Virginia Board of Education Agenda Item

Agenda Item: L **Date:** November 21, 2013

Title	First Review of Virginia's Renewal Application for Waivers from Certain Requirements of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965* (ESEA)		
Presenter	Ms. Veronica Tate, Director, Office of Program Administration and Accountability		
E-mail	Veronica.Tate@doe.virginia.gov	**Phone**	804-225-2869

Purpose of Presentation:
Action required by state or federal law or regulation.

Previous Review or Action:
No previous review or action.

Action Requested:
Action will be requested at a future meeting. Specify anticipated date below:
January 16, 2014

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

X	Goal 1: Accountability for Student Learning
	Goal 2: Rigorous Standards to Promote College and Career Readiness
	Goal 3: Expanded Opportunities to Learn
	Goal 4: Nurturing Young Learners
	Goal 5: Highly Qualified and Effective Educators
	Goal 6: Sound Policies for Student Success
	Goal 7: Safe and Secure Schools
X	Other Priority or Initiative. Specify: Required by the U.S. Department of Education for ESEA flexibility

Background Information and Statutory Authority:
Goal 1: The Board of Education supports accountability for all public schools by establishing state policies and complying with federal requirements that help schools increase the academic success of all students.

In September 2011, the U.S. Department of Education (USED) offered states flexibility regarding specific requirements of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965* (ESEA), as amended by the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB), in exchange for rigorous and comprehensive state-developed plans designed to improve educational outcomes for all students, close achievement gaps, increase equity, and improve the quality of instruction (ESEA flexibility). To be granted flexibility from ESEA requirements, states had to submit applications requesting waivers and outlining the state-developed plans to accomplish the goals above by implementing reforms aligned with the following principles:

- Principle 1 – College- and career-ready standards and high-quality assessments to ensure that every student graduates from high school college and career ready;
- Principle 2 – Targeted and differentiated accountability systems, rigorous supports and interventions to the lowest-performing schools and schools with the lowest graduation rates, and identification of support to low-achieving students based on need; and
- Principle 3 – Teacher and principal evaluation and support systems that provide teachers and principals with the feedback and support needed to improve practice and increase student achievement.

Virginia submitted its waiver request to USED in February 2012, or "Window 2" of the submission process. After numerous amendments, the final revised ESEA flexibility application was approved in March 2013. The terms of the waiver are effective for two years, through the end of the 2013-2014 school year.

In August 2013, USED invited "Window 1" and "Window 2" states to request a two-year renewal of ESEA flexibility through the end of the 2015-2016 school year. The purpose of the renewal is to confirm that a state is meeting its commitments in accordance with the principles and timelines of ESEA flexibility. A state seeking renewal of ESEA flexibility must: 1) submit an updated ESEA flexibility application describing how it will continue to meet the principles and improve its implementation of the state plan; and 2) demonstrate that the waivers have contributed to improved student achievement and that their extension is in the public's best interest.

Summary of Important Issues:
Virginia's application for ESEA flexibility renewal will address the state's success in meeting the three required principles.

Principle 1 – College- and Career-Ready Standards and High-Quality Assessments

Implementation of College- and Career-Ready Standards

Virginia has fully implemented its college- and career-ready Standards of Learning and assessments in reading and mathematics as described in its original waiver request. Unlike states that have adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) to totally replace their prior standards, Virginia's college- and career-ready Standards of Learning are an extension of earlier Standards of Learning that have been enhanced to ensure students are prepared for successful entry into postsecondary education and the workplace.

Implementation of College- and Career-Ready Assessments

The administration of the state assessments in an online format has provided Virginia with the opportunity to develop next-generation assessments that include technology-enhanced items in addition to multiple-choice items. 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 Standards of Learning mathematics tests for grades 3-8, Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II that include technology-enhanced items were administered for the first time in 2011-2012. New reading, writing, and science assessments that also include technology-enhanced items were implemented in 2012-2013. The Algebra II, Reading, and Writing end-of-course Standards of Learning tests include a "college path" achievement level that represents the prerequisite skills and knowledge that students need for success in introductory credit-bearing college courses.

