

# Virginia Board of Education Agenda Item



**Agenda Item:** B.

**Date:** February 23, 2012

<b>Title</b>	Final Review of Virginia’s Application for U.S. Department of Education Flexibility from Certain Requirements of the <i>Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965</i> (ESEA)		
<b>Presenter</b>	Mrs. Veronica Tate, Director, Office of Program Administration and Accountability		
<b>E-mail</b>	Veronica.Tate@doe.virginia.gov	<b>Phone</b>	(804) 225-2870

**Purpose of Presentation:**

Action required by state or federal law or regulation.

**Previous Review or Action:**

Previous review and action. Specify date and action taken below:  
January 12, 2012 – Accepted for first review.

**Action Requested:**

Final review: Action requested at this meeting.

**Alignment with Board of Education Goals: Please indicate (X) all that apply:**

	Goal 1: Expanded Opportunities to Learn
X	Goal 2: Accountability of Student Learning
	Goal 3: Nurturing Young Learners
X	Goal 4: Strong Literacy and Mathematics Skills
X	Goal 5: Highly Qualified and Effective Teachers and Administrators
X	Goal 6: Sound Policies for Student Success
	Goal 7: Safe and Secure Schools
	Other Priority or Initiative. Specify:

**Background Information and Statutory Authority:**

Goal 2: The Board of Education has established policies to assist chronically low-performing schools in improving as well as to recognize schools and school divisions for the achievement of excellence goals established by the governor and Board of Education through the Virginia Index of Performance (VIP) incentive program.

Goal 4: Virginia’s ESEA flexibility proposal includes student performance in reading, writing, mathematics, science, and history and social science among the proposed Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs). 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.

Goal 5: In 2011, the Board of Education adopted teacher performance standards and evaluation criteria. Performance standards and evaluation criteria for principals are pending approval at the February 2012 Board meeting.

Goal 6: The Board of Education's policies and practices demonstrate leadership in and compliance with implementing provisions of state and federal laws and regulations. They also encourage innovation in providing opportunities for student success, including the establishment of procedures and criteria for the Board to review charter school applications, college laboratory schools, and virtual schools.

The *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965* (ESEA), as amended by the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB), was scheduled for reauthorization by Congress in 2007. Although several reauthorization bills have been introduced since 2007, Congress has not successfully moved forward a bipartisan bill for ESEA reauthorization. In the absence of ESEA reauthorization, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan announced in summer of 2011 that flexibility would be offered to states in the form of waivers from certain existing restrictive and punitive ESEA requirements that misidentify a disproportionate percentage of schools and divisions as underperforming.

In August 2011, Governor Robert F. McDonnell sent a letter to Secretary Duncan in which he pointed out the flaws in the federal accountability requirements and noted that "A model that increasingly misidentifies schools as low performing and confuses the public about the quality of their schools does not advance the cause of reform or accountability." Governor McDonnell's letter is provided in Attachment A.

In September 2011, the U.S. Department of Education (USED) announced that states may request flexibility from certain requirements of ESEA 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, Secretary Duncan stated that many ESEA requirements have unintentionally become barriers to state and local forward-looking educational reform efforts not anticipated when the original legislation was amended 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. Moreover, the flexibility offer provides an unprecedented opportunity for states to propose revised federal accountability plans that more closely align with their existing state systems. To receive relief from the regulatory requirements impeding progress in the three reform areas, states must submit applications that agree to certain requirements and guidelines of the ESEA flexibility offer.

### **Summary of Important Issues:**

At its meeting on September 22, 2011, the Board accepted a report on the process to request flexibility from certain NCLB requirements and authorized the Department of Education to begin gathering stakeholder input on a new federal accountability plan. As part of the process of preparing a flexibility application, the Board solicited input from numerous stakeholder groups, as outlined in the schedule of forums provided in Attachment B. The Department of Education worked with the Board of Education and stakeholders to prepare an ESEA flexibility application that: 1) reflects the significant reform that Virginia has advanced in the three reform areas outlined in the flexibility requirement; and 2) more closely aligns the existing state accountability system with ESEA requirements.

At its meeting on January 12, 2012, the Board of Education accepted for first review Virginia's proposed ESEA flexibility application, which highlights the following current reform efforts:

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

- Adoption and implementation of revised content standards that reflect college- and career-ready expectations in reading and mathematics
- Implementation of corresponding assessments in 2011-2012 and 2012-2013, respectively
- Adoption of English language proficiency (ELP) standards and an ELP assessment that support the state's college- and career-ready standards
- Development of projects under the state's College- and Career-Ready Initiative such as capstone courses for college-intending seniors to strengthen their readiness for postsecondary coursework and partnerships with selected state universities to pilot professional development related to college- and career-ready expectations

*Principle 2: Differentiated Accountability Systems*

- Recognition for schools and divisions demonstrating achievement on a variety of performance indicators
- Implementation of a comprehensive support system focused on building division-level capacity to support schools in need of support and interventions
- Partnership with recognized educational organizations and institutions, consultants, and lead turnaround partners to develop and provide extensive professional development to struggling divisions and schools and expertise in implementing effective school reform strategies

*Principle 3: Teacher and Principal Evaluation and Support Systems*

- Adoption of revised guidelines for performance standards and evaluation criteria for teachers and principals\* that are intended to inform instruction and personnel decisions, and include differentiated performance levels and student performance and growth as a significant factor

*\* Adoption of performance standards and evaluation criteria for principals is contingent upon Board of Education action in February 2012*

In addition to highlighting Virginia's current reform efforts, the state's ESEA flexibility application revises the state's accountability system under *Principle 2: Differentiated Accountability Systems* by:

- Building on Virginia's existing state accountability system by featuring the Standards of Accreditation (SOA) as the foundation of academic achievement expectations for all schools
- Maintaining accountability by issuing annual school accreditation ratings and progress toward additional indicators, reported at the school, division, and state levels, that indicate whether proficiency gaps exist for Virginia's traditionally lower performing subgroups of students
- Identifying the most pressing subgroup needs by focusing on three proficiency gap groups with the greatest gap in academic achievement:
  - Gap group 1: students with disabilities, English language learners, and economically disadvantaged students
  - Gap group 2: African-American 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
- Incorporating growth and college- and career-ready indicators

The proposed revised accountability system: 1) blends the SOA and federal requirements into one integrated state and federal system; 2) eliminates the additional punitive labels required under the ESEA, as amended by NCLB; 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.

Virginia's proposed ESEA flexibility application is included in Attachment C. The application reflects revisions recommended by the Board of Education Committee on School and Division Accountability at its January 11, 2012, meeting, to clarify the following: 1) accreditation ratings on report cards will be supplemented with performance results for additional indicators to show the progress of proficiency gap groups in closing the achievement gap; 2) traditional subgroup performance data will continue to be displayed on the report card and used in local decision-making about appropriate supports and interventions for underperforming groups; 3) performance results will be reported publicly via school, division, and state report cards, press releases, and other related media.

The application also reflects feedback received during a pre-peer review session sponsored by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) during which peer experts from other state educational agencies, research groups, and educational consulting firms provided suggestions to strengthen Virginia's application. Pre-peer reviewers made recommendations similar to those of the Board Committee on School and Division Accountability, and advised the state to more prominently highlight the Virginia's achievements in each of the three ESEA flexibility principles.

Finally, it is important to note that USED has provided a revised application template to use, which includes additional waiver options and assurances. All modifications to Virginia's proposed request are indicated by underlining and strikethroughs. Some underlining also indicates hyperlinks to additional information on Virginia's initiatives.

Pending a spring 2012 USED approval of Virginia's ESEA flexibility application, new accountability determinations would be implemented for the 2012-2013 school year based on 2011-2012 assessment results.

**Impact on Fiscal and Human Resources:**

The provisions of the ESEA flexibility offer require the Virginia Department of Education to implement considerable revisions to federal accountability requirements. These requirements will have a significant impact on the resources of the agency and school divisions.

**Timetable for Further Review/Action:**

Upon approval by the Board, Virginia's ESEA flexibility application will be submitted to the U.S. Department of Education for review by the February 28, 2012, deadline, as extended by USED.

**Superintendent's Recommendation:**

The Superintendent of Public Instruction recommends that the Board of Education approve Virginia's proposed ESEA flexibility application and authorize the Superintendent of Public Instruction, in consultation with the President of the Board, to make technical amendments and negotiate substantive revisions to the application.



**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA**  
*Office of the Governor*

Robert F. McDonnell  
Governor

August 24, 2011

The Honorable Arne Duncan  
Secretary of Education  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20202

Dear Mr. Secretary:

The just-announced federal Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) ratings for Virginia schools and school districts illustrate the expanding disconnect between No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and the reality of what is really happening in the states. When an accountability model — regardless of its former utility and the good intentions of its designers — identifies better than six out of every ten Virginia schools as failing, it is time to go review the metrics.

A model that increasingly misidentifies schools as low performing and confuses the public about the quality of their schools does not advance the cause of reform and accountability. NCLB should be dramatically reformed with a new law that restores the proper balance between state and federal authority in public education — while still requiring very high standards and accountability for closing achievement gaps as conditions for receiving federal funds. The goals are good, but the measurements, bureaucracy, and reporting need overhaul.

A reauthorized Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) should focus on results — including continuous improvement in the performance of student subgroups — rather than prescribing the minutiae of a state testing and school ratings system. States — especially states like Virginia with mature and validated accountability programs — should have the flexibility to implement models that make sense given where their students are on the road to college and career readiness.

Given the progress Virginia's schools have made under the commonwealth's Standards of Learning (SOL) program (which predates NCLB), an accountability model based on individual student growth — with a high floor for minimum acceptable schoolwide and subgroup proficiency — makes more sense than the current system of rapidly escalating benchmarks.

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Benchmarks that jump 5-6 points every year based on a rigid formula are not capable of capturing the progress of students in schools with already-high pass rates. In these schools, the ground left to be won is occupied by the most challenging students. An accountability model that focuses on student growth would recognize subtle, but significant, gains in these schools and not leave communities wondering how a school in which achievement actually increased could be judged as failing.

Virginia's robust longitudinal student data system is capable of supporting such a growth model and accurately identifying low-performing schools and schools in which subgroups are not making acceptable progress toward grade-level proficiency. A growth-focused accountability system also could include excellence measures to prevent complacency and promote continuous improvement in high-performing schools.

I was encouraged to hear from Superintendent of Public Instruction Patricia I. Wright of your pledge not to insist on word-for-word adoption of the Common Core State Standards as a condition for receiving a waiver under the short-term flexibility you announced on August 8, 2011.

I fully supported the decision of the Commonwealth's Board of Education to maintain the SOL program as the foundation of instruction and accountability in our classrooms. Board members redoubled their commitment to putting the interests of students and teachers first and resisting any pressure to abandon Virginia's proven standards and adopt the federally created Common Core.

Make no mistake that Virginia has and will continue to look for ways to improve upon our SOL program to meet or exceed the Common Core, as we have personally discussed. Virginia's newly revised reading and mathematics standards are now fully aligned with the Common Core and are of equal, and in some areas, greater rigor. With instruction and assessments in 2011-2012 based on the new mathematics SOL, Virginia will actually be implementing and testing Common Core content, while so-called adoption states continue to await the development of resources and tests.

Because of the State Board's thoughtful exercise of its authority under our constitution to establish and revise learning objectives for our public schools, Virginia students will experience the benefits of rigorous college and career ready standards — without the disruption to instruction and accountability that might have followed word-for-word adoption of the Common Core.

In addition, the Virginia Department of Education, the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia and the Virginia Community College System have approved a joint agreement on performance expectations in English and mathematics that high school graduates must meet to be successful in freshman-level college courses or career training. These college-and-career-ready expectations — which were developed at the direction of the Board of Education and in collaboration with high school educators, college and university faculty and the business community — build upon the solid foundation of the Standards of Learning.

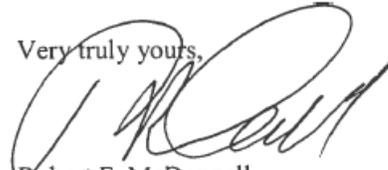
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Virginia has a bipartisan tradition of education reform. Our SOL program has been sustained and strengthened by Governors and legislative majorities of both parties. In the coming months, I will work with Superintendent Wright, the Board of Education, and the legislature to institute additional reforms to ensure Virginia students receive the world-class education they need and deserve to be internationally competitive.

It is in this spirit that I offer you my pledge to support common-sense reform of federal education law that will strengthen accountability while freeing states to innovate and focus resources where they are most needed.

With warm, personal regards I remain

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. McDonnell', written over the words 'Very truly yours,'.

Robert F. McDonnell

RFM/piw/kcc

cc: The Honorable Laura W. Fornash  
The Honorable William J. Howell  
The Honorable Martin L. Kent  
The Honorable Ward L. Armstrong  
The Honorable Thomas K. Norment, Jr  
The Honorable Richard L. Saslaw  
Dr. Patricia I. Wright, Superintendent of Public Instruction  
State Board of Education  
Virginia Congressional Delegation

**Virginia Department of Education  
ESEA Flexibility  
Schedule of Stakeholder Input**

<b>Date*</b>	<b>Forum</b>	<b>Stakeholders Providing Input</b>
Wednesday, 10/26/11 Starting at 2 p.m.	Board Committee on School and Division Accountability	Representatives from the following organizations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Virginia Association of School Superintendents (VASS)</li> <li>• Virginia Parent Teacher Association (VPTA)</li> <li>• Virginia School Boards Association (VSBA)</li> </ul>
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: <a href="http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/meetings/info_attending.shtml">http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/meetings/info_attending.shtml</a> .
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.	<i>No Child Left Behind Act of 2001</i> (NCLB) Committee of Practitioners Meeting	Selected educators representing various segments of Virginia's education community
Wednesday, 11/16/11 Starting at 2 p.m.	Board Committee on School and Division Accountability	Representatives from the following organizations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals (VAESP)</li> <li>• Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals (VASSP)</li> <li>• Virginia ESL Supervisors' Association (VESA)</li> <li>• Virginia Council of Administrators for Special Education (VCASE)</li> <li>• Virginia Education Association (VEA)</li> </ul> One selected educator is also invited to provide input.
Thursday, 11/17/11 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: <a href="http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/meetings/info_attending.shtml">http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/meetings/info_attending.shtml</a> .
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 Superintendent's Leadership Advisory Council (SLAC)
Wednesday, 1/11/12	Board Committee on School and Division Accountability	Public comment will be received by persons that indicate their interest in speaking using the procedure outlined at: <a href="http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/meetings/info_attending.shtml">http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/meetings/info_attending.shtml</a> .
Thursday, 1/12/12	Board of Education Meeting	Public comment will be received by persons that indicate their interest in speaking using the procedure outlined at: <a href="http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/meetings/info_attending.shtml">http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/meetings/info_attending.shtml</a> .
12/19/11	<i>No Child Left Behind Act of 2001</i> (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

\*Other meetings may be scheduled based on need.

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# **ESEA FLEXIBILITY REQUEST**

## **VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

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Revised September 28, 2011

This document replaces the previous version, issued September 23, 2011.

U.S. Department of Education  
Washington, DC 20202

OMB Number: 1810-0708  
Expiration Date: March 31, 2012

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.

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## INTRODUCTION

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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

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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.

**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. 4-5), and assurances (p. 5-6).
- A description of how the SEA has met the consultation requirements (p. 8).
- An overview of the SEA’s request for the ESEA flexibility (p. 8). This overview is a synopsis of the SEA’s vision of a comprehensive and coherent system to improve student achievement and the quality of instruction and will orient the peer reviewers to the SEA’s request. The overview should be about 500 words.
- Evidence and plans to meet the principles (p. 9-18). 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](mailto: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 will be provided multiple opportunities to submit requests for the flexibility. The submission dates are November 14, 2011, a date to be announced in mid-February 2012, and an additional opportunity following the conclusion of the 2011–2012 school year.

### **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE MEETING FOR SEAS**

To assist SEAs in preparing a request and to respond to questions, the Department will host a series of Technical Assistance Meetings via webinars in September and October 2011.

### **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION**

If you have any questions, please contact the Department by e-mail at [ESEAflexibility@ed.gov](mailto:ESEAflexibility@ed.gov).

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

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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.

<b>LABEL</b>	<b>LIST OF ATTACHMENTS</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
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## COVER SHEET FOR ESEA FLEXIBILITY REQUEST

Legal Name of Requester: Dr. Patricia I. Wright, 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: Mrs. 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: <a href="mailto:veronica.tate@doe.virginia.gov">veronica.tate@doe.virginia.gov</a>	
Chief State School Officer (Printed Name): Dr. Patricia I. Wright	Telephone: (804) 225-2023
Signature of the Chief State School Officer:  X_____	Date:
The State, through its authorized representative, agrees to meet all principles of the ESEA Flexibility.	

