

**ADVANCING
WORK FORCE
READINESS:**

**ADULT EDUCATION
and LITERACY *for*
21st CENTURY
VIRGINIA**

**A STRATEGIC PLAN
for 2012-2017**



VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
DIVISION OF
**TECHNOLOGY, CAREER &
ADULT EDUCATION**
OFFICE OF ADULT EDUCATION & LITERACY SERVICES



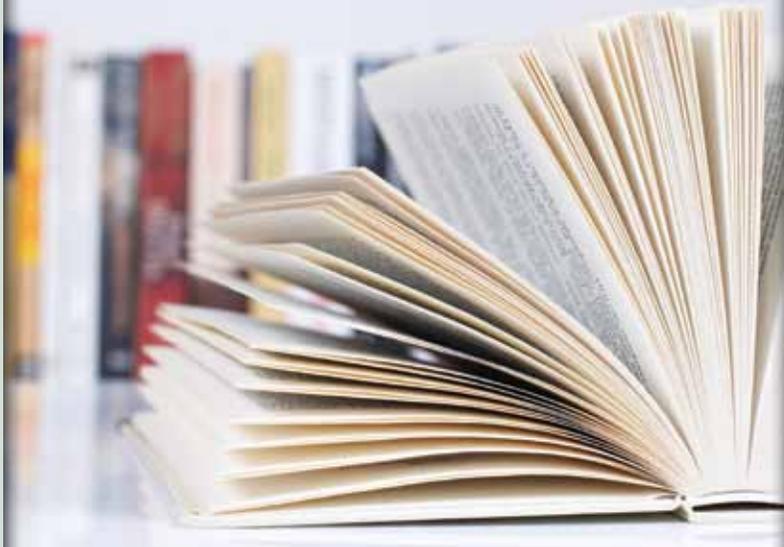


VISION

Every Virginian is prepared with the knowledge, skills, and credentials necessary to excel in the 21st century economy.

MISSION

As a partner in Virginia's work force development system, the Office of Adult Education and Literacy strengthens the Commonwealth's economy by supporting innovative, effective educational programs that prepare individuals for college, careers, and responsible citizenship.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS, the Virginia Department of Education's Office of Adult Education and Literacy (OAEL) intends to lead Virginia into the top tier of adult education programs nationally. OAEL will accomplish this by pursuing aggressive new goals and refocusing its stewardship of federal and state adult education and literacy funding. This report highlights the magnitude of the adult literacy challenges in the Commonwealth of Virginia and OAEL's new plan to address them.



IN APRIL 2011, OAEL contracted with McManis & Monsalve Associates to facilitate an eight-month, comprehensive strategic planning effort that defined the path that OAEL will follow in the coming five years. The cornerstone of this effort was the development of new vision, mission, and value statements for OAEL.

These statements reflect OAEL's awareness that adult education and literacy programming in Virginia must extend beyond a focus on the high school equivalency credential to an emphasis on the skills and knowledge required for adults to excel in the 21st century economy.

OAEL's redefined mission aligns well with the Virginia Department of Education's commitment to college and career readiness standards for public school students, as well as national and state priorities that focus on preparing adult education students not only to earn secondary credentials, but also to be successful in postsecondary education and training and in the work force.

OAEL has also embarked upon a competitive process for the federal funds authorized by the *Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA)*, Title II of the *Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA)*, in order to ensure that the most qualified and effective organizations receive the support they need to provide top quality adult education services. The competition, which

is being implemented in the first half of 2012, will be the first competition for the AEFLA funds in 13 years.

Work on the competition began in 2010, starting with authorization from Superintendent of Public Instruction, Dr. Patricia Wright, followed by an extensive revision of the Virginia State Plan for Adult Education and Literacy, which was approved by the United States Department of Education in the spring of 2011. The competition for funding will be conducted among all eligible providers of adult education services in Virginia. Grants will be awarded to organizations and consortia whose applications demonstrate that they can best serve adult Virginians in need of basic literacy skills and career and college preparation. Application requirements for the competition will focus on supporting elements of OAEL's strategic plan. Preparing for this competition and putting the organization on a solid strategic foundation were the catalysts for developing this plan.

In addition to developing new mission, vision, and value statements, the strategic planning process included setting ambitious goals designed to improve the quality of adult education and literacy instruction and administration over the next five years. OAEL established meeting or exceeding all of its federal and state adult education performance targets within five years as its guiding measure of success.

To reach this goal, the OAEL staff understood that they first needed to construct a bridge from where Virginia's adult education and literacy system is currently to where it can be within five years. That bridge is built upon five key pillars on which OAEL will focus its time and energy in the next five years.

- Program Management and Instructional Standards
- Recruitment, Retention, and Reporting
- Career Pathways
- Professional Development
- Monitoring and Evaluation

Through this strategic planning effort, OAEL is setting a clear course that will redefine Virginia's approach to adult education and literacy programming. This new approach is required because of the increasing gap between the literacy skills of hundreds of thousands of adult Virginians and the workplace demands of the 21st century economy. The implementation of OAEL's strategic plan will provide renewed leadership and motivation to adult education and literacy programs and stakeholders as they prepare adults for college, careers, and responsible citizenship. To be successful with its plan, OAEL will rely on its strengths and partnerships to drive program performance, improve outcomes, and achieve excellence.