Principle 2 – Targeted and Differentiated Accountability Systems

Annual Measurable Objectives

At its October 2012 meeting, the Virginia Board of Education approved and USED accepted a revised annual measurable objective (AMO) methodology applied to a six-year trajectory. The methodology requires lower-performing subgroups to make greater gains in pass rates to close the achievement gap in reading and mathematics. The Board also established new continuous progress expectations for higher-performing subgroups. The policy requires that subgroups with a prior year pass rate higher than the current year's target maintain or exceed the prior year pass rate, within five percent, and up to 90 percent. Also, subgroups with a starting pass rate higher than the required Year 6 pass rate are expected to make continuous progress. Schools with subgroups that do not meet the higher expectations currently receive an accountability status of *Did Not Meet All Federal AMOs – MHE (did not Meet Higher Expectations).*

The higher expectations were established in an effort to ensure higher-performing subgroups continue to advance their achievement. However, impact data analyzed in fall of 2013 indicate that a disproportionate percentage of schools are adversely affected by one or more subgroups not meeting the higher expectations. As well, the minimum group size reduction from 50 to 30 students in the 2012-2013 assessment year further magnified the impact of the higher expectations because more schools were accountable for the now smaller subgroups that had previously not been reported for federal accountability. Fluctuations in the number of students in a subgroup from year to year also create inconsistencies when comparing a high pass rate in the prior year to the current year's achievement of a different cohort of students. Hence, the Board's policy, which has been coined the "no backsliding" policy, created unintended consequences during 2012-2013 where high-performing subgroups did not meet the AMOs, thus the school did not meet the required federal accountability benchmarks.

To mitigate the unintended consequences of the higher expectations embedded among the provisions to meet AMOs, the Department of Education proposes that these higher expectations be used as an incentive for schools and subgroups. Beginning with the 2014-2015 accountability year (2013-2014 assessment year), a subgroup would be considered as meeting the federal AMOs for reading and mathematics if:

1) The subgroup's current year pass rate meets or exceeds the target;
2) The subgroup's three year average meets or exceeds the target; or
3) The subgroup reduces the failure rate by 10 percent as compared to the prior year (safe harbor).

The Department proposes that schools with all subgroups meeting the AMOs by the aforementioned provisions, and have one or more subgroups meeting the higher expectations approved by the Board in October 2012, would receive a status of *Met All Federal AMOs and Higher Expectations*. The *Did Not Meet All Federal AMOs – MHE (did not Meet Higher Expectations)* status would be discontinued.

Statewide System of Support for Title I Schools

The Office of School Improvement will begin reviewing the practices and supports in place in previously-identified priority schools that do not meet the state's exit criteria after two years of implementing interventions aligned with the turnaround principles. A transition plan will be developed to move these schools from the Lead Turnaround Partner (LTP) to the state's direct oversight if the school does not meet the exit criteria after the third year of implementation. The Department may require the division to continue with the LTP or may require other actions needed to ensure that the school improves through a Memorandum of Understanding established with the Department and the local school board. The local board and school will be required to provide updates on actions prescribed in the Memorandum of

Understanding periodically to the Virginia Board of Education.

Previously-identified focus schools that have not met the state's exit criteria after implementing interventions will be required to hire a lead turnaround partner (LTP) or other entity such as a university partner or contractor with expertise in school reform and approved by the Office of School Improvement.

Services provided by an LTP or other approved entity will be paid for using the division's federal Title I set-aside or other available funds. The LTP or other approved entity will support the school and division in identifying strategies that are based on the needs of students and designed to improve the performance of low-performing students and reduce achievement gaps among subgroups.

Principle 3 – Teacher and Principal Evaluation Systems

Virginia has fully implemented model teacher and principal evaluation systems approved by the Virginia Board of Education. Extensive technical assistance and professional development have been provided to central office leaders, principals, and teachers in the implementation of the Board's approved teacher and principal model evaluation systems.

