-risk of failing the Algebra I end-of-course test as demonstrated by their individual performance on diagnostic tests that have been provided or approved by the Virginia Department of Education.
- **Virginia Preschool Initiative**, which distributes state funds to schools and community-based organizations to provide quality preschool programs for at-risk four-year-olds not served by Head Start.
- **Early Intervention Reading Initiative** (EIRI), which provides early reading intervention services to students in kindergarten through the third grade who demonstrate reading deficiencies reflected in each student's performance on the state-approved literacy screener, The Phonological and Literacy Screening (PALS) assessment. Legislation passed by the 2012 General Assembly and budget language in the 2012-2014 biennial budget increased funding for EIRI to provide reading intervention services to 100 percent of eligible students in grade three prior to promotion to grade four. Previously, funding had been provided to serve 25 percent of eligible third-grade students. In doing this, the General Assembly also made participation in EIRI at third grade a requirement within the Standards of Quality. Legislation passed by the 2013 General Assembly added kindergarten and grades one and two to the requirement that local school divisions provide early intervention services to students in grade three who demonstrate deficiencies based on their

individual performance on diagnostic reading tests.

- **Virginia's Early Warning System**, which relies on readily available data – housed at the school – to predict which students are at risk for dropping out of high school; target resources at the school- and division-level to support students not on track to graduate while they are still in school and before they drop out; and examine patterns and identify school climate issues that may contribute to disproportionate dropout rates.

Additionally, Early childhood programs in Virginia's public schools provide a foundation for learning and academic success. School-readiness activities focus on phonological awareness, vocabulary, number sense and physical, motor and social development. The Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI) began in 1997 and distributes state funds to schools and community-based organizations to provide quality preschool programs for at-risk four-year-olds not already served by Head Start. School readiness describes the capabilities of children, families, schools and communities that promote student success in kindergarten and beyond. Each component plays an essential role in the development of school readiness. In 2013, the Board received the revised Virginia Foundation Blocks for Early Learning: Comprehensive Standards for Four-Year-Olds (PDF) which are aligned to the current K-12 *Standards of Learning*. In addition to the Foundation Blocks, support documents include:

- Preschool Curriculum Review Rubric and Planning Tool (PDF) – This rubric is designed to assist early childhood educators with reviewing curricula and products to determine if they align with the Virginia Foundation Blocks for Early Learning.
- Virginia's Quality Indicators for Responsive Teaching: Creating a High Quality Preschool Learning Environment (PDF) – This checklist aligns with the preschool standards and helps teachers, parents, and administrators focus on creating shared, active, and hands-on opportunities for young children to develop their full potential.

Virginia has conducted significant outreach to apprise stakeholders of its college- and career-ready Standards of Learning.

Virginia's *Standards of Learning* and Assessment Program have been part of Virginia's accountability system since 1995. Since 1998, all schools have been held accountable for student achievement on the *Standards of Learning* (SOL*)* and parents have received their child's SOL results. Students must take *SOL* assessments in English and mathematics in grades 3-8 and at the end of certain high school courses, as well as assessments in science (grades 3, 5, 8 and end-of-course), and history and social science (grades 3- 8 and end-of-course). Students must pass a certain number of *SOL* tests to earn verified credits for graduation, and in order to be accredited by the state, schools must achieve a certain pass rate on the tests. Thus, the existence of Virginia's *SOL* is well-known.

The process to revise the *SOL* is very inclusive and well-publicized. Additionally, the increased rigor of the recently revised *SOL* has been well documented during state board meetings, in the press, at meetings with school personnel, during presentations to the public, and in interactions with higher education faculty and administrators. Members of the Virginia Board of Education met with local school board members at the annual conference of the Virginia School Boards Association in November 2011, and the agenda also contained several

presentations related to Virginia's *SOL*. At its meeting on January 12, 2012, the Board of Education approved cut scores on Virginia's new *Mathematics SOL* tests for Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II. The discussion surrounding this item has sent a clear message to the public that Virginia's standards are more rigorous, as are the tests associated with them.

The Board of Education has also adopted cut scores for the following new assessments:

- March 22, 2012 – Grades 3-8 Mathematics tests;
- January 10, 2013 – End-of-course tests in Reading, Earth Science, Biology, and Chemistry;
- March 28, 2013 – Grades 3-8 Reading tests; and
- April 25, 2013 – Grades 3, 5, and 8 Science, and Grades 5, 8, and end-of-course Writing.

Virginia has also used its College and Career Readiness Initiative to engage and inform higher education faculty about the increased rigor and expectations for K-12 students. Attachment 4 provides a detailed description of the process used to involve higher education faculty in the development of Virginia's *College- and Career-Ready Performance Expectations.* Additionally, Virginia Department of Education staff members serve on the Virginia Community College System's Developmental Education Initiative, so each agency is involved in the work of the other on a regular basis. At the quarterly fall meeting of the Virginia Community College System's Academic and Student Affairs Council, comprised of the academic deans and student affairs directors of all 23 of Virginia's community colleges, Virginia Department of Education staff conducted a College and Career Readiness Forum, and the topic has been presented to Virginia's State Committee on Transfer (among institutions of higher education). Collaboration between the two agencies continues to flourish, with joint work and presentations at both the state and national levels.

Virginia also leverages state and federal funding to engage the participation of higher education faculty in providing professional development to K-12 teachers that is based on Virginia's *SOL*, thus increasing their awareness of changes to the *SOL*. Examples include ESEA Title II, Part A, grants provided to universities to develop an English Capstone Academy to support Virginia's College and Career Readiness Initiative, the Mathematics and Science Partnership Grants (ESEA, Title II, Part B), and working with the State Council of Higher Education in defining the priorities for its ESEA Title II Improving Teacher Quality grants to reflect needs for professional development that are aligned with Virginia's new standards.

Additionally, knowledge of the *SOL* is a key element of Virginia's *Licensure Regulations for School Personnel*, which form the basis of Virginia's approved teacher and administrator preparation programs. The Board of Education has recently approved revised *Licensure Regulations for School Personnel* and *Regulations Governing the Review and Approval of Education Programs in Virginia*, which will become effective upon completion of the requirements of the Administrative Process Act.

Virginia has provided and will continue to provide substantial instructional materials and professional development to help teachers teach and administrators provide instructional leadership for all students in the content and skills contained in the Standards of Learning.

Instructional Materials and Resources

The revision of *Standards of Learning* (SOL) in specific content areas triggers a review of all accompanying instructional materials and supports for those standards. As such, the Department of Education has revised the *Mathematics* and *English SOL Curriculum Frameworks* to reflect the 2009 *Mathematics SOL* and the 2010 *English SOL*. The Curriculum Frameworks serve as companion documents to the *SOL* and delineate in greater specificity the content that all teachers should teach and all students should learn. These documents define the content knowledge, skills, and understandings that are measured by the *SOL* assessments. The Curriculum Frameworks provide additional guidance to school divisions and their teachers as they develop an instructional program appropriate for their students. They assist teachers in their lesson planning by identifying essential understandings, defining essential content knowledge, and describing the intellectual skills students need to use.

In addition to providing content area Curriculum Frameworks, the Department of Education works with practitioners to develop sample lesson plans that reflect the content included in the *SOL* and the Curriculum Frameworks. The *SOL* Enhanced Scope and Sequence is a searchable database of lesson plans that incorporate Universal Design for Learning (UDL). These lesson plans were designed to include multiple means of representation, activity, and engagement for students. Teachers of special education and LEP students were included among the practitioners to ensure the lesson plans included suggestions and differentiated instructional strategies to meet the needs of all students. The *Mathematics SOL Enhanced Scope and Sequence Sample Lesson Plans* provide teachers with sample lesson plans that are aligned with the essential understandings and essential knowledge and skills found in the Curriculum Frameworks for the 2009 *Mathematics SOL*. The *English SOL Enhanced Scope and Sequence Sample Lesson Plans* reflect the 2010 *English SOL* and were released in summer 2012. The Enhanced Scope and Sequence Sample Lesson Plans include resources and specific methods for differentiating the lessons for students with disabilities and English language learners.

Virginia also provided the Mathematics Standards of Learning Crosswalk Between the 2009 and 2001 Standards and the English Standards of Learning Crosswalk Between the 2010 and 2002 Standards documents to help school divisions realign their curricula with the newly adopted standards.

The Department of Education's Instruction Web page provides abundant resources to support teaching and learning in all content areas. Using the navigation bars on the right, students, teachers, administrators, and the public have access to resources targeting elementary, middle, and high school students, as well as providing links to other state and national sites to support instruction in English, mathematics, science, history and social science, fine arts, foreign language, health education, physical education, driver education, economics and personal finance, English as a second language, gifted education, Governor's Schools Programs, special

education, career and technical education, family life education, character education, leadership, early childhood, adult education, alternative education, charter schools, laboratory schools, homebound services, and virtual learning.

In June 2012, the Department of Education conducted a survey of teachers regarding their knowledge of resource materials provided by the Department. A majority indicated they did not receive this information on a regular basis. In response, in fall 2012, the Department launched Teacher*Direct* as a direct line of communication with classroom teachers and educators. Teacher*Direct* consists of a Web site and weekly e-mails to over 26,700 subscribers regarding instructional materials, professional development opportunities, and other topics of interest to all teachers, including those of students with disabilities and English Language Learners.

Professional Development

Virginia has provided targeted face-to-face professional development and professional development resources through Mathematics SOL Institutes in 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, and 2014 across the Commonwealth that involved over 4,000 administrators and teachers of mathematics, special education, and ELL students. The Mathematics SOL Institutes continue to support implementation of the 2009 *Mathematics SOL*, framed by the five goals for students becoming mathematical problem solvers, communicating mathematically, reasoning mathematically, making mathematical connections, and using mathematical representations to model and interpret practical situations.

To assist school division teachers and leaders in implementing the *English Standards of Learning*, a series of English SOL Institutes providing targeted professional development were conducted in 2012, 2013, and 2014. The first Institutes emphasized the new standards in nonfiction reading, writing, research, and media literacy. Subsequent Institutes have focused on specific SOL strands: vocabulary development, nonfiction reading, and persuasive writing. The 2014 K-12 English Language Arts SOL Institutes focused on effective reading and writing strategies and instructional strategies for ELLs and Students with Disabilities (SWD). More than 3,100 English Language Arts educators have been trained in the English SOL Institutes. Virginia Department of Education staff members have also delivered a variety of presentations and trainings on the 2010 *English SOL*, *English SOL Curriculum Framework*, and online writing instruction and assessment to numerous Virginia principals, curriculum specialists, professional education associations and organizations, reading councils, school improvement schools, and many divisions across the state. Using SOL performance data, staff continues to provide assistance to other associations, organizations, and divisions for delivery of informational presentations and trainings. Additionally, four regional Early Intervention Reading Initiative (EIRI) Workshops are planned for the 2014-2015 academic year. The purpose of these regional training events is to provide professional development to K-3 classroom teachers and reading specialists. Topics include early reading instructional strategies and resources for interventions using Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) for formative and progress monitoring.

Participant survey results from both the Mathematics and English SOL Institutes consistently indicate strong satisfaction with the support that the professional development opportunities provide for implementation of the content standards.

Additionally, Virginia used its Mathematics and Science Partnership (MSP) funds under NCLB to create regional Professional Development Centers for Mathematics (2010-2012) that provided sustained, intensive and classroom-focused professional development aligned with the 2009 *Mathematics Standards of Learning* (SOL). The regional centers across the state each focused on a specific grade band: three centers with a K-3 focus; four with a 4-6 focus; three with a 7-8 focus; and two with a high school focus. In 2012-2014, professional development funded through the MSP grants include professional development models and materials, curriculum developed by projects or teachers participating in the project, and videos of science and mathematics teachers. For 2014-2015, the MSP priorities have been redesigned to provide targeted, high-quality, discipline-based, and school-focused professional development on a sustained basis to teachers in elementary, middle, and high schools, especially those with "Warned" status under the state accreditation system in mathematics or science or those that did not meet federal accountability benchmarks in mathematics.

The Virginia Department of Education also provides specific support to school- and division-level administrators to help them provide strong instructional leadership to their instructional personnel. Often the Department provides this support at events where school- and division-level administrators are already assembled. Examples include:

- In 2011, the From Vision to Practice Seventh Annual Institute: From Cradle to Career - Pathways to Success, focused on Virginia's College and Career Readiness Initiative and identified best practices and interventions for prekindergarten through high school that contribute to increased graduation rates and postsecondary and career opportunities. The recommended attendees for the Institute were: 1) administrators; 2) principals; 3) teachers; 4) school counselors; and 5) pupil service personnel, or others who provide support to students in preparing for postsecondary and career success. Subsequent Vision to Practice Institutes in 2012 and 2013 focused on the future of learning and emerging trends in education, respectively.
- The VDOE Colloquium, at the annual Virginia Middle and High School Principals Conference & Exposition, which addresses recent state mandates and the school leadership expectations of principals. The Colloquium focuses on resources and implementation strategies that have been successfully used in schools to improve instruction in the core curriculum areas – mathematics, science, English, and history and social science. Department of Education staff members participate in the Colloquium's annual conference and exposition.
- The Virginia Department of Education supports and participates in the Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals Annual Conference, featuring topics such as parental involvement, the future of special education testing, and best practices in mathematics and literacy instruction and other Department of Education updates on a variety of relevant educational issues.
- The annual Technical Assistance Academy for Coordinators of Title I, Part A; Title I, Part C; Title I, Part D; Title II, Part A; and Title III, Part A.

Forty-seven school divisions in Virginia are benefitting from professional development delivered through a $28.5 million U.S. Department of Education Investing in Innovation (i3) grant received by George Mason University, its six partner universities, and the Virginia Department of Education in 2010. The Virginia Initiative for Science Teaching and Achievement (VISTA) is building an infrastructure to provide sustained and intensive science teacher professional development to increase student performance, especially in high-need (high-poverty, high minority) schools.

Additionally, Old Dominion University has received an i3 grant to provide professional development to teachers in five school districts nationwide, including three school divisions in Virginia, which will enable students in high-need middle schools to access rigorous and engaging coursework in STEM.

Virginia has also prepared a number of resources to assist teachers of students who need additional help to succeed. The General Assembly provides funding through Project Graduation for academies for high school students who need additional instruction in preparation for *SOL* tests. Academies are conducted during the summer and during the school year, and include multiple opportunities for retesting. Available on the Project Graduation Web site are 10 modules for Algebra I as well as English reading and writing modules to provide assistance in developing reading comprehension strategies and strong written essays.

Additionally, a number of instructional modules have been developed for the English and mathematics capstone courses mentioned earlier. The modules contain high-interest contextualized content designed to give certain students an additional boost for competent and successful entry into college and careers. In the case of mathematics, these modules add to students' preparation for college and the workplace by: 1) enhancing skills in number and quantity, functions and algebra, geometry, and statistics and probability; and 2) simultaneously reinforcing readiness skills and dispositions in adaptability and flexibility, creativity and innovation, leadership, team work, collaboration, and work ethic. The English modules add to students' preparation for critical reading, college and workplace writing, and career-ready communications by enhancing skills in reading, the writing process, and creation of effective texts, and effective communications (speaking, listening, and collaborating).

The General Assembly has also funded a number of other initiatives to recruit and maintain effective teachers in Virginia's classrooms by contributing to their initial teacher preparation or ongoing professional development. These include:

- STEM Teacher Recruitment and Retention Incentive Awards which attract, recruit, and retain high-quality diverse individuals to teach science, technology, engineering, or mathematics (STEM) subjects in Virginia's middle and high schools.
- MonarchTeach at Old Dominion University, which integrates requirements for majors in mathematics and science with specially designed teacher-preparation courses. This program is designed to increase the number of high-quality mathematics and science teachers in the Commonwealth's middle and high schools.
- Virginia Center for Excellence in Teaching at George Mason University, which provides professional development opportunities in instruction, education policy, and leadership for 100 exemplary teachers annually.

- Strategic Compensation Grants, totaling $4.5 million, and provides performance and incentive payments of up to $5,000 for teachers in 13 school divisions who meet goals related to student achievement, professional growth, and leadership.
- Virginia Middle School Mathematics Teacher Corps, which helps school divisions fill a critical teacher shortage area: middle school mathematics.
- Virginia Teaching Scholarship Loan Program, which provides financial support to students who are preparing to teach in one of Virginia's critical shortage teaching areas.

Use of Title II, Part A, Funds for School Divisions

School divisions in Virginia are required to submit applications to the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) on an annual basis for Title II, Part A, funding. As part of the application process, school divisions are required to conduct an annual local needs assessment in order to prioritize the use of Title II, Part A, funds for the upcoming year. Additionally, each school division must provide a description in the program overview section of the application that describes the methods the division will use to:

- support student mastery of college- and career-ready reading and mathematics standards, and attainment of proficiency or better on corresponding college- and-career ready reading and mathematics assessments;
- meet annual measurable objective (AMO) targets for reading and mathematics that demonstrate academic growth for all students and subgroups over time, and, for high schools with a graduating class, meeting the federal graduation indicator;
- ensure that students are taught by highly qualified and effective teachers; and
- provide meaningful professional development and support to promote effective instruction to increase student achievement.

Online resources and training modules are provided to school divisions to assist with the application development process, including suggestions of types of documentation that can be used in the needs assessment process, and examples of allowable activities that may be planned with Title II, Part A, funds as a result of this analysis. Additionally, an annual face-to-face Coordinators' Academy is conducted to provide division-level staff with program specific information related to Title II, Part A and other federal programs, including the needs assessment process. As part of the Coordinator's Academy, staff members from divisions demonstrating especially effective implementation of specific program elements are invited to provide presentations to their colleagues. Examples of these promising practices shared during the Summer 2013 Academy included how the needs assessment and teacher evaluation processes informed professional development and instructional coaching programs in several different school divisions. These types of sharing opportunities are very well-received by the field.

Applications for federal funds are considered public documents and must go for review before the division's local school board in public meetings. Once this approval has been given, multiple additional levels of review and approval are necessary at both the local and state levels. These reviews are assured through the electronic Online Management of Education Grant Awards (OMEGA) approval process. After initial submission, at least two levels of approval are required at the local level, one of which is the local school division

superintendent. Each application is then reviewed by Title II, Part A, staff at VDOE to ensure that needs assessment information is provided and program activities reflect alignment to needs identified by the school division. The review also ensures that when a school division uses its funds for professional development, the activities reflect the required elements for high-quality, evidence-based professional development. Final approval is granted by the Director of the Office of Program Administration and Accountability at VDOE. Funding becomes available to school divisions upon approval of applications.

Additionally, each school division participates in federal program monitoring under Title II, Part A. Among the elements examined during monitoring visits, school divisions must provide a description of the needs assessment process (Section 2122(c)(1-2), Indicator 2.1), along with documentation that is examined. Divisions must also provide information related to the personnel involved in the needs assessment process (Section 2122(c)(1-2), Indicator 2.2) and the methods used to align activities to the findings of their needs assessment (Indicator 2.3).

Furthermore, the school division must provide a description of the research-based activities that are supported with Title II, Part A, funding (Section 2122(b)(1)(A-B), Indicator 2.5), and 1) how the division monitors activities to ensure that they have a substantial, measurable, and positive impact on student academic achievement and 2) how the division evaluates the effectiveness of activities in helping to eliminate any identified achievement gaps. (Section 2122(b)(2), Indicator 2.6). Additionally, the school division must provide evidence that multiple stakeholders, including teachers and principals, are involved with the needs assessment and application development/review processes. (Section 2122(b)(7), Indicators 2.2 and 2.10).

Assessment Blueprints and Practice Tools

Standards of Learning (SOL) test blueprints provide information on how the *SOL* assessments are constructed. They indicate the content areas that will be addressed by the test and the number of items that will be included by content area and for the test as a whole. A blueprint is provided for each test in grades 3-8 mathematics, Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II and in grades 3-8 Reading and End-of-Course Reading (Grade 11).

SOL Practice Items and Practice Item Guides are presented online to familiarize students, teachers, and administrators with new 2009 *Mathematics SOL*, the 2010 *English SOL, and* 2010 *Science SOL* assessment questions, including Technology Enhanced Items. The delivery of the practice items closely simulates the online Standards of Learning assessment experience for students. In addition, sample sets of Released Standards of Learning Test Items from *Mathematics, Science, History and Social Science* and *English* tests that were administered to Virginia public school students during previous spring test administrations are provided. The released tests are not inclusive of all *SOL* tests administered during the previous year; however, the tests are representative of the content and skills assessed.

Ancillary test materials in mathematics include revised formula sheets for grades 6 through 8 mathematics and End-of-Course Algebra I, Geometry and Algebra II, as well as a z-table. The revised formula sheets were effective for the end-of-course tests administered in fall 2011 and

for grades 6 through 8 mathematics tests administered in spring 2012 and beyond.

In English, Virginia provides the Writing Practice Tool for Grade 5 Writing, Grade 8 Writing, and End of Course (EOC) Writing, as well as a Practice Guide for Writing that allows students to practice using the online writing format utilized by TestNav, the online testing software used in Virginia. Beginning with the writing test administration in 2012-2013, all statewide writing assessments were administered online. In 2012, the writing prompts that may be administered on the grade 5, 8, and End-of-Course writing SOL tests were made available for educators and students. An online writing page and vocabulary page are available to serve as a resource for writing and vocabulary instruction and provide information on the new writing assessment.

Update for 2014-2015: Legislation in the 2014 General Assembly eliminated the Grade 5 Writing test.

Important additional mathematics, science, and English professional development resources are available under the title "Using Statewide SOL Test Results to Guide Instruction." They present an analysis of statewide results that identify specific content for which overall student performance was weak or inconsistent with suggestions of SOL content that need to be reinforced more clearly to improve student performance.

Support for Teachers of LEP Students and Students with Disabilities

General instruction, special education, and English as a second language (ESL) staff at the Virginia Department of Education work closely to ensure that materials developed and professional development provided serve students with disabilities and LEP students. Recent examples include the involvement of special education teachers and ESL teachers in the development of the *English and Mathematics Enhanced Scope and Sequence Sample Lesson Plans* mentioned earlier and their strong collaboration in developing the programs for the From Vision to Practice Annual Institutes.

A number of resources and services are also available to schools to assist teachers in helping LEP students demonstrate their ability to understand, read, and write English in order to function and be successful in school and in American society. Most of these resources are made available or announced on the ESL Instructional Web page. Examples include:

- A two-day training entitled "Academic Language Development for English Learners (ELs)" was offered during November 2011 for elementary and secondary educators of ELLs. The World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA®) Academic trainings were held in November 2011 in four areas in the state and focused on providing instructional strategies to increase academic language development among ELLs.
- The "Fall Professional Development Academy for K-12 Teachers of English Language Learners (ELLs)" was held at two locations for six Saturdays, September through December 2011. The academy is designed to assist students in communicating effectively in English, both in and out of school.
- Continued annual institutes and graduate level courses on the WIDA ELD Standards

and ACCESS for ELLs assessment and instructional strategies and differentiation for ELLs in the core content areas.

In 2014, the Department of Education partnered with the Appalachian Regional Comprehensive Center (ARCC) to develop and implement strategies for: 1) enhancing the technical expertise of Department instructional staff to provide support to educators of ELLs; 2) increasing support to ELLs in rural areas; 3) increasing statewide ELL graduation rates; and 4) supporting students dually identified as ELL and SWD. As part of this effort, the ESL staff at the Department provide intra-agency training on the WIDA ELD standards and ACCESS for ELLs assessment results and collaborated with the Division of Special Education and Student Services to provide training to school divisions on serving dually identified students.

The Virginia Department of Education also directs and supports regional T/TACs (Training/Technical Assistance Centers) based in seven institutions of higher education that comprise a statewide system emphasizing collaboration in the planning and provision of services to improve educational opportunities and contribute to the success of children and youth with disabilities (birth - 22 years). The T/TACS provide quality training and technical assistance in response to local, regional, and state needs. T/TAC services increase the capacity of schools, school personnel, service providers, and families to meet the needs of children and youth. The T/TACs meet these needs through activities such as consultation, long-term systems change initiatives, information services, linking and networking resources together, a lending library of multimedia resources and technology, referral to other services, and workshops. In addition to responding to requests for services, T/TAC staff members are deployed to schools and school divisions identified by the Virginia Department of Education as needing improvement through the School Improvement Office and/or the of Special Education Program Improvement. Throughout the school improvement process, school divisions can also request specific training and technical assistance from their local T/TAC. The Virginia Department of Education has a comprehensive database of requests made to the T/TACs and the services provided, which is monitored to determine how schools and school divisions access those services.

In 2010, the Virginia Department of Education and Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) established the Center of Excellence for Autism Spectrum Disorders. A collaborative venture of the Department of Education and VCU's Schools of Education and Medicine, the center serves as a focal point for research, professional development, and targeted technical assistance in implementing research-based effective practices and comprehensive services for students with autism. The center is funded through a start-up grant from the Department of Education.

In 2013 the Virginia Department of Education again partnered with Virginia Commonwealth University and its Research Rehabilitation and Training Center (RRTC) in the establishment of the Center on Transition Innovations (CTI). CTI serves as a statewide center on the development, dissemination, and evaluation of effective practices aimed at assisting students with disabilities in transitioning from the K-12 school system to postsecondary education, training and competitive integrated employment. A main focus of the Center in its first year of implementation is to collect online resources and training opportunities designed to support

educational professionals, families and students with effective transition planning and support. The Center on Transition Innovation will also serve as a mechanism to bring all of the resources and initiatives around best practices for students planning for transition under one statewide structure.

Additionally, Virginia's strong Response to Intervention (RtI) initiative has evolved over the years to the Virginia Tiered System of Supports (VTSS), a framework and philosophy that provides resources and support to help every student be successful in academics and behavior. It begins with systemic change at the division, school and classroom level that utilizes evidence-based, system-wide practices to provide a quick response to academic and behavioral needs. These practices include frequent progress-monitoring that enable educators to make sound, data-based instructional decisions for students. The following initiatives fall under the VTSS umbrella; Response to Intervention (RTI), Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and Content Literacy Continuum (CLC). The VTSS guide (PDF) completed in 2012 provides information to support division leaders in implementing VTSS divisionwide research-based best practices and evidence from expert educators. This information will support division leadership teams as they assemble the structures necessary at all levels.

In the fall of 2014, the Virginia Department of Education was awarded two five-year grants, the School Climate Transformation grant (SCT) from USED and the Project Aware grant from the Federal Health and Human Services Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Agency (SAMHSA). The purpose of the grants is to expand the depth and breadth of the VTSS. The Project AWARE SAMHSA initiative integrates mental health promotion, the early identification of students experiencing distress, and access to mental health supports and other social services into the VTSS model. The SCT extents this VTSS transformative framework to several more school divisions with schools in improvement. The Department of Education is partnering with the Center for School/Community Collaboration in the College of Education at the Virginia Commonwealth University to create the VTSS Center for Implementation and Research (VTSS-RIC). This center will conduct research and evaluation, update and develop guidance for systems coaching and training modules, and provide coaches to selected school divisions in improvement. Additionally, the VTSS-RIC will work with a multi-state agency management team that includes representatives from local school divisions and child and family advocacy groups. This team will work to develop a more effective and efficient cross-agency multi-tiered systems approach that engages families and enables all students to achieve their academic potential.

The *Technical Assistance Plan for the Implementation of Virginia's Standards of Learning in English, Mathematics, Science, and History and Social Science* (Attachment 18 – updated 2013) provides a brief overview of assistance that occurred prior to 2011-2012, assistance that has occurred during school years 2011-2012, 2012-2013, and planned for the current school year. Additional assistance will be developed as data are analyzed following each test administration to determine where to most effectively focus the resources of the Virginia Department of Education. Teachers of special education students and English language learners are included in the activities included in the plan and have equal access to the documents, lesson plans, and other resources provided. Additionally, as described in the previous paragraphs, Virginia's regional TTACs provide specialized supplemental assistance

to special education teachers, and the state uses Title III funds to provide supplemental professional development and technical assistance to teachers of English Language Learners.

The letter Virginia received from Acting Assistant Secretary Michael Yudin on April 17, 2012, asked for an explanation as to how students with disabilities who are currently taking Virginia's tests based on modified achievement standards in reading and mathematics will be transitioned to the regular *SOL* assessments by 2014-2015. As background, Virginia implemented modified achievement standards tests, the Virginia Modified Achievement Standards Test (VMAST), for grades 3-8 mathematics and Algebra I in 2011-2012, and for grades 3-8 and end-of-course reading in 2012-2013. More information about these assessments may be found in the response to Question 1.C of this application.

The state discontinued the use of VMAST after the 2013-2014 test administration and will transition the students who would have been eligible for VMAST to the regular SOL assessments for the 2014-2015 test administration. School divisions were notified via Superintendent's Memorandum #261-12 on September 21, 2012, that VMAST would no longer be available to eligible students beyond the 2013-2014 school year. VDOE staff will continue to work with its testing contractor to investigate future opportunities to incorporate research-based supports and simplifications such as those developed for the VMAST reading and mathematics assessments into the Virginia assessment program. In addition, VDOE will continue to work with school division personnel to ensure that students previously eligible for VMAST will participate in the *SOL* assessment program beginning in the 2014-2015 school year.

Virginia's transition plan to ensure that the Standards of Learning improve teaching and learning has been in place since 2008 when the History and Social Science Standards of Learning were adopted by the Board of Education.

The *Technical Assistance Plan for the Implementation of Virginia's Standards of Learning in English, Mathematics, Science,* and *History and Social Science* (Attachment 18 – updated 2013) has been recently updated and provides a brief overview of assistance that occurred prior to 2011-2012, assistance that has occurred during school years 2011-2012, 2012-2013, and planned for the current school year. Additional assistance will be developed as data are analyzed following each test administration to determine where to most effectively focus the resources of the Virginia Department of Education. Teachers of special education students and English language learners are included in the activities included in the plan and have equal access to the documents, lesson plans, and other resources provided. Additionally, as described in the previous paragraphs, Virginia's regional T/TACs provide specialized supplemental assistance to special education teachers, and the state uses Title III funds to provide supplemental professional development and technical assistance to teachers of English Language Learners.

Virginia continues to expand access to college-level courses for high school students.

Virginia has a strong track record of providing access to college-level courses for high school students, particularly by offering Advanced Placement (AP) courses, International

Baccalaureate programs, dual enrollment courses, and Governor's Schools. Virginia's Early College Scholars program allows eligible high school students to earn at least 15 hours of transferable college credit while completing the requirements for an Advanced Studies Diploma. The Commonwealth College Course Collaborative supports the Early College Scholars program by providing a set of academic courses that fully transfer as core requirements and degree credits at Virginia colleges and universities.

While many school divisions offer AP courses on-site, Virginia's *Virtual Virginia* also offers online AP, world language, core academic, and elective courses to students across the Commonwealth and nation. Students whose school divisions are not able to offer some or all of the AP courses available through The College Board are able to access 23 AP courses, along with courses in Arabic, Chinese, French, Latin, Spanish, and other courses in creative writing, earth science, economics and personal finance, physics, pre-calculus, psychology, and world history and geography.

Additionally, Virginia's 23 community colleges have strong partnerships with high schools in the Commonwealth to provide dual enrollment opportunities. Virginia's Plan for Dual Enrollment is an agreement between the Virginia Community College System and the Virginia Department of Education that provides the parameters to provide a wide range of dual enrollment course options for high school students in academic and career/occupational-technical subject areas where appropriate. As such, the plan promotes rigorous educational pursuits and encourages learning as a lifelong process. It recognizes that high school students who accrue college credit are more likely to continue with their education beyond high school than those who do not. The plan also offers a direct cost benefit to the Commonwealth of Virginia, especially as it avoids the unnecessary duplication of facilities and equipment when students receive credit towards a postsecondary credential while enrolled in high school.

Additionally, the General Assembly passed legislation in 2012 that required each community college to develop agreements for postsecondary degree attainment with the public high schools in the school divisions they serve, specifying the options for students to complete an associate's degree or a one-year Uniform Certificate of General Studies concurrent with a high school diploma. The agreements must specify the credit available for dual enrollment courses and Advanced Placement courses with qualifying exam scores of three or higher. To date, all community colleges and Virginia public high schools have outlined at least one pathway for students to be able to earn a high school diploma and a postsecondary credential concurrently.

The three education agencies in Virginia, the Department of Education, the Virginia Community College System, and the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia have also collaborated to create the Virginia Education Wizard, a comprehensive Web-based tool that helps students choose a career, get the information they need to pursue a career, find the college that is right for them, pay for college, transfer from a community college to a university, and get answers to questions about future educational opportunities. This tool is especially helpful to students as they make decisions in high school about pursuing college-level courses to transfer to their postsecondary programs.

The following table shows the increase in high school students enrolled in college-level courses and Governor's Schools during the last five years:

	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Student Enrollment, Grades 9 - 12	380,720	379,996	376,155	375,502	376,698
Students Enrolled in Governor's Schools	4,525	4,631	4,940	5,447	5,675
Senior IB Enrollment	1,098	1,284	1,258	1,374	1,620
	2009-2010	**2010-2011**	**2011-2012**	**2012-2013**	**2013-2014**
Seniors Awarded IB Diplomas	765	821	789	881	973
Students Taking 1 or More AP Courses	67,170	71,192	76,845	80,550	80,317
Students Taking 1 or More AP Exams	57,703	62,800	67,967	67,024	64,082
Students Taking 1 or More Dual Enrollment Courses	23,740	20,966	25,809	28,432	Not Available At This Time

- Enrollment data available at: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/statistics_reports/enrollment/fall_membership/index.shtml.
- Advanced programs data available at: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/statistics_reports/advanced/index.shtml.

In February 2012, the Virginia Department of Education posted to its Web site new reports that provide information on postsecondary enrollment and achievement of Virginia high school graduates. The reports, which were developed in collaboration with the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, connect student-level data from K-12 and postsecondary information systems. Their release is a milestone in the state's effort to improve the quality of data on educational outcomes available to researchers, educators, policymakers, and the public. For the first time, Virginia is able to link the high school records of individual students to higher education student data, while protecting privacy and keeping personal information secure. The data in the reports represent the best available estimates about postsecondary enrollment and achievement for Virginia high school graduates. State-level, division-level and school-level reports are available for all student subgroups.

External measures of student achievement document the impact of Virginia's rigorous college- and career-ready Standards of Learning.

International Mathematics and Science Comparison

- The 2013 report from the National Center on Educational Statistics, *The Nation's Report Card: U.S. States in a Global Context: Results From the 2011 NAEP-TIMSS Linking Study,* connects mathematics and science scores of American students on the 2011 National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP) with results from the 2011 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS).
    - NAEP is taken by representative samples of American students and allows for state-to-state comparisons of achievement in mathematics, science and reading.
    - TIMSS is taken by students in 38 countries and nine subnational jurisdictions, including several Canadian provinces. The next TIMSS data collection will take place in 2015.
- Mathematics achievement of Virginia eighth graders was higher than that of peers in 39 countries and systems, including Finland.
    - Only students in South Korea, Singapore, Taiwan (Chinese Taipei), Hong Kong, Japan, Russia, and Quebec ranked higher.
    - Mathematics achievement in one country – Israel – was found to be similar to achievement in Virginia.

The 2011 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)

- The average mathematics score for Virginia students in grade eight increased by three points to 289, compared with the national public school average of 283.
- The average mathematics score of Virginia fourth graders was 245, a statistically significant five points higher than the national average of 240, and a two-point increase in grade-four mathematics achievement since 2009.
- In 2011, fourth-grade Virginia students achieved an average score of 226 in reading, which was significantly higher than the average for the nation. Only three states had statistically higher grade-four reading scores.
- Virginia eighth-grade students achieved an average NAEP reading score of 267, which was higher than the national average, but statistically similar to the 2009 state average of 266.

The 2013 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)

- The average mathematics score for Virginia students in grade four increased to 246, compared to the average score of 241 for public school students in the nation.
- The average reading score for Virginia students in grade four increased to 229, compared to the average score of 221 for public school students in the nation.
- Virginia eighth-grade math students achieved an average score of 288 in 2013 compared to an average score of 284 in 2013 for public school students in the nation.
- The 2013 eighth-grade average reading score for Virginia students was 268 compared

to the 2013 average score of 266 for public school students in the nation.

The College Board SAT

- Virginia's 2013 public school graduates achieved significant gains and outperformed their peers nationwide on the SAT college-admissions test.
    - The average Virginia public school reading score of 512 is 21 points higher than the national average.
    - The average Virginia public school mathematics score of 511 is eight points higher than the national average.
    - The average Virginia public school writing score of 494 is 14 points higher than the national average.

- Twenty-nine percent of the Virginia public school SAT takers were members of student subgroups – black, Hispanic, and American Indian – historically underrepresented in higher education. Hispanic participation increased by seven percent compared with 2012.
- Virginia's 2014 public school graduates continued to demonstrate gains and outperform their peers nationwide on the SAT college-admissions test.
    - The average Virginia public school reading score of 515 is 23 points higher than the national average.
    - The average Virginia public school mathematics score of 512 is 11 points higher than the national average.
    - The average Virginia public school writing score of 493 is 15 points higher than the national average.
- According to The College Board, 69 percent of Virginia public school graduates took the SAT in 2014, as compared to the national average of 57 percent.
- The average reading score of Virginia public graduates was the second highest among the twenty-five states (including the District of Columbia) in which fifty percent or more public school graduates took the SAT and sixth highest in both mathematics and writing.
- Forty-five percent of Virginia's 2014 public school SAT takers achieved The College Board's benchmark for college readiness.

2013 ACT

- The performance of Virginia public school students improved on all components of the ACT while the achievement of their peers nationwide was down across the board.
- The Commonwealth's public school students achieved a composite score of 22.4, compared with 20.9 for public school graduates nationwide.
- The percentage of Virginia public school students meeting ACT college-readiness benchmarks was 10 or more points higher than the percentages nationwide.

2014 ACT

- Virginia students outperformed their peers nationwide by significant margins on the 2014 ACT as the number of the Commonwealth's high school seniors taking the examination continued to grow.
- Virginia public school 2014 graduates achieved statistically significant gains on the mathematics, reading, and science portions of the test compared with the average scores of graduates in 2013.
- The percentage of Virginia public school students meeting the ACT college-readiness benchmarks remained 10 or more points higher than the percentages nationwide.

The College Board Advanced Placement

In 2007, Virginia received a National Mathematics and Science Initiative (NMSI) grant that encourages high school students in the Commonwealth to prepare for careers in mathematics and science by enrolling in challenging AP classes. Virginia Advanced Study Strategies (VASS), a nonprofit state organization, was created to leverage grant funding with seed money from several Virginia businesses to support the development of more AP classes and strengthen existing programs in the state. With significant success in increasing participation in AP classes, when grant funding expired in 2013, VASS began a new phase with the creation of the Rural Math Excel Partnership (RMEP) project to develop a sense of shared responsibility among families, teachers, and communities in rural areas for student success in and preparation for advanced high school and postsecondary study.

According to The College Board's 2014 Advanced Placement Report to the Nation, Virginia ranks third among states for the highest percentage of public high school seniors qualifying for college credit on AP exams. As well, Virginia was cited in the report for narrowing the equity gap for African-Americans and Latino students. The College Board provided the following additional data about 2013 Advanced Placement (AP) course and test taking patterns in Virginia:

- 28.3 percent of Virginia's graduating seniors earned a score of three or higher on at least one AP examination, compared with 27.2 percent in 2012 and 16.5 percent in 2003.
- Overall, 34,901 of Virginia's graduates took at least one AP exam during their high school years.
- The number of African-American graduates who took at least one AP examination has more than doubled since 2003. In 2013, 4,753 African-American students took at least one AP test, compared with 1,682 in 2003. During the same period, the percentage of African-American graduates earning at least one qualifying AP score rose 2.5 points, to 7.7 percent in 2013, compared with 5.2 percent in 2003.
- The number of Hispanic graduates who took at least one AP examination has more than tripled since 2003. In 2013, 2,867 Latino students took at least one AP test, compared with 920 of Hispanic graduates in 2003. During the same period, the percentage of Hispanic graduates earning at least one score of three or higher rose 2.6 points, to 7.8 percent, in 2013, compared with 5.2 percent in 2003.

The following table provides data on 2013 AP success in Virginia:

Group	Test Takers (# of Students)			Exams Taken		Scores of 3-5 Scores	
	Total	Increase from 2012	% of Total	Total	Increase from 2012	Total	Increase from 2012
All Students	77,528	9.4%	100%	149,918	9.7%	91,562	11.1%
Asian	10,284	8.1%	13.3%	23,422	7.7%	15,513	7.7%
Black	8,791	4.7%	11.3%	14,544	5%	4,885	8.1%
Hispanic	5,795	6.5%	7.5%	10,462	7%	5,527	9.4%
White	47,618	11.2%	61.4%	92,142	11.5%	60,351	12.6%

2014 AP success in Virginia:

Group	Test Takers (# of Students)			Exams Taken		Number of 3-5	
	Total	Increase from 2013	% of Total	Total	Increase from 2013	Total	Increase from 2013
All Students	77,614	0.1%	100%	152,155	1.5%	94,240	2.9%
Asian	10,619	3.3%	13.7%	24,652	5.2%	16,506	6.4%
Black	8,951	1.8%	11.5%	14,861	2.2%	5,025	2.9%
Hispanic	5,985	3.3%	7.7%	10,984	5.0%	6015	8.8%
White	47,171	-0.9%	60.8%	92,458	0.3%	61,357	1.7%

In the 2012 General Assembly, Governor McDonnell introduced budget language that would have established the Virginia Early Participation PSAT Program by providing $1.83 million over two years to pay the PSAT test fees for all tenth-grade students in Virginia, assuming a 75 percent actual participation rate. The program would have provided professional development to high school teachers and guidance counselors in using the AP Potential tool provided by The College Board to identify more students who have the potential to succeed in college-level courses in high school and to intervene early with those students who are off-track to help them better prepare for life and a career post-graduation. While funding for this initiative was not appropriated by the 2012 General Assembly, the Department of Education continues to encourage school divisions to provide opportunities for all students to take the PSAT and make full use of The College Board tools. All students participating in the PSAT receive free access to an online planning tool called QuickStart, which contains a personality test designed to match a student's personality, interests, and skills to potential careers and necessary steps and training for those careers, as well as detailed descriptions of hundreds of different careers, profiles of individuals who have pursued these careers, and guidance on next steps on a path toward these careers.

1.C DEVELOP AND ADMINISTER ANNUAL, STATEWIDE, ALIGNED, HIGH-QUALITY ASSESSMENTS THAT MEASURE STUDENT GROWTH

Select the option that pertains to the SEA and provide evidence corresponding to the option selected.

Option A	Option B	Option C
☐ The SEA is participating in one of the two State consortia that received a grant under the Race to the Top Assessment competition. i. Attach the State's Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) under that competition. (Attachment 6)	☐ The SEA is not participating in either one of the two State consortia that received a grant under the Race to the Top Assessment competition, and has not yet developed or administered statewide aligned, high-quality assessments that measure student growth in reading/language arts and in mathematics in at least grades 3-8 and at least once in high school in all LEAs. • Provide the SEA's plan to develop and administer annually, beginning no later than the 2014–2015 school year, statewide aligned, high-quality assessments that measure student growth in reading/language arts and in mathematics in at least grades 3-8 and at least once in high school in all LEAs, as well as set academic achievement standards for those assessments.	☒ The SEA has developed and begun annually administering statewide aligned, high-quality assessments that measure student growth in reading/language arts and in mathematics in at least grades 3-8 and at least once in high school in all LEAs. i. Attach evidence that the SEA has submitted these assessments and academic achievement standards to the Department for peer review or attach a timeline of when the SEA will submit the assessments and academic achievement standards to the Department for peer review. (Attachment 7)

Virginia is a national leader in implementing online tests and is often consulted by other states and consortia that are transitioning to online testing. Since 2013 all Standards of Learning (SOL) tests in Virginia have been administered online with the exception of those taken by a small number of students who have a documented need for a paper/pencil test. The movement to all online testing has provided Virginia with the opportunity to develop next-generation assessments that include technology-enhanced items in addition to the multiple-choice items that have traditionally comprised the SOL tests. The technology-enhanced items provide for different ways to measure critical thinking and problem-solving skills and support the increased rigor inherent in Virginia's new content standards. New mathematics tests for grades 3-8, Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II that include technology-enhanced items were administered for the first time in 2011-2012. Examples of the technology-enhanced items may be found at: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/sol/practice_items/index.shtml. New reading, writing, and science assessments that also include technology-enhanced items were implemented in 2012-2013. In addition to the new SOL tests, Virginia also implemented the Virginia Modified Achievement Standards Tests (VMAST) in mathematics for grades 3-8 and Algebra I in 2011-2012 and in reading for grades 3-8 and high school in 2012-2013. VMAST is intended for students with disabilities who are learning grade-level content but who are not expected to achieve proficiency in the same time frame as their non-disabled peers. (As noted in the response to Question 1.B, Virginia discontinued the use of the VMAST assessments for federal accountability after the 2013-2014 school year.)

Both the SOL and the VMAST assessments are based on the content standards described in the responses to Questions 1.A and 1.B. Peer review documentation for the new mathematics and reading assessments will be submitted according to timelines established by the United States Department of Education.

The Algebra II SOL test was developed to support a "college ready" achievement level that would represent the prerequisite skills and knowledge contained in the Algebra II SOL that students would need to be successful in an introductory credit-bearing college mathematics course.

In preparation for the development of the Algebra II test, the *Algebra II SOL* were reviewed by college faculty in Virginia's two-year and four-year institutions who teach introductory credit-bearing mathematics classes such as pre-Calculus, College Algebra or introductory statistics. Faculty members rated each of the *Algebra II SOL* as being "not helpful," "relevant," "important," or "essential" to success in an introductory credit-bearing college mathematics class. Success was described as a grade of "C" or better. The results of this survey were used in developing the Algebra II test so that sufficient items measuring the content identified as "important" or "essential" to being prepared for college mathematics classes were included in the test.

In addition, the results of the survey were used by a committee of secondary educators in developing performance level descriptors for the Algebra II test to describe what students should know and be able to do to be prepared for an introductory credit-bearing college mathematics course. This performance level descriptor was used by the standard setting committee in recommending a cut score for the Algebra II test that would represent the knowledge and skills

necessary for students to enroll in, without remediation, an introductory credit-bearing college mathematics class with Algebra II as its highest prerequisite. Based on the recommendations of the standard setting committee, this achievement level has been labeled as "advanced/college path."

The standard setting committee included secondary educators with experience in teaching Algebra II as well as higher education faculty from Virginia's two year and four year institutions. The recommendations from the standard setting committee for cut scores that represent "proficient" as well as "advanced" for Algebra I and Geometry and "advanced/college path" for Algebra II were presented to the Virginia Board of Education, and the Board adopted cut scores for these tests in January 2012. Standard setting for the mathematics tests for grades 3-8 will occur in February with the Board scheduled to adopt cut scores for these tests in March 2012.

Using a similar process as was used for the Algebra II test, the end-of-course reading test was also developed to support a "college path" level. The Virginia Board of Education adopted a "college path" achievement level for the reading test in 2013.

Student growth percentiles are calculated for both the mathematics tests and the reading tests to provide a measure of growth. Information about Virginia's student growth percentiles is available in Attachment 12.

2014-2015 Update: Virginia is transitioning to the use of value tables as a measure of growth. More information about value tables may be found in Principle 3 in the response to Question 3.B.

PRINCIPLE 2: STATE-DEVELOPED DIFFERENTIATED RECOGNITION, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND SUPPORT

2.A DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A STATE-BASED SYSTEM OF DIFFERENTIATED RECOGNITION, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND SUPPORT

2.A.i Provide a description of the SEA's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system that includes all the components listed in Principle 2, the SEA's plan for implementation of the differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system no later than the 2012–2013 school year, and an explanation of how the SEA's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system is designed to improve student achievement and school performance, close achievement gaps, and increase the quality of instruction for students.

Overview

Virginia's existing state Standards of Accreditation (SOA) require all schools to meet instructional program standards and proficiency targets in four core content areas: 1) reading and writing; 2) mathematics; 3) science; and 4) history and social science. The SOA also requires schools with a graduating class to meet state graduation requirements approved by the Board of Education. Schools receive annual accreditation ratings based on student performance on the four core content areas and state graduation requirements as defined in Attachment 17 – *Standards of Accreditation – Accountability and Support*.

Beginning with accountability ratings for the 2012-2013 school year, Virginia implemented a revised ESEA accountability plan. In addition to the accreditation expectations: 1) Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) that require a 95 percent participation rate and academic progress over time in reading and mathematics were established for all students, three proficiency gap groups, and each individual subgroup; and 2) schools with a graduating class are expected to meet the Federal Graduation Indicator. Together, the AMOs for participation rate, progress expectations in reading and mathematics, and the federal graduation indicator comprise expectations under ESEA accountability. The methodology for establishing ESEA AMOs is described in the response to Question 2.B.

Recognition **–** The Virginia Index of Performance (VIP) program, Blue Ribbon Schools Program, and the Title I Distinguished Schools program recognize schools demonstrating high academic performance and high graduation rates, as well as recognizing schools demonstrating significant progress toward meeting academic performance and graduation expectations.

Accountability **–** Both Title I and non-Title I schools with significant performance and graduation gaps for the "all students" group as defined under the SOA are held accountable under the Academic Review process described in the response to Question 2.F. As required under the ESEA flexibility provisions, five percent of those Title I schools with the most significant reading, mathematics, and graduation rate gaps for the "all students" group are identified for priority school status (a minimum of 36 schools total). In addition, ten percent of those Title I schools with the most significant proficiency gaps in reading, mathematics, and

graduation rates for traditionally lower performing subgroups are considered for focus school status (a minimum of 72 schools total).

The most pressing subgroup needs are identified by focusing on three "proficiency gap groups" representing Virginia's traditionally lower performing subgroups with the greatest gap in academic achievement:

- **Gap group 1:** students with disabilities, English language learners, and economically disadvantaged students (unduplicated)
- **Gap group 2:** Black students, not of Hispanic origin, including students with disabilities, English language learners, and economically disadvantaged students
- **Gap group 3:** Hispanic students, of one or more races, including students with disabilities, English language learners, and economically disadvantaged students

Additional details about Virginia's rationale for the proficiency gap group configuration and their role in the state's revised accountability system are included in the response to Question 2.B.

Virginia's revised accountability system: 1) more closely aligns state and federal requirements by featuring the SOA as the foundation for accountability; 2) eliminates the additional school improvement labels required under the ESEA and instead assigns school accreditation and proficiency gap determinations; and 3) reduces the number of annual measurable objectives (AMOs) for schools and divisions, allowing an increased focus on a core set of indicators and targeting of resources where they are needed the most through the identification of priority and focus schools with the greatest proficiency gaps in reading, mathematics, or graduation rates.

<u>Key Features</u>

- Holds schools and divisions accountable for subgroup performance through additional AMOs that recognize the starting points of all students, proficiency gap groups, and each individual subgroup and reduce the proficiency gap over time
- Maintains accountability by issuing annual school accreditation and proficiency gap determinations, using a Proficiency Gap Dashboard, reported on the school, division, and state report cards, that indicates whether proficiency gaps exist in reading, mathematics, and graduation rates for Virginia's traditionally lower performing subgroups of students (i.e., proficiency gap groups)
- Eliminates additional ESEA accountability labels related to meeting/not meeting Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)
- Continues to publicly report performance results on AMOs for all student subgroups individually as currently required under ESEA and requiring schools and divisions to address performance gaps as needed

Statewide System of Recognition and Support

Recognition

The *VIP Incentive Program, Blue Ribbon Schools Program,* and the *Title I Distinguished Schools Program*, as described in the response to Question 2.C, provide incentives for continuous improvement of student achievement for Title I schools.

The state's accountability and support system for Title I schools that are not identified as priority or focus schools is the same as for non-Title I schools. Schools that do not receive a rating of *Fully Accredited* are supported through a rigorous academic review process and intensive interventions as described in the response to Question 2.F. These supports and interventions include a detailed academic review process conducted by a team of experienced educators and school improvement planning tools and resources to inform school improvement planning efforts. School boards of divisions with schools assigned a rating of *Accreditation Denied* are required to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Board of Education and are closely supported and monitored to ensure that aggressive interventions are implemented to improve the performance of the school's students.

Support

Fully Accredited schools that have significant proficiency gaps and/or low graduation rates and are *not* identified as priority or focus schools are required to develop and implement an improvement plan that addresses the specific needs of the students in the identified gap groups. Divisions may work with appropriate offices at the Virginia Department of Education to design technical assistance and professional development that support schools with subgroups failing to meet annual measurable objectives. These services are described below.

Schools identified as priority and focus schools receive targeted support and interventions through the statewide system of support. Priority schools are expected to hire an external Lead Turnaround Partner (LTP) or other external partner that is agreed upon by the Virginia Department of Education and the local school board to assist in implementing, at a minimum, a model that meets the USED turnaround principles or one of the four USED models. Focus schools are required to work closely with state-approved personnel and a division team to develop, implement, and monitor intervention strategies designed to improve the performance of students identified as in danger of not meeting the academic achievement expectations or at risk of dropping out of school. Further details about these interventions are included in the responses to Questions 2.D and 2.E.

Title I schools not meeting proficiency gap group targets or participation rates that are not identified as focus or priority schools and schools not *Fully Accredited* are required to use a state-determined comprehensive improvement planning tool. Currently, *Indistar*® is the state-determined tool used to plan, monitor, and implement a plan for improvement. The current state-determined comprehensive improvement planning tool, *Indistar*®, is also available to non-Title I schools not meeting proficiency gap group targets or participation rates as well.

Title I high schools that do not meet the federal graduation indicator rate are required to use the Virginia Early Warning System (VEWS) to plan, monitor and implement a plan for improvement. More information on VEWS can be found at the following Web site: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/school_improvement/early_warning_system/index.shtml.

Additional services for schools that have significant proficiency gaps, low graduation rates, or participation rates include technical assistance and professional development offered by the Virginia Department of Education as referenced in the responses to Questions 1.A and 1.B:

Of special note is that divisions are no longer required to implement the school improvement sanctions under ESEA, such as public school choice and supplemental educational services (SES); however, school divisions may opt to provide either choice or SES as part of the interventions required for priority or focus schools. School divisions with students currently transferring under the choice provisions must continue to allow those students to transfer, and can determine whether division funds will be used to pay for transportation.

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities in Virginia are expected to achieve the same standards as their non-disabled peers, through the Virginia *Standards of Learning*. A small number of students with significant cognitive disabilities participate in alternate assessments based on alternate achievement standards as provided for in NCLB. The assessments are based on Aligned Standards of Learning.

The Virginia Board of Education's *Regulations Governing Special Education Programs for Children with Disabilities in Virginia* require transition planning as part of the IEP for students with disabilities beginning at age 14. The Virginia Department of Education also assists students with disabilities in developing self-advocacy skills through the "I'm Determined" initiative. Through this program, students with disabilities are provided knowledge and skills to not only participate in, but also to lead their IEP meetings.

In the area of transition for students with disabilities with the most intensive support needs, there are two model initiatives supported by the Virginia Department of Education: Project SEARCH and the Post-High School Community College Program. Project SEARCH, a business-led model, is a collaborative between school divisions, adult rehabilitative services and local businesses that provide employability skills training and workplace internships that occur entirely in the workplace. The Post-High School Community College Program is a supported education model that provides individualized supports to students with significant disabilities seeking postsecondary education to enhance their skills for employment, in an age-appropriate setting. The Department of Education provides support and technical assistance to increase the number of partnerships between school divisions and institutions of higher education.

English Language Learners

English Language Learners (ELLs) in Virginia are expected to achieve the same college- and career-ready content *Standards of Learning* as their English-proficient peers. In addition to

achieving content standards, ELLs must also achieve proficiency in the English language.

On September 26, 2007, the Virginia Board of Education adopted the ACCESS for ELLs (Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners) as the statewide English language proficiency (ELP) assessment for Virginia. The ACCESS for ELLs was developed by the World-Class Instructional Design Assessment (WIDA) consortium through a United States Department of Education (USED) Enhanced Assessment grant. On March 19, 2008, the Board adopted the WIDA English Language Proficiency (ELP) standards as the ELP standards for the Commonwealth. Since then, WIDA has released its enhanced version of the ELP standards, referred to as the 2012 Amplification of English Language Development (ELD) Standards. Virginia has continued to use the amplified 2012 WIDA ELD standards as its state ELP standards.

The WIDA ELD standards emphasize the need for academic language to support the four core content areas and thus reinforce the linguistic demands required for LEP students to be successful in Virginia's *Standards of Learning* program. The five WIDA ELD standards are as follows:

- Standard 1: English language learners communicate in English for **Social and Instructional** purposes within the school setting.
- Standard 2: English language learners communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of **Language Arts**.
- Standard 3: English language learners communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of **Mathematics**.
- Standard 4: English language learners communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of **Science.**
- Standard 5: English language learners communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of **Social Studies**.

The WIDA ELD standards support the English language development of ELLs to provide the foundation for them to achieve academically in all content areas. The five WIDA ELD standards are represented in the following grades/grade clusters: K, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9-10, 11-12. Additionally, each standard encompasses five levels of English language proficiency as well as the four language domains. The levels of English language proficiency are: entering, emerging, developing, expanding, and bridging. The four language domains are: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

In 2009, Virginia prepared both a PreK–5 and a Grades 6–12 crosswalk showing the alignment between the WIDA ELD standards and the Virginia *Standards of Learning* in English, mathematics, science, and history and social science. Professional development opportunities are provided annually to train educators of ELLs in creating lesson plans that align the 2012 amplified ELD standards with recent revisions to the *Standards of Learning*.

Assistance to All At-Risk Students

- **Project Graduation**, which provides remedial instruction and assessment opportunities for students at risk of not meeting the Commonwealth's diploma requirements. Project Graduation includes remedial academies during the school year and summer.
- **Algebra Readiness Initiative**, which provides assistance in preparing students for success in algebra. School divisions receive incentive payments to provide mathematics intervention services to students in grades 6-9 who are at-risk of failing the Algebra I end-of-course test as demonstrated by their individual performance on diagnostic tests that have been provided or approved by the Virginia Department of Education.
- **Virginia Preschool Initiative**, which distributes state funds to schools and community-based organizations to provide quality preschool programs for at-risk four-year-olds not served by Head Start.
- **Early Intervention Reading Initiative** (EIRI), which provides early reading intervention services to students in kindergarten through the third grade who demonstrate reading deficiencies reflected in each student's performance on the state-approved literacy screener, The Phonological and Literacy Screening (PALS) assessment. Legislation passed by the 2012 General Assembly and budget language in the 2012-2014 biennial budget increased funding for EIRI to provide reading intervention services to 100 percent of eligible students in grade three prior to promotion to grade four. Previously, funding had been provided to serve 25 percent of eligible third-grade students. In doing this, the General Assembly also made participation in EIRI at third grade a requirement within the Standards of Quality. Legislation passed by the 2013 General Assembly added kindergarten and grades one and two to the requirement that local school divisions provide early intervention services to students in grade three who demonstrate deficiencies based on their individual performance on diagnostic reading tests.
- **Virginia's Early Warning System**, which relies on readily available data – housed at the school – to predict which students are at risk for dropping out of high school; target resources at the school- and division-level to support students not on track to graduate while they are still in school and before they drop out; and examine patterns and identify school climate issues that may contribute to disproportionate dropout rates.

Additionally, early childhood programs in Virginia's public schools provide a foundation for learning and academic success. School-readiness activities focus on phonological awareness, vocabulary, number sense and physical, motor and social development. The Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI) began in 1997 and distributes state funds to schools and community-based organizations to provide quality preschool programs for at-risk four-year-olds not already served by Head Start. School readiness describes the capabilities of children, families, schools and communities that promote student success in kindergarten and beyond. Each component plays an essential role in the development of school readiness. In 2013, the Board received the revised Virginia Foundation Blocks for Early Learning: Comprehensive Standards for Four-Year-Olds (PDF) which are aligned to the current K-12 *Standards of Learning*. In addition to the Foundation Blocks, support documents include:

- Preschool Curriculum Review Rubric and Planning Tool (PDF) – This rubric is designed to assist early childhood educators with reviewing curricula and products to determine if they align with the Virginia Foundation Blocks for Early Learning.

- Virginia's Quality Indicators for Responsive Teaching: Creating a High Quality Preschool Learning Environment (PDF) – This checklist aligns with the preschool standards and helps teachers, parents, and administrators focus on creating shared, active, and hands-on opportunities for young children to develop their full potential.

In addition to providing content area Curriculum Frameworks, the Department of Education works with practitioners to develop sample lesson plans that reflect the content included in the *SOL* and the Curriculum Frameworks. The *SOL* Enhanced Scope and Sequence is a searchable database of lesson plans that incorporate Universal Design for Learning (UDL). These lesson plans were designed to include multiple means of representation, activity, and engagement for students. Teachers of special education and LEP students were included among the practitioners to ensure the lesson plans included suggestions and differentiated instructional strategies to meet the needs of all students. The *Mathematics SOL Enhanced Scope and Sequence Sample Lesson Plans* provide teachers with sample lesson plans that are aligned with the essential understandings and essential knowledge and skills found in the Curriculum Frameworks for the 2009 *Mathematics SOL*. The *English SOL Enhanced Scope and Sequence Sample Lesson Plans* reflect the 2010 *English SOL* and were released in the summer of 2012. Examples of the sample lesson plans aligned with the 2002 *English SOL* are available at: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/sol/standards_docs/english/index.shtml. The Enhanced Scope and Sequence Sample Lesson Plans include resources and specific methods for differentiating the lessons for students with disabilities and English language learners.

Support for Teachers of LEP Students and Students with Disabilities

General instruction, special education, and English as a second language (ESL) staff at the Virginia Department of Education work closely to ensure that materials developed and professional development provided serve students with disabilities and LEP students. Recent examples include the involvement of special education teachers and ESL teachers in the development of the *English and Mathematics Enhanced Scope and Sequence Sample Lesson Plans* mentioned earlier and their strong collaboration in developing the programs for the From Vision to Practice Annual Institutes.

A number of resources and services are also available to schools to assist teachers in helping LEP students demonstrate their ability to understand, read, and write English in order to function and be successful in school and in American society. Most of these resources are made available or announced on the ESL Instructional Web page. Examples include:

- A two-day training entitled "Academic Language Development for English Learners (ELs)" was offered during November 2011 for elementary and secondary educators of ELLs. The World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA®) academic trainings were held in November 2011 in four areas in the state and focused on providing instructional strategies to increase academic language development among ELLs.
- The "Fall Professional Development Academy for K-12 Teachers of English Language Learners (ELLs)" was held at two locations for six Saturdays, September through December 2011. The academy is designed to assist students in communicating effectively in English, both in and out of school.
- Continued annual institutes and graduate level courses on the WIDA ELD Standards and ACCESS for ELLs assessment and instructional strategies and differentiation for ELLs in

the core content areas.

In 2014, the Department of Education partnered with the Appalachian Regional Comprehensive Center (ARCC) to develop and implement strategies for: 1) enhancing the technical expertise of Department instructional staff to provide support to educators of ELLs; 2) increasing support to ELLs in rural areas; 3) increasing statewide ELL graduation rates; and 4) supporting students dually identified as ELL and SWD. As part of this effort, the ESL staff at the Department provide intra-agency training on the WIDA ELD standards and ACCESS for ELLs assessment results and collaborated with the Division of Special Education and Student Services to provide training to school divisions on serving dually identified students.

The Virginia Department of Education also directs and supports regional T/TACs (Training/Technical Assistance Centers) based in seven institutions of higher education that comprise a statewide system emphasizing collaboration in the planning and provision of services to improve educational opportunities and contribute to the success of children and youth with disabilities (birth - 22 years). The T/TACS provide quality training and technical assistance in response to local, regional, and state needs. T/TAC services increase the capacity of schools, school personnel, service providers, and families to meet the needs of children and youth. The T/TACs meet these needs through activities such as consultation, long-term systems change initiatives, information services, linking and networking resources together, a lending library of multimedia resources and technology, referral to other services, and workshops. In addition to responding to requests for services, T/TAC staff members are deployed to schools and school divisions identified by the Virginia Department of Education as needing improvement through the School Improvement Office and/or the Office of Special Education Program Improvement. Throughout the school improvement process, school divisions can also request specific training and technical assistance from their local T/TAC. The Virginia Department of Education has a comprehensive database of requests made to the T/TACs and the services provided, which is monitored to determine how schools and school divisions access those services.

In 2010, the Virginia Department of Education and Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) established the Center of Excellence for Autism Spectrum Disorders. A collaborative venture of the Department of Education and VCU's Schools of Education and Medicine, the center serves as a focal point for research, professional development, and targeted technical assistance in implementing research-based effective practices and comprehensive services for students with autism. The center is funded through a start-up grant from the Department of Education.

In 2013 the Virginia Department of Education again partnered with Virginia Commonwealth University and its Research Rehabilitation and Training Center (RRTC) in the establishment of the Center on Transition Innovations (CTI). CTI serves as a statewide center on the development, dissemination, and evaluation of effective practices aimed at assisting students with disabilities in transitioning from the K-12 school system to postsecondary education, training and competitive integrated employment. A main focus of the Center in its first year of implementation is to collect online resources and training opportunities designed to support educational professionals, families and students with effective transition planning and support. The Center on Transition Innovation will also serve as a mechanism to bring all of the resources and initiatives around best practices for students planning for transition under one statewide

structure.

Additionally, Virginia's strong Response to Intervention (RtI) initiative has evolved over the years to the Virginia Tiered System of Supports (VTSS), a framework and philosophy that provides resources and support to help every student be successful in academics and behavior. It begins with systemic change at the division, school and classroom level that utilizes evidence-based, system-wide practices to provide a quick response to academic and behavioral needs. These practices include frequent progress-monitoring that enable educators to make sound, data-based instructional decisions for students. The following initiatives fall under the VTSS umbrella; Response to Intervention (RTI), Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and Content Literacy Continuum (CLC). The VTSS guide (PDF) completed in 2012 provides information to support division leaders in implementing VTSS divisionwide research-based best practices and evidence from expert educators. This information will support division leadership teams as they assemble the structures necessary at all levels.

In the fall of 2014, the Virginia Department of Education was awarded two five-year grants, the School Climate Transformation grant (SCT) from USED and the Project Aware grant from the Federal Health and Human Services Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Agency (SAMHSA). The purpose of the grants is to expand the depth and breadth of the VTSS. The Project AWARE SAMHSA initiative integrates mental health promotion, the early identification of students experiencing distress, and access to mental health supports and other social services into the VTSS model. The SCT extents this VTSS transformative framework to several more school divisions with schools in improvement. The Department of Education is partnering with the Center for School/Community Collaboration in the College of Education at the Virginia Commonwealth University to create the VTSS Center for Implementation and Research (VTSS-RIC). This center will conduct research and evaluation, update and develop guidance for systems coaching and training modules, and provide coaches to selected school divisions in improvement. Additionally, the VTSS-RIC will work with a multi-state agency management team that includes representatives from local school divisions and child and family advocacy groups. This team will work to develop a more effective and efficient cross-agency multi-tiered systems approach that engages families and enables all students to achieve their academic potential.

The *Technical Assistance Plan for the Implementation of Virginia's Standards of Learning in English, Mathematics, Science, and History and Social Science* (Attachment 18 – updated 2013) has been recently updated and provides a brief overview of assistance that occurred prior to 2011-2012, assistance that has occurred during school years 2011-2012, 2012-2013, and planned for the current school year. Additional assistance will be developed as data are analyzed following each test administration to determine where to most effectively focus the resources of the Virginia Department of Education. Teachers of special education students and English language learners are included in the activities included in the plan and have equal access to the documents, lesson plans, and other resources provided. Additionally, as described in the previous paragraphs, Virginia's regional TTACs provide specialized supplemental assistance to special education teachers, and the state uses Title III funds to provide supplemental professional development and technical assistance to teachers of English Language Learners.

School Improvement Planning

Virginia has partnered with the Center on Innovations in Learning for six years. As part of collaboration with the Appalachian Regional Comprehensive Center, *Indistar*®, an online portal created and managed by the Center on Innovations in Learning, can be used by any division for any school in Virginia to track, develop, coordinate, and report improvement activities. A number of evidence-based practices and indicators are provided to inform improvement efforts. The system is customized to reflect Virginia's own indicators of effective practice or rubrics for assessment. *Indistar*® allows the school/division to select a set of indicators that differentiate the actions needed for improvement. In addition, Virginia has created a portal in *Indistar*® to collect meeting minutes, quarterly data, and other data throughout the year. The system includes an electronic repository for planning and implementation materials for the teams. Virginia's portion of *Indistar*® provides online tutorials on the indicators (Indicators in Action), including videos of teachers, principals, and teams demonstrating the indicators in practice. Many of the videos were recorded in Virginia schools. One other advantage of using *Indistar*® is the use of "Wise Ways". This is a short written summary that provides the reader with the research behind each indicator.

2014-2015 Update: Virginia will explore the use of other another comprehensive school improvement planning tool with the general capabilities and features described above.

Non-priority and non-focus Title I schools failing to meet reading or mathematics participation or performance AMOs or the federal graduation indicator for any subgroup, including all students, proficiency gap groups, and individual subgroups, and schools not *Fully Accredited* are required to use a state-determined comprehensive improvement planning tool to plan, monitor, and implement a plan for improvement. *Indistar*®, the current state-determined tool, is also available to non-Title I schools not meeting any AMO as well.

Title I high schools that do not meet the federal graduation indicator rate are required to use the Virginia Early Warning System (VEWS) to plan, monitor and implement a plan for improvement. More information on VEWS can be found at the following Web site: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/school_improvement/early_warning_system/index.shtml.

2.A.ii Select the option that pertains to the SEA and provide the corresponding information, if any.

Option A	**Option B**
☒ The SEA includes student achievement only on reading/language arts and mathematics assessments in its differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system and to identify reward, priority, and focus schools.	☐ If the SEA includes student achievement on assessments in addition to reading/language arts and mathematics in its differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system or to identify reward, priority, and focus schools, it must: a. provide the percentage of students in the "all students" group that performed at the proficient level on the State's most recent administration of each assessment for all grades assessed; and b. include an explanation of how the included assessments will be weighted in a manner that will result in holding schools accountable for ensuring all students achieve college- and career-ready standards.

Not Applicable.

2.B SET AMBITIOUS BUT ACHIEVABLE ANNUAL MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES

Select the method the SEA will use to set new ambitious but achievable annual measurable objectives (AMOs) in at least reading/language arts and mathematics for the State and all LEAs, schools, and subgroups that provide meaningful goals and are used to guide support and improvement efforts. If the SEA sets AMOs that differ by LEA, school, or subgroup, the AMOs for LEAs, schools, or subgroups that are further behind must require greater rates of annual progress.

Option A	**Option B**	**Option C**
☐ Set AMOs in annual equal increments toward a goal of reducing by half the percentage of students in the "all students" group and in each subgroup who are not proficient within six years. The SEA must use current proficiency rates based on assessments administered in the 2010–2011 school year as the starting point for setting its AMOs. i. Provide the new AMOs and an explanation of the method used to set these AMOs.	☐ Set AMOs that increase in annual equal increments and result in 100 percent of students achieving proficiency no later than the end of the 2019–2020 school year. The SEA must use the average statewide proficiency based on assessments administered in the 2010–2011 school year as the starting point for setting its AMOs. i. Provide the new AMOs and an explanation of the method used to set these AMOs.	☒ Use another method that is educationally sound and results in ambitious but achievable AMOs for all LEAs, schools, and subgroups. i. Provide the new AMOs and an explanation of the method used to set these AMOs. ii. Provide an educationally sound rationale for the pattern of academic progress reflected in the new AMOs in the text box below. iii. Provide a link to the State's report card or attach a copy of the average statewide proficiency based on assessments administered in the 2010–2011 school year in reading/language arts and mathematics for the "all students" group and all subgroups. (Attachment 8)

Revised Annual Measurable Objectives

Under Virginia's revised ESEA accountability system: 1) Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) that require a 95 percent participation rate and academic progress over time in reading and mathematics are established for all students, three proficiency gap groups, and individual subgroups; and 2) schools with a graduating class are expected to meet the Federal

Graduation Indicator. The methodology for setting AMO targets is based on, but not identical to, the methodology required in Section 1111 of the ESEA. Performance on AMOs inform the identification of reward, priority, and focus schools as described in the responses to Question 2.C, 2.D, and 2.E, respectively. Finally, to help identify proficiency gaps in schools with smaller subgroups, the minimum group size was lowered to 30 students starting with results from the 2012-2013 administration of state assessments.

Summary of ESEA Performance and Participation Expectations

Performance	• Achieve proficiency targets or reduce proficiency gaps in reading and mathematics and meet the Federal Graduation Indicator (FGI) for all students, proficiency gap groups, and individual subgroups of students
Participation	• Test participation rate ≥ 95 percent for reading and mathematics
Reporting	• Report publicly by press release and other media and on each school, division, and state report card progress – or lack thereof – in closing proficiency gaps for traditionally underperforming students in a Proficiency Gap Dashboard • Report performance on AMOs of all students and individual subgroups on report card

Copies of school, division, and state report cards are available at the following link: https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/reportcard/

Proficiency Targets for All Students, Proficiency Gap Groups, and Individual Subgroups

As described in Virginia's Accountability Workbook, the state identifies the following subgroups: economically disadvantaged students; students with disabilities; English language learners; and racial/ethnic groups representing five percent or more of the student population. In Virginia, the racial ethnic subgroups meeting the criteria for separate identification are: Asian students; black students; Hispanic students; and white students. In total, seven subgroups are identified in Virginia.

Virginia has established AMO targets for all students, proficiency gap groups described in the response to Question 2.A and again below, and individual subgroups described above that increase over time and reduce the proficiency gap using a modification of the approach described in Option A of the ESEA flexibility guidelines. The methodology for setting AMO targets is based on, but not identical to, the methodology required in Section 1111 of the ESEA.

Methodology for Establishing AMOs for Accountability Year 2012-2013 (Year 1)

Virginia rank ordered schools by percent proficient on state assessments and:

1. Determined the pass rate of the school at the 20th percentile of enrollment.
2. Determined the pass rate of the school at the 90th percentile of enrollment.
3. Calculated the point difference in the pass rate between #2 and #1.
4. Divided the point difference in half to calculate the gains in pass rates needed to cut

the proficiency gap in half over the next six years in mathematics and reading.

5. Divided the number calculated in #4 by six for mathematics and reading.
6. Set increasing pass rates at six equal* intervals for mathematics and reading starting with the 2011-2012 assessment year, for accountability ratings for the 2012-2013 school year.

* Pass rates were rounded to the nearest whole figure, which resulted in slightly differing increments over the six year period.

This process was repeated to establish the starting point (Year 1 AMO) for each of the student subgroups, including the three Proficiency Gap Groups. For reading, data from the 2010-2011 administration of reading assessments were used to establish Year 1 AMOs. For mathematics, pass rates were established using data from the 2011-2012 administration of new mathematics assessments. Year 1 AMOs were applied to 2011-2012 assessment results to determine federal accountability status for 2012-2013.

The methodology described above was approved by USED on June 29, 2012. At the time, results from the new 2011-2012 mathematics assessments were unavailable. When the methodology was applied to the mathematics assessment results, it was determined that the resulting AMOs were not sufficiently ambitious to close the achievement gap among subgroups. Based on ongoing discussion with USED about Virginia's methodology to establish AMOs, the revised methodology described below are used to establish AMOs for Years 2 through 6 for every student subgroup.

Methodology for Establishing AMOs for Accountability Years 2013-2014 (Year 2) through 2017-2018 (Year 6)

The AMO targets for all subgroups for Years 2 through 6 are calculated such that by the 2017-2018 accountability year (2016-2017 assessment year), the minimum required pass rate are the same as the Year 6 AMO for the all students subgroup. The intermediate AMOs (Years 2-5) for each subgroup were calculated so that the ending AMO (Year 6) is the same as the ending AMO established for the all students group and the intermediate AMOs are in equal increments. This revised methodology establishes intermediate subgroup passing rates (AMOs) that converge to the same passing rate (AMO) in Year 6 and, thereby, creates higher growth expectations for lower performing subgroups. AMOs in the intermediate years serve as academic progress measures. The revised methodology for establishing AMO targets for Years 2 through 6 addresses the ESEA flexibility requirement that subgroups that are further behind make greater progress.

Meeting AMO Requirements

Reading and Mathematics AMOs: A subgroup will be considered as meeting the federal AMO requirements for reading and mathematics if: 1) the subgroup's current year pass rate meets or exceeds the AMO target; 2) the subgroup's three year average meets or exceeds the target; or 3) the subgroup reduces the failure rate by 10 percent as compared to the prior year (safe harbor).

Federal Graduation Indicator (FGI): Subgroups in high schools with a graduating class will be expected to meet the FGI indicator of 80 percent using the 4-year, 5-year, or 6-year adjusted cohort rate as approved by the U.S. Department of Education. A subgroup will also be considered as meeting the FGI if its non-attainment rate is reduced by 10 percent or more in the current 4-year rate as compared to the prior year's 4-year rate.

Accountability Determinations

Beginning with the 2014-2015 accountability year (2013-2014 assessment year), a school with all subgroups meeting AMOs as defined in the section above will receive a determination of *Met All Federal AMOs*. A school with one or more subgroups not meeting the expectations defined above will receive a determination of *Did Not Meet All Federal AMOs*.

Expectations for Maintaining High Achievement

At its October 2012 meeting, the Virginia Board of Education established new continuous progress expectations for higher-performing subgroups that were subsequently approved by the U.S. Department of Education in March 2013. The policy requires that subgroups with a prior year pass rate higher than the current year's target maintain or exceed the prior year pass rate, within five percent, and up to 90 percent. Also, subgroups with a starting pass rate higher than the required Year 6 pass rate are expected to make continuous progress. Schools with subgroups that do not meet the higher expectations currently receive an accountability status of *Did Not Meet All Federal AMOs – MHE (did not Meet Higher Expectations).*

The higher expectations were established in an effort to ensure higher-performing subgroups continue to advance their achievement; however, impact data analyzed in fall of 2013 indicate that a disproportionate percentage of schools are adversely affected by one or more subgroups not meeting the higher expectations. As well, the minimum group size reduction from 50 to 30 students in the 2012-2013 assessment year further magnified the impact of the higher expectations. Fluctuations in the number of students in a subgroup from year to year created inconsistencies when comparing a high pass rate in the prior year to the current year's achievement of a different cohort of students. Hence, the Board's policy, which has been coined the "no backsliding" policy, created unintended consequences during 2012-2013 that must be addressed immediately to avoid unfairly labeling schools as not meeting federal AMOs in the fall of 2014-2015 based on assessments administered in 2013-2014.

Schools should maintain high expectations for all subgroups, and in particular, should engage in efforts to maintain exceptional achievement among subgroups demonstrating such achievement. However, to mitigate the unintended consequences of the higher expectations, they will be used as an incentive for schools and subgroups beginning with the 2014-2015 accountability year (2013-2014 assessment year). Beginning in 2014-2015, schools with subgroups that meet requirements described in the *Meeting AMO Requirements* section above, and have one or more subgroups meeting the higher expectations approved by the Board in October 2012, will receive a status of *Met All Federal AMOs and Higher Expectations*. The *Did Not Meet All Federal AMOs – MHE (did not Meet Higher Expectations)* status will be discontinued.

Based on the methodology described in this section, mathematics AMO targets for Years 1 through 6 were determined based on the results from the 2011-2012 administration of new mathematics assessments. Reading AMO targets for Year 1 were determined based on the results from the 2010-2011 reading assessments. Reading AMO targets for Years 2 through 6 were determined based on the results of new reading assessments administered in 2012-2013. Mathematics AMO targets for Years 1-6 and reading AMO targets for Year 1 are shown in the chart below.

Mathematics Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs)*
For Accountability Years 2012-2013 through 2017-2018
Based on Revised Methodology

	Year 1 AMO	**Year 2 AMO**	**Year 3 AMO**	**Year 4 AMO**	**Year 5 AMO**	**Year 6 AMO**	**Gap Points Closed**
Accountability Year	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	
Assessment Year	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	
All Students	61	64	66	68	70	73	12
Gap Group 1 (Combined)	47	52	57	63	68	73	26
Gap Group 2 (Black)	45	51	56	62	67		28
Gap Group 3 (Hispanic)	52	56	60	65	69		21
Students with Disabilities	33	41	49	57	65		40
English Language Learners	39	46	53	59	66		34
Economically Disadvantaged	47	52	57	63	68		26
White	68	69	70	71	72		5
Asian	82	Continuous progress towards reducing proficiency gap within subgroup by half					

*Safe harbor and other flexibility provisions remain in effect that are permitted in ESEA and included in Virginia's ESEA Flexibility Plan.

Reading Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs)*

For Accountability Years 2012-2013 through 2017-2018
Based on Revised Methodology

	Year 1 AMO	Year 2 AMO	Year 3 AMO	Year 4 AMO	Year 5 AMO	Year 6 AMO	Gap Points Closed
Accountability Year	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	
Assessment Year	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	
All Students	85	66	69	72	75	78	12
Gap Group 1 (Combined)	76	52	59	65	72	78	26
Gap Group 2 (Black)	76	49	57	64	71		29
Gap Group 3 (Hispanic)	80	53	60	66	72		25
Students with Disabilities	59	30	42	54	66		48
English Language Learners	76	44	52	61	69		34
Economically Disadvantaged	76	52	59	65	72		26
White	90	74	75	76	77		4
Asian	92	80	Continuous progress towards reducing proficiency gap within subgroup by half				

*Safe harbor and other flexibility provisions remain in effect that are permitted in ESEA and included in Virginia's ESEA Flexibility Plan.