**WAIVERS**

By submitting this flexibility request, the SEA requests flexibility through waivers of the ten ESEA requirements listed below and their associated regulatory, administrative, and reporting requirements by checking each of the boxes below. The provisions below represent the general areas of flexibility requested; a chart appended to the document titled *ESEA Flexibility Frequently Asked Questions* enumerates each specific provision of which the SEA requests a waiver, which the SEA incorporates into its request by reference.

- 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 schoolwide 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.
10. The requirements in ESEA section 1003(g)(4) and the definition of a Tier I school in Section I.A.3 of the School Improvement Grants (SIG) final requirements. The SEA requests this waiver so that it may award SIG funds to an LEA to implement one of the four SIG models in any of the State’s priority schools that meet the definition of “priority schools” set forth in the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*.

Optional Flexibilities:

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

11. 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.
12. 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 that are not reward schools, priority schools, or focus schools.

13. 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 rank sufficiently high to be served.

**ASSURANCES**

By submitting this application, the SEA assures that:

- 1. It requests waivers of the above-referenced requirements based on its agreement to meet Principles 1 through 4 of the flexibility, as described throughout the remainder of this request.
- 2. It will adopt 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 new college- and career-ready standards, no later than the 2013–2014 school year. (Principle 1)
- 3. It will develop and 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). (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 report to the public its lists of reward schools, priority schools, and focus schools at the time the SEA is approved to implement the flexibility, and annually thereafter, it will publicly recognize its reward schools as well as make public its lists of priority and focus schools if it chooses to update those lists. (Principle 2)
- 8. Prior to submitting this request, it provided student growth data on their current students and the students they taught in the previous year to, at a minimum, teachers of reading/language arts and mathematics in grades in which the State administers assessments in those subjects in a manner that is timely and informs instructional programs, or it will do so no later the deadline required under the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund. (Principle 3)

- 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 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 State 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 this request.
- 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 and for each subgroup described in ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(C)(v)(II): 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. It will also 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.

**If the SEA selects Option A in section 3.A of its request, indicating that it has not yet developed and adopted all guidelines for teacher and principal evaluation and support systems, it must also assure that:**

- 15. It will submit to the Department for peer review and approval a copy of the guidelines that it will adopt by the end of the 2011–2012 school year. (Principle 3)

## 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:

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

The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) invited diverse stakeholders to provide input through a variety of forums as shown in the table below. The bolded sections below denote the opportunities for teachers and their representatives to provide input:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Forum</b>	<b>Stakeholders Providing Input</b>
10/26/11	Board Committee on School and Division Accountability	Representatives from the following organizations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Virginia Association of School Superintendents (VASS)</li> <li>• Virginia Parent Teacher Association (VPTA)</li> <li>• Virginia School Boards Association (VSBA)</li> </ul>
10/27/11	Board of Education Meeting	Public Comment
10/31/11	Accountability Round Table	Selected division personnel required to implement accountability provisions
<b>11/8/11</b>	<b><i>No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) Committee of Practitioners Meeting</i></b>	<b>Selected educators representing various segments of Virginia’s education community, as outlined in the ESEA</b>
<b>11/16/11</b>	<b>Board Committee on School and Division Accountability</b>	1. Representatives from the following organizations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals (VAESP)</li> <li>• Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals (VASSP)</li> <li>• Virginia ESL Supervisors’ Association (VESA)</li> <li>• Virginia Council of Administrators for Special Education (VCASE)</li> <li>• <b>Virginia Education Association (VEA)</b></li> </ul> 2. <b>Selected teachers</b>
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 <b>teachers</b> nominated by <b>VEA</b> , 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)
<b>12/19/11</b>	<b><i>No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) Committee of Practitioners Meeting</i></b>	<b>Selected educators representing various segments of Virginia’s education community, as outlined in the ESEA</b>
1/11/12	Board Committee on School and Division Accountability	Public Comment
1/12/12	Board of Education Meeting	Public Comment

All input provided by stakeholders was considered in the creation of the ESEA Flexibility proposal. Attachment 2 contains comments provided at each of the meetings.

- 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 below denote the opportunities for these diverse communities to provide input:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Forum</b>	<b>Stakeholders Providing Input</b>
<b>10/26/11</b>	<b>Board Committee on School and Division Accountability</b>	Representatives from the following organizations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Virginia Association of School Superintendents (VASS)</li> <li>• <b>Virginia Parent Teacher Association (VPTA)</b></li> <li>• Virginia School Boards Association (VSBA)</li> </ul>
<b>10/27/11</b>	<b>Board of Education Meeting</b>	<b>Public Comment</b>
10/31/11	Accountability Round Table	Selected division personnel required to implement accountability provisions
<b>11/8/11</b>	<b><i>No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) Committee of Practitioners Meeting</i></b>	<b>Selected educators representing various segments of Virginia's education community, as outlined in the ESEA</b>
<b>11/16/11</b>	<b>Board Committee on School and Division Accountability</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Representatives from the following organizations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals (VAESP)</li> <li>• Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals (VASSP)</li> <li>• Virginia ESL Supervisors' Association (VESA)</li> <li>• <b>Virginia Council of Administrators for Special Education (VCASE)</b></li> <li>• Virginia Education Association (VEA)</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Selected teachers</li> </ol>
<b>11/17/11</b>	<b>Board of Education Meeting</b>	<b>Public Comment</b>
<b>11/18/11</b>	<b>Written Comment*</b>	<b>Selected special interest groups</b>
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)
<b>12/19/11</b>	<b><i>No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) Committee of Practitioners Meeting</i></b>	<b>Selected educators representing various segments of Virginia's education community, as outlined in the ESEA</b>

1/11/12	<b>Board Committee on School and Division Accountability</b>	<b>Public Comment</b>
1/12/12	<b>Board of Education Meeting</b>	<b>Public Comment</b>

\*The VDOE invited written comment from the following organizations:

- Chamber of Commerce
- JustChildren Program
- Virginia Association for Career and Technical Education
- Virginia Association for Early Childhood Education
- Virginia Association of Federal Education Program Administrators
- Virginia Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
- Virginia Board on Teacher Education and Licensure
- Virginia Council of Administrators for Special Education
- Virginia Educational Technology Advisory Council
- Virginia Latino Advisory Board
- Virginia National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)
- Virginia Partnership for Out-of-School Time

All input provided by stakeholders was considered in the creation of the ESEA flexibility proposal. The following recommendations from stakeholders have been incorporated into Virginia's proposal:

### **School and Division Accountability**

#### *General*

- Design annual measurable objectives that are easy to understand and achievable for most schools.
- Use the state's Standards of Accreditation targets as the basis for revised federal annual measurable objectives.
- Reset annual measurable objectives at such time that sufficient growth data are available to use as a factor in determinations.
- Use the state's Standards of Accreditation accountability ratings as the basis of the classification system for both Title I and non-Title I schools.

#### *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.
- Incorporate Title III Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAOs) into a single accountability system for divisions.
- Maintain steady Title III AMAOs rather than maintaining targets that rise annually.

- Allow scores on English language proficiency (ELP) assessments to be used as a growth measure for Limited English proficient (LEP) students who have not yet attained proficiency in English.
- Maintain high but reasonable expectations for students with disabilities.

Attachment 2 contains the ESEA flexibility recommendations shared by stakeholders.

## 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 is ranked fourth 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 offer provides Virginia the opportunity to align its state and federal accountability requirements to create a cohesive accountability system that holds schools and divisions accountable for high achievement for all students and college- and career-ready graduates, while preventing the misidentification of schools as underperforming. Virginia's ESEA flexibility proposal is premised on the state's:

1. Recently revised college- and career-ready standards for all students and subgroups;
2. Newly-developed next-generation assessments corresponding to the revised standards;
3. Standards of Accreditation system to inform supports and interventions for both non-Title I and Title I schools;

4. Enhanced subgroup reporting to provide more meaningful performance data for traditionally underperforming groups of students, including growth and college- and career-ready indicators; and
5. Recently revised performance standards and evaluation criteria for teachers and principals.

### ***Background***

Virginia's divisions and schools have operated under a bifurcated accountability system for the past decade – one part built on Virginia's strong and validated *Standards of Learning* and assessment system, and the other part designed to meet the statutory and regulatory requirements of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB). The two different sets of performance expectations, status determinations, and accountability requirements created an incongruous and confusing system for divisions, schools, and stakeholders. For example, although a school may have achieved full state accreditation status under the Standards of Accreditation system, it may have been in school improvement under the NCLB accountability requirements.

Of Virginia's 1,839 schools, 1,768 or 96 percent, received a "fully accredited" rating under the state's Standards of Accreditation system in 2011-2012 based on results from the 2010-2011 assessments. In contrast, 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 are scheduled to increase an additional five points in both reading and mathematics for the 2012 assessment cycle, an even greater disproportionate percentage of schools will be misidentified as underperforming during the 2012-2013 year if the current federal accountability requirements remain in place. Additionally, under NCLB, schools must meet each of 29 targets in order to make AYP. If a school misses one target by even one point, it does not make AYP unless it meets safe harbor.

The flexibility to establish annual performance expectations and classifications that are appropriate for Virginia's schools will allow for proper identification of those schools that need either comprehensive or targeted interventions. Rather than confusing the public with two often conflicting accountability ratings, Virginia's revised accountability plan would eliminate AYP and instead supplement state accreditation ratings with a prominent "dashboard" on each school's report card that would clearly and graphically show progress of subgroups – or the lack thereof – toward closing proficiency gaps.

~~The ESEA flexibility offer provides Virginia the opportunity to align its state and federal requirements, thereby providing a cohesive accountability system that holds all schools and divisions accountable for high student achievement while preventing the misidentification of schools as underperforming. Virginia's ESEA flexibility proposal is premised on the state's strong Standards of Accreditation system serving as the core of both state and federal~~

accountability.

### *Virginia’s Innovative Educational Reform Efforts*

It is important to note that Virginia has already advanced significant reform in each of the three reform areas outlined in the flexibility requirements. ~~The flexibility to establish annual performance expectations and classifications that are appropriate for Virginia’s schools will allow for proper identification of those schools that need either comprehensive or targeted interventions.~~ Below is a summary of the ways Virginia’s ~~progress toward meeting~~ 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. ~~and implementation of new~~ New and more rigorous technology-enhanced next-generation assessments in mathematics, English/writing, and science are being implemented in 2011-2012 and 2012-2013, respectively.

#### **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 are already being implemented in 25 schools participating in Governor McDonnell’s performance-pay pilot initiative. The state is providing school personnel with training and resource materials to assist in the implementation of the performance evaluation standards, criteria, and processes.

In addition, Governor Robert F. McDonnell recently announced his “Opportunity to Learn” K-12 legislative agenda, which includes 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 provides structured support for initiatives

in career and technical education, STEM activities, and expanded community and business involvement in local educational efforts. The Governor’s agenda is currently under consideration in the 2012 Virginia General Assembly, and is proposed to be funded through an additional \$438 million in 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 bold reform agenda, position the state to implement a more effective accountability system for schools and divisions. As part of the process of preparing the ESEA flexibility application, the Virginia Board of Education solicited input from various stakeholder groups as described in the *Consultation* section of this application. Pending a spring 2012 approval of Virginia’s ESEA flexibility application, new accountability determinations would be implemented for the 2012-2013 school year based on 2011-2012 assessment results.

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

### 1A ADOPT COLLEGE-AND CAREER-READY STANDARDS

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

<p><b>Option A</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 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.</p> <p>i. Attach evidence that the State has adopted the standards, consistent with the State’s standards adoption process. (Attachment 4)</p>	<p><b>Option B</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 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.</p> <p>i. Attach evidence that the State has adopted the standards, consistent with the State’s standards adoption process. (Attachment 4)</p> <p>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)</p>
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### 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 F. McDonnell has proposed a bold legislative agenda currently under consideration in the 2012 Virginia General Assembly. Specific to college and career readiness, his “[Opportunity to Learn](#)” agenda includes proposed actions that would:

- 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.
- Repeal the requirement that school divisions must begin their school term after Labor Day unless they have a waiver from the Board of Education to increase the amount of instructional time students receive in a given year.
- 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.
- Provide \$1.8 million in funding in FY13 and FY14 for 10th graders to take the PSAT and partner with College Board to conduct statewide workshops on using the results to increase AP participation, SAT scores, and career readiness.
- 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 or grade 4 to 5. A \$4.1 million FY13 budget amendment has also been proposed for additional funding to [Virginia Early Intervention Reading Initiative](#) to assist with the reading interventions.

Specific to the question posed for Principle 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; 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.

***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 latest review cycle began in 2005 when the Virginia Board of Education adopted revised [Computer Technology SOL](#); followed by revised [Fine Arts SOL](#) in 2006; revised [Foreign Language SOL](#) in 2007; revised [History and Social Science](#), [Health](#), [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. All but the *English* and *Science SOL* have been fully implemented. The 2010 *English* and *Science SOL* are currently being phased in, with full implementation and assessment in 2012-2013.

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.

### **[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 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. 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](#) (page 2), 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 are being piloted in several school divisions in 2011-2012. 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 pilot the courses in 2011-2012. 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 are piloting the course in 2011-2012 or plan to pilot it in 2012-2013. Once completed, all of these materials will reside in the public domain and be available to all Virginia teachers (and others).

### **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 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.

### **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 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.

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. The WIDA ELP 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 ELP 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 ELP standards support the English language development of ELLs to provide the foundation for them to achieve academically in all content areas. The five WIDA ELP standards are represented in the following grade clusters: Pre-K-K; 1-2; 3-5; 6-8; and 9-12. Additionally, each standard encompasses six levels of English language proficiency as well as the four language domains. The levels of English language proficiency are: entering, beginning, developing, expanding, bridging, and reaching. The four language domains are: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Finally, the standards contain both formative and summative model performance indicators.

In 2009, Virginia prepared both a [PreK – 5](#) and a [Grades 6 – 12](#) crosswalk showing the alignment between the WIDA ELP standards and the Virginia *Standards of Learning* in English, mathematics, science, and history and social science. Staff will soon begin the process of updating the crosswalks to align with recent revisions to these *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.

### Percent of Students\* Who Are Economically Disadvantaged, By Subgroup

All Students	Asian	Black	Hispanic	White	LEP	Students with Disabilities
37%	23%	61%	59%	23%	62%	48%

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

#### Assistance to All At-Risk Students

Virginia leverages both state and federal funds to address the needs of all students, with particular emphasis on supporting at-risk students. This support is provided to all students, including students with disabilities, ELLs, and economically disadvantaged students.

Among the state-funded initiatives are:

- [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 are eligible for 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 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](#), 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 [Phonological and Literacy Screening \(PALS\)](#) assessment. In the 2012 legislative session, Governor McDonnell proposed an additional \$8.2 million over two years to the Early Intervention Reading Initiative to provide reading interventions for all students in grades K – 3 who demonstrate a need for the services. A proposed revision to Virginia’s *Standards of Quality* would require that students in grades 3 and 4 who demonstrate reading deficiencies receive remediation prior to being promoted from grade 3 to 4 or grade 4 to 5.
- Additionally, [Virginia’s Early Warning System](#) 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.

***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.

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).

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](#).

***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 will be released by 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](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.](#)

Virginia also provided the [Mathematics Standards of Learning Crosswalk Between the 2009 Standards](#) and 2001 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.

Finally, 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.

### **Professional Development**

Virginia has provided targeted professional development in a “train-the-trainer” format through [Mathematics SOL Institutes](#) in 2009, 2010, and 2011 across the Commonwealth that involved over 1,650 administrators and teachers of mathematics, special education, and limited English proficient students. The 2011 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.

English SOL Institutes are planned for implementation across Virginia beginning in the spring 2012. The content of the new *English SOL*, *English SOL Curriculum Framework*, and *English SOL Scope and Sequence Sample Lesson Plans* will be presented to administrators and teachers of English, special education, and LEP students. Department of Education staff members have also delivered presentations and inservices 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 several divisions across the state. As full implementation and assessment of the 2010 *English SOL* approaches, the Department of Education will target other associations, organizations, and divisions for delivery of informational presentations and inservices.

Additionally, Virginia has used its Mathematics and Science Partnership (MSP) funds under NCLB to create regional [Professional Development Centers for Mathematics](#) to provide sustained, intensive and classroom-focused professional development aligned with the 2009 Mathematics Standards of Learning (SOL). The regional centers across the state each focus 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.

The 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:

- [From Vision to Practice Seventh Annual Institute: From Cradle to Career - Pathways to Success](#), which 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; 5) pupil service personnel, or others who provide support to students in preparing for postsecondary and career success.

- 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 support of and participation 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 will also benefit 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 are being developed for the English and mathematics capstone courses mentioned earlier. The modules will 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 will 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 will 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).