METHODOLOGY

IN APRIL 2011, OAEL contracted with McManis & Monsalve Associates, an experienced consulting firm based in Virginia. Staff from McManis & Monsalve facilitated the strategic planning effort and conducted extensive research into the adult education and literacy system at the national, state, and local levels through literature review, interviews, and focus groups. The project staff sought to identify, engage, and gather feedback from OAEL's key stakeholders, including adult education and literacy program managers, teachers, field experts, research and training professionals, partners in the community college and K-12 offices, education and work force training agency leaders, and individuals representing economic and business interests. This approach yielded valuable insights from those who are affected by OAEL's work, so that the end product – a new strategic plan for adult education and literacy in Virginia – is informed and enriched by all of those who have an interest in the plan's development and implementation.

OAEL'S STRATEGIC PLANNING efforts encompassed a series of connected activities, including the following.

- Examining OAEL in the broadest terms from both internal and external perspectives
- Building consensus among the staff around public statements of mission, vision, and values
- Gathering input from grant recipients and other stakeholders to ensure a more robust and meaningful plan – a plan focused on outcomes for students, programs, and the Commonwealth
- Developing a document that will guide decision making and create a foundation for action planning over the next five years

Focused on articulating and aligning the vision, mission, values, goals, objectives, and strategies that

will guide OAEL's work, OAEL staff participated in a series of interactive workshops from April through July 2011. These workshops provided a forum for defining the challenges facing low-skilled and low-waged Virginians, analyzing the structure of the adult education and literacy system in Virginia, and identifying OAEL's long-term priorities. The staff considered many potential goals, objectives, and courses of action and then evaluated the potential impacts of implementing each.

To engage external stakeholders, a series of focus groups were convened parallel to the OAEL staff workshops. The focus groups brought together individuals with diverse backgrounds, expertise, and insights into adult education and literacy. They voiced diverse perspectives and provided candid feedback that assisted OAEL in the development of its strategic plan. These meetings solicited the participants'

perceptions of: OAEL's role in Virginia's work force development system; OAEL's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats; and the challenges facing the Virginia adult education and literacy system. In addition, a dozen telephone interviews were conducted across the instructor, manager, administrator, and director levels. These conversations gathered additional perceptions and suggestions for OAEL to consider. Planning materials and meeting summaries were posted to a public blog so that all interested individuals could follow the process and comment on the proceedings.

Taken together, these broad efforts allowed OAEL to effectively analyze its current operating environment, establish a new vision and mission, and identify several strategic goals and objectives to pursue over the course of the next five years.



“Leading U.S. researchers and policymakers have defined literacy as the ability to use printed and written information to function in society, to achieve one’s goals, and to develop one’s knowledge and potential.”

(Kirsch et al., 2001, p.3).

LITERACY CHALLENGES FOR THE 21ST CENTURY: THE NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

FOR A COUNTRY TO COMPETE IN TODAY’S WORLD MARKETS, it must have an educated and skilled work force. As many researchers, elected officials, and policy makers have noted, the United States’ competitive edge is threatened by a growing adult education and literacy crisis.

LITERACY IS commonly understood as the ability to read and write. However, in a 21st century society, from a program and policy standpoint, the definition of literacy is not that simple, nor is fighting illiteracy simply teaching people the basics of how to read and write.

Literacy is not a single level of verbal skills; rather, it exists on a continuum from lower to higher ability. As a result, the point at which one is “literate” or “illiterate” is open to interpretation.

The most recent comprehensive survey of adult literacy in the United States, the National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL), found that of the 222 million adults in the United States, 93 million do not possess the levels of reading comprehension or computational literacy needed to succeed in college or the job training that current and future jobs will require (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2003).

The NAAL also found that thirty million American adults scored at the “below basic” level, which means that the extent of their literacy skills, at best, is limited to activities such as basic addition, signing their names, and reading and understanding short, simple documents (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2003). Millions of Americans cannot understand an article in a newspaper, follow medication dosing instructions, or balance a checkbook. The personal, economic, and governmental consequences of not effectively addressing this problem are enormous and growing.

Adult education and work force skills programs nationwide enroll about 3 million adults annually, leaving out the tens of millions of Americans needed to fill the higher paying jobs that will drive our nation’s economy. Without basic literacy skills, these individuals are essentially locked out of the American Dream.

Those with less than a high school diploma earn 71 percent of the income of those with a high school diploma and only 43 percent of the income of those with a bachelor's degree (U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2010).

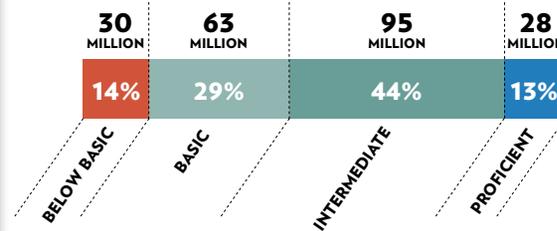
Helping these individuals obtain the skills required to be successful workplace participants and responsible citizens is the overarching goal of the adult education and literacy system in the United States. That task is becoming increasingly challenging.

Research models suggest that by 2030, an even greater number of workers than today will have minimal reading skills, and the extent and impact of adult illiteracy will only get worse in the coming years without major changes in policy, programs, and investment (Educational Testing Service, 2007).

“At a time when the demand for work force skills is higher than ever, the nation’s education and skills levels are declining. To find and hold jobs that will pay a family-sustaining wage in the 21st Century, adults must have at least some postsecondary education or occupational training, but we are moving farther from that goal.”

(National Commission on Adult Literacy, 2008, p.1).