As a part of the renewal process, each state must provide "a detailed timeline of the SEA's plan for implementation of teacher and principal evaluation and support systems, including when data from the systems will be collected, publicly reported, and incorporated into ratings, when ratings will be given to teachers and principals, when ratings will be used to guide professional development, and when ratings will be used to make personnel decisions." The *Code of Virginia* was amended by the 2012 General Assembly, to change the date teachers must be notified of nonrenewal from April 15 to June 15. As amended by the 2013 General Assembly, the *Code* states, in part, that principals must be notified of reassignment to a teaching position by June 15. Evaluation ratings should be provided to teachers and principals by June 15 as they are used to make personnel decisions each year.

In addition, ESEA Flexibility renewal requires each state to describe how it will transition to ensure that poor and minority students are not taught at higher rates than other children by inexperienced, ineffective, or out-of-field teachers and to provide an assurance that it will submit a comprehensive equity plan using effectiveness data from teacher and principal evaluation support systems by October 2015.

Recognizing the critical role that teacher quality plays in ensuring a high-quality education, Virginia has a Teacher Equity Plan. Currently, data for teacher equity planning are collected through the Department's annual Instructional Personnel and Licensure (IPAL) report and includes data regarding the following: 1) licensure and endorsements; 2) highly-qualified status; and 3) out-of-field teachers. Virginia will develop a comprehensive equity plan by October 2015 that will address this teacher quality issue.

Impact on Fiscal and Human Resources:
The provisions of the ESEA flexibility require the Virginia Department of Education and school divisions to implement numerous federal accountability requirements and report a great deal of data. These requirements will continue to have a significant impact on the resources of the agency and school divisions.

Timetable for Further Review/Action:
Following first review of Virginia's proposed ESEA flexibility renewal application, public comment will continue into December 2013. Virginia will submit a letter of intent to apply for renewal to USED by December 15, 2013, as required. Following the Board's final review of the renewal application on

January 16, 2014, it will be submitted to USED during "Phase B" of the submission window, January 22–31, 2014.

Superintendent's Recommendation:
The Superintendent of Public Instruction recommends that the Board of Education receive for first review Virginia's renewal application for waivers from certain requirements of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965* (ESEA).

ESEA Flexibility
Request
Virginia Department of Education

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

REVISIONS SUBMITTED JANUARY 11, 2013
RENEWAL APPLICATION SUBMITTED JANUARY 22, 2014

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

OMB Number: 1810-070
Paperwork Burden Statement

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

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INTRODUCTION

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

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

REVIEW AND EVALUATION OF REQUESTS

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

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Each request must include:

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

Requests should not include personally identifiable information.

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

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

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

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

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

REQUEST SUBMISSION DEADLINE

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

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE MEETING FOR SEAS

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

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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

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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.

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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: Ms. Veronica Tate Position and Office: Director, Office of Program Administration and Accountability Contact's Mailing Address: Virginia Department of Education P.O. Box 2120 Richmond, VA 23218-2120 Telephone: (804) 225-2870 Fax: (804) 371-7347 Email address: veronica.tate@doe.virginia.gov	
Chief State School Officer (Printed Name): Dr. Patricia I. Wright	Telephone: (804) 225-2023
Signature of the Chief State School Officer: X_____	Date: Original: February 23, 2012 Revisions: January 11, 2013 Renewal: January 22, 2014
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, all 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 than 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 the 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:

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

Throughout the development of its ESEA flexibility application, the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) apprised the public of its plan to apply for the flexibility via posting of information on the Department's Web site, mass communication to superintendents and other practitioners, and information shared during public meetings where various stakeholder groups

were represented. The VDOE also invited diverse stakeholders to provide input in a variety of ways, including: 1) providing comment at meetings of the Board of Education and meetings of the Board Committee on School and Division Accountability; 2) providing input during face-to-face forums such as Round Table discussions and Committee of Practitioners meetings; and 3) submitting written comments for review and consideration. The public at large was provided online access to streaming video of the Board of Education and Board Committee on School and Division Accountability meetings during which ESEA flexibility was discussed, as well as to the meeting agendas, reports, minutes, and materials referenced during those meetings.