### **Assessment Blueprints and Practice Tools**

*Standards of Learning* (SOL) test blueprints are provided to inform 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 [mathematics, grades 3-8, Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II](#) and in [Reading, grades 3-8 and End-of-Course \(Grade 11\)](#). [SOL Practice Items and Practice Item Guides](#) are presented via the [Virginia Electronic Practice Assessment Tool \(ePAT\)](#) application to familiarize students, teachers, and administrators with new 2009 *Mathematics SOL* assessment questions, including Technology Enhanced Items. These tests items closely simulate the online Standards of Learning assessment experience for students. In addition, sample sets of [Released Standards of Learning Test Items](#) from *Mathematics SOL* tests that were administered to Virginia public school students during the previous spring test administration 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 include formula sheets for grades 6 – 8 and End-of-Course Algebra I, Geometry and Algebra II, as well as a z-table. The formula sheets will be effective for the end-of-course tests administered in fall 2011 and for grades 6 through 8 mathematics tests administered in spring 2012.

The [Virginia Electronic Practice Assessment Tool \(ePAT\)](#) is also intended to support and enhance student preparation for the *English SOL* Assessments. The ePAT contains items that are representative of the content and skills assessed on the *English SOL* tests. Released tests presented through the ePAT application closely simulate the online *SOL* assessment experience for students. [Released Standards of Learning Test Items](#) from *English SOL* tests that were administered to Virginia public school students are available for teacher, student, and public use. In addition, Virginia provides the [Writing Practice Tool](#) for [Grade 5 Writing](#), [Grade 8 Writing](#), [End of Course \(EOC\) Writing](#), and [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 will be administered online. As of November 2011, an [online writing page](#) is available to serve as a resource for writing instruction and information on the new writing assessment.

### **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 program for [From Vision to Practice Seventh Annual Institute: From Cradle to Career - Pathways to Success](#).

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.

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, lending library of multimedia resources and technology, referral to other services, and workshops. In addition to responding to requests for services, TTAC staff 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 Federal Program Monitoring Office. The Virginia Department of Education has a comprehensive database on TTAC services, which is monitored to determine schools and school divisions that 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 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 Department of Education.

Additionally, Virginia has a strong Response to Intervention (RtI) initiative, a comprehensive student-centered assessment and intervention framework used to identify and address individual student difficulties before referral to special education. In using the RtI approach, students receive research-based intervention and assessment. Rather than waiting for a student

to fail, interventions and assessments are designed to meet the needs of each student with individualized instruction. Virginia launched its RtI initiative with statewide institutes in Roanoke in November 2007 and in Newport News in December 2007. A third institute convened April 1-2, 2008, in Fredericksburg. The Virginia RtI guidance document, [Responsive Instruction: Refining Our Work of Teaching All Children](#), was disseminated in the fall 2007 and sent to all school divisions in the Commonwealth. Virginia's RTI guidance has a major focus on universal screening, which is used to identify students who are struggling and who may need specific interventions. Through screening and other data, increasingly intensive instructional interventions are provided to students through the school's systematic approach to implementing multi-tiered interventions. The Virginia Department of Education is directing and supporting RTI at the elementary, middle, and high school levels and offers demonstration sites to scale-up the RTI framework.

***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.

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:

	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011
Student Enrollment, Grades 9 - 12	378,755	381,194	380,787	380,720	379,996
Students Enrolled in Governor’s Schools	3,796	3,997	4,457	4,525	4,631
Senior IB Enrollment	1,057	1,254	1,270	1,098	1,284
Seniors Awarded IB Diplomas	773	847	734	765	821
Students Taking 1 or More AP Courses	55,147	58,019	63,070	67,170	71,192
Students Taking 1 or More AP Exams	48,481	51,148	57,346	57,703	62,800
Students Taking 1 or More Dual Enrollment Courses	22,882	17,465	23,127	23,740	20,966

- Enrollment data available at: [http://www.doe.virginia.gov/statistics\\_reports/enrollment/fall\\_membership/index.shtml](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](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.*

### **The 2011 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)**

- The average mathematics score for Virginia students in grade 8 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 5 points higher than the national average of 240, and a two-point increase in grade-4 mathematics achievement since 2009.
- In 2011, 4th-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-4 reading scores.
- Virginia 8th-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 College Board SAT**

- The Commonwealth’s 2011 graduating seniors achieved at higher levels than public school students nationwide on all three SAT subsections:
  - ✓ The average reading score of 509 for Virginia public school students is 15 points higher than the national average.
  - ✓ The average mathematics score of 507 for Virginia public school students is 1 point higher.
  - ✓ The average writing score of 492 for Virginia public school students is 9 points higher.
- Asian, black and Hispanic Virginia public school graduates outperformed their peers nationwide on all three SAT subsections.
- The College Board reported that Virginia’s 2011 graduates represented the largest and most diverse pool of college-bound students in the state’s history; four out of every 10 Virginia public school graduates who took the SAT were members of a minority group. Sixty-seven percent of 2011 public school graduates in Virginia took the SAT – a five-percent increase in participation over the previous year.

### **2011 ACT**

- Virginia public high school graduates outperformed their peers nationwide by a significant margin on the 2011 ACT. The state’s public school students achieved a composite score of 22.2, compared with 21.1 for public school graduates nationwide.
- The percentage of Virginia public school students meeting ACT college-readiness benchmarks was six or more points higher than the percentage 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. VASS provides training for teachers in curriculum, instruction and assessment to help them prepare for AP classes and tests as well as incentives to AP teachers and students for accepting the extra challenge of these rigorous programs. VASS high schools have contributed to the overall focus on and student success in AP courses in Virginia.

The College Board has provided the following additional data about Advanced Placement (AP) course and test taking patterns in Virginia:

- The number of AP examinations taken by 2011 public school graduates that qualified for college credit increased by 7 percent from the previous year.
  - Of the 122,269 AP tests taken by Virginia public school students, 71,469, or 58.5 percent, earned a grade of 3 or higher.
- In February 2011, Virginia:
  - Scored the largest five-year increase in the nation on students scoring a grade 3, 4, or 5, followed by Maryland, Georgia, and Maine.
  - Ranked third in the nation on students scoring a grade 3 or better, preceded by New York and Maryland.
  - Was recognized by The College Board as only one of 16 states that have eliminated the “equity and excellence” gap for Hispanic students.
  - Exceeded the national average in AP participation by nearly ten points.
- From 2006-2007 to 2010-2011 in Virginia:
  - The number of AP exams taken has increased from 90,181 to 122,269 (35.6 percent increase).
  - The number of AP exams with scores of 3, 4, or 5 has increased from 53,915 to 71,469 (32.6 percent increase).

The following table provides data on AP success in Virginia:

Group	Test Takers (# of Students)			Exams Taken		Number of 3-5 Scores	
	Total	Increase from last year	% of Total	Total	Increase from last year	Total	Increase from last year
<b>All Students</b>	66,288	7.4%	100.0%	122,269	8.8%	71,469	7.0%
<b>Asian</b>	8,376	9.1%	12.6%	18,397	11.2%	11,606	11.7%
<b>Black</b>	7,550	9.7%	11.4%	11,865	12.2%	3,616	8.8%
<b>Hispanic</b>	4,436	12.9%	6.7%	7,469	14.4%	3,808	8.6%
<b>White</b>	40,264	6.5%	60.7%	74,636	9.1%	47,142	7.7%

In the 2012 General Assembly, Governor McDonnell introduced budget language that would establish 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 will also provide 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. 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.

<p><b>Option A</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The SEA is participating in one of the two State consortia that received a grant under the Race to the Top Assessment competition.</p> <p>i. Attach the State’s Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) under that competition. (Attachment 6)</p>	<p><b>Option B</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 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.</p> <p>i. 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.</p>	<p><b>Option C</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 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.</p> <p>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)</p>
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Virginia is a national leader in implementing online tests and is often consulted by other states and consortia that are transitioning to online testing. By 2013 all Standards of Learning (SOL) tests in Virginia will be 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 will be administered for the first time in 2011-2012. Examples of the technology-enhanced items for mathematics may be found at [http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/sol/practice\\_items/index.shtml](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/sol/practice_items/index.shtml). New reading, writing, and science assessments that also include technology-enhanced items are being implemented in 2012-2013. In addition to the new SOL tests, Virginia is also implementing 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.

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 assessments will be submitted beginning in fall 2012 and documentation for the reading assessments will be submitted during the 2012-2013 school year.

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 will also be developed to support a “college path” level. The Virginia Board of Education is expected to adopt a “college path” achievement level for the reading test in early 2013.

Virginia is developing new *Standards of Learning (SOL)* mathematics tests for grades 3-8 as well as for Algebra I, Geometry and Algebra II that will be administered for the first time in 2011-2012. In addition to the new SOL mathematics tests, Virginia is also implementing the Virginia Modified Achievement Standards Tests (VMASST) in mathematics for grades 3-8 and Algebra I in 2011-2012. VMASST 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. Both the SOL and the VMASST mathematics assessments are based on the content standards described in the responses to Questions 1.A and 1.B.

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New reading tests for grades 3–8 as well as a new end-of-course reading test administered at the high school level will be implemented in 2012–2013. In addition to the new SOL reading tests, Virginia is also implementing new VMAST assessments in reading for grades 3–8 and high school in 2012–2013. Both the SOL and the VMAST reading assessments are based on the content standards described in the responses to Questions 1.A and 1.B. Peer review documentation for the new reading assessments will be submitted during the 2012–2013 school year. Using a similar process as was used for the Algebra II test, the end-of-course reading test will also be developed to support a “college path” level.

[Student growth percentiles](#) will be 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. In addition, Lexile scores for the reading test and Quantile scores for the mathematics tests will provide additional measures of growth. Virginia has reported Lexile scores on its SOL reading tests since 2008. Beginning with the new mathematics SOL tests administered in 2011–2012, Quantile scores also will be reported.

## 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.

Beginning with accountability ratings for the 2012–2013 school year, Virginia will implement a revised ESEA accountability plan that has at its core the state’s existing Standards of Accreditation (SOA) as the foundation of academic achievement expectations for all schools. The SOA requires 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 specific

graduation requirements. Schools will receive annual accreditation ratings as defined in the *Standards of Accreditation* section below.

In addition to annual school accreditation ratings, the accountability system has been enhanced to include more meaningful performance indicators that show whether proficiency gaps exist for Virginia's traditionally lower performing subgroups of students. The additional indicators include student growth indicators and college- and career-ready indicators as described and illustrated in response to Question 2.B. ~~the accountability plan requires the identification of the~~ The most pressing subgroup needs will be identified by focusing on three “proficiency gap groups” 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, not already included in gap group 1
- **Gap group 3:** Hispanic students, of one or more races, not already included in gap group 1

The proficiency gap groups described above were configured based on extensive data analysis revealing the greatest performance gaps in both Title I and non-Title I schools and stakeholder input regarding the most effective methodology for identifying and addressing the most critical subgroup needs. Additional details about Virginia’s rationale for the proficiency gap group configuration are included in the response to Question 2.B.

~~Each school, division, and the state will receive results for additional performance indicators that show whether proficiency gaps exist for Virginia's traditionally lower performing subgroups of students. The additional indicators include student growth indicators and college- and career-ready indicators as described in response to Question 2.B.~~

Virginia’s revised accountability system: 1) blends the SOA and federal requirements into one integrated state and federal system; 2) eliminates the additional Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) and school improvement labels required under the ESEA and assigns school accreditation and proficiency gap determinations; and 3) reduces the number of goals or 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.

### **Standards of Accreditation**

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:

- ii. ***Fully Accredited***: A school will be rated *Fully Accredited* when its eligible students meet the SOA pass rates as shown in the *Revised Annual Measurable Objectives* section of the response to Question 2.B.
  - ***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:

<b>Graduation and Completion Index Benchmarks for Provisionally Accredited Ratings</b>		
<b>Academic Year</b>	<b>Accreditation Year</b>	<b>Index Percentage Points</b>
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.

### **Statewide System of Recognition and Support**

The state’s *VIP Incentive 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. Schools with 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.

Schools identified as priority and focus schools will receive targeted support and interventions through the statewide system of support. Priority schools will 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 will be required to work closely with a state-approved contractor and 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. This includes intervention strategies for students with disabilities and English language learners.

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

<b>Option A</b>	<b>Option B</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> The SEA only includes student achievement on reading/language arts and mathematics assessments in its differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system and to identify reward, priority, and focus schools.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 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 to identify reward, priority, and focus schools, it must: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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</li> <li>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.</li> </ol>

Under the state’s Standards of Accreditation system described in Question 2.A.i, performance on assessments for English, mathematics, science, and history and social science are weighted equally to determine accreditation ratings. For the reporting of proficiency gap group performance and for the identification of priority and focus schools, only reading and mathematics assessment results will be considered. The table below shows the percentage of “all students” scoring proficient for assessments administered in the 2010-2011 school year:

<b>Subject Area Assessment</b>	<b>2010-2011 Percentage of “All Students” Scoring Proficient</b>
Reading	88
Mathematics	87
History/Social Science	84
Science	90

Virginia is implementing new mathematics assessments in the spring of 2012 and new reading and science assessments in the spring of 2013, which will affect accountability results for

schools. As the assessments based on new standards are implemented, the state expects the percentage of students passing the assessment to fall sharply and then gradually increase. In 1998 when new mathematics tests were administered for the first time, the pass rates ranged from 31 percent for Algebra II to 63 percent for grade 3 mathematics. By 2001 the pass rate for Algebra II was 74 percent and for grade 3 mathematics the pass rate was 77 percent. Additionally, when new grade level tests in grades 6 and 7 mathematics were administered for the first time in 2006, the pass rates were 51 percent and 44 percent, respectively. In the 2011 test administration, the pass rate for those tests had risen to 73 percent and 77 percent.

As indicated in the response to Question 2.B., 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.

## 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.

<b>Option A</b>	<b>Option B</b>	<b>Option C</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> 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. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide the new AMOs and an explanation of the method used to set these AMOs.</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> 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. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Provide the new AMOs and an explanation of the method used to set these AMOs.</li> </ul>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Use another method that is educationally sound and results in ambitious but achievable AMOs for all LEAs, schools, and subgroups. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Provide the new AMOs and an explanation of the method used to set these AMOs.</li> <li>ii. Provide an educationally sound rationale for the pattern of academic progress reflected in the new AMOs in the text box below.</li> <li>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</li> </ol>

### **Revised Annual Measurable Objectives—Accreditation Standards and Proficiency Gap Dashboard Results**

The goal of Virginia’s proposed standards-based accountability system is for all schools to achieve and maintain full accreditation as prescribed in the *Code of Virginia* and the Board of Education’s *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia* (SOA) and to reduce the proficiency gap of traditionally lower performing subgroups of students. All schools, divisions, and the state will be expected to show progress towards meeting the metrics associated with this goal.

Virginia’s new annual accreditation results and progress in meeting or reducing proficiency gaps will be reported to the public and prominently displayed in a Proficiency Gap Dashboard on each school, division, and state report card. The required Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) will be defined as a profile of expectations within the Proficiency Gap Dashboard. Transparent and public reporting of the state accreditation status of all schools and identified proficiency gaps for schools, divisions, and the state will achieve the goal of holding all entities accountable for reducing proficiency gaps, especially for traditionally underperforming subgroups of students. It is important to emphasize that, in addition to the performance results of the proficiency gap groups, the disaggregated performance results of traditional subgroups will continue to be reported and used to inform supports and interventions.

#### Key Features

- Builds on Virginia’s current state accountability system by using Standards of Accreditation (SOA) targets in English/reading, mathematics, science, and history and social science as the primary goals that all schools are expected to meet for state and federal accountability
- Incorporates subgroup performance in accountability reporting to ensure schools continue to focus on closing proficiency gaps
- 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 and mathematics 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)
- Reduces the number of annual measurable objectives that are established for schools, division, and the state, allowing greater focus of resources where they are needed most
- Incorporates growth and college- and career-ready indicators that can be modified as additional data become available
- Continues to publicly report performance results for all student subgroups individually as currently required under ESEA, in addition to the data described in the new profile of proficiency gap group expectations

## Performance Expectations and Proficiency Gap Groups

Virginia’s proposed revisions to ESEA implementation would take effect beginning with accountability results announced for the 2012-2013 school year, based on assessments administered in the 2011-2012 school year.

### *Performance and Participation Expectations*

Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meet Standards of Accreditation (SOA) minimums in English (reading and writing), mathematics, science, and history and social science for the “all students” group, including the Graduation and Completion Index (GCI)</li> <li>Achieve proficiency targets or make growth in reducing proficiency gaps in reading and mathematics for three proficiency gap groups of students that are traditionally underperforming</li> <li><del>Report publicly by press release and other media and on each school, division, and state report card accreditation ratings and identified proficiency gaps in a Proficiency Gap Dashboard to show progress in closing the gap to proficiency</del></li> </ul>
Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Test participation rate <math>\geq</math> 95% for reading and mathematics</li> </ul>
Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Report publicly by press release and other media and on each school, division, and state report card accreditation ratings and progress – or lack thereof – in closing proficiency gaps for traditionally underperforming students in a Proficiency Gap Dashboard</u></li> </ul>

SOA Proficiency Targets for All Students*					
Content Area	Grade Level	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
English (Reading & Writing Combined Where Applicable)	Grade 3 – 5	75	75	75	75
	Grade 6 – 8 & EOC Reading & Writing	70	70	75	75
Mathematics	Grade 3 – 8 & EOC High School Courses	70	70	70	70
Science	Grade 3	50	50	70	70
	Grade 4	No test administered			
	Grade 5 – 8 & EOC High School Courses	70	70	70	70
History & Social Science	Grade 3	50	50	70	70
	Grade 4 – 8 & EOC High School Courses	70	70	70	70
Graduation & Completion Index	Schools with a Graduating Class	85/80 pts**	85/81 pts**	85/82 pts**	85/83 pts**

EOC – End of Course

\* Proficiency targets shown are for the previous year’s assessment cycle, for ratings applied in the current academic year.