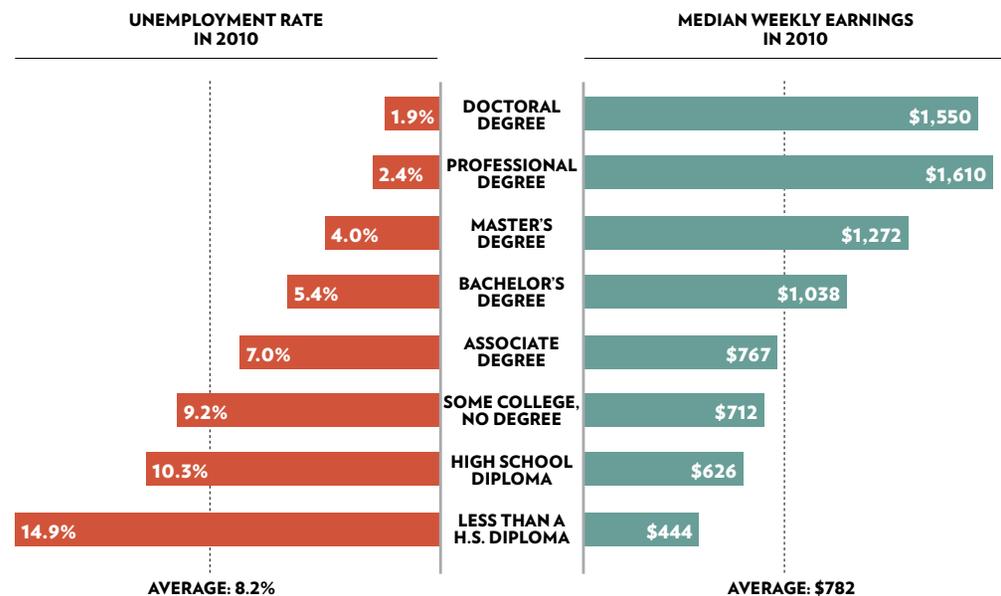
FIGURE 1:
Number of U.S. Adults in each Prose Literacy Level



“[A] vast number of adults need educational services to be ready for the college and job training that our global economy requires.”

(National Commission on Adult Literacy, 2008, p.iii).

FIGURE 2:
Educational Attainment, Unemployment, Earnings



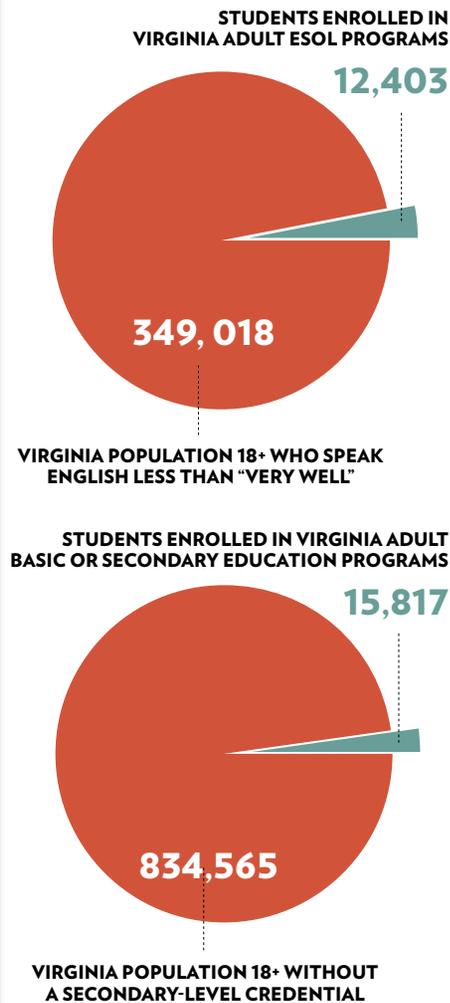
(U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2010)



“Middle-skill jobs, which require more than a high school diploma but not a four-year degree, featured prominently among the top ten ‘hardest to fill’ jobs of 2011. In the American South, middle-skill jobs account for 51 percent of the region’s jobs today and will account for 44 percent of job openings in the next decade, making them the engine of the American South’s economy. But while 51 percent of current jobs are middle-skill, only 43 percent of the region’s workers are currently trained to the middle-skill level, a gap that threatens to undermine economic growth and innovation efforts.”

(National Skills Coalition, 2011).

FIGURE 3:
Adult Literacy Need in Virginia



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau. (2010). *2005-2009 American Community Survey 5-year estimates* [Data set]. Retrieved from <http://www.census.gov/acs/www/>; Virginia Department of Education, Office of Adult Education and Literacy. (2011). *Annual performance report to the U.S. Department of Education, June 1, 2010 – June 30, 2011*.

LITERACY CHALLENGES FOR THE 21ST CENTURY: THE VIRGINIA PERSPECTIVE

THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY found that 834,565 Virginians over the age of 18 do not have a high school diploma or its equivalency (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). This same survey estimates that six percent of adults living in Virginia speak English “less than very well.” Only about three percent of the adults in Virginia who could benefit from OAEL-funded programs in adult basic literacy, high school equivalency, and English language instruction participate in these programs annually (Figure 3). This leaves hundreds of thousands of Virginians at a severe disadvantage in pursuing jobs that provide family-sustaining wages.

IN TERMS OF LITERACY, Virginia ranks 28th among the states with 12 percent of the population (16 years of age and older) lacking basic prose literacy skills (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2003).