While Virginia will continue to annually disaggregate, publicly report, and use AMO performance data for all subgroups in determining appropriate interventions for all non-accredited schools, the performance of proficiency gap groups as defined below are used to identify focus schools:

- **Gap Group 1:** Students with Disabilities, English Language Learners, and Economically Disadvantaged (unduplicated)
- **Gap group 2:** Black students, not of Hispanic origin, including students with disabilities, English language learners, and economically disadvantaged students
- **Gap group 3:** Hispanic students, of one or more races, including students with disabilities, English language learners, and economically disadvantaged students

The use of proficiency gap groups for accountability purposes allows the state to target supports and interventions related to subgroup performance on Virginia's historically underperforming groups of students. The Consolidated State Performance Report (CSPR)

data show that the reading and mathematics performance of students with disabilities, English language learners, and economically disadvantaged students are the lowest in comparison to the statewide average performance of "all students" in both subjects. Furthermore, grouping the three subgroups together mitigates the effect of the minimum group size concealing the results of these traditionally lowest-performing groups, allowing more schools to be identified for supports and interventions for the subgroups that need the most assistance.

CSPR data also show that the reading and mathematics performance of black students and Hispanic students is lower than the statewide average in both subjects. The CSPR data show that white and Asian students traditionally outperform statewide averages; therefore, these two subgroups are not considered as having proficiency gaps.

Safeguard for Proficiency Gap Group 1: Although several important benefits are gained from the creation of proficiency gap group 1, the combining of the three subgroups has the potential to mask the performance of one of the individual subgroups, particularly in schools where one group is significantly larger than the others. As a safeguard against the masking of an individual subgroup's performance, for schools with a proficiency gap group 1 that meets the AMO, Virginia requires that the individual subgroups comprising proficiency gap group 1 also meet AMO targets established separately for each of those groups. Should any of the individual subgroups in proficiency gap group 1 fail to meet its AMO targets, the school is required to implement an improvement plan to address the performance of that individual subgroup.

The performance results of proficiency gap groups are considered in designing supports and interventions for schools. Schools not *Fully Accredited*, identified as priority or focus schools, and any other schools not meeting proficiency targets, graduation rates or participation rates that are not identified as focus or priority schools may receive differentiated support from the Office of School Improvement. Divisions may work with appropriate offices at the Virginia Department of Education to select appropriate technical assistance and professional development that support schools with subgroups failing to meet annual measurable objectives. Tailored support for professional development for instruction provided to students with disabilities is available through the Training and Technical Assistance Centers (T/TAC).

The performance results of proficiency gap groups are considered in designing supports and interventions for schools. Non-priority and non-focus Title I schools failing to meet reading or mathematics participation or performance AMOs or the federal graduation indicator for any subgroup, including all students, proficiency gap groups, and individual subgroups, and schools not *Fully Accredited* are required to use a state-determined comprehensive improvement planning tool to plan, monitor, and implement a plan for improvement. *Indistar®*, the current state-determined tool, is available to non-Title I schools not meeting proficiency gap group targets or participation rates as well.

Title I high schools that do not meet the federal graduation indicator rate are required to use the Virginia Early Warning System (VEWS) to plan, monitor and implement a plan for improvement. More information on VEWS can be found at the following Web site: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/school_improvement/early_warning_system/index.shtml.

Division Accountability

Each school division in Virginia shares the same participation and performance expectations as schools, and additional English language learner benchmarks as required under Section 3122 of Title III, Part A:

- Participation rate in reading and mathematics of ≥ 95 percent for all students, proficiency gap groups, and individual subgroups;
- AMOs for proficiency in reading, mathematics, and graduation rates for all students, proficiency gap groups, and individual subgroups;
- Annual measurable achievement objectives (AMAOs) for limited English proficient (LEP) student progress toward attaining English language skills, proficiency in attaining English language skills, and reading and mathematics proficiency.

Future Revisions of Annual Measurable Objectives

Virginia will annually examine annual measurable objectives (i.e., expectations and growth indicators) to determine if they remain appropriate considering trends in the academic progress of the state's schools and divisions over time.

Considerations for Growth Indicators

The state made available student-level growth data using a student growth percentile (SGP) model in December of 2011. At this point, it is not possible to determine growth-to-standard as required under the ESEA flexibility provisions without additional data; however, Virginia is committed to including growth indicators other than safe harbor (10 percent reduction in the failure rate) in the accountability system in the future. The state will examine available growth data after sufficient data are available to determine growth-to-standard expectations and incorporate a growth indicator in the accountability system that will meet federal requirements.

2014-2015 Update: Virginia is transitioning to the use of value tables as a measure of growth. More information about value tables may be found in Principle 3 in the response to Question 3.B.

Should the state determine that adjustments are needed to the performance expectations proposed in this ESEA flexibility application, the state will submit revisions to USED for review and approval.

2.C REWARD SCHOOLS

2.C.i Describe the SEA's methodology for identifying highest-performing and high-progress schools as reward schools . If the SEA's methodology is not based on the definition of reward schools in *ESEA Flexibility* (but instead, e.g. based on school grades or ratings that take into account a number of factors), the SEA should also demonstrate that the list provided in Table 2 is consistent with the definition, per the Department's "Demonstrating that an SEA's Lists of Schools meet ESEA Flexibility Definitions" guidance.

Highest-performing and high-progress schools are recognized as reward schools through the *Virginia Index of Performance* (VIP) incentives program, the Blue Ribbon Schools program, and the state Title I Distinguished Schools program. Both Title I and non-Title I schools with a *Fully Accredited* rating and meeting federal AMOs are eligible for the range of VIP awards, which recognize highest-performing schools based on a blend of performance and progress criteria as described below and in Attachment 15. Title I schools and school divisions are eligible for the Title I Distinguished Schools and School Divisions awards that recognize highest absolute performance and graduation rates as described below.

VIP Incentives Program

The Virginia Index of Performance (VIP) Incentive Program also recognizes schools and school divisions that meet or exceed minimum state and federal accountability standards for at least two consecutive years. The program provides incentives for continuous improvement and the achievement of excellence goals established by the Board of Education. Included are goals related to preparing students for college and career success, such as increasing the percentage of:

- Students passing reading and writing assessments;
- Students enrolled in Algebra I by Grade 8;
- Students enrolled in Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, or dual enrollment courses;
- Students earning industry credentials or participating in advanced coursework in the STEM areas;
- Students who graduate with a standard or advanced studies diploma;
- Students enrolled in Governor's STEM Academies or Academic Year Governor's Schools;
- Graduates who having taken calculus, chemistry, or physics; and
- Graduates who earned advanced proficient scores on each of the end-of-course assessments in reading, writing, and Algebra II.

VIP Incentives Program

The VIP incentives program was designed to measure the extent to which students are progressing towards advanced proficiency levels in reading, mathematics, science, and history and social science, recognize achievement and student progress based on other key indicators, and encourage schools' and divisions' efforts to provide Virginia's students with excellent educational opportunities. After establishing the VIP program for award year 2008, the Board

has modified the criteria several times. For award year 2010, the Board strengthened the award criteria by including Virginia's On-Time Graduation Rate and cohort dropout rate, and strengthening the focus on each of the four academic content areas included in Virginia's state accreditation system (English, mathematics, science, and history and social science). This change resulted in fewer schools earning awards in 2010 than had been the case previously. Specifically, the change resulted in less than 40 percent of schools earning awards in each of the subsequent years, compared to 43 and 53 percent of schools prior to this change. On February 17, 2011, additional revisions were approved by the Virginia Board of Education to retain the previously established program objectives while adding components that provide additional incentives for school divisions and schools to promote student achievement in the STEM areas and college and career readiness in general. As well, the revisions provide an opportunity for schools with no tested grades to earn VIP awards.

In 2013, the Board set a minimum level of achievement needed for a VIP reward by limiting eligibility to those schools that are *Fully Accredited* and meeting federal AMOs in the current year. The program also recognizes schools' and divisions' progress towards excellence by establishing levels of awards and also through the bonus point system that is one component of the VIP calculation.

The VIP program differentiates schools' and school divisions' progress towards being recognized with the Governor's Award for Educational Excellence. Since the program began, fewer than 10 percent of Virginia's public schools have earned the Governor's awards each year, and only five and six percent earned this award over the past two school years. The next level, the Board of Education Excellence Award, has been awarded to fewer than 17 percent of schools since the Board changed program requirements in 2010, followed by another 15 percent or less earning Competence to Excellence awards in the same period. In each of the five years since VIP's inception, fewer than 10 schools statewide earned the Rising Star award, leading the Board to discontinue that award beginning with the awards issued based on performance in the 2011-2012 school year. In 2013, the Competence to Excellence Award category was discontinued and the Board of Education Distinguished Achievement Award was created. Fewer than eight percent of schools have earned this award.

The VIP program uses a weighted methodology to calculate a VIP achievement index based on assessment results in each content area (English, mathematics, science, and history/social science), and provides opportunities for schools and school divisions to earn additional or "bonus" points to the content area indices by meeting additional VIP indicators.
The VIP Base Index weights the proficiency levels on statewide assessments as follows: (a) Advanced proficient: 100; (b) Proficient: 80; (c) Basic: 25; and (d) Fail: 0. The weighted index is applied to all assessments taken in the school or division. Separate base scores are calculated for each content area – English, mathematics, science, and history/ social science - using the following formula: (# Advanced Proficient scores x 100) + (# Proficient scores x 80) + (# Basic scores x 25) divided by total tests administered.

Schools and divisions may earn additional VIP bonus points based on criteria established by the Board. When earned, they can be added to a school or division's VIP index points in one or more content areas to meet award criteria. The bonus points are based on measures of

student progress, student achievement, and schools' and divisions' progress in their work to increase student access to and enrollment in advanced level and college- and career-ready instructional programs. Examples of these measures are increasing the pass rate on grade 3 and 5 reading assessments, increasing the percentage of high school students who earn career and technical industry certifications, and enrollment in college-level and advanced STEM courses. Attachment 15 contains a chart with details of the criteria that comprise the VIP incentive program, including eligibility criteria, award level criteria, and bonus points earned for each component of the program.

Blue Ribbon Schools Program

Virginia participates in the NCLB Blue Ribbon Program. Virginia is allowed only seven entries each year. Schools nominated for the National Blue Ribbon Schools must meet one of two eligibility criteria:

1. **Exemplary High Performing Schools:** (a) the performance of all tested students in the school in the most recent year tested in both reading (English language arts) and mathematics must be in the top 15 percent of all schools in the state when schools are ranked based on the performance of all tested students; (b) for each of the school's subgroups, the performance of all tested students in the subgroup in the most recent year tested in both reading (English language arts) and mathematics must be in the top 40 percent of all schools in the state when schools are ranked based on the performance of tested students in that subgroup; and, (c) for the most recent year in which graduation rates are available in the state, the graduation rate of a high school must be in the top 15 percent of all high school graduation rates in the state.

2. **Exemplary Achievement Gap Closing Schools:** (a) the school must be in the top 15 percent of all schools in the state for both reading and mathematics based on progress in closing achievement gaps between the school's subgroups and the state's all-students group over the past five years, comparing the most recent year to the earliest year; (b) for each of the school's subgroups, the performance of all tested students in the subgroup in the most recent year tested in both reading (English language arts) and mathematics must be in the top 40 percent of all schools in the state when schools are ranked based on the performance of tested students in that subgroup; (c) for the most recent year in which graduation rates are available in the state, the graduation rate of each of a high school's subgroups must be in the top 40 percent of all high school graduation rates for that subgroup in the state; and, (d) the change in the performance of all tested students in the school over the past five years, comparing the most recent year to the earliest year, must not be less than the change in the performance of all tested students in the state in both reading (English language arts) and mathematics.

Note: Blue Ribbon updates reflect U.S. Department of Education updates for this award category.

Virginia's Title I Distinguished Schools and School Divisions program will offer recognition to schools and divisions that meet the following criteria:

1. **Title I Distinguished School:** (a) achieves a mean score at the 60th percentile for both English and mathematics; (b) meets full accreditation for a minimum of two consecutive years; and (c) meets or exceeds the annual measurable objective (AMO) in all students and in each subgroup for the current year and previous year. High schools must also meet or exceed the FGI target for all students and in each of the three gap groups in the current and previous year.
2. **Title I Highly Distinguished School:** (a) achieves a mean score at the 85th percentile for both English and mathematics; (b) meets full accreditation for a minimum of two consecutive years; and (c) exceeds the AMO in English and mathematics in the current and previous year for all students and in each subgroup. High schools must also exceed the FGI target in the current and previous year for all students and each subgroup.
3. **Title I Distinguished School Division:** (a) meets or exceeds the AMO for all students and in each subgroup for the current year and previous year; (b) meets or exceeds the FGI target in the current and previous year for all students and in each subgroup in the current and previous year; and (c) all schools are fully accredited in the current year.
4. **Title I Highly Distinguished School Division:** (a) exceeds the AMO for English and mathematics in the current and previous year in all students and in each subgroup; (b) exceeds the FGI target in the current and previous year for all students and each subgroup; and (c) all schools are fully accredited in the current and previous year.

2.C.ii Provide the SEA's list of reward schools in Table 2.

Table 2 may not reasonably accommodate the extensive list of Reward Schools; therefore, links to the lists of Virginia's Reward Schools, based on VIP Incentive Program, Blue Ribbon Schools Program, and Title I Distinguished Schools criteria, are provided in the response to Question 2.C.iii and directly below Table 2. Schools meeting the Blue Ribbon criteria for high performing or improving (high-progress) schools are indicated at the following Web site: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/federal_programs/esea/flexibility/index.shtml#school.

2.C.iii Describe how the SEA will publicly recognize and, if possible, reward highest-performing and high-progress schools.

Highest-performing and high progress schools are recognized during Board meetings and through press releases such as the ones available at the following links:

i. **Governor McDonnell & Board of Education Honor High-Performing Virginia Schools & School Divisions** – *2011 Virginia Index of Performance Awards Announced*
2014 Update: **Governor McAuliffe & Board of Education Announce 2014 Virginia Index of Performance Awards**
http://www.doe.virginia.gov/news/news_releases/2014/04_apr29_gov.shtml

ii. **Schools & School Divisions Recognized for Raising Achievement of Economically Disadvantaged Students**
2014 Update available at: www.doe.virginia.gov/news/news_releases/**2014**/10_oct28.shtml

Recognized schools may receive banners or certificates acknowledging their accomplishment. Schools recognized under the Title I Distinguished Schools program may also receive a small monetary academic achievement award as allowable under Section 1117(b)(c).

2.D PRIORITY SCHOOLS

2.D.i Describe the SEA's methodology for identifying a number of lowest-performing schools equal to at least five percent of the State's Title I schools as priority schools. If the SEA's methodology is not based on the definition of priority schools in *ESEA Flexibility* (but instead, e.g. based on school grades or ratings that take into account a number of factors), the SEA should also demonstrate that the list provided in Table 2 is consistent with the definition, per the Department's "Demonstrating that an SEA's Lists of Schools meet ESEA Flexibility Definitions" guidance.

Virginia is committed to identifying and providing support to the state's lowest-performing schools. The state identifies any school meeting one or more of the criteria below as a priority school:

Criterion A	Schools receiving School Improvement Grant (SIG) funds under Section 1003(g) of ESEA in Federal Fiscal Year 2009 (Cohort I) or 2010 (Cohort II) and identified and served as a Tier I or Tier II school
Criterion B	Title I high schools with a federal graduation indicator* of 60 percent or less for two or more of the most recent consecutive years
Criterion C *(see additional notes below)*	Title I schools based on the "all students" performance in reading and/or mathematics performance on federal AMOs
Criterion D	Title I schools failing to meet the 95 percent participation rate in reading and/or mathematics for three consecutive years

* The ESEA federal graduation indicator recognizes only Standard and Advanced Studies diplomas.

Based on 723 schools identified as Title I in school year 2011-2012, Virginia identified a number of schools equal to five percent of the state's Title I schools, or 36 schools (5 percent of 723 schools), as priority schools for school year 2012-2013.

Criterion C: This criterion is applied as necessary to identify as priority schools a number of schools that comprise an amount equal to five percent of the state's Title I schools. Schools in this category are rank-ordered based on the sum of the difference(s) between the performance of the "all students" group in reading and mathematics compared to the respective federal AMO proficiency targets. Those schools with the largest gaps in performance are included in the priority school list, up to the number of schools needed to equal the five percent requirement.

The following methodology was used to determine the list of 36 priority schools for the 2012-2013 school year:

Steps in Methodology	Number of Schools
1. Identify the number of Title I schools in the state in 2011-2012.	732
2. Identify the number of schools that must be identified as priority schools (a number equal to five percent of Title I schools).	36
3. Identify the schools currently served as Cohort I and II Tier I or Tier II SIG schools. (Criterion A)	26
4. Identify the schools that are Title I-participating with an FGI of less than 60 percent over the past two consecutive years. (Criterion B)	1
5. Identify the number of schools that are among the lowest-achieving five percent of Title I schools based on the performance of all students in reading and/or mathematics on federal AMOs (Criterion C)	9
6. Identify the number of schools that are Title I schools failing to meet the 95 percent participation rate in reading and/or mathematics for three consecutive years (Criterion D)	0
Total Number of Priority Schools Identified	**36**

Update for 2015: Beginning with the priority school list for the 2015-2016 school year, Virginia will determine the number of total priority schools based on the number of schools equal to five percent of the state's Title I schools served in the preceding year. The process of updating the total number of priority schools will be repeated annually.

2.D.ii Provide the SEA's list of priority schools in Table 2.

The number of priority schools included in Table 2 represents those schools that would have been identified as such in the 2011-2012 school year, based on 2010-2011 assessment results, according to the criteria describe in 2.D.i. An updated list of priority schools is available each fall for the current school year at: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/federal_programs/esea/flexibility/index.shtml#school.

2.D.iii Describe the meaningful interventions aligned with the turnaround principles that an LEA with priority schools will implement.

A school division with a school receiving SIG funds as a Tier I or II school currently implementing a transformation or restart model are expected to continue to implement the model according to the timeline indicated in its approved application for SIG funding.

School divisions with schools newly identified as priority schools are required to hire a Lead Turnaround Partner to implement, at a minimum, all requirements of the USED turnaround principles. Virginia's LTP strategy, as indicated further in this section, is aligned to these principles:

Turnaround Principles: Meaningful interventions designed to improve the academic achievement of students in priority schools must be aligned with all of the following "turnaround principles" and selected with family and community input:

- providing strong leadership by: (1) reviewing the performance of the current principal; (2) either replacing the principal if such a change is necessary to ensure strong and effective leadership, or demonstrating to the SEA that the current principal has a track record in improving achievement and has the ability to lead the turnaround effort; and (3) providing the principal with operational flexibility in the areas of scheduling, staff, curriculum, and budget;
- ensuring that teachers are effective and able to improve instruction by: (1) reviewing the quality of all staff and retaining only those who are determined to be effective and have the ability to be successful in the turnaround effort; (2) preventing ineffective teachers from transferring to these schools; and (3) providing job-embedded, ongoing professional development informed by the teacher evaluation and support systems and tied to teacher and student needs;
- redesigning the school day, week, or year to include additional time for student learning and teacher collaboration;
- strengthening the school's instructional program based on student needs and ensuring that the instructional program is research-based, rigorous, and aligned with State academic content standards;
- using data to inform instruction and for continuous improvement, including by providing time for collaboration on the use of data;
- establishing a school environment that improves school safety and discipline and addressing other non-academic factors that impact student achievement, such as students' social, emotional, and health needs; and
- providing ongoing mechanisms for family and community engagement.

The four USED models include:

- **Turnaround Model**: Replace the principal, screen existing school staff, and rehire no more than half the teachers; adopt a new governance structure; and improve the school through curriculum reform, professional development, extending learning time, and other strategies.
- **Restart Model**: Convert a school or close it and re-open it as a charter school or under an education management organization.
- **School Closure**: Close the school and send the students to higher-achieving schools in the division.
- **Transformation Model**: Replace the principal and improve the school through comprehensive curriculum reform, professional development, extending learning time, and other strategies.

The state has used lead turnaround partners for four years as part of the School Improvement Grant (SIG) program. For priority schools, LTPs bring in increased resources to the schools and students in low-performing schools. These resources include increased human capital (people), time, money and programs. Additionally, LTPs provide deep, systemic instructional reform for the school division and its affected priority school(s). In Virginia's LTP strategy, the state is

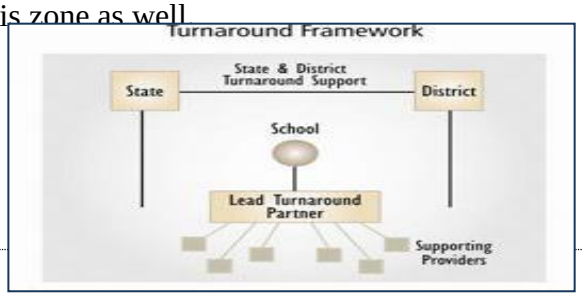
responsible for supporting the school division and the LTP. Thus, the following minimum expectations must be implemented by the LTP through collaboration with the school division and the state.

Building state, school division, and school capacity for low-performing schools is premised on the intentional engagement of stakeholders to direct improvement efforts. At the state level, a differentiated system of support has been developed through collaboration among various offices within the VDOE as well as a multitude of educational partners. Local capacity is built with targeted and differentiated supports and interventions determined by diagnostic reviews of student performance and practices. The practices must be well-coordinated, and delivered with quality and accountability. Finally, the process described in this section will bring coherence to improvement efforts through implementation of strategies grounded within a responsive system of support.

Although the division can select its own Lead Turnaround Partner (LTP) through its own procurement process, Virginia initially selected four vendors through its own rigorous review process on a state contract. A team of both urban and rural superintendents and OSI staff rated each of the proposals from vendors. Previous experience and success in other low-performing schools on state assessments played a key role in the selection of vendors to serve as lead turnaround partners. At that time, 22 out of 26 SIG schools selected one of these partners. The notice of contract awards for the four vendors (Cambridge Education, Edison Learning, Pearson Learning, and Johns Hopkins University) was made publicly available on the VDOE Web site.

In June 2013, VDOE issued a new Request for Proposals (RFP) process for Lead Turnaround Partners for "Full Management" and "Excluding Management" services that replaced the previous contracts. Through the rigorous RFP review process, Virginia selected eight LTPs for the state contract. The notice of contract awards for the eight LTPs (American Institutes for Research, Cambridge Education, Community Training and Assistance Center, Innovative Educational Programs, Mosaica Turnaround Partners, NCS Pearson, Newton Alliance, Public Consulting Group) is available as the following Web site: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/school_finance/procurement/low_achieving_school/index.shtml.

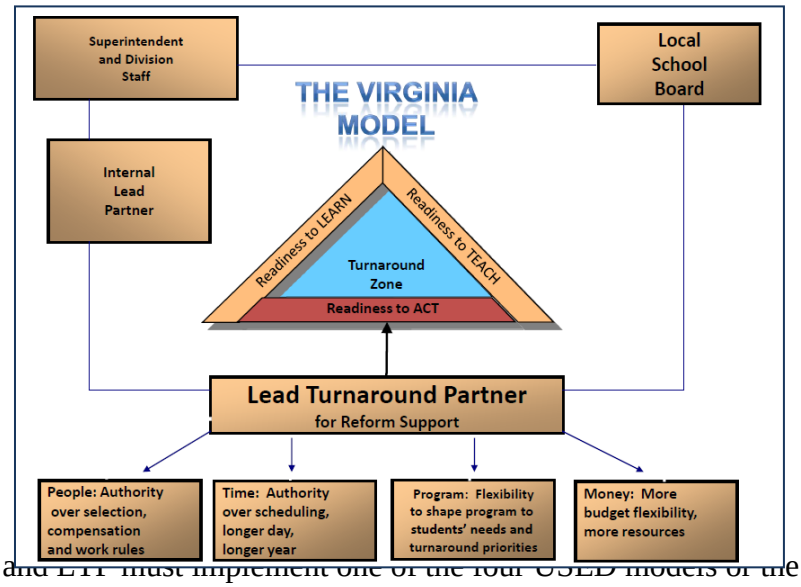
The main purpose of the LTPs assigned to low-performing schools is to increase student achievement and graduation rates. The conceptual framework for *Lead Turnaround Partner* was initially created using the work published in *The Turnaround Challenge* by the Mass Insight Education and Research Institute. A full copy of the report is available at the following Web site: http://www.massinsight.org/resourcefiles/TheTurnaroundChallenge_2007.pdf. Implementing this model, OSI initially created a turnaround zone for a cluster of 26 schools receiving school improvement grants under the SIG program (as illustrated below). Priority schools would enter this zone as well.



Additional priority schools were identified for the turnaround zone as part of the state's ESEA flexibility application for a total of 36 priority schools served. Divisions engage the LTP to work with the division's schools assigned to a "turnaround zone." The purpose of this zone is to provide students with an opportunity for additional research-based instructional resources to increase student achievement. In some cases, this included smaller learning communities in which parents opted for the student to attend.

The LTP, under contract with the local school board, brings increased resources and support for deep, systemic reform. This model is centered on the LTP providing an outside-the-system approach inside-the-system. Under the ultimate authority of the school divisions' local school boards, the LTP leads the reform effort within the turnaround zone and has been given the ability to act and authority to make choices. The program within the turnaround zone focuses on instruction in the core content areas of mathematics, and reading/language arts.

Below is an illustration of the Virginia Model for LTPs:



The school division and LTP must implement one of the four USED models of the USED turnaround principles. Each school division with a priority school must submit a completed statement of work (SOW) for the services of a lead turnaround partner (LTP) that has been approved under a VDOE contract or through the division's local procurement process and established contract.

The SOW includes:

- Name of School Division;
- Name of School & Address;
- School needs identified;
- LTP Services aligned with the VDOE seven (7) turnaround principles that are required to meet the identified school needs;
- Expected outcomes/results of the LTP services rendered;
- Timeline for completion of LTP services;

- LTP Firm Selected;
- USED Model Selected (Transformation, Turnaround or Restart);
- LTP Period of Performance;
- LTP Pricing in accordance with a VDOE-established contract or the division's established contract with an LTP vendor;
- Selected progress reports required from the LTP.

On an annual basis, the LEA must submit a SOW to the Office of School Improvement (OSI) for review and approval for funding. If revisions to the SOW are requested, the LEA will be required to resubmit the revised SOW containing the requested information to the OSI for approval. Only approved SOWs will receive funding for LTP services.

Upon receipt of a VDOE, OSI approved SOW and prior to LTP services commencing, the LEA must obtain the LTP's initials and date on each page of the approved SOW, the LTP's signature and date, company name and address, email and telephone number on the last page of the SOW and issue a local purchase order, with a copy of the approved and signed SOW attached, to the LTP vendor.

OSI provided technical assistance in the fall of 2012 to the newly identified priority schools to ensure the right model is selected for the reform based on the school's most recent data. This is led by the OSI through the document written by the Center on Innovations in Learning which is available at the following Web site: http://www.centerii.org/leamodel/. School divisions are responsible for selecting the intervention model and external partners/providers that have the greatest potential to dramatically improve outcomes for students attending a low-achieving school. The Center on Innovations in Learning's tool assists the school division in making the best decisions based on the data for each school. Currently, OSI provides technical assistance to newly identified priority schools for selecting the intervention model and external partners/providers through face-to-face technical assistance sessions and webinars where external partners present information about their services that will have the greatest potential to improve student outcomes.

As presently required, Virginia will continue to require schools that select the restart model to hire one of the currently approved vendors. Thus, the school must implement, at a minimum, all requirements included in the state contract. In addition, the school will be managed by an Education Management Operator (EMO) that has met a rigorous review process. Virginia expects major reform efforts by the LTP if the restart model is selected.
Once a LTP is selected, priority schools will complete an application for funding. Emphasis in the application will be on the budget and assurances. Assurances are indicated below:

The school division must assure that it:

1. Ensures schools receiving funds implement one of the four USED models aligned with the USED turnaround principles;
2. Uses its funds to implement fully and effectively an intervention in each school that the LEA commits to serve consistent with the final requirements;
3. If implementing a restart model select a LTP from the state contract, agrees to hold the LTP accountable for complying with the selected model;

4. Uses *Indistar*™, the current state-determined comprehensive school improvement planning tool;
5. Establishes annual goals for student achievement on the state's assessments in both reading/language arts and mathematics;
6. Collects meeting minutes, professional development activities, strategies for extending learning opportunities, and parent activities as well as indicators of effective leadership and instructional practice;
7. Sets leading and lagging indicators, including monitoring leading indicators quarterly and lagging indicators annually;
8. Completes an analysis of data points for quarterly reports to ensure strategic, data-driven decisions are made to deploy needed interventions for students who are not meeting expected growth measures and/or who are at risk of failure and dropping out of school;
9. Ensures forty percent of a teacher's evaluation will be based on multiple measures of student academic progress; when data are available and appropriate, teacher performance evaluations may incorporate value tables for growth as one measure of student academic progress;
10. Uses a state-approved electronic query system to provide principals with quarterly data needed to make data driven decisions at the school-level;
11. Uses an adaptive reading assessment program approved by Virginia Department of Education to determine student growth at least quarterly for any student who has failed the SOL assessment in the previous year, a student with a disability, or an English language learner.
12. Uses the *Algebra Readiness Diagnostic Test* (ARDT), or other state-approved mathematics growth assessment, for all schools with grade 6 or higher for all students who have failed the SOL assessment in the previous year, a student with a disability, or an English language learner (fall, mid-year, and spring at minimum).
13. Attends OSI technical assistance sessions provided for school principals, division staff, and LTPs;
14. Collaborates with assigned VDOE contractor to ensure the LTP, division, and school maintain the fidelity of implementation necessary for reform;
15. Provides an annual structured report to a panel of VDOE staff and turnaround leaders detailing the current action plan, current leading and lagging indicators, and modifications to be made to ensure the reform is successful; and
16. Reports to the state the school-level data required under the final requirements of this grant.

Additionally, prior to receiving any reimbursement for funding, each division with a priority school must have an approved and signed SOW that includes:

- Name of School Division;
- Name of School & Address;
- School needs identified;
- LTP Services aligned with the VDOE seven (7) turnaround principles that are required to meet the identified school needs;
- Expected outcomes/results of the LTP services rendered;
- Timeline for completion of LTP services;
- LTP Firm Selected;

- USED Model Selected (Transformation, Turnaround or Restart);
- LTP Period of Performance;
- LTP Pricing in accordance with a VDOE-established contract or the division's established contract with an LTP vendor;
- Identified VDOE progress reports required from the LTP.

On an annual basis, the LEA must submit a SOW to the Office of School Improvement (OSI) for review and approval for funding. If revisions to the SOW are requested, the LEA will be required to resubmit the revised SOW containing the requested information to the OSI for approval. Only approved SOWs will receive funding for LTP services.

As stated in Section 2.A.i., priority schools must use a state-determined comprehensive planning tool. Currently *Indistar*® is the state-determined tool used by priority schools. The Transformation Tool Kit from the Center on Innovations in Learning indicators are aligned with the USED turnaround principles and is available for priority schools within the state determined planning tool.

As in the current SIG schools, Virginia will continue to monitor the reform practices of all LTPs assigned to priority schools. OSI will facilitate discussions where monitoring indicates agreed upon goals between divisions and LTPs are not being met. School divisions may amend SOWs as needed. Only approved SOW will receive funding for LTP services.

VDOE will continue to provide ongoing technical assistance to the LTP, division and school staff. In most cases, the transformation work requires different skill sets and resources than those used in past improvement efforts. Many of the LTPs have managed or have been strongly involved in the management of school improvement efforts in the past, but the prescriptive requirements of the USED models require changes, some significant, to the LTP models. OSI will hold a series of at least five group technical assistance sessions for the school principals, division staff, and LTPs to ensure implementation meets all requirements of the selected model.

Five sessions for each of two cohorts of schools (schools identified in 2009 and schools identified in 2010) took place throughout the course of the 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 school years and were led by an external education reform consultant (Corbett Education Consulting) and OSI staff. These sessions presented a variety of ideas and questions that the local teams considered as part of the work throughout the year. For example, what kind of data needs to be collected to inform staff to continue or discontinue a particular instructional program? Also, the meetings provided an opportunity for teams to share their promising practices and lessons learned.

The primary focus of this work was to observe, consult, and provide technical assistance to Virginia school divisions implementing the USED transformation and restart models, so that they ensure compliance with all school improvement grant requirements of Section 1003(g) of the ESEA. Corbett Education Consulting has extensive experience with school improvement, the federal SIG models, policy and practices related to comprehensive school reform, and working with the various entities involved in school improvement.

For the new priority schools, OSI provides similar training regarding background research and information about selected strands of the improvement models, facilitate sharing, and suggest promising strategies and timelines for implementation of the selected model, and make recommendations to division teams regarding compliance and the implementation of the selected reform model. Using the strands from the Center on Innovations in Learning's (CIL)*Transformation Toolkit*, OSI provides five technical assistance sessions aligned with all Transformation Toolkit strands (Strand A: Establishing and Orienting the District Transformation Team; Strand B: Moving Toward Autonomy; Strand C: Selecting a Principal and Recruiting Teachers; Strand D: Working with Stakeholders and Building Support for Transformation; Strand E: Contracting with External Providers; Strand F: Establishing and Orienting the School Transformation Team; Strand G: Leading Change; Strand H: Evaluation, Rewarding, and Removing Staff; Strand I: Providing Rigorous Staff Development; Strand J: Increasing Learning Time; Strand K: Reforming Instruction; and Intervention).

VDOE state-approved personnel are assigned to each school to monitor the implementation of the school's reform program and report findings monthly to the OSI. This effort ensures that the LTP, division, and school maintain the fidelity of implementation necessary for the reform. VDOE state-approved personnel are selected directly by the OSI; receive extensive training from the OSI and other VDOE offices and/or partner organizations including IHEs; and are assigned to schools based on a match of expertise and identified needs of schools. More information regarding how contractors are selected is included in the response to Question 2.E.iii.

In each year of the reform, schools set leading and lagging indicators. Leading indicators are reviewed quarterly to ensure that the actions undertaken as part of the reform will lead to expected outcomes (lagging indicators). These indicators are posted on *Indistar*®, the current state-determined comprehensive improvement planning tool, and used to evaluate the progress of the school and LTP.

Examples of Leading Indicators

- Number of minutes within the school day
- Student performance on formative assessments in reading/language arts and in mathematics, by student subgroup
- Dropout rate for the quarter
- Student attendance rate for the quarter
- Number, percentage and grades of students enrolled and completing advanced coursework (e.g., AP/IB), early-college high schools, or dual enrollment classes each quarter
- Truancy rate (total of student truant days per quarter and then annually)
- Distribution of teachers by performance level on LEA's teacher evaluation system (number of teachers in each level: L1=High. Use number of levels in LEA's system.
- Teacher attendance rate (Total of all teachers' days in attendance / Total school days x FTE Teachers)

Examples of Lagging Indicators

- Accreditation and increase in student achievement and graduation

- Priority status change in ranking
- Percentage of students at or above each AMO proficiency level on state assessments in reading/language arts and mathematics (e.g., Basic, Proficient, Advanced), by grade and by student subgroup
- Average scale scores on state assessments in reading/language arts and in mathematics, by grade, for the ‘‘all students’’ group, and for each subgroup
- Percentage of limited English proficient students who attain English language proficiency
- Graduation rate
- College enrollment rates

Priority schools are required to use a state-approved data query system to provide principals with data needed to make data-driven decisions at the school-level. School and district teams in priority schools are required to use the quarterly report to make strategic, data-driven decisions in order to deploy needed interventions for students who are not meeting expected growth measures and/or who are at risk of failure and dropping out of school. In addition, the tool allows the schools to follow interventions throughout the year to determine their effectiveness for each student. Monthly reports are generated based upon the following minimum school-level data points:

- Student attendance
- Teacher attendance
- Benchmark or formative assessment results
- Reading and mathematics grades
- Student discipline reports
- Diagnostic reading assessment such as the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) Data (Fall and Spring)
- World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) data for ELL students
- Student transfer data
- Student Intervention participation by intervention type

Analysis of the data points from the quarterly reporting system are used by the school improvement team each quarter, and if needed, monthly. Responses to the following questions are posted on *Indistar*® ,the current state-determined comprehensive improvement planning tool:

- Based upon analysis of data in your benchmark results and grade distribution, do you need to assign additional tasks for your current indicators?
- Based upon analysis of data in your benchmark results, grade distribution, formative and summative assessments, which indicators/tasks will be added to your improvement plan to address or modify the current plan?
- What is the progress of your students needing intervention? What specific tiered interventions are being put in place as the result of your data analysis?
- What plan is in place to monitor this process?

If a school does not have an adaptive reading assessment program to determine student growth at least quarterly, one approved by the Department of Education will be required for students who

failed the SOL assessment in the previous year, with a particular focus on underperforming subgroups. Schools in improvement are currently using an online computer adaptive testing (CAT) system that administers short tests to determine each student's overall reading ability. The system adjusts the difficulty of questions based on performance, and tracks the performance of individual students, classrooms, and the school over time. Students are assessed monthly and then grouped by tiers and skills needed. This information provides data to develop and focus on interventions for those students who are most at risk.

All priority schools with grade 6 or higher are required to use the computer adaptive *Algebra Readiness Diagnostic Test* (ARDT), or other state-approved mathematics growth assessment provided by the Virginia Department of Education. ARDT employs a Web-based computer adaptive testing engine to help determine student proficiency in mathematics. It is required for students who failed the SOL assessment in the previous year, students with disabilities, and English language learners. The application draws from a pool of over 2000 test items in real time. The test items are correlated to the new Mathematics Standards of Learning for grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and Algebra I, and were reviewed by a group of Virginia educators for accuracy and validity. Beginning in the 2012-2013 school year, technology enhanced items were added to the ARDT. Results from the diagnostic test are available immediately and provide information correlated to the Standards of Learning reporting categories. This information provides data to develop and focus on interventions for those students who are most at risk.

Any priority high school not meeting the FGI rate is required to use the Virginia Early Warning System (VEWS). The VEWS indicators are based upon predictors of drop out and graduation that have been validated by national research and by four Virginia school divisions that participated in a pilot program. The VEWS data provide quarterly reports to the school team to track progress on selected indicators. Guided by the systematic review of the VEWS data and the division's and school's self-assessment report, the contractor will identify and will communicate to the Office of School Improvement the technical assistance needs for each school and division. More information on VEWS can be found at the following Web site: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/school_improvement/early_warning_system/index.shtml.

Teacher evaluation and principal evaluation training is provided to priority schools by OSI and the Office of Licensure. The training focuses on providing instructional feedback to teachers as stated in the professional teacher standards included in the response to Question 3.B. The training is based on the data and tools produced as part of the pilot discussed that response. Training from OSI and the LTP supports the principal and division to:

- Analyze and provide feedback to teachers on the effectiveness of instruction and the quality of teacher's student achievement goals;
- Analyze summative ratings of all reported teachers (including the student growth measures); and,
- Provide job-embedded leadership and professional development to focus on what evidence to look for when observing classrooms, coaching for literacy and mathematics, effective modeling practices, planning based on classroom observations, research-based intervention practices and response to intervention.

Priority schools are required to base forty percent of a teacher's evaluation on multiple measures of student academic progress. When data are available and appropriate, teacher performance evaluations may incorporate value tables for growth as one measure of student academic progress. More information regarding value tables for growth is included in Principle 3 of this application.

Virginia will take necessary steps to ensure meaningful consequences for priority schools that do not make progress after full implementation of the interventions. After each year of the reform, key division staff, principal and the LTP provides a structured report on the details of the current action plan, progress on meeting leading and lagging indicators, and what modifications will be made to ensure the reform is successful. This report is reviewed by a panel of VDOE staff, who will provide feedback to the school and LTP to ensure that modifications made to the will produce desirable outcomes.

If a priority school has not exited priority status after three years of interventions, Virginia will require the following additional actions in the fourth year of priority status:

- The LTP will conduct a fourth-year needs assessment designed to identify why interventions have failed to lead the school to exit priority status. VDOE staff will also conduct a parallel needs assessment analyzing both qualitative and quantitative data, and will then compare both needs assessments in order to gain a perspective on the needs of the school.
- Based on the findings from the needs assessments, a plan identifying essential actions will be developed by the LEA in conjunction with the VDOE, and implemented until the school exits priority school status;
- Based on the plan, the VDOE will assign a contractor specially trained to focus on the essential actions and identified outcomes for the school that align with turnaround principles/reform model; and
- On a quarterly basis, the LEA will participate in a monitoring meeting with the SEA (to include the contractor and VDOE staff) to review student performance data related to the interventions and technical assistance provided by the contractor.

If actions requested by the panel are not undertaken by the division, the panel may request that funding be withheld until certain conditions are met. If the division does not adhere responsibly even after withdrawal of funds, the school could be referred to the Virginia Board of Education's Committee on School and Division Accountability. A division-level review may be recommended. State regulations allow for the Board of Education to consider the school division's federal accountability determination for student achievement in order to require a division-level review. Below are the corrective action steps required by the regulation:

8VAC20-700-40. Division improvement plans and corrective actions.

A. School divisions shall develop division improvement plans, including corrective actions for increasing student achievement and correcting any areas of noncompliance determined through the division-level academic review. The school board shall hold a public hearing on the improvement plan at least 15 days prior to the approval of the plan by the board. These plans shall be approved by the local school board and submitted to the Board of Education for approval within 60 business days of the issuance of the division-level academic review report. Upon

Board of Education approval, the division improvement plan and corrective actions shall become part of the school division's division wide comprehensive, unified, long-range plan required by the Standards of Quality.

B. The division superintendent and chair of the local school board may request an extension of the due date for the division improvement plan and corrective actions for good cause shown by appearing before the Board of Education to explain the rationale for the request and provide evidence that a delay will not have an adverse impact upon student achievement.

C. The Board of Education shall monitor the implementation of the division improvement plan and corrective actions developed by a school division as part of the division-level academic review process. This plan must include a schedule for reporting the school division's progress toward completion of the corrective actions to the Board of Education and the public. Any school division not implementing corrective actions, not correcting areas of noncompliance, or failing to develop, submit, and implement required plans and status reports shall be required to report its lack of action directly to the Board of Education and the public.

D. Areas of noncompliance that remain uncorrected shall be reported in the Board of Education's *Annual Report to the Governor and General Assembly on the Condition and Needs of Public Schools in Virginia*. The Board of Education may take additional action to seek compliance with school laws pursuant to the relevant provisions of the *Code of Virginia*.

Statutory Authority § 22.1-253.13:3 of the *Code of Virginia.*

2.D.iv Provide the timeline the SEA will use to ensure that its LEAs that have one or more priority schools implement meaningful interventions aligned with the turnaround principles in each priority school no later than the 2014–2015 school year and provide a justification for the SEA's choice of timeline.

A school division with a school *currently receiving SIG funds* as a Tier I or II school, and implementing a turnaround or transformation model, will be expected to continue to implement the model according to the timeline indicated in their approved application for SIG funding.

School divisions with schools *newly identified* as priority schools will be required to implement in its priority schools, one of the four USED models aligned with the USED turnaround principles. These school divisions will receive pre-implementation technical assistance from the state beginning in September of the first school year of identification. They will be required to hire an LTP no later than January of that school year to assist with implementation, and they must fully implement the selected intervention strategies or USED model no later than the following school year. In keeping with the established timeline for interventions in SIG schools, newly identified priority schools will be expected to implement the selected intervention strategies or USED model over a three-year period.

2.D.v Provide the criteria the SEA will use to determine when a school that is making significant progress in improving student achievement exits priority status and a justification for the criteria selected.

Schools identified as priority schools must implement a three-year intervention model as described in the response to Question 2.D.iii, and will be identified as priority schools for the entire three-year implementation period. To exit priority status following the third year of implementation, priority schools must demonstrate improvement in student achievement according to the criteria for which the school was originally identified, as follows:

Reason for Priority School Identification		Exit Criteria
Criterion A	Schools receiving School Improvement Grant (SIG) funds under Section 1003(g) of ESEA in Federal Fiscal Year 2009 (Cohort I) or 2010 (Cohort II) and identified and served as a Tier I or Tier II school	Will exit priority status at the conclusion of implementation of the chosen three-year intervention model
Criterion B	Title I high schools with a federal graduation indicator of 60 percent or less for two or more of the most recent consecutive years	Will exit priority status after full implementation of a three year intervention model and sustaining a 10 percent reduction in the percentage of students not earning a standard or advanced diploma within a four year period for two consecutive years
Criterion C	Title I schools based on the "all students" performance in reading and/or mathematics performance on federal AMOs	Will exit priority status after full implementation of a three year intervention model and meeting federal AMOs for the "all students" for two consecutive years
Criterion D	Title I schools failing to meet the 95% participation rate in reading and/or mathematics for three consecutive years	Will exit priority status after full implementation of a three year intervention model and meeting the participation rate for the "all students" for two consecutive years

A Tier I or Tier II SIG school will continue to be identified as a priority school if it meets Criterion B, C, or D at the conclusion of the three-year SIG model implementation period.

Update for 2014-2015: Seven of the 36 schools served as priority schools in 2013-2014, or 19 percent, met the priority school exit criteria and are no longer identified as priority schools in 2014-2015.

2.E FOCUS SCHOOLS

2.E.i Describe the SEA's methodology for identifying a number of low-performing schools equal to at least 10 percent of the State's Title I schools as "focus schools." If the SEA's methodology is not based on the definition of focus schools in *ESEA Flexibility* (but instead, e.g. based on school grades or ratings that take into account a number of factors), the SEA should also demonstrate that the list provided in Table 2 is consistent with the definition, per the Department's "Demonstrating that an SEA's Lists of Schools meet ESEA Flexibility Definitions" guidance.

Virginia is committed to identifying and providing support to schools with significant gaps in subgroup performance in reading and mathematics. Virginia will continue to annually disaggregate and publicly report performance data for all subgroups. For accountability purposes, *Title I schools* with one or more proficiency gap groups not meeting performance expectations in reading and mathematics, as defined in the response to Question 2.B, are considered for inclusion in the focus school category. Title I schools with one or more proficiency gap groups failing to meet the 95 percent participation rate in reading and/or mathematics are also considered inclusion in the focus school category. The calculation to determine the list of focus schools is described below.

Methodology for Identifying Focus Schools

The methodology to determine the list of Title I focus schools that do not meet the participation rate or have the largest proficiency gaps is described below:

1. Exclude any schools identified as priority schools.
2. Automatically identify any school not meeting the participation rate of 95 percent in reading or mathematics.
3. For the remaining schools, calculate for each school the difference between the AMO target and each gap group's performance in reading and mathematics to determine proficiency gap points.
4. Exclude from each school's calculation any gap group that meets or exceeds the AMO target.
5. Sum the proficiency gap points in reading and mathematics and divide by the number of gap groups that did not meet the AMO target(s).
6. Rank schools in order of the total number of average proficiency gap points.
7. Identify from the list of schools ranked by proficiency gap points a number equal to 10 percent of the state's total Title I schools (72 schools).

The examples below are provided to illustrate the focus school calculation.

School #1: Example of School Proficiency Gap Performance						
Gap Group	**Reading Target**	**Reading Performance School-level**	**Reading Performance Gap Points**	**Math Target**	**Math Performance School-level**	**Math Performance Gap Points**
Gap Group 1	76	70	6	47	37	10
Gap Group 2	76	66	10	45	41	4
Gap Group 3	80	64	16	52	75	NI*
Sum of Proficiency Gap Points	add point differences for each gap group		32	add point differences for each gap group		14
Average Proficiency Gap Points	divide sum by number of gap groups that did not meet the targets		11	divide sum by number of gap groups that did not meet the targets		7
Total Average Proficiency Gap Points	(add average proficiency gap points)					18

*NI – Not Included because the gap group met or exceeded the subject area target

School #2: Example of School Proficiency Gap Performance						
Gap Group	**Reading Target** **Grade 6-8**	**Reading Performance School-level** **Grade 6-8**	**Reading Performance Gap Points** **Grade 6-8**	**Math Target**	**Math Performance School-level**	**Math Performance Gap Points**
Gap Group 1	76	73	3	47	44	3
Gap Group 2	76	75	1	45	35	10
Gap Group 3	80	80	NI*	52	50	2
Sum of Proficiency Gap Points	add differences for each gap group		4	add differences for each gap group		15
Average Proficiency Gap Points	divide sum by number of gap groups that did not meet the targets		2	divide sum by number of gap groups that did not meet the targets		5
Total Average Proficiency Gap Points	(add average proficiency gap points)					7

*NI – Not Included because the gap group met or exceeded the subject area target

For the example schools above, School #1 has a higher total average proficiency gap (18 points) than School #2 (7 points). School #1 would rank as a higher-need school than School #2.

Ranking schools by highest average proficiency gap points using the methodology described above, Virginia will continue to identify as focus schools 10 percent of the Title I schools, or 72 of the state's 723 Title I schools.

Because all Title I high schools with federal graduation rates below 60 percent for two or more years are served as priority schools, graduation rates are not used as a factor in determining focus schools.

Update for 2015: Beginning with the focus school list for the 2015-2016 school year, Virginia will determine the number of total focus schools based on the number of schools equal to ten percent of the state's Title I schools served in the preceding year. The process of updating the total number of focus schools will be repeated annually.

2.E.ii Provide the SEA's list of focus schools in Table 2.

The number of focus schools included in Table 2 represents those schools that would have been identified as such in the 2011-2012 school year, based on 2010-2011 assessment results, according to the criteria describe in 2.E.i. An updated and accurate list of focus schools for each subsequent year will be made available in early fall of each school year at: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/federal_programs/esea/flexibility/index.shtml#school.

2.E.iii Describe the process and timeline the SEA will use to ensure that its LEAs that have one or more focus schools will identify the specific needs of the SEA's focus schools and their students and provide examples of and justifications for the interventions focus schools will be required to implement to improve the performance of students who are the furthest behind.

Focus School Implementation Timeline

To provide ample time to plan and implement strategies that will increase student achievement in underperforming proficiency gap groups, focus schools will be identified for a period of two years. School divisions with focus schools will begin the planning process to implement intervention strategies beginning in September of the first school year of identification. Implementation will begin no later than January of that school year, and will continue through the conclusion of the following school year. Those schools that remain on the focus school list will be expected to continue implementing intervention strategies until they exit focus school status.

Virginia's Focus School Improvement Process

Virginia emphasizes the participation and continuous involvement of division-level administrators in the school improvement process as well as targeted interventions at the school-level for students at-risk of not passing a grade-level assessment including students with disabilities and English language learners. In Virginia's successful school improvement process, the state works directly with division-level staff to ensure processes are in place to support the improvement of schools (the state builds capacity at the division-level), and then supports the division in working with its schools to ensure improvement is achieved for all students (the division builds capacity at the school-level).

It is important to understand that over the past 14 years, Virginia has embarked on a process for building state capacity to support divisions with low-performing schools. Specifically, the work began with the academic review process in 2000. To further differentiate work needed in schools, the academic review process was revised in 2005. In 2011, Virginia's accreditation benchmarks were revised to include high school graduation benchmarks. The academic review process was revised to include actions for those high schools not meeting graduation targets (Web site: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/meetings/2011/07_jul/agenda_items/item_h.pdf).

In addition, Virginia has leveraged other federal resources, such as the Appalachia Regional Comprehensive Center (ARCC) and the Center on Innovations in Learning (CIL), for the past eight years in order to build state and division capacity to support low-performing schools. This work, in part, is based on the research of William Slotnik as published by the Community Training and Assistance Center (CTAC). The reform efforts in Virginia are designed to build capacity of the school division to make sustained improvement in the areas of student achievement; strategic management and policy; leadership; human resources development and management; and stakeholder satisfaction and ownership.

With ARCC's assistance, Virginia considered all dimensions of capacity building to develop a change map that guides school divisions to bring about transitional change. ARCC facilitated a multidimensional approach based on Banathy's three-dimensional model (context of change, triggers for change, and an organization's focus of change) of designing and implementing organizational change (Banathy, 1996). ARCC's multidimensional approach uses types, stages, levels, and outcomes of capacity building to design and implement technical assistance services that address the identified needs of Virginia's school divisions.

Virginia used the ARCC process tool, the Transitional Change Map. The Transitional Change Map customizes the change strategies around the need to change, improve, or replace an entire subsystem (school improvement efforts) within the organization (the division). Virginia has closely aligned the tool to the work and theory of Bill Slotnik (CTAC). Once the division develops a targeted organizational vision, the map is used to provide technical assistance in designing and implementing organization change initiatives.

The process of using the change map begins by conducting needs sensing interviews with divisions. The process determines the level of support needed to affect change at the division-level. Through collaboration with representatives from various VDOE offices as well as partnering organizations, the change map was developed in August 2011 based on the following theory of action:

> *Effective school divisions demonstrate the ability to continuously improve, adhere to a vision, maximize student learning, provide strong leadership, offer high quality instruction, and conduct relevant professional development. The school division leadership team cultivates a culture of capacity-building and continuous improvement. The school division consistently adheres to a vision that drives strategic planning and subsequent actions* ***(strategic planning)****. The school board and superintendent intentionally organize the division to maximize student learning* ***(system organization)****. Leaders are proactive and intentional, and allocate resources to achieve the vision. Leaders model systemic thinking by communicating and making transparent decisions* ***(leadership)*** *Leaders continuously align curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Leaders implement and monitor differentiated, research-based instruction, and services provided to meet diverse student needs* ***(curriculum, instructional practices, and services)****. The school division provides and assesses the effectiveness of professional development that is needs-based and job-embedded* ***(professional development)****.*

The needs sensing interview is conducted by state-approved personnel who are highly skilled educators trained and assigned to work with division teams to support schools in improvement. They provide guidance regarding the division's improvement efforts, and model assistance to the schools, if needed, until the division team can do so on their own. Activities that the state-approved personnel might be involved with include site visits, modeling teacher practices, modeling data analysis, assistance with developing and monitoring division and school improvement plans, and recommending additional differentiated technical assistance. They are funded by school division federal set-aside funding or school division federal funding. Support is provided to the state-approved personnel via meetings, webinars, book studies, newsletters, partnerships, site visits, and individualized technical assistance. The OSI matches state-approved personnel with the needs of the school and division, and conducts meetings with them at least five times during the year to ensure fidelity of implementation.

Meeting topics have included:

- Visible Learning based on John Hattie's work
- Revised Virginia Standards of Learning
- District Improvement Planning
- Using Change Maps to Build Local Capacity for Improvement
- Program Evaluation
- Implementation and Sustainability (Fixen)
- Providing Effective Teacher Feedback
- Instructional Leadership Training

At the beginning of the academic year, each division with one or more focus schools is assigned state-approved personnel to facilitate the needs sensing interview with key division staff. The needs sensing interview is based on the following areas presented in the change map:

- Strategic planning;
- System organization;
- Leadership;
- Curriculum, instructional practices, and services (including targeted interventions for students with disabilities and English language learners); and
- Professional development (including developing research-based teacher evaluation systems that support teacher improvement and effectiveness).

Information gleaned from the needs sensing interview is used to determine whether a division is operating at the *full*, *functional*, *limited*, or *no implementation* level. The interview enables the division to engage in reflective practice by identifying specific needs at both the division- and school-levels.

The division is required to convene a division team comprised of administrators or other key staff representing Title I, instruction, special education, and English language learners. Using

the results of the needs sensing interview, the division team is tasked with developing, implementing, and monitoring the division improvement plan using a state-determined comprehensive improvement planning tool. Currently, Indistar® is the state-determined improvement planning tool. The Transformation Tool Kit from the Center on Innovations in Learning indicators includes division- and school-level indicators. These research-based indicators serve as the foundation for the support needed to implement strategies to reduce proficiency gaps and create full division-level sustainability for reform efforts. Each division selects indicators based on their specific needs. Not all indicators are selected. The state-approved personnel works with the division team to select the most appropriate indicators.

Each focus school convenes a school-level team that receives support and monitoring from the division team. The division engages state-approved personnel via assurances with the VDOE. The assurances require focus school(s) to-develop interventions for students who are at-risk of not passing a state assessment in reading or mathematics including students with disabilities and English language learners. State-approved personnel help the division and school build their capacity to support leadership practices to support improved teacher effectiveness (as described in the teacher and principal performance standards in Principle 3):

1. Provide leadership and teacher professional development focused on what evidence to look for when observing classrooms; coaching for literacy and mathematics; effective modeling practices; planning based on classroom observations; research-based intervention practices; and, response to intervention;
2. Provide implementation support and coaching throughout the year for principals and teachers. Model effective practices and provide guided practice until practices are in-place independently of the contractor;
3. Provide modeling to principals in providing feedback to teachers, and provide guided practice to principals until the principal is able to exhibit practices independently;
4. Implement, monitor, and support an intervention model at the school-level with a focus on students with disabilities and English language learners; and
5. Build the division's capacity to support low-performing schools and increase student achievement.

Each focus school must develop an intervention strategy for students who have failed an SOL assessment in the past, with a special focus on low performing subgroups such as students with disabilities and English language learners. In addition, each focus school is required to regularly analyze a variety of data points to make strategic, data-driven decisions to implement needed interventions for identified students. Data points must include the results of the Algebra Readiness Diagnostic Test (Grades 6-8) or other state-approved mathematics growth assessment, and diagnostic reading assessment data such as the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (K-3). Analysis of the data points from these reports are used by school improvement teams each quarter to adjust school- and division-level improvement plans to address emerging needs of the focus school(s).

To allow the state to better monitor school improvement progress throughout the school year and over the course of the interventions, division teams and school teams of focus schools are currently required to use a state-determined comprehensive planning tool. Currently,

Indistar®, is the state-determined tool It is an online portal created and managed by the CIL. A state-determined comprehensive planning tool is required for focus schools and division staff to develop, coordinate, track, and report division- and school-level improvement activities. A number of evidence-based practices and indicators are provided to inform improvement efforts. The current system can also be customized to reflect individualized division or school indicators of effective practice or rubrics for assessment.

A state-determined comprehensive improvement planning tool, currently Indistar®, is also used to collect meeting minutes, professional development activities, strategies for extending learning opportunities, parent activities, and indicators of effective leadership and instructional practice. The current tool provides online tutorials on the indicators, including video of teachers, principals, and teams demonstrating the indicators. Many of the videos were taped in Virginia schools. Transformation Toolkit indicators for focus schools allow the school/division to select a set of indicators that differentiate the actions needed for improvement. "Wise Ways" research briefs are a component of the current state-determined comprehensive improvement planning tool. These briefs provide the reader with the research on each indicator.

The Office of School Improvement will continue to collaborate with other VDOE offices and/or partner organizations including institutions of higher education to support and develop leadership at the division level. The goal is to achieve efficient and effective division policies, programs, and practices to enhance growth in student learning through differentiated support to schools. Each participating division leadership team receives ongoing support from state-approved personnel with extensive experience in public education. The VDOE works with state-approved personnel to assist the division leadership team with developing a formalized system of support reflecting best practices to promote and support positive change at the central office and school level.

The school and division support teams are tasked with developing, implementing, and monitoring the school and division improvement plans. State-approved personnel facilitate the process and requests support from OSI, if needed. OSI provides ongoing technical assistance through webinars and technical assistance visits/training throughout the year. Technical assistance recommended by state-approved personnel and VDOE may include the following:

1. **Peer mentors –** The school/division may be paired with a similar school/division performing highly in an area of identified need in order to help the school learn new skills via a mentor/mentee relationship.
2. **Direct technical assistance** – Office of School Improvement staff may provide targeted assistance via telephone, e-mail, on-site visit, or a combination of these methods. Technical assistance can address a variety of topics including, but not limited to, the webinar topics described below.
3. **Webinar series** – State-approved personnel may choose one or more series of webinars to be attended by the principal and other school and division leaders as needed. The recorded webinars and supplementary resources provide assistance in the following areas:

- Co-teaching and Inclusive Practices
- Instructional Preparation
- Instructional Delivery
- Formative Assessment
- Differentiated Instruction
- Student Engagement
- Leadership
- Scheduling - Elementary schools
- Training for School Improvement Teams

These resources may be accessed at the following Web site:
http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/school_improvement/training/index.shtml

The OSI has established an intra-agency technical assistance team to meet on a bi-monthly basis. The team includes representatives from Special Education, Student Support, Instruction, Response to Intervention, Safe and Supportive Schools, and Program Administration and Accountability. The purpose of the team is to share information about resources and technical assistance to better coordinate VDOE support of schools.

Focus schools are required to administer a VDOE-approved adaptive reading assessment to students for the purpose of determining student growth at least quarterly, with a particular focus on underperforming subgroups. Focus schools are currently using an online computer adaptive testing (CAT) system that administers short tests to determine each student's overall reading ability. The system adjusts the difficulty of questions based on performance, and tracks the performance of individual students, classrooms, and the school over time. Students are assessed and then grouped by tiers and skills needed. This information provides data to develop and focus on interventions for those students who are most at risk.

All focus schools are required to use the *Algebra Readiness Diagnostic Test* (ARDT) or other state-approved mathematics growth assessment. The ARDT Web-based application employs a computer adaptive testing engine to help determine student proficiency in mathematics. The application draws from a pool of over 2000 test items in real time. Test items are correlated to the revised Mathematics Standards of Learning for grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and Algebra I and were reviewed by a group of Virginia educators for accuracy and validity. Beginning in the 2012-2013 school year, technology enhanced items were added to the ARDT. Results from the diagnostic test are available immediately and provide information correlated to the Standards of Learning reporting categories. This information provides data to develop and focus on interventions for those students who are most at risk.

Focus schools are required to use a state-approved electronic data query system that provides principals with data needed to make data-driven decisions at the school-level. Each focus school is required to analyze a variety of data points on a quarterly basis using a state-approved data query system. School and division teams use the approved data query system to make strategic, data-driven decisions critical to the implementation of needed interventions for students who: 1) are not meeting expected growth measures; 2) are at risk of failure; or 3) at

risk of dropping out of school. In addition, the approved data query system allows the school leadership team to follow interventions throughout the year to determine their effectiveness. Quarterly reports are generated including, at a minimum, the following forms of data:

- Student attendance;
- Benchmark or formative assessment results;
- Reading and mathematics grades;
- Student discipline reports;
- Adaptive reading assessment data;
- Student transfer data; and
- Student Intervention Participation by Intervention Type.

Analysis of the data points from the quarterly reporting system are used by school improvement teams to respond to the following questions:

- Based upon analysis of data in your benchmark results and grade distribution, do you need to assign additional indicators/tasks to your current improvement plan?
- What is the progress of your students needing intervention? What specific tiered interventions are being put in place as the result of your data analysis?
- What plan is in place to monitor this process?

Although focus schools are identified based on the low performance of proficiency gap groups, it is important that any Title I high school not meeting the FGI rate take action to improve the rate of students graduating on time. Therefore, Title I high schools, including focus schools, not meeting the FGI rate are required to use the Virginia Early Warning System (VEWS). The VEWS indicators are based upon predictors of drop out and graduation that have been validated by national research and by four Virginia school divisions that participated in a pilot program. The VEWS data provide quarterly reports to the school team to track progress on selected indicators. Guided by the systematic review of the VEWS data and the division and school's self-assessment report, state-approved personnel identify and communicate to the Office of School Improvement the technical assistance needs for each school and division. More information on VEWS can be found at the following Web site: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/school_improvement/early_warning_system/index.shtml.

The process to support focus schools brings coherence to improvement efforts through implementation of strategies grounded within a responsive system of support that begins with a division-level plan with specific interventions for students at-risk of not being academically successful.

2.E.iv Provide the criteria the SEA will use to determine when a school that is making significant progress in improving student achievement and narrowing achievement gaps exits focus status and a justification for the criteria selected.

To provide appropriate support to schools identified as having the most significant proficiency gaps for the gap groups identified in the response to Question 2.B, Virginia identifies focus schools for a period of two years based on the methodology described in the response to Question 2.E.i. with the total number of schools not to exceed 10 percent of the state's Title I schools. Once identified as a focus school, a school is expected to implement interventions for

a minimum of two consecutive years, with the support of state-approved personnel.

A school will exit the focus status if The school demonstrates progress towards meeting AMOs* for its proficiency gap groups; and

- The school no longer falls into the bottom 10 percent of Title I schools for the subsequent school year based on the focus school methodology described in the response to Question 2.E.

  * Virginia will work with USED to finalize the progress criterion by June 30, 2015.

Virginia will take necessary steps to ensure meaningful consequences for focus schools that do not make progress after full implementation of the interventions. If a focus school has not exited focus status after two years of interventions, Virginia will require the following additional actions in the third year of focus status:

- A presentation to a VDOE panel regarding interventions implemented during the first two years of identification. Virginia will also conduct a needs assessment designed to identify the reasons the school has not exited focus school status.
- Based on the panel's findings and the needs assessment, VDOE staff and a highly-trained contractor will develop specific technical assistance to address the needs of the identified proficiency gap groups.

The school and division team will participate in a series of webinars and/or technical assistance meetings related to strategies to meet the needs of English language learners, students with disabilities, and economically disadvantaged students. Schools will be assigned to specific sessions based on their needs, and will be required to implement the newly acquired strategies.

Update for 2014-2015: Fifty of the 72 schools served as focus schools in 2013-2014, or 60 percent, met the exit criteria and are no longer identified as focus schools in 2014-2015.

TABLE 2: REWARD, PRIORITY, AND FOCUS SCHOOLS

Provide the SEA's list of reward, priority, and focus schools using the Table 2 template. Use the key to indicate the criteria used to identify a school as a reward, priority, or focus school.

TABLE 2: REWARD, PRIORITY, AND FOCUS SCHOOLS

LEA Name	School Name	School NCES ID #	REWARD SCHOOL	PRIORITY SCHOOL	FOCUS SCHOOL
Alexandria City	Jefferson-Houston Elementary	510012000044		C	
Alexandria City	T.C. Williams High	510012000054		E	
Brunswick County	James S. Russell Middle	510048000182		E	
Colonial Beach	Colonial Beach High	510093001957		E	
Danville City	JM Langston Focus School	510111002750		E	
Franklin City	Joseph P. King Jr. Middle	510141002431		C	
Grayson County	Fries School	510169002747		E	
Hampton City	Jane H. Bryan Elementary	510180000743		C	
Hopewell City	Hopewell High	510198000867		E	
King and Queen County	Central High	510207000878		E	
Newport News City	Newsome Park Elementary	510264001065		C	
Newport News City	Sedgefield Elementary	510264001074		C	
Norfolk City	Lake Taylor Middle	510267001105		E	
Norfolk City	Lindenwood Elementary	510267001112		E	
Norfolk City	Tidewater Park Elementary	510267001142		E	
Norfolk City	William H. Ruffner Middle	510267001134		E	
Northampton County	Kiptopeke Elementary	510271000555		E	
Northampton County	Northampton High	510271001155		E	

Petersburg City	A.P. Hill Elementary	510291001202		E	
Petersburg City	J.E.B. Stuart Elementary	510291001196		E	
Petersburg City	Peabody Middle	510291002794		E	
Petersburg City	Vernon Johns	510291002795		E	
Prince Edward County	Prince Edward County High	510306001271		E	
Richmond City	Armstrong High	510324002082		E	
Richmond City	Elkhardt Middle	510324001364		C	
Richmond City	Fred D. Thompson Middle	510324001368		E	
Richmond City	Henderson Middle	510324001374		E	
Richmond City	John Marshall High	510324002080		D-1	
Richmond City	Martin Luther King Jr. Middle	510324001385		E	
Richmond City	Richmond Alternative	510324002307		E	
Richmond City	Thomas C. Boushall Middle	510324002078		E	
Roanoke City	Lincoln Terrace Elementary	510330001425		E	
Roanoke City	Westside Elementary	510330001437		E	
Roanoke City	William Fleming High	510330001438		E	
Sussex County	Ellen W. Chambliss Elementary	510378001640		E	
Sussex County	Sussex Central Middle	510378002136		E	
Alexandria City	John Adams Elementary	510012000045			G
Alexandria City	Patrick Henry Elementary	510012000052			G
Amherst County	Madison Heights Elementary	510021000010			G
Arlington County	Barrett Elementary	510027000084			G
Arlington County	Campbell Elementary	510027001940			G
Arlington County	Drew Model Elementary	510027000087			G
Augusta County	Edward G. Clymore Elementary	510030001080			G
Bedford County	Bedford Elementary	510036002141			G
Bedford County	Bedford Primary	510036000144			G
Bedford County	Big Island Elementary	510036000145			G

Bedford County	Body Camp Elementary	510036000146			G
Campbell County	Altavista Elementary	510060000219			G
Campbell County	Brookneal Elementary	510060002834			G
Campbell County	Rustburg Elementary	510060002528			G
Chesterfield County	Crestwood Elementary	510084000325			G
Culpeper County	Pearl Sample Elementary	510105000380			G
Culpeper County	Sycamore Park Elementary	510105000382			G
Danville City	Schoolfield Elementary	510111000268			G
Fairfax County	Annandale Terrace Elementary	510126000424			G
Fairfax County	Forestdale Elementary	510126000472			G
Fauquier County	Margaret M. Pierce Elementary	510132000612			G
Fluvanna County	Carysbrook Elementary	New School			G
Fluvanna County	Central Elementary	510138000622			G
Fluvanna County	Columbia Elementary	510138000623			G
Fluvanna County	Cunningham Elementary	510138000624			G
Franklin City	S.P. Morton Elementary	510141000631			G
Frederick County	Indian Hollow Elementary	510147002121			G
Fredericksburg City	Hugh Mercer Elementary	510151000660			G
Fredericksburg City	Lafayette Upper Elementary	510151002468			G
Greene County	Greene County Primary	510171000700			G
Greene County	Nathanael Greene Elementary	510171002190			G
Greensville County	Greensville Elementary	510174001827			G
Hampton City	Alfred S. Forrest Elementary	510180000727			G
Hampton City	Cesar Tarrant Elementary	510180000736			G
Hampton City	John B. Cary Elementary	510180000745			G
Hanover County	Elmont Elementary	510183000769			G
King George County	Sealston Elementary	510210002445			G
Loudoun County	Guilford Elementary	510225000918			G
Loudoun County	Rolling Ridge Elementary	510225000929			G

Loudoun County	Sugarland Elementary	510225000934			G
Louisa County	Moss-Nuckols Elementary	510228002838			G
Lunenburg County	Victoria Elementary	510231000949			G
Lynchburg City	Heritage Elementary	510234000959			G
Lynchburg City	Paul Munro Elementary	510234000963			G
Lynchburg City	Robert S. Payne Elementary	510234000965			G
Manassas City	Jennie Dean Elementary	510236000977			G
Manassas City	Richard C. Haydon Elementary	510236001854			G
Martinsville City	Albert Harris Elementary School	510240002616			G
New Kent County	George W. Watkins Elementary	510261001038			G
Newport News City	Carver Elementary	510264001043			G
Newport News City	L.F. Palmer Elementary	510264001060			G
Newport News City	Magruder Elementary	510264001062			G
Norfolk City	Jacox Elementary	510267001101			G
Norfolk City	Lafayette-Winona Middle	510267000359			G
Norfolk City	P.B. Young, Sr. Elementary	510267001147			G
Norfolk City	Sherwood Forest Elementary	510267001136			G
Northampton County	Occohannock Elementary	510271000554			G
Northumberland County	Northumberland Elementary	510273001392			G
Nottoway County	Blackstone Primary	510279001166			G
Nottoway County	Crewe Primary	510279001169			G
Page County	Luray Elementary	510285001179			G
Prince Edward County	Prince Edward Elementary	510306001272			G
Prince William County	Elizabeth Vaughan Elementary	510313001294			G
Prince William County	Suella G. Ellis Elementary	510313002456			G
Prince William County	West Gate Elementary	510313001325			G
Prince William County	Yorkshire Elementary	510313001328			G
Richmond City	Binford Middle	510324001356			G
Shenandoah County	W.W. Robinson Elementary	510351001554			G

Smyth County	Marion Intermediate	510352001559			G
Smyth County	Marion Primary	510352001561			G
Stafford County	Rocky Run Elementary	510366002547			G
Staunton City	Bessie Weller Elementary	510369001604			G
TOTAL # of Schools:			**323* (duplicate count)**	**36**	**72**

* The list of schools recognized as Reward Schools is extensive and would not be practically accommodated in the table above.

- The list of schools meeting the 2011 criteria for the VIP Incentive Program is available at the following link: Governor McDonnell & Board of Education Honor High-Performing Virginia Schools & School Divisions – *2011 Virginia Index of Performance Awards Announced*
- The list of schools meeting the 2011 criteria for the Blue Ribbon program is available at the following link: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/school_improvement/planning/index.shtml
- The list of schools meeting the 2011 criteria for the state's Title I Distinguished Schools Program is available at the following link: Schools & School Divisions Recognized for Raising Achievement of Economically Disadvantaged Students

Note: Priority and focus schools included in Table 2 are those schools that would have been identified as such in the 2011-2012 school year, based on 2010-2011 assessment results, according to the criteria describe in 2.D.i and 2.E.i. An updated list of priority and focus schools for each subsequent year is made available in early fall of each school year. The following link provides updated lists of priority and focus schools identified under ESEA Flexibility: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/federal_programs/esea/flexibility/index.shtml#schools.

Total # of Title I schools in the State: 723
Total # of Title I-participating high schools in the State with graduation rates less than 60%: 3

Key	
Reward School Criteria: **A.** Highest-performing school **B.** High-progress school **Priority School Criteria:** **C.** Among the lowest five percent of Title I schools in the State based on the proficiency and lack of progress of the "all students" group **D-1.** Title I-participating high school with graduation rate less than 60% over a number of years **D-2.** Title I-eligible high school with graduation rate less than 60% over a number of years **E.** Tier I or Tier II SIG school implementing a school intervention model	**Focus School Criteria:** **F.** Has the largest within-school gaps between the highest-achieving subgroup(s) and the lowest-achieving subgroup(s) or, at the high school level, has the largest within-school gaps in the graduation rate **G.** Has a subgroup or subgroups with low achievement or, at the high school level, a low graduation rate **H.** A Title I-participating high school with graduation rate less than 60% over a number of years that is not identified as a priority school

2.F PROVIDE INCENTIVES AND SUPPORTS FOR OTHER TITLE I SCHOOLS

2.F Describe how the SEA's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system will provide incentives and supports to ensure continuous improvement in other Title I schools that, based on the SEA's new AMOs and other measures, are not making progress in improving student achievement and narrowing achievement gaps, and an explanation of how these incentives and supports are likely to improve student achievement and school performance, close achievement gaps, and increase the quality of instruction for students.

Recognition

The *VIP Incentive Program, Blue Ribbon Schools Program,* and the *Title I Distinguished Schools Program,* as described in the response to Question 2.C, provide incentives for continuous improvement of student achievement for Title I schools not identified as priority or focus schools.

The state's accountability and support system for other Title I schools is the same as for non-Title I schools. Schools that do not receive a rating of *Fully Accredited* are supported through a rigorous academic review process and intensive interventions as described below.

Non-priority and non-focus Title I schools failing to meet reading or mathematics participation or performance AMOs or the federal graduation indicator for any subgroup, including all students, proficiency gap groups, and individual subgroups, and schools not *Fully Accredited* are required to use a state-determined comprehensive improvement planning tool to plan, monitor, and implement improvement strategies. Currently *Indistar*® is the state-determined comprehensive improvement planning tool used in Virginia. *Indistar*® is also available to non-Title I schools not meeting any AMO as well.

Title I high schools that do not meet the federal graduation indicator rate are required to use the Virginia Early Warning System (VEWS) to plan, monitor and implement improvement strategies. More information on VEWS can be found at the following Web site: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/school_improvement/early_warning_system/index.shtml.

Additional services for schools that have significant proficiency gaps, low graduation rates, or participation rates include technical assistance and professional development offered by the Virginia Department of Education as referenced in the responses to Questions 1.A and 1.B:

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities in Virginia are expected to achieve the same standards as their non-disabled peers, through the Virginia *Standards of Learning*. A small number of students with significant cognitive disabilities participate in alternate assessments based on alternate achievement standards as provided for in NCLB. The assessments are based on Aligned Standards of Learning.

The Virginia Board of Education's Regulations Governing Special Education Programs for Children with Disabilities in Virginia require transition planning as part of the IEP for students with disabilities beginning with the first IEP to be in effect when the student turns 14. The Virginia Department of Education also assists students with disabilities in developing self-advocacy skills through the "I'm

Determined" initiative. Through this program, students with disabilities are provided knowledge and skills to not only participate in, but also to lead their IEP meetings. Additionally these skills assist students to actively participate in their education as well as planning for careers.

In the area of transition for students with disabilities with the most intensive support needs, there are two model initiatives supported by the Virginia Department of Education: Project SEARCH and the Post-High School Community College Program. Project SEARCH, a business-led model, is a collaborative between school divisions, adult rehabilitative services and local businesses that provide employability skills training and workplace internships that occur entirely in the workplace. The Post-High School Community College Program is an education model that provides individualized supports to students with significant disabilities seeking postsecondary education to enhance their skills for employment, in an age-appropriate setting. The Department of Education provides support and technical assistance to increase the number of partnerships between school divisions and institutions of higher education.

English Language Learners

English Language Learners (ELLs) in Virginia are expected to achieve the same college- and career-ready content *Standards of Learning* as their English-proficient peers. In addition to achieving content standards, ELLs must also achieve proficiency in the English language.

On September 26, 2007, the Virginia Board of Education adopted the ACCESS for ELLs (Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners) as the statewide English language proficiency (ELP) assessment for Virginia. The ACCESS for ELLs was developed by the World-Class Instructional Design Assessment (WIDA) consortium through a United States Department of Education (USED) Enhanced Assessment grant. On March 19, 2008, the Board adopted the WIDA English Language Proficiency (ELP) standards as the ELP standards for the Commonwealth. Since then, WIDA has released its enhanced version of the ELP standards, referred to as the 2012 Amplification of English Language Development (ELD) Standards. Virginia has continued to use the amplified 2012 WIDA ELD standards as its state ELP standards.

The WIDA ELD standards emphasize the need for academic language to support the four core content areas and thus reinforce the linguistic demands required for LEP students to be successful in Virginia's *Standards of Learning* program. The five WIDA ELD standards are as follows:

- Standard 1: English language learners communicate for **Social and Instructional** purposes within the school setting.
- Standard 2: English language learners communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of **Language Arts**.
- Standard 3: English language learners communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of **Mathematics**.
- Standard 4: English language learners communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of **Science.**
- Standard 5: English language learners communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of **Social Studies**.

The WIDA ELD standards support the English language development of ELLs to provide the foundation for them to achieve academically in all content areas. The five WIDA ELD standards are represented in the following grades/grade clusters: K, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9-10, 11-12. Additionally,

each standard encompasses five levels of English language proficiency as well as the four language domains. The levels of English language proficiency are: entering, emerging, developing, expanding, and bridging. The four language domains are: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

In 2009, Virginia prepared both a PreK–5 and a Grades 6 – 12 crosswalk showing the alignment between the WIDA ELD standards and the Virginia *Standards of Learning* in English, mathematics, science, and history and social science. Professional development opportunities are provided annually to train educators of ELLs in creating lesson plans that align the 2012 amplified ELD standards with recent revisions to the *Standards of Learning*.

Additional information about professional development for teachers of ELLs is provided later in this section.

Assistance to All At-Risk Students

- **Project Graduation**, which provides remedial instruction and assessment opportunities for students at risk of not meeting the Commonwealth's diploma requirements. Project Graduation includes remedial academies during the school year and summer.
- **Algebra Readiness Initiative**, which provides assistance in preparing students for success in algebra. School divisions receive incentive payments to provide mathematics intervention services to students in grades 6-9 who are at-risk of failing the Algebra I end-of-course test as demonstrated by their individual performance on diagnostic tests that have been provided or approved by the Virginia Department of Education.
- **Virginia Preschool Initiative**, which distributes state funds to schools and community-based organizations to provide quality preschool programs for at-risk four-year-olds not served by Head Start.
- **Early Intervention Reading Initiative** (EIRI), which provides early reading intervention services to students in kindergarten through the third grade who demonstrate reading deficiencies reflected in each student's performance on the state-approved literacy screener, The Phonological and Literacy Screening (PALS) assessment. Legislation passed by the 2012 General Assembly and budget language in the 2012-2014 biennial budget increased funding for EIRI to provide reading intervention services to 100 percent of eligible students in grade three prior to promotion to grade four. Previously, funding had been provided to serve 25 percent of eligible third-grade students. In doing this, the General Assembly also made participation in EIRI at third grade a requirement within the Standards of Quality. Legislation passed by the 2013 General Assembly added kindergarten and grades one and two to the requirement that local school divisions provide early intervention services to students in grade three who demonstrate deficiencies based on their individual performance on diagnostic reading tests.
- **Virginia's Early Warning System**, which relies on readily available data – housed at the school – to predict which students are at risk for dropping out of high school; target resources at the school- and division-level to support students not on track to graduate while they are still in school and before they drop out; and examine patterns and identify school climate issues that may contribute to disproportionate dropout rates.

Additionally, Early childhood programs in Virginia's public schools provide a foundation for learning and academic success. School-readiness activities focus on phonological awareness, vocabulary, number sense and physical, motor and social development. The Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI) began in 1997 and distributes state funds to schools and community-based organizations to provide quality preschool programs for at-risk four-year-olds not already served by Head Start. School

readiness describes the capabilities of children, families, schools and communities that promote student success in kindergarten and beyond. Each component plays an essential role in the development of school readiness. In 2013, the Board received the revised Virginia Foundation Blocks for Early Learning: Comprehensive Standards for Four-Year-Olds (PDF) which are aligned to the current K-12 *Standards of Learning*. In addition to the Foundation Blocks, support documents include:

- Preschool Curriculum Review Rubric and Planning Tool (PDF) – This rubric is designed to assist early childhood educators with reviewing curricula and products to determine if they align with the Virginia Foundation Blocks for Early Learning.
- Virginia's Quality Indicators for Responsive Teaching: Creating a High Quality Preschool Learning Environment (PDF) – This checklist aligns with the preschool standards and helps teachers, parents, and administrators focus on creating shared, active, and hands-on opportunities for young children to develop their full potential.