\*\* Provisionally Accredited – Graduation Rate

As described in the response to Question 2.A.ii, the state is implementing new mathematics assessments in the spring of 2012 and new reading and science assessments in the spring of 2013, which will affect accountability results for schools. Pass rates for all subgroups and in the all students group are expected to fall sharply, which may have a negative residual effect on graduation rates as well. Given the impact of these new assessments, expectations set in the state’s accountability system (SOA) are rigorous.

### **Proficiency Gap Groups**

As described in Virginia’s [Consolidated State Application Amended 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.

While Virginia will continue to annually disaggregate, ~~and publicly report, and use~~ performance data for all seven subgroups in determining appropriate interventions for all non-accredited schools, the performance of the “proficiency gap groups” as defined below will be reported for all schools and used to ~~determine~~ 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, not included in Gap Group 1
- Gap Group 3 – Hispanic students, of one or more races, not included in Gap Group 1

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.

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. After controlling for the factors that comprise Gap Group 1, additional data analysis demonstrates that black and Hispanic students not in Gap Group 1 perform lower than the statewide average of all students, which supports the identification of both groups as proficiency gap groups. The CSPR data show that white and Asian students traditionally outperform statewide averages; therefore, these two subgroups are not considered as having proficiency gaps.

### *Proficiency Gap Expectations for Elementary and Middle Schools*

In order for the Proficiency Gap Dashboard to indicate the school is making progress in a specific gap group for reading and/or mathematics, in each subject each gap group must:

- Meet the test participation rate of at least 95 percent; *AND*
- Meet Standards of Accreditation (SOA) targets; *OR*
- A majority of the students who failed the reading or mathematics assessment must show at least moderate growth\* using Virginia’s student growth percentile measures, if sufficient data are available and appropriate; *OR*
- Reduce the failure rate by 10 percent.

Other growth measures may be considered on appeal as outlined in Virginia’s [Consolidated State Application Amended Accountability Workbook](#). English language learners may meet growth targets by meeting progress targets on Virginia’s English language proficiency assessment. Additional information about Virginia’s [student growth percentile](#) (SGP) is available on the Virginia Department of Education Web site.

\* To help interpret SGPs, the Virginia Department of Education has established categorical growth levels of low, moderate, and high. These data will be reported with the growth data for divisions and schools. Low growth represents students with SGPs of 1 to 34. Moderate growth includes students with SGPs of 35 to 65. High growth represents students with SGPs of 66 to 99.

### *Proficiency Gap Expectations for High Schools*

In order for the Proficiency Gap Dashboard to indicate the school is making progress in a specific gap group for reading and/or mathematics, in each subject each gap group must:

- Meet the test participation rate of at least 95 percent; *AND*
- Meet Standards of Accreditation (SOA) targets; *OR*
- Meet a state goal of 48 percent 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 by 10 percent.

For illustrative purposes, the table below provides a sample rendering of the accreditation and proficiency gap group performance results to be displayed on the front page of the revised school report card. Additional data, including traditionally disaggregated subgroup results, demographic and enrollment information, assessment participation figures, safe and drug-free data, and a host of other data will continue to be included in the contents of the report card.

The exact design and format of the revised report card is currently under construction by the Virginia Department of Education educational information management team. An additional example is available in Attachment 13.

Name of Elementary School

Name of School Division

**Proficiency Gap Dashboard**

Accreditation Status		Proficiency Gap Status	
Fully Accredited	X	Mathematics Gap Identified	
Conditionally Accredited – New School		Reading Gap Identified	X
Provisionally Accredited – Graduation Rate		<b>Additional Status</b>	
Accredited with Warning			
Conditionally Accredited – Reconstituted		Priority School	
Accreditation Denied		Focus School	X

Results for All Students		
Subject Area	Target	Result
English	75	76
Mathematics	70	74
History	70	80
Science	70	78

Gap Group Results							
		Reading			Mathematics		
		Met SOA Target	Met Growth Target	Reduced Failure Rate by 10%	Met SOA Target	Met Growth Target	Reduced Failure Rate by 10%
Proficiency Gap Group	Met Overall Performance Expectations*						
1	X	X	X	X	√	X	X
2	√	√	X	√	√	√	√
3	√	√	√	√	X	√	√

\* Each Proficiency Gap Group must meet at least one indicator in Reading and one indicator in mathematics to be considered meeting overall Proficiency Gap Group performance expectations.

**Division Accountability**

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

- Standards of Accreditation (SOA) proficiency targets, shown on page 39, for all students in the four core content areas as shown in the table above;
- Participation rate in reading and mathematics of  $\geq 95$  percent for all students and proficiency gap groups;
- Proficiency gap group targets as described in the “Proficiency Gap Groups” section above; and
- 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.

The existing Title III AMAOs, provided in Attachment 14, rise incrementally each year through the 2013-2014 school year as required under NCLB. To better align the state and federal accountability system, Virginia proposes to hold the current progress and proficiency targets and apply the SOA reading and mathematics targets as shown in the table below:

Proposed English Language Proficiency Title III AMAOs*					
School Year		2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Progress		65**	65	65	65
Proficiency		15**	15	15	15
English (Reading & Writing Combined Where Applicable)	Grade 3 – 5	75**	75	75	75
	Grade 6 – 8 & EOC Reading & Writing	70**	70	75	75
Mathematics	Grade 3 – 8 & EOC High School Courses	70**	70	70	70

\* Proficiency targets shown are for the previous year's assessment cycle, for ratings applied in the current academic year

\*\* Currently Approved

Additionally, Virginia requests a modification to the [2006 flexibility](#) to allow LEP students newly arrived to the country to be exempt from testing during the first 11 months of school. The proposed modification would allow exemption from testing for newly arrived students for up to two full years, depending on local decision-making to determine if the additional time is needed for individual students.

### Future Revisions of Expectations and Growth Indicators

The state is implementing new college- and career-ready (CCR) mathematics assessments in the spring of 2012 and new CCR reading and science assessments in the spring of 2013, which will affect accountability results for schools and may require expectations to be recalibrated. 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. In particular, the state recently made available student-level growth data in December of 2011. At this point, it is not possible to determine growth to standard requirements without additional data. The state will examine available growth data after a three-year period to determine whether revisions are needed to the methodology when including the data in the annual determinations of schools. ~~Also, the state is implementing new college- and career-ready (CCR) mathematics assessments in the spring of 2012 and new CCR reading and science assessments in the spring of 2013, which will affect accountability results for schools and may require expectations to be recalibrated.~~

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.

**State Report Card:** Additional data about the current academic performance of Virginia's divisions, schools, and subgroups are available in the [state report card](#).

## 2.C REWARD SCHOOLS

2.C.i Describe the SEA’s methodology for identifying highest-performing and high-progress schools as reward schools.

The Virginia Board of Education will recognize highest-performing and high-progress schools as reward schools through the [Virginia Index of Performance](#) (VIP) incentives program and the state Title I Distinguished Schools program.

### **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 of other key indicators of school success, and encourage schools’ and divisions’ efforts to provide Virginia’s students with excellent educational opportunities. Currently, schools and school divisions become eligible for VIP awards by meeting applicable state and federal achievement benchmarks (school accreditation and adequate yearly progress or AYP) for two consecutive years.

The VIP award requirements encourage school divisions to increase the percent of students earning advanced proficiency on state mathematics and science assessments, and provide incentives for schools to meet additional Virginia performance objectives. On February 17, 2011, 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.

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.

The VIP Base Index weights the proficiency levels on statewide assessments as follows: (a) Advanced proficient: 100; (b) Proficient: 75; (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:  $(\# \text{ Advanced Proficient scores} \times 100) + (\# \text{ Proficient scores} \times 75) + (\# \text{ Basic scores} \times 25)$  divided by total tests administered.

Attachment 15 contains a chart with details of the criteria that comprise the VIP incentive program.

### Title I Distinguished Schools

Virginia's Title I Distinguished Schools 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 80<sup>th</sup> percentile for both English and mathematics; and (b) meets full accreditation for a minimum of two consecutive years.
2. **Title I Highly Distinguished School:** (a) achieves mean score at the 80<sup>th</sup> percentile for both English and mathematics; (b) meets full accreditation for a minimum of two consecutive years; and (c) exceeds the statewide average for English and mathematics in the current and previous year for all proficiency gap groups of students.
3. **Title I Distinguished School Division:** exceeds the SOA proficiency targets for English and mathematics and graduation in the current and previous year for all students.
4. **Title I Highly Distinguished School Division:** (a) exceeds the SOA proficiency targets for English and mathematics and graduation in the current and previous year for all students; and (b) exceeds the statewide average for English and mathematics in the current and previous year for all proficiency gap groups of students.

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 2011 VIP Incentive Program criteria and 2011 state Title I Distinguished Schools criteria, are provided in the response to Question 2.C.iii and directly below Table 2. Updated and accurate lists for both reward categories will be made available for 2012-2013, based on 2011-2012 assessment results.

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

The Virginia Board of Education will publicly recognize highest-performing and high progress schools during Board meetings and through press releases such as the ones available at the following links:

- [Governor McDonnell & Board of Education Honor High-Performing Virginia Schools & School Divisions – 2011 Virginia Index of Performance Awards Announced](#)
- [Schools & School Divisions Recognized for Raising Achievement of Economically Disadvantaged Students](#)

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.

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

<b>Criterion A</b>	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
<b>Criterion B</b>	Title I and Title I-eligible high schools with a federal graduation indicator* of 60 percent or less for two or more of the most recent consecutive years
<b>Criterion C</b>	Title I schools with a rating of <i>Accreditation – Denied</i> or <i>Conditionally Accredited – Reconstituted</i> for the “all students” performance in reading and/or mathematics
<b>Criterion D</b> (see additional notes below)	Title I schools with a rating of <i>Accreditation – Warned</i> for the “all students” performance in reading and/or mathematics

\* 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 will identify 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. The number of schools identified as priority schools in subsequent years may fluctuate due to an increase or decrease in the number of schools identified for Title I services, which will impact the number of schools that comprise an amount equal to 5 percent of the state’s Title I schools.

Criterion D: This criterion will be applied only as necessary to identify as priority schools a number of schools that comprise an amount equal to 5 percent of the state’s Title I schools. Should Criterion D be invoked, schools in this category will be 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 proficiency targets. Those schools with the largest gaps in performance will be included in the priority school list, up to the number of schools needed to equal the five percent requirement. The example that follows is provided for illustrative purposes.

*Example*: A Title I elementary school with a proficiency rate of 65 percent in reading and 60 percent in mathematics would miss the SOA proficiency targets by 10 points in both subjects (see SOA proficiency targets in the response to 2.B). For this school, the sum of the differences between the performance of the “all students” group in reading and mathematics would be 20 points. The school would rank higher and be identified as a priority school before a school with a summed difference in reading and mathematics performance of 19 points or less. The school would rank lower than a school with a summed difference of 21 points, and so forth.

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

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 will be 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 will be required, at a minimum, to implement all requirements of the USED turnaround principles as outlined below.

**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.

Priority schools will 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 a model that meets the USED turnaround principles or one of the four USED models:

- **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 Virginia Department of Education has established a [state contract](#) of approved LTP providers that local school boards may choose to contract for services. If a different LTP is desired, the selection must be by mutual agreement of the Department of Education and the local school board.

The state will provide extensive support and guidance to ensure divisions, together with the selected LTP(s) or other external partner(s), implement a model that meets the USED turnaround principles or one of the four USED intervention models in priority schools. The state will appoint an experienced external educational consultant to work closely with a division team to monitor division- and school-level improvement efforts.

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, at a minimum, all requirements of the USED turnaround principles or one of the four USED models in its priority school(s) and hire an LTP to assist in implementing the intervention no later than the beginning of the 2013-2014 school year. These school divisions will receive technical assistance from the state during the 2012-2013 school year to prepare to implement the selected intervention strategies or USED model in the 2013-2014 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 (2013-2014 through 2015-2016).

- 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.

Virginia will use the following criteria to determine when a school that is making significant progress in improving student achievement exits priority status:

Reason for Priority School Identification		Exit Criteria*
<b>Criterion A</b>	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**
<b>Criterion B</b>	Title I and Title I-eligible high schools with a federal graduation indicator of 60 percent or less for two or more of the most recent consecutive years	Will exit after achieving a federal graduation indicator of more than 60 percent for two consecutive years
<b>Criterion C</b>	Schools with a rating of <i>Accreditation – Denied</i> for the “all students” performance in reading and/or mathematics	Will exit priority status after achieving a rating of <i>Full Accreditation</i>
<b>Criterion D</b>	Schools with a rating of <i>Accreditation – Warned</i> or <i>Conditionally Accredited – Reconstituted</i> for the “all students” performance in reading and/or mathematics	Will exit priority status after achieving a rating of <i>Full Accreditation</i>

\* Schools that exit priority status must continue to implement the chosen intervention model or strategies for the full three year period.

\*\* 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 period to implement a SIG model.

## 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.”

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 seven 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 Section 2.B, will be considered for inclusion in the focus school category. The calculation to determine the list of focus schools is described below.

### Methodology for Identifying Focus Schools

The calculation to determine the list of Title I focus schools having the largest proficiency gaps is described below:

1. Exclude any schools identified as priority schools.
2. Calculate for each school the difference between the SOA target and each gap group’s performance in reading and mathematics to determine proficiency gap points.
3. Exclude from each school’s calculation any gap group that meets or exceeds the SOA target.
4. Sum the proficiency gap points in reading and mathematics and divide by the number of gap groups represented at the school.
5. Rank schools in order of the total number of average proficiency gap points.
6. 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.

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
	Grade 3-5	Grade 3-5	Grade 3-5			
Gap Group 1	75	70	5	70	64	6
Gap Group 2	75	60	15	70	60	10
Gap Group 3	75	65	10	70	75	NI*
Sum of Proficiency Gap Points	add point differences for each gap group		30	add point differences for each gap group		16
Average Proficiency Gap Points	divide sum by number of gap groups represented at the school		10	divide sum by number of gap groups represented at the school		8
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	Reading Performance School-level	Reading Performance Gap Points	Math Target	Math Performance School-level	Math Performance Gap Points
	Grade 6-8	Grade 6-8	Grade 6-8			
Gap Group 1	70	67	3	70	59	11
Gap Group 2	70	75	NI*	70	60	10
Gap Group 3	70	70	NI*	70	68	2
Sum of Proficiency Gap Points	add differences for each gap group		3	add differences for each gap group		23
Average Proficiency Gap Points	divide sum by number of gap groups represented at the school		3	divide sum by number of gap groups represented at the school		7.7
Total Average Proficiency Gap Points	(add average proficiency gap points)					10.7

\*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 (10.7 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 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 and Title I-eligible high schools with federal graduation rates below 60 percent for two or more years will be served as priority schools, graduation rates will not be used as a factor in determining focus schools.

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

The list of priority 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. An updated and accurate list of priority schools for 2012-2013, based on 2011-2012 assessment results, will be made available in early fall of 2012.

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.

### 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 for 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). The process begins by conducting needs sensing interviews with divisions using the *VDOE Change Map for Capacity Building* which 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**).*

### **Virginia’s Capacity Building Process for Divisions to Support Focus Schools**

At the beginning of the academic year, each division with one or more focus schools will be assigned an external VDOE contractor, with extensive experience in the education field. The VDOE contractor will facilitate the needs sensing interview based upon the following components of the school improvement theory of action:

- 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 will be used to determine whether a division is operating at the *exploration, emerging, full, or sustainability* level of implementation for each theory of action component. The interview will enable the division to engage in reflective practice by identifying specific needs at both the division- and school-levels.

The division will be 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 will be tasked with developing, implementing, and monitoring the division improvement plan using the CII Web-based planning tool, Indistar®. The Indistar® tool includes division-level indicators that are aligned with rapid improvement school indicators. These research-based indicators will 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 focus school will have a school-level team, as described in the academic review process section of the response to Question 2.F, that will receive support and monitoring from the division team. The division will engage a contractor from a state-approved list via a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to facilitate division strategies to 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 contractor will help the division build its 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.

### **Data-Driven Interventions**

The school must develop an intervention strategy for all students who have failed an SOL assessment in the past or are identified as below grade level on the Algebra Readiness Diagnostic Test (Grades 5-8) or the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (K-3). Each focus school will be required to regularly analyze a variety of data points to make strategic, data-driven decisions to implement needed interventions for identified students including students with disabilities and English language learners. Analysis of the data points from these reports will be used by school improvement teams each quarter to adjust school- and division-level improvement plans to address emerging needs of the focus school(s).