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

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

Date	Forum	Stakeholders Providing Input
1/11/12	Board Committee on School and Division Accountability	Public Comment
1/12/12	Board of Education Meeting	Public Comment
9/27/12	Board of Education Meeting	Public Comment
10/25/12	Board of Education Meeting	Public Comment

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Other organizations invited to provide written input were the Chamber of Commerce and the Virginia Partnership for Out-of-School Time, which represents several after school programs across the state of Virginia. Attachment 2 contains comments provided at each of the stakeholder meetings.

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

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

General

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

Subgroups

- Maintain visibility and attention on subgroup performance.
- Limit subgroup accountability to reading and mathematics only.
- Combine subgroups where duplication of students is common so that schools with smaller populations of low-performing subgroups can be so identified and receive appropriate support.
- Set annual measurable objectives for each subgroup that are reflective of the group's performance trends and do not measure their performance against a 100 percent proficiency expectation or against the average performance of all students.

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

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

Substantive changes to Virginia's ESEA flexibility request were approved by the Virginia Board of Education at its May 24, 2012, meeting. Based on ongoing discussion with USED, the Virginia Board of Education approved additional changes at its October 25, 2012, meeting.

Public comment is welcomed at all Board meetings. The meetings are accessible to the public via video streaming and related documents are available on the Board's webpage.

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

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

Date	Forum	Stakeholders Providing Input
10/22/2013	NCLB Committee of Practitioners Meeting	Selected educators representing various segments of Virginia's education community, as outlined in the ESEA Executive summary of proposed additions and updates was distributed and discussed.
10/23/2013	Board Committee on School and Division Accountability	Public Comment
10/24/2013	Stakeholder E-mail	Selected educators, parents, and community and interest groups representing various segments of Virginia's education community Link to video recording of 10/23/2013 Committee meeting and executive summary of proposed additions and updates was distributed. Input was solicited.
11/20/2013	Board Committee on School and Division Accountability	Public Comment First Draft of Revised ESEA Flexibility Renewal Application was presented to the Committee for discussion.
11/21/2013	Board of Education Meeting	Public Comment First Draft of Revised ESEA Flexibility Renewal Application was presented to the Board of Education for First Review.

Date	Forum	Stakeholders Providing Input
11/22/2013	Stakeholder E-mail	Selected educators, parents, and community and interest groups representing various segments of Virginia's education community Link to video recording of 11/21/2013 Board meeting and First Draft of Revised ESEA Flexibility Renewal Application was distributed. Input was solicited.
12/2/2013	NCLB Committee of Practitioners Meeting	First Draft of the Revised ESEA Flexibility Renewal Application was distributed and discussed
1/15/2014	Board Committee on School and Division Accountability	Public Comment Final Draft of Revised ESEA Flexibility Renewal Application was presented to the Committee for discussion.
1/16/2014	Board of Education Meeting	Public Comment Final Draft of Revised ESEA Flexibility Renewal Application was presented to the Board of Education for Final Review.

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 create

a more cohesive accountability system that holds schools and divisions accountable for high achievement for all students and subgroups, while preventing the misidentification of schools as underperforming. Virginia's ESEA flexibility application is premised on the state's:

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

Background

Of Virginia's 1,839 schools, only 38 percent, or 697 of Virginia's 1,839 schools, made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) based on results from the 2010-2011 assessments, compared to 61 percent of schools that made AYP in the previous year. The AYP targets in 2010-2011 were five points higher (86 percent) in reading and six points higher in mathematics (85 percent) than the targets for assessments taken by students during 2009-2010. As a consequence, 342 schools that made AYP in the previous year, and would have made AYP had the targets not increased, were identified as not meeting AYP. Because AYP targets 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 federal annual performance expectations and classifications that are appropriate for Virginia's schools ~~will~~ allows for proper identification of those schools that need either comprehensive or targeted interventions. Virginia's revised accountability plan supplements state accreditation ratings with a prominent "dashboard" on each school's report card that ~~would~~ clearly and graphically shows progress – or the lack thereof – of all students, proficiency gap groups, and each individual subgroup toward closing proficiency gaps in reading, mathematics, and graduation rates.