In addition to providing content area Curriculum Frameworks, the Department of Education works with practitioners to develop sample lesson plans that reflect the content included in the *SOL* and the Curriculum Frameworks. The *SOL* Enhanced Scope and Sequence is a searchable database of lesson plans that incorporate Universal Design for Learning (UDL). These lesson plans were designed to include multiple means of representation, activity, and engagement for students. Teachers of special education and LEP students were included among the practitioners to ensure the lesson plans included suggestions and differentiated instructional strategies to meet the needs of all students. The *Mathematics SOL Enhanced Scope and Sequence Sample Lesson Plans* provide teachers with sample lesson plans that are aligned with the essential understandings and essential knowledge and skills found in the Curriculum Frameworks for the 2009 *Mathematics SOL*. The *English SOL Enhanced Scope and Sequence Sample Lesson Plans* reflect the 2010 *English SOL* and were released in the summer 2012. Examples of the sample lesson plans aligned with the 2002 *English SOL* are available at: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/sol/standards_docs/english/index.shtml. The Enhanced Scope and Sequence Sample Lesson Plans include resources and specific methods for differentiating the lessons for students with disabilities and English language learners.

Support for Teachers of LEP Students and Students with Disabilities

General instruction, special education, and English as a second language (ESL) staff at the Department of Education work closely to ensure that materials developed and professional development provided serve students with disabilities and LEP students. Recent examples include the involvement of special education teachers and ESL teachers in the development of the *English and Mathematics Enhanced Scope and Sequence Sample Lesson Plans* mentioned earlier and their strong collaboration in developing the programs for the From Vision to Practice Annual Institutes.

A number of resources and services are also available to schools to assist teachers in helping LEP students demonstrate their ability to understand, read, and write English in order to function and be successful in school and in American society. Most of these resources are made available or announced on the ESL Instructional Web page. Examples include:

- A two-day training entitled "Academic Language Development for English Learners (ELs)" was offered during November 2011 for elementary and secondary educators of ELLs. The World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA®) Academic trainings were held in November 2011 in four areas in the state and focused on providing instructional strategies to increase academic language development among ELLs.
- The "Fall Professional Development Academy for K-12 Teachers of English Language

Learners (ELLs)" was held at two locations for six Saturdays, September through December 2011. The academy is designed to assist students in communicating effectively in English, both in and out of school.

- Continued annual institutes and graduate level courses on the WIDA ELD Standards and ACCESS for ELLs assessment and instructional strategies and differentiation for ELLs in the core content areas.

In 2014, the Department of Education partnered with the Appalachian Regional Comprehensive Center (ARCC) to develop and implement strategies for: 1) enhancing the technical expertise of Department instructional staff to provide support to educators of ELLs; 2) increasing support to ELLs in rural areas; 3) increasing statewide ELL graduation rates; and 4) supporting students dually identified as ELL and SWD. As part of this effort, the ESL staff at the Department provide intra-agency training on the WIDA ELD standards and ACCESS for ELLs assessment results and collaborate with the Division of Special Education and Student Services to provide training to school divisions on serving dually identified students.

The Virginia Department of Education also directs and supports regional T/TACs (Training/Technical Assistance Centers) based in seven institutions of higher education that comprise a statewide system emphasizing collaboration in the planning and provision of services to improve educational opportunities and contribute to the success of children and youth with disabilities (birth - 22 years). The T/TACS provide quality training and technical assistance in response to local, regional, and state needs. T/TAC services increase the capacity of schools, school personnel, service providers, and families to meet the needs of children and youth. The T/TACs meet these needs through activities such as consultation, long-term systems change initiatives, information services, linking and networking resources together, a lending library of multimedia resources and technology, referral to other services, and workshops. In addition to responding to requests for services, T/TAC staff members are deployed to schools and school divisions identified by the Virginia Department of Education as needing improvement through the School Improvement Office and/or the Office of Special Education Program Improvement. Throughout the school improvement process, school divisions can also request specific training and technical assistance from their local T/TAC. The Virginia Department of Education has a comprehensive database of requests made to the T/TACs and the services provided, which is monitored to determine how schools and school divisions access those services.

In 2010, the Virginia Department of Education and Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) established the Center of Excellence for Autism Spectrum Disorders. A collaborative venture of the Department of Education and VCU's Schools of Education and Medicine, the center serves as a focal point for research, professional development, and targeted technical assistance in implementing research-based effective practices and comprehensive services for students with autism. The center is funded through a start-up grant from the Department of Education.

In 2013 the Virginia Department of Education will again partnered with Virginia Commonwealth University and its Research Rehabilitation and Training Center (RRTC) in the establishment of the Center on Transition Innovations (CTI). CTI serves as a statewide center on the development, dissemination, and evaluation of effective practices aimed at assisting students with disabilities in transitioning from the K-12 school system to postsecondary education, training and competitive integrated employment. A main focus of the Center in its first year of implementation is to collect online resources and training opportunities designed to support educational professionals, families and

students with effective transition planning and support. The Center on Transition Innovation will also serve as a mechanism to bring all of the resources and initiatives around best practices for students planning for transition under one statewide structure.

Additionally, Virginia's strong Response to Intervention (RtI) initiative has evolved over the years to the Virginia Tiered System of Supports (VTSS), a framework and philosophy that provides resources and support to help every student be successful in academics and behavior. It begins with systemic change at the division, school and classroom level that utilizes evidence-based, system-wide practices to provide a quick response to academic and behavioral needs. These practices include frequent progress-monitoring that enable educators to make sound, data-based instructional decisions for students. The following initiatives fall under the VTSS umbrella; Response to Intervention (RTI), Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and Content Literacy Continuum (CLC). The VTSS guide (PDF) completed in 2012 provides information to support division leaders in implementing VTSS divisionwide research-based best practices and evidence from expert educators. This information will support division leadership teams as they assemble the structures necessary at all levels.

In the fall of 2014, the Virginia Department of Education was awarded two five-year grants, the School Climate Transformation grant (SCT) from USED and the Project Aware grant from the Federal Health and Human Services Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Agency (SAMHSA). The purpose of the grants is to expand the depth and breadth of the VTSS. The Project AWARE SAMHSA initiative integrates mental health promotion, the early identification of students experiencing distress, and access to mental health supports and other social services into the VTSS model. The SCT extents this VTSS transformative framework to several more school divisions with schools in improvement. The Department of Education is partnering with the Center for School/Community Collaboration in the College of Education at the Virginia Commonwealth University to create the VTSS Center for Implementation and Research (VTSS-RIC). This center will conduct research and evaluation, update and develop guidance for systems coaching and training modules, and provide coaches to selected school divisions in improvement. Additionally, the VTSS-RIC will work with a multi-state agency management team that includes representatives from local school divisions and child and family advocacy groups. This team will work to develop a more effective and efficient cross-agency multi-tiered systems approach that engages families and enables all students to achieve their academic potential.

The *Technical Assistance Plan for the Implementation of Virginia's Standards of Learning in English, Mathematics, Science, and History and Social Science* (Attachment 18 – updated 2013) has been recently updated and provides a brief overview of assistance that occurred prior to 2011-2012, assistance that has occurred during school years 2011-2012, 2012-2013, and planned for the current school year. Additional assistance will be developed as data are analyzed following each test administration to determine where to most effectively focus the resources of the Virginia Department of Education. Teachers of special education students and English language learners are included in the activities included in the plan and have equal access to the documents, lesson plans, and other resources provided. Additionally, as described in the previous paragraphs, Virginia's regional TTACs provide specialized supplemental assistance to special education teachers, and the state uses Title III funds to provide supplemental professional development and technical assistance to teachers of English Language Learners.

School Improvement Planning

Virginia has partnered with the Center on Innovations in Learning for six years. As part of collaboration with the Appalachia Regional Comprehensive Center, *Indistar*®, an online portal created and managed by the Center on Innovations in Learning, may be used by any division for any school in Virginia to track, develop, coordinate, and report improvement activities. A number of evidence-based practices and indicators are provided to inform improvement efforts. The system is customized to reflect Virginia's own indicators of effective practice or rubrics for assessment. *Indistar*® allows the school/division to select a set of indicators that differentiate the actions needed for improvement. In addition, Virginia has created a portal in *Indistar*® to collect meeting minutes, quarterly data, and other data throughout the year. The system includes an electronic repository for planning and implementation materials for the teams. Virginia's portion of *Indistar*® provides online tutorials on the indicators (Indicators in Action), including videos of teachers, principals, and teams demonstrating the indicators in practice. Many of the videos were recorded in Virginia schools. One other advantage of using *Indistar*® is the use of "Wise Ways". This is a short written summary that provides the reader with the research behind each indicator.

Non-priority and non-focus Title I schools failing to meet reading or mathematics participation or performance AMOs or the federal graduation indicator for any subgroup, including all students, proficiency gap groups, and individual subgroups, and schools not *Fully Accredited* are required to use a state-determined comprehensive improvement planning tool to plan, monitor, and implement a plan for improvement. Currently, the state-determined tool used is *Indistar*®, which is also available to non-Title I schools not meeting any AMO as well.

To ensure that Title I high schools not meeting the FGI rate take action to improve the rate of students graduating on time, any Title I high school not meeting the FGI rate is required to use the Virginia Early Warning System (VEWS). The VEWS indicators are based upon predictors of drop out and graduation that have been validated by national research and by four Virginia school divisions that participated in a pilot program. The VEWS data provide quarterly reports to the school team to track progress on selected indicators. The Office of School Improvement provides technical assistance for each school and division using VEWS to inform interventions on graduation rates. More information on VEWS can be found at the following Web site:
http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/school_improvement/early_warning_system/index.shtml.

Academic Review

The academic review guidelines and procedures as presecribed by the SOA are being revised. Revisions will be presented to the Virginia Board of Education for their approval in late spring 2015. The SOA requires schools that are *Accredited with Warning, Accredited with Warning-Graduation Rate,* or *Provisionally Accredited – Graduation Rate* to undergo an academic review and prepare a three-year school improvement plan. An overview of the proposed academic review process is available at the following Web site:
http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/school_improvement/planning/waiver_request/x8_proposed_acad_review_for_schools_if_waiver_approved.pdf.

As stated in the response to Question 2.A.i, it is important to understand that Virginia embarked on building SEA capacity to implement the model that is used to improve focus schools over the past ten years. Specifically, the work began with the academic review process in 2000. To further differentiate

work needed in schools, the academic review process was revised in 2005. In 2011, Virginia's accreditation required high schools to meet specific graduation rate targets. The academic review process was revised to include actions for schools not meeting high school graduation benchmarks. Throughout this process, Virginia has leveraged the human capacity needed to implement the work by contracting with outstanding retired educators with experience in working with high-poverty and high achievement schools.

The academic review is designed to help schools identify and analyze instructional and organizational factors affecting student achievement. The focus of the review process is on the systems, processes, and practices that are being implemented at the school and division levels. The academic review team, consisting of Department of Education staff, division staff, and/or state-approved personnel trained in the academic review process, assists the school in writing the essential actions for the school improvement plan based on the final report of findings. Specifically, information is gathered that relates to the following areas of review:

- Implementation of curriculum aligned with the Standards of Learning
- Use of time and scheduling practices that maximize instruction
- Use of data to make instructional and planning decisions (including teacher effectiveness data and teacher evaluation data as aligned to the state standards as indicated in Principle 3)
- Design of ongoing, school-based program of professional development
- Implementation of a school improvement plan addressing identified areas of weakness
- Implementation of research-based instructional interventions for schools warned in English or mathematics
- Organizational systems and processes
    - Use of school improvement planning process that includes data analysis and input of faculty, parents, and community
    - School culture, including engagement of parents and the community
    - Use of learning environments that foster student achievement
    - Allocation of resources aligned to areas of need

These areas of review are based on state and federal regulations, and research-based practices found to be effective in improving student achievement. Within each of these areas, indicators reflecting effective practices have been identified for review (with an emphasis on effective pedagogy and teaching practices).

The academic review team collects and analyzes data that demonstrate the school's status in implementing these practices. A report of essential actions is provided to the division and school team. The essential actions have been aligned with *Indistar®*, the current state-determined comprehensive improvement planning tool. Schools *Accredited with Warning* are required to use a state-determined comprehensive improvement planning tool to write the school improvement plan. The school will use the essential actions provided in the report of findings to select the indicators/tasks that must be addressed in the school improvement plan.

Based on their findings, the academic review team provides the school and the division with information that can be used to develop or revise, and implement the school's three-year school improvement plan, as required by the *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia*.

The school-level academic review process is tailored to meet the unique needs and circumstances presented by the school. The first year that a school is rated "accredited with warning" an academic review team conducts a comprehensive review of the areas related to the systems, processes, and practices that are being implemented at the school and division levels as indicated above. Throughout the school's continued status in warning, the academic review process is designed to monitor the implementation of the school improvement plan and provide technical assistance to support the school's improvement efforts.

An academic review team, either state or locally directed, conducts an on-site review and assists the school in identifying areas of need and writing an effective three-year school improvement plan. Concurrent with developing a school improvement plan, priority assistance is prescribed by the academic review team and approved by the Virginia Department of Education.

Technical assistance recommended by the academic review may include one or more of the following:

1. **Peer mentors –** The school/division may be paired with a similar school/division performing highly in an area of identified need in order to help the school learn new skills via a mentor/mentee relationship.
2. **Direct technical assistance** – Office of School Improvement staff may provide targeted assistance via telephone, e-mail, on-site visit, or a combination of these methods. Technical assistance can address a variety of topics including, but not limited to, the webinar topics described below.
3. **Webinar series** – State-approved personnel may choose one or more series of webinars to be attended by the principal and other school and division leaders as needed. The recorded webinars and supplementary resources provide assistance in the following areas:
   - Co-teaching and Inclusive Practices
   - Instructional Preparation
   - Instructional Delivery
   - Formative Assessment
   - Differentiated Instruction
   - Student Engagement
   - Leadership
   - Scheduling - Elementary schools
   - Training for School Improvement Teams

These resources may be accessed at the following Web site:
http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/school_improvement/training/index.shtml

The OSI has established an intra-agency technical assistance team to meet on a bi-monthly basis. The team includes representatives from Special Education, Student Support, Instruction, Response to Intervention, Safe and Supportive Schools, and Program Administration and Accountability. The purpose of the team is to share information about resources and technical assistance to better coordinate VDOE support of schools.

For those schools that were warned in the previous year and received an on-site academic review, the school improvement team reviews and updates the school improvement plan based on new accountability data.

The academic review process also addresses graduation and academic issues as well as the required elements of three-year school improvement plans for high schools that are *Accredited with Warning* in specific academic areas and/or in achievement of the minimum threshold for the graduation and completion index or *Provisionally Accredited – Graduation Rate*.

High School Academic Review Process

The Virginia Early Warning System (VEWS) was developed for the Department of Education in collaboration with the National High School Center as a data tracking tool designed to assist schools in identifying which students show signs that they are at-risk of failure or dropping out. The VEWS indicators are based upon predictors of drop out and graduation that have been validated by national research and by four Virginia school divisions that participated in a pilot program. The VEWS data provides quarterly reports to the school team to track progress on selected indicators. These indicators include attendance, grades, credits earned, scores on SOL assessments, and behavior. The 7-Step VEWS implementation process is available at the following Web site: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/school_improvement/early_warning_system/index.shtml.

State-approved personnel assigned by the Department of Education, the division team, and the school team will review the VEWS data as well as other available data. These data may include identifying the number of over-age students at each grade, reviewing PALS data in grades K-3, identifying the percent of students not reading on grade-level at third grade over the past three years, and other significant data the division may find relevant to strategies needed to prevent students from entering high school at risk of not graduating on time or at all.

The state-approved personnel assigned by the Department of Education will identify the needs of each school *Accredited with Warning* (in specific academic areas and/or in achievement of the minimum threshold for the graduation and completion index) or *Provisionally Accredited – Graduation Rate* by reviewing the same data as the division and school teams. The state-approved personnel, in collaboration with the division and school teams, will customize a framework for improvement developed by either the National High School Center (NHSC) and/or the Center on Innovations in Learning (CIL).

Technical assistance will be provided to each school as needed and determined by the Office of School Improvement (OSI). Guided by the systematic review of the VEWS data and the division's and school's self-assessment report, the OSI will identify the priority needs for technical assistance for each school and division.

As part of the high school academic review process, two teams were established. The division team will include the principal of the school rated *Accredited with Warning* in specific academic areas and/or in achievement of the minimum threshold for the graduation and completion index or *Provisionally Accredited – Graduation Rate*, the division's top elementary, middle and secondary leaders, and membership from Title I and special education. For high schools, the division team review data from the VEWS to make decisions about resources, policies, and strategies that will impact high school achievement (academic and graduation) at all grade levels.

The school team includes the school's principal and membership from guidance, special education and instruction. At least one member, other than the principal, of the division team serve on the school team as well, preferably the division's top instructional leader. For high schools, the school team

utilizes the VEWS implementation process in order to identify and intervene with students at-risk of failure or drop out.

The division and school teams use an online electronic improvement planning tool to develop, implement and monitor a comprehensive three-year improvement plan using a state-determined comprehensive school improvement planning tool. Once the teams review the data and develop a comprehensive school improvement plan, the plan will be monitored for three years. In years two and three, the teams will continue to meet, discuss data, modify, and implement the school improvement plan.

For high schools with a low graduation rate, throughout the course of the first year, the division and school teams use the VEWS data and other data to complete an in-depth and thorough needs assessment using tools developed by the NHSC and CII. These tools can be customized by the state-approved personnel to meet the needs of each school. The selection of the appropriate tool will be decided by the contractor, in collaboration with the division and school teams, based on the review of VEWS and other data. The division and school teams use selected indicators to develop a single comprehensive plan that includes division and school strategies. The division strategies will focus on K-12 needs, while the school strategies will focus on strategies needed for student success at the high school.

Requirements for Schools that are Denied Accreditation

Any school rated *Accreditation Denied* must provide parents of enrolled students and other interested parties with written notice of the school's accreditation rating; a copy of the school division's proposed corrective action plan to improve the school's accreditation rating; and an opportunity to comment on the division's proposed corrective action plan. The school enters a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Virginia Board of Education and the local school board. The local school board submits a corrective action plan to the Board of Education for its consideration in prescribing actions in the MOU within 45 days of the notification of the rating.

The local board submits status reports detailing implementation of actions prescribed by the MOU to the Board of Education. The status reports are signed by the school principal, division superintendent, and the chair of the local school board. The school principal, division superintendent, and the chair of the local school board are required to appear before the Board of Education to present status reports. The MOU includes, but is not limited to:

1. Undergoing an educational service delivery and management review. The Board of Education prescribes the content of such review and approves the reviewing authority retained by the school division.
2. Working with a specialist approved by the state to address those conditions at the school that may impede educational progress and effectiveness and academic success.

As an alternative to the MOU, a local school board may choose to reconstitute a school rated *Accreditation Denied* and apply to the Board of Education for a rating of *Conditionally Accredited*. The application must outline specific responses that address all areas of deficiency that resulted in the *Accreditation Denied* rating.

If a local school board chooses to reconstitute a school, it may annually apply for an accreditation rating of *Conditionally Accredited*. The *Conditionally Accredited* rating is granted for a period not to

exceed three years if the school is making progress toward a rating of *Fully Accredited* in accordance with the terms of the Board of Education's approval of the reconstitution application. The school will revert to a status of *Accreditation Denied* if it fails to meet the requirements to be rated *Fully Accredited* by the end of the three-year term or if it fails to have its annual application for such rating renewed.

The local school board may choose to close a school rated *Accreditation Denied* or to combine such school with a higher performing school in the division. A local school board that has any school with the status of *Accreditation Denied* annually reports each school's progress toward meeting the requirements to be rated *Fully Accredited* to the Board of Education.

2.G BUILD SEA, LEA, AND SCHOOL CAPACITY TO IMPROVE STUDENT LEARNING

2.G Describe the SEA's process for building SEA, LEA, and school capacity to improve student learning in all schools and, in particular, in low-performing schools and schools with the largest achievement gaps, including through:

i. timely and comprehensive monitoring of, and technical assistance for, LEA implementation of interventions in priority and focus schools;
ii. ensuring sufficient support for implementation of interventions in priority schools, focus schools, and other Title I schools identified under the SEA's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system (including through leveraging funds the LEA was previously required to reserve under ESEA section 1116(b)(10), SIG funds, and other Federal funds, as permitted, along with State and local resources); and
iii. holding LEAs accountable for improving school and student performance, particularly for turning around their priority schools.

Explain how this process is likely to succeed in improving SEA, LEA, and school capacity.

Monitoring of, and Technical Assistance for, Division Implementation of Interventions in Priority and Focus Schools

Virginia's schools and school divisions that do not meet prescribed benchmarks receive significant assistance in the form of state-sponsored academic reviews, targeted interventions to increase division capacity, and an increased focus on professional development and evaluation of teachers and principals. Schools and divisions that continue to be low-performing are subject to further accountability in the form of Memoranda of Understanding with the Virginia Board of Education.

To ensure efficacy of the statewide system of support, VDOE requires each priority school to set rigorous leading and lagging indicators and evaluates the school's performance against the indicators. VDOE, with the support of lead turnaround partners and state-approved personnel, engage divisions and schools in a continuous cycle of reviewing, revising, and modifying interventions to ensure fidelity of implementation. A quarterly meeting and data review process allows for timely modification of interventions.

As the state implemented new rigorous assessments in mathematics and in reading, it was anticipated that assistance would be needed to help divisions and schools align their curriculum

with the revised standards, versus a smaller number of divisions and schools that will need continued support with instructional pedagogy.

Overseeing improvement efforts in numerous divisions and schools across a state requires a strong support infrastructure. The Department of Education uses a variety of systems to facilitate and streamline data collection, file sharing, and reporting mechanisms for priority and focus schools. The division engages state-approved personnel via assurances with VDOE. The assurances support focus school(s) to develop interventions for students who are at-risk of not passing a state assessment in reading or mathematics including students with disabilities and English language learners. The state-approved personnel help the division and school build their capacity to support leadership practices to support improved teacher effectiveness (as described in the teacher and principal performance standards in Principle 3):

1. Provide leadership and teacher professional development focused on what evidence to look for when observing classrooms; coaching for literacy and mathematics; effective modeling practices; planning based on classroom observations; research-based intervention practices; and, response to intervention;
2. Provide implementation support and coaching throughout the year for principals and teachers. Model effective practices and provide guided practice until practices are in-place independently of the contractor;
3. Provide modeling to principals in providing feedback to teachers, and provide guided practice to principals until the principal is able to exhibit practices independently;
4. Implement, monitor and support an intervention model at the school-level with a focus on students with disabilities and English language learners; and
5. Build the division's capacity to support low-performing schools and increase student achievement.

The state-approved personnel meet at least quarterly with Department of Education staff to share common issues across the state and discuss strategies for addressing emerging issues in the field.

To allow the state and school division to better monitor school improvement progress throughout the school year and over the course of the interventions, priority and focus schools are required to use the same assessments, online planning tool, and data analysis systems, such as:

- A state-determined comprehensive school improvement planning tool is required. Currently, Indistar® is the state-determined tool used. It is an online portal created and managed by the Center on Innovations in Learning (CIL). It is used by both focus and priority schools and division and LTP staff to develop, coordinate, track, and report improvement activities. A number of evidence-based practices and indicators are provided to inform improvement efforts, but the system can also be customized to reflect customized division or school indicators of effective practice or rubrics for assessment. *Indistar*® is used to collect meeting minutes, professional development activities, strategies for extending learning opportunities, parent activities, and indicators of effective leadership and instructional practice. *Indistar*® also provides online tutorials on the indicators, including video of teachers, principals, and teams demonstrating the indicators.
- An adaptive reading test that administers short tests to determine each student's overall reading ability. The system adjusts the difficulty of questions based on performance, and tracks the performance of individual students, classrooms, and the school over time. Students are assessed at least quarterly and then grouped by tiers and skill need. The

system can be used in conjunction with other reading programs. Priority and focus schools are required to utilize a progress monitoring tool to track the efficacy of interventions for selected students. The system automatically reports student achievement using either Lexile or grade equivalency scores. Assessments selected by the division must be approved by the Virginia Department of Education. These assessments must be provided at least quarterly and must offer either a norm-referenced, or Lexile score.)

- The *Algebra Readiness Diagnostic Test* (ARDT), which is a Web-based application that employs computer adaptive testing to help determine student proficiency in mathematics. The test items are correlated to the *Mathematics Standards of Learning* for grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and Algebra I and were reviewed by a group of Virginia educators for accuracy and validity. Results from the diagnostic test are available immediately and provide information correlated to the Standards of Learning reporting categories. This information is beneficial in developing and focusing an intervention program for those students who are most at risk. Priority and focus schools at the middle school level are required to utilize this diagnostic tool.
- Datacation, which is an electronic query system that provides principals with data needed to make data-driven decisions at the school-level. Each focus and priority school is required to analyze a variety of data points on a quarterly basis using the "Virginia Dashboard," a Web-based data analysis and reporting tool or other state-approved electronic data query system. School and division teams use the tool to make strategic, data-driven decisions to implement needed interventions for students who: 1) are not meeting expected growth measures; 2) are at risk of failure; or 3) at risk of dropping out of school. In addition, the Virginia Dashboard or other state-approved electronic data query system must allow the school leadership team to follow interventions throughout the year to determine their effectiveness. The state-approved electronic data query system must generate~~s~~ monthly reports which include, at a minimum, the following forms of data:
    - Student attendance;
    - Benchmark or formative assessment results;
    - Reading and mathematics grades;
    - Student discipline reports;
    - Data from a state-approved student growth reading assessment;
    - World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) data for ELL students;
    - Student transfer data; and
    - Student Intervention Participation by Intervention Type.

Analysis of the data points from the quarterly reporting system are used by school improvement teams to respond to the following questions:

- Based upon analysis of data in your benchmark results and grade distribution, do you need to assign additional indicators/tasks to your current improvement plan?
- What is the progress of your students needing intervention? What specific tiered interventions are being put in place as the result of your data analysis?
- What plan is in place to monitor this process?

Holding Divisions Accountable for Improving Schools and Student Performance, Particularly for Turning Around Priority Schools

In addition to the statewide accountability system described in Question 2.A.i and 2.F, the state

provides extensive support and guidance to ensure divisions, together with the selected LTP(s) or other external partner(s), implement one of the four USED intervention models aligned with the USED turnaround principles in priority schools. State-approved personnel work closely with a division team to monitor division- and school-level improvement efforts. This technical assistance is monitored by a monthly reporting system.

As in the current SIG schools, Virginia will continue to monitor the reform practices of all LTPs assigned to priority schools. OSI will intervene and facilitate discussions for required changes to the statement of work (SOW), if needed.

VDOE continues to provide ongoing technical assistance to the LTP, division and school staff. In most cases, the transformation work requires different skill-sets and resources than those used in past improvement efforts. Many of the LTPs have managed or have been strongly involved in the management of school improvement efforts in the past, but the prescriptive requirements of the USED models require changes, some significant, to the LTP models. OSI holds a series of at least five group technical assistance sessions for the school principals, division staff, and LTPs to ensure implementation meet all requirements of the selected model.

The state monitors the implementation of school improvement interventions in priority, as well as focus and other schools, on a cyclical basis.

Ensuring Sufficient Support for Implementation of Interventions in Priority Schools, Focus Schools, and other Title I Schools Identified under the SEA's Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, and Support System, Including through Leveraging Available Funds

As described in the responses to Questions 2.D.iii, 2.E.iii, and 2.F, the state provides support to schools missing SOA targets through the academic review process and requires divisions with priority and focus schools to hire partners to assist in the implementation of improvement strategies. The state gives priority to divisions with schools identified as priority schools in the awarding of Section 1003(a) and 1003(g) school improvement funds, as available. To supplement the amount the state may award to divisions with priority schools, these divisions may also reserve an appropriate portion of their Title I, Part A, funds, not to exceed 20 percent as currently allowable under ESEA, to implement the requirements of one of the four USED intervention models aligned with the turnaround principles. If 1003(a) funds remain available after awarding funds to divisions with priority schools, the state prioritizes remaining 1003(a) funds for awards to divisions with focus schools that have the greatest subgroup performance gaps. These divisions may also reserve an appropriate portion of their Title I, Part A, funds, not to exceed 20 percent, to: 1) hire ~~a~~ state-approved personnel to provide guidance and technical assistance in the improvement planning process and in the implementation of strategies to improve the performance of proficiency gap groups and individual subgroups; and 2) carry-out the implementation and monitoring of improvement strategies.

Divisions with other Title I schools, not identified as priority or focus schools, but identified as not meeting federal achievement benchmarks, may also reserve a portion of their Title I, Part A, funds, not to exceed 20 percent, to support intervention strategies for underperforming groups of students through the school allocation or other allowable federal or state funds, as deemed necessary and appropriate through local planning efforts.

Support for All Schools, Including Schools Not Identified as Priority or Focus Schools

Non-priority and non-focus Title I schools failing to meet reading or mathematics participation or performance AMOs or the federal graduation indicator for any subgroup, including all students, proficiency gap groups, and individual subgroups, and schools not *Fully Accredited* are required to use a state-determined comprehensive improvement planning tool to plan, monitor, and implement a plan for improvement. Currently, *Indistar*® is the state-determined tool used to plan, monitor, and implement a plan for improvement. The state-determined school improvement planning tool is also available to non-Title I schools not meeting any AMO as well.

To ensure that Title I high schools not meeting the FGI rate take action to improve the rate of students graduating on time, any Title I high school not meeting the FGI rate is required to use the Virginia Early Warning System (VEWS). The VEWS indicators are based upon predictors of drop out and graduation that have been validated by national research and by four Virginia school divisions that participated in a pilot program. The VEWS data provide quarterly reports to the school team to track progress on selected indicators. The Office of School Improvement provides technical assistance for each school and division using VEWS to inform interventions on graduation rates. More information on VEWS can be found at the following Web site: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/school_improvement/early_warning_system/index.shtml.

Additional services for schools that have significant proficiency gaps, low graduation rates, or participation rates include technical assistance and professional development offered by the Virginia Department of Education as referenced in the responses to Questions 1.A and 1.B:

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities in Virginia are expected to achieve the same standards as their non-disabled peers, through the Virginia *Standards of Learning*. A small number of students with significant cognitive disabilities participate in alternate assessments based on alternate achievement standards as provided for in NCLB. The assessments are based on Aligned Standards of Learning.

The Virginia Board of Education's Regulations Governing Special Education Programs for Children with Disabilities in Virginia require transition planning as part of the IEP for students with disabilities beginning with the first IEP to be in effect when the student turns 14. The Virginia Department of Education also assists students with disabilities in developing self-advocacy skills through the "I'm Determined" initiative. Through this program, students with disabilities are provided knowledge and skills to not only participate in, but also to lead their IEP meetings. Additionally these skills assist students to actively participate in their education as well as planning for careers.

In the area of transition for students with disabilities with the most intensive support needs, there are two model initiatives supported by the Virginia Department of Education: Project SEARCH and the Post-High School Community College Program. Project SEARCH, a business-led model, is a collaborative between school divisions, adult rehabilitative services and local businesses that provide employability skills training and workplace internships that occur entirely in the workplace. The Post-High School Community College Program is an education

model that provides individualized supports to students with significant disabilities seeking postsecondary education to enhance their skills for employment, in an age-appropriate setting. The Department of Education provides support and technical assistance to increase the number of partnerships between school divisions and institutions of higher education.

English Language Learners

English Language Learners (ELLs) in Virginia are expected to achieve the same college- and career-ready content *Standards of Learning* as their English-proficient peers. In addition to achieving content standards, ELLs must also achieve proficiency in the English language.

On September 26, 2007, the Virginia Board of Education adopted the ACCESS for ELLs (Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners) as the statewide English language proficiency (ELP) assessment for Virginia. The ACCESS for ELLs was developed by the World-Class Instructional Design Assessment (WIDA) consortium through a United States Department of Education (USED) Enhanced Assessment grant. On March 19, 2008, the Board adopted the WIDA English Language Proficiency (ELP) standards as the ELP standards for the Commonwealth. Since then, WIDA has released its enhanced version of the ELP standards, referred to as the 2012 Amplification of English Language Development (ELD) Standards. Virginia has continued to use the amplified 2012 WIDA ELD standards as its state ELP standards.

The WIDA ELD standards emphasize the need for academic language to support the four core content areas and thus reinforce the linguistic demands required for LEP students to be successful in Virginia's *Standards of Learning* program. The five WIDA ELD standards are as follows:

- Standard 1: English language learners communicate for **Social and Instructional** purposes within the school setting.
- Standard 2: English language learners communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of **Language Arts**.
- Standard 3: English language learners communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of **Mathematics**.
- Standard 4: English language learners communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of **Science.**
- Standard 5: English language learners communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of **Social Studies**.

The WIDA ELD standards support the English language development of ELLs to provide the foundation for them to achieve academically in all content areas. The five WIDA ELD standards are represented in the following grades/grade clusters: K, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9-10, 11-12. Additionally, each standard encompasses five levels of English language proficiency as well as the four language domains. The levels of English language proficiency are: entering, emerging, developing, expanding, and bridging. The four language domains are: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

In 2009, Virginia prepared both a PreK–5 and a Grades 6 – 12 crosswalk showing the alignment between the WIDA ELD standards and the Virginia *Standards of Learning* in English, mathematics, science, and history and social science. Professional development opportunities

are provided annually to train educators of ELLs in creating lesson plans that align the 2012 amplified ELD standards with recent revisions to the *Standards of Learning*.

Additional information about professional development for teachers of ELLs is provided later in this section.

Assistance to All At-Risk Students

- **Project Graduation**, which provides remedial instruction and assessment opportunities for students at risk of not meeting the Commonwealth's diploma requirements. Project Graduation includes remedial academies during the school year and summer.
- **Algebra Readiness Initiative**, which provides assistance in preparing students for success in algebra. School divisions receive incentive payments to provide mathematics intervention services to students in grades 6-9 who are at-risk of failing the Algebra I end-of-course test as demonstrated by their individual performance on diagnostic tests that have been provided or approved by the Virginia Department of Education.
- **Virginia Preschool Initiative**, which distributes state funds to schools and community-based organizations to provide quality preschool programs for at-risk four-year-olds not served by Head Start.
- **Early Intervention Reading Initiative** (EIRI), which provides early reading intervention services to students in kindergarten through the third grade who demonstrate reading deficiencies reflected in each student's performance on the state-approved literacy screener, The Phonological and Literacy Screening (PALS) assessment. Legislation passed by the 2012 General Assembly and budget language in the 2012-2014 biennial budget increased funding for EIRI to provide reading intervention services to 100 percent of eligible students in grade three prior to promotion to grade four. Previously, funding had been provided to serve 25 percent of eligible third-grade students. In doing this, the General Assembly also made participation in EIRI at third grade a requirement within the Standards of Quality. Legislation passed by the 2013 General Assembly added kindergarten and grades one and two to the requirement that local school divisions provide early intervention services to students in grade three who demonstrate deficiencies based on their individual performance on diagnostic reading tests.
- **Virginia's Early Warning System**, which relies on readily available data – housed at the school – to predict which students are at risk for dropping out of high school; target resources at the school- and division-level to support students not on track to graduate while they are still in school and before they drop out; and examine patterns and identify school climate issues that may contribute to disproportionate dropout rates.

Additionally, Early childhood programs in Virginia's public schools provide a foundation for learning and academic success. School-readiness activities focus on phonological awareness, vocabulary, number sense and physical, motor and social development. The Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI) began in 1997 and distributes state funds to schools and community-based organizations to provide quality preschool programs for at-risk four-year-olds not already served by Head Start. School readiness describes the capabilities of children, families, schools and communities that promote student success in kindergarten and beyond. Each component plays an essential role in the development of school readiness. In 2013, the Board received the revised Virginia Foundation Blocks for Early Learning: Comprehensive Standards for Four-Year-Olds (PDF) which are aligned to the current K-12 *Standards of Learning*. In addition to the Foundation Blocks, support documents include:

- Preschool Curriculum Review Rubric and Planning Tool (PDF) – This rubric is designed to assist early childhood educators with reviewing curricula and products to determine if they align with the Virginia Foundation Blocks for Early Learning.
- Virginia's Quality Indicators for Responsive Teaching: Creating a High Quality Preschool Learning Environment (PDF) – This checklist aligns with the preschool standards and helps teachers, parents, and administrators focus on creating shared, active, and hands-on opportunities for young children to develop their full potential.

In addition to providing content area Curriculum Frameworks, the Department of Education works with practitioners to develop sample lesson plans that reflect the content included in the *SOL* and the Curriculum Frameworks. The *SOL* Enhanced Scope and Sequence is a searchable database of lesson plans that incorporate Universal Design for Learning (UDL). These lesson plans were designed to include multiple means of representation, activity, and engagement for students. Teachers of special education and LEP students were included among the practitioners to ensure the lesson plans included suggestions and differentiated instructional strategies to meet the needs of all students. The *Mathematics SOL Enhanced Scope and Sequence Sample Lesson Plans* provide teachers with sample lesson plans that are aligned with the essential understandings and essential knowledge and skills found in the Curriculum Frameworks for the 2009 *Mathematics SOL*. The *English SOL Enhanced Scope and Sequence Sample Lesson Plans* reflect the 2010 *English SOL* and were released in summer 2012. The Enhanced Scope and Sequence Sample Lesson Plans include resources and specific methods for differentiating the lessons for students with disabilities and English language learners.

Support for Teachers of LEP Students and Students with Disabilities

General instruction, special education, and English as a second language (ESL) staff at the Department of Education work closely to ensure that materials developed and professional development provided serve students with disabilities and LEP students. Recent examples include the involvement of special education teachers and ESL teachers in the development of the *English and Mathematics Enhanced Scope and Sequence Sample Lesson Plans* mentioned earlier and their strong collaboration in developing the programs for the From Vision to Practice Annual Institutes in 2011, 2012 and 2013.

A number of resources and services are also available to schools to assist teachers in helping LEP students demonstrate their ability to understand, read, and write English in order to function and be successful in school and in American society. Most of these resources are made available or announced on the ESL Instructional Web page. Examples include:

- A two-day training entitled "Academic Language Development for English Learners (ELs)" was offered during November 2011 for elementary and secondary educators of ELLs. The World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA®) academic trainings were held in November 2011 in four areas in the state and focused on providing instructional strategies to increase academic language development among ELLs.
- The "Fall Professional Development Academy for K-12 Teachers of English Language Learners (ELLs)" was held at two locations for six Saturdays, September through December 2011. The academy is designed to assist students in communicating effectively in English, both in and out of school.
- Continued annual institutes and graduate level courses on the WIDA ELD Standards and ACCESS for ELLs assessment and instructional strategies and differentiation for ELLs in

the core content areas.

In 2014, the Department of Education partnered with the Appalachian Regional Comprehensive Center (ARCC) to develop and implement strategies for: 1) enhancing the technical expertise of Department instructional staff to provide support to educators of ELLs; 2) increasing support to ELLs in rural areas; 3) increasing statewide ELL graduation rates; and 4) supporting students dually identified as ELL and SWD. As part of this effort, the ESL staff at the Department provide intra-agency training on the WIDA ELD standards and ACCESS for ELLs assessment results and collaborate with the Division of Special Education and Student Services to provide training to school divisions on serving dually identified students.

The Virginia Department of Education also directs and supports regional T/TACs (Training/Technical Assistance Centers) based in seven institutions of higher education that comprise a statewide system emphasizing collaboration in the planning and provision of services to improve educational opportunities and contribute to the success of children and youth with disabilities (birth - 22 years). The T/TACS provide quality training and technical assistance in response to local, regional, and state needs. T/TAC services increase the capacity of schools, school personnel, service providers, and families to meet the needs of children and youth. The T/TACs meet these needs through activities such as consultation, long-term systems change initiatives, information services, linking and networking resources together, a lending library of multimedia resources and technology, referral to other services, and workshops. In addition to responding to requests for services, T/TAC staff members are deployed to schools and school divisions identified by the Virginia Department of Education as needing improvement through the School Improvement Office and/or the Office of Special Education Program Improvement. Throughout the school improvement process, school divisions can also request specific training and technical assistance from their local T/TAC. The Virginia Department of Education has a comprehensive database of requests made to the T/TACs and the services provided, which is monitored to determine how schools and school divisions access those services.

In 2010, the Virginia Department of Education and Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) established the Center of Excellence for Autism Spectrum Disorders. A collaborative venture of the Department of Education and VCU's Schools of Education and Medicine, the center serves as a focal point for research, professional development, and targeted technical assistance in implementing research-based effective practices and comprehensive services for students with autism. The center is funded through a start-up grant from the Department of Education.

In 2013 the Virginia Department of Education will again partnered with Virginia Commonwealth University and its Research Rehabilitation and Training Center (RRTC) in the establishment of the Center on Transition Innovations (CTI). CTI serves as a statewide center on the development, dissemination, and evaluation of effective practices aimed at assisting students with disabilities in transitioning from the K-12 school system to postsecondary education, training and competitive integrated employment. A main focus of the Center in its first year of implementation is to collect online resources and training opportunities designed to support educational professionals, families and students with effective transition planning and support. The Center on Transition Innovation will also serve as a mechanism to bring all of the resources and initiatives around best practices for students planning for transition under one statewide structure.

Additionally, Virginia's strong Response to Intervention (RtI) initiative has evolved over the years to the Virginia Tiered System of Supports (VTSS), a framework and philosophy that provides resources and support to help every student be successful in academics and behavior. It begins with systemic change at the division, school and classroom level that utilizes evidence-based, system-wide practices to provide a quick response to academic and behavioral needs. These practices include frequent progress-monitoring that enable educators to make sound, data-based instructional decisions for students. The following initiatives fall under the VTSS umbrella; Response to Intervention (RTI), Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and Content Literacy Continuum (CLC). The VTSS guide (PDF) completed in 2012 provides information to support division leaders in implementing VTSS divisionwide research-based best practices and evidence from expert educators. This information will support division leadership teams as they assemble the structures necessary at all levels.

In the fall of 2014, the Virginia Department of Education was awarded two five-year grants, the School Climate Transformation grant (SCT) from USED and the Project Aware grant from the Federal Health and Human Services Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Agency (SAMHSA). The purpose of the grants is to expand the depth and breadth of the VTSS. The Project AWARE SAMHSA initiative integrates mental health promotion, the early identification of students experiencing distress, and access to mental health supports and other social services into the VTSS model. The SCT extents this VTSS transformative framework to several more school divisions with schools in improvement. The Department of Education is partnering with the Center for School/Community Collaboration in the College of Education at the Virginia Commonwealth University to create the VTSS Center for Implementation and Research (VTSS-RIC). This center will conduct research and evaluation, update and develop guidance for systems coaching and training modules, and provide coaches to selected school divisions in improvement. Additionally, the VTSS-RIC will work with a multi-state agency management team that includes representatives from local school divisions and child and family advocacy groups. This team will work to develop a more effective and efficient cross-agency multi-tiered systems approach that engages families and enables all students to achieve their academic potential.

The *Technical Assistance Plan for the Implementation of Virginia's Standards of Learning in English, Mathematics, Science, and History and Social Science* (Attachment 18 – updated 2013) has been recently updated and provides a brief overview of assistance that occurred prior to 2011-2012, assistance that has occurred during school years 2011-2012, 2012-2013, and planned for the current school year. Additional assistance will be developed as data are analyzed following each test administration to determine where to most effectively focus the resources of the Virginia Department of Education. Teachers of special education students and English language learners are included in the activities included in the plan and have equal access to the documents, lesson plans, and other resources provided. Additionally, as described in the previous paragraphs, Virginia's regional TTACs provide specialized supplemental assistance to special education teachers, and the state uses Title III funds to provide supplemental professional development and technical assistance to teachers of English Language Learners.

School Improvement Planning

Virginia has partnered with the Center on Innovations in Learning for six years. A state-

determined comprehensive school improvement planning tool is required for Title I schools that do not meet federal requirements. Currently, *Indistar* is the state-determined tool used. It is an online portal created and managed by the Center on Innovations in Learning, and can be used by any division for any school in Virginia to track, develop, coordinate, and report improvement activities. A number of evidence-based practices and indicators are provided to inform improvement efforts. The system is customized to reflect Virginia's own indicators of effective practice or rubrics for assessment, and allows the school/division to select a set of indicators that differentiate the actions needed for improvement. In addition, Virginia has created a portal in *Indistar*® to collect meeting minutes, quarterly data, and other data throughout the year. The system includes an electronic repository for planning and implementation materials for the teams. "Wise Ways," a component of *Indistar*, provides the research behind each indicator.

Non-priority and non-focus Title I schools failing to meet reading or mathematics participation or performance AMOs or the federal graduation indicator for any subgroup, including all students, proficiency gap groups, and individual subgroups and schools not *Fully Accredited* are required to use a state-determined comprehensive improvement planning tool to plan, monitor, and implement a plan for improvement. Currently, *Indistar*® is the state-determined tool used, and is also available to non-Title I schools not meeting any AMO as well.

To ensure that Title I high schools not meeting the FGI rate take action to improve the rate of students graduating on time, any Title I high school not meeting the FGI rate will be required to use the Virginia Early Warning System (VEWS). The VEWS indicators are based upon predictors of drop out and graduation that have been validated by national research and by four Virginia school divisions that participated in a pilot program. The VEWS data provide quarterly reports to the school team to track progress on selected indicators. The Office of School Improvement will provide technical assistance for each school and division using VEWS to inform interventions on graduation rates. More information on VEWS can be found at the following Web site:
http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/school_improvement/early_warning_system/index.shtml.

The efficacy of Virginia's system for building state, division, and school capacity is premised on the intentional engagement of stakeholders to direct improvement efforts. At the state level, a differentiated system of support has been developed through collaboration among various offices within the Department of Education as well as a multitude of educational partners. Local capacity will be built with targeted and differentiated supports and interventions determined by diagnostic reviews of student performance and practice, well-coordinated, and delivered with quality and accountability.

PRINCIPLE 3: SUPPORTING EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION AND LEADERSHIP

3.A DEVELOP AND ADOPT GUIDELINES FOR LOCAL TEACHER AND PRINCIPAL EVALUATION AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Select the option that pertains to the SEA and provide the corresponding description and evidence, as appropriate, for the option selected.

Option A	Option B
☐ If the SEA has not already developed and adopted all of the guidelines consistent with Principle 3, provide: i. the SEA's plan to develop and adopt guidelines for local teacher and principal evaluation and support systems by the end of the 2011–2012 school year; ii. a description of the process the SEA will use to involve teachers and principals in the development of these guidelines; and iii. an assurance that the SEA will submit to the Department a copy of the guidelines that it will adopt by the end of the 2011–2012 school year (see Assurance 14).	☒ If the SEA has developed and adopted all of the guidelines consistent with Principle 3, provide: i. a copy of the guidelines the SEA has adopted (Attachment 10) and an explanation of how these guidelines are likely to lead to the development of evaluation and support systems that improve student achievement and the quality of instruction for students; ii. evidence of the adoption of the guidelines (Attachment 11); and iii. a description of the process the SEA used to involve teachers and principals in the development of these guidelines.

Governor's 2012 Legislation

The Governor of Virginia initiated bold legislation in the 2012 General Assembly session to eliminate continuing contract status (referred to as tenure in some states) and improve the evaluation process for teachers and principals (includes assistant principals).

Major legislation was passed by the 2012 General Assembly to change the date from April 15 to June 15 for school divisions to notify teachers of contract status for the following school year (§ 22.1-304). This law became effective on July 1, 2012. This change in statute allow~~s~~ed school divisions more time to evaluate teachers and principals and receive results of assessments before making decisions about summative ratings on evaluations. Additional legislation proposed by the Governor in the 2012 General Assembly Session was referred to Senate Education and Health for the 2013 General Assembly Session.

In addition, the Governor's budget requested $277,000 the first year (Fiscal Year 13) and $138,500 the second year (Fiscal Year 14) from the general fund to be used to provide performance evaluation training to teachers, principals, division superintendents. This is in

addition to the funds that were appropriated for the Performance-Pay Pilot that implemented the new *Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers*.

2013 Legislation

Highlighted below are major revisions, passed by the 2013 General Assembly, related to teacher, principal, and superintendent evaluation:

- Changes the process by which teachers and administrators are evaluated. Teachers, assistant principals, and principals are to be evaluated every year, either formally or informally, and such evaluations are to include student academic progress as a significant component and an overall summative rating (§ 22.1-253.13:5; § 22.1-294; § 22.1-295).
- Requires local school board members to participate in high-quality professional development including, but not limited to, the evaluation of personnel (§ 22.1-253.13:5).
- Requires the division superintendent to consider performance evaluations when recommending reassignments or making nonrenewal recommendations of the probationary contract of any principal or assistant principal (§ 22.1-294).
- Changes the deadline for a school board to notify principals, assistant principals, or supervisors under continuing contract status of their reassignment to teaching positions from April 15 to June 15. (§ 22.1-294).
- Requires that teachers employed by local school boards who have achieved continuing contract status shall be formally evaluated at least once every three years and more often as deemed necessary by the principal, and they shall be evaluated informally during each year in which they are not formally evaluated (§22.1-295).
- Requires that any teacher who has achieved continuing contract status who receives an unsatisfactory formal evaluation and who continues to be employed by the local school board shall be formally evaluated in the following year (§22.1-295).
- Permits school boards the flexibility to increase the term of probationary service required before a teacher becomes eligible for continuing contract from three years up to five years (§ 22.1-303).
- Requires a teacher in the first year of the probationary period to be evaluated informally at least once during the first semester of the school year (§ 22.1-303).
- Changes the probationary period from one to up to two years for a teacher who has already obtained continuing contract status in a school division in the Commonwealth but has been hired to serve in another school division, if made part of the contract of employment, (§ 22.1-303).
- Requires a school board to consider performance evaluations of teachers, amongst other things, when implementing reduction in workforce (§ 22.1-30~~3~~4).
  Includes "one or more unsatisfactory performance evaluations" in the definition of "incompetency" (§ 22.1-307).

Code of Virginia

§ 22.1-253.13:5. Standard 5. Quality of classroom instruction and educational leadership.

…B. Consistent with the finding that leadership is essential for the advancement of public

education in the Commonwealth, teacher, principal, and superintendent evaluations shall be consistent with the performance standards included in the Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers, Principals, and Superintendents. Evaluations shall include student academic progress as a significant component and an overall summative rating. Teacher evaluations shall include regular observation and evidence that instruction is aligned with the school's curriculum. Evaluations shall include identification of areas of individual strengths and weaknesses and recommendations for appropriate professional activities.

…C. The Board of Education shall provide guidance on high-quality professional development for (i) teachers, principals, supervisors, division superintendents, and other school staff; (ii) principals, supervisors, and division superintendents in the evaluation and documentation of teacher and principal performance based on student academic progress and the skills and knowledge of such instructional or administrative personnel; (iii) school board members on personnel, curriculum and current issues in education; and (iv) programs in Braille for teachers of the blind and visually impaired, in cooperation with the Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired.
The Board shall also provide technical assistance on high-quality professional development to local school boards designed to ensure that all instructional personnel are proficient in the use of educational technology consistent with its comprehensive plan for educational technology.

…D. Each local school board shall require (i) its members to participate annually in high-quality professional development activities at the state, local, or national levels on governance, including, but not limited to, personnel policies and practices; the evaluation of personnel, curriculum, and instruction; use of data in planning and decision making; and current issues in education as part of their service on the local board and (ii) the division superintendent to participate annually in high-quality professional development activities at the local, state, or national levels, including the Standards of Quality, Board of Education regulations, and the Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers, Principals, and Superintendents.

§ 22.1-294. Probationary terms of service for principals, assistant principals, and supervisors; evaluation; reassigning principal, assistant principal, or supervisor to teaching position.

…A. A person employed as a principal, assistant principal, or supervisor, including a person who has previously achieved continuing contract status as a teacher, shall serve a probationary term of three years in such position in the same school division before acquiring continuing contract status as principal, assistant principal, or supervisor. With such funds as may be appropriated by the General Assembly for such purpose, school boards shall provide each probationary principal, except probationary principals who have prior successful experience as principals, as determined by the local school board in a school division, a mentor, as described in guidelines developed by the Board, during the first year of the probationary period, to assist such probationary principal in achieving excellence in administration.

…B. Each local school board shall adopt for use by the division superintendent clearly defined criteria for a performance evaluation process for principals, assistant principals, and supervisors that are consistent with the performance standards set forth in the Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers, Principals, and Superintendents as provided in § 22.1-253.13:5 and that includes, among other things, an assessment of such administrators' skills and knowledge; student academic progress and school gains in student learning; and effectiveness in addressing school safety and enforcing student discipline. The division superintendent shall implement such performance evaluation process in making employment recommendations to the school board pursuant to § 22.1-293. Principals and assistant principals who have achieved continuing contract status shall be formally evaluated at least once every three years and evaluated informally at least once each year that they are not formally evaluated. Probationary principals and assistant principals shall be evaluated each school year. The division superintendent shall consider such evaluations, among other things, in making recommendations to the school board regarding the nonrenewal of the probationary contract of any principal or assistant principal.

…C. Continuing contract status acquired by a principal, assistant principal, or supervisor shall not be construed (i) as prohibiting a school board from reassigning such principal, assistant principal, or supervisor to a teaching position if notice of reassignment is given by the school board by June 15 of any year or (ii) as entitling any such principal, assistant principal, or supervisor to the salary paid him as principal, assistant principal, or supervisor in the case of any such reassignment to a teaching position.

…D. No such salary reduction and reassignment, however, shall be made without first providing such principal, assistant principal, or supervisor with written notice of the reason for such reduction and reassignment and an opportunity to present his or her position at an informal meeting with the division superintendent, the division superintendent's designee, or the school board. Before recommending such reassignment, the division superintendent shall consider, among other things, the performance evaluations for such principal, assistant principal, or supervisor. The principal, assistant principal, or supervisor shall elect whether such meeting shall be with the division superintendent, the division superintendent's designee, or the school board. The school board, division superintendent, or the division superintendent's designee shall determine what processes are to be followed at the meeting. The decision to reassign and reduce salary shall be at the sole discretion of the school board.

The intent of this section is to provide an opportunity for a principal, assistant principal, or supervisor to discuss the reasons for such salary reduction and reassignment with the division superintendent, his designee, or the school board, and the provisions of this section are meant to be procedural only. Nothing contained herein shall be taken to require cause, as defined in § 22.1-307, for the salary reduction and reassignment of a principal, assistant principal, or supervisor.

22.1-295. Employment of teachers.

…C. School boards shall develop a procedure for use by division superintendents and principals in evaluating teachers that is appropriate to the tasks performed and addresses,

among other things, student academic progress and the skills and knowledge of instructional personnel, including, but not limited to, instructional methodology, classroom management, and subject matter knowledge.

Teachers employed by local school boards who have achieved continuing contract status shall be formally evaluated at least once every three years and more often as deemed necessary by the principal, and they shall be evaluated informally during each year in which they are not formally evaluated. Any teacher who has achieved continuing contract status who receives an unsatisfactory formal evaluation and who continues to be employed by the local school board shall be formally evaluated in the following year. The evaluation shall be maintained in the employee's personnel file.

Each local superintendent shall annually certify divisionwide compliance with the provisions of this section to the Department.

§ 22.1-303. Probationary terms of service for teachers.

…A. A probationary term of service of at least three years and, at the option of the local school board, up to five years in the same school division shall be required before a teacher is issued a continuing contract. School boards shall provide each probationary teacher except probationary teachers who have prior successful teaching experience, as determined by the local school board in a school division, a mentor teacher, as described by Board guidelines developed pursuant to § 22.1-305.1, during the first year of the probationary period, to assist such probationary teacher in achieving excellence in instruction. During the probationary period, such probationary teacher shall be evaluated annually based upon the evaluation procedures developed by the employing school board for use by the division superintendent and principals in evaluating teachers as required by subsection C of § 22.1-295. A teacher in his first year of the probationary period shall be evaluated informally at least once during the first semester of the school year. The division superintendent shall consider such evaluations, among other things, in making any recommendations to the school board regarding the nonrenewal of such probationary teacher's contract as provided in § 22.1-305.

If the teacher's performance evaluation during the probationary period is not satisfactory, the school board shall not reemploy the teacher; however, nothing contained in this subsection shall be construed to require cause, as defined in § 22.1-307, for the nonrenewal of the contract of a teacher who has not achieved continuing contract status. Any teacher hired on or after July 1, 2001, shall be required, as a condition of achieving continuing contract status, to have successfully completed training in instructional strategies and techniques for intervention for or remediation of students who fail or are at risk of failing the Standards of Learning assessments. Local school divisions shall be required to provide said training at no cost to teachers employed in their division. In the event a local school division fails to offer said training in a timely manner, no teacher will be denied continuing contract status for failure to obtain such training.

…B. Once a continuing contract status has been attained in a school division in the Commonwealth, another probationary period need not be served in any other school division unless such probationary period, not to exceed two years, is made a part of the

contract of employment. Further, when a teacher has attained continuing contract status in a school division in the Commonwealth and separates from and returns to teaching service in a school division in Virginia by the beginning of the third year, such teacher shall be required to serve a probationary period not to exceed two years, if made a part of the contract for employment.

…D. Teachers holding three-year local eligibility licenses issued prior to July 1, 2013, shall not be eligible for continuing contract status while teaching under the authority of such license. Upon attainment of a collegiate professional or postgraduate professional license issued by the Department of Education, such teachers shall serve a probationary term of service of at least three years and, at the option of the local school board, up to five years prior to being eligible for continuing contract status pursuant to this section.

§ 22.1-304. Reemployment of teacher who has not achieved continuing contract status; effect of continuing contract; resignation of teacher; reduction in number of teachers.

…G. If a school board implements a reduction in workforce pursuant to this section, such reduction shall not be made solely on the basis of seniority but must include consideration of, among other things, the performance evaluations of the teachers potentially affected by the reduction in workforce.

§ 22.1-305. Nonrenewal of contract of probationary teacher.

…E. In any case in which a teacher requests reasons for the recommendation as provided in this section, written notice of nonrenewal of the contract by the school board must be given either within 10 days after the time for requesting a conference has expired and the teacher has not made a timely request for a conference or, if a conference is requested, within 30 days after the division superintendent notifies the teacher of his intention with respect to the recommendation and the provisions of § 22.1-304 requiring such notice on or before June 15 shall not be applicable.

22.1-307. Dismissal of teacher; grounds.

B. For the purposes of this article, "incompetency" may be construed to include, but shall not be limited to, consistent failure to meet the endorsement requirements for the position or one or more unsatisfactory performance evaluations.

Teacher Evaluation

Virginia has adopted all guidelines required for teacher evaluation.

Background: In response to the *1999 Education Accountability and Quality Enhancement Act* (HB2710 and SB1145) approved by the Virginia General Assembly, the Virginia Board of Education approved the *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers, Administrators, and Superintendents* in January 2000. In May 2008, the Board of Education approved the guidance document, *Virginia Standards for the Professional Practice of Teachers* that responded to a recommendation from the Committee to Enhance the K-12

Teaching Profession in Virginia established by the Board of Education and the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia. In 2010, the Virginia Department of Education embarked on a major statewide initiative to revise the uniform performance standards and evaluation criteria for teachers, principals, and superintendents.

The *Code of Virginia* (state law) requires the Virginia Board of Education to establish performance standards and evaluation criteria for all teachers, principals, and superintendents to serve as guidelines for school divisions to use in implementing educator evaluation systems. The *Code of Virginia* requires that (1) teacher evaluations be consistent with the performance standards set forth in the Board of Education's *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers, Administrators, and Superintendents* and (2) evaluations shall include student academic progress as a significant component and an overall summative rating. It is important to note that the performance standards and evaluation criteria outlined in the *Guidelines* apply to all teachers, including teachers of English language learners and students with disabilities. The 2013 General Assembly passed major legislation to revise state statute impacting teacher evaluation as noted in the section entitled 2013 Legislation.

Teacher Evaluation Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria: Policy Development

July 2010
Work Plan: The Virginia Board of Education received a recommended work plan to develop model teacher and principal evaluation systems.

Comprehensive Study: The Virginia Department of Education established a Teacher Evaluation Work Group, led by expert consultants, and conducted a comprehensive study of teacher evaluation.

August 2010 – March 2011
Teacher Evaluation Statewide Work Group: Teacher Evaluation Work Group meetings were held to develop and recommend uniform performance standards and evaluation criteria for teachers.

February 2011
State Budget Action: Governor Robert F. McDonnell and the General Assembly budgeted $3 million for a Virginia Performance Pay Pilot to be implemented in identified hard-to-staff schools. In addition, Title I School Improvement Grant Funds were designated to support the pilot in low-performing schools. Pilot schools implemented the teacher evaluation system recommended by the Board of Education.

March 2011 and April 2011
Virginia Board of Education Approval: The revised *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers* and the *Virginia Standards for the Professional Practice of Teachers* were presented to the Virginia Board of Education in March 2011 and approved in April 2011.

July 1, 2012
Implementation Date: The Virginia Board of Education approved the *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers* that became effective July 1, 2012; however, school boards and divisions were authorized to implement them prior to July 1, 2012.

Revision of Teacher Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria

At its July 2010 meeting, the Virginia Board of Education received a report from the Virginia Department of Education that provided a work plan to study and develop model teacher and principal evaluation systems that would result in revisions to the Board's uniform performance standards and evaluation criteria. The initial work focused on developing a model teacher evaluation system that could be used by school divisions in making decisions about performance pay.

The Virginia Department of Education established a statewide work group to conduct a comprehensive study of teacher evaluation in July 2010. The work group included teachers, principals, superintendents, human

resources representatives, a higher education representative, and representatives from professional organizations (Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals, Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals, Virginia Association of School Superintendents, Virginia Education Association, Virginia School Boards Association and the Virginia Parent Teacher Association), expert consultants, and Department of Education personnel.

Department of Education staff consulted with the Center for Innovative Technology (CIT) to coordinate the activities of the work group. Working with the Department, CIT engaged the services of two expert consultants to assist in revising the documents, developing revised standards, and creating new evaluation models. The consultants were Dr. James Stronge, Heritage Professor of Educational Policy, Planning, and Leadership, The College of William and Mary; and Dr. Terry Dozier, Associate Professor, Teaching and Learning, and Director, Center for Teacher Leadership, Virginia Commonwealth University. The goals of the work group were to:

- compile and synthesize current research on:
    - comprehensive teacher evaluation as a tool to improve student achievement and teacher performance, improve teacher retention, and inform meaningful staff development, and
    - effective models of differentiated and performance-based compensation including differentiated staffing models;
- examine selected research being conducted by faculty at Virginia colleges and universities involving teacher evaluation and differentiated and performance-based compensation;
- examine existing state law, policies, and procedures relating to teacher evaluation;
- examine selected teacher evaluation systems currently in use across Virginia;
- develop and recommend policy revisions related to teacher evaluation, as appropriate;
- revise existing documents developed to support teacher evaluation across Virginia, including the *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards for Teachers, Administrators and Superintendents* and the *Virginia Standards for the Professional Practice of Teachers* to reflect current research and embed the requirement to consider student growth as a significant factor of all teacher evaluation protocols;
- examine the use of teacher evaluation to improve student achievement with particular focus on high-poverty and/or persistently low-performing schools in Virginia;
- examine the use of teacher evaluation to improve teacher retention and guide meaningful professional development with particular focus on hard-to-staff, high-poverty, and/or persistently low-performing schools in Virginia;
- examine the use of teacher evaluation as a component of differentiated compensation or performance-based compensation both in Virginia and nationally;
- develop new models of teacher evaluation, including a growth model, that can be field tested by selected school divisions;
- provide technical support to selected school divisions as they field test new models; and
- evaluate field test results and use results to refine evaluation models, inform further policy development, inform legislative priorities, and support applications for federal or other grant funding to support further implementation of new evaluation models and performance-based compensation models across Virginia.

Work group meetings were held in Richmond in August 2010, Charlottesville in October 2010, and Newport News in December 2010. The work group concluded its work in December 2010, and a subcommittee of the work group met on March 9, 2011, to review the draft documents.

The work group developed two guidance documents requiring Board of Education approval:

> ***Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers***
> State statute requires that teacher evaluations be consistent with the performance standards (objectives) included in this document and evaluations must address student academic progress. The document is provided as guidance for local school boards in the development of evaluation systems for teachers. It is important to note that the performance standards and evaluation criteria outlined in the *Guidelines* apply to *all* teachers, including teachers of English language learners and students with disabilities.
>
> ***Virginia Standards for the Professional Practice of Teachers***
> The standards in this document define what teachers should know and be able to do, and they establish a foundation upon which all aspects of teacher development from teacher education to induction and ongoing professional development can be aligned. The revised *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers* incorporate these teaching standards. This document serves as a resource for school divisions in the implementation of the Board of Education's performance standards and evaluation criteria for teachers and for colleges and universities in teacher preparation.

An extensive review of research was conducted for the development of the *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers.* A document, *The Research Base for the Uniform Performance Standards for Teachers,* was prepared that provides the research base supporting the selection and implementation of the proposed performance standards and evaluation criteria. This document may be accessed at the following Web site: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/teaching/performance_evaluation/research_base_ups_teachers.pdf. The Board's guidelines are researched-based and emphasize the benefits of a teacher evaluation system that assesses the effectiveness of teachers, identifies areas in need of improvement, makes professional development more individualized, and improves instruction.

Teacher Performance Standards, Including Student Academic Progress

The document, *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers,* sets forth seven performance standards, including student academic progress, for all Virginia teachers. Pursuant to state law, teacher evaluations must be consistent with the following performance standards (objectives) included in this document:

> **Performance Standard 1: Professional Knowledge**
> *The teacher demonstrates an understanding of the curriculum, subject content, and the developmental needs of students by providing relevant learning experiences.*
>
> **Performance Standard 2: Instructional Planning**
> *The teacher plans using the Virginia Standards of Learning, the school's curriculum, effective strategies, resources, and data to meet the needs of all students.*

Performance Standard 3: Instructional Delivery
The teacher effectively engages students in learning by using a variety of instructional strategies in order to meet individual learning needs.

Performance Standard 4: Assessment of and for Student Learning
The teacher systematically gathers, analyzes, and uses all relevant data to measure student academic progress, guide instructional content and delivery methods, and provide timely feedback to both students and parents throughout the school year.

Performance Standard 5: Learning Environment
The teacher uses resources, routines, and procedures to provide a respectful, positive, safe, student-centered environment that is conducive to learning.

Performance Standard 6: Professionalism
The teacher maintains a commitment to professional ethics, communicates effectively, and takes responsibility for and participates in professional growth that results in enhanced student learning.

Performance Standard 7: Student Academic Progress
The work of the teacher results in acceptable, measurable, and appropriate student academic progress.

The first six standards closely parallel the work of the Interstate New Teachers Assessment and Support Consortium as well as the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. The seventh standard adds an increased focus on student academic progress. For each standard, sample performance indicators are provided. In addition, the evaluation guidelines provide assistance to school divisions regarding the documentation of teacher performance with an emphasis on the use of multiple measures for teacher evaluation rather than relying on a single measure of performance.

Teacher Performance Ratings

The evaluation rating scale provides a description of four levels of how well the standards (i.e., duties and responsibilities) are performed on a continuum from *Exemplary* to *Unacceptable.* The use of the scale enables evaluators to acknowledge effective performance (i.e., *Exemplary* and *Proficient*) and provides two levels of feedback for teachers not meeting expectations (i.e., *Developing/Needs Improvement* and *Unacceptable*). The following definitions offer general descriptions of the ratings.

Definitions of Terms Used in Rating Scale

Rating	Description	Definition
Exemplary	The teacher performing at this level maintains performance, accomplishments, and behaviors that consistently and considerably surpass the established standard. This rating is reserved for performance that is truly exemplary and done in a manner that exemplifies the school's mission and goals.	Exceptional performance: • consistently exhibits behaviors that have a strong positive impact on learners and the school climate • serves as a role model to others • sustains high performance over a period of time
Proficient	The teacher meets the standard in a manner that is consistent with the school's mission and goals.	Effective performance: • meets the requirements contained in the job description as expressed in the evaluation criteria • demonstrates willingness to learn and apply new skills • exhibits behaviors that have a positive impact on learners and the school climate
Developing/Needs Improvement	The teacher often performs below the established standard or in a manner that is inconsistent with the school's mission and goals.	Ineffective performance: • requires support in meeting the standards • results in less than quality work performance • leads to areas for teacher improvement being jointly identified and planned between the teacher and evaluator
Unacceptable	The teacher consistently performs below the established standard or in a manner that is inconsistent with the school's mission and goals.	Poor-quality performance: • does not meet the requirements contained in the job description as expressed in the evaluation criteria • may result in the employee not being recommended for continued employment

The *Code of Virginia* requires that school boards' procedures for evaluating teachers address student academic progress as a significant component of an overall summative rating. The Board's *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers* call for each teacher to receive a summative evaluation rating, and that the rating be determined by weighting the first six standards equally at 10 percent each, and that the seventh standard, student academic progress, account for 40 percent of the summative evaluation. There are three key points to consider in this model:

1. Student learning, as determined by multiple measures of student academic progress, accounts for a total of 40 percent of the evaluation.

2. At least 20 percent of the teacher evaluation (half of the student academic progress measure) is comprised of student growth percentiles as provided from the Virginia Department of Education when the data are available and can be used appropriately.

3. Another 20 percent of the teacher evaluation (half of the student academic progress measure) should be measured using one or more alternative measures with evidence that the alternative measure is valid. *Note:* Whenever possible, it is recommended that the second progress measure be grounded in validated, quantitative, objective measures, using tools already available in the school.

It is important to understand that less than 30 percent of teachers in Virginia's public schools will have a direct measure of student academic progress available based on Standards of Learning assessment results. It is also important to note that many teachers in Virginia's public schools will not be provided with SGP data based on Standards of Learning assessment results. SGPs cannot be computed for all teachers since not all subjects and grades have statewide Standards of Learning assessments. When the state-provided growth measure *is* available, it is important that the data be reviewed for accuracy and appropriateness before including in a performance evaluation. Student growth percentiles may be applied to the evaluation when data from at least 40 students are available, possibly from multiple years; data from students are representative of students taught; and data from at least two years are available (three years should be reviewed whenever possible). Guidance for applying student growth percentiles to teacher and principal performance evaluation are provided in Attachment 16.

There must be additional measures for all teachers, including teachers of English language learners and students with disabilities, to ensure that there are student academic progress measures available for teachers who will not be provided with data from the state, and to ensure that more than one measure of student academic progress can be included in evaluations. Quantitative measures of student academic progress based on validated achievement measures that already are being used locally should be the first data considered when determining local progress measures; other measures are recommended for use when two valid and direct measures of student academic progress are not available.

One approach to linking student achievement to teacher performance involves building the capacity for teachers and their supervisors to interpret and use student achievement data to set target goals for student improvement. Setting goals -- not just any goals, but goals set squarely on student performance -- is a powerful way to enhance professional performance and, in turn, positively impact student achievement. *Student Achievement Goal Setting* is designed to improve student learning. *Student Achievement Goal Setting* is designed to improve student learning and is a tool that all teachers (e.g., teachers of students with disabilities, teachers of English Learners, teachers of nontested grades and subjects) can leverage for documenting how their students have made academic progress since the school year began.

Teachers have a definite and powerful impact on student learning and academic performance. The purposes of goal setting include focusing attention on students and on instructional improvement based on a process of determining baseline performance, developing strategies for improvement, and assessing results at the end of the academic year. More specifically, the intent of student achievement goal setting is to:

- make explicit the connection between teaching and learning;
- make instructional decisions based upon student data;
- provide a tool for school improvement;
- increase the effectiveness of instruction via continuous professional growth;

- focus attention on student results; and ultimately
- increase student achievement.

Each teacher, using the results of an initial assessment, sets an annual goal for improving student achievement. The evaluator and the teacher meet to discuss data from the initial assessment and review the annual goal. A new goal is identified each year. The goal should be customized for the teaching assignment and for the individual learners. Student academic progress goals measure where the students are at the beginning of the year, where they are at mid-year, where they are at the end of the year, and *what is the difference*.

Appropriate measures of student learning gains differ substantially based on the learners' grade level, content area, and ability level. The following measurement tools are appropriate for assessing student academic progress:

- criterion-referenced tests;
- norm-referenced tests;
- standardized achievement tests;
- school adopted interim/common/benchmark assessments; and
- authentic measures (e.g., learner portfolio, recitation, performance).

In addition to teacher-generated measures of student performance gains (e.g. teacher developed assessments, performance-based assessments), administrators may conduct schoolwide reviews of test data to identify patterns in the instructional program. Such reports are useful for documenting student gains and for making comparisons.

In choosing measures of student academic progress, schools and school divisions should consider individual teacher and schoolwide goals, and align performance measures to the goals. In considering the association between schoolwide goals and teacher performance, it may be appropriate to apply the state growth measure -- student growth percentiles (SGP) -- as one measure of progress for teachers who provide support for mathematics or reading instruction. For example, a school-level median growth percentile could be applied to all teachers in a grade-level, department, or whole school as one of multiple measures for documenting student academic progress. This would be appropriate only if all teachers were expected to contribute directly to student progress in mathematics or reading. The association between schoolwide goals, grade-level goals, or specific subject area goals and the performance of teachers of students with disabilities and teachers of students of English Learners may be applicable in certain school settings. Ultimately, the choice of how to apply student growth percentiles to teachers who are supporting mathematics and reading achievement would be a local one; it is critical that decisions to apply SGP data to support teachers as part of their evaluation must be made in a manner that is consistent with individual, school, or school division goals.

Forty percent of a teacher's evaluation will be based on multiple measures of student academic progress. The Board's guidelines recommend that when data are available and appropriate, teacher performance evaluations incorporate student growth percentiles (SGPs) as one measure of student academic progress, Standard 7. SGPs provide a statistical measure of relative student growth, and are provided to school divisions by the Virginia Department of Education. SGP data are derived from state assessments in reading and mathematics grades four through eight, and Algebra I.

The Virginia Department of Education continues to develop new guidance materials and resources for school divisions as they move towards implementation of Virginia's revised teacher evaluation system. A guidance document is being developed to support school divisions' appropriate use of SGPs in teacher performance evaluations as summative rating decisions are made on Standard 7, student academic progress. Guidance will be provided for school divisions on 1) when it is appropriate to use SGP data in teacher performance evaluations; 2) how to summarize data for each teacher for multiple years and content areas; and 3) how to synthesize SGP ratings over multiple years and content areas and apply information to summative ratings in the comprehensive teacher performance evaluation. Completing these steps will assist school divisions' successful integration of SGP data into teacher performance evaluation in a manner that is consistent with state Board guidance.

There also are teachers for whom validated achievement measures are not readily available. In these situations, student achievement goal setting provides an approach that quantifies student academic progress in meaningful ways and is an appropriate option for measuring student academic progress.

The Virginia Department of Education is providing technical assistance and professional development to assist school divisions in building capacity for teachers and their supervisors to interpret and use student achievement data to set target goals for student improvement.

The *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers* provide school divisions with a model evaluation system, including sample forms and templates that may be implemented "as is" or used to refine existing local teacher evaluation systems. Properly implemented, the evaluation system provides school divisions with the information needed to support systems of differentiated compensations or performance-based pay.

On April 28, 2011, the Board of Education approved the revised documents, *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers* and the *Virginia Standards for the Professional Practice of Teachers*. The guidelines set forth seven performance standards and call for student academic progress to be a significant factor in the evaluation of all teachers. The documents may be accessed at the following Web site*:* http://www.doe.virginia.gov/teaching/performance_evaluation/index.shtml.

The guidelines and standards became effective statewide on July 1, 2012; however, school boards and divisions were authorized to implement them prior to July 1, 2012. Schools participating in the Governor's Performance-Pay Pilot were required to use the standards and evaluation criteria during the 2011-2012 school year.

2014-2015 Teacher Evaluation Update

Additional guidance and professional development on teacher and principal evaluation is being provided by the Office of School Improvement to school division staff and principals of priority school and schools not fully accredited for two or more years. Professional development includes a focus on improving instruction and instructional leadership practices through implementation of the Board-approved *Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers* and the *Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Principals*.

In addition to the extensive teacher evaluation training materials developed for school divisions (http://www.doe.virginia.gov/teaching/performance_evaluation/teacher/index.shtml), Department staff is engaging in conversations about the development of materials in the area of student achievement goals.

In 2015-2016, Virginia will implement value tables in place of Student Growth Percentiles for use with Virginia's model teacher evaluation system. Guidance provided to Virginia's school divisions will be revised to reflect the use of value tables as one measure of student academic progress. Additional information on Virginia's use of value tables related to teacher evaluation is available in the response to Question 3.B.

Principal Evaluation

Virginia has adopted all guidelines required for principal evaluation.

Background: 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 its 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 principal evaluation systems that would result in revisions to the Board's uniform performance standards and evaluation criteria for teachers and principals.

The Virginia Board of Education is required to establish performance standards and evaluation criteria for teachers, principals, and superintendents to serve as guidelines for school divisions to use in implementing educator evaluation systems. The *Code of Virginia* requires that (1) principal evaluations be consistent with the **performance objectives (standards)** set forth in the Board of Education's *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers, Administrators, and Superintendents* and (2) evaluations shall include student academic progress as a significant component and an overall summative rating.

The Board of Education's performance evaluation standards for principals are mandated statewide. The indicators and procedures used to evaluate each performance standard may be tailored by each school division. The state has provided sample rubrics; however, divisions may design their own rubrics to measure the seven required performance standards. The 2013 General Assembly passed legislation to revise state statute impacting principal evaluation as noted in the section entitled 2013 Legislation.

Revision of Principal Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria

The Virginia Department of Education established a statewide work group to conduct a comprehensive study of principal evaluation in fall 2011. The work group included teachers, principals, superintendents, a human resources representatives, higher education representatives, a parent representative, and representatives from professional organizations (Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals, Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals, Virginia Association of School Superintendents, Virginia Education Association,

Virginia School Boards Association and the Virginia Parent Teacher Association), expert consultants, and Department of Education personnel.

The goals of the principal evaluation work group were to:

- develop and recommend policy revisions related to principal evaluation, as appropriate;
- compile and synthesize current research related to principal evaluation and principal performance standards;
- examine existing state law, policies, and procedures relating to principal evaluation;
- establish the use of multiple data sources for documenting performance, including opportunities for principals to present evidence of their own performance as well as student growth;
- develop a procedure for conducting performance reviews that stresses accountability, promotes professional improvement, and increases principals' involvement in the evaluation process;
- revise existing documents developed to support principal evaluation across Virginia, including the *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards for Teachers, Administrators, and Superintendents* to reflect current research and embed student growth as a significant factor of principal evaluation protocols; and
- examine the use of principal evaluation to improve student achievement.

Work group meetings were held in Richmond in October and December 2011. The work group concluded its work in early December 2011, and a subcommittee of the work group met later in December 2011 to review the *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Principals* before the final recommendation was made to the Virginia Board of Education.

Principal Evaluation Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria: Policy Development

July 2010
Work Plan: The Virginia Board of Education received a recommended work plan to develop model teacher and principal evaluation systems.

August-September 2011
Comprehensive Study: The Virginia Department of Education established a Principal Evaluation Work Group to conduct a comprehensive study of principal evaluation.

Expert Consultants: The Virginia Department of Education secured expert consultants led by Dr. James Stronge, heritage professor of educational policy, planning, and leadership at The College of William and Mary to assist with the development of the principal evaluation system.

October-December 2011
Principal Evaluation Work Group: The Principal Evaluation Work Group meetings were held to develop and recommend uniform performance standards and evaluation criteria for principals.

January and February 2012
Virginia Board of Education Approval: The revised document, *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Principals*, were presented to the Virginia Board of Education in January 2012 and approved in February 2012.

May 2012
Statewide Training Materials: New resources, *Training Materials for the Implementation of Virginia's Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Principals*, were developed and posted for use by all school divisions.

July 1, 2013
Implementation Date: The Virginia Board of Education approved the *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Principals* to become effective July 1, 2013; however, school boards and divisions were authorized to implement them prior to July 1, 2013.

An extensive review of research was conducted in the development of the *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Principals*. A document, *Research Synthesis of Virginia Principal Evaluation Competencies and Standards*, was prepared that

provides the research base supporting the selection and implementation of the proposed performance standards and evaluation criteria.

Principal Performance Standards, Including Student Academic Progress

The *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Principals* set forth seven performance standards for all Virginia principals. The performance standards refer to the major responsibilities and duties performed by a principal. For all principals there is a set of standards unique to the specific position that serves as the basis of the principal evaluation.

Pursuant to state law, principal evaluations must be consistent with the following performance standards (objectives):

Performance Standard 1: Instructional Leadership
The principal fosters the success of all students by facilitating the development, communication, implementation, and evaluation of a shared vision of teaching and learning that leads to student academic progress and school improvement.

Performance Standard 2: School Climate
The principal fosters the success of all students by developing, advocating, and sustaining an academically rigorous, positive, and safe school climate for all stakeholders.

Performance Standard 3: Human Resources Management
The principal fosters effective human resources management by assisting with selection and induction, and by supporting, evaluating, and retaining quality instructional and support personnel.

Performance Standard 4: Organizational Management
The principal fosters the success of all students by supporting, managing, and overseeing the school's organization, operation, and use of resources.

Performance Standard 5: Communication and Community Relations
The principal fosters the success of all students by communicating and collaborating effectively with stakeholders.

Performance Standard 6: Professionalism
The principal fosters the success of all students by demonstrating professional standards and ethics, engaging in continuous professional development, and contributing to the profession.

Performance Standard 7: Student Academic Progress
The principal's leadership results in acceptable, measurable student academic progress based on established standards.

Included within the *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Principals* are guidelines for implementing Virginia's Principal Evaluation System. Virginia's Principal Evaluation System is a performance appraisal process that articulates

the duties and responsibilities of principals and the criteria by which to judge their effectiveness. It is designed to help focus principals as they implement practices to improve student learning and to support the professional growth of school and division staff. The system is used both formatively and summatively for improvement and accountability.