Additional details about the tools and strategies available for data analysis are available in the response to Question 2.G.

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

The school support team will be tasked with developing, implementing, and monitoring the school improvement plan using the CII Web-based planning tool, Indistar®. The Indistar® tool includes rapid improvement school indicators. These research-based indicators will serve as the foundation for the support needed to implement strategies to reduce proficiency gaps and create full school-level sustainability for reform efforts.

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 timely support to schools identified as having the most significant proficiency gaps for the gap groups identified in the response to Question 2.B, Virginia will identify a new list of focus schools annually based on the methodology described in the response to Question 2.E.i. with the total in any given year not to exceed 10 percent of the state's Title I schools. Once identified as a focus school, a school will be expected to implement interventions for a minimum of two consecutive years, with the support of a state-approved contractor, regardless of whether the school is identified as a focus school in the second year of implementing intervention strategies.

**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
	27 elementary and middle schools			C	
	9 high schools			D-2	
	72 schools				X
<b>TOTAL # of Schools:</b>			<b>323* (duplicate count)</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>72</b>

\* 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 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 and accurate list of priority schools for 2012-2013, based on 2011-2012 assessment results, will be made available in early fall of 2012.

**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	
<p><b>Reward School Criteria:</b></p> <p>A. Highest-performing school</p> <p>B. High-progress school</p> <p><b>Priority School Criteria:</b></p> <p>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</p> <p>D-1. Title I-participating high school with graduation rate less than 60%</p>	<p><b>Focus School Criteria:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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</li> <li>• Has a subgroup or subgroups with low achievement or, at the high school level, a low graduation rate</li> <li>• 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</li> </ul>

<p>over a number of years</p> <p><b>D-2.</b> Title I-eligible high school with graduation rate less than 60% over a number of years</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tier I or Tier II SIG school implementing a school intervention model</li></ul>	
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## 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.

The state’s *VIP Incentive 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.

### Academic Review

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. Attachment 16 contains an overview of the academic review process.

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. 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. 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, will conduct an on-site review and assist 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 for immediate delivery.

If the school is not fully accredited in the year following the academic review team visit, the Department of Education will identify a school support team to provide technical assistance to the school and/or division to modify, monitor, and implement the school improvement plan.

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 independent contractors trained in the academic review process, assists the school in writing the school improvement plan based on the final report of findings.

For those schools that were warned in the previous year and received an on-site academic review, the school support team reviews the current plan and provides technical assistance to the school to update the school improvement plan based on new accountability data. The school support team consists of Department of Education staff, division staff, and/or independent contractors trained in developing, implementing, and monitoring the school improvement plan. The school support team provides technical assistance based on the specific needs of the school

and/or division. In some schools, only school intervention is needed, while in other schools, division intervention and allocation of resources may have to be refocused to support the efforts of the school(s) to improve. The school support team monitors and provides technical assistance to the school during the time it is rated accredited with warning.

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*.

### **Data Driven Strategy Development for High Schools with Low Graduation Rates – Virginia Early Warning System (VEWS)**

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 in Attachment 17.

An academic review contractor that is 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 contractors 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 contractor, 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 Innovation and Improvement (CII).

Individual technical assistance will be provided to each school as needed and determined by the contractor. 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 priority needs for technical assistance for each school and division. In addition

to individualized technical assistance, the state will provide regional trainings. Regional training serves two purposes: 1) the cost of training is greatly reduced; and 2) schools with similar needs and demographics can learn from each other.

Web conferences developed by the contractors, a select group of principals, and other educational leaders, will be provided throughout the year. The Web conferences will meet the needs of Virginia's schools that have low graduation rates and/or low academic achievement and will be aligned with the research-based strategies available from the NHSC and CII. The Eight Elements of High School Improvement from NHSC are available in Attachment 18 and high school rapid improvement indicators from CII are available in Attachment 19.

### **Follow-up by Division- and School-Level Teams**

As part of the academic review process, two teams will be 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 will 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 will include the school's principal and membership from guidance, special education and instruction. At least one member, other than the principal, of the division team will serve on the school team as well, preferably the division's top instructional leader. For high schools, the school team will utilize the VEWS implementation process in order to identify and intervene with students at-risk of failure or drop out.

The Office of School Improvement, the National High School Center, the Appalachia Regional Comprehensive Center, the Center on Innovation and Improvement, the Virginia Foundation of Educational Leadership, the College of William and Mary, the Virginia Association of Elementary Principals, and the Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals have collaborated to develop a framework of technical assistance that provides intensive systems of support for the division and the school.

As a result of the development and implementation of the academic review process for schools not meeting graduation targets over the past four years, graduation rates have increased across all subgroups, as shown in the table below.

**Virginia Federal Graduation Indicator  
Four Year Graduation Indicator  
2011 Data as of September 26, 2011**

	2008	2009	2010	2011	One-year point change	Point change since 2008
All Students	75.0%	76.9%	79.9%	81.6%	1.7	6.6
Black	63.9%	66.6%	70.6%	72.8%	2.3	9.0
Hispanic	57.9%	59.9%	66.1%	70.9%	4.9	13.0
White	81.0%	82.8%	85.1%	86.3%	1.2	5.3
Students with Disabilities	37.9%	42.7%	44.1%	47.3%	3.2	9.4
Economically Disadvantaged	57.2%	60.9%	66.4%	70.1%	3.6	12.9
Limited English Proficient	55.8%	56.4%	60.4%	63.3%	2.9	7.6

### **Electronic Comprehensive Improvement Planning Tool**

The division and school teams will use an online electronic improvement planning tool to develop, implement and monitor a comprehensive three-year improvement plan using either the targeted indicators from CII or the broader indicators provided by the NHSC. 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 will 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 contractor 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 will 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. holding LEAs accountable for improving school and student performance, particularly for turning around their priority schools; and
  - iii. 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).
- 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**

Overseeing improvement efforts in numerous divisions and schools across a state requires a strong support infrastructure. The Department of Education will use a variety of systems to facilitate and streamline data collection, file sharing, and reporting mechanisms for priority and focus schools. The division will engage a contractor from a state-approved list via a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to facilitate division strategies to 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 contractor will help the division build their capacity to support leadership practices to support improved teacher effectiveness (see 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 contractors will 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 to better monitor school improvement progress throughout the school year and over the course of the interventions, priority and focus schools will be required to use the same assessments, online planning tool, and data analysis systems, such as:

- *Indistar*®, which is an online portal created and managed by the Center on Innovation and Improvement (CII). *Indistar*® will be 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. Many of the videos are from Virginia schools.
- *iStation's Indicators of Progress (ISIP)*, which is 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 skill need. The system can be used in conjunction with the *iStation* reading program as well as other programs. Priority and focus schools will be required to utilize this progress monitoring tool to track the efficacy of interventions for selected students. *iStation* automatically reports student achievement each month. This information will be used by the assigned external consultants and the SEA to determine subsequent actions. *iStation's Indicators of Progress (ISIP)* is piloting a mathematics program for K-5. If this program's effectiveness is demonstrated in the Virginia pilot schools, it will be considered as a requirement to monitor progress in mathematics. (Other assessments selected by the division may be approved by the Virginia Department of Education. These assessments must be norm-referenced, offer a Lexile score, or be provided frequently throughout the year.)
- 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 will be required to utilize this diagnostic tool and report the results to the state quarterly.

- Datacation by Casenex, 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 will be required to analyze a variety of data points on a quarterly basis using the “Virginia Dashboard,” a Web-based data analysis and reporting tool. School and division teams will 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 allows the school leadership team to follow interventions throughout the year to determine their effectiveness. The Virginia Dashboard generates monthly reports which include, at a minimum, the following forms of data:
  - Student attendance;
  - Teacher attendance;
  - Benchmark results;
  - Reading and mathematics grades;
  - Student discipline reports;
  - Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) data;
  - 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 will be used by school improvement teams each quarter, and if needed, monthly, to respond to the following questions:

- 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 will be added to your Indistar® online plan to address or modify your current plan?
- Correspondingly, what Indistar® tasks will the school, through the principal, the governance committee, or the school improvement team, initiate in each of the Indistar® indicators identified above?
- 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 will provide extensive support and guidance to ensure divisions, together with the selected LTP(s) or other external partner(s), implement a model that meets the USED turnaround principles or one of the four USED intervention models in priority schools. The state will appoint an experienced external educational consultant to work closely with a division team to monitor division- and school-level improvement efforts. This technical assistance will be monitored by a monthly online reporting system.

The state will monitor 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. Divisions with schools identified as priority schools will be awarded Section 1003(a) and 1003(g) school improvement funds, as available, and may also reserve an appropriate portion of their Title I, Part A, funds, not to exceed 20 percent, to implement the requirements of the turnaround principles or one of the four USED intervention models. Divisions with focus schools may be awarded Section 1003(a) funds, if available, and may also reserve an appropriate portion of their Title I, Part A, funds, not to exceed 20 percent, to hire a state-approved contractor 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 other subgroups.

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.

<p><b>Option A</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> If the SEA has not already developed and adopted all of the guidelines consistent with Principle 3, provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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;</li> <li>ii. a description of the process the SEA will use to involve teachers and principals in the development of these guidelines; and</li> <li>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).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Option B</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If the SEA has developed and adopted all of the guidelines consistent with Principle 3, provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 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;</li> <li>▪ evidence of the adoption of the guidelines (Attachment 11); and</li> <li>▪ a description of the process the SEA used to involve teachers and principals in the development of these guidelines.</li> </ul>
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#### Highly Qualified Teacher Data

With the new emphasis on teacher and principal evaluation and effectiveness, as part of the ESEA flexibility opportunity, Virginia requests to discontinue collecting and reporting data on teacher and paraprofessional highly qualified percentages. Virginia’s percentage of highly qualified teachers was 99.3 percent for the 2010-2011 school year. The highly qualified percentage for high poverty schools was 98.8 percent. With the achievement of almost 100 percent of highly qualified teachers in Virginia, the request to eliminate this additional reporting requirement is merited. The Virginia Department of Education has met the requirements outlined in Section 9401 of ESEA in terms of the process to notify school divisions and the public of the request and provide them an opportunity to comment on the proposal.

By virtue of Virginia’s law, regulations, and accountability system, teachers meet the highly qualified designation. State law requires that teachers must be licensed. Board of Education regulations require that teachers must be endorsed appropriately for the teaching assignment. Teachers in federal core areas in Virginia are required to meet rigorous licensure and endorsement requirements. By meeting the licensure requirements, these teachers:

- hold at least an earned bachelor’s degree from a regionally accredited college or university with a major in the arts or sciences (or the equivalent);
- have met specified content course work in the area taught (equivalent to a major for secondary teachers);
- satisfied professional studies requirements; and
- passed a reading and writing content assessment, an instructional reading assessment (for elementary and special educators), and the Praxis II content assessment. The qualifying scores for the Praxis II content assessments for Virginia are among the highest in the nation among those states using the Praxis II assessments.

Virginia is focusing on teacher and principal effectiveness. In the last year, the Board of Education has approved *Guidelines for the Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers and Principals*. These guidelines require student academic progress as one of the seven performance standards that must be addressed in teacher and principal evaluation. The Virginia Department of Education developed an automated system to collect information from each school division on the performance standards and evaluation system. This system requires school divisions to describe their evaluation systems for teachers and principals and provide summative ratings for teachers and principals. The information collected from the 132 school divisions is posted on the Department of Education’s Web site [[https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/tpec\\_public/](https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/tpec_public/)]. Each evaluation system must address the uniform performance standards and student academic progress pursuant to state law. In addition, school division superintendents and school board chairs are required to certify compliance with *Code of Virginia* (state law) requirements relative to teacher and principal evaluation.

Virginia believes the focus should be on ensuring teachers and principals are highly effective – properly licensed and endorsed for their assignment and their efforts result in improved student academic progress. Eliminating the requirement for Virginia to collect and report highly qualified percentages provides school divisions and the Department of Education additional resources to focus on the objective of ensuring that instructional personnel are highly effective.

### **Governor’s Proposed Legislation**

The Governor of Virginia has proposed bold legislation that is moving through the General Assembly that will eliminate continuing contract status (referred to as tenure in some states) and improve the evaluation process for teachers and principals (includes assistant principals). The legislation proposes that the statute would become effective on July 1, 2013.\*

The legislation would require:

- a probationary term of service for five years for teachers and principals in the same school division before being issued a three-year term contract;
- probationary teachers and principals to be evaluated each school year;
- teachers and principals who have achieved term contract status, if not evaluated formally, to be evaluated informally at least once during each of the first and second years of their term contract and evaluated formally in the third year;
- an overall summative rating in which student academic progress is a significant component of the evaluation of a teacher, principal, and superintendent;
- local school boards to be trained on evaluation of personnel and make provisions for superintendents to participate in high-quality professional development activities, including (among other things) the *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers, Principals, and Superintendents* to superintendents annually;
- a change in the date from April 15 to June 15 for school divisions to notify teachers and principals of contract status for the following school year;
- a teacher who has achieved term contract status who receives an unsatisfactory formal evaluation in the first year of his term contract and who continues to be employed by the local school board to be formally evaluated in the second year of the term contract [Also, the legislation would not allow a teacher who has not achieved term contract status or who is in the last year of a three-year term contract to grieve nonrenewal of a contract]; and
- local school boards to establish reduction in force policies that must consider, among other things, the performance evaluations of the teachers potentially affected by the reduction in workforce. (Seniority could not be the sole factor for making reduction in force decisions.)

*\* Teachers, assistant principals/principals, or supervisors who have achieved continuing contract status in a school division by the first day of the 2013-14 school year and who are employed in the same division for the 2013-14 school year shall continue to have continuing contract status, during good behavior and competent service.*

This legislation will strengthen the evaluation of teachers and principals in Virginia. Student academic progress, currently required for teacher and principal evaluations, would be a significant component of teacher, principal, and superintendent evaluations. Teachers would be evaluated formally each year during the probationary term of five years (extended from three years). During the term contract, the teacher and principal must be evaluated each year.

In addition, the Governor's budget is requesting \$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 appropriated this year for the Performance-Pay Pilot that is implementing the new *Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers*.

## 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 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 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) school boards’ procedures for evaluating instructional personnel address student academic progress.

### *Code of Virginia*

Section 22.1-253.13:5 (**Standard 5. Quality of classroom instruction and educational leadership**) of the *Code of Virginia* states, in part, the following:

...B. Consistent with the finding that leadership is essential for the advancement of public education in the Commonwealth, teacher, administrator, and superintendent evaluations shall be consistent with the performance objectives included in the *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers, Administrators, and Superintendents*. 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....

Section 22.1-295 (**Employment of teachers**) states, in part, the following:

...C. School boards shall 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.

Instructional personnel employed by local school boards who have achieved continuing contract status shall be evaluated not less than once every three years. Any instructional personnel, who has achieved continuing contract status, receiving an unsatisfactory evaluation who continues to be employed by the local school board shall be evaluated no later than one year after receiving such unsatisfactory evaluation. The evaluation shall be maintained in the employee's personnel file.

### **Revision of Teacher Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria Guidelines**

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

#### **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, to conduct 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 must implement 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*

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.

***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](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/teaching/performance_evaluation/research_base_ups_teachers.pdf).

**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***

<b>Rating</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>Exemplary</b>	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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>consistently exhibits behaviors that have a strong positive impact on learners and the school climate</li> <li>serves as a role model to others</li> <li>sustains high performance over a period of time</li> </ul>
<b>Proficient</b>	The teacher meets the standard in a manner that is consistent with the school's mission and goals.	Effective performance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>meets the requirements contained in the job description as expressed in the evaluation criteria</li> <li>demonstrates willingness to learn and apply new skills</li> <li>exhibits behaviors that have a positive impact on learners and the school climate</li> </ul>
<b>Developing/Needs Improvement</b>	The teacher often performs below the established standard or in a manner that is inconsistent with the school's mission and goals.	Ineffective performance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>requires support in meeting the standards</li> <li>results in less than quality work performance</li> <li>leads to areas for teacher improvement being jointly identified and planned between the teacher and evaluator</li> </ul>
<b>Unacceptable</b>	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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>does not meet the requirements contained in the job description as expressed in the evaluation criteria</li> <li>may result in the employee not being recommended for continued employment</li> </ul>

The *Code of Virginia* requires that school boards' procedures for evaluating teachers address student academic progress. 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.

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 documents may be accessed at the following Web site: [http://www.doe.virginia.gov/teaching/performance\\_evaluation/index.shtml](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/teaching/performance_evaluation/index.shtml). The guidelines and standards will become effective statewide on July 1, 2012; however, school boards and divisions are 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.

### **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) school boards’ procedures for evaluating principals address student academic progress.