Virginia's Innovative Educational Reform Efforts

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

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

In 2007, with the support of the Governor's Office, the Virginia Department of Education launched a College- and Career-Readiness Initiative. A hallmark of this initiative has been the

raising of standards and expansion of learning opportunities to ensure Virginia students become competitive in the global market. Some of the significant accomplishments under this initiative include the adoption of revised content standards that reflect national and international college- and career-ready expectations in mathematics and reading and are fully aligned with the Common Core State Standards. New and more rigorous technology-enhanced next-generation assessments in mathematics, English/writing, and science ~~are being~~ were 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~~ were initially implemented in 25 schools participating in Governor McDonnell's performance-pay pilot initiative. All schools fully implemented the standards and evaluation model by July 2013. The state ~~is providing~~ provided and will continue to provide school personnel with training and resource materials to assist in the implementation of the performance evaluation standards, criteria, and processes.

In addition, Governor Robert F. McDonnell's "Opportunity to Learn" K-12 legislative agenda 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 funded through additional substantial K-12 funding over the next biennium. Additional details about the Governor's K-12 agenda are included in the introduction to Question 1.A.

Virginia's innovative efforts in the three ESEA flexibility principles, coupled with the Governor's bold reform agenda, position the state to implement a more effective accountability system for schools and divisions. ~~Pending a spring 2012~~ Based on a summer 2012 initial approval of Virginia's ESEA flexibility application, new accountability determinations ~~would be~~ were implemented for the 2012-2013 school year based on 2011-2012 assessment results.

Based on Board of Education actions in October 2012, and U.S. Department of Education approval in March 2013, adjustments were made to the state's methodology for establishing annual measurable objectives (AMOs) as described in Principle 2. Based on impact data and stakeholder input, Virginia's renewal application includes a revision to the AMO methodology.

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

1.A ADOPT COLLEGE- AND CAREER-READY STANDARDS

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

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

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

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

Virginia is proud of the steps that have been taken to strengthen its Standards of Learning; the

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

Additionally, Governor Robert F. McDonnell's ~~proposed a~~ bold legislative agenda for the 2012-2014 bienniem ~~Virginia General Assembly~~ garnered much attention and success. Specific to college and career readiness, his "Opportunity to Learn" agenda ~~included proposed~~ succeeded in legislative actions to:

- Consolidate the high school diplomas available in the Commonwealth from seven to three with more rigorous and meaningful requirements, and raise the rigor of a Standard Diploma to require a career and technical education credential.
- Require the establishment of written agreements between school divisions and their local community colleges specifying the pathway for students to complete an associate's degree or a one-year Uniform Certificate of General Studies from a Virginia Community College concurrent with a high school diploma.
- ~~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.~~
- Strengthen teacher and principal evaluation processes.
- Provide $80,000 in FY13 to provide planning and first year start-up funding in for Governor's Health Sciences academies, which are partnerships among high schools, community colleges, and the business sector.
- Revise Virginia's *Standards of Quality* to ensure local school divisions use funds appropriated for prevention, intervention, and remediation to create reading intervention services to students in grades 3 and 4 who demonstrate reading deficiencies prior to promoting the student from grade 3 to 4 ~~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 was also passed.
- Report individual school performance using an A-to-F grading system that includes the standards of accreditation, state and federal accountability requirements, and student growth indicators in assigning grades.
- Establish the Opportunity Educational Institution Board charged with the supervision and operation of schools that have been denied accreditation in a manner most likely to achieve full accreditation for each school in the Institution, including the utilization of

charter schools and college partnership laboratory schools.

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;
- Ensured that each school division's use of Title II, Part A, funds is aligned with a local needs assessment, derived from multiple sources of student and educator data;
- Monitored school divisions' use of Title II, Part A, funds for evidence-based professional development activities;
- Developed a plan to ensure a smooth transition to college- and career-ready Standards of Learning and assessments (Attachment 18 ~~20~~); 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.

2013-2014 Update on Virginia's Implementation of College- and Career-Ready Standards

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

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

to the Department of Education and Board of Education that verifies the divisions' compliance with requirements under the Standards of Quality. The Virginia Board of Education submits to the Governor and General Assembly an annual report that identifies areas of noncompliance by school division.