Principal Performance Ratings

The major consideration used to assess job performance during the principal's summative evaluation is documentation of the actual performance of the standards through evidence. To assist with making a judgment regarding performance on each of the ratings a four-point rating scale along with performance appraisal rubrics for each of the principal standards are provided as part of Virginia's Principal Evaluation System.

The rating scale consists of four levels of how well the performance standards are performed on a continuum from *Exemplary* to *Unacceptable*. The use of the scale enables evaluators to acknowledge principals who exceed expectations (i.e., *Exemplary*), note those who meet the standard (i.e., *Proficient*), and use the two lower levels of feedback for principals who do not meet expectations (i.e., *Developing/Needs Improvement* and *Unacceptable*). The following definitions offer general descriptions of the ratings:

Definitions of Terms Used in Rating Scale

Rating	Description	Definition
Exemplary	The principal performing at this level maintains performance, accomplishments, and behaviors that consistently and considerably surpass the established performance standard, and does so in a manner that exemplifies the school's mission and goals. This rating is reserved for performance that is truly exemplary and is demonstrated with significant student academic progress.	Exceptional performance: • sustains high performance over the evaluation cycle • empowers teachers and students and consistently exhibits behaviors that have a strong positive impact on student academic progress and the school climate • serves as a role model to others
Proficient	The principal meets the performance standard in a manner that is consistent with the school's mission and goals and has a positive impact on student academic progress.	Effective performance: • consistently meets the requirements contained in the job description as expressed in the evaluation criteria • engages teachers and exhibits behaviors that have a positive impact on student academic progress and the school climate • demonstrates willingness to learn and apply new skills

Developing/ Needs Improvement	The principal is starting to exhibit desirable traits related to the standard, but has not yet reached the full level of proficiency expected or the principal's performance is lacking in a particular area. The principal often performs less than required in the established performance standard or in a manner that is inconsistent with the school's mission and goals and results in below average student academic progress.	Below acceptable performance: • requires support in meeting the standards • results in less than expected quality of student academic progress • requires principal professional growth be jointly identified and planned between the principal and evaluator
Unacceptable	The principal consistently performs below the established performance standard or in a manner that is inconsistent with the school's mission and goals and results in minimal student academic progress.	Ineffective performance: • does not meet the requirements contained in the job description as expressed in the evaluation criteria • results in minimal student academic progress • may contribute to a recommendation for the employee not being considered for continued employment

The *Code of Virginia* requires that school boards' procedures for evaluating principals address student academic progress as a significant component of the summative rating. The Board's *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Principals* call~~s~~ for each principal to receive a summative evaluation rating and that the rating be determined by weighting the first six standards equally at 10 percent each, and that the seventh standard, student academic progress, accounts for 40 percent of the summative evaluation. There are three key points to consider in this model:

1. Student learning, as determined by multiple measures of student academic progress, accounts for a total of 40 percent of the evaluation.

2. For elementary and middle school principals:
   - At least 20 percent of the principal evaluation (half of the student academic progress measure) is comprised of the student growth percentiles in the school as provided from the Virginia Department of Education when the data are available and can be used appropriately.
   - Another 20 percent of the principal evaluation (half of the student academic progress measure) should be measured using *Student Academic Progress Goals* with evidence that the alternative measure is valid. ***Note:*** Whenever possible, it is recommended that the second progress measure be grounded in validated, quantitative, objective measures, using tools already available in the school. These should include improvement in achievement measures (e.g., *Standards of Learning* assessment results, state benchmarks) for the school.

3. For high school principals: The entire 40 percent of the principal evaluation should be measured using Student Academic Progress Goals with evidence that the alternative measure is valid. These should include improvement in achievement measures (e.g., *Standards of Learning* assessment results, state benchmarks) for the school.

The *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Principals* provide school divisions with a model evaluation system, including sample forms and templates that may be implemented "as is" or used to refine existing local principal evaluation systems. Properly implemented, the evaluation system provides school divisions with the information needed to support systems of differentiated compensations or performance-based pay.

The ultimate goal of Virginia's Principal Evaluation System is to support principal growth and development. By monitoring, analyzing, and identifying areas of strength and areas for growth within these comprehensive standards, principals and their supervisors can be assured that principal performance is continually enhanced and refined. In other words, leadership development is an ongoing and valued aspect of the Virginia Principal Evaluation System.

Virginia Board of Education Approval of Guidelines and Evaluation Criteria for Principals

The document, *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Principals*, was presented to the Virginia Board of Education for first review on January 12, 2012. The Board of Education adopted the *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Principals* at its February 23, 2012, meeting. The guidelines set forth seven performance standards and call for student academic progress to be a significant factor in the evaluation of all principals. School divisions must have aligned principal evaluation systems with the Board approved performance standards and evaluation criteria for principals by July 1, 2013; however, school boards and divisions were authorized to implement the guidelines and standards prior to July 1, 2013.

2014-2015 Principal Evaluation Update

Additional guidance and professional development on teacher and principal evaluation is being provided by the Office of School Improvement to school division staff and principals of priority school and schools not fully accredited for two or more years. Professional development includes a focus on improving instruction and instructional leadership practices through implementation of the Board-approved *Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers* and the *Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Principals*.

In 2015-2016, Virginia will implement value tables in place of Student Growth Percentiles for use with Virginia's model principal evaluation system. Guidance provided to Virginia's school divisions will be revised to reflect the use of value tables as one measure of student academic progress. Additional information on Virginia's use of value tables related to principal evaluation is available in the response to Question 3.B.

Division Superintendent Evaluation

Background: In response to the *1999 Education Accountability and Quality Enhancement Act* (HB2710 and SB1145) approved by the Virginia General Assembly, the Virginia Board of Education approved the *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers, Administrators, and Superintendents* in January 2000. In 2010, the Virginia Department of Education embarked on a major statewide initiative to revise the

uniform performance standards and evaluation criteria for teachers, principals, and superintendents. The 2013 General Assembly passed legislation to revise state statute impacting superintendent evaluation as noted in the section entitled 2013 Legislation.

The Board of Education is required to adopt performance standards and evaluation criteria for division superintendents to be used by school boards in evaluating superintendents. The Virginia Department of Education established a work group to conduct a comprehensive study of superintendent evaluation in spring 2012. The work group included principals, teachers, superintendents, a human resources representative, a parent representative, and representatives from professional organizations (Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals, Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals, Virginia Association of School Superintendents, Virginia Education Association, Virginia School Boards Association, and the Virginia Parent Teacher Association), expert consultants, and Department of Education personnel. Work group meetings were held in Richmond in April and May 2012. The work group concluded its work in late May 2012, and a subcommittee of the work group met in June 2012 to review the draft documents before the final recommendation was made to the Virginia Board of Education.

On September 27, 2012, the Board of Education approved the revised document, *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Superintendents*. The guidelines and standards became effective on July 1, 2014; however, school boards and divisions were authorized to implement them prior to July 1, 2014.

3.B ENSURE LEAS IMPLEMENT TEACHER AND PRINCIPAL EVALUATION AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS

3.B Provide the SEA's process for ensuring that each LEA develops, adopts, pilots, and implements, with the involvement of teachers and principals, including mechanisms to review, revise, and improve, high-quality teacher and principal evaluation and support systems consistent with the SEA's adopted guidelines.

The Board of Education's performance evaluation standards are mandated statewide. Teacher evaluations shall include regular observation and evidence that instruction is aligned with the school's curriculum. Evaluations shall include identification of area of individual strengths and weaknesses and recommendations for appropriate professional activities.

The indicators and procedures used to evaluate each performance standard may be tailored by each school division. The state has provided sample rubrics; however, divisions may design their own rubrics to measure the seven required performance standards.

The *Code of Virginia* requires teacher, administrator, and superintendent evaluations be consistent with the performance standards approved by the Board of Education. Evaluations shall include student academic progress as a significant component and an overall summative rating. The statute in Virginia requires that each school division must provide professional development for administrative personnel in the evaluation and documentation of teacher and

administrator performance. In addition, state law requires that school boards must develop a procedure for use by division superintendents and principals in evaluating instructional personnel that is appropriate to the tasks performed and addresses, among other things, **student academic progress** [emphasis added] and the skills and knowledge of instructional personnel, including, but not limited to, instructional methodology, classroom management, and subject matter knowledge. The 2013 General Assembly passed legislation to revise state statute impacting teacher, principal, and superintendent evaluation as noted in the section entitled 2013 Legislation.

Teacher and Principal Evaluation Reporting System and Assurance of Compliance

Required Reporting on Teacher and Principal Evaluation in 2010-2011: The Virginia Department of Education developed an automated system to collect and review information from each school divisions on their performance standards and evaluation systems. The first collection was for the 2010-2011 school year and was due to the Virginia Department of Education in August 2011. School divisions were required to submit the following information annually to the Virginia Department of Education:

- Description of the teacher and principal evaluation system;
- How the results of performance evaluations are used in decisions regarding teacher and principal development, compensation, promotion, retention, and removal;
- How student achievement outcomes or student growth data are used as evaluation criteria for both teachers and principals; and
- Information on the number of teachers (by school) and number of principals (by division) receiving each evaluation rating.

The information was collected from the 132 school divisions and is posted on the Department of Education's Web site and reviewed by Department staff.

Required Reporting on Teacher and Principal Evaluation in 2011-2012: As a result of the approval of Virginia's ESEA Flexibility Plan and guidance provided by the United States Education Department (i.e., January 31, 2012, *Federal Register*, page 4666 and 4667; February 2012 USED Revisions to Reporting Requirements under the SFSF Descriptors and Indicators PowerPoint, slide 16; May 2, 2013) the Virginia Department of Education collected evaluation ratings for schools receiving School Improvement Grant (SIG) 1003(g) funds. (SIG schools are required to report these data as a part of the federal grant requirements.) SIG schools submitted a narrative description of how the evaluation system was used to make decisions regarding professional development, employee compensation, employee promotion, employee retention, and employee removal. SIG schools provided definitions of rating levels used. The number of teachers rated at each rating level for each of the domains (performance standards) or the number of teachers rated at each level on summative ratings were submitted. Due to the small number of SIG schools (less than 10) in each school division, rating levels for principals were not collected to ensure that evaluation ratings were not personally identifiable.

Virginia modified its automated system to collect and review data and feedback from school divisions on the implementation of teacher and principal evaluation systems, including use of student academic progress as a part of those systems. In accordance with Virginia's approved ESEA Flexibility Plan, school divisions were required to provide:

1. a narrative description of the teacher and principal evaluation systems used during the 2011-2012 school year;
2. certify that the teacher evaluation system implemented in 2011-2012 included student achievement outcomes or student growth data as an evaluation criteria;
3. certify that the teacher evaluation standards being implemented during the 2012-2013 school year were consistent with the seven Board approved standards; and
4. certify that student academic progress accounted for a total of 40 percent of the summative evaluation for teachers.

Data and feedback from the 2011-2012 TPEC indicated that eight school divisions reported that student academic progress accounted for less than 40 percent of the summative evaluation for teachers during the 2012-2013 school year. The eight identified school divisions were required to submit a corrective action plan describing how the school division would take the necessary steps to ensure that the portion of a teacher's evaluation that is based on Standard 7: Academic Progress is equal to 40 percent of the total evaluation by July 1, 2013. School divisions' progress was monitored throughout the school year. All school divisions have now reported that Standard 7: Academic Progress is weighted as 40 percent of teachers' summative performance rating for the 2013-2014 school year.

Required Reporting on Teacher and Principal Evaluation in 2013-2014: In order to ensure that school divisions established teacher and principal evaluation and support systems that included as a significant factor student academic progress data for all students in determining teacher and principal performance levels, new data collection elements were added to the Virginia Department of Education's automated Teacher and Principal Evaluation Collection System. The Teacher and Principal Evaluation Collection Survey (TPEC-Survey) due to the Virginia Department of Education on September 13, 2013, included gathering data and feedback from school divisions and to certify the following:

1. division's performance standards and evaluation criteria for teachers and principals are consistent with the Board approved performance standards;
2. teachers and principals are given an overall summative performance rating;
3. summative rating levels are being implemented; and
4. student academic progress (Standard 7) accounts for a total of 40 percent of the summative evaluation for teachers and principals.

School division superintendents or designees, reported that 100 percent of Virginia's school divisions are currently implementing teacher and principal evaluation systems that are consistent with Virginia's performance standards and weight Standard 7: Academic Progress as 40 percent of teachers' and principals' summative performance ratings during the 2013-2014 school year.

Certification and Monitoring of Student Academic Progress: The Board of Education *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers and Principals* establish performance evaluation standards that must be used by school divisions in evaluating personnel. These guidelines call for student academic progress to be a significant component of school divisions' evaluation systems for teachers and principals. The Board of Education guidelines define "significant" as 40 percent of the evaluation. In order to ensure

that school divisions have established teacher and principal evaluation and support systems that include as a significant factor student academic progress data for all students in determining teacher and principal performance levels, new data collection elements were added to the Virginia Department of Education's automated Teacher and Principal Evaluation Collection System. Effective in the 2012-2013 school year for teachers and the 2013-2014 school year for principals,* school divisions are required to certify that student academic progress (Standard 7) is a significant component of their overall teacher and principal evaluations. If a school division does not certify that student academic progress is a significant component and comprising at least 40 percent of their evaluation system, the division must submit a corrective action plan to the Virginia Department of Education describing how the division will meet this requirement in the following school year. Department of Education staff will be assigned to work with those school divisions and monitor progress toward meeting the 40 percent requirement. A quarterly progress report will be required to be submitted to the Department of Education.

*Note: The *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers* became effective statewide on July 1, 2012, and the *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Principals* became effective statewide on July 1, 2013.

Next Steps for Teacher and Principal Evaluation Collection: Because teachers and principals are so fundamentally important to school improvement and student academic progress, improving the evaluation of teachers' and principals' performance in Virginia's underperforming schools (priority schools) is a high priority. Virginia's approach to assisting school divisions with increasing student achievement in these schools is maximized by the implementation of Virginia's model teacher and principal evaluation systems.

As described in Principle 2, school divisions with schools newly identified as priority schools will be required to hire a Lead Turnaround Partner (LTP) to implement, at a minimum, all requirements of the USED turnaround principles. As such, Virginia's LTP program is consistent with certain turnaround principles directly aligned to teacher and principal evaluation.

Turnaround Principles: Meaningful interventions designed to improve the academic achievement of students in priority schools must be aligned with all of the following "turnaround principles" and selected with family and community input:

1. Providing strong leadership by:
    - reviewing the performance of the current principal;
    - either replacing the principal if such a change is necessary to ensure strong and effective leadership, or demonstrating to the SEA that the current principal has a track record in improving achievement and has the ability to lead the turnaround effort; and
    - providing the principal with operational flexibility in the areas of scheduling, staff, curriculum, and budget.

2. Ensuring that teachers are effective and able to improve instruction by:
    - reviewing the quality of all staff and retaining only those who are determined to be effective and have the ability to be successful in the turnaround effort;
    - preventing ineffective teachers from transferring to these schools; and
    - providing job-embedded, ongoing professional development informed by the teacher

evaluation and support systems and tied to teacher and student needs.

As a part of supporting the division and school team in ensuring that highly effective teachers are hired to support the instructional program and that students with a high need for highly effective instruction receive the benefits of having a highly effective teacher and principal, all priority schools, including those priority schools designated as School Improvement Grant (SIG) schools, will be required to collect and report the following evaluation data to the Virginia Department of Education: 1) the number of teachers rated at each summative rating level by school (schools with less than ten teachers evaluated will not be reported*); and 2) the number of principals rated at each summative rating level aggregated to the division level (divisions with less than ten evaluated principals of priority schools, including non-SIG schools, will not report principal ratings*). The state will communicate the evaluation data collection requirements to school divisions with non-SIG priority schools in the spring of 2014, and begin collecting data from these schools beginning with the 2014-2015 school year.

* Note: In order to protect personally identifiable evaluation results, schools with less than ten teachers evaluated and school divisions with less than ten principals evaluated will not report ratings.

Support and Monitoring: As part of the Academic Review Process (refer to section 2F), each school division with an identified focus school will engage a contractor from a state-approved list via a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to facilitate division strategies to support the focus school(s). The contractor will help the division build its capacity to support leadership practices to improve teacher effectiveness. This will include providing targeted technical assistance to build school division capacity for implementing Virginia's revised *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers and Principals* and to:

1. Provide leadership and teacher professional development focused on teacher evaluation, including gathering evidence through classroom observations;
2. Provide implementation support and coaching throughout the year for teachers and principals;
3. Provide modeling to principals in giving feedback to teachers;
4. Implement, monitor, and support an intervention model at the school-level; and
5. Build the division's capacity to support low-performing schools and increase student achievement.

Assurance of Compliance Required: Each year as a part of the annual report to the General Assembly on the condition and needs of public education in Virginia, the Board of Education is required to report the level of compliance by local school boards with the requirements of the *Standards of Quality* (state law). As part of the report to the General Assembly, the division superintendent and chairman of the school board must certify divisionwide compliance with the requirements that instructional personnel be evaluated according to the law.

Federal Program Monitoring: As a supplement to the information and data collected through the TPEC system, beginning with federal program monitoring conducted in school year 2014-2015 for the Title II, Part A, program, the monitoring protocol will include questions designed to gauge the extent to which a school division has: 1) fully embedded the state's required performance standards and evaluation criteria in the school division's locally-designed teacher and principal evaluation system; and 2) adequately used results of teacher and principal

evaluations to inform the school division's professional development offerings and educator support system.

Effective Date of Revised Teacher and Principal Professional Standards and Evaluation

On April 28, 2011, the Board of Education approved the revised documents, *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers* and the *Virginia Standards for the Professional Practice of Teachers*. The guidelines and standards became effective statewide on July 1, 2012; however, school boards and divisions were authorized to implement them prior to July 1, 2012. Schools participating in the Governor's Performance-Pay Pilot were required to use the standards and evaluation criteria during the 2011-2012 school year.

The Board of Education adopted the *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Principals* at its February 23, 2012, meeting. As of July 1, 2013, school divisions aligned principal evaluation systems with the Board approved performance standards and evaluation criteria for principals.

Evaluations and Ratings of Teachers and Principals

The *Code of Virginia* (§ 22.1-253.13.5) requires evaluations to include identification of individual strengths and weaknesses and recommendations for appropriate professional activities. Virginia's model teacher and principal evaluation systems are designed to assess the effectiveness of the performance of teachers and principals while identifying the strengths and weaknesses of both teachers and principals. In so doing, evaluation results inform professional development for teachers and principals. In addition to the overall summative rating provided, each of the seven performance standards are evaluated separately providing specific data on performance related to job responsibilities. The Teacher Summative Performance Report and the Principal Summative Performance Report both include the following sections for the evaluator to complete in order to guide professional development: 1) commendations; 2) areas noted for improvement; 3) improvement goals; and 4) recommended for placement on a Performance Improvement Plan.

The model teacher and principal evaluation systems provide two tools that may be used at the discretion of the evaluator. The first is the Support Dialogue, a division-level discussion between the evaluator and the principal – a process to promote conversation about performance in order to address specific needs or desired areas for professional growth. The second is the Performance Improvement Plan which has a more formal structure and is used for notifying a teacher or principal of performance that requires improvement due to less-than-proficient performance and includes professional development activities to be completed by the employee.

Major legislation was passed by the 2012 General Assembly to change the date from April 15 to June 15 for school divisions to notify teachers of contract status for the following school year. This law became effective on July 1, 2012. The *Code of Virginia* (§ 22.1-304), the new deadline for notifying continuing contract teachers of noncontinuation of the contract is June 15; therefore, teacher evaluations need to be completed by June 15 to make personnel

decisions. This change in statute allows school divisions more time to evaluate teachers and receive results of assessments before making decisions about summative ratings on evaluations.

Legislation was passed by the 2013 General Assembly changing the date from April 15 to June 15 for school divisions to notify principals of contract status for the following school year. The *Code of Virginia* (§ 22.1-294) requires a school board to notify principals under continuing contract of their reassignment to teaching positions by June 15; therefore, principal evaluations need to be completed by June 15 to make personnel decisions. This change in statute allows school divisions more time to evaluate principals and receive results of assessments before making decisions about summative ratings on evaluations and before making personnel decisions.

Performance Pay-Incentives Initiative

Performance-Pay Pilot

On July 21, 2011, Governor Bob McDonnell announced that teachers in 25 schools across the Commonwealth would participate in performance-pay pilot programs. With participating schools located in 13 of the 132 school divisions in the Commonwealth, or 10 percent of Virginia's school divisions, the program has broad participation for a pilot. The participating schools must implement the performance standards and model teacher evaluation system approved by the Board of Education in April 2011.

The 2011 General Assembly approved Governor Robert F. McDonnell's request for $3 million to reward teachers in hard-to-staff schools based on student growth and other performance measures during the 2011-2012 school year. The legislation authorizes incentive payments of up to $5,000 for teachers earning exemplary ratings. In addition, incentive payments of up to $3,000 based on performance during 2012-2013 are available for exemplary-rated teachers in participating schools with federal School Improvement Grants. The competitive grant application packet for the Virginia Performance Pay Incentives (VPPI) in Hard-to-Staff Schools may be accessed on the following Web site: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/teaching/career_resources/performance_pay/index.shtml.

Extensive training was held for teams from the 25 pilot schools during the summer of 2011. An additional training was held in October, and another session was held in January 2012. Consultants provided a review of the evaluation components as outlined below:

1. Analyze and provide feedback to principals in the schools on the quality of student achievement goals.
    a. Analysis will be conducted based on "SMART" criteria and "Level of Rigor" rubric.
    b. Selected goals will be revised, as needed, to improve quality based on "SMART" criteria and "Level of Rigor" rubric.
    c. A minimum of four goals or 10 percent of all submitted goals for each school will be selected for analysis and revision.
    d. Recommendations for revisions of selected goals will be delivered to principals.

2. Selected student achievement goals will be collected to create a handbook of recommended goals.
3. Analyze summative ratings of all reported teachers.
    a. Ratings of the seven teacher performance standards will be analyzed to investigate frequency of ratings for each standard.
    b. Patterns for ratings of the seven teacher performance standards will be documented.
    c. Final summative ratings will be analyzed in terms of frequency of ratings for the four levels on the performance appraisal rubric.
    d. A comparison of summative ratings for teachers with student growth percentiles (SGPs) and those without SGPs will be reported.

Site Visits and Support

1. An on-site visit will be made to each of the schools by a member of the Virginia Teacher Evaluation team.
    a. A conference will be held with the school administrative team, as desired by the school administrators, to discuss progress made and support needed as part of the evaluation pilot.
    b. A minimum of one classroom observation of a participating teacher will be conducted with the principal of each school.
    c. Feedback will be provided to the principal of each school regarding areas of inter-rater agreement in the observation and discrepancies in the observation that should be considered.
2. Based on the site visits, additional support that may be beneficial to the administrative team will be provided.
    a. Guidance that may be pertinent to observation will be offered to each principal.
    b. Recommended materials that may be pertinent to improved implementation of the pilot will be provided.

Below is a brief overview of the primary activities, including a timeline, for the Teacher Performance-Pay Initiative.

Project Description	Primary Teacher Performance-Pay Initiative Activities	Timeline
Development of training materials	• Conducted research on performance-pay initiatives • Prepared training materials	Spring 2011
Administrator orientation training in use of teacher evaluation system	• Planned training for administrators and key instructional leaders • Held a three-day workshop– participants received copies of training materials, five texts related to the new system, and electronic access to resources	Summer 2011

Teacher orientation in use of performance evaluation system	• Developed and provided fact sheets to update teachers and other educators on development and design features of new teacher evaluation system • Scheduled school trainings with consultants • Conducted a follow-up webinar for teachers on student achievement goal setting • Held on-site workshops to orient teachers to the evaluation system and introduce student achievement goal setting conducted August-October. • Reviewed goals	Spring 2011 – Fall 2011
Administrator inter-rater reliability training: teacher evaluation	• Planned training workshop materials, including simulations of teacher evaluation • Delivered workshop – one-day training in October was available to administrators in pilot schools • Conducted joint teacher observations with principals and expert consultants	Fall 2011
Administrator training on making summative decisions	• Planned training workshop materials, including simulations of teacher evaluation • Delivered workshop (held January 26, 2012)	Winter 2012
Training Materials and Continued Support	• Produced the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document and an electronic newsletter with updates and new resources • Posted sample goals and appropriate assessments on Wiki • Conducted follow-up session from October training	Fall 2011-Spring 2012
Pilot year evaluation	• Conduct an evaluation of the pilot by outside evaluators	Fall 2011 - Fall 2012
Refinement of teacher evaluation system	• Reconvene teacher design team to review pilot year results and modify evaluation system, as needed • Revise teacher evaluation system based on recommendations from design team	Fall 2012

Training and On-Site Support for Pilot Schools

Extensive training on teacher evaluation was held for teams from the 25 pilot schools during the summer of 2011. An additional training was held in October 2011, and another session was held in January 2012.

Expert consultants, with national expertise on teacher evaluation, provided extensive training to the school divisions participating in the pilot. In addition to the professional development workshops, the consultants will provide additional support to the schools, including the following:

1. Analyze and provide feedback to principals in the schools on the quality of student achievement goals.
    a. Analysis will be conducted based on "SMART" criteria and "Level of Rigor" rubric.
    b. Selected goals will be revised, as needed, to improve quality based on "SMART" criteria and "Level of Rigor" rubric.
    c. A minimum of four goals or 10 percent of all submitted goals for each school will be selected for analysis and revision.
    d. Recommendations for revisions of selected goals will be delivered to

principals.

2. Collect selected student achievement goals to create a handbook of recommended goals.
3. Analyze summative ratings of all reported teachers.
    a. Ratings of the seven teacher performance standards will be analyzed to investigate frequency of ratings for each standard.
    b. Patterns for ratings of the seven teacher performance standards will be documented.
    c. Final summative ratings will be analyzed in terms of frequency of ratings for the four levels on the performance appraisal rubric.
    d. A comparison of summative ratings for teachers with student growth percentiles (SGPs) and those without SGPs will be reported.

In addition, the following on-site support will be provided to each of the pilot schools:

1. An on-site visit will be made to each of the schools by a member of the Virginia Teacher Evaluation team.
    a. A conference will be held with the school administrative team, as desired by the school administrators, to discuss progress made and support needed as part of the evaluation pilot.
    b. A minimum of one classroom observation of a participating teacher will be conducted with the principal of each school.
    c. Feedback will be provided to the principal of each school regarding areas of inter-rater agreement in the observation and discrepancies in the observation that should be considered.

2. Based on the site visits, additional support that may be beneficial to the administrative team will be provided.
    a. Guidance that may be pertinent to observation will be offered to each principal.
    b. Recommended materials that may be pertinent to improved implementation of the pilot will be provided.

Training Materials and Professional Development

TRAINING SUPPORT

July-August 2011
Performance-Pay Pilot Training: Six days of extensive training on the *Revised Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers* were provided to administrators and key instructional leaders.

Statewide Training Materials: New resources, *Training Materials for the Implementation of Virginia's Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers*, are posted for use by all school divisions in the state at the following Web site: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/teaching/performance_evaluation/index.shtml.

October 2011
Performance-Pay Pilot Training: Administrators and key instructional leaders received training in the Student Achievement Goal Setting process.

Teacher Evaluation Statewide Training: The Virginia Department of Education collaborated with the Virginia Association of School Superintendents to launch a workshop series for school division leaders, school leaders, and lead teachers on improving teacher performance by improving teacher evaluation using Virginia's model evaluation system.

Student Growth Percentiles Statewide Training: The Virginia Department of Education partnered with The Center for Educational Partnerships at Old Dominion University (TCEP) and the Center for Innovative Technologies (CIT) to develop and deliver professional development workshops designed to increase division leadership teams' knowledge of the student growth measure and how it can be used as a tool to inform decision making. Student Growth Percentiles are one of the recommended measures to be used for making teacher and principal evaluation decisions.

December 2011
State Budget Action: The Governor's 2012-2014 Introduced Budget requested funding in Fiscal Year 2013 and Fiscal Year 2014 for the Department of Education to conduct intensive, training of principals, division superintendents, and other administrators who will conduct evaluations using the revised uniform performance standards and guidelines.

January 2012
Performance-Pay Pilot Training: Administrators and key instructional leaders received training in making summative rating decisions on each teacher performance standard and an overall summative rating using the state recommended four-level rating scale.

Spring 2012
Performance-Pay Pilot Training: Expert consultants provided support to the pilot schools.

Summer 2012 – Fall 2013
Refer to Attachment 18 for training support provided Summer 2012 through Fall 2013.

Training materials, accessible on the following Web site: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/teaching/performance_evaluation/index.shtml, were developed for the 2011-2012 performance pay pilot schools. The training materials are intended to help all school divisions in aligning their current evaluation systems with the revised *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers*. The training materials provide practice in implementing a teacher evaluation system that is aligned with the guidelines through simulations and activities. Based on the implementation of the teacher evaluation system by pilot schools, there may be revisions to these training materials. Additionally, training materials will be available to assist all Virginia school divisions in aligning their evaluation systems with the revised *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Principals*.

The Governor's 2012-2014 Introduced Budget requests funding in Fiscal Year 2013 and Fiscal Year 2014 for the Department of Education to conduct intensive, training of principals, division superintendents, and other administrators who will conduct evaluations using the revised uniform performance standards and guidelines. By undergoing this training, principals, division superintendents, and other administrators will have the opportunity to be documented as trained evaluators of teachers and principals based on the Board's uniform standards and criteria. Two waves of on-site training are being planned, for evaluators of teachers and evaluators of principals.

In order to ensure that all school divisions have the capacity to implement teacher evaluation that aligns with the Board of Education's *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers*, extensive training will be provided to teams of evaluators from each school division during the summer of 2012. These nine regional Teacher Evaluation Summer Institutes will be offered through a train-the-trainer delivery method. School divisions will be encouraged to send a team of educators, including individuals who work with teachers of students with disabilities and teachers of English Learners, who will be responsible for returning to the school division to train evaluators and teachers in the evaluation system. Follow-up training will be offered later in the 2012-2013 school year to assist school divisions' teams in the ongoing implementation process. Topics of focus for the institutes and follow-up training will include the following:

- using multiple measures of student academic progress for evaluating teacher performance Standard 7 (e.g., what assessments can be used, what criteria should be used before using the assessment, use of teacher-developed assessments, use of performance-based assessments, determining validity of assessments);
- implementing student achievement goals setting;
- determining teacher performance on Standards 1- 6 with multiple measures (e.g., student surveys, observations, document logs, portfolios);
- using teacher evaluations to promote differentiated professional development;
- working with teachers who instruct students with disabilities and English Learners; and
- establishing inter-rater reliability.

Training materials developed and used in the regional training sessions are made available for use by all school divisions in conducting more intensive sessions at the local level.

Evaluation of the Performance-Pay Pilot

The Virginia Department of Education secured an outside evaluator to determine the outcomes of the pilot, the quality of the training provided, the strengths and weaknesses of the teacher evaluation standards and performance-pay model, and the lessons learned from the pilot. Results will be used to inform the state as school divisions implement revised teacher evaluation systems.
The evaluation of the performance-pay pilot will serve to answer key questions regarding the implementation of the revised *Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers* and the use of the state's performance-pay model. Key questions to be answered include:

1. What were the outcomes of the pilot (e.g., summative ratings of participating teachers, number of teachers receiving performance pay)?;
2. What was the quality of the training and technical assistance provided by the state to implement the performance-pay model?;
3. What lessons were learned in the pilot period about the implementation of the Pay for Performance model overall?;
4. What if any were challenges in the implementation of the *Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers*?;
5. What if any were the suggested changes to the performance standards for teachers?; and
6. What were the attitudes and beliefs of participants regarding the performance-pay pilot?

Answers to these questions will be used to inform and guide the ongoing and future work of teacher evaluation both at the state and local levels.

A Pilot: Strategic Compensation Initiative Grants

Former Governor Robert F. McDonnell and the 2013 General Assembly approved the Strategic Compensation Grants (SCG) initiative for fiscal year 2014. The grants were awarded for fiscal year 2014 (July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2014).

The groups or types of teachers targeted for incentives in the compensation system were designated in the proposals submitted by interested school divisions. Specific proposal requirements included the following:

1. Provide a detailed description of the school division's compensation system that provides incentives based on the division's strategic goals and objectives; clearly identify in the proposal the division's strategic goals and objectives.
2. Provide a detailed description of how the division will meet the following required criteria:
   a. stakeholder involvement in the development and implementation of the strategic compensation model at the school division;
   b. evaluation of teachers in the initiative using an effective evaluation system with quality measure systems, consistent with the Board of Education's evaluation standards and criteria, including a weight of 40 percent on student academic progress for the summative evaluation;
   c. measurable and appropriate achievement goals for student academic progress (a significant component of the model for awarding incentives); and
   d. professional development, an integral component of the model, including how a teacher will be supported to develop a school culture of teaching and learning, to improve instruction, and to increase student achievement.
3. Designate the groups or types of teachers targeted for incentives in the compensation system. Incentives may focus on all teachers where quantitative student achievement data are available or specific groups of teachers within a division or school. [Detail the numbers of the teachers targeted for incentives and the schools where these teachers are assigned.] These proposals may include, but are not limited to, the following incentives:

a. rewarding teachers who help students make significant academic progress;
b. rewarding teachers who seek opportunities to assist in the leadership needs of the school division, such as serving as instructional coaches or professional developers;
c. providing pay incentives for effective teachers with needed expertise who are willing to transfer to hard-to-staff or low-performing schools;
d. providing incentives for team performance in schools that achieve student learning goals; or
e. rewarding effective teachers who are assigned to teach critical shortage areas, such as mathematics and special education.

4. Verify that the teacher population eligible to receive an award from the incentive program administered by the local school division and supported by the state SCG initiative must meet the following eligibility criteria as well as other requirements established by the school division to receive incentives:
   a. The teacher must be licensed to teach in Virginia and endorsed in the subject or grade level of the assignment;
   b. In the case of federal core areas, the teacher must be highly qualified;
   c. The teacher must be employed under a teacher contract (substitute teachers, hourly employees, or teacher aides are not eligible for an award);
   d. The teacher must be employed by the local school board and provide or support direct instruction;
   e. The teacher must be evaluated using an effective system, consistent with the evaluations and criteria of the Board, including a weight of 40 percent on student academic progress for the summative rating; and
   f. The teacher receiving the award must be rated as successful, which shall be defined as "proficient or above" in performance evaluation ratings.
5. Provide a detailed narrative budget based on the number of anticipated incentives to teachers that adhere to the following requirements and includes proposed costs. The Budget Summary form in Appendix C must also be included.
   a. Designate incentive payments as a range or tiers for target groups, such as differentiating between the teacher of record or teachers in support positions; proposals shall include the amount of funds requested by the division and the number of anticipated incentives to be awarded.
   b. Have a maximum payment to a teacher of $5,000 per year; in addition, the proposal may include cost of the employer share of the Federal Insurance Contributions Act (FICA) tax.
   c. Request no more than five percent of the grant funding to design and implement, as well as administer, this compensation program, and this funding shall not exceed five percent of the final reimbursement for the year
   d. Prorate payments for teachers who have taught for less than a full school year; and
   e. Performance evaluations for participating teachers must be completed in a timeline that provides sufficient time to distribute incentive funds to teachers and submit reimbursement requests to the Department of Education no later than June 1, 2014.
6. Include a description of how the program will be evaluated to determine whether the division achieved its goal(s) and objectives. Include the data that will be collected; how the data will be reported and analyzed; and the process for identifying weaknesses and making adjustments to address them.

Grant Application Process and Awards

The Secretary of Education partnered with the Virginia Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development to host a one-day Symposium for all interested divisions. The Virginia Department of Education convened an application review panel composed of representatives from the Virginia Association of School Superintendents, Virginia Education Association, Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals and Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals. Thirteen school divisions were awarded Strategic Compensation Initiative Grants.

More than 1,400 teachers in the 13 divisions could receive performance and incentive payments by meeting the goals identified in the applications and earning positive performance evaluations.

2013 Strategic Compensation Grant Recipients

- Amelia County – $536,904 to provide incentive payments of up to $5,000 for 95 teachers who achieve goals related to professional growth, increased parental involvement, increased student achievement and coaching and mentoring other teachers
- Chesapeake – $39,637 to provide incentive payments of $2,500 for 14 teacher coaches selected for their success in raising achievement of low-performing student subgroups
- Cumberland County – $107,650 to provide incentive payments of up to $5,000 for 20 teachers who demonstrate that they have met goals for increasing student learning and achievement
- Dinwiddie County – $471,783 to provide incentive payments of up to $5,000 for 344 teachers who meet goals related to increased student achievement, professional growth and leadership
- Fluvanna County – $212,920 to provide incentive payments of up to $5,000 for 65 teachers at Fluvanna Middle School who meet goals related to increased student achievement and school-wide accountability
- Gloucester County – $331,874 to provide incentive payments of $5,000 for seven lead teachers and payments of $4,000 to 66 middle and high school teachers and intervention specialists who meet goals related to increased student achievement, professional development and improved teaching
- Goochland County – $450,000 to provide incentive payments of up to $5,000 for 135 “exemplary-rated” teachers who meet individual and school-wide goals related to increased student achievement, professional development, improved teaching, community engagement and accepting challenging assignments
- Harrisonburg – $432,011 to provide incentive payments of up to $5,000 for 159 teachers who meet goals related to achieving dual-language endorsements and proficiency in Spanish, including bonuses to attract or retain already qualified teachers
- Lynchburg – $26,250 to provide $5,000 incentive payments to five experienced and successful mathematics teachers selected to serve as coaches for mathematics teachers in the city’s middle and high schools
- Portsmouth – $72,340 to provide incentive payments for 24 middle and high school teachers who meet goals related to increased student achievement in mathematics as

follows: $5,000 for eight master mathematics teachers, $2,000 for eight partner mathematics teachers and $1,000 for eight partner special education teachers

- Roanoke – $706,307 to provide incentive payments of $5,000 for 125 teachers at Garden City Elementary, Morningside Elementary and Westside Elementary who meet performance goals related to increased student achievement
- Salem – $850,000 to provide incentives of up to $5,000 for 302 teachers who meet individual, school and division goals for increased student achievement and use of technology
- Suffolk – $259,975 to provide incentives of up to $5,000 for 46 high school mathematics and special education teachers who meet individual, school and division goals for increased student achievement in mathematics

Approximately 1,236 teachers met the requirements of the grant and received incentive awards.

2014-2015 Update on Growth Measures

For the past several years, Virginia has used student growth percentiles (SGPs) as a measure of growth in its model teacher and principal evaluation system. SGPs measure growth by comparing individual student performance to that of other students with similar score histories. Because of this comparison, SGPs must be calculated each year, and the calculations cannot be prepared until all statewide data are available. This requirement has resulted in growth information not being available to school districts until the early fall of the school year following test implementation. In addition, because SGPs provide a norm-referenced measure of growth, teachers and students are not aware of the score required on the current year's test for students to be considered as having made growth during the school year. Finally, SGPs could not be calculated for Virginia's alternate assessments.

After researching other growth models, Virginia Department of Education staff has determined that value tables would more accurately recognize success in closing the achievement gap than SGPs while providing teachers and principals with growth data more representative of the students being taught in their classroom and schools. The value table model, unlike the SGP model, is based solely on individual student performance from one year to the next and accounts for each student who is closing the achievement gap by moving one step closer to demonstrating proficiency of the state standards. Virginia is planning to begin using value tables as a measure of growth instead of SGPs during the 2015-2016 school year.

A description of the methodology used to establish Virginia's value tables follows. Virginia's reading and mathematics assessments for grades 3-8 have four achievement levels: below basic, basic, proficient and advanced. In the value table model, each of these achievement levels has been divided into two sublevels using the empirical score distributions from the first year that these tests were administered operationally. For example, the below basic achievement level is divided into "low below basic" and "high below basic," and the basic achievement level is divided into "low basic" and "high basic." The Value Table Model allows for the measurement of growth by evaluating the number of sublevels a student moves from one year to the next on the state assessments. For example, a student whose score was in the "low below basic" range on the grade 3 mathematics assessment in 2012-2013 and whose score was in the "low basic" category on the grade 4 mathematics assessments in 2013-2014

has moved two levels.

In the example below, two students who performed in the "low basic" sublevel on their tests in the previous year have performed in the "high basic" sublevel on their tests completed in the current year. The two students are represented in a green cell which signifies students who moved one level from one year to the next. Similarly, values appearing in yellow cells would signify the students who moved two levels, and values appearing in blue cells would signify students who moved three or more levels. Gray cells would represent students who stayed at the same performance level from one year to the next.

Value Table Example

			Current Year (2013-2014)							
			Below Basic		Basic		Proficient		Advanced	
			Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High
Previous Year (2012-2013)	Below Basic	Low								
		High								
	Basic	Low				2				
		High								
	Proficient	Low								
		High								
	Advanced	Low								
		High								

Growth measures for teachers may be determined by evaluating the aggregate growth of the individual students in the teacher's class. Similarly, value tables may be used to derive growth measures for principals by aggregating the growth demonstrated by students in the principal's school.

Since the value table model is not dependent on students having "similar score histories," the process by which student growth is being measured will be easier to explain, and students and teachers will know in advance what score on the current year's test will be necessary for the student to demonstrate growth. In addition, growth data from the value tables should be available soon after the student finishes testing rather than waiting until all test data are available, as is the situation with SGPs. Lastly, this model can be applied to the alternate tests that have been approved as part of Virginia's assessment program as well as to the Standards of Learning (SOL) tests taken by most students; thereby ensuring that a growth measure will be available to additional students who take the state tests.

Additional guidance regarding the application of the value table model to the evaluation of

teachers and principals will be provided to school divisions prior to the 2015-2016 school year. School divisions will be provided with student growth data by teacher for teacher evaluation and student growth data by school for use in principal evaluation.

Endnotes:

[1] Tucker, P. D. & Stronge, J. H. (2005).

[1] Tucker, P. D. & Stronge, J. H. (2005).

Attachment 1 – Notice to Local Educational Agencies (LEAs)

From: McHale, Juanita (DOE) on behalf of Wright, Patricia (DOE)
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2011 10:56 AM
To: McHale, Juanita (DOE)
Subject: SUPTS E-MAIL: ESEA Flexibility Update
Attachments: Schedule of Stakeholder Input.pdf

On Friday, September 23, 2011, the U.S. Department of Education (USED) invited state educational agencies (SEAs) to request flexibility from certain requirements of ESEA, as amended by the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB), in exchange for rigorous and comprehensive state-developed plans designed to improve educational outcomes for all students, close achievement gaps, increase equity, and improve the quality of instruction. In a letter to state chief school officers, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan stated that many NCLB requirements have unintentionally become barriers to state and local forward-looking educational reform efforts not anticipated when the original legislation was enacted in 2001. The flexibility offer is intended to support state and local reform efforts in the areas of college- and career-ready standards and assessments, differentiated support and interventions for underperforming schools, and teacher and principal evaluation systems. Virginia has already advanced significant reform in each of these three areas.

To receive relief from the regulatory requirements impeding progress in the three areas, states will need to submit applications that agree to certain requirements of the ESEA flexibility offer as outlined below. At its meeting on September 22, 2011, the Board of Education endorsed the recommendation of Superintendent Patricia I. Wright, that it submit an application for the flexibility provisions. As part of the process of preparing a flexibility application, the Board is soliciting input from various stakeholder groups, educational organizations, and special interest groups on the following requirements:

College- and Career-Ready Standards and Assessments
To receive flexibility to develop new ambitious but achievable annual measurable objectives (AMOs) in reading/language arts and mathematics, a state must:

- Demonstrate that it has college- and career-ready expectations for all students in the state by adopting college- and career-ready standards in at least reading/language arts and mathematics and implement them statewide;
- Develop and administer annual, statewide, aligned, high-quality assessments that measure student growth in at least grades 3-8 and at least once in high school; and
- Support limited English proficient (LEP) students by adopting English language proficiency standards and assessment that correspond to the state's college- and career-ready standards.

Differentiated Accountability Systems
To receive flexibility from existing ESEA school and division improvement requirements, a state must develop and implement a system of differentiated recognition, accountability, and support for all local educational agencies (LEAs) in the state and for all Title I schools in these LEAs. The statewide system:

- Must consider student achievement in at least reading/language arts and mathematics and all student subgroups required for disaggregation under existing ESEA requirements;

- Must take into account student growth; and
- Must create incentives and include differentiated interventions and support to improve student achievement and graduation rates and close the achievement gaps for all subgroups, including interventions specifically focused on improving the performance of LEP students and students with disabilities.

Teacher and Principal Evaluation and Support Systems
To receive flexibility from existing accountability provisions related to existing ESEA highly qualified teacher requirements, a state and each school division must commit to develop, adopt, pilot, and implement, teacher and principal evaluation and support systems that:

- Will be used for continual improvement of instruction and to inform personnel decisions;
- Differentiate performance using at least three performance levels;
- Including as a significant factor student growth; and
- Require evaluation on a regular basis and provide clear, timely, and useful feedback.

A schedule of opportunities for stakeholder input is attached.

The Board intends to submit a comprehensive state plan aligned with the principles of the USED flexibility offer by mid-February. Pending a spring 2012 approval of Virginia's application, new accountability determinations would be implemented for the 2012-2013 school year based on 2011-2012 assessment results. Additional information about the flexibility offer is available at: http://www.ed.gov/esea/flexibility.

Virginia Department of Education
ESEA Flexibility
October 26, 2011

Schedule of Stakeholder Input

As part of the process of preparing an ESEA Flexibility application, the Virginia Board of Education will accept input from various stakeholder groups, educational organizations, and special interest groups as indicated in the schedule below.

Date*	Forum	Stakeholders Providing Input
Wednesday, 10/26/11 Starting at 2:30 p.m.	Board Committee on School and Division Accountability	Representatives from the following organizations: • Virginia Association of School Superintendents (VASS) • Virginia Parent Teacher Association (VPTA) • Virginia School Boards Association (VSBA)
Thursday, 10/27/11 Starting at 9 a.m.	Board of Education Meeting	Public comment will be received by persons that indicate their interest in speaking using the procedure outlined at: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/meetings/info_attending.shtml.
Monday, 10/31/11 10 a.m. to noon	Accountability Round Table	Selected division personnel required to implement accountability provisions
Tuesday, 11/8/11 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.	*No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB) Committee of Practitioners Meeting	Selected educators representing various segments of Virginia's education community, as outlined in the ESEA
Wednesday, 11/16/11 Please check http://townhall.virginia.gov/L/meetings.cfm for meeting time	Board Committee on School and Division Accountability	1. Representatives from the following organizations: • Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals (VAESP) • Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals (VASSP) • Virginia ESL Supervisors' Association (VESA) • Virginia Council of Special Education Administrators (VCASE) • Virginia Educators Association (VEA) 2. A panel of selected teachers representing a diversity of regions, grade levels, and subject areas
Thursday, 11/17/11 Starting at 9 a.m.	Board of Education Meeting	Public comment will be received by persons who indicate their interest in speaking using the procedure outlined at: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/meetings/info_attending.shtml.
No later than Friday, 11/18/11	Written Comment	Selected special interest groups
Monday, 11/21/11 10 a.m. to noon	Teacher and Principal Round Table	Principals and teachers nominated by VEA, VAESP, and VASSP
Monday, 11/21/11 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.	Superintendents Round Table	Superintendents, and one division personnel versed in NCLB accountability requirements, nominated by regional representatives of the Superintendents' Leadership Advisory Council (SLAC)
Wednesday, 1/18/12	Board Committee on School and Division Accountability	To Be Determined
Thursday, 1/19/12	Board of Education Meeting	Public comment will be received by persons that indicate their interest in speaking using the procedure outlined at: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/meetings/info_attending.shtml.

*Other meetings may be scheduled based on need.

Sample Communications to ESEA Stakeholders Regarding the 2014 Extension Process

From: Tate, Veronica (DOE)
Sent: Thursday, October 24, 2013 12:00 PM
To: Tate, Veronica (DOE) [ESEA STAKEHOLDERS]
Cc: Jay, Diane (DOE); Kelly, Christopher (DOE)
Subject: Stakeholder Input - ESEA Flexibility Renewal

Dear Stakeholder,

The purpose of this communication is to provide you with information about the process for Virginia's *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965* (ESEA) Flexibility renewal and to ask for your input on proposed updates and revisions to the state's plan. The ESEA Flexibility renewal procedures require states to document the process for consulting with stakeholders, provide a summary of comments received, and note changes made as a result of stakeholder input.

As background, in September 2011, the U.S. Department of Education (USED) offered states flexibility regarding specific requirements of ESEA in exchange for rigorous and comprehensive state-developed plans designed to advance educational reforms aligned to three principles:

- Principle 1: College- and career-ready standards and high-quality assessments to ensure that every student graduates from high school college- and career-ready;
- Principle 2: Targeted and differentiated accountability systems, rigorous supports and interventions to the lowest-performing schools and schools with the lowest graduation rates, and identification of support to low-achieving students based on need; and
- Principle 3: Teacher and principal evaluation and support systems that provide teachers and principals with the feedback and support they need to improve their practices and increase student achievement.

To be granted flexibility from ESEA requirements, states had to submit applications requesting waivers and outlining the state-developed plans to meet the goals above. Virginia submitted its waiver application to USED in February 2012, and after several amendments, a final version of the application was approved by USED in March 2013. Information on Virginia's ESEA Flexibility plan and a copy of the final approved application are available at the following Web site: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/federal_programs/esea/flexibility/index.shtml. The ESEA Flexibility plan was approved for two years, or through the end of the 2013-2014 school year. States must now apply for a renewal of their ESEA Flexibility plans or revert to implementing the provisions of ESEA without the waivers.

As part of the stakeholder input process, the Department convened a meeting of the ESEA Committee of Practitioners on October 22, 2013, to discuss the renewal process and share proposed updates and revisions to be included in the state's renewal application. On October 23, 2013, the Board of Education's Committee on School and Division Accountability received the same information. You are invited to view the recorded meeting of the Board's Committee by accessing the October 23, 2013, video link at the following Web site: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/committees_standing/accountability/index.shtml. A copy of the Report on the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Waiver Renewal Process and Options for Amendments to Virginia's Renewal Application can be found under the meeting materials for the same date. The portion of the video related to ESEA flexibility begins at approximately the 2 hours

and 6 minutes mark. The report contains a summary of proposed updates and revisions to the application and a timeline of the renewal process.

On November 21, 2013, a draft of the proposed ESEA Flexibility renewal application will be presented to the Virginia Board of Education for first review, and a final draft will be presented to the Board on January 16, 2014. Additional e-mail communication with links to the draft application and Board meeting video will be sent to you in November and in January.

You are invited to view the video and review the report linked above and provide the Department with input on the proposed updates and revisions to the ESEA Flexibility application. Comments should be submitted to ESEA@doe.virginia.gov, and will be received through December 31, 2013. When submitting comments, please identify whether you are representing the input of an organization. We look forward to your input.

Regards,
Veronica Tate, Director
Office of Program Administration and Accountability
Virginia Department of Education
Voice: (804) 225-2870
Fax: (804) 371-7347

Superintendent's E-mail to School Division Superintendents, Advocacy Groups, and Other Stakeholders - Issued February 12, 2014

Background on ESEA Flexibility

In September 2011, the U.S. Department of Education (USED) offered states flexibility regarding specific requirements of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965* (ESEA), as amended by the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB), in exchange for rigorous and comprehensive state-developed plans designed to improve educational outcomes for all students, close achievement gaps, increase equity, and improve the quality of instruction (ESEA flexibility). To be granted flexibility from ESEA requirements, states had to submit applications requesting waivers and outlining the state-developed plans to accomplish the goals above by implementing reforms aligned with the following principles:

- Principle 1 – College- and career-ready standards and high-quality assessments to ensure that every student graduates from high school college and career ready;
- Principle 2 – Targeted and differentiated accountability systems, rigorous supports and interventions to the lowest-performing schools and schools with the lowest graduation rates, and identification of support to low-achieving students based on need; and
- Principle 3 – Teacher and principal evaluation and support systems that provide teachers and principals with the feedback and support needed to improve practice and increase student achievement.

Virginia submitted its waiver request to USED in February 2012, or "Window 2" of the submission process. After numerous amendments, the final revised ESEA flexibility application was approved

in March 2013. The terms of the waiver are effective for two years, through the end of the 2013-2014 school year.

One-Year ESEA Flexibility Extension

In November 2013, USED issued a letter to state superintendents (Attachment A) inviting "Window 1" and "Window 2" states to request a one-year extension of ESEA flexibility through the end of the 2014-2015 school year. A state seeking an extension of ESEA flexibility must: 1) submit a letter to USED requesting an extension of ESEA flexibility and describing how the flexibility has been effective in enabling the state to carry out the activities for which the flexibility was requested and how the flexibility has contributed to improved student achievement; and 2) resolve any state-specific issues and or action items identified as a result of USED's Part B monitoring of ESEA flexibility, including by submitting, as necessary and where applicable, a revised application. A state may also submit additional amendment requests through a revised application.

States must submit ESEA flexibility extension requests to USED by February 28, 2014, or within 60 days of receipt of the ESEA flexibility Part B monitoring report. On September 30, 2014, USED conducted Part B monitoring of the state's implementation of ESEA flexibility provisions. Virginia has not yet received an official monitoring report from USED.

Virginia plans to request the one-year extension for ESEA flexibility. As part of the request, the state will include an amended ESEA flexibility application with updates to Principles 1 and 3. The Department also anticipates requesting an amendment to Principle 2.

Amendment to Principle 2 – Methodology to Calculate Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) and School Accountability Determinations

At its October 2012 meeting, the Virginia Board of Education approved and USED accepted a revised annual measurable objective (AMO) methodology applied to a six-year trajectory. The methodology requires lower-performing subgroups to make greater gains in pass rates to close the achievement gap in reading and mathematics. The Board also established new continuous progress expectations for higher-performing subgroups. The policy requires that subgroups with a prior year pass rate higher than the current year's target maintain or exceed the prior year pass rate, within five percent, and up to 90 percent. Also, subgroups with a starting pass rate higher than the required Year 6 pass rate are expected to make continuous progress. To mitigate the unintended consequences of the higher expectations embedded among the provisions to meet AMOs, the Department of Education will propose to the Board that these higher expectations be used as an incentive for schools and subgroups. Additional details about the proposed change to the AMO methodology and its effect on school accountability determinations are available in Attachment B.

Virginia Board of Education Review and Submission to USED

On Thursday, February 27, 2014, the Board will receive for first review Virginia's amended ESEA flexibility application. The full Board item and application will be accessible at the following link beginning February 20, 2014: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/meetings/index.shtml. It is anticipated that the amended application will be presented to the Board of Education for final review on March 27, 2014, pending Virginia's timely receipt of USED's ESEA flexibility Part B

monitoring report. Following the Board's final review of the amended application, Virginia will submit to USED a one-year extension of ESEA flexibility along with the amended application.

Comments or questions regarding Virginia's revised ESEA flexibility application or the ESEA flexibility extension process may be submitted to ESEA@doe.virginia.gov.

Superintendent's E-mail to School Division Superintendents, Advocacy Groups, and Other Stakeholders - Issued March 14, 2014

On February 12, 2014, the Virginia Department of Education shared an update regarding Virginia's application for a one-year extension of waivers from certain requirements of ESEA (ESEA flexibility). A copy of the Superintendent's E-mail is attached (Attachment A). As described in the attachment, the U.S. Department of Education (USED) approved Virginia to implement ESEA flexibility for two school years – 2012-2013 and 2013-2014. In November 2013, USED invited states to submit a request for a one-year extension of ESEA flexibility for 2014-2015. States must submit extension requests to USED by February 28, 2014, or within 60 days of receipt of the ESEA flexibility Part B monitoring report, and include responses to the monitoring report, if applicable. In anticipation of submitting an extension request, the February 12 Superintendent's E-mail shared details of a significant amendment to its ESEA flexibility plan the state will submit with its extension request.

On Thursday, March 13, 2014, Virginia received a final report resulting from USED's September 30, 2014, Part B monitoring of the state's implementation of flexibility. A copy of the report is attached (Attachment B). The report contains two findings, one related to the timeline for replacing principals in priority schools and the other related to report card data elements. In other notes in the monitoring report, USED requests that Virginia clarify its data collection requirements for school division educator evaluation systems and describe the process the state will use to monitor implementation of such systems. Virginia's official responses to the monitoring report must be submitted with the state's request for a one-year extension of ESEA flexibility. Responses to the two aforementioned findings will be submitted in a separate monitoring response document; however, Virginia's response to the educator evaluation item must be addressed in the state's amended flexibility application. Below is a summary of Virginia's proposed response to the educator evaluation system item.

Continued Support and Monitoring for Educator Evaluation Systems

As described in the state's currently approved ESEA flexibility application, Virginia will continue to annually collect:

- Through the Teacher and Principal Evaluation Collection Survey (TPEC Survey), information and certifications from all school divisions on their implementation of the Board's *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers and Principals*; and
- Through the School Improvement Grant (SIG)-TPEC Survey, the following data from all SIG schools: 1) the number of teachers rated at each summative rating level by school; and 2) the number of principals rated at each summative rating level aggregated to the division level.

Additional Support and Monitoring for Educator Evaluation Systems – Beginning in the 2014-2015 School Year

In an effort to provide additional assistance to the state's lowest-performing schools, and to ensure highly effective teachers and principals are working with students most in need of academic support, Virginia will require *all* priority schools to submit the same detailed evaluation data submitted by SIG schools. As well, the Title II, Part A, federal program monitoring protocol will be revised to include questions related to the implementation of the educator evaluation system and the extent to which school divisions are using data from evaluations to inform professional development and educator support efforts. Together, these additional efforts will allow the state to target guidance on evaluation systems for optimal impact on lowest-performing schools and meaningful use of evaluation data for a transformative effect on teaching and learning.
The Virginia Department of Education welcomes comments on the proposed additional support and monitoring for educator evaluation systems. Comments may be submitted electronically by Tuesday, March 25, to ESEA@doe.virginia.gov. Comments may also be presented during one of the following public meetings:

Board of Education Committee on School and Division Accountability
Wednesday, March 26, 2014, at 1 p.m.

Board of Education Business Meeting
Thursday, March 27, 2014, at 9 a.m.

Both meetings will convene in the Jefferson Conference Room, 22nd floor, James Monroe Building, 101 N. 14th Street, Richmond, Virginia. Speakers intending to present comment at either meeting above are encouraged to contact Melissa Luchau, director of Board relations, at melissa.luchau@doe.virginia.gov or boe@doe.virginia.gov to be placed on the speaker list.

Virginia Board of Education Final Review of ESEA Flexibility Extension Request and Submission to USED

On Thursday, March 27, 2014, the Board will receive for final review Virginia's amended ESEA flexibility application, which will include the amendment outlined in Attachment A and the educator evaluation amendment described above. The full Board item and application will be accessible at the following link prior to the meeting date:
http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/meetings/index.shtml. Following the Board's final review of the amended application, Virginia will submit to USED a one-year extension of ESEA flexibility along with the amended application and response to monitoring findings.

General comments or questions regarding Virginia's revised ESEA flexibility application or the ESEA flexibility extension process may be submitted to ESEA@doe.virginia.gov.

Sample Communication to ESEA Stakeholders Regarding the 2015 Renewal Process

To: Division Superintendents

From: Superintendent of Public Instruction

Subject: Opportunity to Comment on Virginia's Application for a Four-Year Renewal of Waivers from Certain Requirements of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965* (ESEA)

Background on ESEA Flexibility

In September 2011, the U.S. Department of Education (USED) offered states flexibility regarding specific requirements of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965* (ESEA), as amended by the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB), in exchange for rigorous and comprehensive state-developed plans designed to improve educational outcomes for all students, close achievement gaps, increase equity, and improve the quality of instruction (ESEA flexibility). To be granted flexibility from ESEA requirements, states had to submit applications requesting waivers and outlining the state-developed plans to accomplish the goals above by implementing reforms aligned with the following principles:

- Principle 1 – College- and career-ready standards and high-quality assessments to ensure that every student graduates from high school college and career ready;
- Principle 2 – Targeted and differentiated accountability systems, rigorous supports and interventions to the lowest-performing schools and schools with the lowest graduation rates, and identification of support to low-achieving students based on need; and
- Principle 3 – Teacher and principal evaluation and support systems that provide teachers and principals with the feedback and support needed to improve practice and increase student achievement.

Virginia submitted its original waiver request to USED in February 2012. After numerous amendments, a revised ESEA flexibility application was approved in March 2013. The terms of the waiver were effective for two years, or through the end of the 2013-2014 school year.

In November 2013, USED invited eligible states to request a one-year extension of ESEA flexibility through the end of the 2014-2015 school year. Virginia's amended ESEA flexibility extension application was submitted to USED in March 2014 and subsequently approved in July 2014. Additional information about Virginia's 2014 amended ESEA flexibility extension application, including a summary of amendments, is available on the Department's ESEA Flexibility Web site: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/federal_programs/esea/flexibility/index.shtml.

ESEA Flexibility Renewal through the 2018-2019 School Year

In November 2014, USED invited eligible states to request a renewal of ESEA flexibility for up to four years, or through the 2018-2019 school year. A state seeking a renewal of ESEA flexibility must submit to USED a completed ESEA Flexibility Renewal Form and a redlined version of its ESEA Flexibility Renewal Application indicating: 1) updates to its implementation plan; 2) process for continuous improvement across the three flexibility principles; and 3) details of amendments to the plan, if applicable. The deadline to submit an ESEA flexibility renewal request to USED is March 31,

2015; however, Virginia is one of seven states eligible to submit its request by January 30, 2015, for an expedited review as a result of the state's timely implementation of its ESEA flexibility plan as outlined in its 2014 amended ESEA flexibility extension application. The USED anticipates that any state submitting its ESEA flexibility renewal application in January 2015 will receive a status update by late March 2015. To ensure that Virginia school divisions are notified as early as possible about 2015-2016 federal accountability provisions, Virginia is opting to submit its application in January for the expedited review.

In preparation to submit an ESEA flexibility renewal request, the Virginia Department of Education has completed the required ESEA Flexibility Renewal Form and redlined revisions to the ESEA Flexibility Renewal Application. Minor revisions were made to Virginia's renewal application to reflect programmatic and implementation updates across the three flexibility principles that have already been enacted. Revisions that qualify as amendments to the 2014 amended ESEA flexibility extension application are listed in the chart below:

Flexibility Element(s) Affected by the Amendment	Page Number(s) Affected in Redlined Request	Brief Description of Requested Amendment	Rationale
Update criteria for one reward school category: *Virginia Index of Performance* (VIP) Incentives Program	Page 75	Delete one award category, the Competence to Excellence Award, and add the Board of Education Distinguished Achievement Award.	These category changes reflect updates made to the VIP awards as approved by the Board of Education in 2013.
Criteria to determine if a school identified as a focus school has made sufficient progress to exit focus school status	Page 103	Delete the first exit criterion requiring that the proficiency gap group(s) for which the school was originally identified meet(s) the AMOs for two consecutive years. Maintain the criterion for the focus school to no longer fall in the bottom 10 percent of Title I schools with subgroup proficiency gaps.	Although conceptually sound, maintaining the first criterion to exit focus school status had the unintended consequence of keeping schools on the focus school list that had smaller subgroup proficiency gaps than other Title I schools demonstrating a greater need for support in this area. To be able to serve the Title I schools with the greatest gaps in subgroup proficiency, the state must use a one-step ranking method and select as focus schools those 10% with the highest gaps for subgroups as compared to the other schools.

Additionally, Virginia is planning to begin using value tables as a measure of growth instead of student growth percentiles (SGPs) during the 2015-2016 school year. As compared to SGPs, value tables would more accurately recognize success in closing the achievement gap while providing teachers and principals with growth data more representative of the students being taught in their classroom and

schools. A description of value tables and the rationale for replacing SGPs with value tables are available on pages 163-164 of the renewal application.

It is important to note that USED approval of Virginia's ESEA flexibility renewal request does not preclude additional amendments to the state's ESEA flexibility implementation plan. The Virginia Department of Education, on behalf of the Virginia Board of Education, will continue to engage stakeholders in discussions about continuous improvement to the state's federal accountability plan during appropriate opportunities in the future. Virginia may submit amendments to the state's federal accountability plan, as needed, following USED approval of state's ESEA flexibility renewal request.

Opportunity to Comment on Virginia's ESEA Flexibility Renewal Request

The Virginia Department of Education welcomes comments on its ESEA flexibility renewal request. **Comments may be submitted electronically by Tuesday, January 20, 2015, to ESEA@doe.virginia.gov**. Comments may also be presented in person during one of the following public meetings:

Board of Education Committee on School and Division Accountability
Wednesday, January 21, 2015, at 1 p.m.

Board of Education Business Meeting
Thursday, January 22, 2015, at 9 a.m.

Both meetings will convene in the Jefferson Conference Room, 22nd floor, James Monroe Building, 101 N. 14th Street, Richmond, Virginia. Speakers intending to present comment at either meeting above are encouraged to contact Melissa Luchau, director of Board relations, at melissa.luchau@doe.virginia.gov or boe@doe.virginia.gov to be placed on the speaker list.

Department staff will present a report on the ESEA flexibility renewal request process and a summary of revisions to the state's ESEA flexibility plan at the January 22 Board meeting listed above. The Board report will be accessible at the following link beginning the week of January 19, 2015: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/meetings/index.shtml.

Comments or questions regarding Virginia's ESEA Flexibility Renewal Application or the ESEA flexibility renewal process may be submitted to ESEA@doe.virginia.gov.

Attachment 2 – Comments on Request Received from LEAs, Stakeholder Meetings, and Others

Board of Education Committee on School and Division Accountability
October 26, 2011

Flexibility Principle 1: College- and Career-Ready Standards and Assessments
Discussion points and ideas shared for the waiver request are the following: • Stakeholders support Virginia's college- and career-ready standards.
Other general discussion included the following: • Additional *Standards of Learning* (SOL) assessments are needed in order that rigor and high expectations are increased. • Grade 3 data should be examined as a predictor of future success. • Use of "pass advanced" performance category should be used as an indicator for college success.
Flexibility Principle 2: Differentiated Support and Interventions for Underperforming Schools
Discussion points and ideas shared for the waiver request are the following: • Multiple measures need to be included in the accountability system, i.e., student growth and classroom data.
Other general discussion included the following: • None provided.
Flexibility Principle 3: Teacher and Principal Evaluation Systems
Discussion points and ideas shared for the waiver request are the following: • Stakeholders support the teacher and principal evaluation criteria, but suggest greater consistency between teacher and principal models. • Assessments used in the evaluation of teachers should be formative as well as evaluative.
Other general discussion included the following: • Increased professional development is needed for all staff conducting evaluations so that they are conducted in a uniform manner. • Student records should not be available through the *Freedom of Information Act* (FOIA) because partial progress may affect teacher evaluations.

Board of Education Meeting
Public Comment
October 27, 2011

Flexibility Principle 1: College- and Career-Ready Standards and Assessments
Discussion points and ideas shared for the waiver request are the following: • None provided.
Other general discussion included the following: • Reconsider the decision to label an advanced score on the Algebra II and English SOL assessments as indicative of College and Career Readiness. • Retain "pass advanced" and develop multiple criteria from a variety of sources to define college and career readiness.
Flexibility Principle 2: Differentiated Support and Interventions for Underperforming Schools
Discussion points and ideas shared for the waiver request are the following: • None provided.
Other general discussion included the following: • None provided.
Flexibility Principle 3: Teacher and Principal Evaluation Systems
Discussion points and ideas shared for the waiver request are the following: • None provided.
Other general discussion included the following: • None provided.

Accountability Roundtable
October 31, 2011

Flexibility Principle 1: College- and Career-Ready Standards and Assessments
Discussion points and ideas shared for the waiver request are the following: • None provided.
Other general discussion included the following: • Feature writing skills more prominently as a subset of college- and career-ready skills.
Flexibility Principle 2: Differentiated Support and Interventions for Underperforming Schools
Discussion points and ideas shared for the waiver request are the following: • Ensure data calculations are not so complex that school divisions and schools cannot run preliminary data to make predictions. • Move toward a blended state and federal system with realistic standards. • Include all four content areas, but weight reading and mathematics higher. • Raise accreditation benchmarks in all four content areas (e.g., add five percent and determine where schools are ranked). • Set benchmarks for "all" students, then identify focus schools based on achievement gap. • Consider having "warned schools" be designated as "priority schools." • Set targets for subgroups and provide an opportunity for "safe harbor" to be used where applicable. • Consider combining subgroups for focus and reward designations (e.g., English language learners, economically disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, etc.). • Increase the exemption timelines to two or three years for assessments in reading and mathematics of the Limited English Proficient (LEP) subgroup to ensure second language acquisition. • Consider using "pass advanced" as an indicator with internal targets set at intervals to meet locally established school-level goals. • Continue to provide comprehensive student achievement data, identifying sanctions for each school regardless of Title I status. • Consider an index model differentiated by grade-level. • Include some flexibility in waivers for an appeals process for designation as a "focus" or "priority" school in extenuating circumstances.
Other general discussion included the following: • Consider developing a growth model with consistent multiple measures across the state. • Consider growth by movement of students via *Standards of Learning* assessment scores through bands. • Consider growth measures in non-tested grades in reading and mathematics. • Use Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) for K-3 reading as growth measure. • Consider statewide equivalency of PALS for mathematics. • Consider a pre- and post-test to show growth annually.
Flexibility Principle 3: Teacher and Principal Evaluation Systems
Discussion points and ideas shared for the waiver request are the following: • None provided.
Other general discussion included the following: • Consider multiple assessments and measures in pay-for-performance model.

Correspondence Related to Accountability Round Table Meeting on October 31, 2011

From: ---------
Sent: Tuesday, November 01, 2011 4:50 PM
To: Tate, Veronica (DOE)
Subject: Follow-up Accountability Round Table

Veronica,

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the Accountability Round Table. It was a great format, and you did a nice job of moderating the discussion. I have summarized my thoughts below as suggested. I appreciate the opportunity to safely share them. My words do not represent the views of ------- (not because they are opposed but because I have not gotten feedback from my colleagues).

My Thoughts:

- I suggested raising accreditation benchmarks and incorporating the proposed index with a growth measure to categorize schools (priority, focus and reward). It would be interesting to review state data to see how this would change ratings while seizing a good opportunity to combine high expectations with setting realistic targets. Historical AMO data throughout VA could be reviewed to set the target carefully.
- Does the data indicate at what point when the AMO was raised schools were inappropriately labeled as failing schools?
- Would 80% be an appropriate target for reading and 75% for math?
- ALL schools should be categorized and have their scores made public. This is an opportunity for Virginia to show dedication to the success of ALL students (not just in schools that receive federal Title I funds and have 50 or more students in a subgroup). Continue to provide Title I schools with additional supports as with NCLB- but eliminate the punishment.
- Non Title I schools identified as priority or focus would receive support as determined by the LEA.
- The index could include looking at the performance of ALL students (with the benchmark being 80%, for example) and then look at the achievement gap with each subgroup. This is an exciting time where the language at the Federal level has changed from static benchmarks to highlighting "the greatest achievement gap."
- What defines an achievement gap? The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) defines it this way "achievement gaps occur when one group of students out performs another group and the difference in average scores for the two groups is statistically significant (that is, larger than the margin of error)" http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/studies/gaps/understand_gaps.asp
- http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/studies/gaps/
- If the NAEP measures trends over time, could the SOL test?
- Could the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) define a "statistically significant gap" using previous/current state data?
- The cornerstone of Virginia's state accountability system should be rewarding schools for adequate growth rather than punishing and labeling schools for missing static target. VDOE could identify Focus schools as only those schools that have not made progress toward closing the gap- they are the schools in need of the greatest support and focus.
- I mentioned not losing sight of the purpose in which assessments were created. PALs (as suggested yesterday for K-2) and SOL tests were not written to measure growth or teacher performance.
- Virginia should continue to report all subject areas for Accreditation purposes. If an index is used, reading and math outcomes should drive each school's designation as Priority, Focus and Reward schools.

- Differentiated Accountability for elementary, middle and secondary- YES! This is efficient and practical- a great opportunity to hold each level accountable while being sensitive to their unique challenges.
- Flexible Appeal Process- YES for HIGHLY unusual circumstances
- Race should continue to be a subgroup. There was a lot of discussion regarding race being a subgroup. Race should not be a factor in a student's academic performance, but the reality is that large achievement gaps exist. They exist and we cannot ignore them. This problem is bigger than Virginia- it is a national epidemic, which only punctuates our duty to deal with it. From my professional experience, the gap between African American and White students is alarming. In --------, our Hispanic students are outperforming our African American students. If we believe what is "monitored is respected" (or what is measured gets done), we need to monitor this.

Committee of Practitioners Meeting
No Child Left Behind Act of 2001

Virginia Department of Education
Jefferson Conference Room

November 8, 2011
1 p.m.

MINUTES

Attendance

- *Committee:* Dr. Randy Barrack, Donna Bates, Dr. Kitty Boitnott, Dr. Al Butler, Anne Carson, Dr. Linda Hayes, Herbert Monroe, Megan Moore, Dr. Marcus Newsome, Jeff Noe, Teddi Predaris, Dr. Ernestine Scott, Dr. Ellery Sedgwick, and Dr. Philip Worrell

- *Department of Education:* Dr. Patricia Wright, Dr. Linda Wallinger, Veronica Tate, Dr. Mark Allan, Diane Jay, Becky Marable, Stacy Freeman, Patience Scott, Carol Sylvester, and Duane Sergent

- *Guest*: Dr. Tom Smith

Veronica Tate, director of program administration and accountability, opened the meeting with greetings. Dr. Linda Wallinger, assistant superintendent for instruction, facilitated the introductions of staff and committee members. Dr. Wallinger provided a background on the status of reauthorization and the U.S. Department of Education's (USED) invitation to states to request flexibility from certain requirements of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965* (ESEA), as amended *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB), until the law is reauthorized. The flexibility offer is intended to support state and local reform efforts in three areas: college- and career-ready standards and assessments; differentiated support and interventions for underperforming schools; and teacher and principal evaluation systems. Dr. Wallinger stated that the committee is broadly represented, with the responsibility of advising the Department and Virginia Board of Education on carrying out its responsibilities under ESEA.

Dr. Wright, superintendent of public instruction, reiterated the importance of stakeholder input and the urgency for flexibility for federal accountability requirements. While some states are not seeking waivers, others are submitting for the first round in November. Virginia plans to submit its comprehensive waiver plan aligned with the USED flexibility provisions during the second round of submissions in February 2012. The Board will conduct a first review of the plan in January and final review in February.

Dr. Wright stated that the current NCLB barriers must be replaced by strong educational reform efforts that work for Virginia. Dr. Wright's charge to the stakeholders was to seek advice on resetting targets and to create a classification system to mesh with our state accreditation system, using the state's system as a base and integrating the federal mandates. With the short timeline, it is not possible to recommend changes in the Standards of Accreditation (SOA) which would necessitate going through the Administrative Processes Act.

Dr. Wright said that Virginia must demonstrate that the state's college- and career- readiness standards are strong in reading/language arts and mathematics, including English language proficient standards that correspond to the college- and career-readiness standards. The Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) must be ambitious, yet reasonable by showing a differentiated accountability system reflecting student growth and differentiated interventions including those for Title I priority and focus schools. The accountability system must be reflective of improving the performance for all students and identified subgroups, including Limited English Proficient (LEP) students and students with disabilities.

Virginia's teacher evaluation system was adopted by the Board in the spring 2011, and the principal evaluation system will be presented to the Board for approval in February. The waiver request must demonstrate that Virginia's principal and teacher evaluation systems support continued improvement of instruction; is differentiated and uses at least three performance levels; includes a student growth model; and requires evaluation on a regular basis.

Ms. Tate facilitated the stakeholder comments regarding the three flexibility principles.

Flexibility Principle 1: College- and Career-Ready Standards and Assessments
Discussion points and ideas shared for the waiver request are the following: • Continue to use the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) proficiency standards. • Include additional indicators for career readiness for high school students, for example, industry certification(s).
Other general discussion included the following: • Provide additional clarification to parents to better understand the meaning of different diplomas as they relate to college and career readiness. • Change the proposed name of the Pass/College Ready cut score on the *Algebra II Standards of Learning* assessment to a different term. • Consider a student who meets the rigorous "proficient" score as "college ready."

Flexibility Principle 2: Differentiated Support and Interventions for Underperforming Schools
Discussion points and ideas shared for the waiver request are the following: • Definition for Limited English Proficient (LEP) subgroup should include formerly LEP students as well. • Build upon the positive impacts of NCLB by considering subgroups, but measure growth over time instead of holding students to one standard. • Continue a primary focus on reading and mathematics. • When establishing new cut scores, consideration should be given to the new targets in relation to the new tests. • Dissolve School Choice with the new flexibility application. Funds saved in transportation costs could be used in critical areas that would have a direct benefit to students.
Other general discussion included the following: • If School Choice remains as part of Virginia's accountability system and parents opt-out, transportation should be the responsibility of the parent.

Flexibility Principle 3: Teacher and Principal Evaluation Systems
Discussion points and ideas shared for the waiver request are the following: • When implementing teacher and principal evaluation systems, give consideration to possible unintended consequences that may affect teachers and principals.

Ms. Tate encouraged the Committee to send additional comments. The meeting was adjourned at 3 p.m.

Handouts:

- Agenda
- List of Committee Members
- Legislation relative to Committee of Practitioners
- ESEA Flexibility Application Handout
- List of Waivers
- Accountability Requirements
- Standards of Accreditation AMOs

Board of Education Committee on School and Division Accountability
November 16, 2011

Flexibility Principle 1: College- and Career-Ready Standards and Assessments
Discussion points and ideas shared for the waiver request are the following: • Support utilization of World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) standards and allow English language learners (ELLs) to have additional time to graduate and remain in school until age 22.
Other general discussion included the following: • Equal emphasis should be given to performance at the early grades (K-3) in addition to the emphasis placed on high school performance. • *Standards of Learning* (SOL) tests emphasis must commence in grades K-2 because children behind in second grade usually remain behind in future years and leave school. • Support rigorous standards but be mindful when comparing small rural divisions to large urban school divisions. • Once the educational philosophy of the country has been established, maintain it regardless of the change in leadership at the local, state, and national levels. • Focus on interventions in the areas of early childhood, effective school leadership, highly effective teachers, and an early warning system to prevent dropping out of high school. Also, concentrate on schools with high poverty levels and low graduations rates. • "Pass advanced" performance category should be used as an indicator for college success; also examine third grade data as an indicator/predictor of future success. • Extend time for graduation for special needs students. Make high school a five- to six-year or age-out option. • Identify students where they are and provide appropriate assessments to more accurately identify ability and progress. • Retest certain students in elementary and middle school, as appropriate. • Fold the *Learn Act* into the waiver application while focusing on rigor, relevance, and relationships.
Flexibility Principle 2: Differentiated Support and Interventions for Underperforming Schools
Discussion points and ideas shared for the waiver request are the following: • SOL assessments need to be featured in the accountability system in order that rigor and high expectations would be increased. • Maintain consistency between teacher and principal evaluation models. • AYP sanctions should by omitted but continue holding the lowest-performing schools accountable. • Remove AYP sanctions to narrow the number of schools in school improvement. • Provide "priority" and "focus" schools with additional resources for student subgroups. • Support inclusion of growth models. • Continue to identify subgroups, disaggregate data by subgroups, and maintain high expectations for students with disabilities, but be mindful of alternate assessments. • Consider student growth versus student achievement as a measure. • Use a fixed percentage for proficiency rather than an increase to show progress.

Other general discussion included the following: • Keep present rigor and do not add more requirements to make testing even more difficult. • Expand ELL subgroup to include successful/exited ELL students in testing and use Virginia Grade Level Alternative (VGLA) as a test option. • Create an assessment system reflecting student growth not measured by the SOL tests. • Support efforts to reform neighborhood schools instead of sending children and accompanying federal funds to school in other areas.
Flexibility Principle 3: Teacher and Principal Evaluation Systems
Discussion points and ideas shared for the waiver request are the following: • Assessments need to be formative as well as evaluative; multiple measures need to be included in the accountability system, i.e., student growth and classroom data. • Emphasize the use of multiple assessment measures in evaluating teachers and principals. • Consider unintended consequences of "value-added" measures labeling a teacher/principal and impact their employment and salary. • Ensure funds and scheduled times are available for thorough training of teachers, principals, and superintendents regarding their roles and responsibilities in the evaluation process.
Other general discussion included the following: • Include teachers in the process as well as stringent training for teachers, principals, and superintendents. • Emphasis should be placed on site trainings, not solely webinars. Evaluators and those being evaluated must be thoroughly aware of the evaluation process. • Assure that teachers and principals impacted by the evaluation system have input in their creation.

Board of Education Meeting
Public Comment
November 17, 2011

Flexibility Principle 1: College- and Career-Ready Standards and Assessments
Discussion points and ideas shared for the waiver request are the following: • None provided.
Other general discussion included the following: • None provided.
Flexibility Principle 2: Differentiated Support and Interventions for Underperforming Schools
Discussion points and ideas shared for the waiver request are the following: • Do not lower academic expectations for subgroups.
Other general discussion included the following: • None provided
Flexibility Principle 3: Teacher and Principal Evaluation Systems
Discussion points and ideas shared for the waiver request are the following: • None provided.
Other general discussion included the following: • None provided.
Optional Flexibility Request: Use of 21st Century Community Leaning Centers (CCLC) Funds for Approved Activities During the Extended School Day
Discussion points and ideas shared for the waiver request are the following: • Recommendation is not to apply for the optional waiver request because if granted, funds presently supporting 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) programs could be diverted to other programs or initiatives, including less-cost-effective extended day programs that would put the current and future of the 21st CCLC programs at risk of continuing. • Little research is available about the impact of a longer school day on improving the academic outcomes of students. • Several cited studies provide positive data for maintaining the current 21st CCLC program as it now operates.
Other general discussion included the following: • Maintain the current three-year funding structure of the 21st CCLC out-of-school time programs since the structure provides an excellent vehicle for expanded learning opportunities. • Losing access to afterschool opportunities and programs increase the number of young people at risk and also opens up times for children to be unsupervised, unsupported, and vulnerable to negative influences. • The program presently operating in Virginia offers strong partnerships between the 21st CCLC programs and the community.