### [Code of Virginia](#)

Section 22.1-253.13:5 of the *Code of Virginia* states, in part, the following:

...B. Consistent with the finding that leadership is essential for the advancement of public education in the Commonwealth, teacher, administrator, and superintendent evaluations shall be consistent with the performance objectives included in the *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers, Administrators, and Superintendents*. 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....

...E. Each local school board shall provide a program of high-quality professional development... (iv) for administrative personnel designed to increase proficiency in instructional leadership and management, including training in the evaluation and documentation of teacher and administrator performance based on student academic progress and the skills and knowledge of such instructional or administrative personnel.

Section 22.1-294 of the *Code of Virginia* states, in part, the following:

...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 objectives set forth in the *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers, Administrators, 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.

### **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 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), 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

#### **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 [Pending Approval].

##### **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*, will be 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 are authorized to implement them prior to July 1, 2013. [Pending Approval]

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.

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***

<b>Rating</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>Exemplary</b>	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.	<p>Exceptional performance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sustains high performance over the evaluation cycle</li> <li>• empowers teachers and students and consistently exhibits behaviors that have a strong positive impact on student academic progress and the school climate</li> <li>• serves as a role model to others</li> </ul>
<b>Proficient</b>	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.	<p>Effective performance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• consistently meets the requirements contained in the job description as expressed in the evaluation criteria</li> <li>• engages teachers and exhibits behaviors that have a positive impact on student academic progress and the school climate</li> <li>• demonstrates willingness to learn and apply new skills</li> </ul>
<b>Developing/ Needs Improvement</b>	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.	<p>Below acceptable performance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• requires support in meeting the standards</li> <li>• results in less than expected quality of student academic progress</li> <li>• requires principal professional growth be jointly identified and planned between the principal and evaluator</li> </ul>
<b>Unacceptable</b>	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.	<p>Ineffective performance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• does not meet the requirements contained in the job description as expressed in the evaluation criteria</li> <li>• results in minimal student academic progress</li> <li>• may contribute to a recommendation for the employee not being considered for continued employment</li> </ul>

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. 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 [pending approval]. School divisions must align principal evaluation systems with the Board approved performance standards and evaluation criteria for principals by July 1, 2013; however, school boards and divisions are authorized to implement the guidelines and standards prior to July 1, 2013.

### **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.

#### **[Code of Virginia](#)**

Section 22.1-253.13:5 of the *Code of Virginia* states, in part, the following:

...B. Consistent with the finding that leadership is essential for the advancement of public education in the Commonwealth, teacher, administrator, and superintendent evaluations shall be consistent with the performance objectives included in the *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers, Administrators, and Superintendents*. 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....

...E. Each local school board shall provide a program of high-quality professional development... (iv) for administrative personnel designed to increase proficiency in instructional leadership and management, including training in the evaluation and documentation of teacher and administrator performance based on student academic progress and the skills and knowledge of such instructional or administrative personnel.

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. Planning is underway in Virginia to conduct research and develop a statewide work group to

make recommendations to the Board of Education to revise the standards and evaluation criteria for superintendents. The anticipated plan is to make final recommendations to the Board of Education in September 2012.

### 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 *Code of Virginia* requires teacher, administrator, and superintendent evaluations be consistent with the performance objectives approved by the Board of Education. Student academic progress must be addressed in the evaluation, as referred to in the following excerpts from the *Code of Virginia*. 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.

Section 22.1-253.13:5 (**Standard 5. Quality of classroom instruction and educational leadership**) of the *Code of Virginia* states, in part, the following:

...B. Consistent with the finding that leadership is essential for the advancement of public education in the Commonwealth, teacher, administrator, and superintendent evaluations shall be consistent with the performance objectives included in the *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers, Administrators, and Superintendents*. 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....

...E. Each local school board shall provide a program of high-quality professional development... (iv) for administrative personnel designed to increase proficiency in instructional leadership and management, including training in the evaluation and documentation of teacher and administrator performance based on student academic progress and the skills and knowledge of such instructional or administrative personnel.

Section 22.1-294. (**Probationary terms of service for principals, assistant principals and supervisors; evaluation; reassigning principal, assistant principal or supervisor to teaching position**) states, in part, the following:

...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 objectives set forth in the *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers, Administrators, 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. Section 22.1-295 (**Employment of teachers**) states, in part, the following:

...C. School boards shall 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.

Instructional personnel employed by local school boards who have achieved continuing contract status shall be evaluated not less than once every three years. Any instructional personnel, who has achieved continuing contract status, receiving an unsatisfactory evaluation who continues to be employed by the local school board shall be evaluated no later than one year after receiving such unsatisfactory evaluation. The evaluation shall be maintained in the employee's personnel file.

### **Teacher and Principal Evaluation Reporting System and Assurance of Compliance**

**Required Reporting on Teacher and Principal Evaluation:** The Virginia Department of Education developed an automated system to collect information from each school divisions on their performance standards and evaluation systems. The first collection was for the 2010-2011 school year. School divisions are 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.

This system requires school divisions to describe their evaluation systems for teachers and principals and provide summative ratings for teachers and principals. The [information](#) collected from the 132 school divisions is posted on the Department of Education’s Web site.

**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 teachers;
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. Each system must address the uniform performance standards and student academic progress pursuant to state law. In addition, school division superintendents are required to certify compliance with *Code of Virginia* requirements relative to teacher and principal evaluation.

### **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 will become effective statewide on July 1, 2012; however, school boards and divisions are 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 [pending approval]. School divisions must align principal evaluation systems with the Board approved performance standards and evaluation criteria for principals by July 1, 2013; however, school boards and divisions are authorized to implement the guidelines and standards prior to July 1, 2013.

### **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. Teachers in 25 schools are participating in Governor Robert F. McDonnell’s Virginia Performance Pay Incentives Initiative. 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](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. summary of the primary activities of the pilot.

Project Description	Primary <u>Teacher Performance-Pay Initiative</u> Activities	Timeline
<b>Development of training materials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <del>Development</del> of required training materials</li> <li>● <u>Conducted research on performance-pay initiatives</u></li> <li>● Prepared training materials</li> </ul>	Spring 2011
<b>Administrator orientation training in use of teacher evaluation system</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Planned training for administrators and key instructional leaders</li> <li>● <del>Delivered training materials and activities</del></li> <li>● <u>Delivered</u> Held a three-day workshop (<del>conducted an additional 3-day training to accommodate HTS administrators</del>) – participants received copies of training materials, five texts related to the new system, and electronic access to resources</li> </ul>	Summer 2011
<b>Teacher orientation in use of performance evaluation system</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Developed and provided fact sheets to update teachers and other educators on development and design features of new teacher evaluation system</li> <li>● <del>Delivered training materials and activities</del></li> <li>● <u>Field trainers shared their Scheduled</u> of-school trainings <u>with consultants</u></li> <li>● <u>Conducted a follow-up Webinar</u> for teachers on student achievement goal setting <del>became available to teachers and administrators</del></li> <li>● For SIG pilot schools: <del>On-site workshops</del> Held <u>on-site</u> workshops to orient teachers to the evaluation system and introduce student achievement goal setting conducted August-October.</li> <li>● <del>Follow up training determined with input from administrators.</del></li> <li>● Reviewed goals</li> </ul>	Spring 2011 – Fall 2011
<b>Administrator inter-rater reliability training: teacher evaluation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Planned training workshop materials, including simulations of teacher evaluation</li> <li>● <del>Delivered materials and activities</del></li> <li>● Delivered workshop – one-day training in October was available to administrators in pilot HTS schools</li> <li>● <u>Conducted joint teacher observations with principals and expert consultants</u> <del>W&amp;M trainer will participate in joint teacher observations with principals</del></li> </ul>	Fall 2011
<b>Administrator training on making summative decisions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Planned training workshop materials, including simulations of teacher evaluation</li> <li>● <del>Delivered materials and activities</del></li> <li>● Delivered workshop (held January 26, 2012)</li> </ul>	Winter 2012

Project Description	Primary <u>Teacher Performance-Pay Initiative</u> Activities	Timeline
<b><u>Training Materials and Continued Support</u></b> <b>Additional materials in development that will be shared with pilot HTS schools</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Produced the</u> Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document and an electronic newsletter with updates and new resources</li> <li>• <del>Posting of</del> <u>Posted</u> sample goals and appropriate assessments on Wiki</li> <li>• <u>Conducted follow-up session from October training</u> (<del>from Oct training</del>) <u>roundtable Questions and Answers on-site and distance learning, based on input from the field</u></li> </ul>	Fall 2011 - Spring 2012
<b><u>Pilot year Support evaluation</u></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <del>Focus groups with teachers and administrators regarding how system is working</del></li> <li>• <u>Conduct an evaluation of the pilot by outside evaluators</u></li> </ul>	Fall 2011 - Fall 2012
<b><u>Refinement of teacher evaluation system</u></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reconvene teacher design team to review pilot year results and modify evaluation system, as needed</li> <li>• Revise teacher evaluation system based on recommendations from design team</li> </ul>	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.

~~Consultants provided a review of the evaluation components as outlined below:~~ 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. ~~Selected student achievement goals will be collected to create a handbook of recommended goals.~~ 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.

**Site Visits and Support**

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.
  - c. 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.
  - d. A minimum of one classroom observation of a participating teacher will be conducted with the principal of each school.
  - e. 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.
3. 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](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 will continue to provide support to the pilot schools.

Training materials, accessible on the following Web site:

[http://www.doe.virginia.gov/teaching/performance\\_evaluation/index.shtml](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. ~~These materials may be accessed at the following Web site:~~

~~The evaluation of the performance pay pilot will be reviewed to determine if modifications are needed to strengthen the evaluation criteria.~~ 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, and will be provided as two-day sessions in the eight superintendent's regions around the state.

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.

## 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.

<b>Date*</b>	<b>Forum</b>	<b>Stakeholders Providing Input</b>
Wednesday, 10/26/11 Starting at 2:30 p.m.	Board Committee on School and Division Accountability	Representatives from the following organizations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Virginia Association of School Superintendents (VASS)</li> <li>• Virginia Parent Teacher Association (VPTA)</li> <li>• Virginia School Boards Association (VSBA)</li> </ul>
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: <a href="http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/meetings/info_attending.shtml">http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/meetings/info_attending.shtml</a> .
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.	<i>No Child Left Behind Act of 2001</i> (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 <a href="http://townhall.virginia.gov/L/meetings.cfm">http://townhall.virginia.gov/L/meetings.cfm</a> for meeting time	Board Committee on School and Division Accountability	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Representatives from the following organizations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals (VAESP)</li> <li>• Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals (VASSP)</li> <li>• Virginia ESL Supervisors' Association (VESA)</li> <li>• Virginia Council of Special Education Administrators (VCASE)</li> <li>• Virginia Educators Association (VEA)</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. A panel of selected teachers representing a diversity of regions, grade levels, and subject areas</li> </ol>
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: <a href="http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/meetings/info_attending.shtml">http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/meetings/info_attending.shtml</a> .
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: <a href="http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/meetings/info_attending.shtml">http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/meetings/info_attending.shtml</a> .

\*Other meetings may be scheduled based on need.

**Attachment 2 – Comments on Request Received from LEAs, Stakeholder Meetings, and Others)**

**Board of Education Committee on School and Division Accountability  
October 26, 2011**

<b>Flexibility Principle 1: College- and Career-Ready Standards and Assessments</b>
Discussion points and ideas shared for the waiver request are the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stakeholders support Virginia’s college- and career-ready standards.</li> </ul>
Other general discussion included the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Additional <i>Standards of Learning</i> (SOL) assessments are needed in order that rigor and high expectations are increased.</li> <li>Grade 3 data should be examined as a predictor of future success.</li> <li>Use of “pass advanced” performance category should be used as an indicator for college success.</li> </ul>
<b>Flexibility Principle 2: Differentiated Support and Interventions for Underperforming Schools</b>
Discussion points and ideas shared for the waiver request are the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multiple measures need to be included in the accountability system, i.e., student growth and classroom data.</li> </ul>
Other general discussion included the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None provided.</li> </ul>
<b>Flexibility Principle 3: Teacher and Principal Evaluation Systems</b>
Discussion points and ideas shared for the waiver request are the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stakeholders support the teacher and principal evaluation criteria, but suggest greater consistency between teacher and principal models.</li> <li>Assessments used in the evaluation of teachers should be formative as well as evaluative.</li> </ul>
Other general discussion included the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased professional development is needed for all staff conducting evaluations so that they are conducted in a uniform manner.</li> <li>Student records should not be available through the <i>Freedom of Information Act</i> (FOIA) because partial progress may affect teacher evaluations.</li> </ul>

**Board of Education Meeting  
Public Comment  
October 27, 2011**

<b>Flexibility Principle 1: College- and Career-Ready Standards and Assessments</b>
Discussion points and ideas shared for the waiver request are the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None provided.</li> </ul>
Other general discussion included the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reconsider the decision to label an advanced score on the Algebra II and English SOL assessments as indicative of College and Career Readiness.</li> <li>• Retain “pass advanced” and develop multiple criteria from a variety of sources to define college and career readiness.</li> </ul>
<b>Flexibility Principle 2: Differentiated Support and Interventions for Underperforming Schools</b>
Discussion points and ideas shared for the waiver request are the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None provided.</li> </ul>
Other general discussion included the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None provided.</li> </ul>
<b>Flexibility Principle 3: Teacher and Principal Evaluation Systems</b>
Discussion points and ideas shared for the waiver request are the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None provided.</li> </ul>
Other general discussion included the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None provided.</li> </ul>

**Accountability Roundtable  
October 31, 2011**

<b>Flexibility Principle 1: College- and Career-Ready Standards and Assessments</b>
Discussion points and ideas shared for the waiver request are the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None provided.</li> </ul>
Other general discussion included the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feature writing skills more prominently as a subset of college- and career-ready skills.</li> </ul>
<b>Flexibility Principle 2: Differentiated Support and Interventions for Underperforming Schools</b>
Discussion points and ideas shared for the waiver request are the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure data calculations are not so complex that school divisions and schools cannot run preliminary data to make predictions.</li> <li>• Move toward a blended state and federal system with realistic standards.</li> <li>• Include all four content areas, but weight reading and mathematics higher.</li> <li>• Raise accreditation benchmarks in all four content areas (e.g., add five percent and determine where schools are ranked).</li> <li>• Set benchmarks for “all” students, then identify focus schools based on achievement gap.</li> <li>• Consider having “warned schools” be designated as “priority schools.”</li> <li>• Set targets for subgroups and provide an opportunity for “safe harbor” to be used where applicable.</li> <li>• Consider combining subgroups for focus and reward designations (e.g., English language learners, economically disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, etc.).</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Consider using “pass advanced” as an indicator with internal targets set at intervals to meet locally established school-level goals.</li> <li>• Continue to provide comprehensive student achievement data, identifying sanctions for each school regardless of Title I status.</li> <li>• Consider an index model differentiated by grade-level.</li> <li>• Include some flexibility in waivers for an appeals process for designation as a “focus” or “priority” school in extenuating circumstances.</li> </ul>
Other general discussion included the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider developing a growth model with consistent multiple measures across the state.</li> <li>• Consider growth by movement of students via <i>Standards of Learning</i> assessment scores through bands.</li> <li>• Consider growth measures in non-tested grades in reading and mathematics.</li> <li>• Use Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) for K-3 reading as growth measure.</li> </ul>

- 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/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.

<b>Flexibility Principle 1: College- and Career-Ready Standards and Assessments</b>
<p>Discussion points and ideas shared for the waiver request are the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to use the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) proficiency standards.</li> <li>• Include additional indicators for career readiness for high school students, for example, industry certification(s).</li> </ul>
<p>Other general discussion included the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide additional clarification to parents to better understand the meaning of different diplomas as they relate to college and career readiness.</li> <li>• Change the proposed name of the Pass/College Ready cut score on the <i>Algebra II Standards of Learning</i> assessment to a different term.</li> <li>• Consider a student who meets the rigorous “proficient” score as “college ready.”</li> </ul>

### **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 be 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**

<b>Flexibility Principle 1: College- and Career-Ready Standards and Assessments</b>
Discussion points and ideas shared for the waiver request are the following:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None provided.</li> </ul>
Other general discussion included the following:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None provided.</li> </ul>
<b>Flexibility Principle 2: Differentiated Support and Interventions for Underperforming Schools</b>
Discussion points and ideas shared for the waiver request are the following:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not lower academic expectations for subgroups.</li> </ul>
Other general discussion included the following:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None provided</li> </ul>
<b>Flexibility Principle 3: Teacher and Principal Evaluation Systems</b>
Discussion points and ideas shared for the waiver request are the following:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None provided.</li> </ul>
Other general discussion included the following:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None provided.</li> </ul>
<b>Optional Flexibility Request: Use of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) Funds for Approved Activities During the Extended School Day</b>
Discussion points and ideas shared for the waiver request are the following:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommendation is not to apply for the optional waiver request because if granted, funds presently supporting 21<sup>st</sup> 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 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC programs at risk of continuing.</li> <li>• Little research is available about the impact of a longer school day on improving the academic outcomes of students.</li> <li>• Several cited studies provide positive data for maintaining the current 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program as it now operates.</li> </ul>
Other general discussion included the following:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain the current three-year funding structure of the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC out-of-school time programs since the structure provides an excellent vehicle for expanded learning opportunities.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• The program presently operating in Virginia offers strong partnerships between the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC programs and the community.</li> </ul>

**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](mailto: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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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!