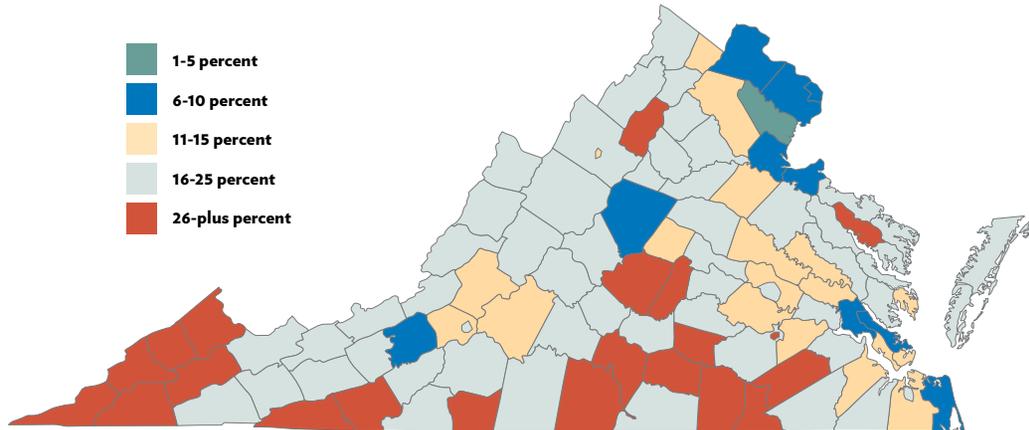
Literacy and academic achievement correlate directly with employment. Virginia’s “working age” residents with a college degree are 37 percent more likely to be involved in the work force than those residents without a high school diploma (Council for Adult Education and Experiential Learning, 2008). Those regions in Virginia with the highest percentages of adults without

high school credentials also suffer from some of the highest unemployment rates in the Commonwealth.

In Virginia, as throughout the country, the lack of an educated and skilled work force is a tremendous barrier to attracting and growing business. In particular, an undereducated work force hampers the growth of middle-skill jobs, which represent a significant portion of future job growth in the United States.

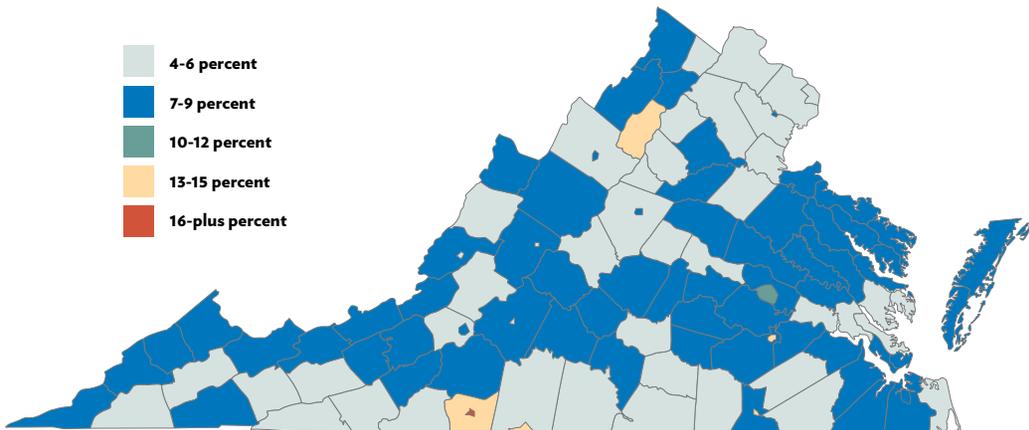
The new and innovative approaches to recruitment, retention, instruction, assessment, and the collection

FIGURE 4:
Percentage of People Age 18 and Over Without a High School Diploma



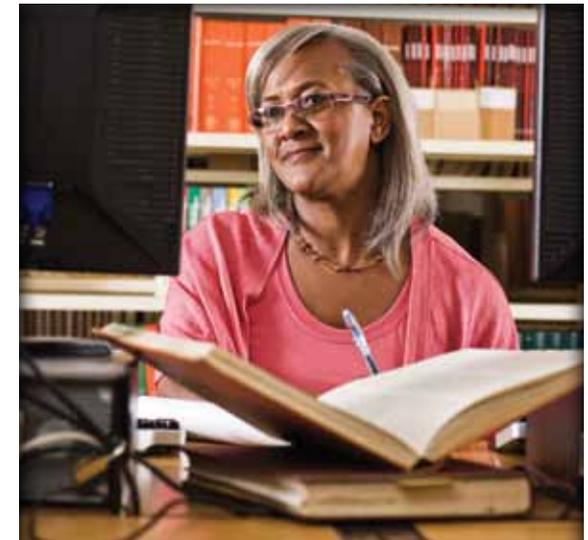
Source: U.S. Census Bureau. (2010). *2005-2009 American Community Survey 5-year estimates* [Data set]. Retrieved from <http://www.census.gov/acs/www/>

FIGURE 5:
Annual Unemployment Rate, Age 18 and over



Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2011). *Local area unemployment statistics*. [Data set]. Retrieved from <http://www.bls.gov/lau/>

and use of data identified in this strategic plan are necessary if Virginia’s adult education and literacy system is to be more effective in serving greater numbers of the population in need of adult education and literacy services. OAEL’s successful implementation of these approaches will put Virginia in a stronger position to compete and prosper in the 21st century economy.