Superintendents' Round Table
November 21, 2011

Flexibility Principle 1: College- and Career-Ready Standards and Assessments
Discussion points and ideas shared for the waiver request are the following: • None provided.
Other general discussion included the following: • None provided.
Flexibility Principle 2: Differentiated Support and Interventions for Underperforming Schools

Discussion points and ideas shared for the waiver request are the following:
• In addition to reading and mathematics, include science, social studies, and writing for "all students" group.
• Use current Standards of Accreditation (SOA) targets as benchmarks for all schools.
• Use student growth measures in conjunction with SOA targets.
• Develop multiple paths for accountability.
• Use multiple measures for determining proficiency such as the following:
  – Advanced Placement (AP) participation and pass rates;
  – Industry standards - competency tests;
  – Participation rates for preschool programs;
  – Growth measures (including subgroups);
  – Closing achievement gap results; and
  – Lexile scores in reading and Quantile scores in mathematics.
• Performance in reading and mathematics should be used to determine "priority" and "focus" schools.
• Combine the economically disadvantaged, English language learners, and students with disabilities subgroups into one subgroup.
  – This would eliminate the lack of accountability for schools with subgroup populations smaller than the minimum group size for reporting.
  – The combined subgroup should receive concentrated resources to reduce the performance gap between these populations and the "all students" group.
  – The combined subgroup could also have negative implications and reinforce stereotypes toward minority students since black students are over-represented in these subgroups.
• Use multiple measures of proficiency and growth in student progress measures for both the "all students" group and subgroups and find an effective way to measure progress toward reducing the achievement gap.
 	
• Schools could better use funding from Supplemental Educational Services (SES) to fund their own tutoring programs. The effectiveness of SES has not been demonstrated from Virginia's annual evaluations. Challenges have included:
  – Monitoring SES providers for quality of service;
  – Fiscal issues; and
  – Higher rates paid by SES providers to teachers than offered by the school division.

• Discontinue Public School Choice (PSC) but allow current PSC students to attend their current school.
Other general discussion included the following: • Use of the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) as a valid measure of progress for the purpose of this waiver is questionable. • Use of the current state benchmarks may be perceived by the public as less rigorous.
Flexibility Principle 3: Teacher and Principal Evaluation Systems
Discussion points and ideas shared for the waiver request are the following: • Strongly emphasize teacher effectiveness as opposed to the current "highly qualified" provisions of NCLB.
Other general discussion included the following: • None provided.

Correspondence Related to Superintendents' Round Table Meeting on November 21, 2011

From: -------
Date: November 22, 2011 10:24:34 AM EST
To: "Wright, Patricia (DOE)" <Patricia.Wright@doe.virginia.gov>
Subject: Thank you

Dr. Wright,

Thanks so much for hosting the roundtable yesterday. I thought the conversation was worthwhile. In addition, we all you do to advocate for our schools.

Finally, I know the brunt of the meeting yesterday was regarding AMOs and how we will readjust. However, from our perspective there are two areas we think are most important when comes to reauthorization. First, is an emphasis on preschool education. Our data demonstrates that our students that have preschool experience do much better. In fact, 86% of those students passed the 3rd grade reading test last year. Obviously, funding and space are our obstacles. Second, we are very much in support of wrap around services that increase activity in after school programs and summer programs; and programs that involve the various community agencies that support the schooling process.

Attached, you will find our comments.

Warmest regards,

Attachment to E-mail Above

Elementary and Secondary Education Act Reauthorization
Round Table Discussion
November 21, 2011, Richmond, VA

Support:

6. Growth measures
    a. Fully support accountability and believe aspects of the high-stakes testing model have made us better by making us more data driven.
    b. Consider flexibility and multiple methods to determining measures of growth and improvement.
    c. End 100% mandates

7. Wrap-around Services
    a. After-school and summer programs under the school's roof, and inclusive of community agencies and services.
    b. Health care, career coaches, psychiatric counseling, family counseling, social services, child care, adult education.

Concerns:

1. School choice and funding support for Charter schools

   a. Charter schools need to be measured the same as public schools. Particularly cohort graduation rates.
   b. Public Schools have the same regulatory flexibility as charter school (class sizes- Charters have the option to set class size limits and stop enrollment when classes are full)
2. Identifying the bottom 5% of school, divisions, and state
   a. Under this measure, there will always be a bottom 5%
   b. Who are they?
   c. Will growth be recognized?
   d. Will social factors be taken into account?

Recommendations:

1. Funding for Pre-K
   a. Earlier exposure to public school means better success for children; especially those in poverty
2. Align ESEA and IDEA
   a. Congruency of language and definitions (i.e., Highly Qualified)
   b. Parallel standards (One shouldn't contradict the other)
3. Fund all public schools and not allow competitive funding to push administrative agenda's.

From: --------
Sent: Tuesday, November 22, 2011 10:38 AM
To: Redd, Barbara (DOE)
Subject: Recommendations from Region VI

Ms. Redd,

Dr. Wallinger asked that I submit Region VI's recommendations from yesterday's meeting in an electronic format. They are attached. Could you get them to the right person?

Thanks!

Attachment to E-mail Above

Region VI Recommendations for the Superintendents' Roundtable
November 21, 2011

College- and Career- Ready Standards

- It is our assumption that the bulk of this requirement is met by the adoption of the 2009 Mathematics and 2010 English Standards of Learning.
- We support the use of a new term to replace "college-ready." We are not, however, pleased with the newer term "advanced/college path." The term "college path" indicates that students who do not earn an advanced score are not on the path to college, which is a dangerous message to send to 17- and 18-year olds. A term such as "advanced/RCE*" would be appropriate. The asterisk would refer to a more in-depth description at the bottom of the parent report with "RCE" signifying "Remedial Course Exempt."

Differentiated Accountability Systems

- We feel that an accountability system based on the existing VIP model could potentially be appropriate, but the details of the system implementation are as important as the system itself. Some recommendations if such a system were implemented are listed below.
- Include multiple pathways to success, including improvement in SOL proficiency, meeting student growth objectives, closing achievement gaps, and increasing the graduation rate.
- In the Massachusetts ESEA waiver request, Students with Disabilities, LEP, and Economically Disadvantaged students are combined into a "high need" reporting group. Each is tracked separately but reported together to help bring additional schools into the accountability system and reduce the phenomena of students counting multiple times because they are in different subgroups. If paired with a reasonable minimum *n* and the elimination of current NCLB sanctions, this would be useful.
- Rather than setting AMOs at static VIP index points, Virginia may want to consider the percentile approach similar to the accountability system detailed in Colorado's ESEA waiver request. Schools in the 90th percentile and above (based on the previous year's VIP calculations, or in the event of new standards/tests, on the current year's performance) would be on one tier with the other tiers being the 50th percentile to 89th percentiles, the 15th to 49th percentiles, the 5th to 14th percentile, and schools below the 5th percentile.
- Please give us adequate opportunities to respond to Virginia's draft waiver application prior to submission.

- We support approaches that seamlessly account for changes in test difficulty from year to year. For example, the current AYP accountability system will likely show a drop in math scores that will make safe harbor nearly impossible for schools to attain. Use of any system based on percentiles would help offset this issue.
- We support the long-term consideration of adaptive testing similar to that being proposed by the Common Core's SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium.
- We support an improved state data reporting system modeled after the Colorado's School View (http://www.schoolview.org/).

Teachers and Principal Evaluation and Support Systems

- It is our understanding that the Virginia Uniform Performance Standards meet much of this section.
- We recommend clarification of best practices or additional support for determining appropriate student achievement measures in non-core subjects such as art and physical education.

Teacher and Principal Round Table
November 21, 2011

Flexibility Principle 1: College- and Career-Ready Standards and Assessments
Discussion points and ideas shared for the waiver request are the following: • None provided.
Other general discussion included the following: • Broaden the base of what identifies college and career ready beyond mathematics and reading.
Flexibility Principle 2: Differentiated Support and Interventions for Underperforming Schools
Discussion points and ideas shared for the waiver request are the following: • Include all subgroups within the school as a measure of the school's growth. • Consider setting the Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) at 80 percent for the "all students" category. • A ten percent reduction in the gap between the "all students" category and subgroups should be considered. • AMOs should be recalibrated every three years. • Expand content area targets beyond reading and mathematics to include history/social sciences and science at the "all students" category. • Consider removing or lowering the minimum group size for accountability purposes. • Consider students' "pass advance" scores for school recognition. • Differentiate AMOs at the individual school level so each school would be held to different benchmarks.
Other general discussion included the following: • Provide additional opportunities for expedited retakes on *Standards of Learning* (SOL) reading and mathematics assessments for elementary and middle schools. • To address the incompatibility between IDEA and NCLB, Individual Education Plans (IEPs) should be considered to measure progress of "students with disabilities" subgroup, not solely SOL grade level tests. • Investigate ways in which STEM initiatives might be considered in the accountability plan. • Consider assessing students more than one time per year. • Specifically define the growth model and provide in-depth training to all involved.
Flexibility Principle 3: Teacher and Principal Evaluation Systems
Discussion points and ideas shared for the waiver request are the following: • Teacher evaluations should not have a tiered rating level because of the potential impact on teacher morale. • Ensure school divisions are implementing evaluation systems with fidelity.

Other general discussion included the following:
• Adequate training is needed for teachers, principals, superintendents, school board members, and the public at large in the following areas:
  – Student goal setting for non-tested content;
  – Conducting teacher evaluations including linking student performance to teachers;
  – Using multiple measures of student performance;
  – Evaluating individual teachers when a child is taught by multiple teachers; and
  – Using student growth measures appropriately.

Committee of Practitioners Meeting
No Child Left Behind Act of 2001

Virginia Department of Education
Jefferson Conference Room

December 19, 2011
2 p.m.

MINUTES

Attendance

- *Committee:* Dr. Kitty Boitnott, Anne Carson, Barbara Warren Jones, Megan Moore, Teddi Predaris, and Dr. Philip Worrell

- *Department of Education:* Dr. Linda Wallinger, Veronica Tate, Diane Jay, Patience Scott, and Carol Sylvester

Veronica Tate, director of program administration and accountability, introduced staff and committee members and facilitated the meeting.

- The meeting provided an overview and discussion of the proposed annual measurable objectives (AMOs) for all schools that Virginia is supporting in its flexibility application from certain requirements under the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965* (ESEA), as amended by the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB).

Key Features of the Proposed AMOs:

- Builds on Virginia's current state accountability system by using Standards of Accreditation (SOA) targets as the primary AMOs that all schools are expected to meet
- Incorporates subgroup performance to ensure schools continue to focus on closing proficiency gaps
- Maintains accountability by issuing annual school accreditation ratings and a proficiency gap dashboard, reported on the school, division, and state report cards, that indicates whether proficiency gaps exist for Virginia's traditionally lower performing subgroups of students
- Eliminates additional ESEA accountability labels related to meeting or not meeting Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)
- Reduces the number of AMOs that are established for schools, allowing greater focus of resources where they are needed most
- Incorporates growth and college- and career-ready indicators
- Continues to report all student subgroups as currently required under ESEA, in addition to the data described in the new AMOs

Measuring performance. A school's performance would be measured by meeting:

- Standards of Accreditation (SOA) targets in core content areas for the "all students" group, including the Graduation and Completion Index;

- Test participation rates of ≥ 95 percent for reading and mathematics and SOA participating rates for other subjects; and
- Proficiency gap group targets as described below.

Proficiency Gap Groups. Virginia would establish three "Proficiency Gap Groups" as follows:

- **Gap Group 1** – Students with Disabilities, English Language Learners (ELLs), and Economically Disadvantaged Students
- **Gap Group 2** – Black students not included in Gap Group 1
- **Gap Group 3** – Hispanic students not included in Gap Group 1

Proficiency Gap AMOs for Elementary and Middle Schools. In order for there to be no proficiency gap indicated on the dashboard in a specific gap group for reading and/or mathematics, in each subject each group must:

- Meet the test participation rate of at least 95 percent; *AND*
- Meet SOA targets; *OR*
- A majority of the students who failed the reading or mathematics assessment must show at least moderate growth, if sufficient data are available; *OR*
- Reduce the failure rate by 10 percent.

Proficiency Gap AMOs for High Schools. In order for there to be no proficiency gap indicated on the dashboard in a specific gap group for reading and/or mathematics, in each subject each group must:

- Meet the test participation rate of at least 95 percent; *AND*
- Meet SOA targets; *OR*
- Meet a state goal of graduates earning an externally validated college- or career-ready credential (CCRC), including earning an Advanced Studies diploma, a state professional license, an industry credential approved by the Board of Education, a passing score on a NOCTI, or Board-approved Workplace Readiness Skills Assessment; *OR*
- Increase the percent of graduates earning a CCRC.

Following the suggestions from stakeholders, the SOA targets for the proficiency gap groups are only in reading and mathematics. To be accredited, a school is expected to meet the targets in the four core content areas in the "all students" category. During the discussion, the definition of "moderate growth" was explained to represent students with a Student Growth Percentile of 35 and 65 percent.

The reasoning for grouping Students with Disabilities, ELLs, and Economically Disadvantaged Students into one proficiency gap group was discussed. The advantage is that these groups often fall into the small "n" category; therefore, the proposed combined configuration allows a sufficient number of these students to be reported at the school-level when aggregated into one result. In addition, Virginia's data from the annual Consolidated State Performance Report (CSPR) submitted to USED demonstrates that over the past few years, the three groups dramatically underperform in reading and mathematics; therefore, these groups need additional targeted support and interventions. However, schools would continue to receive disaggregated data for all seven of Virginia's groups to aid in decision making at the local level.

The point was made that parents need to be able to understand the new system. A question was raised if the Graduation and Completion Index point system could be reexamined to better account for ELLs who by law who may remain in school until age 21 if so permitted by the school division. However, at this point, this is not possible because it would involve Board action and changing the

SOA. The federal graduation indicator will continue to be reported as it is presently, which permits ELLs to "slide" among cohorts if they remain in school.

The plan will be presented for first review to the Board of Education in early January and will be posted on Virginia's Web site by the first Friday in January. It was noted that the principal evaluation system will also be presented to the Board for first review in January.

Ms. Tate asked the Committee to send any additional comments in the next few days. The meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

Handout:

- Agenda
- Virginia's Proposed Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs)

Board of Education Committee on School and Division Accountability Meeting
January 11, 2012

Flexibility Principle 1: College- and Career-Ready Standards and Assessments
Discussion points and ideas shared for the waiver request are the following: • None provided.
Other general discussion included the following: • None provided.
Flexibility Principle 2: Differentiated Support and Interventions for Underperforming Schools
Discussion points and ideas shared for the waiver request are the following: • None provided.
Other general discussion included the following: • None provided.
Flexibility Principle 3: Teacher and Principal Evaluation Systems
Discussion points and ideas shared for the waiver request are the following: • None provided.
Other general discussion included the following: • None provided.

Board of Education Meeting
January 12, 2012

Flexibility Principle 1: College- and Career-Ready Standards and Assessments
Discussion points and ideas shared for the waiver request are the following: • None provided.
Other general discussion included the following: • None provided.
Flexibility Principle 2: Differentiated Support and Interventions for Underperforming Schools
Discussion points and ideas shared for the waiver request are the following: • Letter shared by the JustChildren expressing concerns about subgroup accountability (the letter is included in Attachment 2 of this application)
Other general discussion included the following: • None provided.
Flexibility Principle 3: Teacher and Principal Evaluation Systems
Discussion points and ideas shared for the waiver request are the following: • Letter shared by the Virginia Education Coalition expressing concerns about appropriate training for the implementation of evaluation systems for principals and teachers (the letter is included in Attachment 2 of this application)
Other general discussion included the following: • None provided.

Virginia Department of Education
Committee of Practitioners Meeting
***Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965* (ESEA)**
as Amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB)

May 1, 2012
2 p.m.

MINUTES

Attendance

- *Committee:* Dr. Sheila Bailey, Donna Bates, Dr. Linda Hayes, Teddi Predaris, Dr. Ellery Sedgwick, Brenda Sheridan (for Ann Carson), Dr. Philip Worrell

- *Department of Education:* Dr. Linda Wallinger, Shelley Loving-Ryder, Veronica Tate, Diane Jay, Becky Marable, Stacy Freeman, Christopher Kelly, Marsha Granderson, and Carol Sylvester

- *Others:* Wendell Roberts

Veronica Tate, director of program administration and accountability, introduced staff and committee members and facilitated the meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss proposed revisions and clarifications to Virginia's *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965* (ESEA) flexibility application based on U. S. Department of Education (USED) feedback. The Board of Education approved and submitted Virginia's ESEA flexibility application in February 2012.

Virginia will provide additional clarification and information as requested and address each of the concerns raised in the April 17, 2012, USED letter sent in response to Virginia's ESEA flexibility application. Mrs. Tate discussed the draft summary of the substantive requests related to the provisions in Principle 2 and Virginia's proposed responses.

1. **USED Request:** Address the concern that the use of the Graduation Completion Index (GCI) may weaken graduation rate accountability and modify the calculation of the GCI so that schools do not receive points for students not graduating but still in school or students earning certificates of program completion. *(Section 2.A.i.a)*

   Virginia's Response: In addition to reporting the federal graduation indicator (FGI) for the "all students" group for all high schools, Virginia will add the FGI to the indicators each proficiency gap group must meet to be considered meeting federal annual measurable objectives (AMOs).

2. **USED Request:** Address concerns regarding lack of accountability for individual ESEA subgroups, particularly the use of proficiency gap groups that could mask the performance of ESEA subgroups, by providing additional safeguards for subgroups. *(Section 2.A.i)*

   Virginia's Response: The potential for "masking" of subgroup performance is limited to proficiency gap group 1, which combines the performance results for students with disabilities, English learners, and economically disadvantaged students in an unduplicated count. For example, the low performance of English learners may be "masked" in a school with a large number of

economically disadvantaged students that outperform English learners. For schools with a proficiency gap group 1 meeting the federal AMOs, Virginia will require that the individual subgroups comprising proficiency gap group 1 also meet safeguard targets. Should any of the individual subgroups in proficiency gap group 1 fail to meet the safeguard targets, the school will be required to implement targeted improvement actions to address the performance of that individual subgroup.

3. **USED Request:** Revise Virginia's composition of the proficiency gap groups, so that proficiency gap group 2 and proficiency gap group 3 reflect the performance of all black and Hispanic students, including those identified as English learners, students with disabilities, and low-income students. *(Section 2.A.i)*

   Virginia's Response: Virginia will revise proficiency gap group 2 and proficiency gap group 3 as indicated above.

4. **USED Request:** Provide AMO targets that increase over time and are similarly rigorous to Options A or B, as outlined in ESEA flexibility. *(Section 2.B)*

   Virginia's Response: Virginia will establish AMO targets for proficiency gap groups that increase over time and reduce the proficiency gap using a modification of the approach described in Option A of the ESEA flexibility guidelines. The methodology for setting AMO targets will be based on, but not identical to, the methodology required in Section 1111 of the ESEA.

Mrs. Tate reviewed proposed revisions to AMOs, which included the following for proficiency gap groups:

Elementary and Middle Schools

- For both reading and mathematics, meet pass rates that increase over time, or the growth indicator, or reduce the failure rate by 10 percent

High Schools

- For both reading and mathematics, meet pass rates that increase over time, or the growth indicator, or reduce in the failure rate of 10 percent, or meet one of two indicators related to college- and career-ready credentials
- Meet federal graduation indicator (FGI) rate of 80 percent, which includes a provision for a 10 percent reduction in the percent of nongraduating students from the previous year applied only to the adjusted four-year federal graduation rate

Mrs. Loving-Ryder, assistant superintendent for student assessment and school improvement, then described a methodology for establishing increasing pass rates in reading and mathematics that is

based on ESEA methodology and one of the options in the ESEA flexibility provisions that requires achievement gaps to be reduced by half over six years.

Following the presentations, Committee members had the opportunity to discuss the revisions and ask questions. Points of clarification that were discussed are as follows:

- Proficiency gap groups will have separate AMOs, instead of the Standards of Accreditation targets proposed in Virginia's original ESEA flexibility application
- In reading, the revisions include holding the reading pass rate at the 2010-2011 rate of 86 percent, with pass rates being reset following the administration of new reading assessments in 2012-2013
- Priority and focus schools will continue to be identified and served as originally proposed
- Revisions to Title III annual measurable achievement objectives (AMAOs) will not be considered by USED as part of the ESEA flexibility application
- While Supplemental Educational Services (SES) and public school choice will no longer be required under the ESEA flexibility provisions, school divisions may choose to use either or both at interventions for priority or focus schools
- Highly qualified teacher requirements will not be waived
- Regarding teacher evaluations, the extent to which student growth counts as a significant factor will remain a local decision
- Consequences for schools not meeting AMOs will differ for Title I and non-Title I schools
- The federal graduation indicator is 80 percent, and includes students receiving standard and advanced diplomas with four, five, or six years

The Department plans to submit a revised proposal for Principle 2 to USED within the next week. The meeting was adjourned at 3 p.m.

Virginia Department of Education
Committee of Practitioners Meeting
***Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965* (ESEA)**
as Amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB)

May 18, 2012
2 p.m.

MINUTES

Attendance

- *Committee:* Donna Bates, Dr. Alfred Butler, Anne Carson, Dr. Marcus Newsome, and Teddi Predaris

- *Department of Education:* Dr. Linda Wallinger, Veronica Tate, Christopher Kelly, Stacy Freeman, Marsha Granderson, Carol Sylvester, and Dr. Lynn Sodat

- *Others:* Bekah Saxon

Veronica Tate, director of program administration and accountability, introduced staff and committee members and facilitated the meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss additional revisions to Principle 2 of Virginia's *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965* (ESEA) flexibility application submitted to the U.S. Department of Education (USED).

On May 1, 2012, Virginia provided clarification and information as requested and addressed each of the concerns raised in the April 17, 2012, USED letter sent in response to Virginia's ESEA flexibility application. Based on additional requests made by USED during a May 7, 2012, phone call, Virginia proposed the following additional revisions to Principle 2 to meet the requirements of ESEA flexibility:

AMOs for Subgroups

- *May 1 proposal*: Virginia will establish AMO targets for proficiency gap groups that increase over time and reduce the proficiency gap using a modification of the approach described in Option A of the ESEA flexibility guidelines. The methodology for setting AMO targets will be based on, but not identical to, the methodology required in Section 1111 of the ESEA.
- *May 9 proposal:* Virginia will also establish AMOs for all students and individual subgroups recognized in the Virginia Accountability Workbook using the same methodology to establish AMO targets for proficiency gap groups.

Use of Growth Indicators in AMOs

- *May 1 proposal:* As summarized below, Virginia included use of the student growth percentile as a growth indicator for elementary and middle schools and the use of college- and career-ready indicators as a growth indicator for high schools.
    - **Elementary and Middle Schools**
        - For both reading and mathematics, meet pass rates that increase over time, or the growth indicator, or reduce the failure rate by 10 percent
    - **High Schools**
        - For both reading and mathematics, meet pass rates that increase over time, or reduce in the failure rate of 10 percent, or meet one of two growth indicators related to college- and career-ready credentials
        - Meet federal graduation indicator (FGI) rate of 80 percent, which includes a provision for a 10 percent reduction in the percent of nongraduating students from the previous year applied only to the adjusted four-year federal graduation rate
- *May 9 proposal:* Virginia excluded the use of the student growth percentile as a grow indicator for elementary and middle schools and the use of college- and career-ready indicators as a growth indicator for high schools. Virginia will need to determine a growth-to-standard measure when sufficient data are available from the administration of new assessments over the next several years.

Establishing Reading Pass Rates

- *May 1 proposal:* For reading assessments administered in 2011-2012, Virginia proposed to hold the 86 percent pass rate applied to the 2010-2011 reading assessment. Adjusted pass rates for reading would be established following the administration of new reading assessments in 2012-2013.
- *May 9 proposal:* In lieu of holding the 86 percent pass rate, Virginia proposed to use the AMO methodology to establish reading pass rates based on data from the 2010-2011 reading assessments. As originally proposed, adjusted pass rates for reading would be established following the administration of new reading assessments in 2012-2013.

On May 9, 2012, Virginia submitted a revised ESEA flexibility application to USED for review. An additional phone conference will be held on Tuesday, May 22, 2012, with USED to discuss the revisions. The revised application will be presented for review to the Board of Education on Thursday, May 24, 2012, and is posted on the Department's Web site at: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/meetings/2012/05_may/agenda.shtml.

Following the presentation, committee members had the opportunity to discuss the revisions and ask questions. Points of clarification that were discussed are as follows:

- The request from the Virginia ESL Supervisors Association (VESA) to recalibrate Title III annual measurable achievement objectives (AMAOs) for progress and proficiency will not be included as part of the ESEA flexibility at USED's request. At a later date, Virginia will examine available data from the administration of the statewide English language proficiency assessment and reevaluate if and how progress and proficiency targets need to be adjusted.

- USED has informed Virginia that college-and career-ready credentials cannot substitute for meeting proficiency in reading or mathematics.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

Handout:

- Agenda
- Virginia's revisions to Principle 2 of Virginia's *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965* (ESEA) flexibility application

Written Comments

November 16, 2011

Dr. Patricia I. Wright, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Public Instruction
Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Education
P.O. Box 2120
Richmond, VA 23218-2120

Dear Dr. Wright,

The Virginia Partnership for Out-of-School Time (VPOST) would like to share with you our comments and recommendations regarding Virginia's intent to request flexibility from certain requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) through application to the U.S. Department of Education, especially in reference to the Optional Flexibility Waiver provision.

While we recognize that this voluntary waiver may provide educators and State and local authorities with options regarding certain specific requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), this particular provision could have serious and negative consequences on funds that are now directed to afterschool program funding.

Successful afterschool and summer programs are effective for several reasons. The services are provided when the children who need them most would be otherwise unsupervised, thus not supported or engaged in meaningful and enriching activities. In addition, the scope of personal development and academically enriching programs is broad, giving all youth who are in such programs a wide variety of options that provide a counterpoint to the academic day.

Our primary concern with the Optional Flexibility waiver is that if the state chose to "check the box" for the waiver, funds that now go to support effective afterschool and summer programs could be diverted, and the community partnerships so effective in providing hands-on learning opportunities of all kinds would be forced to end, depriving thousands of youth from safe and valuable programs. Given the high cost of extended learning time programs compared to afterschool, it is estimated that for each school that uses 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) funds to add an hour to its day, six afterschool programs would lose their funding.

A secondary but related concern is the consistency of programming that would be available. Currently parents, youth and schools are able to count on 21st CCLC funding for programs being available for a minimum of three years. Consistency of approach and availability is critical to academic growth and positive youth development programming, and we believe that funding uncertainty would be detrimental to these programs and to the youth who participate in them.

We are all dedicated to the same goals of ensuring that all our school-age youth are given every possible opportunity to succeed academically, socially, and emotionally, and believe that continuing to fund 21st CCLC programming in Virginia is a critical piece of that effort, especially for those children who need these programs the most.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our comments and concerns.

Sincerely,

Blaire U. Denson
Director

cc: Patience Scott
Eleanor B. Saslaw
David M. Foster
Betsy D. Beamer
Christian N. Braunlich
Dr. Billy K. Cannaday, Jr.
Isis M. Castro
K. Rob Krupicka
Dr. Virginia L. McLaughlin
Winsome E. Sears

From: Emily C. Dreyfus [emily@justice4all.org]
Sent: Wednesday, November 16, 2011 3:38 PM
To: Tate, Veronica (DOE)
Subject: RE: ESEA Flexibility Input

Thank you for your note. I do not see anyone on this list who has a specific purpose of representing parents of students with disabilities. I would like to convey the very strong concerns held by parents that high expectations and high accountability for the achievement of students with disabilities is imperative. Waiving sub-group accountability will threaten the progress gained over the last several years. I hope that the Board of Education will not take a step backward by requesting a waiver of these important requirements. They have made a life-changing difference in the lives of thousands of students whose futures are brighter because expectations for their success were raised. We need to continue that forward momentum.

Thank you,
Emily

From: Tate, Veronica (DOE) [mailto:Veronica.Tate@doe.virginia.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, November 16, 2011 12:58 PM
To: Emily C. Dreyfus
Subject: RE: ESEA Flexibility Input

Emily,

The Virginia Council for Administrators of Special Education (VCASE) was asked to provide input. As well, several members of the NCLB Committee of Practitioners were asked to serve in part because of their association with students with disabilities. The Committee of Practitioners represents a wide variety of stakeholders. Finally, organizations such as VEA, VPTA, VASS, etc, represent the interests of all students groups, including students with disabilities. Please let me know if I can provide you with any additional information.

I look forward to listening in on the comment provided by JustChildren during the meeting of the Board Committee on School and Division Accountability.

Veronica Tate, Director
Office of Program Administration and Accountability
Virginia Department of Education
P.O. Box 2120
Richmond, VA 23218-2120
Voice: (804) 225-2870
Fax: (804) 371-7347
E-mail: veronica.tate@doe.virginia.gov

From: ----------
Sent: Thursday, November 17, 2011 11:22 AM
To: Tate, Veronica (DOE); Sheehan, Ann (DOE)
Cc: ----------
Subject: parent comment re SES

Dear Ann and Veronica:
I know you are still in the throes of writing your request for waivers from the NCLB sanctions, and I thought I would pass along a parent comment that was received by the assistant principal at -------- Elementary School. In the back of our SES parent handbook, I have included a statement that the information was provided by VDOE and a note to call me with any questions
about SES. Instead of calling, one parent returned the handbook with this question written on that page: "*Why should our children participate when only a few had 'evidence of effectiveness' and that showed no difference*??!"

This question seems to be all one would need to justify a waiver to SES requirements!

From: ----------
Sent: Wednesday, November 30, 2011 12:10 PM
To: Tate, Veronica (DOE)
Subject: NCLB Waiver input

Please allow me to add my "2 cents worth" of input into the NCLB Waiver input process.
Any way to allow students to be counted in only one subgroup? Some of our students are in two and three subgroups. If they pass, that is fine. If they do not pass, then it is double or triple jeopardy against a school division and/or an individual school.

The elimination of SES would prevent the consequences of 20% of the Division's
total allocation being used in only one school. (Especially since research results do not indicate convincing evidence of SES effectiveness.) I support the elimination of SES.

If School Choice is eliminated, what happens to the families who are currently in School Choice? What about their younger siblings who are not yet enrolled in school? Would they be grandfathered in?

Reducing the Pass Rates to a more achievable level, 2009-10, with continued expectations that all students progress and show growth would be ideal. VDOE could change the cut scores allowing more students to Pass. Why is there so much difference in the percent of questions answered correctly for a student to Pass between elementary, middle, and high schools? At some
grade levels the percent of questions needing to be correct is 50% (H.S. End of Course) and at other grade levels it is 70% (5th grade Math).

Thank you for allowing me to share. Best wishes to you and the rest of the Committee who are working on the NCLB Waivers Plan for Virginia.

VIRGINIA ASSOCIATION FOR SUPERVISION AND CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

513 Half Mile Branch Road
Crozet, VA 22932

November 18, 2011

Dr. Patricia Wright, Superintendent of Public Instruction
Virginia Department of Education
101 N. 14th Street
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Dr. Wright:

On behalf of the Virginia ASCD Board of Directors, thank you for the opportunity to provide comments to the Department of Education regarding Virginia's ESEA Flexibility application. VASCD is encouraged that USED responds to the public's questions about ESEA with the following statement:

> *Under ESEA flexibility, States will begin to move beyond the bubble tests and standards that are based on arbitrary standards of proficiency. By measuring student growth and critical thinking, new assessments will inspire better teaching and greater student engagement across a well-rounded curriculum. By setting standards based on college- and career-readiness, States will challenge students to make progress toward a goal that will prepare them for success in the 21st century knowledge economy. (USED, Sept 2011)*

As an organization of teachers, administrators, and higher education faculty, we support efforts to enhance the quality of teaching, learning, and leading across the Commonwealth, and we understand that preK-12 education is in a transformational state. VASCD joins other public education stakeholders grappling with how to define 21st century learning, how to build new assessment systems, how to measure student growth, and how to design meaningful ways to evaluate educators. The offer of flexibility and the promotion of pilot programs and innovative practices in classrooms and school divisions provide an excellent opportunity for VDOE to collaborate with Virginia educators and to shape the future of public education in Virginia.

College- and Career-Ready Standards and Assessments

VASCD applauds Virginia's efforts to revise and align the Standards of Learning with the Common Core State Standards. Our members indicate a high level of interest in information about the Common Core and its relationship to the SOL. On December 14, VASCD will offer a symposium focused on building on the SOL foundation plus maintaining alignment with the Common Core. VASCD's guiding position statement, Teaching, Learning, and Leading in a Changing World, speaks to the rapidly changing nature of learning and working environments and notes, "Testing and accountability systems must go beyond selected response tests to include the assessment of student-generated products." (VASCD, 2010) In the *Blueprint for the Future of Public Education*, Virginia's division superintendents opine students must graduate with skills that go well beyond facts and content and encourage Virginia stakeholders to, "Define and develop an integrated model of rigorous content and core performance competencies that combines Virginia's excellent content standards and international/21st century performance standards." (VASS, 2011) A system of instruction and assessment that prepares students for college and the workforce is essential, but the definition of "college- and career-ready" is

complicated, is changing, and should not be defined by a single test score. We view the flexibility application as an opportunity to pilot problem-based instruction and new assessment systems that highlight the application of knowledge in multiple ways.

Differentiated Accountability Systems
VASCD recognizes the importance of student growth as one piece of a differentiated accountability system; however, we question multiple choice test performance as a valid and reliable way to measure student growth. In particular, we are concerned about student growth measures based on SOL scores of some students taught in some subjects by some teachers. We are concerned about transient populations, students scoring above 570 on SOL tests, and measures based on SOL scores alone.

We recognize and appreciate that AYP measures and the related accountability system have caused schools to pay greater attention to the needs and progress of all students, particularly those who may have been underserved in some schools in the past. However, we believe that the keys to unlocking the vision of learning for all students are found in supports for evidence-based practices, not in sanctions or punitive measures.

We hope that Virginia will use the flexibility offered by USED to establish a rigorous but reasonable set of targets for student achievement and growth in our public schools. We believe it is imperative that teachers and administrators continue to challenge their students and themselves each and every day in order to ensure that all students achieve at the highest possible levels. When schools struggle, we hope that the response from the state level will be a research-driven and flexible set of strategies that focus on support for quality implementation. We agree with the recommendation made by USED that, for schools that are low-performing or have the largest achievement gaps, interventions be tailored to the unique needs of these schools, their districts, and their students.

Teacher and Principal Evaluation
Virginia ASCD values and supports an evaluation system that informs and improves instruction and has a positive impact on student learning. If an evaluation system has high stakes for educators, the tools and information used must be correlated to student learning and must include multiple measures of teacher effectiveness. Given the lack of agreement among educators on how to approach this challenge, we believe research on five measures of teacher effectiveness (MET Project from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation) is worth considering:

1. Student achievement gains on state standardized assessments and supplemental assessments designed to measure higher-order conceptual thinking;
2. Classroom observations and teacher reflections;
3. Teachers' pedagogical content knowledge;
4. Students' perceptions of the classroom instructional environment; and,
5. Teachers' perceptions of working conditions and instructional support at their schools

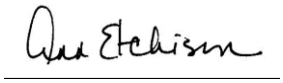
While the research associated with this project is ongoing, the goal is to identify reliable and credible measures of teacher effectiveness that predict the biggest student achievement gains. Preliminary findings suggest that student perceptions of the classroom instructional environment have high correlation to student achievement data. The project's soon-to-be-released conclusions reinforce the importance of an evaluation system that includes a variety of proven measures of teacher effectiveness. VASCD supports efforts to define teacher effectiveness through research-based multiple measures as well as to design evaluation systems aligned with the research findings.

The documents produced by USED regarding ESEA flexibility emphasize the need to move beyond assessments of students, teachers, and schools based on a single standardized test on a single day. The terms *well-rounded curriculum* and *multiple measures* indicate an interest in moving away from test prep classrooms toward rich and rigorous learning environments that provide the flexibility needed to ensure the success of each student. Virginia ASCD is ready to assist in shaping the preK-12 programs and systems that will increase the quality of

instruction and assessment, provide meaningful feedback to educators, and ultimately prepare Virginia's students for a variety of post-secondary paths.

We are grateful for the opportunity to provide input on this important matter.

Sincerely,



Ann Etchison, Virginia ASCD Executive Director

Mission: Advancing Excellence in Teaching, Learning, and Leadership

Virginia Association of Federal Education Program Administrators

www.vafepa.org

2011 VAFEPA POSITION PAPER

Flexibility Waiver

for the

Elementary & Secondary Education Act

On Friday, September 23, 2011, the U.S. Department of Education (USED) invited state educational agencies (SEAs) to request flexibility from certain requirements of ESEA, as amended by the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB), in exchange for rigorous and comprehensive state-developed plans designed to improve educational outcomes for all students, close achievement gaps, increase equity, and improve the quality of instruction. Since the introduction of the *NCLB in 2001,* school districts in the state of Virginia have worked tirelessly to improve instruction and learning for all students.

Members of the VAFEPA organization have prepared this position paper organized around required areas identified by the U.S. Department of Education:

I. **College- and Career-Ready Expectations for All Students**
II. **State-Developed Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, and Support**
III. **Supporting Effective Instruction and Leadership**

I. College- and Career-Ready Expectations for All Students

To receive flexibility, a state must develop new ambitious but achievable annual measurable objectives (AMOs) in reading/language arts and mathematics, and create a system aligned with college and career ready expectations.

VAFEPA supports:

a. The college- and career-ready expectations for all students in the state by adopting college- and career-ready standards in at least reading/language arts and mathematics and implement them statewide;
b. Annual, statewide, aligned, high-quality assessments measuring student growth for students in grades 3-8 and high school; and
c. Adopting English language proficiency standards and assessment corresponding to the state's college- and career-ready standards for English Language Learners.

II. State-Developed Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, and Support

To receive flexibility from NCLB school and division improvement requirements, a state must develop and implement a system of differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system. This system must improve the academic achievement of all students, close persistent achievement gaps, and improve equity.

VAFEPA supports:

a. Achievable AMOs for reading/language arts and mathematics that measure all LEAs, schools, and subgroups, to provide meaningful goals that incorporate a method to establish AMO's for growth and proficiency;
b. An accountability system which recognizes student growth, school progress, and aligns accountability determinations with support and capacity-building efforts;
c. An incentive based system recognizing the success of schools that are able to improve student achievement and graduation rates and close the achievement gaps for all subgroups; and

d. Providing interventions specifically focused on improving the performance of English Language Learners and students with disabilities.

III. Supporting Effective Instruction and Leadership

To receive flexibility from existing accountability provisions related to existing NCLB highly qualified teacher requirements, states and school divisions must develop, adopt, pilot, and implement an evaluation and support system. This system must provide meaningful information about the effectiveness of teachers and principals.

VAFEPA supports:

a. A fair, rigorous evaluation and support systems which supports continuous improvement of instruction;
b. A system to meaningfully differentiate performance using multiple performance levels;
c. Performance measures to include student growth for all students and other measures of professional practice; and
d. Regularly scheduled evaluations of teachers and principals providing clear, timely, and useful feedback that identifies needs and guides professional development.

Conclusion

VAFEPA members believe NCLB was an important piece of legislation creating a renewed focus on student achievement and accountability in K-12 education, while highlighting the needs of typically underperforming student populations. However, the law suffers from significant flaws, including its failure to give credit for progress and an ineffective approach to labeling schools as failing.

Currently LEAs across Virginia are faced with 205 Title I schools in improvement that are performing at a high level of performance and treated with the same sanctions as the lowest five percent of schools in the state. NCLB requires districts to set-aside 20% of Title I funding to pay for SES and transportation costs related to Public School Choice. LEA's across Virginia are faced with the burden of School Choice and SES, which costs close to ten million dollars. Studies have shown limited effectiveness of these programs and costs will

continue to increase rapidly over the next few years, as we approach the target of 100% pass rate by 2014. VAFEPA proposes using the 20% set-aside in Title I for other school improvement efforts that expand beyond the lowest 5% of schools not being able to meet AMO targets, including a growth percentile calculation.

Accountability systems should exist to advance student learning and ensure students graduate from high school with college and career ready skills. VAFEPA believes the plan presented by the State will increase accountability for school performance and serve as a mechanism to improve achievement for all students. It will also more accurately measure schools performance through a growth model, and provide flexibility with regulations on school improvement.

Dr. Sheila Bailey
President
Hopewell Public Schools
103 North 12th Avenue
Hopewell, VA 23860
(804) 541-6400
FAX: (804) 541-6401
sbailey@hopewell.k12.va.us

Mr. Jim Gallagher
President Elect
Amherst County PS
PO Box 1257
Amherst, VA 24521
(434) 946-9341
FAX: (434) 946-9346
Jgallagher@amherst.k12.va.us

Mr. Scott Hand
Secretary
Rockingham County PS
100 Mt. Clinton Pike
Harrisonburg, VA 22802
(540) 564-3228
FAX (540) 564-3250
shand@rockingham.k12.va.us

Ms. Angela Neely
Treasurer
Culpeper County Schools
450 Radio Lane
Culpeper, VA 22701
(540) 825-3677
FAX: (540) 727-0985
ANeely@culpeperschools.org

Mr. Wyllys VanDerwerker
Past President
Lynchburg City Schools
915 Court Street
Lynchburg, VA 24505
(434) 522-3700, ext. 183
FAX: (434) 522-3774
vanderwerkerwd@lcsedu.net

Ms. Marylou Wall
Executive Director
7403 Park Terrace Dr.
Alexandria, VA 22307
(703) 201-9732
marylwall@aol.com

VCASE
Virginia Council of Administrators of Special Education

November 22, 2011

Greetings,

The Virginia CASE membership appreciates the opportunity to provide input regarding Virginia's ESEA Flexibility Application. Special Education Administrators have expressed concerns related to the implementation of some ESEA requirements and the education of students with disabilities. The lack of flexibility, in certain areas such as assessments and diploma status, has created a system that can be rigid and difficult to comply with given the challenges students with disabilities encounter each day.

There are areas of direct conflict with the Individual with Disabilities Act (IDEA 2004). IDEA clearly places the responsibility for educational decisions for students with disabilities in the hands of the Individualized Education Plan Committee. ESEA requirements often conflict with IDEA and the rights and responsibilities of the IEP Committee.

- Virginia's current SOL assessments should be tailored to meet the standards associated with college and career readiness. Students with disabilities must be afforded multiple opportunities to demonstrate their achievement through SOL assessments both with and without accommodations, alternate assessments and alternative assessments. Students who work diligently toward the Modified Standard Diploma should count toward the division's graduation rate in a positive way. The growth model that has been presented does not include students that score above 500 on SOL tests or students that have alternate or alternative assessments. There will be challenges incorporating an equitable system of evaluation for teachers who provide educational services to students with disabilities
- The use of Virginia's Standards of Accreditation should be considered in the application for ESEA flexibility given the restrictions that USED has placed on schools related to the 1% and 2% flexibility. The application of these percentages are not very realistic given the demographic variations. Localities that exceed the 1% must convert some passing scores to failing for AYP purposes. The same will occur with the 2% if this is not changed. IEP teams follow the criteria developed by the state when making decisions. Converting a passing score for a student who meets the criteria for the assessment to failing is in direct conflict with the decisions of IEP teams.

- Considering differentiated accountability systems- consistency is a concern as we discuss incentives and differentiated interventions that support improvements for targeted groups. Students with disabilities often progress at rates that do not reflect a year's growth within a school year. They, however, are meeting the targets associated with their IEP goals. This must be considered when developing accountability systems that are central to teacher evaluation and support.

Special Education Administrators support high standards for students with disabilities. Accountability should be reflected in any system of evaluation of teacher effectiveness. While there have been many positive improvements associated with ESEA, there is a demonstrated need to incorporate flexibility that recognizes the accomplishments of both our students and teachers.

The membership of Virginia CASE recognizes the challenges that await our Commonwealth as we develop and implement plans to address the achievement gap, increase equity and improve the quality of instructions.

We welcome each opportunity to offer insight, recommendations, or support as we work toward the ultimate goal- improved outcomes for all students. Please continue to call upon Virginia CASE Leadership and Membership.

Sincerely,

Sheila B. Bailey, Ph.D.
President, Virginia CASE

JUSTCHILDREN

A Program of the

LEGAL AID JUSTICE CENTER

Angela A. Ciolfi
Legal Director
angela@justice4all.org

December 9, 2011

Dr. Patricia Wright
Superintendent of Public Instruction
Virginia Department of Education
P.O. Box 2120
Richmond, VA 23218-2120

BY ELECTRONIC MAIL AND FIRST CLASS MAIL

Re: Virginia's ESEA Flexibility Application

Dear Dr. Wright:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on Virginia's ESEA wavier application. JustChildren represents students who are always low income, often minority, sometimes experiencing a disability or language barrier, and occasionally homeless. In this letter, I outline principles that are critical for the clients we serve and all of the children you do.

Virginia should select AMOs that will lead to the greatest gains for all low performing students and each existing subgroup.

Virginia should choose Option A plus GCI: Setting AMOs in reading, math, *and the graduation and completion index* in annual equal increments toward a goal of reducing by half the percentage of students in the "all students" group and in each subgroup who are not proficient within six years.[1]

Using Option A plus GCI, Virginia can customize its AMOs for individual school, school division, and subgroup within a school, as long as the AMOs require greater gains for students who are farthest behind and result in reducing by half the percentage of students who are not proficient within six years. The advantage of Option A is that it allows states to set ambitious, but realistic targets based on baseline data for each school and subgroup. This customization recognizes that not all schools and subgroups are equally situated on day one of the accountability system.

If Virginia chooses Option C, it should create AMOs that are at least as ambitious as those that would have been established under Option A and include the GCI.

Please note: JustChildren strongly urges Virginia to require all existing subgroups to meet the new AMOs. Virginia should not combine subgroups to make larger subgroups, as this will result in masking both the achievements and weaknesses of discreet groups of students.

[1] See p. 7 of ESEA Frequently Asked Questions, U.S. Dep't of Education (describing Options A, B, and C).

1000 Preston Avenue, Suite A. • Charlottesville, VA 22903
Telephone - 434-977-0553 • Fax - 434-977-0558 • Toll-free - 800-578-8111 • www.justice4all.org

Virginia should identify Priority, Focus, and Reward schools based on multiple measures of school performance, including indicators that reflect student achievement, school climate, student attendance, teacher effectiveness, and credit accumulation.

Research increasingly recognizes that schools cannot adequately prepare today's young people for tomorrow's jobs without first meeting their social and emotional needs. Virginia should recognize that reality by setting targets for a wide variety of academic and non-academic indicators in order to identify schools struggling to meet expectations for all students or only for one or more groups of students.

Priority schools would be schools in the lowest 5% based on proficiency and lack of progress on any of the following indicators for all students:

- SOL test passage rates in reading and math
- Out-of-school suspension and expulsion rates
- Disciplinary alternative program placement rates
- Attendance rates
- Student mobility rates
- Arrests/juvenile court referral rates
- Performance on the Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers
- Disproportionality in special education enrollment
- Disproportionality in disciplinary referral and/or suspension rates
- (High schools only) Graduation and Completion Index score
- (High schools only) Special Diploma rates (i.e., to capture over-use of Special Diplomas)
- (High schools only) Over-age, under-credited rate (i.e., what percentage of students are at least one year behind their same-age peers in grade level or credit accumulation?)
- (Elementary and middle schools only) SOL test passage rates in writing and science
- (Elementary schools only) PALS performance

Focus schools would be schools that have the largest gap between subgroup performance and the relevant comparison group (e.g., economically disadvantaged students vs. non-economically disadvantaged students) for any of the above indicators.

Reward schools would be schools that have the highest performance or progress on many of the above indicators for all students *and* all student subgroups. It is important to recognize schools that are meeting the social and emotional needs of their students, in addition to high academic performance.

Please note: Virginia should use the same indicators described above to identify schools that need improvement, but do not meet the criteria for Focus and Priority status.

Virginia should provide Priority and Focus schools with the resources necessary to implement programs that have proven effective in improving student achievement.

Virginia should require Priority and Focus schools to use Title I and School Improvement Grant funding to implement research-based interventions that fit the identified area of need, such as:

- **Early Warning System.** All schools identified as Priority, Focus, or schools needing extra support should be required to implement **Dashboard**, Virginia's early warning system. The system predicts which students are most at risk of dropping out based on a number of factors, including test scores, attendance, and disciplinary history and allows schools to intervene early in a student's career to give them the best chances of graduating college and career ready. Importantly, Dashboard also allows schools to measure the effect of its interventions on individual student progress.

- **Early Childhood Education.** A 2007 report by the Joint Legislative and Audit Review Commission found that children who participate in VPI are significantly better prepared for kindergarten.[2]

- **Early Reading Intervention.** JLARC's recent Third Grade Reading report highlighted the importance of early reading intervention programs and reading specialists in getting students reading by grade three.

- **Effective Schoolwide Discipline.** Effective Schoolwide Discipline has significantly reduced office disciplinary referrals, in-school suspensions, and out-of-school suspensions. Most significantly, it has reduced out-of school suspensions by 75% for general education students and 85.6% for special education students. ESD has also saved 9.2 hours of administrative time and 4.6 hours of instructional time weekly. Schools participating in ESD have also seen increased SOL pass rates in math for students with and without disabilities.

- **Extended Learning Time.** Expanding the school day, week, or year can offer opportunities for remediation and other enriching coursework.

- **Inter-district School Choice.** In some places, like Petersburg, the public school choice option has been limited by the lack of availability of higher performing schools in the school division. Give **Reward** schools financial incentives to accept economically disadvantaged students from schools identified as Priority or Focus schools.

- **Highly Effective Teachers.** Teachers are the most important school-level variable in a student's success, but high poverty schools often have the least experienced teachers. School divisions with Priority and Focus Schools should be required to provide incentives for their most effective teachers to serve their schools with the greatest needs.

---

[2] Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission, *Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI): Current Implementation and Potential Changes*, HD No. 44 (2007) *available at* http://jlarc.state.va.us/reports/Rpt364.pdf

- **Family and Community Engagement.** Struggling schools should be required to increase family and community involvement by holding public meetings to review school performance and develop improvement plans, implement complaint procedures for families having any area of difficulty, provide parent education classes, and/or convene student assistance teams with outside service providers to develop wraparound service plans for students with emotional or behavioral health needs. In addition, schools should give students and parents access to their own information via Dashboard. In New York, a data system developed by the same company has been used to allow parents and students to access their own information, including grades, attendance, and tardies.

Schools that do not meet the criteria for Priority and Focus schools should be provided technical assistance to help them implement the above interventions, as appropriate.

Finally, I am enclosing a copy of our recent report, *Educate Every Child*, which documents the over-use of out-of-school suspension in Virginia schools, the negative impact on minority students and students with disabilities, and the impressive results achieved by schools implementing Effective Schoolwide Discipline. I hope Virginia will consider incorporating indicators and interventions related to school climate into its ESEA waiver application.

Please feel free to contact me if I may provide additional information.

Sincerely,

Angela A. Ciolfi

cc: Veronica Tate, Director, Office of Program Administration and Accountability

enclosures

4

VIRGINIA EDUCATION COALITION

Virginia Assoc. of Elementary School Principals
Virginia Assoc. of School Superintendent
Virginia Assoc. of Secondary School Principals
Virginia Assoc. for Supervision and Curriculum Development
Virginia Congress of Parents and Teachers
Virginia Counselors Association
Virginia Education Association
Virginia Middle School Association
Virginia Professors of Educational Leadership
Virginia School Counselor Association
Virginia Association of Colleges for Teacher Education
Virginia School Boards Association

Contact Person: Dr. Kitty Boitnott
Virginia Education Association
116 South Third Street
Richmond, VA 23219
1-800-552-9554 Toll Free
(804) 648-5801 - Work
(804) 775-8379 - Fax

January 3, 2012

Dr. Patricia Wright, Superintendent of Public Instruction &
Members of the Virginia Board of Education
Virginia Department of Education
101 N. 14th Street
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Dr. Wright and Members of the Virginia Board of Education:

At the November 30th meeting of the Virginia Education Coalition, representatives of the member organizations discussed the issue of Virginia's ESEA Flexibility application. As a result, it was decided that we would write a letter as a collective body addressing some of the common concerns that we share as stakeholders.

A major area of concern centers on the issue of training for all groups involved as teachers and administrators undertake the new evaluation systems that have been approved by the Virginia Board of Education in response to federal requirements. It is the consensus of all members of the coalition that proper training is absolutely critical to the success of the new evaluation models. Therefore, it is imperative that localities be provided adequate resources, incentives, and training in order to facilitate the comprehensive change that accompanies the implementation of the evaluation systems for both teachers and administrators. In addition, we feel that the Virginia Department of Education should provide additional recommendations and guidance to local education agencies on adoption of the new guidelines, as well as specific recommendations on how teachers and principals are to be trained on its implementation.

There is also consensus that clarification is needed as to where money for training purposes might be obtained and how much is expected to be necessary in order to properly prepare all teachers and administrators for the implementation of the new evaluation systems. This is a question that no one in the coalition felt has been adequately addressed; therefore clarification would be greatly appreciated.

The Virginia Education Coalition works to include voices of its member organizations in discussions about public policy and any initiative designed to enhance student learning and the public school experience. We hope that you will accept the communication of these concerns as constructive feedback and welcome our participation in the policy process. All of the member groups of the VEC are interested in assisting as Virginia moves forward in the implementation of the new teacher and principal evaluation systems and in the ESEA waiver process. Both of these initiatives are critically important to Virginia at this point in time.

Sincerely,

Kitty J. Boitnott

Kitty J. Boitnott, Ph.D., NBCT
Chair, Virginia Education Coalition

JUSTCHILDREN

A Program of the

LEGAL AID JUSTICE CENTER

Angela Ciolfi
Legal Director
angela@justice4all.org

January 12, 2011

RE: Virginia's ESEA Flexibility Application

President Saslaw, Superintendent Wright, and members of the Board:

I read the draft ESEA waiver application and listened to yesterday's committee meeting online. My comments relate to some of the big policy choices embedded in Principle 2 and in no way detract from my appreciation for the amount of sweat and anguish it must have taken to put together such an impressively detailed application.

I urge you to reconsider de-linking subgroup performance from accountability. If you divorce the two, there will be two sets of schools. Those that have incentives to close achievement gaps and those that do not. Only 4% of Virginia's schools will fall into the first category. (Those are the so-called "Focus" schools.) The other 96% have only to meet the target pass rates and GCI index scores for *all students* in order to receive our state's stamp of approval. That will be a great tragedy for low-income and minority students, students with disabilities, and LEP students.

It has been pointed out that some schools will have greater difficulty than others in meeting the threshold for Full Accreditation, especially after the new reading and math tests go into effect. That may be true. But the fact remains that even those schools will not feel any pressure to close achievement gaps. They just have to focus their resources on those 70% or 75% of students who are most likely to pass, which is exactly the opposite of what NCLB – and the waiver requirements – are designed to accomplish.[1]

Reporting is not accountability. The Proficiency Gap Dashboard may provide a measure of the achievement gaps that exist in reading and math performance. But it leaves out graduation gaps altogether. And, more important, if the sign above the door says Fully Accredited, who will understand or care about the Proficiency Gap points? It will just be another statistic. And statistics do not change systems.[2]

This process has unveiled some flaws in the SOA that are important to address; namely, the SOA do not ensure that schools provide meaningful educational opportunity to our most vulnerable

[1] Guidance from the U.S. Department of Education indicates that states must set AMOs that "(1) are ambitious but achievable and (2) require schools and subgroups that are further behind to make greater rates of annual progress than other schools and subgroups." The proposed AMOs are not ambitious, since 96% of our schools have already met them, and they do not require subgroups that are further behind to make greater rates of annual progress. In fact, they incentivize schools to focus more on those students who are most likely to pass and less on the lowest performing students.

[2] The draft application does not address how schools that are Fully Accredited and have not been identified as Focus schools will be provided incentives and supports needed to close achievement gaps. The academic review process described in Section 2.F will only apply to the small percentage of schools that are not Fully Accredited.

1000 Preston Avenue, Suite A • Charlottesville, VA 22903
Telephone 434 977 0553 • Fax 434 977 0558 • Toll free 800 578 8111 • www.justice4all.org

groups of students. I hope your next step is to address these deficiencies so that the state system is strong no matter what happens on the federal level.

But you don't have to revise the SOA to do the right thing with this application. We talk about NCLB as if it is a wholly separate accountability system that impedes our state system. But NCLB never created a separate system. It always rested on top of the state system you designed. It simply created an overlay that forced schools to give historically neglected groups of students a chance to meet the same state standards you set for all students.

And that is all I am asking you to do today. Design an overlay that preserves the core premise of No Child Left Behind, a premise we all share: that schools should be accountable for providing meaningful educational opportunity for every child in the building, even the underperforming ones. There must be middle ground between guaranteeing outcomes for 100% of the students and giving up on 25 to 30% of them. I urge you to rethink this approach and seriously consider some of the ideas expressed at yesterday's committee meeting. We cannot afford to backslide on ten years of progress closing achievement gaps.[3]

Thank you.

[3] It should be noted that since Virginia has chosen Option C to comply with requirement 2.B, its application will be peer-reviewed, and the AMOs set by the state will be compared to what the state's AMOs would have been under Options A and B. The AMOs chosen under Option C must be "similarly ambitious" to those chosen under Option C. Under Option A, states must set AMOs in annual equal increments toward a goal of reducing by half the percentage of students in the "all students" group *and in each subgroup* who are not proficient within six years. Under Option B, states must set AMOs that increase in annual equal increments and result in 100% of students achieving proficiency no later than the end of the 2019-2020 school year. It is clear that the AMOs in Virginia's application do not increase annually and are not "similarly ambitious" as those that would have been set under Options A and B. **Before approving the application, the Board should request that the AMOs that would have been set under Options A and B be presented to the Board so that it can evaluate the application's chances of successfully satisfying requirement 2.B.**

2

VIRGINIA COALITION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

January 12, 2012

Virginia Board of Education

Dear Board Members:

The Virginia Coalition of Students with Disabilities has worked together over the years with other groups to encourage the development of strong standards and assessments for students with disabilities in Virginia schools. We believe Virginia has maintained a solid history of increased expectations for teaching and learning in Virginia.

But we must add our voice to those concerned over Virginia's request for a flexibility waiver to the No Child Left Behind amendment. These new changes allowed by a flexibility waiver could not only lower achievement expectations for students but also prevent many from the opportunity to successfully achieve higher standards of education that will lead them forward towards college or careers. This is not the type of education reform Virginia should participate in by requesting a flexibility waiver from the current No Child Left Behind standards.

The Virginia Coalition for Students with Disabilities urges Virginia Board of Education to reject any changes by maintaining the current assessments and standards for students with disabilities under the No Child Left Behind amendments to ESEA. The Virginia Coalition for Students with Disabilities wishes to see Virginia protect the rights of students with disabilities, not lessen them.

The Virginia Coalition for Students with Disabilities
The Virginia Board for People with Disabilities
Blue Ridge Center for Independent Living
Endependence Center Incorporated

From: ----------
Sent: Friday, January 13, 2012 9:05 AM
To: Tate, Veronica (DOE)
Subject: ESEA Flexibility Application

Hello Veronica-

Thanks again for calling me back to discuss the ESEA Flexibility Application. As discussed by phone, our requests were the following:

- Number of school divisions that made and number of school divisions that did not make LEP AMAO 2 Proficiency for 2011-12
- Exploring the possibility of recalculating the AMAO 2 Proficiency target, currently designated as 15% in the ESEA Flexibility Application to avoid unintended consequences and to make AMAO 2 an attainable goal for VA school divisions

Rationale: The 15% AMAO target was calculated using data from years during which Level 5 students were required to remain at Level 5 for two years. Currently, ELLs are not required to remain at Level 5 for two years, therefore there are fewer Level 5 students taking WIDA ACCESS for ELLs than with the previous system, as most have already become Level 6. As an example in ----------, with the previous system, there were approximately 12,000 Level 5 students in 2010 who took WIDA ACCESS for ELLs, and the AMAO 2 Proficiency result for that test year (reported in 2010-11) was 23%. The next year, with the new system and the removal of the requirement that Level 5 students remain at Level 5 for two years, there were fewer than 6000 Level 5 students in --------- (the vast majority had already become Level 6) thus there were less than half of the number of Level 5 students taking WIDA ACCESS for ELLs, and the AMAO 2 Proficiency result was 14%, 2% less than the AMAO, and the first time that --------- had not met all LEP AMAOs since the inception of NCLB.

Another major factor that affects the calculation of this AMAO 2 is the transiency of the ELL population each year. If more lower level students move in and more higher level students move out of a division in a given year or vice versa, that will have a significant effect on the results of this AMAO, since it is a one-time snapshot of students who become Level 6 in one year alone.

As always, thank you for discussing these important issues and we look forward to your response. Again congratulations on the excellent work and presentations on the VDOE ESEA Flexibility Application!

From: Blaire Denson [Blaire@vachildcare.org]
Sent: Fri 1/20/2012 1:55 PM
To: Tate, Veronica (DOE)
Subject: From Superintendent of Public Instruction RE: Virginia's ESEA Flexibility Proposal

Veronica,
It was a pleasure to speak with you after the Board of Education meeting last week. I appreciate the opportunity to provide comments regarding Virginia's proposed ESEA flexibility application. Specifically, The Virginia Partnership for Out-of-School Time (VPOST) would like to see some additional language included within the application regarding the optional waiver. Attached are our recommendations to be considered. Please contact me with any questions or comments, and I thank you for the opportunity to provide our recommendations.
With Kind Regards,
Blaire

Blaire U. Denson, Director
Virginia Partnership for Out-of-School Time
308 Turner Road, Suite A
Richmond, VA 23225
Phone: (804) 612-0307
Fax: (804) 285-0847
blaire.denson@v-post.org
www.v-post.org

VPOST
VIRGINIA PARTNERSHIP FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME

Attachment to 1/20/2012 VPOST E-mail

21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC): A Priority School that is currently receiving or is awarded a 21st CCLC grant may submit an amendment to their original grant application to use a limited percentage of their 21st CCLC funds for extended learning time in accordance with the guidance provided by the SEA and based on a comprehensive needs assessment. This amendment must be approved by the SEA. The extended learning time must include the following:

- School Community Partnerships: To ensure that expanded learning programs are high quality, creative, and maximize the potential of each local community, strong partnerships that emphasize collaboration, data and resource sharing, communication, and alignment between schools and community-based/faith-based organizations should be at the core of expanded learning time programs. Meaningful, active collaboration at all levels increase the likelihood of success.
- Engaged Learning: Expanded learning programs should be used to enhance and complement—but not replicate—learning that takes place during the traditional school day. Quality expanded learning opportunities provide children and youth with hands on, student-centered learning that motivates and inspires them. These meaningful experiences, involving science, math, physical activity, music, arts and opportunities for service, complement but do not replicate the traditional school day and take place in an environment that is less stressful than the traditional school day. Expanded learning programs should provide opportunities for mentoring, tutoring, internships, apprenticeships, individualized and group learning, college and career exploration, and even jobs.

- Family Engagement: Expanded learning programs should maintain parental choice, community involvement, and family engagement. Quality programs succeed because parents and children choose to fully participate. This forces programs to ensure that the learning is meaningful, engaging, and relevant, particularly for older children and youth. Expanded learning time programs can make it easier for working parents to interact with instructors. A wide body of research points to active parent involvement in their children's education as a factor in student success, and community-based/faith-based organizations partnering with schools on expanded learning time can help facilitate that involvement. Expanded learning programs should focus on meeting the needs of the most at-risk students to ensure that resources are appropriately directed to students most in need of additional supports. For these reasons, expanded learning programs should emphasize parental engagement and parental choice.
- Prepared staff: Forming healthy relationships with program staff can lead to a positive emotional climate for students, allowing them to feel comfortable learning and exploring. Factors that serve as a catalyst for establishing these bonds are a small staff-child ratio and a well-prepared and compensated staff. Professional development in both content areas and youth development allows struggling students to catch up to their classmates, while helping all students hone the skills necessary for success in school.
- Intentional programming: The best programs are structured with explicit goals and activities designed with these goals in mind. For instance, program goals might address improving a specific set of academic or social skills, building on previous knowledge, meeting age-specific developmental needs or maximizing engagement in school. Programs should be intentionally aligned with traditional school-day instruction.
- Student participation and access: In order for youth to take advantage of all that expanded learning opportunities offer, there must be steady access to programs over a significant period of time. Programs that contain components of quality – specifically safety, youth engagement, and supportive relationships – are more likely to keep children in school.
- Ongoing assessment and improvement: Programs that employ management practices focused on continuous improvement have the most success in establishing and maintaining quality services. Frequent assessment, both informal and formal, and regular evaluation, both internal and external, are ingredients needed to refine and sustain expanded learning programs.

From: Diane Elliott [D.Elliott@arlingtondiocese.org]
Sent: Thu 2/2/2012 1:23 PM
To: Tate, Veronica (DOE)
Cc: mcotton@richmonddiocese.org; Wright, Patricia (DOE); Wallinger, Linda (DOE); Marable, Rebecca (DOE); Jay, Diane (DOE); Josie Webster (jwebster@vcpe.org); Sr. Bernadette McManigal
Subject: RE: ESEA Waiver and private school consultation

Veronica-
In the introductory sections of the application, I request that the following language be inserted as a means of protecting the equitable participation of eligible private school students.
"Continued provision of equitable services for eligible Title I students attending nonpublic schools is an important consideration in the implementation of this plan. As a result, we are directing each local educational agency with Title I eligible children attending nonpublic schools to expend an equitable share of any funds the agency designates for priority and focus schools, in addition to the funds already designated for equitable services. If the LEA decides to transfer Title IIA funds, private school students will still benefit from at least the percentage of allocated Title IIA funds that was received under equitable participation in 2011-12."

Diane Elliott
Special Services Coordinator
Arlington Diocese Catholic Schools
703-841-3818

From: Tate, Veronica (DOE) [mailto:Veronica.Tate@doe.virginia.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, January 25, 2012 10:51 AM
To: Diane Elliott
Cc: mcotton@richmonddiocese.org; Wright, Patricia (DOE); Wallinger, Linda (DOE); Marable, Rebecca (DOE); Jay, Diane (DOE)
Subject: RE: ESEA Waiver and private school consultation

Diane,

Thank you for your interest in Virginia's ESEA flexibility application. As you are aware, the flexibility offer does not waive equitable services provisions. You may also know that the U.S. Department of Education has provided guidance to states regarding the possible effect of the waivers on equitable services. Please be aware that a division may still need to reserve a portion of its Title I, Part A, funds that would have been reserved for school improvement activities to fund interventions in schools identified as priority or focus schools. Any funds that are no longer reserved for school improvement efforts are subject to the equitable services provisions. Virginia plans to provide technical assistance to school divisions to ensure they are aware of the possible effect of the waivers on equitable services. The effects will be case-specific and vary by division.

Regarding input on Virginia's application, the application process has included a wide variety of stakeholders, including the NCLB Committee of Practitioners which includes private school representation. Following completion of a draft proposal, the attached e-mail announcing the availability of the draft was sent to stakeholders for additional comment. Please feel free to review the proposed ESEA application. Should you have any comments or input, please submit them directly to me by e-mail no later than Friday, February 3, 2012. As I am sure you understand, we are on an

exceptionally limited timeline to make final revisions, but we welcome your thoughts. You will note, however, that the application is not designed to address equitable services as these provisions are not waived nor are they part of the broader state accountability system which addresses standards, assessments, identification of low-performing schools, and principal and teacher evaluations for public school divisions and schools.

Sincerely,
Veronica Tate, Director
Office of Program Administration and Accountability
Virginia Department of Education
P.O. Box 2120
Richmond, VA 23218-2120
Voice: (804) 225-2870
Fax: (804) 371-7347
E-mail: veronica.tate@doe.virginia.gov

From: Diane Elliott [mailto:D.Elliott@arlingtondiocese.org]
Sent: Monday, January 23, 2012 2:48 PM
To: Marable, Rebecca (DOE)
Cc: Miriam Cotton
Subject: ESEA Waiver and private school consultation

Becky-
I am writing to you regarding the state's application to the U.S. Department of Education for waivers of provisions of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) proposed to be sent to US DOE in February. By way of this letter, I want to share with you my thoughts concerning the implications of waivers on the equitable participation of private school students.

As you are aware, ESEA does not permit the equitable participation of private school students to be waived. However, other actions could affect private school students' participation in Title IA programs.

Private and public school students generate funding for Title IA in the same manner—low-income students residing in Title IA attendance areas generate funds. When, through the waiver authority, funds are freed up that had previously been used for required set asides, it is important that the needs of the private school students be considered in the determination of the new use of those funds.

Prior to the allocation of any freed up funds, the district has the obligation to consult with private school officials and consider the needs of private school students prior to making any decision regarding expenditure of these funds. These topics should be added to the agenda of ongoing consultation or a special consultation meeting should be scheduled. I am interested in knowing how this consultation will work with the LEAs that are by-passed as they generally do not consult with the private schools.

The waiver authority also calls for review of the state's application from a wide range of stakeholders. Because of the importance of equitable participation in the Title I program, I ask that you include private school officials in this review process. Reviewers representing the interests of private school students in the Title I program should be those with experience in the program participation of private school students. I am happy to serve in this capacity and/or suggest others that are appropriately qualified.

Thank you for your consideration. My contact information is

Diane Elliott
Special Services Coordinator
Arlington Diocese Catholic Schools
200 North Glebe Road, Suite 503
Arlington, VA 22203
703-841-3818
d.elliott@arlingtondiocese.org
www.arlingtondiocese.org

Virginia Coalition for Students With Disabilities

Comments on Virginia ESEA Flexibility Waiver Application

February 16, 2012

The **Virginia Coalition for Students with Disabilities (VCSWD)** reviewed the ESEA Flexibility Waiver Application prepared by the Virginia Department of Education for submission to the U.S. Department of Education. We submit the following comments for your consideration before any further action is taken on the ESEA Flexibility Waiver Application. We are concerned that the changes proposed in this application will have unintended negative consequences on accountability for education to students with disabilities.

Throughout this document, we reference the VDOE ESEA Flexibility Waiver Application by page number (in parentheses). Our recommendations for changes to the application are in bold font.

BACKGROUND.

According to the draft Request for the ESEA Flexibility submitted to the Virginia Board of Education (VBOE) on January 12, 2011, the VDOE will submit its request for final review at the VBOE meeting on Feb. 23, 2012. If approved, Virginia's proposed revisions to ESEA implementation would take effect beginning with the accountability results for the 2012-2013 school year, based on assessments administered in the 2011-2012 school year. (page 40)

At this time, *approximately 145,000 students, 6-21 years of age* in Virginia have a disability.

ISSUES RELATING TO VIRGINIA'S STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

1. INADEQUATE STAKEHOLDER INPUT

The U.S. Department of Education requires a state to describe how the State Education Agency (SEA) "meaningfully engaged and solicited input from other diverse communities, such as students, parents, community-based organizations, civil rights organizations, organizations representing students with disabilities and English Learners, business organizations and Indian tribes."

The minutes of the December 2011 SEAC quote Assistant Superintendent Doug Cox as follows:

> "The Virginia Department of Education is considering applying for a waiver for Title One. It is uncertain whether No Child Left Behind will be amended with regard to teacher accountability in the near future, so Secretary Duncan indicated that he would entertain waivers. ...Mr. Cox stated that there will be public comment after first draft. The Board has already invited some groups to provide overall input. He does not expect a lot of change for students with disabilities and encourages anyone to make public comment."

[Retrieved from: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/committees_advisory/special_ed/meetings/2011/dec_2011/minutes.pdf]

According to the Request, VDOE did not solicit feedback from any stakeholders or organizations which advocate for students with disabilities, such as: Centers for Independent Living, the Virginia Learning Disabilities Association, the International Dyslexia Association, the ARC of Virginia, the Virginia Autism Society, CHADD, PEATC, the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities, Virginia Office of Protection and Advocacy (VOPA), Virginia State Special Education Advisory Committee (VA SSEAC), School Division SEACs. This oversight was pointed out to VDOE by Emily Dreyfus of Justice 4 All in an e-mail to VDOE dated November 16, 2011 (page 132).

The only written comment included in the draft Request is the invited comment on behalf of Virginia Council of Administrators in Special Education (VCASE) (page 124). This input should not be considered as representative of parents or organizations that represent students with disabilities.

Virginia DOE as yet has not meaningfully engaged with or solicited input on its request from stakeholders or organizations representing students with disabilities. Other states have set up online surveys to facilitate feedback from parents or other stakeholders advocating for students with disabilities.

The VCSWD recommends that VDOE aggressively solicit stakeholder input prior to approval of this application by the State Board of Education.

2. SUB-GROUP ACCOUNTABILITY

VCSWD has a number of concerns about the changes to student subgroup accountability proposed in the Waiver application. The proposed changes are certain to have negative impact for students with disabilities in the areas of academic planning and supports, test participation outcomes, and graduation rates.

Virginia currently identifies a total of 7 student subgroups:

- economically disadvantaged students;
- **students with disabilities;**
- English language learners; and
- racial/ethnic groups representing five percent or more of the student population. The 4 racial ethnic subgroups meeting the criteria for separate identification are: Asian students; black students; Hispanic students; and white students (page 41).

The Waiver Application proposes to combine student subgroups "where duplication of students is common so that schools with smaller populations of low-performing subgroups can be so identified and receive appropriate support." (page 10) The proposed Proficiency Gap Groups or PGGs (page 34) are:

2

- **Gap group 1:** students with disabilities, limited English proficient (LEP) students, and economically disadvantaged students (unduplicated)
- **Gap group 2:** Black students, not of Hispanic origin, not already included in gap group 1
- **Gap group 3:** Hispanic students, of one or more races, not already included in gap group 1

Virginia proposes using the PGG data to determine **Focus schools** (page 41) and to measure performance as part of the accountability system (page 40).

We find the proposed PGGs to be problematic in concept and likely to have negative impact on accountability for academic performance, test participation and graduation rates for students with disabilities. PPG #1 is problematic because it combines three very diverse student groups who have different learning needs. Moreover, as VDOE data indicate (see Attachment 8 table below), students with disabilities scored at least 12 points below the other two groups in both reading and math. Assuming similar outcomes for this academic year, aggregating outcomes from students with disabilities with the other two subgroups (ED and LEP) will lead to an inflation of academic progress for the former and a decrease in outcomes for the latter two subgroups. The disparate academic issues for students with disabilities potentially will be lost.

Attachment 8 – Copy of the Average Statewide Proficiency Based on Assessments Administered in the 2010-2011 School Year in Reading/Language Arts and Mathematics for the "All Students" Group and All Subgroups (if applicable)

2010-2011 Statewide Average		
Subgroup	**Reading**	**Mathematics**
All Students	88	87
Economically Disadvantaged	80	78
Students with Disabilities	67	66
Limited English Proficient	79	82
Asian*	NA	NA
Black	80	77
Hispanic	84	83
White	92	90

* As described in Virginia's Consolidate State Accountability Workbook, results for the Asian subgroup will be available beginning with assessments administered in the 2011-2012 school year.

Inclusion of the LEP group with the other two in the proposed PPG#1 additionally is troubling since this group has several distinct characteristics, such as Title III AMAOs as well as exemption from testing for newly arrived students. (Virginia also proposed to expand this exemption at page 43).

The planned aggregation of PGGs apparently contradicts the value of disaggregating students with disabilities seen by VDOE. State Assistant Superintendent H. Douglas Cox recently noted, as reported in the December 2011 State SEAC minutes:

> *"In the language for this wavier, VA DOE will continue to disaggregate special education so students with disabilities will not get lost in the bigger picture and special education teachers will have separate accountability. That was the strongest, most important thing NCLB brought to the table." (p. 3)*

Of concern is that adoption of the PGGs would result in weakened accountability for the education of students with disabilities in some schools and districts.

Virginia's rationale (page 41) for the composition of each PGG is stated as follows:

> "The use of proficiency gap groups for accountability purposes will allow the state to target supports and interventions related to subgroup performance on Virginia's historically underperforming groups of students. The Consolidated State Performance Report (CSPR) data show that the reading and mathematics performance of students with disabilities, English language learners, and economically disadvantaged students are the lowest in comparison to the statewide average performance of —all students in both subjects. Furthermore, grouping the three subgroups together mitigates the effect of the minimum group size concealing the results of these traditionally lowest-performing groups, allowing more schools to be identified for supports and interventions for the subgroups that need the most assistance. Hence, no change in Virginia's approved n-size is being proposed. "

An intent seems to be expansion of the number of schools that receive supports, which is laudable. However, it is unclear what the impact of use of the proposed PGGs will be on school and district accountability as well as a school's/district's ability to develop interventions designed to target the needs of specific students as defined by individual subgroup data.

The application seems unclear about the way in which the Standards of Accreditation (SOA) - which will be used as VA's overarching school accountability system – considers the performance of student subgroups, including students with disabilities (see pages 35-36, 39). While the 'key features' described on page 39 include "incorporates subgroup performance in accountability reporting to ensure schools continue to focus on closing the proficiency gap", exactly how this is accomplished remains unclear. Again, if the proposed PGGs are used, then variation between the subgroups in PPG #1 will be lost.

Under Virginia's current Standards of Accreditation system, there is a clear discrepancy between the numbers of schools with accreditation vs. the number of schools not achieving AYP (see page 11): 1768 schools (96%) are fully accredited while only 697 (38%) made AYP.

TEST PARTICIPATION. While Virginia proposes to continue to "annually disaggregate and report performance data for all seven subgroups" (page 41), the application does NOT propose to do so for test participation. Rather, Virginia proposes to base ESEA's participation

4

requirement (95% of each subgroup) on the proposed PGGs. This approach is unacceptable for many reasons. Subgroup participation is critical, particularly for students with disabilities. Only by reporting on participation at the subgroup level will the Commonwealth be able to identify schools that are in violation of the participation requirement.

GRADUATION. Virginia's request does not provide information regarding the use of subgroups in graduation rate. Current ESEA regulations – which are not being waived as part of this Flexibility program – require states to set graduation targets by subgroup. As with proficiency determinations, Virginia proposes to use PGGs to determine if a high school is making progress in closing achievement gaps.

VCSWD recommends that the ESEA Waiver Application explicitly: a.) limit use of proposed PGG for determination of Focus Schools for small schools; and require schools to track academic outcomes, including test participation and graduation rates, for students with disabilities, limited English proficient students and economically disadvantaged students.

3. CURRENT 'N' SIZE

According to the application, Virginia does not intend to change its current subgroup "n" size, claiming that the new "proficiency gap groups" (PGG) approach will provide adequate identification of schools with low-performing subgroups. However, no evidence of this assertion is provided in its request.

Virginia's current "n" size is the greater of 50 students or 1 percent, with a cap of 200 students (amended in 2005). This "n" is one of the largest of any state. It should NOT be assumed that the PGG approach will include all Title I schools. Currently, Virginia's 'n' size excludes a significant percentage of schools from an AYP determination for the students with disabilities (SWD) subgroup.

VCSWD recommend that an analysis be done to identify the impact of the current "n" vs. a lower number, specifically: the number and percentage of schools and districts that are exempt from AYP for the SWD subgroup and a projection of the number and percentage of schools and districts that would be included via the PGG approach.

VCSWD also recommends that Virginia reduce its current 'n' size to reflect "n" size in keeping with other states. An 'n' size of 20 is recommended. An N of 20 protects student confidentiality while providing accountability through more accurate indicators of school performance that does not occur when using larger N numbers. [i]We again encourage data analysis, to provide valuable information on the impact of "n" size.

4. ALTERNATE ASSESSMENTS

According to data for the 2009-2010 school year (available at www.IDEAdata.org) Virginia assessed **30.42%** of students with IEPs via alternate assessments, the Virginia Grade Level Alternative (VGLA) and Virginia Alternate Assessment Program (VAAP), in READING and **25.58%** in MATH. More specifically, 22% of students with IEPs were assessed via the VGLA in reading

and 18% in Math (see details below). Virginia is one of only 3 states offering an alternate assessment on grade-level achievement standards.

	READING:	MATH:
VGLA:	22%	18%
VAAP:	8%	8%

VA plans to phase out the VGLA and to begin administration of the Virginia Modified Achievement Standards Test (VMAST) (see below and see: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/administrators/superintendents_memos/2011/219-11.shtml). However, these tests are **not** the same. The VGLA measures grade-level content standards in an alternative format (evidence-based). As such, use of scores for AYP are not limited under the ESEA. In contrast, the VMAST does not measure a student's performance on the same achievement standards as their non-disabled classmates and, under current ESEA, use of scores for accountability is limited to prevent overuse.

Known also as an alternate assessment on modified academic achievement standards or AA-MAS, the **Virginia Modified Achievement Standards Test (VMAST)** for mathematics assessments in grades 3-8 and Algebra I will be implemented in 2011-2012. VMAST reading assessments in grades 3-8 and in high school will be introduced the following year (2012-2013). A timetable has not been established yet for phasing out use of the VGLA for writing, history and science. (See: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/ alternative_assessments/ vmast_va_mod_achievement_stds_test/index.shtml) The only mention of the VMAST within the VA Request is on pages 32-34.