-----

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**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 90<sup>th</sup> 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 50<sup>th</sup> percentile to 89<sup>th</sup> percentiles, the 15<sup>th</sup> to 49<sup>th</sup> percentiles, the 5<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> percentile, and schools below the 5<sup>th</sup> 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**

<b>Flexibility Principle 1: College- and Career-Ready Standards and Assessments</b>
Discussion points and ideas shared for the waiver request are the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None provided.</li> </ul>
Other general discussion included the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broaden the base of what identifies college and career ready beyond mathematics and reading.</li> </ul>
<b>Flexibility Principle 2: Differentiated Support and Interventions for Underperforming Schools</b>
Discussion points and ideas shared for the waiver request are the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include all subgroups within the school as a measure of the school’s growth.</li> <li>• Consider setting the Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) at 80 percent for the “all students” category.</li> <li>• A ten percent reduction in the gap between the “all students” category and subgroups should be considered.</li> <li>• AMOs should be recalibrated every three years.</li> <li>• Expand content area targets beyond reading and mathematics to include history/social sciences and science at the “all students” category.</li> <li>• Consider removing or lowering the minimum group size for accountability purposes.</li> <li>• Consider students’ “pass advance” scores for school recognition.</li> <li>• Differentiate AMOs at the individual school level so each school would be held to different benchmarks.</li> </ul>
Other general discussion included the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide additional opportunities for expedited retakes on <i>Standards of Learning</i> (SOL) reading and mathematics assessments for elementary and middle schools.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Investigate ways in which STEM initiatives might be considered in the accountability plan.</li> <li>• Consider assessing students more than one time per year.</li> <li>• Specifically define the growth model and provide in-depth training to all involved.</li> </ul>
<b>Flexibility Principle 3: Teacher and Principal Evaluation Systems</b>
Discussion points and ideas shared for the waiver request are the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher evaluations should not have a tiered rating level because of the potential impact on teacher morale.</li> <li>• Ensure school divisions are implementing evaluation systems with fidelity.</li> </ul>

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  $\geq 95$  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 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**

<b>Flexibility Principle 1: College- and Career-Ready Standards and Assessments</b>
Discussion points and ideas shared for the waiver request are the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>None provided.</u></li> </ul>
Other general discussion included the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>None provided.</u></li> </ul>
<b>Flexibility Principle 2: Differentiated Support and Interventions for Underperforming Schools</b>
Discussion points and ideas shared for the waiver request are the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>None provided.</u></li> </ul>
Other general discussion included the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>None provided.</u></li> </ul>
<b>Flexibility Principle 3: Teacher and Principal Evaluation Systems</b>
Discussion points and ideas shared for the waiver request are the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>None provided.</u></li> </ul>
Other general discussion included the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>None provided.</u></li> </ul>

**Board of Education Meeting  
January 12, 2012**

<b>Flexibility Principle 1: College- and Career-Ready Standards and Assessments</b>
Discussion points and ideas shared for the waiver request are the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>None provided.</u></li> </ul>
Other general discussion included the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>None provided.</u></li> </ul>
<b>Flexibility Principle 2: Differentiated Support and Interventions for Underperforming Schools</b>
Discussion points and ideas shared for the waiver request are the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Letter shared by the JustChildren expressing concerns about subgroup accountability (the letter is included in Attachment 2 of this application)</u></li> </ul>
Other general discussion included the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>None provided.</u></li> </ul>
<b>Flexibility Principle 3: Teacher and Principal Evaluation Systems</b>
Discussion points and ideas shared for the waiver request are the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>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)</u></li> </ul>
Other general discussion included the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>None provided.</u></li> </ul>

## 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

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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

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From: -----  
Sent: Thursday, November 17, 2011 11:22 AM  
To: Tate, Veronica (DOE); Sheehan, Ann (DOE)  
Cc: Wilder, Amanda; Williams, Judy  
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!

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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. 14<sup>th</sup> 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. VASCED 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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. VASCED joins other public education stakeholders grappling with how to define 21<sup>st</sup> 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**

VASCED 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, VASCED will offer a [symposium](#) focused on building on the SOL foundation plus maintaining alignment with the Common Core. VASCED'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/21<sup>st</sup> 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](http://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**

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November 22, 2011

Greetings,

**Mr. Jim Gallagher****President Elect**

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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.

**Mr. Scott Hand****Secretary**

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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.

**Ms. Angela Neely****Treasurer**

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- 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.

**Mr. Wyllys VanDerwerker****Past President**

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**Ms. Marylou Wall****Executive Director**

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- 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 waiver 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.<sup>1</sup>

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.

<sup>1</sup> See p. 7 of ESEA Frequently Asked Questions, U.S. Dep't of Education (describing Options A, B, and C).

**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.<sup>2</sup>
- **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.

<sup>2</sup> 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>

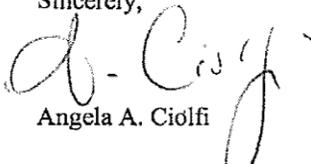
- **Family and Community Engagement.** Struggling schools should be required to increase family and community involvement by holding public meetings to review school performance and develop improvement plans, implement complaint procedures for families having any area of difficulty, provide parent education 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

## 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. 14<sup>th</sup> Street  
 Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Dr. Wright and Members of the Virginia Board of Education:

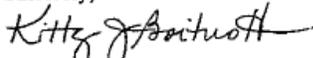
At the November 30<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Virginia Education Coalition, representatives of the member organizations discussed the issue of Virginia's ESEA Flexibility application. As a result, it was decided that we would write a letter as a collective body addressing some of the common concerns 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, Ph.D., NBCT  
 Chair, Virginia Education Coalition

## JUSTCHILDREN

A Program of the

Angela Ciolfi  
Legal Director  
angela@justice4all.org

LEGAL AID JUSTICE CENTER

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.<sup>1</sup>

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.<sup>2</sup>

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

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

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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.<sup>3</sup>

Thank you.

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<sup>3</sup> 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.**



## 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  
Independence Center Incorporated

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  
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#### 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](mailto: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  
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**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

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### 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Virginia Association of School Superintendents (VASS)</li> <li>• Virginia Parent Teacher Association (VPTA)</li> <li>• Virginia School Boards Association (VSBA)</li> </ul>
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	<i>No Child Left Behind Act of 2001</i> (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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Representatives from the following organizations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals (VAESP)</li> <li>• Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals (VASSP)</li> <li>• Virginia ESL Supervisors’ Association (VESA)</li> <li>• Virginia Council of Administrators for Special Education (VCASE)</li> <li>• Virginia Education Association (VEA)</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Selected teachers</li> </ol>
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	<i>No Child Left Behind Act of 2001</i> (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

## **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 2001 and 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](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](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 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learner, and the NCTE 21<sup>st</sup> 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](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](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](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\\_frameworks/2009/mathematics\\_curriculum\\_frmwrk\\_supplement.pdf](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/sol/frameworks/mathematics_frameworks/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](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](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. 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. (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 important or essential 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](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/administrators/superintendents_memos/2011/065-11.shtml) 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](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

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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 21<sup>st</sup> 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.

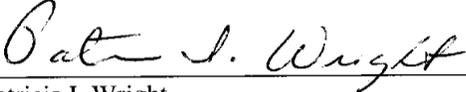
As a key step in this initiative and through a systematic process involving Virginia’s community colleges and four-year institutions, Virginia has identified college and career ready performance expectations for mathematics and English. These performance expectations define the level of achievement students 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

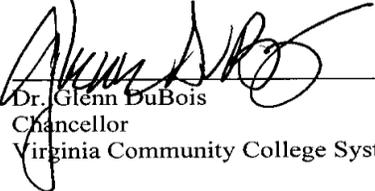


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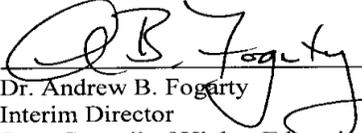
performance expectations for mathematics and reading, writing, and communicating, and that by this agreement, these performance expectations are recognized by the Commonwealth's education agencies, the Virginia Department of Education, the Virginia Community College System, and the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, for this purpose.

  
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Dr. Patricia I. Wright  
Superintendent of Public Instruction  
Virginia Department of Education

2-11-11  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Glenn DuBois  
Chancellor  
Virginia Community College System

2-16-11  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Andrew B. Fogarty  
Interim Director  
State Council of Higher Education for Virginia

2/16/11  
Date



**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 assessments** will be submitted beginning in 2011-2012. Peer review documentation for the **new reading assessments** will be submitted during the 2012-2013 school year.

**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)**

<b>2010-2011 Statewide Average</b>		
<b>Subgroup</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>
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 of schools identified as reward, priority, and focus schools, based on the most recently available data, is provided in Section 2.E of this application. A list will be developed to reflect updated and accurate data, based on performance expectations outlined in Principle 2 of this application, following the availability of 2011-2012 assessment results.

**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](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:

[pending approval]

**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/](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](mailto: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

## Attachment 12 – Virginia’s Student Growth Percentiles



### 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](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/scoring/student_growth_percentiles/index.shtml).

**Attachment 13 – Sample Report Card Cover Page**



**Name of School**  
**Address of School**  
**Name of Division**

**Principal Name**  
**Telephone Number**

**Superintendent Name**  
**Telephone Number**

**Accreditation Status**  
**Gap Group Status**  
**Focus or Priority Indication, if applicable**

The Commonwealth of Virginia is committed to providing quality education for all students. This commitment includes keeping parents of the public informed through the Virginia School Report Card of the progress of our schools in raising student achievement and enhancing the learning environment. The ratings for school accreditation and gap group proficiency for a specific school year are based on the achievement of students on tests taken during the previous academic year.

**This School's Area(s):**  
 General Education, Title I – School Wide Program

Annual Measureable Objective for Mathematics is 70  
 Annual Measureable Objective for Reading/Language Arts is 75

Subject	Accreditation Status					
	2009-2010		2010-2011		2011-2012	
	1 Yr.	3 Yr.	1 Yr.	3 Yr.	1 Yr.	3 Yr.
English						
Mathematics						
History						
Science						

Proficiency	Proficiency Gap Group Status						
	Met Overall Performance Expectations*	Reading			Mathematics		
		Met SOA Target	Met Growth Target	Reduced Failure Rate	Met SOA Target	Met Growth Target	Reduced Failure Rate
Gap Group 1							
Gap Group 2							
Gap Group 3							

\* Each Proficiency Gap Group must meet at least one indicator in Reading and one indicator in mathematics to be considered meeting overall Proficiency Gap Group performance expectations.

**Notes:**

1. Accreditation Status labels include Fully Accredited, Conditionally Accredited – New School, Provisionally Accredited, Accredited with Warning, Conditionally Accredited - Reconstituted, Accreditation Denied
2. Gap Group Status labels include Met All Gap Group Proficiency Targets or Did Not Meet All Gap Group Proficiency Targets
3. Focus or Priority Identification based on definitions within ESEA flexibility application

### Attachment 14 – Virginia’s Former NCLB Title I Reading and Mathematics Annual Measurable Objectives and Current Title III AMAOs

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.

<b>Former Title I Reading and Mathematics AMOs</b>				
<b>Content Area</b>	<b>2010-2011</b>	<b>2011-2012</b>	<b>2012-2013</b>	<b>2013-2014</b>
Reading	86	91	96	100
Mathematics	85	90	95	100

In February 2011, the Virginia Board of Education adopted the **Title III Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAOs)**, shown in the table below, to comply with the requirements in Section 3122 of NCLB.

<b>Existing English Language Proficiency Title III AMAOs</b>				
	<b>2010-2011</b>	<b>2011-2012</b>	<b>2012-2013</b>	<b>2013-2014</b>
AMAO 1 Progress	65	66	67	68
AMAO 2 Proficiency	15	16	17	18
AMAO 3 Reading	86	91	96	100
AMAO 3 Mathematics	85	90	95	100

The targets shown in both 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**

**Virginia Index of Performance  
Criteria, Indicators, and Award Requirements  
February 17, 2011**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Board of Education Distinguished Achievement Award</b>	<b>Board of Education Excellence Award</b>	<b>Governor’s Award for Educational Excellence</b>
A. Eligibility – Schools must have met accreditation and federal benchmarks for two consecutive years; school divisions must have made federal benchmarks for two consecutive years	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/reading (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. 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%)	3	3	At least 95%
E. Students passing the Grade 5 state reading and writing assessments (percent passing increases annually, state goal 95%)	1	1	Increases annually or is at least 95%
F. School offers foreign language instruction in the elementary grades	1	1	Yes

Criteria	Board of Education Distinguished Achievement Award	Board of Education Excellence Award	Governor's Award for Educational Excellence
<b>For Middle Schools</b>			
G. Students enrolled in Algebra I by Grade 8* (percent participating increases annually, state goal 50%)	2	2	At least 50%
H. Students passing the Grade 8 state reading and writing assessments (percent passing increases annually, state goal 95%)	1	1	Increases annually or is at least 95%
<b>For High Schools</b>			
I. High school students enrolled in one or more AP, IB, or dual enrollment courses (increases annually, state goal 30%)	1	1	At least 30%
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).	1	1	Number or percent of CTE credentials increases annually OR The percent of students participating in advanced coursework in STEM areas increases annually
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%)	At least 85% or increases annually	At least 85%	At least 85%
L. High school graduates earning an Advanced Studies Diploma out of the total number of Board of Education-approved diplomas awarded (increases annually, state goal 60%)	1	1	At least 60%
M. Students in each subgroup who graduate from high school with a Standard or Advanced Studies Diploma (increases annually, state goal 85%)	1	1	Increases annually, or is at least 85%
N. Students who graduate from high school having taken Calculus, Chemistry, and Physics* (increases annually)	1	1	Increases annually

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Board of Education Distinguished Achievement Award</b>	<b>Board of Education Excellence Award</b>	<b>Governor's Award for Educational Excellence</b>
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* (increases annually)	1	1	Increases annually
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
<b>For all Schools and Divisions</b>			
Q. Increase participation in the Governor's Nutrition and Physical Activity Scorecard Awards program (schools must earn an award; divisions increase program participation)	1	1	1
R. 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)	1	1	1
<b>For School Divisions Only</b>			
S. Eligible schools participate in the Virginia Preschool Initiative for at-risk four-year-olds.	1	1	Yes
T. 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*	1	1	Yes
U. Schools offer foreign language instruction in the elementary grades (number increases annually, state goal 100%)	1	1	Increases annually or equals 100%
V. Increase the percentage of schools that are fully accredited and making Adequate Yearly Progress (annual increase, state goal 100%)	1	1	1

\* Indicates STEM components of the VIP program

Note: Items listed in *italics* are proposed modifications from the current VIP program; items listed in *italics and underlined* are proposed changes that are new to the VIP program.