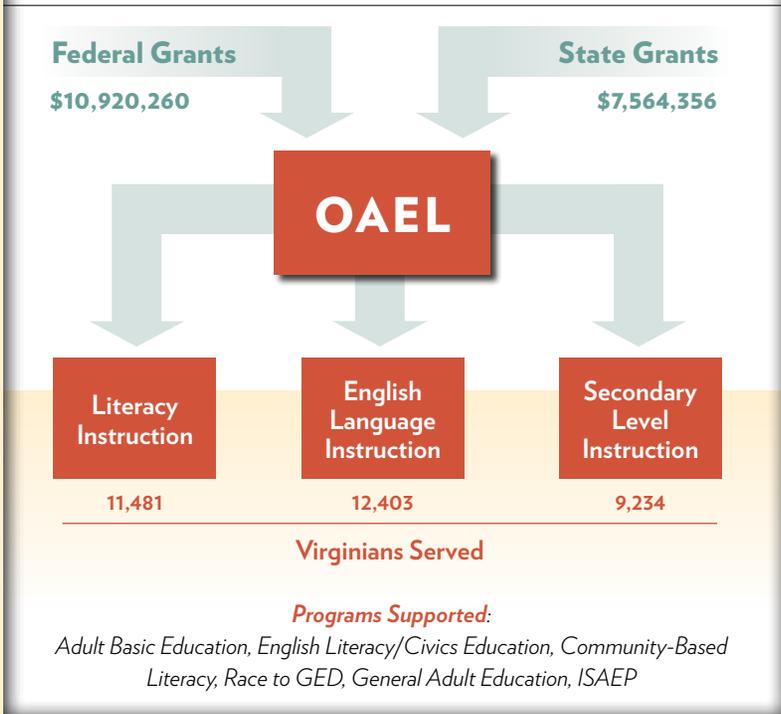


“Virginia’s ‘working age’ residents with a college degree are 37% more likely to be involved in the work force than those residents without a high school diploma.”

(Council for Adult Education and Experiential Learning, 2008)



FIGURE 6:
OAEL Funding and Services 2010-2011



OAEL'S RESPONSE TO VIRGINIA'S LITERACY CHALLENGES

OAEL IS ONE OF FOUR OFFICES within the Virginia Department of Education's (VDOE) Division of Technology, Career, and Adult Education. It is the office within VDOE that is charged with fulfilling the statutory responsibilities identified in Section 221.224 of the *Code of Virginia*, which states that the Board of Education "shall require the development of adult education programs in every school division and promulgate appropriate standards and guidelines for adult education programs" (Virginia General Assembly, 1950). OAEL is also, therefore, the VDOE office responsible for administering the funding and activities authorized by the *Adult Education and Family Literacy Act*, Title II of the *Workforce Investment Act of 1998* (WIA).

In fulfilling these responsibilities, OAEL plays a key role in Virginia's work force development system – providing leadership, developing public policy, maintaining an accountability system, collaborating with other work force agencies in Virginia, and funding research and training. Through these efforts, OAEL ensures compliance with federal and state laws, access to high quality adult education and literacy programs, and continuous program improvement.

FIGURE 7:
NRS Educational Functioning Levels

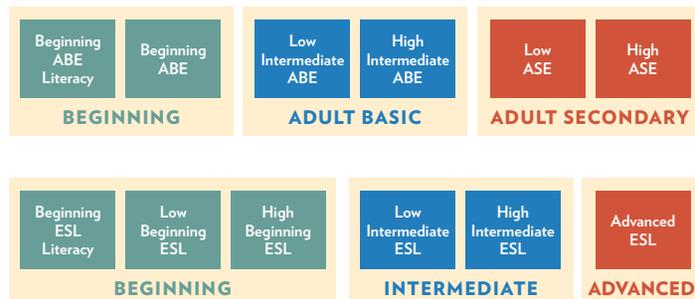


FIGURE 8:
Strategic Plan Core



FEDERAL AND STATE PERFORMANCE MEASURES

All state agencies that administer federal adult education and literacy funds are responsible for achieving 15 core outcomes that are tracked and reported into the National Reporting System (NRS), the federal adult education and literacy data system. Each year, state adult education and literacy offices negotiate annual performance targets for these core outcomes with the federal Office of Vocational and Adult Education. The negotiations are based on a continuous improvement model in which states must maintain or improve their previous year's performance levels.

The 15 outcomes are divided into two groups. The first is focused on increased educational functioning levels among those who attend adult education and literacy classes. The second group is focused on follow-up measures that assess whether individuals who have participated in and then exited from adult education programs get or keep a job, earn a secondary credential, or enroll in postsecondary education or training. (A more detailed description of the Workforce Investment Act can be found in the Appendix.)

In addition to the federal performance measures, Oael sets state targets for all funded programs. These targets are related to program enrollments, student retention, and policy compliance. Together, the federal and state targets are the metrics against which Oael measures and evaluates its own work and the work of its funded programs.

BECOMING THE HIGHEST PERFORMING STATE IN THE COUNTRY

Oael has challenged itself to lead Virginia's adult education and literacy system to be the highest performing system in the country. However, in recent years, Virginia's statewide performance against the federal targets has declined annually, and Oael recognizes that it must respond to this trend with swift and comprehensive action. As part of that response, Oael has instituted a competition for the federal funds authorized by the *Adult Education and Family Literacy Act* (AEFLA), Title II of the

Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA), in order to ensure that the most qualified and effective organizations receive the support they need to provide top quality adult education services that consistently achieve the federal and state performance measures. This competition, which is being implemented in the first half of 2012, will be the first competition for the AEFLA funds in Virginia in 13 years.