Potential overuse. States that have been administering an AA-MAS for several years (e.g., CA, TX, KS, OK) are dramatically overusing this alternate assessment. For example, 54% of Oklahoma's students with disabilities (SWDs) received alternate assessments, while 50% of Texas SWDs did and 36% of California's SWDs did. . These excesses are occurring under the current NCLB AYP accountability system which caps the proficient scores on an AA-MAS that can be used toward AYP at 2% of all students in grades assessed, or roughly 20% of students with IEPs in grades assessed.

Virginia's implementation of an AA-MAS (5 years after such an AA was authorized by ESEA regulations) is a matter of concern for several reasons. First, if ESEA Flexibility Request is granted, Virginia's new accountability system may not suppress the assignment of students with disabilities to this assessment as under the current AYP. At this time, there is no apparent limitation on AA-MAS use set forth in the proposed Waiver application. Second, SWDs who receive the AA-MAS assessment may well be taken off course for a regular diploma; some very early in their school career. Third, use of the AA-MAS may put Virginia's educational system at a disadvantage over time. Virginia is not participating in the Race To The Top (RTTT) grant. Assessment consortia currently are developing new assessments aligned to the Common Core

State Standards (CCSS). The RTTT consortia must design assessments that can be used to assess all students, including students with disabilities, except for those with the most significant cognitive disabilities. Thus, the 41 states and the District of Columbia participating in and planning to adopt the RTTT assessments [ii]will NOT be able to continue administration of an AA-MAS. In contrast, Virginia is likely to be one of the few states that would be administering the AA-MAS.

VCSWD recommends that VDOE identify steps for controlling use of the VMAST to ensure that SWDs are not inappropriately assigned to this assessment; and identify plans to appropriately move SWDs who have been assessed via the VGLA to the general assessment with accommodations as appropriate.

In summary, like VDOE, the VCSWD desires a statewide school system which is effective and accountable, able to prepare students of all abilities for engagement in employment and community participation. VCSWD believes that revisions to the current draft application as recommended would significantly improve school accountability, academic supports, and student achievement. We look to the Virginia Board of Education to provide consistent leadership in maintaining standards that promote and support progress in education for all students.

---

[i] http://www.publiceducation.org/nclb_main/Reports.asp

Commission Staff Research Report: Children with Disabilities and LEP Students: Their impact on the AYP determinations of schools

[ii] http://www.ed.gov/news/media-advisories/us-department-education-host-second-series-public-meetings-race-top-assessment

JUSTCHILDREN

A Program of the

LEGAL AID JUSTICE CENTER

Angela Ciolfi
Legal Director
angela@justice4all.org

February 23, 2012

RE: ESEA Flexibility Application

Members of the Board of Education and Superintendent Wright:

I have reviewed the most recent draft of the ESEA waiver application attached to today's agenda. As you may recall, we expressed concerns at the last meeting and in the attached op-ed that the proposed waiver application does not adequately address achievement gaps.

The Department has made some positive changes – clarifying that some of the largest achievement gaps in reading and math will be prominently identified on the Report Card. I found the Sample Proficiency Gap Dashboard on page 50 especially helpful.

But because the entire application is based on the Standards of Accreditation, which has never addressed achievement gaps, it has some fundamental flaws:

- **Problem:** There are no provisions independently addressing graduation gaps. There are provisions regarding college-or-career ready credentials (CCRC), but the CCRC target is set extremely low (48%), and those provisions *only kick in if the gap group does not meet the reading and math proficiency targets.* **Proposed Solution:** This concern can be addressed by requiring high schools to meet or make progress toward 85 points on the graduation and completion index for each Gap Group.
- **Problem:** A school will only be identified as having a proficiency gap if it does not meet the reading and math proficiency targets of 70% and 75%. That means that a school can have a 25-30 point gap, still be Fully Accredited, and not qualify for academic support from the state. **Proposed Solution:** This concern can be addressed by eliminating the language on page 49 that allows schools to make progress on the Dashboard simply by meeting the SOA targets for each group, even if double-digit gaps exist. Schools would still be able to meet the requirements by showing moderate growth using student growth percentile measures or reducing the failure rate by 10%.
- **Problem:** The annual targets remain static at 70% and 75%, despite the fact the federal application guidelines anticipate annual measurable objectives that advance incrementally from year to year. **Proposed Solution:** Set AMOs that increase in annual increments.
- **Problem:** The application does not address what supports will be provided to schools where gaps have been identified using the Dashboard, but the school is Fully Accredited and has not been identified as a Priority or Focus school. Those schools do not qualify for the academic review process described on pages 65-70, even if they are identified as having large gaps. **Proposed Solution:** Identify supports and interventions for schools that have identifiable gaps, but do not qualify for academic review, Priority, or Focus school status, whether or not they are Title I schools.

1000 Preston Avenue, Suite A. • Charlottesville, VA 22903
Telephone - 434-977-0553 • Fax - 434-977-0558 • Toll-free - 800-578-8111 • www.justice4all.org

Finally, there are a lot of unknowns that make it difficult to assess whether we are being appropriately aggressive about attacking achievement gaps. For example:

- How will consolidating students with disabilities, English language learners, and low-income students into one group affect how schools approach the unique needs of each student in those groups? Will the performance of one group mask another?
- How will student growth percentiles affect the identification of achievement gaps?
- Most significantly, how will the overlap between minority status, language proficiency, and poverty affect the size of Gap Groups 2 and 3?[1] Given Virginia's large n-size (n=50 students), how will schools be held accountable for the performance of relatively smaller numbers of Black and Hispanic students who are not members of Gap Group 1?

The fundamental flaw in our state accreditation system has always been its failure to address achievement and graduation gaps. The waiver process has brought those flaws out into the light. Now we have an opportunity to revisit the state system and make sure that schools with large gaps can get the incentives and academic support they need from the state to close them.

Thank you.

[1] Gap Group 1 includes students with disabilities, English Language learners, and economically disadvantaged students. Gap Group 2 includes Black students not included in Group 1. Gap Group 3 includes Hispanic students not included in Group 1. Virginia has one of the highest n-sizes at n=50. In any given school, will there be more than 50 Black or Hispanic students who are not economically disadvantaged or English Language Learners to satisfy the n-size? If not, how will schools be held accountable for the performance of minority students?

2

From: ----------
Sent: Wednesday, April 25, 2012, 3:43 PM
To: Tate, Veronica (DOE)
Subject: ESEA Thoughts

Many Superintendents believe an accountability framework that allows and promotes re-learning and re-assessment can allow VA to have increasing AMOs and perhaps meet other criteria.

VIRGINIA ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS

405 Emmet Street • P. O. Box 400265 • Charlottesville, Virginia 22904-4265 • (434) 924-0538 • Fax (434) 982-2942

April 26, 2012

Patricia I. Wright
Superintendent of Public Instruction
PO Box 2120
Richmond, VA 23218

Dear Dr. Wright:

On behalf of the Virginia Association of School Superintendents (VASS), I wanted to reiterate support for the waiver request submitted by the Virginia Department of Education from the No Child Left Behind Federal Act of 2001. The superintendents across Virginia universally report they are making progress to align local teacher performance evaluation procedures and processes with the Virginia Board of Education approved standards for teacher evaluation. As you know, the Superintendents' Blueprint for Virginia Education Reform approved unanimously at the VASS legislative conference in October 2011 addresses the association's Human Capital (Goal 1).

Objective 2: Improve teacher, administrator, and classified staff performance through Strategy 2A that recommends that the Board of Education/Department of Education provide assistance during implementation of a fair and uniform evaluation system that provides for timely reporting of student performance data and other performance indicators to be used as the basis for teacher and administrator evaluations.

The superintendents' association wanted to again state its support for the waiver request and the commitment to using student growth performance indicators and data as a key component in the evaluations of staff.

Sincerely,

Pamela R. Moran

Pamela R. Moran, Ed.D.

VASS president

From: Predaris, Teddi G. [TGPredaris@fcps.edu]
Sent: Monday, May 7, 2012, 8:41 AM
To: Tate, Veronica (DOE)
Subject: Recommendation for VDOE'S Response to USED's Feedback Summary on VDOE'S ESEA Flexibility Waiver Application

[logo for Virginia ESOL Supervisors Association (VESA)]

Veronica Tate, Director
Office of Program Administration and Accountability
Virginia Department of Education

Dear Ms. Tate,
This letter is sent from the Virginia ESL Supervisors Association's (VESA) Executive Board on behalf of the state professional organization that promotes the academic achievement of English language learners, VESA. Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on Virginia Department of Education's (VDOE) response to the U. S. Department of Education's (USED) Summary of Additional Information Regarding Virginia's Flexibility Request.

As our Legislative Liaison, Teddi Predaris, mentioned during the Committee of Practitioners audio conference meeting on May 1, 2012, we would like to make a recommendation regarding the Title III LEP student Annual Measurable Achievement Objective (AMAO) 2 for Proficiency.
Our recommendation is the following:

- **Request from USED the opportunity to recalculate the AMAO 2 Proficiency target and establish a new baseline in 2011-12 (aligned with the current WIDA system) and establish increasing pass rates in subsequent years.**

Rationale: The current AMAO 2 Proficiency target was calculated using data from years during which English Language Proficiency (LEP) Level 5 students were required to remain at Level 5 for two years. Currently in Virginia, English language learners (ELLs) are not required to remain at Level 5 for two years, therefore there are fewer Level 5 students assessed with WIDA ACCESS for ELLs than with the previous system, as most previous Level 5 students have already become Level 6 each year. As an example in Fairfax, with the previous system, there were approximately 12,000 Level 5 students in 2010 who took WIDA ACCESS for ELLs, and the AMAO 2 Proficiency result for the that test year (reported in 2010-11) was 23%. The next year, with the new system and the removal of the requirement that Level 5 students remain at Level 5 for two years, there were fewer than 6000 Level 5 students in Fairfax (the vast majority had already become Level 6) thus there were less than half of the number of Level 5 students taking WIDA ACCESS for ELLs, and the AMAO 2 Proficiency result was correspondingly lower, 14%. During this time period, there was no change to the high-quality instructional offerings provided for ELLs in Fairfax, which has been recognized nationally by USED, after having been nominated by VDOE for USED's upcoming publication focused on best educational practices for ELLs.

Another major factor that affects the calculation of this AMAO 2 is the transiency of the ELL population each year. If more lower level students move in and more higher level students move out of a division in a given year or vice versa, that will have a significant effect on the results of this AMAO, since it is a one-time snapshot of students who become Level 6 in one year alone. **Another consideration for this AMAO could be requesting to use a three year average as an additional option to meet AMAO 2 if a division experienced a significant change in student population in a given year to avoid the "cliff" effect of sudden changes in demographics.**

Since VDOE will be requesting from USED the opportunity to establish new baselines for both the reading and mathematics targets, due to new standards and assessments, we are recommending that VDOE also submit a

parallel request to establish a new baseline for Title III AMAO 2 Proficiency, due to the change to the WIDA English language proficiency (ELP) level system. Recalculating and establishing a new AMAO 2 baseline on the current system would make the AMAO more accurate and attainable, and is based on the same logic and rationale for requesting and establishing new baseline measures for the new reading and mathematics standards and assessments. Parallel with that reading and mathematics request, and as is being requested by USED, an increasing pass rate could then be established for subsequent years for AMAO 2. Together requesting new baseline AMAOs for reading, mathematics, and English language proficiency would create a more fair and equitable set of AMAOs for all students, including ELLs.

This past year, according to VDOE data, nearly one-third of all Virginia schools divisions did not make Title III AMAO 2 Proficiency, and only two divisions in the entire state made all three LEP student AMAOs, as required. During the current opportunity for negotiation with USED on waiver flexibility from certain NCLB requirements, it is essential that a recommendation be submitted that would make this a fair and attainable goal based on the current system being used, rather than on a previous system that has been discontinued. If it is not considered in 2011-12 and beyond, since only two divisions made all three ELL AMAOs last year, Virginia runs the risk of having nearly every school division in the Commonwealth not meet one or more ELL AMAOs this year, and thus become unjustly categorized as needing division improvement plans for ELLs, even if other ELL results demonstrate student success.

We greatly appreciate all of VDOE's extensive work on the waiver application and your consideration of this important and time-sensitive recommendation. We would be happy to provide any additional information that may be needed in this or any related areas.

Respectfully,
The VESA Executive Board, on behalf of the
Virginia ESL Supervisors Association

Cc: Patricia Wright
Linda Wallinger
Shelley Loving-Ryder
Judy Radford
Stacy Freeman

From: Hoover, Laura [lhoover@FCPS1.ORG]
Sent: Monday, May 7, 2012, 10:23 AM
To: Tate, Veronica (DOE)
Subject: ESEA Waiver and Title III

Dear Ms. Tate,

My name is Laura Hoover, the Title III Coordinator from Fauquier County Public Schools. I am including a letter below from Teddi Predaris and would like to inform you that I fully agree with the recommendation to recalculate the AMAO 2 Proficiency target and establish a new baseline for proficiency for ELs based on the WIDA ACCESS. I feel that considering this in our waiver negotiations is critical for the success and equity of

services for our English Language Learners. Please consider this recommendation and make it a part of the VDOE request to the USED. If this is not considered at this time, we will find that all of the VA School Divisions will be in Title III Improvement because the current proficiency measure is based on an old system, the amount of time and resources that will be lost in this on the state and division levels will be immense. I feel that there is no better time to address this issue since VDOE is already negotiating other points with USED.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this very important issue.

Sincerely,
Laura M. Hoover

Laura M. Hoover
ESL/Foreign Language Instructional Supervisor
Fauquier County Public Schools
Phone (540) 422-7024
Fax (540) 422-7057

(e-mail included a copy of the May 7, 2012, VESA e-mail above)

From: ----------
Sent: Sunday, August 05, 2012 10:36 PM
To: DOE - Board of Education, rr (DOE)
Subject: New Virginia Benchmark Standards - Questions

Dear Virginia Department of Education Board Members,

My name is ----------, and I am very concerned about the article on the front page of Thursday's (Aug 2, 2012) **Daily Press** entitled "A New Method to Measure Students". My concern is that, as a parent of a bright African American 15 year old young man, it appears that he will be held to a different "measuring stick" simply because he's black. Please let me know if I am reading this incorrectly. It appears these new benchmark standards are based on a student's race and his/her economic position. Given this, what incentive does any Virginia teacher have in helping my African American son perform to his best academic potential? I have also contacted Ms Patricia Wright but am unsure if she is the appropriate person to contact regarding this concern. Please advise on who is most appropriate for me to discuss this matter.

Regards,

From: ----------
Sent: Friday, August 17, 2012 8:23 AM
To: DOE - Board of Education, rr (DOE)
Subject: New Racial standards of achievement

DEAR Board Members,

I just read the article in the VA Pilot concerning your newly adopted standards for differentiating between races and economic standards.

I TOTALLY DISAGREE with this ! I teach at ---------- in ---------- and this new standard will DESTROY the equity in the classroom. Being originally from Wisconsin, I never thought I'd see the day when such a racist and stereotypic policy would actually BECOME policy in the 21st century in any state.
How can you possible believe that a 45% pass rate will enable these students to become productive citizens in this century of knowledge expansion.

What an admission of defeat! This is a sad day in VA.

Sincerely,

-----Original Message-----
From: dasco5@cox.net [mailto:dasco5@cox.net]
Sent: Wednesday, September 05, 2012 3:30 PM
To: DOE - Board of Education, rr (DOE)
Subject: Annual Measurable Objective Do -Over

Greeting Board of Education members.

I am a member of the Williamsburg James City County Board of Education. Our board, as well as I am sure many board members and members of the educational community, have been inundated with communications from many people unhappy with the new amo's. There is a lot of concern in our community about the disparity of pass rates and a seeming lack of progress in the sub groups. As a parent and a board member, I am committed

to every progressing as far as possible regardless of their skin color, identified race, economic level or special needs. I know that is a concern that all of you share and that you have spent many hours overseeing and improving our services.

I do not know whether or not there is a role for someone like me in this review process but if so, I would welcome a seat at the table as these standards are being reexamined.

Please make every effort to ensure that all children are appropriately challenged and that the highest of expectations are maintained. I am aware that this is not an exact science and that there will be continued adjustments necessary.
Thank you again for your efforts.

Sincerely,
Heather Cordasco

From: ----------
Sent: Tuesday, September 18, 2012 12:46 PM
To: DOE - Board of Education, rr (DOE)
Subject: Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs)

Dear Board Members,

My name is ----------. I recently moved to Arlington, VA with my wife and two children (ages 8 and 5). Thus far, we have been more than pleased with our experiences in the area, particularly with the education that our children are receiving.

However, within the last few days, some disturbing news regarding the Board's Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) has come to my attention, and I would like someone from the Board to respond to the following questions. Is it true that the percentage of African American children who are expected to pass has been lowered to less than 50%? If so, then what was the detailed rationale for such a decision? What alternative options were considered? And lastly, will there be some upcoming public forum to discuss this matter?

Thank you for your time. I eagerly anticipate your response.

Sincerely,

From: ----------
Sent: Tuesday, October 16, 2012 8:01 PM
To: DOE - Board of Education, rr (DOE)
Subject: Dr. Cannady

I am a parent of a ---------- Middle school 8th grader and I am NOT in favor of the No Backslide Provision.

Thank You

From: ----------
Sent: Tuesday, October 16, 2012 8:08 PM
To: DOE - Board of Education, rr (DOE)
Subject: Backslide provision

Stupid idea to put that in...what the heck is the logic behind that?!? So flippin tired of putting band aids on the runaway SOL nightmare!! How far into this mess do we have to be to just man up and scrap this nightmare! Ridiculous!!

From: ----------
Sent: Tuesday, October 16, 2012 8:55 PM
To: DOE - Board of Education, rr (DOE)
Subject: Dr. Cannady

Please reverse the Backslide Provision! Thank you for your time and work.

From: ----------
Sent: Tuesday, October 16, 2012 11:46 PM
To: DOE - Board of Education, rr (DOE)
Subject: Dr. Cannaday

I am not in favor of the NO BACKSLIDE PROVISION. This provision is not fair to the school or the students.

From: ----------
Sent: Wednesday, October 17, 2012 8:21 AM
To: DOE - Board of Education, rr (DOE)
Subject: Dr. Cannaday - No backslide provision

Dr. Cannaday,

My child attends ---------- Middle School in Roanoke County. While this is our first year at the school, I understand that our SOL scores are quite good. I was disturbed to learn from our principal that there is a new rule about to go into effect which would stipulate that our Math SOL scores would have to be as high or higher than the previous year in order to maintain accreditation, even though our pass rate is much higher than the required standard. This seems unfair to me - I have volunteered in our elementary school for a number of years and can attest to the fact that each class is not the same - some years a 5th grade class may be filled with high achievers, and the next year have a large number of children who perform at a lower level. Therefore, I do not feel that holding each class to the previous year's score is fair or logical. Please help to see that this provision goes away. I am not a fan of SOL's in general as I think they have created more problems than they have remedied, but this is beyond ridiculous. Thanks for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

---- 6th Grade Parent

From: ----------
Sent: Wednesday, October 17, 2012 8:48 AM
To: DOE - Board of Education, rr (DOE)
Subject: Backslide Provision

Hello, I was informed by ---------- Middle School of the Backslide Provision that was put in place. I DO NOT agree with this logic. No two students are exactly the same and therefore no two groups of students are the same and therefore should not be compared in this manner. I hope that this can be removed from the standard.

Thank you

From: ----------
Sent: Wednesday, October 17, 2012 9:44 AM
To: DOE - Board of Education, rr (DOE)
Subject: Dr. Cannady

Dr. Cannady,
As a 6th grade math teacher for ---------- County School's, I would like to express my concern over the no backslide provision of the revised math AMO's. As you know, no two students and no two groups of students are the same, and therefore cannot be compared with one another in terms of the no backslide provision. Please help us to fairly evaluate the students by removing the no backslide provision.
Thank you for your time,

--- Middle School
From: ----------
Sent: Wednesday, October 17, 2012 12:26 PM
To: DOE - Board of Education, rr (DOE)
Subject: FOR DR. CANNADAY

Dear Dr. Cannaday,

My name is ----------. I have a student at ---------- Middle School in ---------, VA, where I am a PTA board member. I recently heard of the 'No Backslide' provision added to the State's Mathematics AMOs. I am NOT in favor of that provision and ask that you do all you can to get it removed. I feel it may unfairly affect schools, like ---, that have regularly exceeded state requirements.

Thank you,

From: ----------
Sent: Wednesday, October 17, 2012 12:30 PM
To: DOE - Board of Education, rr (DOE)
Subject: Dr Cannaday

This is ment to inform you that I am NOT in favor of the NO BACKSLIDE PROVISION. Thank you, ----------
(parent of---------- of ---------- Middle School 8th grade)

From: ----------
Sent: Wednesday, October 17, 2012 1:58 PM
To: DOE - Board of Education, rr (DOE)
Cc: ----------
Subject: Dr. Cannaday

Dr Cannaday,

I am the parent of three students enrolled in --------- County Public schools, grades 6, 8 and 11. It has come to my attention that there has been a provision added for the SOL accreditation standards that sets minimum standards, but also does not allow any reduction in passing rates from the previous year. This "no backslide provision" does not seem to be a fair way to asses a school. Each year, they are faced with different students with different needs and abilities, who will undoubtedly vary to some degree in thier pass rates. I understand the need to have a minimum standard, but as long as a school meets that standard, they should be accredited. I urge you to reconsider this when you meet with the State Board of Education and eliminate the "no backslide" rule. Thank you, in advance, for your time and consideration.

From: ----------
Sent: Wednesday, October 17, 2012 10:46 PM
To: DOE - Board of Education, rr (DOE)
Subject: Dr Cannaday

We are not in favor of " no backslide provision " our child is a student @ ------ Middle School

From: ----------
Sent: Thursday, October 18, 2012 9:48 AM
To: DOE - Board of Education, rr (DOE)
Subject: Dr. Cannaday

This email is in regards to Math AMOs. I understand it states that ***Every school is expected to meet the following pass rates—academic progress measures known as AMOs—or the prior year's pass rate whichever is higher, up to 90% for all students and every student subgroup.*** What does all that really mean? If the AMO for a group such as all students is 66% and we at our school had an 88% the previous year and we then slip to an 87% we would NOT make accreditation standards even though we were way above the state AMO. I personally feel this is a very unfair provision. I hope you will work to remove this provision. Thank you.

From: ----------
Sent: Thursday, October 18, 2012 11:24 AM
To: DOE - Board of Education, rr (DOE)
Subject: Dr. Cannaday

Dr. Cannaday,
I just wanted to e-mail you and let you know that I am not in favor of the NO BACKSLIDE PROVISION.

Sincerely,

----------, VA

From: ----------
Sent: Thursday, October 18, 2012 11:32 AM
To: DOE - Board of Education, rr (DOE)
Subject: Dr. Cannady, no backslide provision

As a parent, educator and tax payer, I strongly resist punishing schools for marginally decreasing in test scores for a single year. Instead, the system should recognize demographic changes and natural variations in the student population. Using a more comprehensive rubric across several years more effectively identifies schools that are backsliding, which is what we want to do.

Thank you for your consideration,

Subject: Comments on Regression Sanctions
From: ----------
To: Billy Cannaday

Good evening, Dr. Cannaday.

… I would ask that you consider the negative message that would be sent to higher achieving schools who may see some decline in the student performance on SOL tests in consecutive years (regresssion sanctions). Maybe a sample would explain.

I have a school in the district ---------- that scored in the high 80's in mathematics this past year. That was considerably higher than some schools' performance on the new standards. If they would happen to fall a point below their performance on the spring 2013 test administration in math, they would be in warning due to their regression. In reality they would continue to be above the AMO identified over the six year period to close the performance gap.

This is a negative sanction for students, teachers, and schools who are doing their best to achieve at their highest ability. There is one thing we can always expect in these criterion reference testing. There will be variation of student performance from year to year due in some measure to the strength of students being tested. Some groups of students respond differently due to their cumulative strengths or weaknesses over a period of time. While we would all like to see the continuous upward graphing of student performance, there can be some leveling or decrease due to this participant variation.

I hope you and your colleagues will find some way to maintain high expectations for students and schools and to acknowledge the real possibility of fluctuating scores, especially when the students and schools are exceeding the targets established by the State Board of Education.

I thank you for your service and commitment to the students and teachers in Virginia and appreciate the time you have taken to read this email. I have a great deal of confidence that you will consider this concern.

Thank you for your time.

From: ----------
Sent: Monday, November 12, 2012 10:06 PM
To: DOE - Board of Education, rr (DOE)
Subject: NPR article on disparate educational goals

Dear Virginia Board of Education,

Although I am not a resident of your state, I read the following NPR article with great concern: http://www.npr.org/2012/11/12/163703499/firestorm-erupts-over-virginia-s-education-goals. I agree with the assessment that there should be no separate expectations of performance based on ethnic lines. That would be the start of a slippery slope. If one believes that the same intrinsic talent and skills exist across all groups, then an "A" for students of one group should mean the same as an "A" for students of another group. Lowering the bar does a disservice to those for whom the bar is lowered, creating a false or even erroneous sense of achievement. The real question, as Ms. Sears pointed out in the article, is why the starting point is lower for one group versus another - and to address that gap. Education is the primary gateway to financial security and success on many levels. I strongly believe in that for all children, and I volunteer in reading programs at local schools and libraries to help those students who are behind their grade level. I want all children to succeed unequivocally. In the interest of starting a perspective on this, I would ask, who are the role models for each student group? What are the expectations set by their parents, guardians, immediate cultural circle? Do the parents/guardians, immediate cultural circle model those expectations with actions? Schools can and do provide resources, but the people around the children have to help also. One reads articles about children in other parts of the world who walk for an hour each way or more to get to school, and study by candlelight. Is education culturally respected by the community? When someone says that he or she will be a teacher or educator or professor, is that looked upon with admiration, or are their other life choices that are much more admired? It is not an easy situation to address - there are many factors involved. From my perspective, I see cultural / social expectation as one of the very strong forces, like peer pressure. It would be helpful, for example, to see current acknowledged role models make a strong case advocating learning, education, teaching. Virginia could well be a front-runner in making revolutionary strides to address this achievement gap. I urge you not to shortchange any of the students; measure them all by the same ruler, and award them the same gold medal when they cross the finish line.

Sincerely,

From: ----------
Sent: Tuesday, November 13, 2012 9:31 PM
To: DOE - Board of Education, rr (DOE)
Subject: NPR Article

Virginia Board of Education Member,

My name is ------. I am a future educator, currently studying music education at James Madison University. I read an interesting article on the NPR website, link here: http://m.npr.org/news/U.S./163703499.

Some of the statistics in the article concerned me, and I would like to discuss my concerns with someone who may have the opportunity to either make things more clear to me, or to make a difference in the system.

There is currently a racial disparity concerning the achievement of students in public schools in Virginia. That is a true fact, and I'm not attempting to deny this. However, I do not believe that the inequity has anything to do with the race of our children. The difference has to do with family background, community, school setting, individual learning challenges, environment, past experiences, and the ability level of teachers, and not one single factor can be measured without considering the influence of the others.

Race does not determine anything about what a student may or may not have been through in the past. As Patricia Wright reportedly said, "...when it comes to measuring progress, we have to consider that students start at different points." While I agree that we must take into account the starting points of our individual students, I don't understand why racial categories are being used to document this. Winsome Sears: "...we're starting with black children where they are. We can't start them at the 82 percentile because they're not there. The Asian students are there. And so the real question is why aren't black students starting at the 82 percentile? Why? Why are they not there?" There are an infinite number of factors (life variants) that play into why the specific individuals in the black category perform the way that they do, and not one of those factors is skin color. To quote the Virginia Board of Education: "The vision of the Board of Education and Superintendent of Public Instruction, in cooperation with their partners, is to create an excellent statewide system of public education that derives strength from our diversity and that ensures equality of opportunity for each student in a safe and healthy learning environment that prepares all students to be capable, responsible, and self-reliant citizens in the global society."

If we are truly attempting to create a system that "derives strength from our diversity and ensures equality of opportunity for each student," we need to educate individual students rather than trying to section them off and give them labels. The percentiles imply that we would teach a black student differently than an Asian student - with a lower expectation.

I do plan to teach each of my students differently, but I can assure you that it will not be because he is black or Asian, it will be based on how I believe I can best offer him education and encouragement in learning music.

Thank you so much for taking the time and consideration to read this e-mail. I deeply appreciate any level of response you may be able to offer to help me work through my confusion, though I understand how busy you must be.

I hope it doesn't seem that I am angry with the board, or that I blame you or anyone personally for my emotional response to this proposition. I understand that you all are doing very good work to make the Virginia education system as safe and encouraging as possible.
Best wishes in all of the good work that you do for our schools.

Thank you again,

From: ----------
Sent: Wednesday, November 14, 2012 8:17 AM
To: DOE - Board of Education, rr (DOE)
Subject: a way around the curent controversy on demographic-based goals

The way that your criteria is stated for establishing goals is obviously controversial. You can actually achieve the exact same goal by mathematically defining it in a different (non-controversial) way. Instead of stating that you are measuring % of passing students per demographic, target exactly what you are trying to achieve. Your intent is to measure percentage of passing students so that you can compute and compare the gap between demographics. Your ultimate intent is to provide incentive to schools to work on closing this gap. State that you

are measuring and establishing goals on the gap itself. You would be able to identify schools that show outstanding performance by (1) measuring overall passing rate (as you do now), and (2) measuring the demographic gaps. For example: Goal – Reduce the existing gap between each demographic classification and top achievers by 10%. Obviously, this needs some work, but hopefully you get the general idea and hopefully this will help to smooth things over. You could even state that you are retracting the controversial proposal and instituting fair across-the-board fair criteria (even though it is mathematically the same).

------ – 1985 graduate of Charlottesville High School and current resident of Albemarle County.

From: ----------
Sent: Saturday, November 17, 2012 1:01 AM
To: DOE - Board of Education, rr (DOE)
Subject: New proposal for educational standards.

What you're proposing on doing(lowering the passing mark to 45% for blacks) is really embarrassing. This is racial segregation and offensive. It is exactly this low expectation for black students that is making them score badly. Instead of decreasing standards based on race you should work on increasing the quality of teachers and facilities at the disadvantaged schools. A school with high standards for both grades and discipline will have successful students regardless of race.

Just a suggestion

September 7, 2012

David Foster, President
Virginia Board of Education
P.O. Box 2120
Richmond, VA 23218-2120

Dear President Foster,

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we request your consideration of our suggestions to strengthen Virginia's new statewide accountability system as allowed under the ESEA flexibility granted by the U.S. Department of Education.

As you are aware, the goals established recently were cause for alarm. The six-year targets locked in extremely low expectations with achievement gaps ranging up to 40 percentage points.[1] We appreciate the responsiveness of the members of the Board of Education, and offer the following recommendations as you set more appropriate goals:

1) **Be ambitious.** Virginia teachers, principals and students have a strong track record of rising to meet expectations. Flexibility is helpful, but Virginia must continue to meet the spirit of the federal law, which is based on high expectations and closing achievement gaps. Virginia's original testing targets for math proficiency would have increased achievement gaps among student groups. For example, the actual black-white achievement gap on 2010-2011 math tests was 13 points.[2] The original plan would have resulted in an achievement gap between black and white students in 2016-2017 of 21 points. The new targets need to reduce achievement gaps dramatically and result in equitable outcomes.

2) **Set rigorous short-term goals and equitable long-term goals.** We recommend a two-tiered approach: Set annual benchmarks that cut non-proficiency rates in half by 2016 for all students and for each subgroup, and set a longer-term goal for 2020 with all students and all subgroups achieving at 85-90% or a similarly rigorous level. Virginia should set the same high expectations for every group of students and require students, subgroups, schools, and divisions that are further behind to make greater rates of annual progress. Parents of low-income and minority students, as well as students with disabilities and English language learners, must be assured that schools have high expectations and are working to ensure all students achieve, opening doors for future success.

3) **Use the actual achievement of individual schools as a starting point** to set targets for reducing achievement gaps. Schools with dramatic gaps need reasonable targets that will result in rapid progress toward remedying inequities. Schools with smaller gaps still need incentives and goals that will provide appropriate educational services to the Commonwealth's most needy student subgroups.

---

[1] The 2016-2017 target for students with disabilities is 49%, 40 points lower than the target for Asian students at 89%. To view the actual targets, see http://www.doe.virginia.gov/news/news_releases/2012/jul24.shtml.
[2] The 2010-11 pass rates for all subgroups is on page 225 of Virginia's waiver application: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/meetings/2012/06_jun/agenda_items/item_n.pdf.

4) **Bear in mind that the second year of a new test always shows improvements.** The Math test being considered as a baseline is a new assessment. History shows that subsequent scores improve dramatically, as students are better prepared for the new methodology.[3]

   For example, the improvements for African American students between 1998-2002 were as follows: Grade 3 English pass rates rose from 33 to 55%. Fifth grade Math pass rates rose from 24 to 53%. Improvements beyond the initial years of SOL implementation show this upward trend has continued. From 2000 to 2002 the Grade 3 English pass rates for students with disabilities rose from 33 to 48%, and Math achievement rose from 48 to 58%. The progress for members of these subgroups in older grades was also impressive.

5) **Eliminate unnecessary stigma** by re-wording titles for proficiency groups. Black students and Hispanic students are priority groups for remedying achievement gaps, but it is unnecessary to add the words "Proficiency Gap Group" to their titles. Simplifying the categories is a more sensitive approach. Since Virginia's initial request to create unduplicated subgroups for Black and Hispanic students not counted in Proficiency Gap Group 1 was refused by the U.S. Department of Education, Virginia should drop use of Gap Groups 2 and 3 and instead use the racial/ethnic descriptors for these groups of students.

6) **Promote strong interventions and focus department resources on the lowest-performing schools.** The identified Title I Focus and Priority schools will need significant additional technical assistance and resources to make the dramatic improvements students and the Commonwealth as a whole deserve. The need to implement meaningful instructional reform was noted in the Peer Panel comments on Virginia's Waiver application.[4] Additionally, the peer review cited the importance of including "subgroup performance (i.e., academic achievement, graduation rates, and gap closing) as a factor in the accreditation system, not just the public reporting." Many specific suggestions were provided in this document, including the following feedback: "There is a lack of accountability for closing the achievement gap for subgroups for many schools as it is only required for priority and focus schools. Specific strategies for supporting English Learners and students with disabilities in the general classroom and accessing the regular curriculum were inadequate..."

   This year, as you carry out your constitutional duty to revise the Standards of Quality, we hope the needs of schools with high concentrations of poverty and persistent low student achievement and graduation rates will be at the forefront of your discussion.

7) **Link the ESEA Waiver process to the upcoming revisions to the Standards of Accreditation.** The Standards of Accreditation (SOA) need to be updated to reflect the goals and needs of the Commonwealth. The fundamental flaw in our state accreditation system is its failure to address achievement and graduation gaps. The waiver process has brought those flaws into the light, but finalizing the waiver should not end the conversation. No matter what happens with federal policy, parents of low-income and minority students, as well as students with

[3] http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/achievement_data/archived/index.shtml
[4] http://www2.ed.gov/policy/eseaflex/panel-notes/va.pdf

disabilities and English language learners, must be assured that schools are equal partners in their efforts to raise strong college and career ready adults.

We look forward to working with you, your colleagues and members of the Department on this process. We would be happy to discuss these issues further at any point. Please feel free to contact Angela Ciolfi, JustChildren Legal Director, at 434-977-0553 X110 or angela@justice4all.org.

Sincerely,

The Advocacy Institute
Advocating 4 Kids, LLC
Charlottesville Public Housing Association of Residents (PHAR)
Coalition of the Silence
Endependence Center
Families & Allies of Virginia's Youth (FAVY)
Legal Aid Justice Center, JustChildren Program
National Center for Learning Disabilities
Virginia Association of Centers for Independent Living (VACIL)
Virginia Down Syndrome Alliance
Virginia Office of Protection and Advocacy
Virginia Poverty Law Center
Voices for Virginia's Children

cc: Patricia Wright, Superintendent of Public Instruction

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
Virginia Board for People with Disabilities

John Kelly
Chair
Charles Meacham
Vice Chair
Margaret Disney
Secretary
Heidi L. Lawyer
Executive Director

Washington Building, Capitol Square
1100 Bank Street, 7th Floor
Richmond, Virginia 23219

804-786-0016 (TTY/Voice)
1-800-846-4464 (TTY/ Voice)
804-786-1118 (Fax)
info@vbpd.virginia.gov
www.vaboard.org

September 21, 2012

Mr. David Foster
President
Virginia Board of Education
P.O. Box 2120
Richmond, VA 23218-2120

Dear Mr. Foster:

I am writing on behalf of the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities (VBPD or "the Board") regarding the achievable measurable targets that have recently been established under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) flexibility waiver granted by the U.S. Department of Education.

VBPD is the Commonwealth's federally funded Developmental Disabilities (DD) Council, addressing the needs of people with developmental disabilities as established under the federal "Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act" and the state "Virginians with Disabilities Act." The Board advises the Secretary of Health and Human Resources, the Governor, and other policymakers on issues related to people with developmental and other disabilities in Virginia. The Department of Education is a member of the Board and we have long enjoyed a mutually positive and productive relationship, working together to improve education and transition outcomes for students with disabilities.

VBPD has been a long standing participant in the Virginia Coalition for Students with Disabilities and joined with the Coalition in February 2012 to submit comments and recommendations regarding Virginia's ESEA waiver application. We were gratified to see that a number of suggestions were accepted with respect to subgroup accountability.

The Board is aware of the concerns that have been expressed by families and numerous advocacy groups regarding the targets that were set for achievable measurable objectives (AMOs) for several subgroups (black and Hispanic students and students with disabilities). It is our understanding that the methodology for setting the AMOs was set prior to the results of tests under the more rigorous math Standards of Learning were obtained. We also understand that based on the widespread concern expressed in the community and at the request of the U.S. Department of Education, VDOE staff will be presenting an alternate methodology at the September 27 Board meeting that will ensure that the

achievement gaps of subgroups will be addressed and that all students will be expected to achieve at a high level.

It is clear that the performance of students with disabilities on the mathematics AMO for the lowest performing skills was dismally low, the lowest of all of the subgroups. Therefore we understand why the initial targets, were upsetting to parents and advocates. VBPD supports the Superintendent of Public Instruction's recommendation to adopt Option C, the alternate methodology for accountability years 2013-2014 through 2017-2018 that is based on the more rigorous assessments. We agree with the process for using the actual current scores as a starting point with accelerating rates of achievement calculated to result in a minimum 73 percent pass rate in the lowest performing schools. We also support differentiated AMOs in the intervening years as based on each subgroup's starting point as long as the Department ensures that the these low performing schools are held accountable to the interim and final targets. Doing so will require the commitment of significant resources, but in the end, reducing the huge proficiency gaps by setting exacting targets and expecting results is an investment in the future of the Commonwealth.

VBPD appreciates the commitment by the Board of Education to public service and to educational excellence. We would be happy to serve in any capacity that would be helpful as these discussions and decisions take place. Thank you for considering our Board's recommendations and for listening to the concerns of the families and advocates supporting students.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions about our comments. I am available by phone at (804) 786-9369 or by email at Heidi.lawyer@vbpd.virginia.gov.

Sincerely,

Heidi L. Lawyer

Cc: John Kelly, Board Chair
Dennis Manning, Chair,
Education and Employment Committee

Public Comment to the Virginia Board of Education
September 27, 2012

Speaker:
Candace Cortiella
The Advocacy Institute
PO Box 565
Marshall, VA 20116
PH: 540-364-0051
Email: Candace@advocacyinstitute.org

President Foster and members of the Board. Good morning. My name is Candace Cortiella. I'm speaking today regarding Agenda Item J, the First Review of Proposed Alternate Methodology for Revising Mathematics Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) under Virginia's NCLB waiver.

As Board members are aware, Virginia was directed by the US Dept. of Education to revise the methodology originally approved when it resulted in AMOs that did not address the achievement gaps.

While the revised AMOs appear rigorous on the surface, a closer examination reveals several issues.

First, the same flawed methodology is used to establish both the starting pass rates for each student group as well as the overall AMO for each of the next 6 years. The result is starting rates BELOW the actual pass rates for 2011-2012 for all students and all student groups, as shown on the table I've provided. In the case of English Language Learners, the proposed starting rate is **20 points** below the actual performance of these students last year.

In fact, the revised AMOs really reflect only one change: subgroup AMOs that result in all students performing at the same pass rate at the end of 6 years. Ironically, this "one size fits all" approach, considered one of the fatal flaws of NCLB, is now incorporated into the revised AMOs, despite the flexibility to do otherwise.

Second, the revised AMOs apparently apply ONLY to a school (or a subgroup within a school) with a pass rate LOWER than the AMOs, as it is now stated that every school is expected to **meet *either* the AMO or the school's previous year's pass rate, whichever is higher**. This approach will result in NO requirement for any year-to-year improvement in a substantial number of schools, while providing lots of confusion for the public.

Third, while the revised AMOs for low-performing subgroups are more rigorous, it is also made clear that schools may still meet the pass rate via safe harbor, requiring only a 10% reduction in the failure rate, with no requirement of adequate growth toward the AMO.

To arrive at more meaningful AMOs, the Board should consider the following approach:

- use the 2011-2012 math proficiency rates as the starting pass rates;
- calculate AMOs that – **at a minimum** – cut in half the proficiency gap ***within*** each student group by 2017 while also closing the gap ***between*** groups;
- establish AMOs specific to every school and every subgroup within each school. This ensures that **every school** is challenged to improve while expecting more improvement from those schools with the poorest performance.

These recommendations were also endorsed by 16 state and national organizations in a letter sent to the Board earlier this month.

Thank you.

VIRGINIA MATHEMATICS SOL PERFORMANCE AND AMOS

		2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2011-2012 Revised AMO	2016-2017 Revised AMO
Percent of Students Scoring Proficient	**Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs)** ***(same for all groups through 2010-2011)***	**75**	**79**	**79**	**85**			
	All students	80	83	88	87	68	61	73
	Asian	93	94	95	95	87	82	-
	Black	73	77	79	77	52	45	73
	Hispanic	75	79	82	83	61	52	73
	White	88	90	91	90	75	68	73
	Economically Disadvantaged	73	77	80	78	54	47	73
	Limited English Proficient	75	79	82	82	59	39	73
	Students with Disabilities	65	71	73	66	40	33	73

Denotes student groups not meeting AMO.

JUSTCHILDREN

A Program of the

LEGAL AID JUSTICE CENTER

Angela Ciolfi
Legal Director
angela@justice4all.org

September 27, 2012

Re: Item J – Revisions to Virginia's Application for ESEA Flexibility

President Foster, Superintendent Wright, and Members of the Board:

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to the revisions of Virginia's application on first review. I would like to provide you with copies of a letter signed by 16 Virginia organizations urging you to consider specific revisions to the AMO methodology. We provided copies of the letter to Dr. Wright and Mr. Foster earlier in the month so that these recommendations could be considered in advance of Virginia's revisions.

Before I talk about what is in the letter, I'd like to talk about what Virginia's application does right. First, it's fairly strong on graduation rates, a place where other states have dropped the ball. It requires all students *and all subgroups* to meet an 80% target on the Federal Graduation Indicator, which rewards schools for helping students achieve the most valuable credentials and allows students extra time to graduate if they need it.

Second, the new goals are more equitable and will encourage many schools to make significant progress toward closing achievement gaps in the long-term. This is a big improvement over the goals set in the July application, which locked existing achievement gaps in place over the next five years.

Now I'd like to talk about where there is still room for improvement. First, Virginia's proficiency goals need to be not only equitable, but ambitious. Using the 20th percentile as the starting point means that 80% of our students are already meeting the goals *and* that the end goals are lower than they would be if we used the state average. We know from past experience that the first administration of a new test does not accurately reflect what our students know and can do.

Second, and most importantly, we need to think about strengthening interventions for schools that do not meet the targets. As the peer reviewers noted, the interventions "are generic and focus on process rather than tailored and targeted interventions to address the needs of particular groups to close achievement gaps."

In addition, due to the nature of the waiver, the interventions only apply to a limited number of schools – most intensively to Priority and Focus schools and less intensively to other Title I schools. For example, even though the graduation rate targets are strong, the intervention – access to the Virginia Early Warning System (VEWS) – is only required of Title I high schools. There are only 3 Title I high schools in Virginia.

1000 Preston Avenue, Suite A. • Charlottesville, VA 22903
Telephone - 434-977-0553 • Fax - 434-977-0558 • Toll-free - 800-578-8111 • www.justice4all.org

Where the waiver application is strong, our state accreditation system is weak. But the reverse is not true. The Standards of Accreditation do not disaggregate for either test scores or graduation rates, and they, too, are weak on interventions. But the accreditation system does apply to all schools, not just Title I schools, and so I hope your next step is to turn your focus on strengthening the SOA by setting rigorous proficiency and graduation goals for all students and all subgroups.

Finally, everybody knows it is not enough just to set targets. We also have to provide students the resources and support needed to meet them, which means that this conversation is intertwined with the SOQ recommendations. We know that we can't close the achievement gap with low expectations, and we have to let the General Assembly know that we can't do it on the cheap.

Thank You.

Public Comment to the Virginia Board of Education
September 27, 2012

Cheryl A Poe
Advocating 4 Kids LLC
3788 Stoneshore Road
Virginia Beach VA 23452
757-306-1942
adv4kids@gmail.com

Dear Board Members:

My name is Cheryl Poe and I am here to speak today, on the proposed revision for the Mathematics Annual Measurable Objectives AMOs.

Although Virginia has been instructed by the U.S. Department Education to revise these wrongful AMO's, I am still concerned, both for my own children and all of Virginia's children, that it took a group of concerned citizens to identify the Board's discriminatory actions.

As an African-American mother of two children in Virginia public schools both of whom have a learning disability, I expect more from you, as my state leaders, when you address the needs of the most vulnerable and disenfranchised children.

Virginia attempted to create expectations for our students that are separate and unequal, and proposed a formula that would lock in existing disparities.

History tells us what happens when you separate students by status.
Before Brown v. Board of Education, millions of Virginia's black students were locked out of white schools and consequently, further educational and professional opportunities were denied. Before the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, millions of students with disabilities were educated in separate schools or not at all. Before Title VI, language minority students had to sink or swim on their own, falling further behind on knowledge and skills while they struggled to learn English.

You as leaders, are charged with the responsibility for the educational outcomes of all Virginia students, and not just a privileged few. I respectfully challenge you, the

Board, to engage the minority and disabled communities to re -build trust as we move forward together.

I do not speak for just myself and my two children, I am here today representing the voices of over 1000 concerned citizens nationwide who share my request to this board to correct this injustice and grant Virginia students the opportunity to reach their full potential.

Thank you for allowing me to speaking to you on this very important manner.

Statement to Virginia State Board of Education **September 27, 2012**

The Rev. Benjamin P. Campbell
2209 East Grace St., Richmond, VA 23223
bcampbell@richmondhillva.org

My name is Benjamin P. Campbell. I am a product of the Arlington County Public Schools and a resident of Richmond. I am married to an elementary school teacher in the Richmond Public Schools and I have sent four children through the Richmond Public Schools. I am also co-chair of the Micah Association, a volunteer association in Richmond which places volunteers from 126 faith communities in 25 city elementary schools.

I am speaking on Agenda item J: *Revising Mathematics Annual Measureable Objectives (AMO's) for Accountability Years 2012-2014 through 2017-2018.*

My topic is accountability: Not the accountability of the Richmond City Public Schools, but the accountability of the Commonwealth of Virginia and, yes, the Board of Education.

The Commonwealth of Virginia has obtained a waiver from No Child Left Behind. The price of the waiver is another unfunded demand on inner city schools.

Some people are proud of these latest AMO requirements and believe they will help by raising the bar for the children with lowest test scores. How tragic and cruel it is! The demands go in the wrong direction. It is not our city schools that fail to be accountable. The failure of accountability rests firmly upon the Commonwealth, its system of jurisdictional segregation, and its diminishing funding for education.

Everybody already knows what will help the children with low test scores who are concentrated in the inner city. It is not rocket science. The same thing works in special programs in inner city schools, in private schools, in charter schools. What works is smaller classes; special attention to each student's needs; extended day programs offering non-academic opportunities; and, especially important, full wrap-around care and social services. It takes resources. According to national statistics, it costs two times as much to bring the bottom 10 to 20% up to the achievement level of the top 70-80%.

The Commonwealth is notorious in underfunding its center city schools. Since statewide racial integration in 1970, Virginia has impoverished these resegregated schools, even instituting a composite index for education funding which favors affluent suburban children over poor city students.

The Board of Education should be applauded in its desire to meet the needs of children long abandoned, by improving their math education. But tragically, the Board's demands go in only one direction. First, demand resources from the Commonwealth. Speak boldly to the public, the Governor and General Assembly. Tell them the truth. Be accountable for that. Do this as openly as you criticize our inner city schools for low test scores. If the Commonwealth is accountable for funding this latest effort, I assure you our schools and children will take special delight in being accountable for these standards of achievement. Thank you.

Roanoke County Public Schools
5937 Cove Road, N.W.
Roanoke, Virginia 24019
Phone: (540) 562-3700 Fax: (540) 562-3986
www.rcs.k12.va.us

Address to the State Board of Education

Ben Williams, Assoc. Dir. or Testing, Remediation, and Staff Development, for the Roanoke County Public Schools School Board

I am here to present concerns that the Roanoke County School Board has about the "no backsliding" provision mentioned in agenda item i. In particular, my intent is to make the Board aware of the impact of the 5% rule on subgroups that are small but still large enough to be counted for federal accountability. For example, an "active" subgroup of 30 students is more likely to show higher year-to-year variability than a large subgroup, but even a 2-student decrease would put it below the 5% threshold. In short, the subgroups with the most variability are the ones most negatively impacted by the 5% provision. Instead, we propose a simpler solution that should ease schools' concerns while maintaining the original intent. Our proposal is that if a subgroup above the minimum *n* that is below 90% decreases for three consecutive years, then that subgroup has not met federal accountability regardless of the AMO.

September 25, 2012

David Foster, President
Virginia Board of Education
P.O. Box 2120
Richmond, VA 23218-2120

Dear President Foster,

Richmond Teachers for Social Justice (RTSJ) recently signed on as a supporting organization to a letter you received from the Legal Aid Justice Center JustChildren Program regarding Virginia's ESEA waiver. We offer these points as an important addendum that elaborates our position regarding the application for a waiver from certain provisions of the No Child Left Behind law. First, we applaud the Virginia DOE for its foresight and proactive approach in applying for a waiver from some of the provisions of NCLB. As written, this law placed an undue burden on school districts in the Commonwealth, and required performance gains that while socially laudable, may not be statistically possible in the time allotted. Nevertheless, we at RTSJ have reservations about specific provisions in the waiver application. We believe that as written, the application for the waiver, is merely an attempt to "game the system" in ways that are counterproductive to the ultimate goal of a public school system in which all students can be successful. We believe that a more realistic approach to the ways in which standardized test scores are used, and a more holistic understanding of the broad measures of students achievement will enhance our ability to affect positive change in our public schools.

1. **Expand the key measures of student achievement beyond standardized multiple-choice tests to include portfolio and performance-based assessments.** The goal of increasing the achievement of all Virginia's students is one that we wholeheartedly support. Unfortunately, achievement has been measured in ways that are counterproductive to the larger goal of providing all students with a world-class education. Much of the blame for this situation can be laid at the over-reliance on multiple-choice format exams to measure success. We are alarmed that the apparent definition of academic rigor in the Commonwealth is based on multiple-choice test achievement. Young Virginians need to learn academic skills such as collaborative problem solving, critical thinking, rich textual literacy and writing. These are the skills that are in high demand in the workforce, and that will build students civic skills and dispositions. Currently these skills are not measured by our current system of assessment, and consequently are ignored in too many of our schools.

2. **Develop student, teacher and school accountability systems that go beyond standardized tests of achievement.** We have been using test scores to rate the proficiency of individual students and, more recently, their teachers. Although these

practices may have spurred many students and educators to focus more on raising achievement, they have had the unintended consequence of encouraging these stakeholders to invest time and energy into learning how to game the testing system, rather than improving education. The most prominent national educational research organization, the American Educational Research Association, has taken public positions against high-stakes testing and the use of high-stakes tests in "value added" systems that seek to reward teacher merit. They have done so because these exams were never designed to provide information upon which valid decisions about individual students and their teachers can be based. Many experts agree, however, that using test scores at the aggregate level of a school, group of schools or district can be useful for identifying problems with learning. We propose that SOL scores be used to identify schools in need of assistance in meeting student needs. In this way, the accountability for achievement becomes a school wide issue, rather than an issue of individual students and teachers.

3. **Establish achievement goals that are ambitious in addressing the current achievement gaps in the system.** While we have serious reservations about NCLB, we applaud the ways in which the provisions of the law related to reporting the achievement of sub-groups within schools has drawn our focus to issues of equity in the system. While far from perfect, test score gaps between and within schools can be useful for identifying and addressing areas of concern. We oppose changing expectations for African-American and Latino students to reflect current levels of achievement. If the goal is parity, then we need to set goals that will bring us closer to that parity.

Thanks you for considering these points as you move forward with these important decisions. We would be happy to discuss these concerns in more detail at any point. Please feel free to contact Gabriel Reich at greich@vcu.edu, or by phone at (804) 827-2647.

Sincerely,

Gabriel A. Reich

Richmond Teachers for Social Justice

VCU School of Education

Dept. of Teaching and Learning

COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Office of the Governor

Laura W. Fornash
Secretary of Education

September 26, 2012

Dear State Board of Education Members:

I write to you today to again thank you for your leadership of Virginia's public education system. Earlier this month, I asked for your help in revisiting the Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) set for all students in the No Child Left Behind Waiver application. I want to state emphatically that we must have the same standards and expectations for all groups of students in the Commonwealth, as all are capable of high achievement and success. I know the previous proposal was based on U.S. Department of Education approved methodology resulting from the NCLB waiver. Your efforts over the past few weeks in engaging key stakeholders, has generated a revised approach which sets the same high achievement for standards for all students. It is critical that the entire Board of Education support this revised approach at your upcoming September 27, 2012 meeting. This approach sets out to address the much larger issue of closing the achievement gap between different groups of students. As you know, it has been a priority of mine to ensure that our public schools afford every student, regardless of their zip code or background, the same opportunity to pursue the American Dream through a quality education. While we have accomplished much in this effort, we must recognize there are still concerns across the Commonwealth.

One thing we have learned from NCLB is that objectives in isolation will not close the gap. We need a renewed approach therefore, I have directed my Secretary of Education, Laura Fornash, to convene a group of key educational leaders to begin examining the "gap" and methods of closing it from within each school district in partnership with you. As we prepare for next session, we are serious about education reform focusing on increased performance and higher achievement. I anxiously await the report that will come out of this group as we begin crafting our legislative agenda.

These reforms will be paramount in our ongoing, bipartisan efforts to improve public education and prepare our next generation of young people for the opportunities of tomorrow.

Sincerely,

Robert F. McDonnell

Cc: The Honorable Laura W. Fornash, Secretary of Education
Dr. Patricia Wright, Superintendent of Public Instruction

CENTER FOR LAW AND EDUCATION

99 Chauncy Street, Suite 700
Boston, MA 02111
(617) 451-0855

Reply to:
1875 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite
Washington, DC 20009
(202) 986-3000

September 27, 2012

The Honorable Arne Duncan, Secretary, U.S. Department of Education
The Honorable Deborah S. DeLisle, Assistant Secretary, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education
The Honorable David Foster, President, and Other Members of the Virginia Board of Education
The Honorable Patricia I. Wright, Superintendent of Instruction, Virginia Department of Education

Dear Secretary Duncan, Assistant Secretary DeLisle, President Foster and Board Members, and Superintendent Wright:

The Center for Law and Education has, for more than forty years, worked to advance the rights of every student to a high-quality education, particularly in low-income communities – through helping to shape education policies toward that end and through working collaboratively with educators and educational officials, as well as with parents, students, community and civil rights organizations and their advocates, to implement those policies to effectuate those rights, including extensive work on Title I. It is in that collaborative spirit that we provide these comments to both the U.S. Department of Education and the Virginia Board and Department of Education – in hopes of better accomplishing our shared goals for all students.

Underlying Principles. While these comments are focused on Virginia's revised waiver proposal for modified annual measurable objectives (AMOs) under Title I, the underlying principles are applicable more generally, and we share many of the concerns raised by other groups about waiver proposals from a variety of states.

In considering the implications of our urging more rigorous targets for student achievement, it is first important to note our understanding of what these targets do and do not represent. Contrary to the common conception of NCLB, we view them not as a means for blaming or stigmatizing schools or teachers but as a means of identifying when students are not on a sufficiently expeditious path to actual attainment of proficiency in the skills and knowledge we say all students should master. Those students, and their educational programs, clearly need attention if we are to turn the rhetoric of leaving no child behind into reality. As such, when we adopt high standards for what all children should learn, it is a matter of course, not a matter of blame or failure, that there will be large numbers of students who are not currently on that path and most schools will need improvement of one kind or another to enable them to do so. Having such students not currently on that path does not put a school in violation of Title I. It creates a demand for attention and improvement. From that perspective, having a set of targets tied to identifying when any child is on a path that will not result in him/her actually learning the things every child should is not, when devoid of blame and shame, "unrealistic." To the contrary, it is essential to making our rhetorical goals real. And so we approach the need for very rigorous targets tied to that goal, and our concern about waivers that appear to depart from it, from that perspective.[1]

[1] Indeed from that perspective, we were pleased when USED's initial policy, several years ago on alternative approaches for AYP, incorporated a required measure of whether individual students were progressing at a rate sufficient for them to become proficient within a short number of years. We have been concerned that under the current structure waivers are now being proposed and approved that do not seem to have that same result.

Overall Impact of the Revised Virginia Proposal. We are pleased that Virginia has revised its proposed AMOs upward and narrows the gaps between groups in comparison to the original. This does not negate the fact, however, that as a matter of law and policy in our view the proposed starting points are too low and that the narrowing of gaps between groups is based on progress from that starting point toward end goals that are also too low to close the most important gap – between current levels of achievement and proficiency -- to the detriment of both lower achieving and higher achieving groups.

While several specific problems are discussed below, the combined outcome of these problems is that the proposed alternate methodology does not meet USED's basic requirement that any alternate approach must provide for AMOs that are "similarly ambitious" to the AMOs that would result from using **Option A** (equal annual increments toward a goal cutting the percentage of students not proficient in half by 2016-2017 for the all-student group and each subgroup) or **Option B** (equal annual increments toward a goal of having all students proficient by 2019-2020 for the all-student group and all subgroups). The following table should help illustrate our concerns.

Virginia Annual Measurable Objectives for Mathematics[2]										
Student Group	**Actual**	**Virginia Proposed AMOs Based on Alternate Methodology**						**Option A**	**Option B**	
Assessment Year ->	**2011-2012**	**2011-2012**	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	**2016-2017**	**2016-2017**	**2016-2017**	
All Students	**68**	**61**	64	66	68	70	**73**	**84**	**88**	
Gap Group 1		**47**	52	57	63	68	**73**			
Black	**52**	**45**	51	56	62	67	**73**	**76**	**82**	
Hispanic	**61**	**52**	56	60	65	69	**73**	**81**	**85**	
Stu. w Disabilities	**40**	**33**	41	49	57	65	**73**	**70**	**78**	
ELL	**59**	**39**	46	53	59	66	**73**	**80**	**85**	
Econ. Disadvantaged	**54**	**47**	52	57	63	68	**73**	**77**	**83**	
White	**75**	**68**	69	70	71	72	**73**	**88**	**91**	
Asian	**87**	**82**	Continuous progress toward reducing proficiency gap by half					**94**	**95**	

Most obvious from this table are two things – (1) that the proposed starting points in 2011-2012 are a good deal lower than the actual results, and (2) that comparing the 73% alternate methodology targets for 2016-2017 with what the targets would be under Options A and B points to a conflict with the claim that that the proposed alternate methodology, as revised, "will continue to address USED's flexibility application requirement of cutting in half within six years the failure rate of the all students

[2]See notes about this table at the end of this document.

2

group and every student subgroup,"[3] i.e., the requirement that the alternative be "similarly rigorous to Options A or B".[4]

When Option A is itself significantly less rigorous than Option B, and when both those options extend the goal for having every student proficient many years beyond the 2014 target goal requirement of NCLB that would be waived (to 2023 for Option A, to 2020 for Option B), surely anything less rigorous than Option A should not be countenanced. We also note that others have pointed to the typical phenomenon of very large jumps in performance in the second year that a new test is administered, which further suggests that expected progress rates can and should be more rigorous than proposed.

There are two, related central methodological problems underlying this falling short of the required similar rigor to Options A or B – (1) in determining the start point and (2) in then determining the annual increases in goals.

Starting Points. The proposed methodology does not start with the actual results for 2011-2012. Instead it starts with AMOs for 2011-2012 that are far below the actual performance of students (see the first two columns of the table) and then projects annual gains from there. According to the proposed amendment the proposed start point is set by rank ordering all schools in the state based on percent of students that passed and then selecting as the start point the proficiency rate for the school at the 20th percentile of all assessed students in state as the AMO for the start point; the proposed amendment states that "[t]his procedure for calculating a starting point is consistent with the methodology in the NCLB Act of 2001." Aside from our noting that this procedure does not in fact seem to be consistent with that used in NCLB[5], the more important point is that we are looking at two entirely different uses. The methodology used to determine start points in 2002 towards aiming to bring all students to proficiency in 2014 does not provide a sensible rationale in 2012 for starting over with lower rates than the actual 2012 rates under a plan extending that deadline but designed to close the remaining the gaps from where we now are. Toward that end, options A and B clearly require that actual performance levels be the start point for an acceptable waiver, and a proposed alternate methodology under option C is clearly not of comparable rigor when it uses much lower start points.

Annual Improvement Targets. Instead of basing annual goals of closing half the gap toward all students (both as a whole and in each subgroup) becoming proficient in six years under Option A (or nine under option B), the proposed alternate methodology seeks only to close half the gap between the 20th percentile ranking start point and the schools at the 90th percentile ranking. To the extent that the school at the 90th percentile ranking among all schools is still significantly far from having all students proficient (particularly when the 90th percentile ranking is done for each subgroup), seeking to eliminate

[3] Virginia Board of Education agenda memo for 9/27/20120, Appendix C (the proposed amendment).

[4] Virginia Board of Education agenda memo for 9/27/20120, page 2. This mirrors USED 's *ESEA Flexibility Review Guidance*, page 12 (June 7, 2012), calling for AMOs under Option C that are "similarly ambitious to the AMOs that would result from using Option A or B."

[5] Under NCLB, the starting point selected by the State had to be, at a minimum, the higher of the percentage of students at the proficient level who are in (i) the State's lowest achieving subgroup *or* (ii) the school at the 20th percentile in the State, based on enrollment, among all schools ranked by the percentage of proficient students. Section 1112(b)(2)(E). Virginia may possibly have conflated the two, by looking at the school at the 20th percentile ranking separately for each group.

half of the gap toward that level is of course significantly far short of seeking to eliminating half the gap toward *all* students becoming proficient (the Option A target).

Related Issues:

Students in Schools Above the AMOs. Given the lowered starting points, based on schools at the 20th percentile ranking for each group, along with the lowered annual targets from there, there will not be effective expectations for improving the proficiency of students in a large majority of schools in the State for the next few years, and for a large number of schools even after that. Perhaps to address that fact, the proposed amendment states that schools meeting the AMOs will be deemed to be making sufficient progress if they maintain their prior year proficiency rates (up to 90%) for each student group. That standing still, however, does nothing to close the gap toward proficiency for all students in those schools, let alone ensure continuous progress at all. To deal with this issue, in addition to revising the starting points and the annual targeted gains, we agree with others calling for a gap-closing measure that is set for each school, depending on its own starting points. As we use waivers to move away from the NCLB version of having the same AMO for all groups in all schools to a different model for closing the gap between where groups and schools are and 100%, then different rates of progress for different schools, as well as different student groups, are needed and makes great sense -- those further behind need to make greater progress (and need help in doing so), while improvements are needed in all schools to the extent that not all children are reaching the proficiency expected for all students.

AMOs for Reading. The proposed amendment seeks to apply the same methodology – i.e., the 20th percentile school rank starting point (rather than actual levels) and the closing half the gap between that 20th percentile school and the 90th percentile rank school (rather than closing half the gap toward proficiency for all). As such our comments and concerns here are equally applicable to reading.

Stakeholder Involvement. As with other issues, our underlying concerns are not exclusive to Virginia, but that is particularly the case with stakeholder involvement. USED's *ESEA Flexibility Review Guidance*[6] asks (in terms similar to the questions it uses for review of teacher involvement):

> Did the SEA meaningfully engage and solicit input on its request from other diverse communities, such as students, parents, community-based organizations, civil rights organizations, organizations representing students with disabilities and English Learners, business organizations, and Indian tribes?
>
> > *Is the engagement likely to lead to successful implementation of the SEA's request due to the input and commitment of relevant stakeholders at the outset of the planning and implementation process?*
> >
> > *Did the SEA indicate that it modified any aspect of its request based on stakeholder input?*
> >
> > *Does the input represent feedback from a diverse mix of stakeholders representing various perspectives and interests, including stakeholders from high-need communities?*

[6] Page 5 (emphasis in original).

These questions reflect a recognition that *meaningful engagement* by these diverse communities requires real involvement *at the outset and throughout*. Asking for input only after a proposed plan has already been developed does not meet the standard. Neither does asking for input only at the beginning before anything has been drafted, without meaningful chance to discuss how well that initial input has been addressed. Rather, real engagement is an iterative process of dialogue, in which ideas about the overall approach and identification and discussion of issues occurs before drafting but then is continued in reaction to initial drafts and changes along the way toward finalization. And it must provide for sufficient time, information, and assistance to enable those communities and their representatives to fully understand the background, issues, and particulars to which insiders have greater access.

It is also worth noting that ESEA Section 1111(a)(1) requires that State plans must be "developed by the State educational agency, in consultation with local educational agencies, teachers, principals, pupil services personnel, administrators . . . , other staff, and parents. " As such, this development of the plan in consultation with those parties is clearly distinct from the single public hearing, open to anyone, on the state plan that has already been developed and is typically held just prior to submission to USED. While in some States the public hearings on State plans have themselves been held with too little advanced notice and too little opportunity for review of the document and relevant background to have full, informed comments – which needs more attention from USED nationally – that does not appear to be the case in regard to notice of Virginia's 9/27 meeting on the revised AMO proposal.

What we do urge is a full review, both by Virginia and by USED, of the extent of meaningful engagement, from the outset and onward, of the identified diverse communities, in the terms discussed above (distinct from and beyond the public comment for 9/27) – and for similar thorough review in other States. That review should involve direct communication with those communities themselves to present their own perspective on how well and meaningfully they were involved in those terms (as discussed above). While such engagement and commitment is critical for any State plan or amendment, it is all the more so in the case of a waiver proposal, where provisions of law that Congress wrote for the benefit of students will no longer apply. I.e., where the Department has chosen to allow States to deviate from that law, including lowering targets, the importance of public involvement in those State decisions, particularly by the program beneficiaries (students) and their parents and advocates, and the need for the Department to ensure it, is all the greater. Thus, it is critical to look at such involvement in the initial decision to seek a waiver, in the decision to use an alternative methodology to those offered under Options A and B, and in the specific decisions made in constructing the particulars – as well as in planning for the future decisions that are mentioned in the proposed amendments.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss any of these issues and to work with both USED and Virginia on improvements toward our shared ideals for children and their education, including on the hard work to enable them to reach the properly ambitious goals.

Sincerely,

Paul Weckstein and Kathleen B. Boundy, Co-Directors

5

Notes on the Table:

1. Because whole numbers are used for AMOs, we have rounded off numbers in the two right-hand columns to the nearest whole number.

2. At the time of writing this, we were not in possession of actual results for 2011-2012 for Virginia's combined proficiency gap group 1 (the aggregation of students with disabilities, English-language learners, and economically disadvantaged students). But taking into account the assessment results for each of the three groups, and the relatively large numbers of economically disadvantaged students, it seems unlikely that the results for this combined group would change our overall analysis.

3. We calculated Option A consistent with USED requirements that under it AMOs be set in annual equal increments toward a goal of cutting the percentage of students not proficient by half for all students and each subgroup within six years, starting with *current proficiency rates* in 2010-2011.

4. For Option B, we calculated the targets for 2016-2017 by determining what it would need to be if there were equal annual increments from the 2011-2012 results toward the end goal of 100% in 2019-2020.

5. We are aware that Virginia's reason for starting with 2011-2012 is because the 2010-2011 results were based on a different, less challenging assessment. We have used the 2016-2017 assessments as the end goal – both because it is what the Virginia is proposing (both in describing that assessment year as such and in having all groups converge at the same AMO percent by then – and it is consistent with the USED provisions, which under A require meeting the goal by then (six years after 2010-2011 assessments. But even if the USED requirements for using the 2010-2011 data as the starting point and having similar rigor to Option A for closing half the gap to 100% by 2016-2017 (6 years thereafter) or Option B for closing all the gap by 2019-2020 were weakened to allow Virginia an extra year, the projected average annual rates of gain would not get them to the half-way point for all groups by 2018 (falling far short for the all-students group and for white students, falling short by a lesser amount for Hispanic students).

6. We do not know what the AMOs for Asian students after last year (where they are set at 82, five points below the actual proficiency level for that year), But it may be likely that in providing a narrative standard in the proposal for this group – "continuous progress toward reducing proficiency gap within subgroup by half" – the "proficiency gap" is intended to mean the same thing as it means for other groups, namely the gap between the proficiency rate in schools at the 20th percentile rank and schools at the 90th percentile, rather than the more ambitious (and appropriately so in relation to Option A) standard of closing half the gap between the current actual proficiency and 100% proficiency.

6

October 17, 2012

The Honorable David Foster, President, Virginia Board of Education
Members of the Virginia Board of Education
The Honorable Patricia I. Wright, Superintendent of Instruction, Virginia Department of Education

Dear President Foster and Board Members, and Superintendent Wright:

The Advocacy Institute is a Virginia-based non-profit organization that works to improve the lives of people with disabilities, including those who are minorities, low-income, and non-English speaking.

This letter expands upon the comments provided to you during public comment at the September 27, 2012, Virginia Board of Education public meeting regarding the First Review of Proposed Alternate Methodology for Revising Mathematics Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) under Virginia's NCLB waiver as well as the multi-organizational letter to you on the same issue (appended to this letter.)

Major issues remain in the revised AMOs submitted for the Board's review on September 27th. These are discussed in detail below:

STARTING POINTS BELOW ACTUAL PASS RATES

The revised AMOs continue to rely on the pass rates for the school at the 20th percentile rather than the actual pass rates for each student group on the 2011-2012 SOL administration. The VDOE appears to feel that this "methodology" has been approved by the US Dept. of Education (USED) as part of its approval of Virginia's ESEA waiver and, as such, may not be altered.

In fact, USED, in its letter to VDOE dated August 29, 2012, stated that "Virginia's approved methodology must be revised." Presumably, this revision applies to the entire methodology, not simply to the rates of progress for student subgroups.

Further, USED's ESEA Flexibility Section 2B (Set Ambitious But Achievable Annual Measurable Objectives), Option A, requires that a state use "current proficiency rates based on assessments administered in the 2010-2011 school year as the starting point for setting its AMOs." While Virginia was allowed to forego use of the 2010-2011 assessment results in light of implementation of its new Math SOL assessment in 2011-2012, use of actual pass rates should serve as the basis for AMO formulation.

Option A also requires that AMOs reduce by half the percentage of students in the "all students group and in each subgroup who are not proficient within six years." Virginia's methodology does not accomplish this result. Rather, it is engineered to reduce by half the proficiency gap between the school at the 20th percentile and the school at the 90th percentile. **Option A includes no requirement to reduce failure rates between schools. In fact, the purpose of ESEA is "to ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging State academic achievement standards and state academic assessments."**

Virginia claims the methodology is based upon current NCLB law. In fact, the methodology set forth in NCLB for calculating start points toward 100% proficiency (for all schools and all students) in 2013-2014 was to be, at a minimum, the higher of the percentage of students at the proficient level who are in (i) the State's lowest achieving subgroup *or* (ii) the school at the 20th percentile in the State, based on enrollment, among all schools ranked by the percentage of proficient students. Section 1112(b)(2)(E). Virginia may possibly have conflated the two, by looking at the school at the 20th percentile ranking separately for each group. In any event, the approach is not reflective of NCLB requirements nor would it be reasonable to take such an approach in the context of ESEA flexibility.

Lastly, using the pass rates of the first administration of a new, more rigorous SOL assessment to calculate the starting rates for new AMOs has resulted in a disproportionate impact on low performing student groups, as the achievement gap widened between the 2010-2011 Math assessment and the 2011-2012 new Math assessment, as shown below.

MATH		2010-2011	2011-2012
Percent Proficient	Asian	95	87
	Black	77	52
	Hispanic	83	61
	White	90	75
	Economically Disadvantaged	78	54
	Limited English Proficient	82	59
	Students with Disabilities	66	40

Change in Math achievement gaps between 2010-2011 and 2011-2012:

- ***Black/White: Grew by 10 points (23 vs. 13)***
- ***Hispanic/White: Grew by 7 points (14 vs. 7)***

For these reasons, in must be concluded that the revised AMOs do not comply with USED's ESEA Flexibility requirements since they are neither based on actual proficiency rates nor produce progress as rigorous as Option A. Additionally, as stated in our earlier letter, the Math AMOs do not reflect the jumps in performance in the second year that a new test is administered, which further suggests that expected progress rates can and should be more rigorous than those being proposed, particularly for those students for whom the achievement gap widened last year.

AMOs THAT DO NOT APPLY TO ALL SCHOOLS

The revised AMOs apparently apply **only** to a school (or a subgroup within a school) with a pass rate **lower** than the AMOs in any given year, as the revised AMOs state that every school is expected to **meet *either* the AMO or the school's previous year's pass rate, whichever is higher**.

This approach will result in **no requirement for any year-over-year improvement in a substantial number of schools**. Any school already performing above the AMO will merely need to maintain last year's proficiency until or unless it comes up against AMOs above that level. Parents and other stakeholders will have a difficult if not impossible time figuring out exactly how a school is expected to perform.

A better approach, adopted by several states with ESEA Flexibility waivers, would be to establish AMOs for each subgroup for each Virginia school, applying the Option A methodology to each. This approach results in an expectation that all schools are showing improvement while the lowest performing schools are required to make significantly more improvement. Nothing in Virginia's approved waiver would prevent this approach from being incorporated.

Beyond these two major issues is the additional issue of Virginia's lack of effort to have meaningful involvement and input by the public in the AMO-setting process. Beyond the limited opportunity to provide 3 minutes of public comment at the Board's open meetings, no effort has been made to seek public comment on the revised AMOs, despite the statement contained in Agenda item J that "The Department of Education will assist the Board of Education in inviting input from stakeholders on the revised AMO methodology" (page 4). This general lack of regard for Virginia's citizens is troubling and does little to promote public involvement in public education.

We hope that the Virginia Board of Education will look closely and inquisitively at this issue.

Sincerely,

Candace Cortiella

Candace Cortiella
Director

cc: The Honorable Arne Duncan, Secretary, U.S. Department of Education
The Honorable Deborah S. DeLisle, Assistant Secretary, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education
Members, Virginia Legislative Black Caucus

A not-for-profit organization dedicated to services and projects that work to improve the lives of children, youth and adults with disabilities.

P.O. Box 565 ♦ Marshall, Virginia 20116♦ Phone 540.364.0051
www.AdvocacyInstitute.org ♦ Email: info@AdvocacyInstitute.org

October 25, 2012

Good morning President Foster, Superintendent Wright, and Board Members,

My name is Richard Noble III. I am a parent of two children (ages 8 and 6), and I am also a mathematics instructor. I recently moved to Arlington, VA with my wife and children from North Carolina. Thus far, my family has been pleased with our experiences in the Arlington Public School System.

I am here to speak briefly on Agenda Item J (Annual Measurable Objectives—AMOs). In the Board's Goal 4, the following is stated, "Strong literacy and mathematics skills are the basis for success in all subject and career areas, both in K-12 education and in postsecondary studies and careers." I will speak directly to mathematics.

As a university instructor, too often I have encountered students, fresh out of high school, whose mathematics abilities are subpar. These subpar skills span race and ethnicity; yet, the negative effects of these subpar skills seem to disproportionately impact students of color, African American students especially. Virginia's efforts to implement more rigorous mathematics assessments in an effort to produce college- and career-ready students are to be applauded. I wholeheartedly agree that mathematics achievement is an issue that requires immediate and thoughtful attention; however, the mathematics issue requires effective action, which excludes any practice or policy that does not adequately address the achievement gap. While the proposed alternate methodology outlines a plan for incremental growth, setting a starting pass rate of 45% for African American students sends a clear message that little is expected of them. As a result, this cannot be classified as effective action, particularly if the following are not provided to those students: sufficient resources, qualified and effective teachers, qualified and effective administrators.

Lisa Delpit, a MacArthur award winner and Felton G. Clark Professor of Education at Southern University, has stated that there is no achievement gap at birth. Nonetheless, somewhere along the educational pipeline, the gap evolves and widens over time. I am not certain that we have a thorough understanding of the achievement gap; therefore, it is unlikely that we can satisfactorily address it. And while there is a need to act with urgency, I am deeply concerned that the proposed alternate methodology will also prove to be insufficient in addressing the mathematics achievement gap.

Thank you.

Richard Noble III

change

To: President Virginia Board of Education (David Foster)

Subject: **Tell Virginia to resist separate and unequal expectations for our students!**

Letter: Greetings,

Please sign this petition to David Foster, President, Virginia Board of Education.

We, the undersigned, respectfully request that your agency carefully scrutinize the implementation of Virginia's ESEA waiver.

Virginia has taken the astonishing step of setting six-year targets that vary by race, disability, income, and language proficiency status – in some cases by as much as 40 percentage points. The annual measurable objectives are so low that most schools in the Commonwealth will have no incentive to close the achievement gap. We ask you to address the following problems with Virginia's waiver implementation:

1. Virginia's testing targets for math proficiency will increase achievement gaps among student groups. For example, the actual black-white achievement gap on 2010-2011 math tests was 13 points. Under the waiver, the difference between the goals for black and white students in 2016-2017 is 21 points.

2. Virginia is shortchanging vulnerable students. Virginia's testing targets for both reading and math are not "similarly ambitious" to the targets that would result from the other two options you approved.

3. Virginia's targets ensure that only the lowest performing schools will have any incentive to close achievement gaps. Under the waiver, only schools at or near the 20th percentile will have to improve subgroup performance. The Commonwealth's state accountability system does not require disaggregation for accountability purposes; therefore, only the lowest performing schools in Virginia will have to work to close achievement gaps.

4. The process of developing Virginia's AMOs lacked in transparency and meaningful stakeholder input. Virginia did not provide a public estimate of the actual targets that would be produced by its methodology prior to USED's approval of its application.

We urge you to create more ambitious goals for all student subgroups in order to improve educational outcomes and the quality of instruction, close achievement gaps and increase equity.

Virginia Association of School Superintendents

1805 Chantilly Street Richmond, Virginia 23230
Phone (804) 562-4430 ✦ Fax (804) 355-1196

August 12, 2013

David M. Foster, President
2607 North Wakefield Street
Arlington, VA 22207

Mr. ~~Foster~~: David

I write to inform you of our serious concerns regarding Virginia's new accountability provision labeled "Meeting High Expectations" (MHE). In essence, this new accountability standard penalizes schools that "backslide" in SOL passing rates from last year to this year, even if the new passing rates still meet all AMO standards.

One aspect of our concern relates to the combined impact of implementing new versions of selected SOL tests as the MHE requirement is added. Historically, the introduction of new versions of SOL tests results in an "achievement dip" until schools gain an understanding of new question formats and testing expectations. This "initial dip" has occurred in almost every implementation year for new SOL tests, most recently with the introduction of new mathematics exams in the 2011-12 testing year. So it is well known that the first year of any new SOL tests results in lower passing rates across Virginia.

For the 2012-13 testing year, Virginia implemented new versions of reading, writing, and science SOL exams. The implementation of new versions of the exams brought an expected result of lower passing rates during the implementation cycle. In fact, the Department of Education's own Press Release (June 7, 2013) noted this expected result in a statement from State Superintendent, Dr. Patricia Wright:

> "Temporary declines in scores and pass rates on state tests are inevitable whenever academic standards are raised," Wright said. "The lower scores and pass rates are a sign that the state is expecting more of students so they will be better prepared for college or the work force, not that students are learning less. Just as Virginia students and schools began a new trend line last year in mathematics, this year marks new beginnings in reading, writing and science."

In her published statement, the State Superintendent stated that lower results for the 2012-13 testing year were "inevitable". But the State Board added consequences if the 2012-13 results were lower.

The logical interpretation of these two separate events (implementation of new SOL tests and the addition of the new MHE accountability standard) has resulted in a real Catch -22 for Virginia's schools. **The state accurately forecast that the 2012-13 year results would be lower due to the implementation of new tests and then added consequences if test results were, indeed, lower.**

Put more simply, Virginia's schools will receive the negative consequence for an achievement dip that you publicly forecast and, at least partially acknowledged, was created by your own actions.

Later, in the same June 7 Press Release, a heading asks:
"Will the new SOL tests impact school and division accountability ratings?"

The written response states:
"Three-year averaging – as allowed under Virginia's accountability program – will mitigate the impact of the new tests on federal ratings under No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and state accreditation ratings for the 2013-2014 school year."

I ask if you believe this statement remains an accurate descriptor for Virginia's schools.

I also ask you to reflect on the reasonableness of this most recent accountability addition.