**Attachment 16 – Academic Review Process Overview**

**Academic Review Process for All Schools**

<u>Year of Warning</u>	<u>Non-Title I Schools Accredited with Warning or Provisionally Accredited</u>	<u>Title I Schools Accredited with Warning</u>	<u>Focus Schools</u>	<u>Priority Schools</u>
<b><u>Year 1</u></b>	<p><u>Academic Review and assignment of a school and division support team</u></p> <p><u>Develop the school improvement plan and division improvement plan</u></p> <p><u>VDOE contractor assigned to the division – Needs sensing interview</u></p>	<p><u>Academic Review and assignment of a school and division support team</u></p> <p><u>Develop the school improvement plan and division improvement plan</u></p> <p><u>Supplement intervention strategies using Title I, 1003a or 1003g funding</u></p> <p><u>VDOE contractor assigned to the division – Needs sensing interview</u></p>	<p><u>Academic Review and assignment of a school and division support team</u></p> <p><u>Develop the school improvement plan and division improvement plan</u></p> <p><u>Supplement intervention strategies using Title I, 1003a or 1003g funding</u></p> <p><u>VDOE contractor assigned to the division – Needs sensing interview</u></p> <p><u>Closely follow all requirements in 2E and 2G</u></p>	<p><u>Academic Review and assignment of a school and division support team</u></p> <p><u>Develop the school improvement plan and division improvement plan</u></p> <p><u>Select and implement one of USED models or implement all turnaround principles (funded through Title I, 1003a or 1003g)</u></p> <p><u>LTP contractor assigned to the school/division</u></p> <p><u>VDOE contractor assigned to the division and school</u></p> <p><u>Closely follow all requirements in 2D and 2G</u></p>

<u>Year of Warning</u>	<u>Non-Title I Schools Accredited with Warning or Provisionally Accredited</u>	<u>Title I Schools Accredited with Warning</u>	<u>Focus Schools</u>	<u>Priority Schools</u>
<b><u>If warned in Year 2</u></b>	<p><u>Division team and school team Implement, monitor and modify the school improvement plan</u></p> <p><u>VDOE contractor assigned to the division and/or school</u></p>	<p><u>Division team and school team Implement, monitor and modify the school improvement plan</u></p> <p><u>VDOE contractor assigned to the division and/or school</u></p>	<p><u>Division team and school team Implement, monitor and modify the school improvement plan</u></p> <p><u>VDOE contractor assigned to the division and school</u></p> <p><u>Supplement intervention strategies using Title I, 1003a or 1003g funding</u></p> <p><u>Closely follow all requirements in 2D and 2G</u></p>	<p><u>LTP, division team and school team Implement and monitor the USED model or all turnaround principles.</u></p> <p><u>VDOE contractor assigned to the division and school.</u></p>
<b><u>If warned in Year 3</u></b>	<p><u>Division team and school team Implement, monitor and modify the school improvement plan</u></p> <p><u>VDOE contractor assigned to the division and the school</u></p>	<p><u>Division team and school team Implement, monitor and modify the school improvement plan</u></p> <p><u>VDOE contractor assigned to the division and the school</u></p>	<p><u>Division team and school team Implement, monitor and modify the school improvement plan</u></p> <p><u>VDOE contractor assigned to the division and school</u></p> <p><u>Supplement intervention strategies using Title I, 1003a or 1003g funding</u></p> <p><u>Closely follow all requirements in 2D and 2G</u></p>	<p><u>LTP, division team and school team Implement and monitor the USED model or all turnaround principles.</u></p> <p><u>VDOE contractor assigned to the division and school.</u></p>
<b><u>If warned in Year 4</u></b>	<p><u>Move to Accreditation Denied Status</u></p> <p><u>Develop a MOU with the Board of Education</u></p>	<p><u>Move to Accreditation Denied Status and Priority Status</u></p> <p><u>Develop a MOU with the Board of Education</u></p>	<p><u>Move to Accreditation Denied Status and Priority Status</u></p> <p><u>Develop a MOU with the Board of Education</u></p>	<p><u>Move to Accreditation Denied Status and Continue in Priority Status</u></p> <p><u>Develop a MOU with the Board of Education</u></p>

## Attachment 17 – 7-Step Virginia Early Warning System (VEWS) Implementation Process

In order to comprehensively address the barriers to student success that lead to drop out, a strategic process of data-driven decision making that includes systematic student identification, intervention, monitoring, and evaluation must be implemented. The 7-Step VEWS implementation process, developed by the National High School Center, will be executed over the course of the year in alignment with the academic calendar.

Specific steps are undertaken during defined periods of the year, many in a recurring or continuous manner, so that the process of reviewing VEWS data and identifying appropriate dropout strategies and interventions is timely and responsive to individual student needs. In the longer term, the process allows ongoing evaluation and revision across academic years to ensure that the VEWS achieves maximum efficiency and efficacy in the local context. The process is defined below:

### *Step 1: Establish Roles and Responsibilities*

A diverse, well-informed school team is essential to the success of this process. The team should include a broad representation of staff within the school and, ideally, the division. Membership may include the school principal or assistant principal, representatives from feeder middle and elementary schools, guidance counselors, teachers, and division central office representatives. The school team will meet regularly throughout the school year.

### *Step 2: Use the VEWS Tool*

The VEWS tool uses information about student attendance, course failures, grade point average (GPA), and credits earned to identify, or flag, students who are at-risk for dropping out. The tool is designed to primarily monitor students while they are in high school; however, a pre-high school risk indicator has also been integrated into the tool. Once data are imported into the tool using an Excel file format, the tool automatically flags students as “at-risk” on the basis of the indicators that are predictive of whether students will graduate or drop out. The school team ensures that the tool is regularly updated and that VEWS information is disseminated appropriately to maintain confidentiality while facilitating the decision making process. The VEWS tool is available at

[http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/school\\_improvement/early\\_warning\\_system/index.shtml](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/school_improvement/early_warning_system/index.shtml).

### *Step 3: Review the VEWS Data*

In Step 3, VEWS data are reviewed to identify students at risk for dropping out and to understand patterns in student engagement and academic performance. This is a critical step when using any type of early warning data, although the focus here is on information and reports that are in the VEWS tool. A wide variety of reports are available to disaggregate data into manageable pieces that can be sorted, organized, and prioritized so

that the school team can take action. The VEWS tool provides student- and school-level reports that the team can then review to better understand patterns and begin to consider the allocation of dropout prevention resources to flagged students. These reports allow the team to review summary information on the number and percentage of students in the school who are flagged (for any reason) and who are flagged for particular indicators.

*Step 4: Interpret the VEWS Data*

This step builds on the review of VEWS data conducted in Step 3 by encouraging the team to look more closely at the characteristics of flagged students. Indicators of risk are merely signs of deeper and likely more complex problems related to student disengagement with school and academic failure. The team should gather data from a variety of sources. These sources may include classroom teachers or other adults in the school who interact with flagged students. Additionally, the team should consider conducting one-on-one meetings with individual students, their parents, or both. On the basis of their investigations, the team should be able to identify some common and individual needs among students, and prepare to identify and implement appropriate intervention strategies (Step 5) and monitor students' responses to these interventions (Step 6).

*Step 5: Assign and Provide Interventions*

During Step 5, the school team matches individual students to specific interventions after having gathered information about: (1) potential root causes for individual flagged students, and (2) the available dropout prevention and academic and behavioral support programs in the school, division, and community. A tiered approach to intervention, in which increasingly intensive levels of intervention are provided to the students with the greatest needs, is recommended. The VEWS tool allows schools to identify and prescribe multiple levels of intervention for flagged students. Interventions are then assigned by tier, date, and person responsible.

[www.vews.org](http://www.vews.org)

*Step 6: Monitor Students*

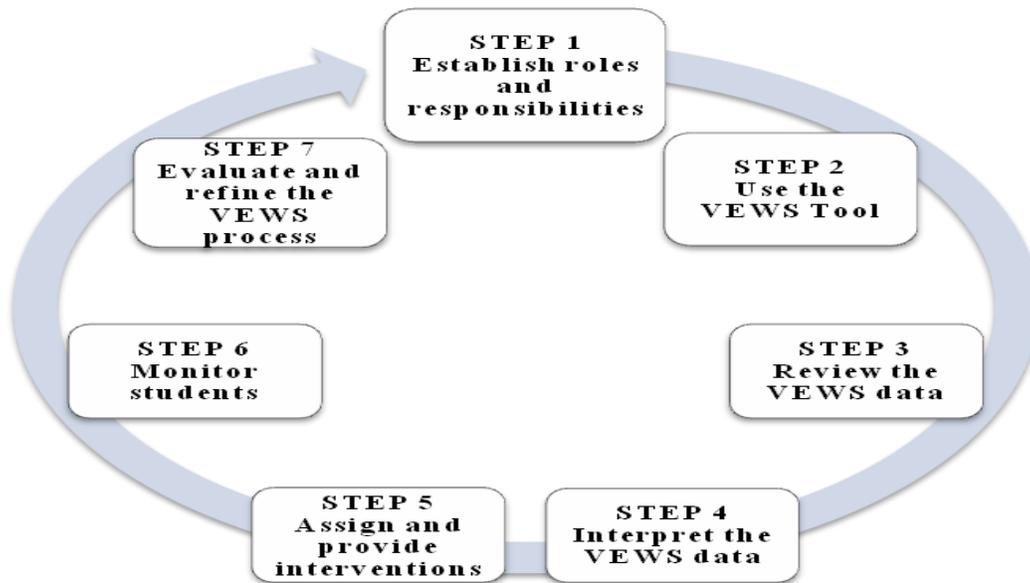
In this step, the school team uses progress monitoring information to evaluate the impact of interventions on individual students and on students with common needs. Students who were previously flagged and assigned to one or more interventions should be monitored closely to determine whether they are again flagged and for which reasons. Issues that arise with students who are receiving supports and who continue to show signs that they are at risk for dropping out should be addressed. New interventions that are not currently available to meet the needs of students may be identified. In these cases, the team must conduct a search and develop a list of potential interventions and strategies that may serve the need, with the associated costs of implementing the intervention or strategy (e.g., resources, funding, staff time). After the team shares the level of need and potential solutions and shares the information with leadership and staff, appropriate intervention(s) can be implemented. Families should be informed when students appear

to make improvements, and they should also be informed when there is lack of improvement or further decline.

*Step 7: Evaluate and Refine the VEWS Process*

On an annual basis (at a minimum), the school team should reflect on the VEWS implementation process. In this step, the team reflects on the VEWS process based upon data and evidence and identifies successes and challenges. As part of this step, the team makes recommendations for improving the process. Finally, the current school team, in addition to other school and division leadership, identifies new school team members and ensures that they are trained and that they understand the implementation process. Step 7 also includes an analysis of the VEWS risk indicators to determine the extent to which they are accurately predicting students who are at-risk of dropping out of high school. Having multiple years of data to look at these percentages is critical to testing the predictive power of the VEWS indicators for the local context. If the validation analysis shows that the system is not very predictive in the local context, modification of the indicators or the thresholds/benchmarks may be warranted.

### 7-Step VEWS Implementation Process Developed by the National High School Center



## Attachment 18 – The Eight Elements of High School Improvement from the National High School Center

Element	Sample Indicators of Effectiveness
<b>Rigorous Curriculum and Instruction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rigorous content and instruction are aligned to local, state, and national standards.</li> <li>• Research- and evidence-based instructional strategies are incorporated across all content areas for all students.</li> <li>• College and career readiness skills are incorporated across all content areas.</li> </ul>
<b>Assessment and Accountability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multiple assessment strategies, including formative assessment, are implemented across all content areas.</li> <li>• Instructional staff members regularly analyze assessment data of instructional planning.</li> <li>• An early warning system is used to identify students at risk for failure and dropping out; identified students are provided appropriate interventions.</li> </ul>
<b>Teacher Quality and Professional Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers have the necessary content and pedagogical knowledge, as well as prerequisite training and pre-service experiences.</li> <li>• Instructional staff members work collaboratively to meet student needs across all content areas and in all categorical programs.</li> <li>• Professional development is job-embedded, ongoing throughout each school year, and aligned with school and division improvement initiatives.</li> </ul>
<b>Student and Family Supports</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programs that engage and support family members are provided.</li> <li>• Transition programs are in place that support students as they transition in and out of high school.</li> <li>• A positive school climate which includes school safety and respect is fostered.</li> </ul>
<b>Stakeholder Engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multiple stakeholders are engaged in high school improvement strategies and initiatives.</li> <li>• Partnerships with stakeholders are fostered to enhance teaching and learning opportunities.</li> <li>• Multiple communication strategies are implemented.</li> </ul>
<b>Leadership and Governance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A distributed leadership approach is in place to promote high school improvement.</li> <li>• High school improvement strategies and initiatives are guided by an effective high school improvement team.</li> <li>• School leaders possess the prerequisite knowledge of school change to support high school initiatives and improvement strategies.</li> </ul>
<b>Organization and Structure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organizational structures that foster collaboration among instructional staff are in place.</li> <li>• Schoolwide structures that support effective classroom management across all content areas are implemented.</li> <li>• Organizational structures to support innovative instruction and opportunities to learn through nontraditional settings are in place.</li> </ul>
<b>Resources for Sustainability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate time and necessary fiscal support are provided so that high school improvement strategies and initiatives can be implemented and sustained.</li> <li>• Facilities and materials are continually assessed and upgraded to keep pace with evolving standards and technology.</li> <li>• Teachers and principals continuously develop their knowledge and skills to incorporate high school improvement strategies and initiatives within their instructional leadership practices.</li> </ul>

## Attachment 19 – High School Rapid Improvement Indicators from the Center on Innovation and Improvement

Element	Indicators of Effectiveness
<b>Team Structure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The division and school teams regularly examine individual and collective student data (e.g., course grades and completion, overall grade point average, attendance rates, behavior referrals, suspensions, end-of-course exams, state exam results) to identify areas for improvement across all content areas and throughout the school.</li> <li>• The division and school teams monitor rates of student transfer, dropout, graduation, and post-high school outcome (e.g., student enrollment in college, students in careers) using a longitudinal data system.</li> <li>• The division and school teams implement, monitor, and analyze results from an early warning system at the school level using indicators (e.g., attendance, academic, behavior monitoring) to identify students at risk for dropping out of high school.</li> <li>• A team structure is officially incorporated into the school improvement plan and school governance policy.</li> <li>• All teams have written statements of purpose and bylaws for their operation.</li> <li>• All teams operate with work plans for the year and specific work products to produce.</li> <li>• All teams prepare agendas for their meetings.</li> <li>• All teams maintain official minutes of their meetings.</li> <li>• The principal maintains a file of the agendas, work products, and minutes of all teams.</li> <li>• The division and school teams meet regularly (twice a month or more for an hour each meeting).</li> <li>• The division and school team serve as a conduit of communication to the faculty and staff.</li> <li>• The division and school teams regularly look at school performance data and aggregated classroom observation data and use that data to make decisions about school improvement and professional development needs.</li> <li>• Teachers are organized into grade-level, grade-level cluster, or subject-area instructional teams.</li> <li>• Instructional teams meet for blocks of time (4 to 6 hour blocks, once a month; whole days before and after the school year) sufficient to develop and refine units of instruction and review student learning.</li> </ul>

Element	Indicators of Effectiveness
<b>Principal's Role</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The traditional roles of the principal and other administrators (e.g., management, discipline, security) are distributed to allow adequate time for administrative attention to instruction and student supports.</li> <li>• The principal keeps a focus on instructional improvement and student learning outcomes.</li> <li>• The principal monitors curriculum and classroom instruction regularly.</li> <li>• The principal spends at least 50 percent of his/her time working directly with teachers to improve instruction, including classroom observations.</li> <li>• The principal challenges, supports and monitors the correction of unsound teaching practices.</li> <li>• The principal compiles reports from classroom observations, showing aggregate areas of strength and areas that need improvement without revealing the identity of individual teachers.</li> <li>• The division and school teams review the principal's summary reports of classroom observations and take them into account in planning professional development.</li> <li>• Professional development for teachers includes observations by the principal related to indicators of effective teaching and classroom management.</li> <li>• Professional development for teachers includes observations by peers related to indicators of effective teaching and classroom management.</li> <li>• Professional development for teachers includes self-assessment related to indicators of effective teaching and classroom management.</li> <li>• Teachers are required to make individual professional development plans based on classroom observations.</li> <li>• Professional development of individual teachers includes an emphasis on indicators of effective teaching.</li> <li>• Professional development for the whole faculty includes assessment of strengths and areas in need of improvement from classroom observations of indicators of effective teaching.</li> <li>• The principal plans opportunities for teachers to share their strengths with other teachers.</li> </ul>

Element	Indicators of Effectiveness
<b>Opportunity to Learn: Content Mastery and Graduation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school confirms that a student has mastered prerequisite content knowledge before allowing the student to take higher-level courses.</li> <li>• All students demonstrating prerequisite content mastery are given access to higher-level courses.</li> <li>• The curriculum and schedule provide pathways for all students to acquire missing content knowledge.</li> <li>• The school provides all students with academic supports (e.g., tutoring, co-curricular activities, tiered interventions) to keep them on-track for graduation.</li> <li>• The school provides all students extended learning opportunities (e.g., summer bridge programs, after-school and supplemental educational services, Saturday academies, enrichment programs) to keep them on-track for graduation.</li> <li>• The school provides all students with opportunities for content and credit recovery that are integrated into the regular school day to keep them on-track for graduation.</li> <li>• Teachers individualize instruction based on pre-test results to provide support for some students and enhanced learning opportunities for others.</li> <li>• Teachers re-teach based on post-test results.</li> <li>• All teachers differentiate assignments (individualize instruction) in response to individual student performance on pre-tests and other methods of assessment.</li> <li>• All teachers test frequently using a variety of evaluation methods and maintain a record of the results.</li> <li>• All teachers develop weekly lesson plans based on aligned units of instruction.</li> </ul>
<b>Opportunity to Learn: Extended Learning Opportunities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school expects all students to participate in activities to develop skills outside of the classroom (e.g., service learning, athletics, enrichment, internships).</li> <li>• The school provides all students with opportunities to learn through nontraditional educational settings (e.g., virtual courses, dual enrollment, service learning, work-based internships).</li> <li>• The school provides all students with formal supports and a network of contacts with school personnel, community members, and workplace personnel to ensure the social capital necessary to make informed life decisions.</li> </ul>
<b>Opportunity to Learn: Transitions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school provides freshman students with formal supports as they make the transition to high school (e.g., summer bridge programs, freshman academies).</li> <li>• The school provides senior students with formal supports as they make the transition out of high school (e.g., college and career planning, job fairs).</li> <li>• The school tracks the postsecondary school placements and experiences of their graduates and reports the results to the school board, faculty, and school community.</li> </ul>