Work on the competition began in 2010, starting with authorization to conduct the competition from Superintendent of Public Instruction, Dr. Patricia Wright, followed by an extensive revision of the Virginia State Plan for Adult Education and Literacy, which was approved by the United States Department of Education in the spring of 2011. The competition will be open to all eligible providers of adult education services in Virginia, including local school divisions, community colleges, public libraries, and community-based literacy organizations. And application requirements will focus on supporting elements of OAEL's strategic plan.

While developing OAEL's updated vision and mission statements, the staff highlighted the importance of the federal NRS measures. Because they are data driven, tailored to Virginia, and yet comparable across states and relevant to work force outcomes, they play a central role in decision making and evaluation. Moreover, they influence the state-specific goals that OAEL sets for its funded programs. As a result, OAEL has set the guiding metric to substantiate its strategic plan's goals and objectives as meeting all Federal and State performance measures by June 2017.

STRATEGIC PLAN CORE: VISION, MISSION, GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND GUIDING METRIC

As a set, these elements comprise the core of OAEL's strategic plan. Each goal highlights a key strategic area of need and supports one or more of the federal performance targets. Each goal outlined below includes a brief background that establishes the context or rationale for the goal, a description of the goal, and a target date for completion of the goal. OAEL has further defined a set of supporting objectives for each goal. These objectives are also described and include target dates.

**FIGURE 9:
OAEL's Goals for the Next Five Years**

Program Management and Instructional Standards	Develop and implement standards for adult education program management, teacher quality, and instructional content with corresponding measures for monitoring and evaluating their implementation in OAEL-funded adult education programs by June 2017.
Recruitment, Retention, and Reporting	Increase and improve recruitment, retention, and reporting efforts to ensure that OAEL-funded programs collectively serve a minimum of 75,000 students, report a minimum of 40,000 students into the National Reporting System, and retain a minimum of 32,000 reported students annually by June 2017.
Career Pathways	Ensure by June 2017 that 100 percent of students enrolled in OAEL-funded programs participate in career pathways activities that prepare them with the academic and work force skills they need to successfully transition into college, careers, and responsible citizenship.
Professional Development	Implement a plan that ensures 100 percent of adult education program managers, teachers, and data management staff from OAEL-funded programs participate annually in quality professional development that supports continuous program improvement beginning July 2014.
Monitoring and Evaluation	Monitor and evaluate 100 percent of programs following a five-year cycle to ensure compliance with federal and state program and funding requirements and to identify program strengths and weaknesses by June 2017.

Program Management and Instructional Standards

Currently, there are several sets of standards that guide OAEL-funded programs, including draft content standards for General Educational Development (GED®) and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) instruction, standards adopted from Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) that guide the adult educator certification program, and guidelines that define the Individual Student Alternative Education Plan (ISAEP) program. However, OAEL believes that it must develop an integrated, comprehensive set of standards that address all aspects of all its programs so that program staff will have a clear understanding of the expectations, benchmarks, and best practices that drive performance.

GOAL 1

Develop and implement standards for adult education program management, teacher quality, and instructional content with corresponding measures for monitoring and evaluating their implementation in OAEL-funded adult education programs by June 2017.

Objectives

- **G1.01** – Update, finalize, and disseminate Virginia’s content standards for English for Speakers of Other Languages for use by OAEL-funded adult education programs by June 2012.
- **G1.02** – Develop and disseminate adult education program management standards to establish expectations for the administration and operation of OAEL-funded adult education programs by June 2014.
- **G1.03** – Develop and disseminate content standards for adult basic education, adult secondary education, and English literacy/civics education for OAEL-funded programs by June 2015.
- **G1.04** – Develop and disseminate teacher quality standards to establish expectations for teacher qualifications, training, and classroom practices in OAEL-funded adult education programs by June 2016.

- **G1.05** – Develop and implement corresponding professional development packages for adult education program managers and teachers for each phase of standards implementation by June 2016.
- **G1.06** – Develop measures to monitor and evaluate each phase of standards implementation by June 2017.

Recruitment, Retention, and Reporting

OAEL must find more effective ways to employ its limited resources to reach and serve a greater number of adults. While significant resources are devoted to the recruitment and retention of adult students and to the subsequent reporting of data reflecting students’ participation, achievements, and outcomes, an analysis of the data clearly indicates that the current database used by OAEL does not track all of the services provided by funded programs, and that far too many students leave programs before achieving a goal or an educational gain. Moreover, data matching procedures used by OAEL to document student and program achievement are not completely effective because they rely on matching OAEL data to other organization’s data sets, many of which are incomplete or not regularly updated.

GOAL 2

Increase and improve recruitment, retention, and reporting efforts to ensure that OAEL-funded programs collectively serve a minimum of 75,000 students, report a minimum of 40,000 students into the National Reporting System, and retain a minimum of 32,000 reported students annually by June 2017.

Objectives

- **G2.01** – Prepare and disseminate by January 2012 a set of guidelines and requirements for recruitment and retention plans to be submitted annually by all grant applicants starting April 2012.
- **G2.02** – Develop and manage an annual, statewide adult education outreach and recruitment campaign that will increase enrollments in ABE, ASE, ESOL, and EL/Civics classes held by OAEL-funded adult education programs by five percent annually beginning July 2013.