This correspondence provides just one of the reasons that VASS has serious concerns about the accountability system in Virginia as currently configured. We will provide expanded comments at your upcoming meeting later this month. In the meantime, for short term consideration, please note our serious concerns for the "Meeting High Expectations" accountability provision for the 2012-13 testing cycle. It is our sincere hope that the State Board will consider immediate adjustments for this new expectation.

I would be happy to discuss this further with you as you desire.

Thank you for your attention to our concerns.

Sincerely,

Steven R. Staples, Ed.D
Executive Director
VASS

VIRGINIA ASSOCIATION
OF SECONDARY SCHOOL
PRINCIPALS

804.355.2777
(fax) 804.355.4262
www.vassp.org

The Professional Association of Middle and High School Administrators

November 5, 2013

Dr. Patricia I. Wright
Superintendent of Public Instruction
Virginia Department of Education
P.O. Box 2120
Richmond, Virginia 23218

Dear Pat:

The Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals wishes to express its opposition to the "maintaining higher expectations" or "backslide" provision currently being considered by the Virginia Board of Education as part of the Commonwealth's Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) waiver renewal application. While we fully support the desire to promote and sustain standout scholastic achievement in schools, this proviso, as currently crafted, can actually penalize those campuses. For example:

- It seems inherently unfair, and misleading to the public, that a school meeting academic goals for sub-groups set by the state be designated as failing to achieve standards set by the federal government;
- One year certainly "does not a pattern make." Is it fair to have a school meeting state standards stigmatized by the blemish of a "does not maintain higher expectations" moniker? Such a mark can not only demoralize students, staff, and the school community, but hinder and stymie continued good work in a most positive direction;
- Should a school rightfully be asked to endure a "does not maintain higher expectations" rating if it enjoys a particularly banner year (e.g., an 89% pass rate), followed by a modest decline the following year? Is it accurate to characterize such a school as one which does not thrive – in any form or fashion?
- Need the growth standard be so focused on a year-to-year comparison, a mere "snapshot" of overall progress, when schools work diligently to focus on growth patterns over more extended periods of time? We maintain that such upward trends over protracted periods, even when they may not be uninterrupted increases each successive spring, should be lauded.

Thus, VASSP respectfully requests that the Board of Education permit the meeting of targeted annual measurable objectives in reading and mathematics be the standard, in this regard, by which schools, working conscientiously across the Commonwealth, are assessed.

Sincerely,

Randy D. Barrack, Ed.D., Ph.D.
Executive Director

cc: VASSP Board of Directors

NASSP AFFILIATE
4909 Cutshaw Avenue • Richmond, VA 23230

E-mails from ESEA Stakeholders

From: ----------
Sent: Wednesday, October 23, 2013 9:34 PM
To: DOE - ESEA
Subject: Request to reconsider changes to the "no backsliding" provisions

This memo is a comment on the proposed revision of Virginia's Waiver of Certain ESEA Requirements, specifically under Principle 2 on page four of the Executive Summary:

For the following reasons, I ask the Department to consider retaining the current "no backsliding" provisions intended to maintain continuing progress for high achieving students but allow schools to achieve compliance through a three year average (as in other provisions).

I have spent the majority of my life working in support of the public school system as a teacher, college professor, administrator, parent, school board member and member of the VSBA board of Directors. I have a deep and continuing commitment to public education. For this reason, it disturbs me to see public education losing credibility with some segments of the public and losing students as a result. I believe that one reason for this is that the federal and state governments, the media, and therefore increasingly the public define the public schools almost exclusively in terms of the percentage of students failing to meet basic competency standards.

The massive national, state and local efforts to decrease the percentage of students failing to meet minimal competencies are admirable and necessary. **But they should not become virtually the only mission and measure of the public schools.** While laudably intentioned, this approach largely ignores (and invites schools to ignore) the needs of a majority of our students who do achieve minimal competencies but need higher goals. Reviewing the Waiver proposal one gets the impression that reducing the percentage of students failing the standardized tests **has** become the sole concern, (largely because the proposal is a response to NCLB which itself measures schools almost entirely in terms of the percentage of "failing" students).

The current draft revision goes even further in this direction by significantly weakening the "no backsliding" provisions requiring continuing progress for higher performing students. I agree that schools should not be "punished" for a single year's decline. But if stasis or decline persist over two or three years that should send a clear message that there is indeed a problem that needs to be addressed. I ask that the department consider retaining the "no backsliding" provisions but allowing schools to meet it with a three year average.

While unfortunately not a part of the current dialogue, the best way to rebalance the exclusive emphasis solely on the percentage of students failing standardized tests would be to give some weight to increasing the percentage who achieve at the Pass Advanced (500) level.

From: ----------
Sent: Friday, November 01, 2013 4:24 PM
To: DOE - ESEA
Subject: Waiver Application Revision

Good afternoon,

We respectfully request that the committee writing the next waiver application for NCLB/ESEA please remove the "Meets Higher Expectations" methodology. The new methodology has impacted far too many high performing schools.

Superintendent

From: ----------
Sent: Monday, November 04, 2013 6:08 PM
To: DOE - ESEA
Subject: Renewal of NCLB Waivers

Dear DOE Representatives:

Thank you for the opportunity to express my opinion regarding the waivers attached to the ESEA Flexibility or NCLB Waiver application. As a principal of a school that did not meet AMO requirements this past year due to the addition of the Meets High Expectations (MHE) provision, I want you to know that I support 100% the language included in the waiver renewal application. The proposal to meet federal AMO objectives in Reading and Math that includes three ways to do this seems more fair and reasonable. If the 3-year average provision had been in effect this past year, our school would have met AMO. It was very disappointing to our students, families, and staff to score above the established targets and still not make AMO because two of our subgroups dipped a little. Statistically, this is going to occur once in awhile and that is why I understood that the 3-year average provision was included. The goal is to see steady overall growth through the years, in much the same way that a business may see a down year, but still is pleased with overall climbing profits. I encourage you to adopt and propose to the United States Department of Education your proposed application that includes this change.

Please call with questions or clarification.

Sincerely,

Principal

From: ----------
Sent: Monday, October 28, 2013 1:56 PM
To: DOE - ESEA
Subject: Input- MHE

Greetings,

I am writing to voice my support of the recommended amendments to the higher expectations formula. The rationale is accurate and describes the unfair designation ---- Elementary School in ----- received "Did not meet all federal AMOS- MHE" when they exceeded the math AMO by 12% points. This data phenomena was very difficult to explain to parents for the reasons stated in the proposed revisions.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond.

From: ----------
Sent: Friday, November 01, 2013 2:54 PM
To: DOE - ESEA
Subject: ESEA Waiver

Good Afternoon,

The proposed language to the "backslide provision" for the ESEA Waiver request is probably the best option at this point in time.

Division Superintendent

From: ----------
Sent: Thursday, November 07, 2013 8:46 AM
To: DOE - ESEA
Cc: --------
Subject: Flexibility Waiver Comments

Hello,

In ---------- County, we are significantly affected by the "no backsliding" provision. In almost every AMO category for reading and math, our achievement has been higher than the state targets, and it seems contrary that we would be punished for achieving at a higher level than the state and federal targets. In fact, as I explained this to our teachers last year, there was a sense of dismay because our students had done "too well" in the previous year. One teacher said, "so we are going to be punished for how well our kids have done?" Of course, I shared a positive outlook that I know our students would continue to achieve as well as they did in the previous year, but it is easy to see why she would feel that way.

In a small district like ours, the fact that every group of students is different is magnified in this situation. Some years we have large (for us) groups of ELL students (12 to 14%) and in others we do not; this has a significant effect on our reading scores. The same goes for years in which we have large numbers of students with disabilities. Another factor that has great impact on our achievement is hiring new teachers. For example, we have only one 7th grade math teacher, whose scores have been

significantly above the state average, who retired last year. We have a brand new teacher in that position; I have complete confidence in her ability, but also understand that student achievement this year will likely be lower.

I like the idea of noting schools as "Meeting Higher Expectations," rather than attaching a punitive measure to high achievement. It provides appropriate motivation for achievement without the attending negative impacts of "no backsliding."

Thank you,

Assistant Superintendent of Instruction

From: ----------
Sent: Thursday, November 07, 2013 1:57 PM
To: DOE - ESEA
Subject: MHE and the ESEA Waiver

Members of the Virginia Board of Education and State Superintendent Wright:

Please approve the change in the provisions of the ESEA Flexibility Waiver which would adjust the "Meeting High Expectations" (or "backsliding) provision to an incentive rather than a punitive measure in calculating Federal Accountability.

Thank you for allowing input.

Superintendent

From: Alan Seibert [mailto:aseibert@salem.k12.va.us]
Sent: Monday, November 11, 2013 2:12 PM
To: DOE - ESEA
Subject: Support for converting MHE to "a reward" vs. the current punitive approach

Comment regarding the BOE Agenda Item related to the ESEA Waiver Application

I am writing to commend staff for conceiving of a positive solution to the vexing problem of unintended consequences of the previously adopted MHE "no backsliding" requirements.

Changing MHE to a special, positive designation (a "reward") that encourages the desired outcome of continuous improvement without the unintended mislabeling of schools by comparing a very small number of students (n=30) one year to be a wholly different yet still very small number of students another year is a terrific idea!

Thank you for your consideration,
Alan Seibert

H. Alan Seibert, Ed.D.
Division Superintendent, Salem City Schools
President, Virginia Association of School Superintendents

Virginia Department of Education

Committee of Practitioners Meeting
Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA)
as *Amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB)

January 15, 2015

10 a.m.

MINUTES

Attendance

Committee: Dr. Beth Baptist, Dr. Sheila Carr (for Jim Gallagher), Lori Jackson-Black, Mary Beth Libby (for Gail Jones), Robin Liten-Tejada, Sam Klein, Dr. Ellery Sedgwick

Department of Education: Shelley Loving-Ryder, Patty Pitts, Veronica Tate, Dr. Mark Allen, Sarah Susbury, Michael Bolling, Dr. Yvonne Holoman, Diane Jay, Dr. Lynn Sodat, Chris Kelly, Stacy Freeman, Heather Brunner

Veronica Tate, director of program administration and accountability, began the meeting with. thanking the committee for joining the call today and for their participation on the Committee of Practitioners.

Purpose of the Call

The No Child Left Behind Act requires states to assemble a committee of practitioners and consult with that committee on any changes to its federal accountability plan under that Act.
Background information was e-mailed earlier in the week and included links to a renewal form and revised ESEA flexibility application. The purpose of the meeting is to review basic background information on ESEA flexibility and renewal process details and to also discuss three changes made to the application.

Background on ESEA Flexibility

As a reminder about ESEA flexibility, a package of waivers from certain No Child Left Behind requirements was offered to states in late 2011. To receive the waivers, states had to submit robust plans advancing three key education priorities of the current administration: college and career-ready standards and assessments, differentiated accountability and reward systems, and teacher and principal evaluation systems. The waivers are also referred to as ESEA flexibility.

Virginia submitted an original waiver request to USED for approval in 2012. It was revised a number of times based on clarifications from USED regarding flexibility requirements. Virginia's approval for ESEA flexibility was for two years – 2012-2013 and 2013-2014.

The state submitted a request in March 2014 to extend its waiver application through the current 2014-2015 school year which was approved.

In November of 2014, USED invited states with approved flexibility applications to submit a renewal application for up to four years. States that had fully implemented their flexibility plans according to the prescribed timelines were invited to submit a renewal application in January for an expedited review. Seven states qualified to submit early, and Virginia is one of those states. These seven states

could request a renewal for up to four years, or through the 2018-2019 school year. All other states must submit by March 31. The March states may request a three-year renewal.

To request a renewal, a state must submit a redlined version of its most recently-approved application showing updates or changes to its ESEA flexibility implementation plan. The redlined application must be accompanied by a renewal form outlining which pages of the application contain information the USED staff will be looking for during their review.

Minor revisions were made to Virginia's application reflecting updates across the three sections of the application that have already been enacted. Only two of the changes qualify as substantive amendments.

Flexibility Element(s) Affected by the Amendment	Page Number(s) Affected in Redlined Request	Brief Description of Requested Amendment	Rationale
Update criteria for one reward school category: *Virginia Index of Performance* (VIP) Incentives Program	Page 75	Delete one award category, the Competence to Excellence Award, and add the Board of Education Distinguished Achievement Award.	These category changes reflect updates made to the VIP awards as approved by the Board of Education in 2013.
Criteria to determine if a school identified as a focus school has made sufficient progress to exit focus school status	Page 103	Delete the first exit criterion requiring that the proficiency gap group(s) for which the school was originally identified meet(s) the AMOs for two consecutive years. Maintain the criterion for the focus school to no longer fall in the bottom 10 percent of Title I schools with subgroup proficiency gaps.	Although conceptually sound, maintaining the first criterion to exit focus school status had the unintended consequence of keeping schools on the focus school list that had smaller subgroup proficiency gaps than other Title I schools demonstrating a greater need for support in this area. To be able to serve the Title I schools with the greatest gaps in subgroup proficiency, the state must use a one-step ranking method and select as focus schools those 10% with the highest gaps for subgroups as compared to the other schools.

Although not considered a substantive amendment, Ms. Tate pointed out a revision to the growth measure Virginia will use as part of its teacher and principal evaluation system. Beginning in the 2015-2016 school year, Virginia will begin using value tables as a measure of growth instead of student growth percentiles (SGPs) that have been used. The state believes the value tables will be more useful to educators in understanding whether achievement gaps and will apply to more students than the

current growth percentile model. The value tables are described in detail on pages 163-164 of the renewal application.

Virginia may submit amendments to the state's federal accountability plan, as needed within the next four years, following USED approval of state's ESEA flexibility renewal request.

The Board will receive a report on renewal on January 22. Following that meeting, the state will prepare the final version of the application to include comments submitted and any revisions made as a result of comments, and submit the application to USED the following week.

The floor was then opened for comments and questions from committee members.

Committee Discussion

A question was asked about the use of value tables as a proxy for SOL accountability. At this time, the Department is not using the value tables as a proxy, but it may be an area of consideration for the future. Furthermore, value tables are intended to be used to measure the same information as growth tables. In the future, value tables could be considered for measuring accountability.

There was a discussion about examining the special education recommendations for IDEA and comparing them to ESEA.

There was a comment relative to expanding Limited English Proficient (LEP) student inclusion to students who had been identified as LEP at any time in public school, including students who had exited services. Ms. Tate encouraged committee members to submit comments to the ESEA link provided for collection and review.

Adjournment

With no additional committee comments, the meeting was adjourned at 10:25 a.m.

2015 Renewal Application ESEA Stakeholder Comments

From: ----------
Sent: Wednesday, January 14, 2015 3:40 PM
To: DOE - ESEA
Subject: Comments

I think we should renew the agreement. We should show progress, which also makes students feel good about themselves.

Sent: Wednesday, January 14, 2015 5:53 PM
To: DOE - ESEA
Cc: Pitts, Patty (DOE)
Subject: FW: PRIORITY E-MAIL: SUPT'S E-MAIL: Opportunity to Comment on Virginia's Application for a Four-Year Renewal of Waivers from Certain Requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA)
Importance: High

Dear Board of Education Committee on School and Division Accountability Members,

Please consider:

1. Value tables sound like a better idea as a measure for standard 7 in the teacher evaluation process than SGPs. I am concerned that value tables still do not address the issue of about 80% of teachers who have no SGP, and it does not have a measure for students performing at the top of the SOL scale.

2. There seems to be a disconnect in the evaluation system. Principals and Schools are evaluated on the percentage of students who pass SOL test. Should not each teacher have some part of their evaluation based on the overall school SOL pass rate? All teachers should be evaluated on the schools SOL scores; this should be some measure of Student Academic Progress whether you teach shop, PE, or a non-SOL tested grade/subject. The school is evaluated on SOL results and this should be some part of the teachers' evaluation, such at 10%. A uniform scale of scores 80% or better of the scores being in the top 80% could score a 4, for example. School scoring less a 3, and on down.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. Your work in seeking the very best in learning opportunities for our children is appreciated!

Sincerely,
----------, Principal
---------- Elementary School

"Teamwork divides the task and multiplies the success."• ~Author Unknown

---

From: ----------
Sent: Saturday, January 17, 2015 11:36 PM
To: DOE – ESEA **Subject:** Public Comment

First, I would like to denote the portions of the new application which I perceive as responsive to the feedback of Virginia educators. The significant increases in funding and support for Early Childhood Education is indicative of a thoughtful, long-term approach to resolving some of the fundamental inequalities in preparation that are the foundation of the achievement gap for multiple sub-groups. In addition, the thought and effort placed in developing a consistent, state-wide measurement for student growth that recognizes the significant achievement of teachers who have previously and continue to contribute to student performance by increasing their proficiency in ways that are neither recognized nor rewarded in the current SOL system. Some of the most outstanding educational professionals in the field are working tirelessly in our non-accredited schools to serve at-risk students and are being unfairly publicly labeled as "failures".

Second, while I am deeply appreciative of these efforts I have some significant concerns regarding the proposed "Virginia Value Tables" as described on page 162 of the proposed ESEA Flexibility Waiver application. The timeline described denotes implementation in 2015-16. Given that it is January of 2015, this timeline is wholly inadequate to provide sufficient preparation to the administrative staff supporting teachers within divisions. Our teachers are working tirelessly under a host of mandates and performance standard changes. For those of us who see our primary responsibility as supporting them in their work so that they can focus on instruction, this very accelerated timeline would require a summer rollout of a new initiative which would cause considerable angst among teaching staff as it pertains to their performance evaluation, the very process which informs their livelihood. I believe it would be much more responsible to place a 2016-17 time frame for implementation. In addition, there is little information provided about details of the plan. There is a great deal of bandwidth within each of the proposed bands (low below basic, high below basic) in which a teacher could achieve growth that falls short of placing a child in a higher band. Will that be recognized or will that teacher be labeled as "failing" to achieve sufficient growth? Within Henrico, the vast majority of our teaching staff utilize NWEA-MAPs which is a truly individualized growth measure in mathematics and language arts content. Would that option no longer be available to our staff? For support staff such as exceptional education staff who co-teach in a classroom would be provided the latitude for multiple teachers to be assigned a responsibility for student growth for a single student? These and many, many other questions remain before we could implement a thoughtful and cohesive system that teachers and the public recognize as fair.

It has been my experience that the vast majority of education professionals strongly support the concept of accountability in their profession. They have proudly chosen a field that represents the foundation for all other professions and work tirelessly to make themselves worthy of such a heavy responsibility in our society. The reality is that the administrative apparatus of our society has failed to develop and support an infrastructure that recognizes excellence in that work and rewards it accordingly (in ways far deeper than financially). If this is VDOEs attempt to rectify that wrong I applaud you for the effort, but in its current format/timeline for implementation it falls short of being worthy of the people it intends to serve.

Respectfully Submitted,

Deputy Superintendent
---------- County Public Schools

From: Rita S. Huffman [mailto:rshuffman@rcs.k12.va.us]
Sent: Friday, January 16, 2015 4:14 PM
To: DOE - ESEA
Subject: ESEA Letter
Please see the attached letter. Thank you.
Rita Huffan
Administrative Assistant; Office of Lorraine S. Lange, Ed. D., Superintendent
Deputy Clerk; Roanoke County School Board

Office of Superintendent
Roanoke County Schools
5937 Cove Road
Roanoke, Virginia 24019
Phone: (540) 562-3705 Fax: (540) 562-3993

January 16, 2015

VA Board of Education Committee on School & Division Accountability,

Roanoke County Public Schools would like to offer its support of Virginia's ESEA Renewal Application. We are especially supportive of the provision that changes the current growth model from student growth percentiles to a value table model. Virginia's current student growth percentile model provides accurate data, but has been the focus of poor implementation and inaccurate analysis in many school divisions. Widespread lack of understanding about the student growth percentile system has eroded its effectiveness as a tool to assess and improve student learning and therefore a new approach is needed to provide a fresh perspective on the important subject of student growth.

The value table model has many advantages. Its main advantage is that it integrates a proficiency level system that teachers and administrators already understand. Knowing ahead of time what result is needed to show growth provides a clear goal, which favorably contrasts with the growth percentiles that are unknown until the results come back long after testing has concluded. It also allows more students to be included into the system than the previous student growth percentile system. Additionally, we are extremely excited of the prospect of its potential use at the state level as a vehicle to integrate a student growth measure into the state accreditation process.

Thank you for all you do. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Lorraine Lange

Lorraine Lange, Ed. D.
Superintendent
Roanoke County Public Schools.

From: ----------
Sent: Tuesday, January 20, 2015 7:57 AM
To: DOE - ESEA
Subject: Public Comment on ESEA Waivers for Virginia

To whom it may concern,

As a curriculum coordinator in a very large school division, I am in full support of the information in the state's application for waivers. With 56 elementary schools to work with, some flexibility in the amount of test preparation needed per school per year will make it infinitely easier to concentrate my team's efforts on the schools who are in most need. Many schools are eager to innovate, especially in light of new legislation like House Bill 930. With more flexibility, these efforts will be much more productive.

Thank you,

Elementary Social Studies Coordinator

---------- City Public Schools

From: ----------
Sent: Tuesday, January 20, 2015 8:44 AM
To: DOE - ESEA
Subject: ESEA Flexibility Request Renewal - Comments

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Virginia Department of Education's ESEA Flexibility Request Renewal. Following review of the request renewal, the following is offered for consideration:

1. The request cites that an increase in EIRI reading intervention funding from 25% of eligible students to 100% has occurred. A review of funding allocated for this purpose does not seem to reflect this increase.

2. Currently, schools that are eligible and apply for a Waiver are exempt from loss of accreditation for 3 years. The stated purpose of the waiver is to encourage innovation in instructional and assessment practices. Since these schools are still required to administer all SOL testing, and these test results are published, the exemption from loss of accreditation changes little. These are extremely high performing schools that would be unlikely to lose their accreditation status without the waiver. If the desire is truly to encourage innovative instructional practices, an exemption from standard SOL testing should be considered. Waiver schools could submit a plan to provide alternative assessments in place of the SOLs. As long as standard multiple-choice, high stakes tests are used as the published measure of a school's academic success, substantive innovations will continue to be limited and the focus will remain

on single measure test results rather than on optimizing each student's progress and utilizing multiple data points / varied assessments to evaluate that progress.

3. A consideration to collect and utilize school principals' perception of the effectiveness of Indistar to make decisions about future use is suggested. If survey data is utilized, consideration should be made to ensuring that responses are confidential in order to procure valid information. The redundancy of various sections of Indistar plans and the large amount of time required to complete ongoing Indistar requirements are concerns.

4. The request renewal provides a description / explanation of the use of a "Value Table" that divisions must use to assess the student growth standard in teacher evaluation. Prescribing that a comparison of one SOL test in a previous year to a different SOL test the following year be used as a measure of a student's growth is concerning.

   The current SOL assessments are not growth measures. Assessments such as NWEA MAPS, PALS, comprehensive pre / post content area tests, and Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Testing are a few examples of valid growth measures that show a students' progress given a consistent continuum of assessment items. These are currently used by teachers to show student growth. This is not the same as comparing results of two completely different tests from one year to the next, as would occur with the SOL "Value Table" proposed method. As an example, a student may show more than a year's growth in reading utilizing both NWEA MAPS and Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Testing, yet show little change when comparing one year's SOL test to the next. Using the proposed "Value Table" methodology proposed, this teacher would be penalized in the evaluation process when, in fact, the student demonstrated growth above the expected pace.

   It is suggested that school divisions utilize assessment measures specifically designed to evaluate student growth for the teacher evaluation process. The ability to select such measures from a menu of valid options ensures that teachers have a voice in this key area of their own evaluation and in accurately assessing the progress of each of their students.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to comment.

----------, Director of Elementary Education
---------- County Public Schools

From: Clyde Mathews [mailto:Clyde.Mathews@dlcv.org]
Sent: Tuesday, January 20, 2015 12:06 PM
To: Eisenberg, John (DOE); DOE - ESEA
Cc: Miller, Colleen (DBHDS); Robert Gray; Valerie Slater
Subject: RE: SUPT'S E-MAIL: Opportunity to Comment on Virginia's Application for a Four-Year Renewal of Waivers from Certain Requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA)

Dear John,

Please accept the disAbility Law Center's comments on the proposed renewal of the Virginia ESEA Waiver.

Regards, Clyde,

Clyde W. Mathews, Jr.
Deputy DIrector for Legal Services
disAbility Law Center of Virginia (dLCV.org)
1910 Byrd Avenue, Suite 5
Richmond, VA 23230
804-225-2042; FAX 804-662-7057

Comments on Virginia ESEA Flexibility Waiver Renewal Application

January 16, 2015

The **disAbility Law Center of Virginia (dLCV)** reviewed the ESEA Flexibility Waiver Renewal Application prepared by the Virginia Department of Education for submission to the U.S. Department of Education January 30, 2015. dLCV submits the following comment for consideration before further action is taken to renew the ESEA Flexibility Waiver for the next four academic years.

dLCV will reference the ESEA Flexibility Waiver Renewal Application by page number in parentheses throughout this comment.

BACKGROUND

In order for a state to receive an ESEA Flexibility Waiver, the state must demonstrate that they have adopted or will implement a series of reforms to their academic standards, student assessments, and accountability systems for schools and educators. Specifically, the U.S. Department of Education requires states to meet three guiding principles:

1. Implement college and career-ready standards and assessments that measure student achievement and growth.
2. A differentiated accountability system that both recognizes high achieving and high progress schools while supporting chronically low achieving schools. And
3. Teacher and principal evaluation and support systems to improve instruction.

dLCV applauds the efforts of Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) in developing rigorous standards of learning assessments which, when passed, better prepare Virginia students for success beyond secondary education. dLCV supports the effort to greatly enhance the availability of successful outcomes for all students. In the Application, VDOE has outlined comprehensive strategies to support and increase academic growth for low performing proficiency groups in Priority and Focus Schools throughout the Commonwealth.

ISSUES RELATED TO VIRGINIA STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

After review of the Application, dLCV raises the following concerns:

- No targeted training and support implementation strategies were established to ensure improved instruction and achievement standard for students with disabilities

- Failure to provide strict alternative assessment usage guidelines or limitations to dissuade overuse
- Failure to comprehensively outline indicators of growth beyond secondary education for students assessed using Virginia's alternative assessment tools.

Targeted Training and Support

VDOE correctly states that the, "Consolidated State Performance Report (CSPR) data show that the reading and mathematics performance of students with disabilities, English language learners, and economically disadvantaged students are the lowest in comparison to the statewide average performance of "all students" in both subjects." (pg. 71-72). These three subgroups are combined for reporting purposes as "proficiency gap group 1" (pg. 71). VDOE outlines the strategy to address the needs of economically disadvantaged students through the identification of the lower fifth percentile Title I schools as Priority schools (pg. 79). The lower tenth percentile (excluding priority schools) are to be identified as focus schools (pg. 93). VDOE outlines the steps and strategies to increase proficiency outcomes for students in these schools, the Turnaround Principles for Priority schools (pg. 80-92) and the Focus School Improvement Process (pg. 95-103). VDOE also acknowledges the unique needs of English language learners (ELL) by outlining the adoption of statewide assessment tools and standards to unify and streamline the teaching methodology for ELL students across Virginia schools (pg. 29-30).

VDOE does not, however, distinguish or prioritize the unique needs of students with disabilities. According to the 2013-14 CSPR, there were 96,137 students with disabilities who participated in the math assessment. (Section 1.2.1). A total of 84,374 students with disabilities participated in the reading assessment (Id. at 1.2.1). Students with disabilities have the lowest proficiency percentages of all subgroups, across all assessments and across all assessment years (pg. 70-71). The actual proficiency gap between students with disabilities and the next lowest performing subgroup within Proficiency Gap Group 1 for assessment years 2011-12 thru 2013-14 range from a low of -11 points to a high of -18 (State Report Card). The annual measureable objectives (AMO) set for students with disabilities for this current year, year 3 in the Application, of 49 reflects a 6 point increase from this subgroups actual performance last year of 43. This reflects the "ambitious goal" of lessening the proficiency gap between students with disabilities and the combined PGG1 from -11points last year to -6 points. While the proficiency gap narrowing trend continues with each consecutive year with the culmination of an AMO of 73 for all subgroups and proficiency gap groups by 2017-18, there is no comprehensive strategy identified to drive this projected change.

Students with disabilities have persistently performed more poorly than all other subgroups both academically and on state assessments. It is unrealistic to expect a decrease in the proficiency gap or an increase in successful outcomes for students with disabilities without coordinated action. In order to purposefully drive increased positive academic growth and success for students with disabilities, dLCV makes the following recommendations targeted at increasing teacher competencies and improving teaching methodologies:

- Adopt a single statewide IEP program. VDOE has already acknowledged the value and benefit of a uniform instruction methodology as evidenced by the learning standards adopted for ELL students.

- Outline a comprehensive system of training and support for special education teachers, as with ELL teachers that include:
    - trainings and professional development academies for K-12 teachers of students with disabilities focusing on:
    - IEP development
    - transition plan development
    - Advanced education opportunities for teachers
    - continued annual institutes and graduate level courses for teachers

dLCV believes that these strategies, coupled with the other support and trainings outlined in the Application for schools, principals and teachers, can make a positive impact on successful outcomes for students with disabilities.

Alternative Assessment Overuse

The Federal Graduation Indicator (FGI) is the monitoring mechanism which sets minimum graduation rate for our nation's school systems. (pg. Together the AMO participation rate, progress expectations in reading and mathematics and the FGI comprise the expectations under ESEA (pg. 54). The FGI only recognizes standard and advanced placement diplomas (pg. 78). ESEA only allows reporting of 1% of all pass and pass advanced alternate assessments administered within a state. LEAs may however seek a waiver of the 1% cap upon application. (Supt. Memo No. 12, Apr. 18, 2008). There are three assessment tools used for students with disabilities that are not accounted for by ESEA:

- Virginia Grade Level Alternative (VGLA)
- Virginia Substitute Evaluation Program (VSEP)
- Virginia Alternate Assessment Program (VAAP)

VDOE states very broadly that "a small number of students with significant cognitive disabilities participate in alterative assessments based on alternate achievement standards as approved for in NCLB." (pg. 29).

dLCV encourages VDOE to develop an accountability system to discourage overuse of alternative assessments which may potentially bolster AMOs for LEAs while having the unintended consequence of depriving students with disability of access to educational rigor.

Alternative Post Secondary Success Indicators

.

The Virginia College and Career Ready Initiative provides a robust program to ensure Virginia students meet with academic and career success (pg. 22-28). VDOE partnered with institutions of higher education to ensure the standards of learning and curriculum were well aligned with college readiness standards (pg. 22-26). Student success is imbedded in the curriculum Virginia schools will use to prepare students to be successful on the more rigorous standards of learning assessment (pg. 24-28). Capstone courses have been developed to further prepare students who need further support to meet the academic demands of higher education (pg. 28).

VDOE has not developed a plan to support and encourage success beyond secondary education for students with disabilities. VDOE states that students with disabilities "may take standards of learning tests with our without accommodations," then goes on to direct attention to the Virginia assessment programs (pg. 29). In the detailed discussion regarding students with disabilities, VDOE mentions the "I'm Determined" Initiative, Project SEARCH and Post-High School Community College Programs (pg. 29). No comprehensive plan to ensure student participation or provide more options is outlined in the Application.

dLCV is greatly concerned with VDOE's failure to develop a strategy to guide and track post secondary success for students with the most significant cognitive challenges. Students with disabilities represent one of the most vulnerable populations with regard to academic and other indicators of success. dLCV encourages use of some of the same strategies used to developed and strengthen potential for academic and career success for non-disabled students be utilized to

foster greater guided and monitored opportunities for the smaller but no less significant population of students with significant cognitive disabilities.

In summary, dLCV lauds the work of VDOE and its partners to develop a plan for success for Virginia students. We also seek to improve access and avenues to positive outcomes for Virginia students. To this end, we strongly urge VDOE to further engage educators, parents, students and other stakeholders directly connected to the needs of students with disabilities and work together to improve teacher competencies and teaching methodologies; to ensure the prevention of alternative assessment overuse; and to develop guided programs and monitoring to ensure improved academic and career successes for students with disabilities.

From: Candace Cortiella [mailto:Candace@advocacyinstitute.org]
Sent: Tuesday, January 20, 2015 3:19 PM
To: DOE - ESEA
Subject: Comments to Virginia's ESEA Flexibility Renewal Application

Attached please find our comments to Virginia's ESEA Flexibility Renewal Application.
Please contact us with any questions.
Candace Cortiella
Director
The Advocacy Institute
www.AdvocacyInstitute.org
PH: 540.364.0051

The Advocacy INSTITUTE

A not-for-profit organization dedicated to services and projects that work to improve the lives of children, youth and adults with disabilities.

P.O. Box 565 ◆ Marshall, Virginia 20116 ◆ Phone 540.364.0051
www.AdvocacyInstitute.org

Comments on Virginia ESEA Flexibility Waiver Application

January 20, 2015

The Advocacy Institute has reviewed the ESEA Flexibility Waiver Renewal Application prepared by the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) for submission to the U.S. Department of Education (USED) on January 30, 2015. We submit the following comments regarding issues and concerns for Virginia's students with disabilities as well as its citizens with disabilities.

1. INADEQUATE STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

The USED FAQ on ESEA Renewal (http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/esea-flexibility/flex-renewal/flexrenewalfaqs.doc) provides extension information on how states must include meaningful stakeholder consultation as part of the renewal application, including this requirement:

"Consultation with stakeholders about ESEA flexibility implementation should be an ongoing process, and consultation regarding renewal is an extension of that ongoing process. If it has not already done so, an SEA should begin consulting with stakeholders specifically on its plans for renewal of ESEA flexibility as soon as possible. Each SEA must ensure that this consultation includes meaningful exchanges with diverse stakeholders, as discussed in question C-2."

VDOE has in no way included meaningful exchanges with diverse stakeholders as part of its ESEA Renewal application process. Rather, VDOE posted a *notice* to its website on Monday, January 13, 2015 advising the public of its intent to apply for ESEA Flexibility Renewal through the 2018-2019 school year and announcing that public comment would be *accepted* through January 20, 2015 via email – a total of nine days.

Additionally, VDOE provided no way for individuals with disabilities to obtain the ESEA Flexibility Renewal application and form in an accessible format (e.g., braille, large print, audiotape, or compact disc). Neither did VDOE provide any alternative means of submitting comments (other than email) except for individuals to deliver comments in person at one of two Board of Education Meetings to be held January 21 and 22 in Richmond. Lastly, individuals seeking additional information are provided with nothing other an email address (ESEA@doe.virginia.gov). Thus, people who use a telecommunications device for the deaf are provided with no means of seeking additional information via TDD or TTY.

These omissions are a clear violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) as they deny individuals with disabilities the tools necessary to participate in the review and comment process.

2. GENERAL MISUNDERSTANDING OF HOW TO AMEND APPROVED ESEA FLEXIBILTY REQUEST

At Page 175 the VDOE renewal application states that: "It is important to note that USED approval of Virginia's ESEA flexibility renewal request does not preclude additional amendments to the state's ESEA flexibility implementation plan. The Virginia Department of Education, on behalf of the Virginia Board of Education, will continue to engage stakeholders in discussions about continuous improvement to the state's federal accountability plan during appropriate opportunities in the future. Virginia may submit amendments to the state's federal accountability plan, as needed, following USED approval of state's ESEA flexibility renewal request."

In sharp contrast to this statement, the USED ESEA Flexibility renewal guidance (available at http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/esea-flexibility/flex-renewal/flexguidrenewal2014.doc) states that:

"The request for renewal of ESEA flexibility also provides an opportunity for an SEA to amend its approved request as part of a continuous improvement process to address challenges and build on successes from current implementation. In addition, an SEA is encouraged to align its ESEA flexibility implementation efforts with other improvement efforts within the State to ensure consistency and coherence across its statewide systems. Therefore, an SEA may choose, but is not required, to amend its currently approved ESEA flexibility request to make any additional changes it deems necessary to improve implementation going forward and to reflect implementation activities that have already occurred (Section III). An SEA requesting to amend its currently approved request must complete the table contained in Section III on the ESEA flexibility renewal form."

2

It is clear from the USED guidance that states are to present any amendments as part of the renewal application. Furthermore, it would be very difficult to address amendments in a piecemeal approach and would likely result in limited if any stakeholder consultation.

3. INADEQUATE EXAMINATION OF IMPACT OF USE OF COMBINED STUDENT GROUPS.

VDOE's use of proficiency gap groups (PGGS) as an indicator of school performance appears to be masking the poor performance of students with disabilities.

For example, while the PGG that includes students with disabilities – Gap Group 1 – made its Performance AMO in Math in 2013-2014, the performance of students with disabilities failed to meet the AMO. The PGG approach is clearly marginalizing the achievement issues faced by the groups consolidated into Gap Group 1.

Since it is the PGG performance that is used to identify Priority and Focus schools, it is critical that VDOE provide a plan to adjust for poor performance of one (or more) of the student groups that comprise Gap Group 1 (Students with Disabilities, English Language Learners, Economically Disadvantaged Students (unduplicated)) to ensure that these students – certainly the Commonwealth's most educationally disadvantaged and historically low performing – are given adequate consideration in the state's accountability system.

Virginia's students with disabilities – representing approximately thirteen percent of the public school enrollment – are consistently the worst performing group of students across all grades and content areas as measured by Virginia's assessment program. VDOE's ESEA Flexibility Renewal application should provide specific actions to address this issue.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments on Virginia's ESEA Flexibility Renewal request.

Sincerely,

Candace Cortiella
Director
Email: Candace@advocacyinstitute.org

3

From: ----------
Sent: Tuesday, January 20, 2015 5:55 PM
To: DOE - ESEA
Subject: Comments regarding ESEA

I have attached comments. I will attend the Jan 22nd meeting.

Supervisor of Mathematics and Science

Good Afternoon,
A few items to concerns:

- On page 200 of the Red-lined Virginia ESEA Flexibility Extension Application under High Schools, it states,

"Meet federal graduation indicator (FGI) rate of 80 percent, which includes a provision for a 10 percent reduction in the percent of non-graduating students from the previous year applied only to the adjusted four-year federal graduation rate"

Consider changing/removing: "applied only to the adjusted four-year federal graduation rate"

Rational/example: By continuing to only allow the 10 percent reduction and the Too Small (TS) in the adjusted four-year federal graduation rate, schools are not given credit for recovering graduates and are penalized for subgroups with very small numbers in year 5 and 6.

Example: Use of Too Small

Determining Values: FGI 5 Year Rate

Subgroup	Data Source	Students Counted	Total Students	Rate	AMO	AMO Met?
All Students	Current	417	449	92.87%	80%	Yes
Gap Group 1	Current	91	105	86.66%	80%	Yes
Gap Group 2	Current	86	98	87.75%	80%	Yes
Gap Group 3	Current	55	59	93.22%	80%	Yes
Asian	Current	7	9	77.77%	80%	No
Economically Disadvantaged	Current	72	83	86.74%	80%	Yes
Limited English Proficient	Current	20	22	90.90%	80%	Yes
Students with Disabilities	Current	16	22	72.72%	80%	No
White	Current	246	258	95.34%	80%	Yes

This school could have meet the benchmark if they were allowed to use the Too Small (TS) provision where there is less than 30 students (Asian and Students with Disabilities containing 9 and 22, respectively), which is allowed in the adjusted four-year federal graduation rate and in the content areas.

Example: 10% reduction of non-graduation rate

First Example (Comparing Like FGI Year Rates)
School Year 2013-2014

Determining Values: FGI 6 Year Rate

Subgroup	Data Source	Students Counted	Total Students	Rate	AMO	AMO Met?
All Students	Current	463	502	92.23%	80%	Yes
Gap Group 1	Current	56	78	71.79%	80%	No
Gap Group 2	Current	62	72	86.11%	80%	Yes
Gap Group 3	Current	28	31	90.32%	80%	Yes
Asian	Current	13	15	86.66%	80%	Yes
Economically Disadvantaged	Current	37	47	78.72%	80%	No
Limited English Proficient	Current	5	8	62.50%	80%	No
Students with Disabilities	Current	20	37	54.05%	80%	No
White	Current	347	370	93.78%	80%	Yes

School Year 2014-2015

Determining Values: FGI 6 Year Rate

Subgroup	Data Source	Students Counted	Total Students	Rate	AMO	AMO Met?
All Students	Current	451	491	91.85%	80%	Yes
Gap Group 1	Current	65	81	80.24%	80%	Yes
Gap Group 2	Current	53	57	92.98%	80%	Yes
Gap Group 3	Current	43	44	97.72%	80%	Yes
Asian	Current	10	10	100.00%	80%	Yes
Economically Disadvantaged	Current	45	53	84.90%	80%	Yes
Limited English Proficient	Current	7	7	100.00%	80%	Yes
Students with Disabilities	Current	22	35	62.85%	80%	No
White	Current	330	363	90.90%	80%	Yes

Data Review: During the school year of 2013-2014, this school's graduation rate for SWD was 54.05% with 37 students in the subgroup. The following year, 2014-2015, the school increased the graduation to 62.85% with 35 students; which reduced the non-graduation rate by 19.15%.

Second Example (Comparing Same Cohort – Same students from one year to next)

The first example is comparing two different groups. This example takes a look at how a school might reduce the non-graduation rate within the same cohort from one year to the next year.

School Year 2013-14

Determining Values: FGI 4 Year Rate

Subgroup	Data Source	Students Counted	Total Students	Rate	AMO	AMO Met?
All Students	Current	424	456	92.98%	80%	Yes
	Previous	445	490	90.81%		
Gap Group 1	Current	79	98	80.61%	80%	Yes
	Previous	62	87	71.26%		
Gap Group 2	Current	54	58	93.10%	80%	Yes
	Previous	53	57	92.98%		
Gap Group 3	Current	47	50	94.00%	80%	Yes
	Previous	43	44	97.72%		
Asian	Current	8	8	100.00%	80%	TS
	Previous	9	10	90.00%		
Economically Disadvantaged	Current	57	66	86.36%	80%	Yes
	Previous	43	60	71.66%		
Limited English Proficient	Current	9	9	100.00%	80%	TS
	Previous	6	7	85.71%		
Students with Disabilities	Current	21	36	58.33%	80%	No
	Previous	21	35	60.00%		
White	Current	284	306	92.81%	80%	Yes
	Previous	326	362	90.05%		

School Year 2014-2015

Determining Values: FGI 5 Year Rate

Subgroup	Data Source	Students Counted	Total Students	Rate	AMO	AMO Met?
All Students	Current	429	454	94.49%	80%	Yes
Gap Group 1	Current	83	99	83.83%	80%	Yes
Gap Group 2	Current	55	57	96.49%	80%	Yes
Gap Group 3	Current	48	49	97.95%	80%	Yes
Asian	Current	8	8	100.00%	80%	Yes
Economically Disadvantaged	Current	59	66	89.39%	80%	Yes
Limited English Proficient	Current	10	10	100.00%	80%	Yes
Students with Disabilities	Current	22	35	62.85%	80%	No
White	Current	287	307	93.48%	80%	Yes

Data Review: The above data is from the same school. The students in FGI 4 Year Rate (school year 2013-2014) are the same students in FGI 5 Year Rate (school year 2014-2015). The SWD subgroup from 2013-2014 reduced the non-graduation rate by 10.85%. Please keep in mind, this comparison is within the same cohort of students.

As you can see, schools are working hard to help students graduate from high school. However, non e of this work is being recognized or helping them with meeting the federal graduation indicator.

From: Clinton Page [mailto:clinton.page@acps.k12.va.us]
Sent: Tuesday, January 20, 2015 7:09 PM
To: DOE - ESEA
Cc: Dr. Terri Mozingo; Bethany Nickerson; Dr. Alvin L. Crawley
Subject: Comment on Virginia's Application for a Four-Year Renewal of Waivers from Certain Requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA)

Colleagues,

Alexandria City Public Schools would petition the state to pursue potential additional flexibility for English Language Learners (ELL) within the federal accountability system. We highly value the importance of accountability systems in their ability to elicit change as well as to highlight unique student populations performing below expectations. At the same time we balance this against research which states it takes five to seven years for ELL students with no English-language skills to gain proficiency.

Recently, Florida was provided additional flexibility within their waiver request specific to ELL and the federal accountability system. The flexibility allowed for ELL students new to the United States to be afforded two years of instruction prior to being held accountable to a grade level standard. Not the five to seven pointed to in research but a step in the correct direction. The students are still tested thus the results may still be used to inform instruction but a reprieve is given to the "high-stakes" nature of the assessment from an accountability perspective. Divisions within Virginia are already held accountable for these students' growth and language acquisition through the Title III AMAOs on an annual basis.
Thank you,
Clinton Page
Chief Accountability Officer
Department of Accountability
Alexandria City Public Schools
703.619.8032

From: ----------
Sent: Tuesday, January 20, 2015 10:46 PM
To: DOE - ESEA
Subject: ESEA Flexibility Revisions

To Whom It May Concern,
Thank you for providing stakeholders with an opportunity to provide feedback regarding the ESEA Waiver revisions. In reviewing the proposed changes, it is unclear whether the value tables will be put in place solely to replace SGPs or if there would be a requirement for use. If the value tables are provided to school divisions as one option of the growth measure for teacher and principal evaluation, the value tables may be helpful. However, all divisions began the implementation of the new evaluation system several years ago, which may or may not include the SGP data. For example, in Henrico, teachers and principals are provided with a menu of growth assessment options and they are able to select the one most appropriate for their school/class. The transition to the new evaluation system has taken several years to fully implement and I would advocate for continuing to allow divisions the flexibility of implementation and measure selection.

Sincerely,

Director, Department of Research and Planning

From: ----------
Sent: Tuesday, January 27, 2015 12:42 PM
To: DOE - ESEA
Subject: ESEA flexibility application support

Hello,

I wanted to express my support for the revised ESEA flexibility application. I participated in a review of the document during a meeting of the Committee of Practitioners.

Thanks!

---------- County Public Schools
Title I Coordinator

Attachment 3 – Notice and Information Provided to the Public Regarding the Request

The Virginia Department of Education provided notice and information to the public through its process for stakeholder input as described in the *Consultation* section of the application. Invitation letters were sent to each of groups invited to participate in the meetings shown on the schedule below:

Date	Forum	Stakeholders Providing Input
10/26/11	Board Committee on School and Division Accountability	Representatives from the following organizations: • Virginia Association of School Superintendents (VASS) • Virginia Parent Teacher Association (VPTA) • Virginia School Boards Association (VSBA)
10/27/11	Board of Education Meeting	Public Comment
10/31/11	Accountability Round Table	Selected division personnel required to implement accountability provisions
11/8/11	*No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB) Committee of Practitioners Meeting	Selected educators representing various segments of Virginia's education community, as outlined in the ESEA
11/16/11	Board Committee on School and Division Accountability	1. Representatives from the following organizations: • Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals (VAESP) • Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals (VASSP) • Virginia ESL Supervisors' Association (VESA) • Virginia Council of Administrators for Special Education (VCASE) • Virginia Education Association (VEA) 2. Selected teachers
11/17/11	Board of Education Meeting	Public Comment
11/18/11	Written Comment*	Selected special interest groups
11/21/11	Teacher and Principal Round Table	Principals and teachers nominated by VEA, VAESP, and VASSP
11/21/11	Superintendents Round Table	Superintendents, and one division personnel versed in NCLB accountability requirements, nominated by regional representatives of the Superintendent's Leadership Advisory Council (SLAC)
12/19/11	*No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB) Committee of Practitioners Meeting	Selected educators representing various segments of Virginia's education community, as outlined in the ESEA
1/11/12	Board Committee on School and Division Accountability	Public Comment
1/12/12	Board of Education Meeting	Public Comment

In preparation to submit a request to the U.S. Department of Education in 2014 to renew Virginia's ESEA flexibility application through the 2014-2015 school year, the Virginia Department of Education, on behalf of the Board of Education, solicited stakeholder input on proposed additions and revisions to its application as indicated in the chart below. An ESEA stakeholder e-mail distribution list was established that includes the stakeholders that provided input on the state's original application and many additional individual practitioners and interest groups that have expressed an interest in ESEA flexibility provisions since the state began implementing the plan. Samples of the communication updates on ESEA flexibility renewal distributed to stakeholders are available in Attachment 1.

Date	Forum	Stakeholders Providing Input
10/22/2013	NCLB Committee of Practitioners Meeting	Selected educators representing various segments of Virginia's education community, as outlined in the ESEA Executive summary of proposed additions and updates was distributed and discussed.
10/23/2013	Board Committee on School and Division Accountability	Public Comment
10/24/2013	Stakeholder E-mail	Selected educators, parents, and community and interest groups representing various segments of Virginia's education community Link to video recording of 10/23/2013 Committee meeting and executive summary of proposed additions and updates was distributed. Input was solicited.
11/20/2013	Board Committee on School and Division Accountability	Public Comment Report Presented on Revised Process for Requesting an Extension for ESEA Flexibility
2/12/2014	Superintendent's E-mail	E-mail update to division superintendents and others regarding the status of the state's extension request, including a description of the proposed change to the AMO methodology and a request for comments to be submitted to the state
2/26/2014	Board Committee on School and Division Accountability	Public Comment Report Presented on Extension for ESEA Flexibility and Proposed Amendments
2/27/2014	Board of Education Meeting	Public Comment First Draft of Amended ESEA Flexibility Application was presented to the Board of Education for First Review.
3/26/2014	Board Committee on School and Division Accountability	Public Comment Report Presented on Extension for ESEA Flexibility and Proposed Amendments
3/27/2014	Board of Education Meeting	Public Comment Final Draft of Amended ESEA Flexibility Application was presented to the Board of Education for Final Review.

In preparation to submit a request to the U.S. Department of Education in 2015 to extend Virginia's ESEA flexibility application through the 2018-2019 school year, the Virginia Department of Education, on behalf of the Board of Education, solicited stakeholder input on proposed additions and revisions to its application as indicated in the chart below. Samples of the communication updates on ESEA flexibility renewal distributed to stakeholders are available in Attachment 1.

Date	Forum	Stakeholders Providing Input
1/12/2015	Public Posting	Red-lined version of the ESEA Flexibility Renewal Application was posted on the Department's website. Input was solicited.
1/12/2015	Superintendent's E-mail	E-mail distributed to division superintendents and school division instructional leaders and federal program staff describing the ESEA Flexibility renewal process and proposed revisions to the state's application. Red-lined version of the renewal application was shared. Input was solicited.
1/12/2015	Stakeholder E-mail	E-mail was distributed to selected educators, parents, and community and interest groups representing various segments of Virginia's education community describing the ESEA Flexibility renewal process and proposed revisions to the state's application. Red-lined version of the renewal application was shared. Input was solicited.
1/15/2015	NCLB Committee of Practitioners Meeting	Selected educators representing various segments of Virginia's education community, as outlined in the ESEA Red-lined version of the renewal application was shared and discussed. Input was solicited.
1/22/2015	Board of Education Meeting	Public Comment ESEA Flexibility Renewal Process and Application was presented and discussed.

Attachment 4 – Evidence That Virginia Has Adopted College- and Career-Ready Standards, Consistent with the State's Approved Standards Adoption Process

A Brief History of the Standards of Learning Development in Virginia

The last seventeen years of educational policy and practice in Virginia have demonstrated a significant commitment to positive educational reform on behalf of the Governor's Office, the General Assembly, the Virginia Board of Education (Board), the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE), as well as Virginia's 132 school divisions, 2000 schools, 1.3 million students, their parents, and citizens of the Commonwealth. Spanning five different governors, representing both political parties, Virginia's systemic reform has remained on course while responding to emerging needs and incorporating innovative and forward-looking components to meet those needs. Public education in Virginia has undergone a thorough transformation to a highly-integrated system founded on academically-rigorous, college- and career-ready standards in all academic disciplines.

In 1994, Virginia initiated significant reform of its K-12 educational system, which has adapted and evolved as the state and national educational landscape has changed. The reform consists of several major elements among them being: 1) nationally-validated academic content standards; 2) an assessment program to measure progress; 3) a robust and comprehensive data system to inform research and policy; and 4) a comprehensive accountability system.

In June 1995, after a fourteen-month development effort that involved K-12 teachers and administrators, higher education representatives, community and agency partners, and citizen groups, the Board adopted a set of statewide standards, the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL). Virginia's SOL set forth learning standards for every child from kindergarten through grade 12 in English, mathematics, science, and history and social science. Overtime, the standards were expanded to include the areas of fine arts, foreign language, health and physical education, driver education, and computer technology.

The Virginia Board of Education's Authority to Establish and Revise the Standards of Learning

The Board is legislatively charged with the authority to establish learning standards for Virginia's public schools. As part of that authority, state policy leaders recognized the need for regular review and evaluation of the state's standards, and legislation was passed requiring review of the standards at least every seven years. The Code of Virginia, Section § 22.1-253.13:1, Subsection B states:

> *The Board of Education shall establish educational objectives known as the Standards of Learning, which shall form the core of Virginia's educational program, and other educational objectives, which together are designed to ensure the development of the skills that are necessary for success in school and for preparation for life in the years beyond. At a minimum, the Board shall establish Standards of Learning for English, mathematics, science, and history and social science.*
>
> *The Standards of Learning in all subject areas shall be subject to regular review and revision to maintain rigor and to reflect a balance between content knowledge and the application of knowledge in preparation for eventual employment and lifelong learning. The Board of Education shall establish a regular schedule, in a manner it deems appropriate, for the review, and revision as may be necessary, of the Standards of*

> *Learning in all subject areas. Such review of each subject area shall occur at least once every seven years. Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit the Board from conducting such review and revision on a more frequent basis.*

Based on the Board's established review schedule for the standards, revised *History and Social Science SOL* were adopted by the Board in 2001 and 2008, revised *Mathematics SOL* in 2001and 2009, and revised *English and Science SOL* in 2002 and 2010.

External Reviews of the Mathematics and English Standards of Learning

In January 2007, as Virginia began its College and Career Readiness Initiative (CCRI), the Board authorized the VDOE to conduct studies to determine factors contributing to success in postsecondary education. As part of that effort, the Department requested ACT, The College Board, and Achieve, the American Diploma Project (ADP), to conduct studies comparing their respective standards for postsecondary readiness to the Standards of Learning in mathematics and English. The College Board, ACT, and Achieve found that Virginia's *Mathematics* and *English Standards of Learning* showed strong alignment with their respective postsecondary readiness standards and likely prepared students for college and career success. Results of the studies are Attachments A to the January 2010 Board agenda items at: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/meetings/2010/01_jan/agenda_items/item_h.pdf.

Among the findings from The College Board's report on Virginia's *Mathematics SOL* is the following:

> *This study reveals that Virginia has much to be proud of. There is clearly good reason why the current Virginia Mathematics Standards have supported a decade-long trend of high performance in mathematics on the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP). Overall, there is strong alignment between the Virginia Mathematics Standards and the College Board Mathematics Standards.*

A summary statement from Achieve's review of Virginia's English standards includes the following:

> *The proposed revised Virginia English Standards of Learning Curriculum Framework presents student learning expectations that are intellectually demanding and well aligned with the ADP Benchmarks. If Virginia students master the state standards, they will likely be prepared for both college and career success.*

The specific input received from 1) ACT, 2) The College Board, and 3) Achieve, the American Diploma Project was thoroughly incorporated in the revision processes that began in 2008 for Virginia's *Mathematics Standards of Learning* and in 2009 for its *English Standards of Learning*.

The Mathematics Standards of Learning Revision Process (2008-2009)

On March 19, 2008, the Board approved a plan to review the mathematics standards during 2008-2009. In accordance with the Board's transparent and systematic standards-revision process, the VDOE took the following steps to produce a draft of proposed revised *Mathematics Standards of Learning*:

- Received online comments from stakeholders, including K-12 teachers and administrators, higher education faculty, parents, and community members;
- Met with a review committee that consisted of recommended individuals solicited from school divisions to 1) review the public comment; 2) consider recommendations and reports from

Achieve, The College Board, ACT; and 3) review the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Frameworks, the Curriculum Focal Points from the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM), Principles and Standards for School Mathematics from NCTM, the Singapore Curricula, and the Report of the President's National Mathematics Advisory Panel;

- Solicited a postsecondary review committee comprised of mathematics and mathematics education faculty and met with the review committee;
- Solicited a business leaders review committee and sent a summary of the public comment with the then current (2001) *Mathematics Standards of Learning*, requesting comments; and
- Developed a draft of the proposed revised *Mathematics Standards of Learning* and presented the draft to the Board for its first review at its October 2008 public meeting.

In November 2008, the Board conducted five public hearings at locations around the state, garnering additional input and comment. From this final public input, the VDOE developed a second draft of revised *Mathematics Standards of Learning* and presented the proposed draft to the Board at its February 2009 public meeting. The proposed revised *Mathematics Standards of Learning* were approved at this meeting. The complete description of the mathematics standards-review process and proposed revised standards is available at: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/meetings/2009/02_feb/agenda_items/item_d.pdf.

The English Standards of Learning Revision Process (2009-2010)

On January 15, 2009, the Board approved a plan to review and revise the 2002 *English Standards of Learning*. In accordance with the Board's standards-revision process, the VDOE took the steps outlined below over the next eight months to develop proposed revised standards.

- Received online comments from stakeholders, including teachers, parents, administrators, business persons, and higher education faculty;
- Solicited a postsecondary review committee comprised of English and English education faculty and met with the review committee;
- Solicited business leaders' comments;
- Convened a state *English SOL* revision team comprised of K-12 personnel, higher education faculty, and other stakeholders to: 1) review public comment; 2) consider specific recommendations from Achieve, The College Board, and ACT; and 3) review reports and recommendations from national organizations including the National Association of Teachers of English (NCTE), the International Reading Association (IRA) Standards, the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) Standards for the 21st Century Learner, and the NCTE 21st Century Skills Map; and
- Developed a draft of the proposed revised *English Standards of Learning* and presented the draft to the Board for its first review at its October 2009 public meeting.

In November 2009, the Board conducted five public hearings at locations around the state, garnering additional input and comment. From this final public input, the VDOE developed a second draft of revised *English Standards of Learning* and presented the proposed draft to the Board at its January 2010 meeting. The proposed revised *English Standards of Learning* were approved at this meeting. The complete description of the English standards-review process and proposed revised standards is available at: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/meetings/2010/01_jan/agenda_items/item_h.pdf.

Virginia Mathematics and English SOL/Common Core State Standards Comparisons

In June 2010, the National Governors Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) released the *Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English/Language Arts* and the *Common Core State Standards for Mathematics*. Since Achieve, The College Board, and ACT were partners with NGA and CCSSO, their earlier work with states in the American Diploma Project (ADP) Network (including Virginia) provided a foundation upon which the *CCSS* were developed. As such, Virginia's 2009 *Mathematics Standards of Learning* and *Mathematics Curriculum Framework* and 2010 *English Standards of Learning* and *English Curriculum Framework* had strong alignment to the *Common Core State Standards* for the two disciplines.

In September 2010, the Board received for first review a preliminary analysis of the content of Virginia's 2010 *English Standards of Learning* compared with the *CCSS* for English. In October 2010, the Department convened a committee of K-16 English educators to further review and refine the analysis to ensure full alignment. The committee made minor revisions including language for clarification or enhancement of content. The 2010 *English Standards of Learning* and revised *Curriculum Framework* together have full alignment with the *CCSS*, and in some areas, exceed the content of the national document. The revised *English SOL Framework* and English revised SOL/CCSS correlation are attached to the November 2010 Board agenda item located at: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/meetings/2010/11_nov/agenda_items/item_j.pdf.

To ensure full alignment of the 2009 *Mathematics Standards of Learning* and *Curriculum Framework* with the *CCSS for Mathematics*, the VDOE staff conducted a preliminary analysis of the content from the two sets of standards, and presented a report to the Board at its September 2010 meeting. Both the *CCSS* and the *SOL* appeared to provide a detailed account of mathematics expectations for student learning and understanding. The content topics covered in both documents were clearly defined and sequential. Students progressing into high school mathematics content through the *CCSS* or *SOL* would have received most of the same mathematical content delivered through different learning progressions.

In October 2010, the Department convened a committee of K-16 mathematics educators to further review and refine the analysis. The review committee identified certain concepts in the *Curriculum Framework* for the 2009 *Mathematics Standards of Learning* that needed to be strengthened to ensure that Virginia's standards were equal to or more rigorous in content and scope than the *CCSS*.

The Department developed a crosswalk of the mathematics content for a proposed supplement to the *Curriculum Framework* for the 2009 *Mathematics Standards of Learning* for final review. The committee that reviewed the preliminary analysis indicated that addition of this material would complete and strengthen the content of the *Curriculum Framework* such that the 2009 *Mathematics Standards of Learning* and *Curriculum Framework* would equal or exceed the content and rigor of the *Common Core State Standards for Mathematics*. The supplement received additional public comment during fall 2010, and the Board approved the proposed supplement to the *Curriculum Framework* for the 2009 *Mathematics SOL* at its January 2011 meeting. The Board agenda item containing the revised *Curriculum Framework* supplement and the revised SOL/CCSS correlation, is found at: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/meetings/2011/01_jan/agenda_items/item_m.pdf.

The final *Mathematics SOL Curriculum Framework* supplement is located at: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/sol/frameworks/mathematics_framewks/2009/mathematics_curriculum_frmwrk_supplement.pdf.

Final, side-by-side, SOL/CCSS comparisons for English and mathematics are located at

- http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/sol/standards_docs/english/sol_ccss_comparison_english.pdf (English)
- http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/sol/standards_docs/mathematics/sol_ccss_comparison_mathematics.pdf (mathematics)

Development of Virginia's College and Career Ready English and Mathematics Performance Expectations

In January 2007, the Board of Education authorized the VDOE to conduct studies of key indicators of college readiness that may be used to develop measures that identify students as likely prepared for postsecondary educational programs. Since that time, VDOE has been engaged in several analytic efforts to identify indicators that suggest graduates are academically prepared for postsecondary educational success. The primary goal of the studies was to understand the associations between achievement as measured by end-of-course SOL assessments in English and mathematics and postsecondary success. Through this research, VDOE identified indicators of college readiness that were independently associated with a high probability of enrollment and persistence in four-year postsecondary institutions from across the country. The research aspect of Virginia's CCRI is ongoing and continues to inform other components of the initiative, especially policy implications related to coursework, school incentives, and higher education matriculation.

In 2009, Virginia became one of five states participating in the Southern Regional Education Board's (SREB) *College and Career Readiness Initiative*, supported by a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Virginia used SREB's *Key Steps in a Statewide College Readiness Initiative* as a framework to evaluate existing strategies and to guide the development and implementation of a strong state policy agenda to improve high school students' readiness for success in college and career training. Working closely with SREB, Virginia was poised to move rapidly forward with the next phase of its CCRI.

In January 2010, Virginia Governor, Timothy Kaine (D), and Governor-elect, Robert McDonnell (R) jointly appeared at a state-sponsored policy forum for K-16 education leaders, stressing the importance of college and career readiness and the high value both leaders placed on this initiative. SREB was an active participant at the forum, and a Virginia-specific college and career readiness progress report SREB had developed was a key resource at the day-long policy discussions. Recommendations in the SREB document further assisted Virginia in defining the major areas of emphasis for the next phase of the initiative. These emphases include:

- defining college- and career-ready performance expectations aligned to national and international college- and career-ready standards;
- developing elective "capstone courses" to support students who need additional instruction to meet college- and career-ready performance expectations before leaving high school;
- providing technical assistance and professional development to Virginia's educators to support implementation of the revised English and mathematics standards and the college- and career-ready performance expectations;

- aligning the state assessments to measure student mastery of the more rigorous mathematics and English standards adopted in 2009 and 2010. Certain high school end-of-course tests will include quantitative indicators of whether students have met or exceeded the achievement levels needed to be successful in introductory mathematics and English courses in college; and
- identifying accountability measures and incentives for schools to increase the percentage of students who graduate high school having demonstrated the academic and career skills needed to be successful in postsecondary education programs.

One important recommendation from the SREB's progress report that helped frame the next step for Virginia's CCRI effort is quoted below:

> *Virginia already has a core of state standards — reviewed by Achieve, College Board, and ACT — that are part of the state's Standards of Learning (SOL) and can be used to determine students' college readiness. These standards, the state curriculum, and the SOL statewide tests place Virginia ahead of many states in establishing a data-driven foundation to improve students' college readiness. <u>It is also important that the public schools work with postsecondary education to identify those SOL that most strongly indicate students' readiness for college-level work. Through this process, the most important readiness standards among the current SOL can be highlighted, further defined and recognized by all stakeholders.</u>* (underlining added)

VDOE instruction, research, and assessment staff, along with representatives from the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) and the Virginia Community College System (VCCS), worked together closely in framing how the performance expectation development process would be conducted. The performance expectations would be defined as those standards considered <u>important or essential</u> for students to master to be academically prepared to succeed in entry-level credit-bearing English and mathematics courses in college. The skills in English and mathematics would also support student success in college courses in other subject areas such as science and history.

Various models were reviewed and discussed, and a step-by-step plan was formulated and agreed upon. An SREB-supported consultant served as a member of the state team, helping to manage logistical and communication aspects of the process.

As a first step in identifying Virginia's college- and career-ready performance expectations, and keeping in mind SREB's recommendations concerning Virginia's own SOL, VDOE reviewed other sources of state and national learning standards and outcomes related to college readiness. These documents included:

- The CCSS;
- VCCS's learning goals and student outcomes;
- Career and Technical Education competencies; and
- Critical Workplace Skills for Virginia's Economic Vitality from the Weldon Cooper Center at the University of Virginia.

The team worked to determine how Virginia could utilize the accumulated effort and thinking of these vetted and validated standards to identify a preliminary draft of English and mathematics performance expectations. It was decided that the college- and career-ready anchor standards in the CCSS would be

used as reference points from which to "back-map" Virginia's secondary *English* and *Mathematics SOL*.

Following the SREB recommendation quoted earlier in this text, staff determined that a distinct subset of the ninth- through twelfth-grade *English SOL* and secondary *Mathematics SOL* correlated strongly with the national anchors standards. (In a few instances, English expectations were "imported" from the national document when matching statements in Virginia's standards were not present; however, these apparent gaps are fully covered in the SOL *Curriculum Framework* documents.)

Fully fleshed-out drafts of the performance expectations were developed and scrutinized internally at VDOE. The back-mapping process further validated the results of the earlier ACT, The College Board, and Achieve studies from 2008 and the observations of SREB's state progress report. These preliminary sets of college- and career-ready performance expectations for English and mathematics were then ready to serve as starting points for further systematic higher education review.

VDOE's assessment division developed online surveys (through LogicDepot) focusing on the draft performance expectations for both disciplines. College and university faculty and additional expert input would determine how important each expectation was for students' success in credit-bearing college courses. A four-point Likert scale was recommended by consulting psychometricians and used in the surveys. The rating scale used in both surveys is provided below:

1 = Not relevant for college- and career- readiness
2 = Helpful for college- and career- readiness
3 = Important for college- and career- readiness
4 = Essential for college- and career- readiness

The survey windows were open for 30 days. With assistance from VCCS and SCHEV in recruitment, faculty at two- and four-year institutions of higher education provided feedback about the importance of each of the draft college- and career-ready performance expectations. A sample of secondary English curriculum supervisors was included to participate in the English survey; the mathematics survey process was limited to two- and four-year higher education faculty. Over 100 respondents participated in each survey.

English and mathematics consensus/review teams composed of two- and four-year higher education institution staff, representatives of SCHEV and VCCS, and secondary content area experts were assembled to provide expert review of the compiled survey data. Detailed data books had been prepared for each of the two surveys with descriptive statistics for each performance expectation displayed for the responding subgroups. Data books were sent in advance to the consensus team members to allow longer reflection and analysis of the results.

During the day-long consensus meetings, the review teams analyzed the data and made recommendations to the VDOE about the performance expectations reaching the level of "important" or "critical" for college and career readiness. The consensus teams also made recommendations about ways to organize the expectations and discussed the teacher professional development that would be needed. From this final layer of expert review and recommendation, the *English Performance Expectations* (EPE) and *Mathematics Performance Expectations* (MPE) were identified.

The *English* and *Mathematics Performance Expectations* were accepted by the Board at its regularly-scheduled public meetings in November 2010, and February 2011, respectively.

The final *English* and *Mathematics Performance Expectations* documents are available at the Virginia Department of Education's Web site.

The 2011 SREB publication, *State College and Career Readiness Initiative: Final Progress Reports*, summarized the results of its multistate effort "Strengthening Statewide College/Career Readiness Initiative." The report's final observation (p. 45) about Virginia's progress in college- and career-ready standards follows:

> *Over the short period of approximately two years, Virginia has taken college and career readiness from an idea to a statewide education reform initiative. Driven by strong leadership in the state Department of Education and the Virginia Community College System, and with ongoing support from the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, Virginia has made dramatic progress in developing a college-readiness agenda.*
>
> *Virginia is the only state in the SSCRI that has developed data-driven, validated college- and career-readiness cut scores for the state end-of-course SOL exams in English III and Algebra II, and it is the only state with a fully funded creation and implementation plan for teacher development for college- and career-readiness courses.*
>
> *While other states began their readiness work by passing legislation, Virginia has outlined an agency-led approach. Virginia's education agencies worked together to develop and have committed to the new performance expectations for college and career readiness, they have vetted and approved the course descriptions for the capstone courses, and they have thoroughly assessed the necessary assessments and cut scores to denote college- and career-ready knowledge and skills. Following the future work on the higher education teacher development grants, implementation of the new postsecondary placement test, and use of accountability measures for college and career readiness, Virginia will have implemented all of the steps in SREB's recommended model agenda.*
>
> *With this agency-led effort, Virginia has established a strong, sustainable foundation for successful reform in the commonwealth's high schools and community colleges. After statewide implementation takes place, Virginia will have one of the most comprehensive college- and career-readiness agendas in the region and the nation.*

Joint Agreement on Virginia's *College and Career Ready English and Mathematics Performance Expectations*

In March 2011, the VDOE, SCHEV, and VCCS approved a joint agreement on the performance expectations in English and mathematics high school graduates must meet to be successful in freshman-level college courses or career training. The agreement signifies the endorsement by all three agencies of specific English and mathematics achievement and performance levels developed by the VDOE at the direction of the Board and in collaboration with high school educators and college and university faculty. For the first time, high-school exit expectations and college entrance expectations in the Commonwealth were the same. The Superintendent's Memorandum announcing publicly this important agreement is located at: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/administrators/superintendents_memos/2011/065-11.shtml.

On September 14, 2011, at a college- and career-readiness forum hosted by the VCCS, a VDOE team met with the academic deans of Virginia's 23 community colleges to discuss the MPE and EPE. The ongoing dialogue represents another milestone as Virginia works to improve the K-16 pathways for postsecondary success.

Attachment 5 – Memorandum Of Understanding Or Letter From A State Network Of IHEs Certifying That Meeting The State's Standards Corresponds To Being College- And Career-Ready Without The Need For Remedial Coursework At The Postsecondary Level (if applicable)

Joint Agreement on Virginia's College and Career Ready Mathematics and English Performance Expectations

In 2010, Governor Robert McDonnell set an ambitious goal for Virginia to create 100,000 additional degrees from the Commonwealth's two- and four-year institutions of higher education over the next 15 years. In order to be on track to meet this important goal, Virginia's elementary and secondary schools and institutions of higher education must "re-set the bar" so that all students, parents, K-12 educators, higher education faculty, and other citizens clearly understand what it takes not only to graduate from high school but also to succeed in college and careers. Virginia's students must be fully prepared to take freshman-level courses or career training without first having to be remediated. Having all students ready for the mathematics and communications demands of the 21st century will require a renewed focus on college and career readiness.

To this end, Virginia has undertaken a statewide effort, the Virginia College and Career Readiness Initiative, the goals of which are:

1) To ensure that college and career ready learning standards in mathematics and English are taught and learned in every Virginia high school classroom; and
2) To strengthen students' preparation for college and the workforce before leaving high school.

As a key step in this initiative and through a systematic process involving Virginia's community colleges and four-year institutions, Virginia has identified college and career ready performance expectations for mathematics and English. These performance expectations define the level of achievement students must reach to be academically prepared for success in entry-level, credit-bearing, college courses in mathematics and English or further career and technical training after high school. Virginia's *College and Career Ready Mathematics* and *English Performance Expectations* build upon the solid foundation of the *Virginia Standards of Learning* and are fully aligned to national and international college and career readiness standards including the *Common Core State Standards.*

Therefore, be it resolved that Virginia's *College and Career Ready Mathematics* and *English Performance Expectations* shall serve as the Commonwealth's college and career ready

CCRI College and Career Readiness Initiative

Joint Agreement on Virginia's College and Career Ready Mathematics and English Performance Expectations
Page 2

performance expectations for mathematics and reading, writing, and communicating, and that by this agreement, these performance expectations are recognized by the Commonwealth's education agencies, the Virginia Department of Education, the Virginia Community College System, and the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, for this purpose.

Patricia I. Wright — 2-11-11
Date

Dr. Patricia I. Wright
Superintendent of Public Instruction
Virginia Department of Education

2.16.11
Date

Dr. Glenn DuBois
Chancellor
Virginia Community College System

2/14/11
Date

Dr. Andrew B. Fogarty
Interim Director
State Council of Higher Education for Virginia

CCRI College and Career Readiness Initiative

Attachment 6 – State's Race to the Top Assessment Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) (if applicable)

Virginia is not a Race to the Top state. This attachment is not applicable for Virginia's ESEA flexibility application.

Attachment 7 – Evidence That The State Has Submitted High-Quality Assessments and Academic Achievement Standards to the Department for Peer Review, or a Timeline of When the State Will Submit Assessments and Academic Achievement Standards to the Department for Peer Review (if applicable)

Peer review documentation for the **new mathematics and reading assessments** will be submitted according to required deadlines once the timeline for the new peer review process is announced by USED.

Attachment 8 – Copy of the Average Statewide Proficiency Based on Assessments Administered in the 2010-2011 School Year in Reading/Language Arts and Mathematics for the "All Students" Group and All Subgroups (if applicable)

2010-2011 Statewide Average		
Subgroup	**Reading**	**Mathematics**
All Students	88	87
Economically Disadvantaged	80	78
Students with Disabilities	67	66
Limited English Proficient	79	82
Asian*	NA	NA
Black	80	77
Hispanic	84	83
White	92	90

* As described in Virginia's Consolidate State Accountability Workbook, results for the Asian subgroup will be available beginning with assessments administered in the 2011-2012 school year.

Attachment 9 – A Table of Reward, Priority, and Focus Schools

The number and list of schools originally identified as priority and focus schools in 2012-2013, based on the most recently available data, is provided in Section 2.E of this application. Reward, priority, and focus schools lists are updated annually and are available at:
http://www.doe.virginia.gov/federal_programs/esea/flexibility/index.shtml

Attachment 10 - Copy Of Guidelines State Has Already Developed And Adopted For Local Teacher And Principal Evaluation And Support Systems (if applicable)

Web links to the full versions of the guidelines adopted for teacher and principal evaluation and support systems are provided below:

Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers, Approved by the Virginia Board of Education on April 28, 2011:
http://www.doe.virginia.gov/teaching/regulations/2011_guidelines_uniform_performance_standards_evaluation_criteria.pdf

Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Principals, Approved by the Virginia Board of Education on February 23, 2012:
http://www.doe.virginia.gov/teaching/performance_evaluation/guidelines_ups_eval_criteria_principals.pdf

Attachment 11 – Evidence that the State has Adopted One or More Guidelines of Local Teacher and Principal Evaluation and Support Systems

Superintendent's Memo #136-11

COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education

May 13, 2011

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: Patricia I. Wright, Superintendent of Public Instruction

SUBJECT: Revised *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers* and *Virginia Standards for the Professional Practice of Teachers*

On April 28, 2011, the Board of Education approved the revised documents, *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers* and the *Virginia Standards for the Professional Practice of Teachers*. The guidelines and standards will become effective on July 1, 2012; however, school boards and divisions are authorized to implement them prior to July 1, 2012.

The Board of Education's action was based on recommendations from a Work Group on Teacher Evaluation established by the Virginia Department of Education. The Work Group included teachers, principals, superintendents, human resources representatives, a higher education representative, and representatives from professional organizations (Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals, Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals, Virginia Association of School Superintendents, Virginia Education Association, Virginia School Boards Association and the Virginia Parent Teacher Association), expert consultants (Dr. James Stronge, Heritage Professor of Educational Policy, Planning, and Leadership, The College of William and Mary; and Dr. Terry Dozier, Associate Professor, Teaching and Learning, and Director, Center for Teacher Leadership, Virginia Commonwealth University), and Department of Education personnel. The Department of Education is planning to establish a second work group in fall 2011 to review performance standards and evaluation criteria for principals. The guidelines for uniform performance standards and evaluation criteria for principals and superintendents that were approved on January 6, 2000, will continue to be effective until revisions are presented and approved by the Board of Education.

The Board of Education is required to establish performance standards and evaluation criteria for teachers, principals, and superintendents to serve as guidelines for school divisions to use in implementing educator evaluation systems. The *Code of Virginia* requires (1) that teacher evaluations be consistent with the **performance objectives** (standards) included in the Board of

Education's *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers, Administrators, and Superintendents* and (2) that school boards shall develop procedures in evaluating instructional personnel that address **student academic progress**.

The *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers* set forth seven performance standards for all Virginia teachers. Pursuant to state law, teacher evaluations must be consistent with the following performance standards (objectives) approved by the Board:

Performance Standard 1: Professional Knowledge
The teacher demonstrates an understanding of the curriculum, subject content, and the developmental needs of students by providing relevant learning experiences.

Performance Standard 2: Instructional Planning
The teacher plans using the Virginia Standards of Learning, the school's curriculum, effective strategies, resources, and data to meet the needs of all students.

Performance Standard 3: Instructional Delivery
The teacher effectively engages students in learning by using a variety of instructional strategies in order to meet individual learning needs.

Performance Standard 4: Assessment of and for Student Learning
The teacher systematically gathers, analyzes, and uses all relevant data to measure student academic progress, guide instructional content and delivery methods, and provide timely feedback to both students and parents throughout the school year.

Performance Standard 5: Learning Environment
The teacher uses resources, routines, and procedures to provide a respectful, positive, safe, student-centered environment that is conducive to learning.

Performance Standard 6: Professionalism
The teacher maintains a commitment to professional ethics, communicates effectively, and takes responsibility for and participates in professional growth that results in enhanced student learning.

Performance Standard 7: Student Academic Progress
The work of the teacher results in acceptable, measurable, and appropriate student academic progress.

The *Code of Virginia* requires that school boards' procedures for evaluating teachers and principals address student academic progress; how this requirement is met is the responsibility of local school boards. Though the recommended teacher evaluation model is not mandated, the Board's *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers* recommend that each teacher receive a summative evaluation rating, and that the rating be determined by weighting the first six standards equally at 10 percent each, and that the seventh standard, student academic progress, account for 40 percent of the summative evaluation. The

document provides guidance for incorporating multiple measures of student academic progress into teacher performance evaluations.

The *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers* provide school divisions with a model evaluation system, including sample forms and templates that may be implemented "as is" or used to refine existing local teacher evaluation systems. Properly implemented, the evaluation system provides school divisions with the information needed to support systems of differentiated compensations or performance-based pay.

The *Virginia Standards for the Professional Practice of Teachers* define what teachers should know and be able to do, and they establish a foundation upon which all aspects of teacher development from teacher education to induction and ongoing professional development can be aligned. The revised *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers* incorporate these teaching standards. The document serves as a resource for school divisions in the implementation of the Board of Education's performance standards and evaluation criteria for teachers and for colleges and universities in teacher preparation.

The revised documents are available on a new page on the Department of Education Web site and can be accessed at http://doe.virginia.gov/teaching/performance_evaluation/. The reference document, *The Research Base for the Uniform Performance Standards for Teachers*, also will be posted on this site. This site will be used to post training and support materials for the new evaluation model as they are developed.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Dr. James W. Lanham, director of teacher licensure and school leadership, via e-mail at James.Lanham@doe.virginia.gov or telephone at (804) 371-2471.

PIW/psp

c: School Division Human Resources and Licensure Contacts
Virginia College and University Deans and Directors of Education

Superintendent's Memo #056-12

COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education

February 24, 2012

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: Patricia I. Wright, Superintendent of Public Instruction

SUBJECT: Revised *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Principals*

On February 23, 2012, the Virginia Board of Education approved revised *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Principals*. The guidelines and standards become effective on July 1, 2013; however, school boards and divisions are authorized to implement them prior to July 1, 2013.

The Board's action was based on recommendations from a Work Group on Principal Evaluation established by the Virginia Department of Education. The Work Group included principals, teachers, superintendents, a human resources representative, higher education representatives, a parent representative, and representatives from professional organizations (Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals, Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals, Virginia Association of School Superintendents, Virginia Education Association, Virginia School Boards Association, and the Virginia Parent Teacher Association), an expert consultant (Dr. James Stronge, Heritage Professor of Educational Policy, Planning, and Leadership, The College of William and Mary), and Department of Education personnel.

The Board is required to establish performance standards and evaluation criteria for teachers, principals, and superintendents to serve as guidelines for school divisions to use in implementing educator evaluation systems. The *Code of Virginia* requires that (1) principal evaluations be consistent with the performance objectives (standards) set forth in the Board's *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers, Administrators, and Superintendents* and (2) school boards' procedures for evaluating principals address student academic progress.

The *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Principals* set forth seven performance standards for all Virginia principals. Pursuant to state law, principal evaluations must be consistent with the performance standards (objectives) approved by the Board:

Performance Standard 1: Instructional Leadership
The principal fosters the success of all students by facilitating the development, communication, implementation, and evaluation of a shared vision of teaching and learning that leads to student academic progress and school improvement.

Performance Standard 2: School Climate
The principal fosters the success of all students by developing, advocating, and sustaining an academically rigorous, positive, and safe school climate for all stakeholders.

Performance Standard 3: Human Resources Management
The principal fosters effective human resources management by assisting with selection and induction, and by supporting, evaluating, and retaining quality instructional and support personnel.