- **G2.03** – Track 100 percent of services provided by 100 percent of OAEL-funded programs by expanding the capacity of the data system and refining local and regional adult education program data reporting processes by July 2014.
- **G2.04** – Develop and implement corresponding professional development and technical assistance packages for adult education program managers, teachers, and data management staff to ensure accurate and complete reporting into the data system by July 2014.
- **G2.05** – Research, develop, and implement a student retention program to ensure an annual student retention rate of 80 percent by June 2017.

Career Pathways

OAEL is a member of the Governor’s Career Pathways System Task Force. This group developed and issued Virginia’s first career pathways system strategic plan in

December 2008. The plan included five recommendations to guide the growth of the career pathways system. Recommendation three identified the need to “establish the means to encourage transitions among education and employment systems, programs, and services” with a specific focus on transitioning adult learners from adult education programs into postsecondary education and training. OAEL-funded programs must increase the numbers of adults exiting adult education and literacy programs with the skills and knowledge needed to be successful in postsecondary education and work force training. Ensuring broader student participation in career pathways activities will help achieve this outcome.

GOAL 3

Ensure by June 2017 that 100 percent of students enrolled in OAEL-funded programs participate in career pathways activities that prepare them with the college and career planning, academic, and basic work force skills they need to successfully transition into college, careers, and responsible citizenship.

Objectives

- **G3.01** – Prepare and disseminate by January 2012 a set of guidelines and requirements for career pathways plans to be submitted annually by all grant applicants beginning April 2012.
- **G3.02** – Provide guidelines, access, and training to ensure that all students entering OAEL-funded programs are registered in the Virginia Education Wizard, a college and career planning tool, by June 2014.
- **G3.03** – Facilitate partnerships and implement projects at the state, regional, and local levels to ensure that 100 percent of OAEL-funded adult education programs will actively participate in the planning and service delivery in their respective work force investment boards by June 2016.
- **G3.04** – Build program capacity and set policy so that 100 percent of OAEL-funded adult education programs will operate at least one integrated education and training program in which students develop the essential basic and workplace skills necessary to gain entry-level jobs in targeted industries by June 2017.

Professional Development

Approximately 95 percent of the teachers and administrators who work in Virginia's adult education and literacy programs are employed part-time or are volunteers, and there is significant annual turnover among teachers and administrators. Therefore, it is imperative for OAEL to focus on developing a highly trained core of adult education professionals throughout Virginia. Restructuring its professional development delivery system, relying more on technology, and prioritizing grant funds to support teacher and administrator training will help to raise the level of professionalization in the field.

GOAL 4

Implement a plan that ensures 100 percent of adult education program managers, teachers, and data management staff from OAEL-funded programs participate annually in quality professional development that supports continuous program improvement beginning July 2014.

Objectives

- **G4.01** – Prepare and disseminate by January 2012 a set of guidelines and requirements for professional development plans to be submitted annually by all grant applicants starting April 2012.
- **G4.02** – Adopt criteria and a process to evaluate, approve, and credit in OAEL's monitoring and evaluation program professional development delivered to staff of OAEL-funded programs by non-OAEL-funded training providers by July 2013.
- **G4.03** – Review, refine, and restructure the OAEL-funded professional development system so that it is fully aligned with OAEL priorities by July 2013.
- **G4.04** – Provide annual, targeted professional development and technical assistance to OAEL-funded programs that is based on regional trends and programmatic needs identified in monitoring and evaluation reports beginning June 2014.

Monitoring and Evaluation

A federal monitoring visit in 2006 led to significant changes to OAEL's monitoring and evaluation system. Currently, all programs receive a year-end performance report card that measures criteria related to financial management, student performance, and policy compliance. Approximately 10 local and regional programs receive an on-site monitoring visit each year, which results in a comprehensive evaluation report targeted at program improvement. However, additional monitoring components are needed throughout the program year so that all programs are provided with regular feedback and technical assistance.

GOAL 5

Monitor and evaluate 100 percent of programs following a five-year cycle to ensure compliance with federal and state policy and funding requirements and to identify program strengths and weaknesses by June 2017.

Objectives

- **G5.01** – Develop and disseminate new criteria and processes for performing periodic desk audits of program performance and financial management by July 2012.
- **G5.02** – Conduct semiannual desk audits and issue annual performance report cards on 100 percent of OAEL-funded programs beginning July 2013.
- **G5.03** – Require 100 percent of OAEL-funded adult education programs that do not reach all federal and state performance targets to submit an annual program improvement plan beginning October 2013.
- **G5.04** – Complete a comprehensive site visit of 100 percent of OAEL-funded adult education programs by June 2017.

FIGURE 10:
Timeline of Goals and Objectives

		2012				2013				2014				2015				2016				2017	
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2																
GOAL 1	PROGRAM MANAGEMENT AND INSTRUCTIONAL STANDARDS																						
G1.01																							
G1.02																							
G1.03																							
G1.04																							
G1.05																							
G1.06																							
GOAL 2	RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, AND REPORTING																						
G2.01																							
G2.02																							
G2.03																							
G2.04																							
G2.05																							
GOAL 3	CAREER PATHWAYS																						
G3.01																							
G3.02																							
G3.03																							
G3.04																							
GOAL 4	PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT																						
G4.01																							
G4.02																							
G4.03																							
G4.04																							
GOAL 5	MONITORING AND EVALUATION																						
G5.01																							
G5.02																							
G5.03																							
G5.04																							



THE PATH MOVING FORWARD

TRENDS

ACHIEVING THESE GOALS and objectives will address significant gaps in Virginia's current adult education and literacy system, improve efficiency and quality, and help to prepare Virginia's adult students for 21st century work and life. While it focuses its time and resources to achieve these goals and objectives over the next five years, OAEL will also have to plan for and respond to other day-to-day developments and competing priorities, such as requests for information from the public and other state agencies, new initiatives identified as high priority by the Governor or VDOE leadership, changes in the NRS data reporting procedures, staff turnover, and the potential reauthorization of WIA. In considering how to advance its goals and objectives while also fulfilling these other responsibilities, OAEL staff identified five primary trends that will impact the adult education and literacy system in Virginia over the next five years and to which OAEL must be prepared to respond.

- Increasing demand for ESOL and career readiness skills will require further training, partnerships, and curriculum development.
- Shifts in regional labor market demands and changes in the workplace skills needed by employers will require that the adult education and literacy system respond with more tailored curricula and flexible scheduling.
- Significant attrition in the field over the next few years will create a higher demand for OAEL's technical assistance to adult education professionals and volunteers.
- Rapidly advancing technology will strain limited budgets and demand flexibility at the state and regional levels as programs strive to enhance their offerings.
- Increasing importance placed on accountability and data tracking will demand ongoing revisions and refinements to OAEL's monitoring processes and data systems.

STRATEGY

OAEL plays an important role in helping to ensure that all adult Virginians possess the knowledge, skills, and credentials they need to be responsible and successful employees and citizens. To help achieve its vision and mission, OAEL will follow a five-point strategy to influence the direction and effectiveness of the adult education and literacy system in Virginia.

1. Set and clearly communicate high expectations for all funded programs.
2. Focus funding, training, and staff time toward helping programs meet these expectations.
3. Identify and promote research-based best practices for use by funded programs.
4. Build partnerships that increase the system's capacity.
5. Implement effective, ongoing monitoring and evaluation processes that measure progress, inform decision making, and guide technical assistance and professional development.

In the next five years, OAEL will employ these approaches to achieve its goals and objectives. OAEL's first step will be to use the competition for federal AEFLA funding to restructure Virginia's adult education and literacy delivery system, focus all funded programs on the goals and objectives identified in this plan, and strengthen the office's oversight and influence over success. Moving forward, OAEL will employ its resources, expertise, and partnerships to develop and implement an integrated system of standards and corresponding metrics for all funded programs, professionalize the field, drive performance, and strengthen its position in Virginia's career pathways system.

VALUES

To be successful in driving Virginia's adult education system to national prominence, OAEL must work collaboratively with a wide range of partnering government agencies and private organizations. OAEL is at the center of a network of public and private entities that must work together to meet the diverse educational and training needs of adults throughout the Commonwealth.

OAEL faces increasing demands for many of its services. As a result, OAEL must be selective when choosing the new tasks it undertakes, while, at the same time, remaining flexible enough to address new priorities that will further its mission. In its work, OAEL staff is committed to being open minded, weighing competing ideas and opinions, identifying trends, supporting innovation, highlighting best practices, and maintaining its expertise. To communicate its commitment to these ideals, OAEL has established three key value statements.

DEDICATED	<i>We are committed to achieving excellence.</i>
RESPONSIVE	<i>We provide prompt, high quality customer service, guidance, and technical assistance to our programs and the public.</i>
PROGRESSIVE	<i>We continuously improve the field of adult education through analysis, innovation, and collaboration.</i>



“Those with less than a high school diploma earn 71% of the income of those with a high school diploma and only 43% of the income of those with a bachelor’s degree.”

(U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2010)

APPENDIX: BACKGROUND ON WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT

The *Workforce Investment Act of 1998* (WIA) is the main piece of federal legislation providing federal money in support of several ODEL programs. ODEL is an essential partner in the provision of work force development services in Virginia as defined by the *Adult Education and Family Literacy Act* (AEFLA), Title II of WIA. WIA was passed into law on August 7, 1998, by the 105th Congress (Public Law 105-220) “to consolidate, coordinate, and improve employment, training, literacy, and vocational rehabilitation programs in the United States” (*Workforce Investment Act, 1998*). At the state level, the Virginia General Assembly appropriates funds annually to support adult education and literacy programs throughout the Commonwealth. ODEL administers these federal and state funds through a variety of grant programs. At the agency level, ODEL collaborates with other agencies that have responsibility for work force development, including the Virginia Community College System, Department of Rehabilitative Services, Virginia Employment Commission, Department of Social Services, and Department of Labor and Industry.

WIA SUPPORTS a comprehensive range of work force development activities through statewide and local organizations. It also provides increased flexibility for state and local officials to establish broad-based labor market systems using federal education and job training funds for adults and youth. State agencies administering WIA funds are responsible for helping laid-off workers, new entrants to the work force, and youth to find jobs. To do this, the agencies assist those who have dropped out of school to develop basic skills, to earn a high school credential, and to learn English. Services are also provided to incumbent workers to help them retain employment or move toward better paying jobs. The law envisions state and local agencies working together to provide education, training, and support services simultaneously to those in need.

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“Research models suggest that ...the extent and impact of adult illiteracy will only get worse in the coming years without major changes in policy, programs, and investment.”

(Educational Testing Service, 2007)





VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
DIVISION OF
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ADULT EDUCATION**
OFFICE OF ADULT EDUCATION & LITERACY SERVICES



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