Performance Standard 4: Organizational Management
The principal fosters the success of all students by supporting, managing, and overseeing the school's organization, operation, and use of resources.

Performance Standard 5: Communication and Community Relations
The principal fosters the success of all students by communicating and collaborating effectively with stakeholders.

Performance Standard 6: Professionalism
The principal fosters the success of all students by demonstrating professional standards and ethics, engaging in continuous professional development, and contributing to the profession.

Performance Standard 7: Student Academic Progress
The principal's leadership results in acceptable, measurable student academic progress based on established standards.

The *Code of Virginia* requires that school boards' procedures for evaluating principals address student academic progress. The Board's *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Principals* calls for each principal to receive a summative evaluation rating and that the rating be determined by weighting the first six standards equally at 10 percent each, and that the seventh standard, student academic progress, account for 40 percent of the summative evaluation. The document provides guidance for incorporating multiple measures of student academic progress into principal performance evaluations.

The *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Principals* provide school divisions with a model evaluation system, including sample forms and templates that may be implemented "as is" or used to refine existing local principal evaluation systems. Properly implemented, the evaluation system provides school divisions with the information needed to support systems of differentiated compensations or performance-based pay.

The revised evaluation document is available on the Performance and Evaluation page on the Department of Education Web site. The reference document, *Research Synthesis of Virginia Principal Evaluation Competencies and Standards*, is also posted on this site. This site will also be used to post training and support materials for the new evaluation model as they are developed.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Dr. Mark R. Allan, director of teacher licensure and school leadership, at Mark.Allan@doe.virginia.gov or (804) 371-2471.

PIW/tc

c: School Division Human Resource and Licensure Contacts
Virginia College and University Deans, Directors, Vice-Presidents, and Provosts

Attachment 12 – Virginia's Student Growth Percentiles

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION INFO

DIVISION OF POLICY AND COMMUNICATIONS · P.O. BOX 2120, RICHMOND, VA 23218-2120

Student Growth Percentiles

In fall 2011, the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) will report growth percentiles in addition to scaled scores for students who participate in Standards of Learning (SOL) testing for reading and mathematics in grades 4-8 and Algebra I through grade 9. These student-level reports will be available to administrators through VDOE's secure SSWS web portal and to teachers as authorized locally.

What is a student growth percentile?
A growth percentile expresses how much progress a student has made in either reading or mathematics relative to the progress of students whose achievement was similar on previous assessments.

Student growth percentiles are calculated by identifying all students in the state whose previous SOL scaled scores in a subject are statistically similar and, then, comparing the achievement of these students on the next grade-level test. The achievement of each student relative to that of the other students in the group is expressed as a percentile.

Student growth percentiles range from 1 to 99, and represent the percent of students who had similar prior academic achievement (based on SOL tests) and earned lower scores on the most recent test in the content area. Higher numbers represent higher growth and lower numbers represent lower growth. For example, a student who earns a student growth percentile of 65 scored better than 65 percent of students who had similar prior achievement, while a classmate with a student growth percentile of 13 scored better than only 13 percent.

Let's examine the meaning of the hypothetical student growth percentiles of four elementary students who all achieved scaled scores of 313 on the 2010 grade-3 reading test.

Example Grade-3 Reading:
SOL Scores and Student Growth Percentiles

Name	2010 Grade-3 Reading	2011 Grade-4 Reading	Growth Percentile
Student A	313	307	15
Student B	313	358	48
Student C	313	387	66
Student D	313	445	91

In the chart above, Student D was the highest achieving of the group, and the only one to exceed the minimum scaled score for proficiency of 400. Student D also showed the most growth because he achieved at a higher level than 91 percent of students statewide with similar histories.

Student A was the lowest achieving of the four students on the grade-4 test. The growth percentile of 15 indicates that Student A achieved at a higher level than 15 percent of students statewide with similar score histories.

Student B, with a student growth percentile of 48, demonstrated close-to-typical growth in reading compared with students with similar score histories. About half of the students who performed similarly on past assessments experienced more growth and about half experienced less.

(more)

Now, let's compare the growth of four students who each earned a scaled score of 412 on the 2010 grade-3 mathematics test.

Example Grade-3 Mathematics:
SOL Scores and Student Growth Percentiles

Name	2010 Grade-3 Mathematics	2011 Grade-4 Mathematics	Growth Percentile
Student A	412	372	13
Student B	412	409	33
Student C	412	443	58
Student D	412	510	92

Student D earned a 510 on the fourth-grade test in 2011 and showed more growth in mathematics than 92 percent of similar students statewide. Student A showed the least growth relative to similar students.

Why is Virginia reporting student growth percentiles to teachers and administrators?
A student growth percentile complements a student's SOL scaled score and gives his or her teacher, parents and principal a more complete picture of achievement and progress. A high growth percentile is an indicator of effective instruction, regardless of a student's scaled score.

Analysis of student growth percentile data can help educators identify best practices, evaluate teacher effectiveness and plan data-driven professional development that meets the needs of educators and students. Student growth percentiles also can provide encouragement during parent-teacher conferences by quantifying progress towards higher levels of student achievement.

In addition, to receive certain federal funds under the federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, states are required to provide timely data on student growth to teachers in a manner that helps quantify the impact of individual teachers on student achievement.

Under the federal requirements, states are required to provide growth data to each assessed student's current and previous teacher. So, if a student is a fifth grader in the fall, his fifth-grade teacher and his fourth-grade teacher during 2010-2011 will receive student growth data.

Will teachers receive student growth percentile reports for all students?
VDOE will report student growth percentiles for students who participate in 2010-2011 SOL testing for reading and mathematics in grades 4-8 and Algebra I through grade 9.

Reporting a student growth percentile requires SOL scaled scores for at least two years. VDOE will not report student growth percentiles for:

- Students who did not attend a Virginia public school in 2010 and/or did not take a SOL reading and/or mathematics test in 2010; and
- Students who took an alternate or alternative assessment in reading and/or mathematics in 2010 or 2011.

Additionally, currently available data will not permit VDOE to report student growth percentiles for students who achieved perfect or near-perfect SOL scaled scores during 2009-2010 and 2010-2011. The introduction of enhanced SOL assessments in mathematics during 2011-2012 and reading in 2012-2013 (based on more rigorous content standards in both subjects) will allow VDOE to report growth percentiles for more of the commonwealth's highest-performing students.

###

Additional information about Virginia's student growth percentiles is available at the following link: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/scoring/student_growth_percentiles/index.shtml.

Attachment 13 –Report Cards

Report card for Virginia's schools are available at: https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/reportcard/.

Attachment 14 – Virginia's Former NCLB Title I Reading and Mathematics Annual Measurable Objectives

In January 2011, the Virginia Board of Education adopted the **reading and mathematics annual measurable objectives (AMOs)**, shown in the table below, to comply with the requirements in Section 1111 of NCLB.

Former Title I Reading and Mathematics AMOs				
Content Area	**2010-2011**	**2011-2012**	**2012-2013**	**2013-2014**
Reading	86	91	96	100
Mathematics	85	90	95	100

The targets shown in the table above are for the assessment cycle in the year identified, for accountability results applied to the next school year.

Attachment 15 – Virginia Index of Performance

The VIP program uses a weighted methodology to calculate a VIP achievement index based on assessment results in each content area (English, mathematics, science, and history/social science), and provides opportunities for schools and school divisions to apply additional or "bonus" points to the content area indices by meeting additional VIP indicators.

Schools and divisions may earn additional VIP bonus points based on criteria established by the Board. When earned, they can be added to a school or division's VIP index points in one or more content areas to meet award criteria. The chart below shows eligibility criteria (criteria A and C), the base points needed to earn an award (Criteria C), and the potential bonus points that may be added to the base index points to enable schools to earn a VIP award (Criteria D-W).

Virginia Index of Performance
Criteria, Indicators, and Award Requirements
Revised October 24, 2013

Criteria	Board of Education Distinguished Achievement Award	Board of Education Excellence Award	Governor's Award for Educational Excellence
A. Eligibility – Schools must be *Fully Accredited* and not be required to write a plan for improvement under the *ESEA Flexibility Waiver*; school divisions must have made federal pass rate targets and graduation targets	All Schools and School Divisions	All Schools and School Divisions	All Schools and School Divisions
B. Number of index points on the weighted VIP index, using the established weightings in each of the following content areas: (a) English (combined reading and writing); (b) mathematics*; (c) science*; and (d) history and social science. Schools with no grades in which tests are administered earn index points based on test data used to make federal and state accountability determinations. All non-test criteria, such as bonus points for foreign language instructional services and the Governor's Nutrition and Physical Activity Scorecard Program, will be determined based on the individual school's data.	At least 75 in each content area, including additional index points where applicable	At least 80 in each content area, including additional index points where applicable	At least 80 in each content area
C. Schools and school divisions should have no significant testing irregularities were verified during the applicable school year.	All Schools and School Divisions	All Schools and School Divisions	All Schools and School Divisions
D. Students passing the Grade 3 state reading assessment (percent passing increases annually, state goal 95%)	3VIP Bonus Points	3VIP Bonus Points	At least 95%
E. Students passing the Grade 5 state reading and writing assessments (percent passing increases annually,	1 VIP Bonus Point	1VIP Bonus Point	Increases annually or is at least 95%

Criteria	Board of Education Distinguished Achievement Award	Board of Education Excellence Award	Governor's Award for Educational Excellence
state goal 95%)			
F. School offers foreign language instruction in the elementary grades	1 VIP Bonus Point	1VIP Bonus Point	Yes
For Middle Schools			
G. Students enrolled in Algebra I by Grade 8* (percent participating increases annually, state goal 50%)	2VIP Bonus Points	2 VIP Bonus Points	At least 50%
H. Students passing the Grade 8 state reading and writing assessments (percent passing increases annually, state goal 95%)	1VIP Bonus Point	1VIP Bonus Point	Increases annually or is at least 95%
For High Schools			
I. High school students enrolled in one or more AP, IB, or dual enrollment courses (percent increases annually, state goal 30%)	1VIP Bonus Point	1VIP Bonus Point	State goal met
J. High school students earning career and technical industry certifications, state licenses, or successful national occupational assessment credentials (number or percent increases annually) OR Students who participate in advanced coursework in the STEM areas, including Advanced Placement courses, International Baccalaureate courses, and dual enrollment courses* (Percent increases annually).	1VIP Bonus Point	1 VIP Bonus Point	Annual increase in number or percent of students earning CTE credentials or increase in percentage of students in advanced STEM courses
K. Students who graduate high school in four, five, or six years with a standard or advanced studies diploma (based on the federal graduation indicator; percent increases annually, state goal 85%)	Annual increase or state goal met	State goal met	State goal met
L. High school graduates earning an Advanced Studies Diploma out of the total number of Board of Education-approved diplomas awarded (percent increases annually, state goal 60%)	1VIP Bonus Point	1VIP Bonus Point	State goal met
M. Students in each subgroup who graduate from high school with a Standard or Advanced Studies Diploma (percent increases annually, state goal 85%)	1VIP Bonus Point	1VIP Bonus Point	Annual increase or state goal met
N. Students who graduate from high school having taken Calculus, Chemistry, and Physics* (percent increases annually)	1VIP Bonus Point	1VIP Bonus Point	Annual increase

Criteria	Board of Education Distinguished Achievement Award	Board of Education Excellence Award	Governor's Award for Educational Excellence
O. Students who graduate from high school having earned advanced proficient scores on each of the state end-of-course assessments in English reading, English writing, and Algebra II* (percent increases annually)	1VIP Bonus Point	1VIP Bonus Point	Annual increase
P. Students who drop out of high school (10% or less, based on the four-year dropout rate)	10% or less	10% or less	10% or less
Q. Increase the number of high school students who earn the one-year Uniform Certificate of General Studies or an associate's degree from a community college in the Commonwealth concurrent with a high school diploma	1VIP Bonus Point	1VIP Bonus Point	Annual increase
For all Schools and Divisions			
R. Increase participation in the Governor's Nutrition and Physical Activity Scorecard Awards program (schools must earn an award; divisions increase program participation)	1VIP Bonus Point	1VIP Bonus Point	1VIP Bonus Point
S. Increase the percentage of students in each subgroup earning higher levels of proficiency on state assessments (increase required for subgroups used to make federal accountability determinations in mathematics and reading)	1VIP Bonus Point	1VIP Bonus Point	1VIP Bonus Point
For School Divisions Only			
T. If the division participates in the Virginia Preschool Initiative for at-risk four-year-olds.	1VIP Bonus Point	1VIP Bonus Point	All eligible schools participate
U. Students in the division enroll in Board of Education-approved Governor's STEM Academies or a Regional Academic Year Governor's School with a focus on STEM*	1VIP Bonus Point	1VIP Bonus Point	Students enrolled
V. Schools offer foreign language instruction in the elementary grades (number increases annually, state goal 100%)	1VIP Bonus Point	1VIP Bonus Point	Annual increase or state goal met
W. Increase the percentage of schools that are *Fully Accredited* and meeting all federal annual measurable objectives (AMOs)	1VIP Bonus Point	1VIP Bonus Point	1VIP Bonus Point

* Indicates STEM components of the VIP program

Attachment 16: Measures of Student Academic Progress

Guidance for Incorporating Multiple Measures of Student Academic Progress into Teacher Performance Evaluations

Teachers	Application of Student Growth Percentiles	Other Student Academic Progress Measures
Teachers of reading and mathematics for whom student growth percentiles are available	20 percent of the total evaluation based on median growth percentile when: • data from at least 40 students are available, possibly from multiple years; • data from students are representative of students taught, and • data from at least two years are available; three years should be reviewed whenever possible.	20 percent of the total evaluation based on other measures of student academic progress: • quantitative measures already available in the school that are validated and provide measures of growth (as opposed to absolute achievement) should be given priority. • student goal setting should incorporate data from valid achievement measures whenever possible (e.g., teachers of Advanced Placement courses could establish a goal of 85 percent of students earning a score of 3 or better on the Advanced Placement exam).
Teachers who support instruction in reading and mathematics for whom student growth percentiles are available	When aligned to individual or schoolwide goals, no more than 20 percent of the total evaluation could be based on median growth percentiles at the appropriate level of aggregation, (a specific group of students, grade-level, or school-level) when data from at least 40 students are available; data are representative of students taught; are available for at least two years; and include: • Decisions about the application of student growth percentiles for support teachers must be made locally. • Depending on schoolwide goals, it is possible that all instructional personnel in a school are considered support teachers.	20 or 40 percent of the total evaluation based on measures of student academic progress other than the SGP, depending on the application of student growth percentiles: • quantitative measures already available in the school that are validated and provide valid measures of student academic growth (as opposed to absolute achievement) should be given priority in evaluation. • student goal setting or other measures should incorporate data from validated achievement measures whenever possible (e.g., teachers of Advanced Placement courses could establish a goal of 85 percent of students earning a score of 3 or better on the Advanced

Teachers	Application of Student Growth Percentiles	Other Student Academic Progress Measures
		Placement exam). • To the extent practicable, teachers should have at least two valid measures of student academic progress included in the evaluation.
Teachers who have no direct or indirect role in teaching reading or mathematics in grades where SGPs are available	Not applicable	40 percent of the total evaluation based on measures of student academic progress other than the SGP: • quantitative measures already available in the school that are validated and provide valid measures of growth (as opposed to absolute achievement) should be given priority in evaluation. • student goal setting or other measures should incorporate data from validated achievement measures whenever possible (e.g., teachers of Advanced Placement courses could establish a goal of 85 percent of students earning a score of 3 or better on the Advanced Placement exam). • To the extent practicable, teachers should have at least two valid measures of student academic progress included in the evaluation.

Guidance for Incorporating Multiple Measures of Student Academic Progress into Principal Performance Evaluations

Principal	Application of Student Growth Percentiles	Other Measures of Student Growth and Achievement
Elementary School and Middle School	20 percent of the total evaluation based on student growth percentiles*	20 percent of the total evaluation based on other measures of student academic progress. • Quantitative measures already available in the school that are validated and provide measures of growth (as opposed to absolute achievement) should be given priority. • Goal setting should incorporate data from valid achievement measures (e.g., SOL assessment results, state benchmarks) that focus on school improvement whenever possible.
High School	Not applicable	40 percent of the total evaluation based on measures of student academic progress other than the SGP. • Quantitative measures already available in the school that are validated and provide measures of growth (as opposed to absolute achievement) should be given priority. However, school improvement in absolute achievement can be used as an indicator for overall student academic progress. • Goal setting should incorporate data from valid achievement measures (e.g., SOL assessment results, state benchmarks) that focus on school improvement whenever possible.

***** When there are not sufficient SGPs to be representative of students in the school, it may be appropriate to use SGPs as one component of the student academic progress standard but at less than 20 percent of the full evaluation, incorporating other validated quantitative measures of growth.

Attachment 17 - Standards of Accreditation – Accountability and Support

The *Code of Virginia* requires that the Virginia Board of Education promulgate regulations establishing standards for accreditation for all Virginia schools. The *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia* (SOA) govern public schools operated by local school boards providing instruction to students as defined in 8 VAC 20-131-5.

The SOA are designed to ensure that an effective educational program is established and maintained in Virginia's public schools. Some of the purposes of the SOA are to:

- 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; and
- Establish a means of determining the effectiveness of schools.

Each school is accredited based primarily on achievement of criteria as specified below:

1. The percentage of students passing the Virginia assessment program tests in the four core academic areas [English, mathematics, science, and history and social science] administered in the school, with the accreditation rating calculated on a trailing three-year average that includes the current year scores and the scores from the two most recent years in each applicable academic area, or on the current year's scores, whichever is higher.
2. The percentage of students graduating from or completing high school based on a graduation and completion index prescribed by the Board of Education. The accreditation rating of any school with a twelfth grade is determined based on achievement of required *SOL* pass rates and percentage points on the Board's graduation and completion index. School accreditation is determined by the school's current year index points or a trailing three-year average of index points that includes the current year and the two most recent years, whichever is higher. The Board of Education's graduation and completion index [GCI] includes weighted points for diploma graduates (100 points), GED recipients (75 points), students not graduating but still in school (70 points), and students earning certificates of program completion (25 points). The Board of Education's graduation and completion index accounts for all students in the graduating class's ninth-grade cohort, plus students transferring in, minus students transferring out and deceased students. Those students who are not included in one of the preceding categories are also included in the index.

Accreditation ratings awarded in an academic year are based upon Virginia assessment program scores from the academic year immediately prior to the year to which the accreditation rating applies. Accreditation ratings are defined as follows:

- ***Fully Accredited***: A school will be rated *Fully Accredited* when its eligible students meet the SOA pass rates.
- ***Accredited with Warning***: A school will be rated *Accredited with Warning* in specific academic areas and/or in achievement of the minimum threshold for the graduation and completion index if it has failed to achieve *Fully Accredited* status. A school may remain in the *Accredited with Warning* status for no more than three consecutive years.

- ***Accreditation Denied***: A school will be rated *Accreditation Denied* if it fails to meet the requirements to be rated *Fully Accredited* or *Provisionally Accredited – Graduation Rate*, for the preceding three consecutive years or for three consecutive years anytime thereafter.
- ***Conditionally Accredited***: New schools that are comprised of students from one or more existing schools in the division will be awarded a *Conditionally Accredited – New* status for one year pending an evaluation of the school's eligible students' performance on *SOL* tests or additional tests approved by the Board of Education to be rated *Fully Accredited*. A *Conditionally Accredited – Reconstituted* rating may be awarded to a school that is being reconstituted in accordance with the provisions of 8 VAC 20-131-340 upon approval by the Board of Education. A school awarded this rating under those circumstances will revert to a status of *Accreditation Denied* if it fails to meet the requirements to be rated *Fully Accredited* by the end of the agreed upon term or if it fails to have its annual application for such rating renewed.
- ***Provisionally Accredited – Graduation Rate***: A school will be rated *Provisionally Accredited – Graduation Rate* when its eligible students meet assessment pass rates to be rated *Fully Accredited* but fail to achieve a minimum of 85 percentage index points on the Board of Education's graduation and completion index, but achieve the following minimum benchmarks for each year:

Graduation and Completion Index Benchmarks for Provisionally Accredited Ratings		
Academic Year	**Accreditation Year**	**Index Percentage Points**
2010-2011	2011-2012	80
2011-2012	2012-2013	81
2012-2013	2013-2014	82
2013-2014	2014-2015	83
2014-2015	2015-2016	84

The last year in which the *Provisionally Accredited – Graduation Rate* rating will be awarded is the 2015-2016 accreditation year, based on tests administered in the 2014-2015 academic year, after which all schools with a graduating class will be expected to meet a GCI of 85.

It should be noted that the content area in which the school misses the accreditation benchmark does not have to be the same from year to year in order for the school to enter into *Accreditation Denied* status after the third year of warning.

Attachment 18 – Teacher and Principal Evaluation − Professional Development and Technical Assistance

Teacher and Principal Evaluation − Professional Development and Technical Assistance
Summer 2012 – Fall 2013

Teacher Evaluation

Summer 2012
Teacher Evaluation Institutes: Nine Institutes were held in different locations throughout the Commonwealth. Institutes were designed to provide support to teachers and building administrators in the implementation of the *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers*. Training materials were developed for use in a train-the-trainer model so that school divisions could build capacity for providing professional development to all teachers in their divisions.

Fall 2012
Teacher Evaluation Institutes: Three Institutes were held in different locations. Institutes were designed to provide support to teachers and building administrators in the implementation of the *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers* with specific attention given to Standard 7 - Academic Progress. The Fall Institutes were designed for teachers, assistant principals, and principals who did not attend a 2012 Teacher Evaluation Summer Institute.

Spring 2013
Teacher Evaluation Training Modules: A series of video modules were created to support teachers, principals, and central office personnel as they implement Virginia's model teacher evaluation system.

Teacher Evaluation Institute: The Teacher Evaluation Institute: Student Achievement Goal Setting – Practical Guidance and Practice was offered. This Institute was designed to provide participants with practical guidance in writing and evaluating student achievement goals.

Summer 2013
Teacher Evaluation Institutes: The Teacher Evaluation Institute: Student Achievement Goal Setting – Practical Guidance and Practice was offered as a repeat session in order for additional participants to attend. In addition, the Teacher Evaluation Institute: Assessment Literacy for Student Achievement Goal Setting was provided. This Institute was designed to support and strengthen teachers' and administrators' knowledge of assessments used to determine student academic progress as a part of teacher evaluation.

Fall 2013
Teacher Evaluation Institute: The Teacher Evaluation Institute: Assessment Literacy for Student Achievement Goal Setting was offered as a repeat session in order for additional participants to attend.

Teacher Evaluation Training Materials: Training materials from the summer and fall Institutes were made available on the Virginia Department of Education's Web site.

Principal Evaluation

Summer 2012
85th Annual Virginia Middle and High School Principals Conference and Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals Annual Conference : Professional development by Virginia Department of Education staff on Virginia's model principal evaluation system was provided at each of these events.

September 2012 – June 2013
Principal Evaluation Pilot Training for School Improvement Grant Schools: Schools receiving 1003(g) School Improvement (SIG) funds were required to pilot Virginia's principal evaluation system and were provided with technical assistance and professional development.

February 2013
Principal Evaluation Training: The Virginia Department of Education collaborated with the Virginia Association of School Superintendents to provide two workshops for superintendents and principals in the implementation of the Board of Education's recommended model principal evaluation system.

Summer 2013
86th Annual Virginia Middle and High School Principals Conference and Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals Annual Conference: Professional development by Virginia Department of Education staff on Virginia's model principal evaluation system was provided at each of these events.

Principal Evaluation Institute: This Institute was designed to provide targeted technical assistance and professional development to school divisions in the implementation of the Board of Education's model principal evaluation system.

Principal Evaluation Training Materials: Training materials from the summer Institute was made available on the Virginia Department of Education's Web site.

Fall 2013
Principal Evaluation Institute: This Institute was offered as a repeat session in order for additional participants to attend.

Attachment 19 - Technical Assistance Plan for the Implementation of Virginia's Standards of Learning in English, Mathematics, Science, and History and Social Science (Revised)

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR 2010 ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARDS OF LEARNING

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS			2013-2014				
Topic	**Event/Resource/ Location**	**Commu-nication**	**Resources for School Divisions**	**Resources for Teachers & Principals**			**Targeted Completion Date/Lead Staff**
				Content Knowledge	**Teaching Skills**	**Assessing Students**	
Online calendar containing professional development opportunities	Posted to the VDOE Web site	X	X	X	X	X	Ongoing/ Tracy Robertson, Tom Santangelo, Jackie Kelley
Monthly postings by VDOE staff providing updates and opportunities of particular interest to teachers and principals	Posted on the VDOE Web site	X	X	X	X	X	Ongoing/ Tracy Robertson, Tom Santangelo, Jackie Kelley
English capstone course instructional modules	Posted to VDOE Web site		X		X	X	May 30, 2013 /Tracy Robertson
In-depth data review of 2011-2013 English Language Arts assessment data (reporting categories, SPBQ, grade level/school/division performance, etc.) to determine additional technical assistance needs for 2013-2014							October 31, 2013/ Tracy Robertson, Tom Santangelo, Jackie Kelley, Christine Harris, Linda Wallinger
English Language Arts SOL Institutes to focus on vocabulary/nonfiction reading, persuasive writing, and using primary sources in the full integration of all English standards at all grade levels.	Four locations around the state	X	X	X	X	X	October 31, 2013/Tracy Robertson, Tom Santangelo, Jackie Kelley
Submit proposal for additional professional development specific to End-of-Course English instruction and assessment							October 31/Tracy Robertson
Submit timeline/proposal for: • Additional or updated tangible products to support English Language Arts instruction in areas of identified need in both reading and writing							November 15, 2012/ Tracy Robertson, Tom Santangelo, Jackie Kelley

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS				2013-2014			
Topic	Event/Resource/ Location	Commu-nication	Resources for School Divisions	Resources for Teachers & Principals			Targeted Completion Date/Lead Staff
				Content Knowledge	Teaching Skills	Assessing Students	
Statewide professional development to review Standards of Learning, instructional strategies, and the accompanying assessments	Presentations at conferences and regional meetings, such as VASSP, VAESP, Vision to Practice, VSRA, VATE, VMSA, VELAS, Content Teaching Academies	X	X	X	X	X	Various – Included in professional development calendar to be posted on Web site

Return to Navigation Bar

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS				2012-2013			
Topic	Event/Resource/ Location	Commu-nication	Resources for School Divisions	Resources for Teachers & Principals			Targeted Completion Date/Lead Staff
				Content Knowledge	Teaching Skills	Assessing Students	
Online calendar containing professional development opportunities	Posted to the VDOE Web site	X	X	X	X	X	June 30, 2012/Tracy Robertson, Tom Santangelo, Jackie Kelley COMPLETED
Voice-over video/webinar describing how Virginia's college- and career-ready English Language Arts Standards of Learning are different from previous standards and what this means for English Language Arts instruction and assessment	Posted on the VDOE Web site	X	X	X	X	X	June 30, 2012/Tracy Robertson, Tom Santangelo, Jackie Kelley COMPLETED
Voice-over video/webinar describing the VDOE's English Language Arts resources and how they might be used effectively	Posted on the VDOE Web site	X	X	X	X	X	June 30, 2012/Tracy Robertson, Tom Santangelo, Jackie Kelley COMPLETED
Monthly postings by VDOE staff providing updates and opportunities of particular interest to teachers and principals	Posted on the VDOE Web site	X	X	X	X	X	Monthly beginning August 2012/Tracy Robertson, Tom Santangelo, Jackie Kelley COMPLETED

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS			2012-2013				
Topic	Event/Resource/ Location	Commu-nication	Resources for School Divisions	Resources for Teachers & Principals			Targeted Completion Date/Lead Staff
				Content Knowledge	Teaching Skills	Assessing Students	
English Language Arts SOL Institutes to review changes in the Standards of Learning and the accompanying assessments; focus on nonfiction reading at all grades, reading analysis, composing online, writing persuasively, integrating research and media literacy, and developing vocabulary	Eight locations around the state	X	X	X	X	X	July –August 2012/Tracy Robertson, Tom Santangelo, Jackie Kelley COMPLETED
Statewide professional development to review changes in the Standards of Learning and the accompanying assessments	Presentations at conferences and regional meetings, such as VASSP, VAESP, Vision to Practice, IRA, VATE, VMSA	X	X	X			Various – Included in professional development calendar to be posted on Web site COMPLETED
English Language Arts Enhanced Scope & Sequence	Posted in PDF format on the VDOE Web site		X	X	X	X	August 31, 2012/Tracy Robertson, Tom Santangelo, Jackie Kelley COMPLETED
Voice-over video/webinar explaining the concept of "rigor" in the Englsh Language Arts Standards of Learning and their accompanying assessments	Posted on the VDOE Web site	X	X	X	X	X	September 15, 2012/ Tracy Robertson, Tom Santangelo, Jackie Kelley COMPLETED
Voice-over video/webinar explaining how the English Language Arts Standards of Learning content and skills are assessed on Virginia's next-generation assessments	Posted on the VDOE Web site	X	X		X	X	September 15, 2012/ Tracy Robertson, Tom Santangelo, Jackie Kelley COMPLETED
In-depth data review of 2011-2012 English Language Arts assessment data (reporting categories, SPBQ, grade level/school/division performance, etc.) to determine additional technical assistance needs for 2012-2013							October 15, 2012/ Tracy Robertson, Tom Santangelo, Jackie Kelley, Roberta Schlicher, Linda Wallinger ONGOING
Resources from 2012 English SOL Institutes	Posted on the VDOE Web site		X	X	X	X	October 31, 2012/Tracy Robertson, Tom Santangelo, Jackie Kelley COMPLETED

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS			2012-2013				
Topic	**Event/Resource/ Location**	**Commu-nication**	**Resources for School Divisions**	**Resources for Teachers & Principals**			**Targeted Completion Date/Lead Staff**
				Content Knowledge	**Teaching Skills**	**Assessing Students**	
Submit timeline/proposal for: • Realignment of curricular documents to the 2010 English Language Arts SOL and • Additional or updated tangible products to support English Language Arts instruction in areas of identified need							November 15, 2012/ Tracy Robertson, Tom Santangelo, Jackie Kelley ONGOING
English Language Arts Enhanced Scope & Sequence	Posted in searchable format on the VDOE Web site		X	X	X	X	November 30, 2012/Tracy Robertson, Tom Santangelo, Jackie Kelley COMPLETED
Update existing Web site for resource references, links, ease of navigation, clarity, completeness, etc.			X	X	X	X	December 15, 2012/Tracy Robertson, Tom Santangelo, Jackie Kelley ONGOING
English capstone course instructional modules	Posted to VDOE Web site		X		X	X	December 31, 2012/Tracy Robertson COMPLETED
Review data from first semester (2012-2013) new End-of-Course English assessments and assess success of fall 2012-2013 VDOE-provided technical assistance to develop focus areas for spring and summer of 2012 and the 2013-2014 school year							January 31, 2013/Tracy Robertson, Tom Santangelo, Jackie Kelley, Roberta Schlicher, Linda Wallinger ONGOING
Submit proposal for additional professional development specific to End-of-Course English instruction and assessment							February 15, 2013/ Tracy Robertson, Tom Santangelo, Jackie Kelley ONGOING
Early Intervention Reading Initiative (EIRI) - State-funded initiative to provide early reading intervention services to students in kindergarten through the third grade who demonstrate reading deficiencies	VDOE Web site - http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/english/elementary/reading/early_intervention_reading.shtml		X			X	Ongoing state initiative; funding expanded to provide services to 100% of all students in grades K – 3 who demonstrate reading deficiencies

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS			2012-2013				
Topic	Event/Resource/ Location	Commu-nication	Resources for School Divisions	Resources for Teachers & Principals			Targeted Completion Date/Lead Staff
				Content Knowledge	Teaching Skills	Assessing Students	
Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) Instrument and accompanying resources - State-funded screening, diagnostic, and progress monitoring tool to measure critical components of literacy	Linked from the VDOE Web site - http://pals.virginia.edu/		X	X	X	X	Ongoing state initiative

Return to Navigation Bar

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS			2011-2012				
Topic	Event/Resource/ Location	Commu-nication	Resources for School Divisions	Resources for Teachers & Principals			Targeted Completion Date/Lead Staff
				Content Knowledge	Teaching Skills	Assessing Students	
Statewide professional development to review changes in the Standards of Learning and the accompanying assessments, particularly the assessment of writing	Live and archived webinars announced by Supts Memo Presentations at conferences and regional meetings, such as VASSP, VAESP, Vision to Practice, VSRA, VATE, VMSA	X	X	X		X	ONGOING
Online Writing Resources Web site and online webinar sessions	Posted to the VDOE Web site - http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/sol/standards_docs/english/2010/online_writing/index.shtml		X	X	X	X	COMPLETED, WITH ONGOING UPDATES
Literacy Web page – provides literacy resources to assist families and educators	Posted to the VDOE Web site - http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/english/literacy/index.shtml		X	X	X		COMPLETED, WITH ONGOING UPDATES

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS				2011-2012			
Topic	Event/Resource/ Location	Commu-nication	Resources for School Divisions	Resources for Teachers & Principals			Targeted Completion Date/Lead Staff
				Content Knowledge	Teaching Skills	Assessing Students	
State Board of Education approval of English Language Arts textbooks	Posted to the VDOE Web site - http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/textbooks/english/index.shtml		X	X	X		COMPLETED
Early Intervention Reading Initiative (EIRI) - State-funded initiative to provide early reading intervention services to students in kindergarten through the third grade who demonstrate reading deficiencies	VDOE Web site - http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/english/elementary/reading/early_intervention_reading.shtml		X			X	ONGOING STATE INITIATIVE
Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) Instrument and accompanying resources - State-funded screening, diagnostic, and progress monitoring tool to measure critical components of literacy	Linked from the VDOE Web site - http://pals.virginia.edu/		X	X	X	X	ONGOING STATE INITIATIVE
Five DOE-funded PALS/EIRI training sessions conducted by the University of Virginia PALS office	In conjunction with the Virginia State Reading Association Conference			X	X	X	COMPLETED MARCH 15-17, 2012
English learning progressions by grade in reading, writing, grammar, and research	Posted to the VDOE Web site - http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/english/literacy/index.shtml		X		X	X	COMPLETED
Development of a "catalog" of DOE instructional resources posted to the VDOE Web site	Posted to VDOE Web site; available for distribution as needed	X	X	X	X	X	MAY 31, 2012/ Tracy Robertson, Tom Santangelo, Jackie Kelley, Roberta Schlicher

Return to Navigation Bar

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS				PRIOR TO 2011-2012			
Topic	**Event/Resource/ Location**	**Commu-nication**	**Resources for School Divisions**	**Resources for Teachers & Principals**			**Targeted Completion Date/Lead Staff**
				Content Knowledge	**Teaching Skills**	**Assessing Students**	
Virginia 2010 English Language Arts Standards of Learning, Curriculum Frameworks, Test Blueprints, Practice Test Questions	Written Documents posted to the VDOE Web site - http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/sol/standards_docs/english/index.shtml & http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/sol/standards_docs/english/review.shtml	X	X	X	X	X	COMPLETED
Elementary Reading and Language Arts Instructional Resources, to include: • Instructional videos on early literacy, reading comprehension, and vocabulary • Assessment & planning instruments for effective elementary reading programs and professional development • Virginia Animals and Their Habitats - a cross-curricular second-grade unit that addresses SOL in science, mathematics, English, and history and social science • Virginia Reads parent brochure to suggest ways to assist their children with early literacy and K-5 English • K-3 English Achievement Record Sample	Videos and written documents posted to the VDOE Web site - http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/english/index.shtml	X	X	X	X	X	COMPLETED, WITH ONGOING UPDATES
Early Intervention Reading Initiative (EIRI) - State-funded initiative to provide early reading intervention services to students in kindergarten through the third grade who demonstrate reading deficiencies	VDOE Web site - http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/english/elementary/reading/early_intervention_reading.shtml		X			X	ONGOING STATE INITIATIVE

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS				PRIOR TO 2011-2012			
Topic	**Event/Resource/ Location**	**Commu-nication**	**Resources for School Divisions**	**Resources for Teachers & Principals**			**Targeted Completion Date/Lead Staff**
				Content Knowledge	**Teaching Skills**	**Assessing Students**	
Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) Instrument and accompanying resources - State-funded screening, diagnostic, and progress monitoring tool to measure critical components of literacy	Linked from the VDOE Web site - http://pals.virginia.edu/		X	X	X	X	ONGOING STATE INITIATIVE
Middle School English and Language Arts Instructional Resources, to include: • Middle school reading and writing modules • Reading comprehension instructional videos on creating active readers • Vocabulary instructional videos • WordsAlive vocabulary acquisition module	Videos and written documents posted to the VDOE Web site - http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/english/index.shtml		X		X	X	COMPLETED, WITH ONGOING UPDATES
High School English and Language Arts Instructional Resources, to include: • Project Graduation reading and writing modules	Documents posted to the VDOE Web site - http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/english/index.shtml		X		X	X	COMPLETED, WITH ONGOING UPDATES
English College- and Career-Ready Performance Expectations and Capstone Course Information	Posted to the VDOE Web site - http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/college_career_readiness/index.shtml		X	X	X	X	COMPLETED, WITH ONGOING UPDATES
Statewide professional development to review changes in the Standards of Learning and the accompanying assessments, particularly the assessment of writing	Presentations at conferences and regional meetings, such as VASSP, VAESP, Vision to Practice, VSRA, VATE, VMSA	X	X	X	X	X	ONGOING
English Language Arts Assessment Resources, to include: • Writing Practice Tool • Writing practice items and guides • Test blueprints • Released Standards of Learning test items	Resources posted to the VDOE Web site - http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/english/resources.shtml		X			X	COMPLETED, WITH ONGOING UPDATES

Return to Navigation Bar

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR 2009 MATHEMATICS STANDARDS OF LEARNING

MATHEMATICS				2013-2014			
Topic	Event/Resource/ Location	Commu-nication	Resources for School Divisions	Resources for Teachers & Principals			Targeted Completion Date/Lead Staff
				Content Knowledge	Teaching Skills	Assessing Students	
Online calendar containing professional development opportunities	Posted to the VDOE Web site	X	X	X	X	X	Ongoing/ Michael Bolling, Deborah Wickham & Christa Southall
Monthly postings by VDOE staff providing updates and opportunities of particular interest to teachers and principals	Posted on the VDOE Web site	X	X	X	X	X	Ongoing/ Michael Bolling, Deborah Wickham & Christa Southall
Mathematics Standards of Learning Institutes – Focus on instruction and assessment that promotes problem solving and the process goals.	Multiple locations around the state Resources to be posted to the VDOE Web site	X	X	X	X	X	October 2013/ Michael Bolling, Deborah Wickham & Christa Southall
Statewide professional development on implementation of the 2009 SOL, instruction, and assessment; focus on instruction and assessment that promotes problem solving and the process goals.	Presentations at conferences and regional meetings, such as VASSP, VAESP, VCMS, VACMS, Vision to Practice, VCTM, and various regional trainings as requested	X	X	X	X	X	Various – Included in professional development calendar to be posted on Web site
Resources from 2013 Mathematics SOL Institutes	Posted to the VDOE Web site		X	X	X	X	November 30, 2013/ Michael Bolling, Deborah Wickham & Christa Southall
Publish FAQ document for the field	Posted to the VDOE Web site		X	X	X	X	September 30, 2013/ Michael Bolling, Deborah Wickham & Christa Southall
Mathematics Vocabulary Word Wall Cards: Geometry and Algebra	Posted to the VDOE Web site	X	X	X	X	X	December 30, 2013 Michael Bolling, Deborah Wickham & Christa Southall
Instructional resources for teachers on mathematics and science cross-curricular teaching in the elementary grades	To be posted to the VDOE Web site		X	X	X	X	June 30, 2014/ Deborah Wickham, Barb Young, Michael Bolling, Eric Rhoades

MATHEMATICS				2013-2014			
Topic	Event/Resource/ Location	Commu-nication	Resources for School Divisions	Resources for Teachers & Principals			Targeted Completion Date/Lead Staff
				Content Knowledge	Teaching Skills	Assessing Students	
Mathematics and Science Partnership New and Continuation Grants to consortia serving school divisions, with a focus on mathematics instruction in Virginia (removed info on # served)	Will be posted on the VDOE Web site		X	X	X	X	Ongoing
Algebra Readiness Initiative - State-funded initiative to provide mathematics intervention services to students in grades 6 - 9 who are at risk of failing the Algebra I end-of-course test as demonstrated, including: • Training videos • Curriculum Companion • Workshop manual	VDOE Web site - http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/mathematics/middle/algebra_readiness/index.shtml		X		X	X	Ongoing state initiative
Work with the Office of School Improvement to provide technical assistance			X	X	X	X	Ongoing
Principals Partnering Institutes – provide monetary support to the Virginia Mathematics and Science Coalition to offer workshops focused on improving mathematics leadership (3 institutes, 30 principals each)	www.vctm.org (hosting registration)			X	X	X	July 2013 – October 2013

Return to Navigation Bar

Mathematics				2012-2013			
Topic	Event/Resource/ Location	Commu-nication	Resources for School Divisions	Resources for Teachers & Principals			Targeted Completion Date/Lead Staff
				Content Knowledge	Teaching Skills	Assessing Students	
Online calendar containing professional development opportunities	Posted to the VDOE Web site	X	X	X	X	X	June 30, 2012/Michael Bolling, Deborah Wickham & Christa Southall COMPLETED

Mathematics				2012-2013			
Topic	**Event/Resource/ Location**	**Commu-nication**	**Resources for School Divisions**	**Resources for Teachers & Principals**			**Targeted Completion Date/Lead Staff**
				Content Knowledge	**Teaching Skills**	**Assessing Students**	
Voice-over video/webinar describing how Virginia's college- and career-ready Mathematics Standards of Learning are different from previous standards and what this means for mathematics instruction and assessment	Posted on the VDOE Web site	X	X	X	X	X	June 30, 2012/Michael Bolling, Deborah Wickham & Christa Southall COMPLETED
Voice-over video/webinar describing the VDOE's mathematics resources and how they might be used effectively	Posted on the VDOE Web site	X	X	X	X	X	June 30, 2012/ Michael Bolling, Deborah Wickham & Christa Southall COMPLETED
Monthly postings by VDOE staff providing updates and opportunities of particular interest to teachers and principals	Posted on the VDOE Web site	X	X	X	X	X	Monthly beginning August 2012/ Michael Bolling, Deborah Wickham & Christa Southall COMPLETED
In-depth data review of 2011-2012 mathematics assessment data (reporting categories, SPBQ, grade level/school/division performance, etc.) to determine additional technical assistance needs for 2012-2013							August 31, 2012/ Michael Bolling, Deborah Wickham & Christa Southall, Roberta Schlicher, Linda Wallinger COMPLETED
Voice-over video/webinar explaining the concept of "rigor" in the Mathematics Standards of Learning and their accompanying assessments	Posted on the VDOE Web site	X	X	X	X	X	September 15, 2012/ Michael Bolling, Deborah Wickham & Christa Southall COMPLETED
Voice-over video/webinar explaining how the Mathematics Standards of Learning content and skills are assessed on Virginia's next-generation assessments	Posted on the VDOE Web site	X	X		X	X	September 15, 2012/ Michael Bolling, Deborah Wickham & Christa Southall COMPLETED
Update existing Web site for resource references, links, ease of navigation, clarity, etc.		X	X	X	X	X	September 30, 2012/ Michael Bolling, Deborah Wickham & Christa Southall ONGOING

Mathematics				2012-2013			
Topic	**Event/Resource/ Location**	**Commu-nication**	**Resources for School Divisions**	**Resources for Teachers & Principals**			**Targeted Completion Date/Lead Staff**
				Content Knowledge	**Teaching Skills**	**Assessing Students**	
Mathematics Standards of Learning Institutes – Focus on development of critical thinking skills in teaching, learning, and assessment	Multiple locations around the state Resources to be posted to the VDOE Web site		X	X	X	X	Fall 2012/ Michael Bolling, Deborah Wickham & Christa Southall COMPLETED
Video of panels or interviews with teachers whose students demonstrated success on the 2011-2012 mathematics assessments	Posted to the VDOE Web site	X	X	X	X	X	October 31, 2012/Michael Bolling, Debbie Wickham, & Christa Southall COMPLETED
Submission of timeline for revision of current curricular resources to be aligned with the 2009 Mathematics SOL or archived; and submission of a timeline for revision of resources, to include: • K-2 Number and Number Sense Module • Algebra Readiness Initiative Curriculum Companion	To be posted to the VDOE Web site		X	X	X	X	November 30, 2012/ Michael Bolling, Deborah Wickham & Christa Southall ONGOING
Submit proposal for additional or updated tangible products to support mathematics instruction in areas of identified need							November 30, 2012/ Michael Bolling, Deborah Wickham & Christa Southall ONGOING
Statewide professional development to review changes in the Standards of Learning and the accompanying assessments; focus on development of critical thinking skills	Presentations at conferences and regional meetings, such as VASSP, VAESP, Vision to Practice, VCTM	X	X	X	X	X	Various – Included in professional development calendar to be posted on Web site COMPLETED
Mathematics capstone course instructional modules	To be posted to VDOE Web site		X		X	X	December 31, 2012/Michael Bolling COMPLETED
Resources from 2012 Mathematics SOL Institutes	Posted to the VDOE Web site		X	X	X	X	December 31, 2012/ Michael Bolling, Deborah Wickham & Christa Southall COMPLETED

Mathematics	2012-2013						
Topic	**Event/Resource/ Location**	**Commu-nication**	**Resources for School Divisions**	**Resources for Teachers & Principals**			**Targeted Completion Date/Lead Staff**
				Content Knowledge	**Teaching Skills**	**Assessing Students**	
Review data from first semester (2012-2013) End-of-Course mathematics assessments and assess success of fall 2012-2013 VDOE-provided technical assistance in order to develop focus areas for spring and summer of 2012 and the 2013-2014 school year							January 31, 2013/ Michael Bolling, Deborah Wickham & Christa Southall, Roberta Schlicher, Linda Wallinger COMPLETED
Submit proposal for additional professional development specific to End-of-Course English instruction and assessment							February 15, 2013/ Michael Bolling, Deborah Wickham & Christa Southall ONGOING
Instructional resources for teachers on mathematics and science cross-curricular teaching in the elementary grades	To be posted to the VDOE Web site		X	X	X	X	June 30, 2013/ Deborah Wickham, Barb Young, Michael Bolling, Eric Rhoades SUMMER 2013
Mathematics and Science Partnership New and Continuation Grants to consortia serving school divisions, with a focus on mathematics instruction in Virginia (removed info on # served)	Will be posted on the VDOE Web site		X	X	X	X	ONGOING
Algebra Readiness Initiative - State-funded initiative to provide mathematics intervention services to students in grades 6 - 9 who are at risk of failing the Algebra I end-of-course test as demonstrated, including: • Training videos • Curriculum Companion • Workshop manual	VDOE Web site - http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/mathematics/middle/algebra_readiness/index.shtml		X		X	X	ONGOING STATE INITIATIVE

Return to Navigation Bar

Mathematics	2011-2012						
Topic	**Event/Resource/ Location**	**Commu-nication**	**Resources for School Divisions**	**Resources for Teachers & Principals**			**Targeted Completion Date/Lead Staff**
				Content Knowledge	**Teaching Skills**	**Assessing Students**	
2011 Mathematics Standards of Learning Institute – to support implementation of the 2009 Mathematics SOL, framed by the goals for students to: • Become mathematical problem solvers, • Communicate and reason mathematically, • Make mathematical connections, and • Use mathematical representations to model and interpret practical situations	Conducted at multiple locations around the state All materials posted to the VDOE Web site - http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/mathematics/professional_development/index.shtml	X	X	X	X	X	CONTINUING INSTITUTES IN FALL 2012
Statewide professional development to review changes in the Standards of Learning and the accompanying assessments, particularly the technology-enhanced items	Live and archived webinars announced by Supts Memo Presentations at conferences and regional meetings, such as VASSP, VAESP, Vision to Practice, VCTM	X	X	X	X	X	COMPLETED AND ONGOING
Mathematics and Science Partnership New and Continuation Grants to 9 consortia serving over 100 school divisions with a focus on mathematics instruction in Virginia	Posted on the VDOE Web site - http://www.doe.virginia.gov/news/news_releases/2011/may9.shtml		X	X	X	X	ONGOING
Review mathematics assessment data of schools that administered the End-of-Course mathematics assessments during first semester 2011-2012 and develop a written document highlighting their successful practices	Posted to the VDOE Web site		X	X	X	X	APRIL 30, 2012/Michael Bolling
Develop a Web site devoted to rigor in mathematics instruction and assessment	Posted to the VDOE Web site	X	X		X	X	MAY 15, 2012/Charles Pyle, Michael Bolling, & Amy Siepka
Development of a "catalog" of DOE instructional resources posted to the VDOE Web site	Posted to VDOE Web site; available for distribution as needed	X	X	X	X	X	MAY 31, 2012/ Michael Bolling, Deborah Wickham, Christa Southall, And Roberta Schlicher

Mathematics	2011-2012						
Topic	Event/Resource/ Location	Commu- nication	Resources for School Divisions	Resources for Teachers & Principals			Targeted Completion Date/Lead Staff
				Content Knowledge	Teaching Skills	Assessing Students	
Algebra Readiness Initiative - State-funded initiative to provide mathematics intervention services to students in grades 6 - 9 who are at risk of failing the Algebra I end-of-course test as demonstrated, including: • Training videos • Curriculum Companion • Workshop manual	VDOE Web site - http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/mathematics/middle/algebra_readiness/index.shtml		X		X	X	ONGOING STATE INITIATIVE

Return to Navigation Bar

Mathematics	Prior to 2011-2012						
Topic	Event/Resource/ Location	Commu- nication	Resources for School Divisions	Resources for Teachers & Principals			Targeted Completion Date/Lead Staff
				Content Knowledge	Teaching Skills	Assessing Students	
Virginia Mathematics Standards of Learning, Curriculum Frameworks, Enhanced Scope & Sequence Guides, Assessment Blueprints, Practice Test Questions	Written Documents posted to the VDOE Web site - http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/sol/standards_docs/mathematics/index.shtml	X	X	X		X	COMPLETED

Mathematics	Prior to 2011-2012						
Topic	**Event/Resource/ Location**	**Commu-nication**	**Resources for School Divisions**	**Resources for Teachers & Principals**			**Targeted Completion Date/Lead Staff**
				Content Knowledge	**Teaching Skills**	**Assessing Students**	
Elementary Mathematics Instructional Resources, including • Instructional videos K-5 Mathematics Modules: Number and Number Sense • Thinking Rationally about Fractions (Grades 4 – 8) • Geometry for Elementary School Teachers: A Professional Development Training Program • Patterns, Functions and Algebra for Elementary School Teachers: A Professional Development Training Program • Probability and Statistics Professional Development Module for Elementary and Middle School Teachers • Mathematics Vocabulary – Definitions of concepts students should know and understand • Virginia Animals and Their Habitats - a cross-curricular second-grade unit that addresses SOL in science, mathematics, English, and history and social science • K-3 Mathematics Achievement Record Sample	Videos and written documents posted to the VDOE Web site - http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/mathematics/elementary/index.shtml	X	X	X	X	X	COMPLETED, WITH ONGOING UPDATES

Mathematics	Prior to 2011-2012						
Topic	**Event/Resource/ Location**	**Commu-nication**	**Resources for School Divisions**	**Resources for Teachers & Principals**			**Targeted Completion Date/Lead Staff**
				Content Knowledge	**Teaching Skills**	**Assessing Students**	
Middle School Mathematics Instructional Resources, to include: • Instructional videos for teachers • Scientific calculator lessons for middle school teachers • Geometry for Middle School Teachers: A Professional Development Module • Probability and Statistics Professional Development Module for Elementary and Middle School Teachers • Thinking Rationally about Fractions (Grades 4 – 8) • Algeblocks Training – streaming video • Mathematics Vocabulary – Definitions of concepts students should know and understand	Videos and written documents posted to the VDOE Web site - http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/mathematics/middle/index.shtml		X	X	X	X	COMPLETED, WITH ONGOING UPDATES
Algebra Readiness Initiative - State-funded initiative to provide mathematics intervention services to students in grades 6 - 9 who are at risk of failing the Algebra I end-of-course test as demonstrated, including: • Training videos • Curriculum Companion • Workshop manual	VDOE Web site - http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/mathematics/middle/algebra_readiness/index.shtml		X		X	X	ONGOING STATE INITIATIVE
High School Mathematics Instructional Resources, to include: • Instructional videos for teachers • Technical assistance document for Algebra I Standard A.9 • Technical assistance document for Algebra II Standards AII.11 • Project Graduation Algebra Modules • Computer Mathematics: Using Graphing Calculators • Mathematics Vocabulary – Definitions of concepts students should know and understand	Documents posted to the VDOE Web site - http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/mathematics/high/index.shtml		X	X	X	X	COMPLETED, WITH ONGOING UPDATES

Mathematics				Prior to 2011-2012			
Topic	**Event/Resource/ Location**	**Commu-nication**	**Resources for School Divisions**	**Resources for Teachers & Principals**			**Targeted Completion Date/Lead Staff**
				Content Knowledge	**Teaching Skills**	**Assessing Students**	
Mathematics College- and Career-Ready Performance Expectations and Capstone Course Information	Posted to the VDOE Web site - http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/college_career_readiness/index.shtml		X	X	X	X	COMPLETED, WITH ONGOING UPDATES
Mathematics Assessment Resources, to include: • Released Standards of Learning test items • Formula sheets • Table of Standard Normal Probabilities • List of approved calculators	Resources posted to the VDOE Web site - http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/sol/practice_items/index.shtml		X			X	COMPLETED, WITH ONGOING UPDATES
Mathematics SOL Institutes in 2009 and 2010 that: • Outlined the content standard changes from the 2001 Mathematics SOL to the 2009 Mathematics SOL (2009); • Supported district leaders and teachers in the implementation of the 2009 Mathematics SOL (2009, 2010); • Provided training in the vertical progression of content and pedagogy (2010); • Provided instructional guidance in content areas of greatest challenge (2010); and • Provided professional development resources (2009, 2010)	Conducted at multiple locations around the state All materials posted to the VDOE Web site - http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/mathematics/professional_development/index.shtml	X	X	X	X	X	CONTINUING INSTITUTES IN 2011 AND 2012
Statewide professional development to review changes in the Standards of Learning and the accompanying assessments, particularly the technology-enhanced items	Live and archived webinars announced by Supts Memo Presentations at conferences and regional meetings, such as VASSP, VAESP, Vision to Practice, VCTM	X	X	X	X	X	ONGOING

Mathematics	Prior to 2011-2012						
Topic	**Event/Resource/ Location**	**Commu-nication**	**Resources for School Divisions**	**Resources for Teachers & Principals**			**Targeted Completion Date/Lead Staff**
				Content Knowledge	**Teaching Skills**	**Assessing Students**	
State Board of Education approval of Mathematics textbooks	Posted to the VDOE Web site - http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/textbooks/mathematics/index.shtmll		X	X	X		COMPLETED
Mathematics and Science Partnership grants awarded to many higher education and school division consortia for the specific purpose of professional development in mathematics and science	Posted to the VODE Web site		X	X	X	X	COMPLETED

Return to Navigation Bar

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR 2010 SCIENCE STANDARDS OF LEARNING

SCIENCE	2013-2014						
Topic	**Event/Resource/ Location**	**Commu-nication**	**Resources for School Divisions**	**Resources for Teachers & Principals**			**Targeted Completion Date/Lead Staff**
				Content Knowledge	**Teaching Skills**	**Assessing Students**	
Online calendar containing professional development opportunities	Posted to the VDOE Web site	X	X	X	X	X	Ongoing/ Rhoades, Young, and Firebaugh
Monthly postings by VDOE staff providing updates and opportunities of particular interest to teachers and principals	Posted on the VDOE Web site	X	X	X	X	X	Ongoing/ Rhoades, Young, and Firebaugh
Teacher Professional Development							
Investigating Science Modeling Instruction - Physical Science, Biology, Chemistry, Physics	Academy for middle school teachers Resources to be posted to the VDOE Web site	X	X	X	X	X	Materials to be posted on VDOE Web site by January 2014 Rhoades, Young, and Firebaugh
2013 Science through an Interdisciplinary Approach (SIA) Summer Institutes – Physical Science, Life and Earth Sciences	Institutes for elementary school teachers Resources to be posted on the VDOE Web site	X	X	X	X	X	Materials to be posted on VDOE Web site by May 2014 Rhoades, Young, and Firebaugh
2013 Science through an Interdisciplinary Approach (SIA) Summer Institutes - Investigating the Biodiversity of the Southwest Virginia Watersheds	Institutes for middle and high school teachers, focused on teachers from Superintendent Regions 6, 7, & 8 Resources to be posted on the VDOE Web site	X	X	X	X	X	Materials to be posted on VDOE Web site by May 2014 Rhoades, Young, and Firebaugh
2013-2014 Chesapeake Watershed Academies Year-long academies which include four weekends along a specific state watershed (Academy 1-James and York Rivers; Academy 2-Rappahannock River)	Academies for sixth grade teachers focusing on Middle Schools within the specific watersheds Resources to be posted and/or linked to the VDOE Web site	x	x	x	x	X	Materials to be posted or linked by June 2014 Rhoades, Young, and Firebaugh

SCIENCE			2013-2014				
Topic	Event/Resource/ Location	Commu-nication	Resources for School Divisions	Resources for Teachers & Principals			Targeted Completion Date/Lead Staff
				Content Knowledge	Teaching Skills	Assessing Students	
SOL Focus Institutes on in-depth topics in follow up to the statewide SOL Institutes	Eight regional institutes		X	X	X	X	2013-14 Eric Rhoades, Barb Young, and Professional Organizations
Building Administrator Professional Development							
Setting a New Trendline in Science – Administrator	1 day workshop model developed for CCPS principals to be delivered upon request		x	X	X	x	Materials completed by October 2014
Statewide professional development on implementation of the 2010 Science SOL, instruction, and assessment; focus on instruction and assessment that investigation and problem solving.	Presentations at conferences and regional meetings, such as VASSP, VAESP, VAST, VSELA, Vision to Practice, and various regional trainings as requested	X	X	X	X	X	Various – Included in professional development calendar to be posted on Teacher Direct Web site
Division Science Leader (Science Coordinators, Directors of Instruction, etc.) Professional Development							
Various – Included in professional development calendar to be posted on Teacher Direct Web site	Presentations at conferences and regional meetings, such as VAST, VSELA, and vision to practice						
New Science Coordinator Academy – Virginia Initiative for Science Teaching and Achievement	Academy for new science division leaders. Working in partnership with VISTA	X		X			April 2014 – Post presentations on the VISTA site and link to VDOE site Rhoades and Young
School Counselors Professional Development							
FAQ for School Counselors	This resource would include credit accommodation guidelines, approved courses for graduation, and other counselor-related topics. A webinar would be offered to school counselors.	X	X				November 2013 Rhoades, Firebaugh, and Young
Virginia School Counselors Association Conference	Present updates and FAQ at VSCA spring conference, if approved for funding	X	X				March 2014

SCIENCE	2013-2014						
Topic	**Event/Resource/ Location**	**Commu-nication**	**Resources for School Divisions**	**Resources for Teachers & Principals**			**Targeted Completion Date/Lead Staff**
				Content Knowledge	**Teaching Skills**	**Assessing Students**	
IHE Science Leader (science and science education professors and instructors) Professional Development							
Science Education Faculty Academy	Presentation to update IHE science leaders on Science SOL program	X		X	X	X	May 2014 and May 2013
Science Update Webinars	Two science webinars (one in September and one in January) to update science leaders						
Mathematics and Science Partnership Program							
Mathematics and Science Partnership (MSP) New and Continuation Grants for consortia serving school divisions, with a focus on science and STEM instruction in Virginia ▪ A Successful Teacher Professional Development Model for Inquiry Teaching in STEM (Sweet Briar College) ▪ Flipped Out for Science (Regent University) ▪ Learning Enhanced through the Nature of Science: An Inter-Disciplinary Sustainable Professional Development Model for High School Science (Old Dominion University Research Foundation and Tidewater Community College) ▪ K-5 Science Collaborative for Innovative and Enhanced Content Excellence (SCIEnCE) (Longwood University and the National Science Teachers Association) ▪ Middle School SCIEnCE (Longwood University and the National Science Teachers Association)	Will be posted on the VDOE Web site		X	X	X	X	Ongoing Rhoades and Powell

SCIENCE				2013-2014			
Topic	Event/Resource/ Location	Commu-nication	Resources for School Divisions	Resources for Teachers & Principals			Targeted Completion Date/Lead Staff
				Content Knowledge	Teaching Skills	Assessing Students	
Science Resources							
Science Activities, Models, and Simulations Web site	A resource that correlates open-source activities, models, and simulations to the 2010 Science Standards of Learning for Grade Six Science through Physics	X	X	X	X	X	June 1, 2013 – Posted on the VDOE Web site Rhoades, Firebaugh, and Young
Science FAQ	A resource developed to share frequently asked questions and the responses shared in the areas of instruction and assessment. Webinars will be offered to	X	X	X	X	X	May 2014 Firebaugh, Young, Rhoades
Mathematics and Science Partnership Web site	Products developed as a result of the MSP projects, including unit and lesson plans, videos, and professional development models are posted. Updated annually.	X	X	X	X	X	Website posted in March 2013 and will be updated annually in December. Rhoades and Powell
Bi-Weekly Science Updates	Updates to augment and advertise Teacher Direct. Audiences are teachers, division science contacts, organization boards (VMSC, VAST, VSELA, etc.), and IHE science contacts. The updates include news, highlighted Supt's. Memos, teacher resources, teacher opportunities, and student opportunities.	X					Ongoing Young, Firebaugh, and Rhoades

SCIENCE			2013-2014				
Topic	Event/Resource/ Location	Commu-nication	Resources for School Divisions	Resources for Teachers & Principals			Targeted Completion Date/Lead Staff
				Content Knowledge	Teaching Skills	Assessing Students	
Creation/updating of TA products and professional development based on current science resources, including ▪ Nature of science ▪ Science Practices Progression ▪ Levels of science inquiry ▪ Other emerging TA needs			x	x	x	x	May 2014 Young, Firebaugh, and Rhoades

Return to Navigation Bar

SCIENCE			2012-2013				
Topic	Event/Resource/ Location	Commu-nication	Resources for School Divisions	Resources for Teachers & Principals			Targeted Completion Date/Lead Staff
				Content Knowledge	Teaching Skills	Assessing Students	
Online calendar containing professional development opportunities	Posted to the VDOE Web site	X	X	X	X	X	June 30, 2012/ Eric Rhoades & Barb Young COMPLETED
Voice-over video/webinar describing how Virginia's college- and career-ready Science Standards of Learning are different from previous standards and what this means for mathematics instruction and assessment	Posted on the VDOE Web site	X	X	X	X	X	June 30, 2012/Eric Rhoades & Barb Young COMPLETED
Voice-over video/webinar describing the VDOE's science resources and how they might be used effectively	Posted on the VDOE Web site	X	X	X	X	X	June 30, 2012/Eric Rhoades & Barb Young COMPLETED
Mathematics and Science Partnership New and Continuation Grants to consortia serving school divisions, with a focus on science instruction in Virginia (removed info on # served)	Will be posted on the VDOE Web site		X	X	X	X	ONGOING
Virginia Science Standards Institutes for K-3 Teachers	Two locations in the state			X	X	X	July 2012/Barb Young COMPLETED
Science Standards of Learning Institutes, to focus on changes in the Standards of Learning and the accompanying assessments, particularly the technology-enhanced items	Four to six locations around the state		X	X	X	X	July & August 2012/Eric Rhoades & Barb Young COMPLETED

SCIENCE			2012-2013				
Topic	**Event/Resource/ Location**	**Commu-nication**	**Resources for School Divisions**	**Resources for Teachers & Principals**			**Targeted Completion Date/Lead Staff**
				Content Knowledge	**Teaching Skills**	**Assessing Students**	
Science textbooks to State Board for first review	State Board meeting		X				July 26, 2012/Eric Rhoades & Barb Young COMPLETED
Monthly postings by VDOE staff providing updates and opportunities of particular interest to teachers and principals	Posted on the VDOE Web site	X	X	X	X	X	Monthly beginning August 2012/ Eric Rhoades & Barb Young COMPLETED
Science Enhanced Scope & Sequence	Posted in PDF format on the VDOE Web site		X	X	X	X	August 31, 2012/Eric Rhoades & Barb Young COMPLETED
Voice-over video/webinar explaining the concept of "rigor" in the Science Standards of Learning and their accompanying assessments	Posted on the VDOE Web site	X	X	X	X	X	September 15, 2012/Eric Rhoades & Barb Young COMPLETED
Voice-over video/webinar explaining how the Science Standards of Learning content and skills are assessed on Virginia's next-generation assessments	Posted on the VDOE Web site	X	X		X	X	September 15, 2012/Eric Rhoades & Barb Young COMPLETED
State Board of Education approval of Science textbooks	Posted to the VDOE Web site		X				September 27, 2012 (anticipated)/Eric Rhoades & Barb Young COMPLETED
In-depth data review of 2011-2012 science assessment data (reporting categories, SPBQ, grade level/school/division performance, etc.) to determine additional technical assistance needs for 2012-2013							October 31, 2012/Eric Rhoades, Barb Young, Roberta Schlicher, Linda Wallinger ONGOING
Statewide professional development to review changes in the Standards of Learning and the accompanying assessments; focus on development of critical thinking skills	Presentations at conferences and regional meetings, such as VASSP, VAESP, Vision to Practice, VAST	X	X	X	X	X	Various – Included in professional development calendar to be posted on Web site COMPLETED
Pricing information for science textbooks	Posted to the VDOE Web site		X				October 31, 2012/Eric Rhoades & Barb Young COMPLETED
Resources from 2012 Science SOL Institutes	Posted to the VDOE Web site		X	X	X	X	October 31, 2012/Eric Rhoades & Barb Young COMPLETED

SCIENCE				2012-2013			
Topic	**Event/Resource/ Location**	**Commu-nication**	**Resources for School Divisions**	**Resources for Teachers & Principals**			**Targeted Completion Date/Lead Staff**
				Content Knowledge	**Teaching Skills**	**Assessing Students**	
SOL Focus Institutes on in-depth topics in follow up to the statewide SOL Institutes	Eight regional institutes		X	X	X	X	Fall 2012/Eric Rhoades, Barb Young, and Professional Organizations COMPLETED
Science Enhanced Scope & Sequence	Posted in searchable format on the VDOE Web site		X	X	X	X	November 30, 2012/Eric Rhoades & Barb Young COMPLETED
Submit timeline/proposal for: • Realignment of curricular documents to the 2010 Science SOL and • Additional or updated tangible products to support science instruction in areas of identified need							November 30, 2012/ Eric Rhoades & Barb Young ONGOING
Update existing Web site for resource references, links, ease of navigation, clarity, completeness, etc.	Posted to the VDOE Web site	X	X	X	X	X	December 31, 2012/ Eric Rhoades & Barb Young ONGOING
Resources from all Virginia Summer Science Institutes for Elementary Teachers	Posted to the VDOE Web site						December 31, 2012/Eric Rhoades & Barb Young COMPLETED
Review data from first semester (2012-2013) End-of-Course science assessments and assess success of fall 2012-2013 VDOE-provided technical assistance in order to develop focus areas for spring and summer of 2012 and the 2013-2014 school year							January 31, 2013/Eric Rhoades, Barb Young, Roberta Schlicher, Linda Wallinger ONGOING
Submit proposal for additional professional development specific to End-of-Course science instruction and assessment							February 15, 2013/Eric Rhoades & Barb Young ONGOING
Instructional resources for teachers on mathematics and science cross-curricular teaching in the elementary grades	To be posted to the VDOE Web site		X	X	X	X	June 30, 2013/ Deborah Wickham, Barb Young, Michael Bolling, Eric Rhoades SUMMER 2013

Return to Navigation Bar

Science	2011-2012						
Topic	**Event/Resource/ Location**	**Commu-nication**	**Resources for School Divisions**	**Resources for Teachers & Principals**			**Targeted Completion Date/Lead Staff**
				Content Knowledge	**Teaching Skills**	**Assessing Students**	
Mathematics and Science Partnership New and Continuation Grants to 7 consortia serving 53 school divisions with a focus on science instruction in Virginia	Posted on the VDOE Web site - http://www.doe.virginia.gov/news/news_releases/2011/may9.shtml		X	X	X	X	ONGOING
Virginia Science Institutes for STEM Education for fourth- and fifth-grade teachers to share exemplary science instruction, especially focusing on STEM content and Standards of Learning alignment using cross-curricular instruction, student teams, and inquiry-based, project-based, and place-based learning	Conducted at four locations around the state		X	X	X	X	COMPLETED
Statewide professional development to review changes in the Standards of Learning and the accompanying assessments, particularly the technology-enhanced items	Presentations at conferences and regional meetings, such as VAESP, VASSP, VAST, Vision to Practice	X	X	X	X	X	ONGOING
Development of a "catalog" of DOE instructional resources posted to the VDOE Web site	Posted to VDOE Web site; available for distribution as needed	X	X	X	X	X	May 31, 2012/Eric Rhoades, Barb Young, Roberta Schlicher COMPLETED
Resources from the 2010 SOL Science Institutes	Posted to the VDOE Web site		X	X	X	X	May 31, 2012/Eric Rhoades COMPLETED

Return to Navigation Bar

SCIENCE	PRIOR TO 2011-2012						
Topic	**Event/Resource/ Location**	**Commu-nication**	**Resources for School Divisions**	**Resources for Teachers & Principals**			**Targeted Completion Date/Lead Staff**
				Content Knowledge	**Teaching Skills**	**Assessing Students**	
Virginia Science Standards of Learning, Curriculum Frameworks, Assessment Blueprints, Practice Test Questions	Written Documents posted to the VDOE Web site - http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/sol/standards_docs/science/index.shtml & http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/sol/standards_docs/science/review.shtml	X	X	X		X	COMPLETED
Elementary and Middle School Science Instructional Resources, to include: • Project PROMISE • Lessons from the Bay • Virginia Animals and Their Habitats • Safety in Science Teaching	Documents posted to the VDOE Web site - http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/science/index.shtml	X	X	X	X	X	COMPLETED, WITH ONGOING UPDATES
High School Science Instructional Resources, to include: • Technology Sparks, Ideas for Teachers: Integrating Technology with the Virginia Standards of Learning • Safety in Science Teaching	Documents posted to the VDOE Web site - http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/science/index.shtml		X	X	X	X	COMPLETED, WITH ONGOING UPDATES
Science Assessment Resources	Resources posted to the VDOE Web site - http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/sol/practice_items/index.shtml		X			X	COMPLETED, WITH ONGOING UPDATES
Statewide professional development to review changes in the Standards of Learning and the accompanying assessments, particularly the technology-enhanced items	Presentations at conferences and regional meetings, such as VAESP, VASSP, VAST, Vision to Practice	X	X	X	X	X	ONGOING

SCIENCE	PRIOR TO 2011-2012						
Topic	**Event/Resource/ Location**	**Commu-nication**	**Resources for School Divisions**	**Resources for Teachers & Principals**			**Targeted Completion Date/Lead Staff**
				Content Knowledge	**Teaching Skills**	**Assessing Students**	
2010 Science SOL Institutes – train the trainer to: • Support implementation of the 2010 Science SOL • Provide training in the nature of science • Deliver instructional guidance in content areas of greatest challenge • Share electronically archived training materials for division and teacher use as a professional development tool	Conducted at four locations around the state	X	X	X	X	X	CONTINUING INSTITUTES IN 2011 AND 2012
Annual Virginia Science Institutes for Elementary Teachers	Multiple locations around the state		X	X	X	X	CONTINUING INSTITUTES IN 2011 AND 2012
Mathematics and Science Partnership grants awarded to many higher education and school division consortia for the specific purpose of professional development in mathematics and science	Posted to the VODE Web site		X	X	X	X	COMPLETED

Return to Navigation Bar

Technical Assistance for 2008 History and Social Science Standards of Learning

HISTORY AND SOCIAL SCIENCE				2013-2014			
Topic	**Event/Resource/ Location**	**Commu-nication**	**Resources for School Divisions**	**Resources for Teachers & Principals**			**Targeted Completion Date/Lead Staff**
				Content Knowledge	**Teaching Skills**	**Assessing Students**	
Online calendar containing professional development opportunities	Posted to the VDOE Web site	X	X	X	X	X	Ongoing/HSS Staff
Monthly postings by VDOE staff providing updates and opportunities of particular interest to teachers and principals	Posted on the VDOE Web site	X	X	X	X	X	Ongoing/HSS Staff
Statewide professional development to support the Standards of Learning and the accompanying assessments; focus on development of critical thinking skills	Presentations at conferences and regional meetings, such as VAESP, VASSP, History Consortium, Vision to Practice	X	X	X	X	X	Various – Included in professional development calendar to be posted on Web site /HSS staff
Three History and Social Science SOL Institutes focusing on rigor, content knowledge, and pedagogy in the HSS SOL and the accompanying assessments	Three Richmond regional locations	x	X	X	X	X	Possible Date: November 30, 2013/ HSS staff
Completion of updated Virginia Indian resources including an instructional video on the 11 state-recognized tribes and updating content and resources on the Web site, *Virginia's First Peoples*	Posted on the VDOE Web site	x	X	X	X	X	August 1, 2013/ HSS staff
In-depth data review of 2010-2013 History and Social Science assessment data (reporting categories, SPBQ, grade level/school/division performance, etc.) to determine additional technical assistance needs for 2013-2014							October 31, 2013/ OHEC Staff/HSS staff,
Submit timeline/proposal for additional professional development, SOL institutes specific to Kindergarten through End-of-Course history and social science instruction and assessment based on critical needs of history and social science test results.							October 31 2013/ HSS staff
Teacher designed and developed digital learning experiences for students based on the critical needs of K-12 history and social science SOL test results.	Posted on the VDOE Web site	x	x	x	x	x	September 1, 2013/ HSS staff & Jean Weller

HISTORY AND SOCIAL SCIENCE				2013-2014			
Topic	Event/Resource/ Location	Commu-nication	Resources for School Divisions	Resources for Teachers & Principals			Targeted Completion Date/Lead Staff
				Content Knowledge	Teaching Skills	Assessing Students	
Online resource (HSS SOL chart) for HSS teachers, students, and parents that includes links to developed lessons and resources from Virginia museums and national history and social science support groups. (LVA, VHS, Mt. Vernon, etc.)	Posted on the VDOE Web site	x	x	x	x	x	September 1, 2013/ HSS staff
For schools accepting the third-grade testing waiver: Workshop for elementary HSS teachers /staff on differentiated strategies for comprehending nonfiction in content support for the elementary HSS SOL.	Statewide locations	x	x	x	x	x	Fall 2013 HSS staff/School Improvement Office

Return to Navigation Bar

HISTORY AND SOCIAL SCIENCE				2012-2013			
Topic	Event/Resource/ Location	Commu-nication	Resources for School Divisions	Resources for Teachers & Principals			Targeted Completion Date/Lead Staff
				Content Knowledge	Teaching Skills	Assessing Students	
Online calendar containing professional development opportunities	Posted to the VDOE Web site	X	X	X	X	X	June 30, 2012/ Bev Thurston & Betsy Barton COMPLETED
Voice-over video/webinar describing how Virginia's college- and career-ready History and Social Science Standards of Learning are different from previous standards and what this means for mathematics instruction and assessment	Posted on the VDOE Web site	X	X	X	X	X	June 30, 2012/Bev Thurston & Betsy Barton COMPLETED
Voice-over video/webinar describing the VDOE's history and social science resources and how they might be used effectively	Posted on the VDOE Web site	X	X	X	X	X	June 30, 2012/Bev Thurston & Betsy Barton COMPLETED
Online resource module for teachers on roles and responsibilities of state and local government	Posted on the VDOE Web site		X	X			June 30, 2012/Teacher Licensure COMPLETED
Proposal for realignment of current curricular resources with the 2008 History and Social Science Standards of Learning							July 31, 2012/Bev Thurston & Besty Barton ONGOING

HISTORY AND SOCIAL SCIENCE 2012-2013

Topic	Event/Resource/ Location	Commu-nication	Resources for School Divisions	Resources for Teachers & Principals			Targeted Completion Date/Lead Staff
				Content Knowledge	Teaching Skills	Assessing Students	
Monthly postings by VDOE staff providing updates and opportunities of particular interest to teachers and principals	Posted on the VDOE Web site	X	X	X	X	X	Monthly beginning August 2012/Bev Thurston & Betsy Barton COMPLETED
Statewide professional development to review changes in the Standards of Learning and the accompanying assessments; focus on development of critical thinking skills	Presentations at conferences and regional meetings, such as VAESP, VASSP, History Consortium, Vision to Practice	X	X	X	X	X	Various – Included in professional development calendar to be posted on Web site COMPLETED
In-depth data review of 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 history and social science assessment data (reporting categories, SPBQ, grade level/school/division performance, etc.) to determine additional technical assistance needs for 2012-2013							August 31, 2012/Bev Thurston, Betsy Barton, Roberta Schlicher, Linda Wallinger ONGOING
Proposal for additional or updated tangible products to support history and social science instruction in identified areas of need							August 31, 2012/ Bev Thurston & Betsy Barton ONGOING
Voice-over video/webinar explaining the concept of "rigor" in the History and Social Science Standards of Learning and their accompanying assessments	Posted on the VDOE Web site	X	X	X	X	X	September 15, 2012/Bev Thurston & Betsy Barton COMPLETED
Voice-over video/webinar explaining how the History and Social Science Standards of Learning content and skills are assessed on Virginia's next-generation assessments	Posted on the VDOE Web site	X	X		X	X	September 15, 2012/Bev Thurston & Betsy Barton COMPLETED
History and Social Science Standards of Learning Institutes, to focus on changes in the Standards of Learning and the accompanying assessments	Four regional locations around the state		X	X	X	X	Fall 2012/ Bev Thurston & Betsy Barton COMPLETED
Resources from Korea – PowerPoint on Korean culture (Sept 30); webinar on geographic elements (Oct); lesson plans added to Enhanced Scope & Sequence (Nov 30);	Posted to the VDOE Web site		X	X			Fall 2012/Bev Thurston INCOMPLETE
Resources from 2012 History and Science SOL Institutes	Posted to the VDOE Web site		X	X	X	X	December 31, 2012/Bev Thurston & Betsy Barton COMPLETED

HISTORY AND SOCIAL SCIENCE				2012-2013			
Topic	Event/Resource/ Location	Commu-nication	Resources for School Divisions	Resources for Teachers & Principals			Targeted Completion Date/Lead Staff
				Content Knowledge	Teaching Skills	Assessing Students	
Review data from first semester (2012-2013) End-of-Course history and social science assessments and assess success of fall 2012-2013 VDOE-provided technical assistance in order to develop focus areas for spring and summer of 2012 and the 2013-2014 school year							January 31, 2013/Bev Thurston, Betsy Barton, Roberta Schlicher, Linda Wallinger ONGOING
Submit proposal for additional professional development specific to End-of-Course history and social science instruction and assessment							February 15, 2013/ Bev Thurston & Betsy Barton ONGOING

Return to Navigation Bar

HISTORY AND SOCIAL SCIENCE				2011-2012			
Topic	Event/Resource/ Location	Commu-nication	Resources for School Divisions	Resources for Teachers & Principals			Targeted Completion Date/Lead Staff
				Content Knowledge	Teaching Skills	Assessing Students	
Statewide professional development to review changes in the Standards of Learning and the accompanying assessments, particularly the technology-enhanced items	Presentations at conferences and regional meetings, such as VAESP, VASSP, History Consortium, Vision to Practice	X	X	X	X	X	Ongoing
World Geography Connects: Contemporary Regions	Online course for teachers			X	X		September-October 2011
World Geography Connects: 1500 A.D. to the Present	Online course for teachers			X	X		March-April 2012
Development of a "catalog" of DOE instructional resources posted to the VDOE Web site	Posted to VDOE Web site; available for distribution as needed	X	X	X	X	X	May 31, 2012/Bev Thurston, Betsy Barton, Robert Schlicher

Return to Navigation Bar

HISTORY AND SOCIAL SCIENCE				PRIOR TO 2011-2012			
Topic	**Event/Resource/ Location**	**Commu-nication**	**Resources for School Divisions**	**Resources for Teachers & Principals**			**Targeted Completion Date/Lead Staff**
				Content Knowledge	**Teaching Skills**	**Assessing Students**	
Virginia History and Social Science Standards of Learning, Curriculum Frameworks, Enhanced Scope and Sequence, Assessment Blueprints, Practice Test Questions	Written Documents posted to the VDOE Web site - http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/sol/standards_docs/history_socialscience/index.shtml	X	X	X		X	Completed
Elementary, Middle, and High School History and Social Science Instructional Resources, to include: • An Economy at Work • Economics and Financial Literacy • North American Map of Selected Geographic Regions • Documents of American History • Maps of Virginia's Five Geographic Regions • Virginia Animals and Their Habitats • Teaching and Learning Virginia K-3 History and Social Science Standards of Learning • Virginia's First People Past and Present • Mali: Ancient Crossroads of Africa • Virginia Studies: Ready Resources for the Classroom • United States History: Connecting the Past to the Present • Everyday Civics • Global Learning Virginia Standards of Learning • Postwar Germany and the Growth of Democracy	Written documents and Web site links posted to the VDOE Web site - http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/history/index.shtml	X	X	X	X	X	Completed, with ongoing updates
World Geography and U.S. History Connects	Online courses for teachers			X			Ongoing
History and Social Science Assessment Resources	Resources posted to the VDOE Web site - http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/history/resources.shtml		X			X	Completed, with ongoing updates
State Board of Education approval of Science textbooks	Posted to the VDOE Web site			X	X		Completed