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

Among the most notable VDOE efforts to respond to the needs of the field in the area of instruction are the following, which will be highlighted in the renewal process:

- The VDOE created a dynamic teacher information Web site called TeacherDirect that provides information to teachers on a weekly basis. Currently, over 23,000 individuals subscribe to a weekly e-mail update from the VDOE, in addition to those who access the information directly from the static Web site.
- Staff members in the Divisions of Instruction and Special Education have worked especially closely to develop instructional resources and recommend policies that provide greater support for students with disabilities and English language learners (ELLs).
- Additional assistance to ELLs and their teachers is included on the VDOE's English as a Second Language (ESL) Web page, including comprehensive information on the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) English Language Development (ELD) standards and corresponding English language proficiency assessment, technical assistance to teachers, schools, and school divisions, and other resources. Additionally, throughout the year, the VDOE provides numerous opportunities for teachers to gain additional expertise in working with ELLs.
- Through the federal program application review and monitoring process, VDOE ensures school divisions: 1) align the use of Title II, Part A, funds with the findings of a local needs assessment conducted in collaboration with the division's teachers and principals, and that multiple sources of data are used; and 2) use funds for evidence-based professional development efforts that deepen educators' subject-matter knowledge of instructional practices for all students and subgroups.
- In recognition of the need for all content areas to address ESL instruction, the VDOE has made this topic a priority in requesting assistance from the Appalachia Regional Comprehensive Center (ARCC), the federally-funded assistance center assigned to work with Virginia. During the next five years, the ARCC will work with the VDOE to

build the capacity of state-level staff to support the use of promising instructional strategies to assist ELLs in the core content areas.

- The Virginia General Assembly continues to support initiatives mentioned in Virginia's approved waiver application that are intended to provide additional support to all at-risk students, which includes students with disabilities and English language learners. These initiatives include Project Graduation, the Algebra Readiness Initiative, the Virginia Preschool Initiative, the Early Intervention Reading Initiative, and the Virginia Early Warning System.

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

Standards of Learning for All Content Areas

In 2010, Virginia completed a full cycle to review and revise its *Standards of Learning* (SOL) as required by Section § 22.1-253.13:1-2 of *The Code of Virginia*. The latest review cycle began in 2007 ~~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~~; followed by 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~~ were fully implemented and assessed in 2012-2013. In 2013, the Board also adopted revised ComputerTechnology and Fine Arts SOL.

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

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~~ were piloted in several school divisions in 2011-2012 and 2012-2013. Both courses are available to all students, including English language learners, students with disabilities, and low-achieving students, and will assist them in gaining access to and learning content aligned

with Virginia's standards.

As part of the work to implement the revised *English* and *Mathematics SOL* and the *College- and Career-Ready Performance Expectations*, the Department of Education and its higher education partners are providing professional development that enables teachers to have a better understanding of the knowledge and skills required for more students to meet or exceed the *Performance Expectations*. Since summer 2011, four public universities have been working with teachers of the capstone courses to align and improve their instruction so it is focused on the *Performance Expectations* and the *SOL* that directly support college and career readiness. The College of William & Mary and James Madison University conducted a Capstone Academy during the summer of 2011 to familiarize English teachers with the *English Performance Expectations* and have continued to provide support to teachers as they piloted the courses ~~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~~ piloted the course in 2011-2012 and 2012-2013.

School divisions have implemented the capstone courses either through modifications of existing senior-year courses or by offering a new course. ~~or plan to pilot it in 2012-2013. Once completed, all of these~~ All of the instructional materials developed to support teachers ~~will~~ reside in the public domain and ~~be~~ are available to all Virginia teachers (and others). These materials are available as follows:

English Capstone Course Instructional Resources

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

Mathematics Capstone Course Instructional Resources

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

Virginia's Index of Performance Incentive Program

The Virginia Index of Performance (VIP) Incentive Program also recognizes schools and school divisions that meet or exceed minimum state and federal accountability standards ~~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~~ with the first IEP to be in effect when the student turns 14. The Virginia Department of Education also assists students with disabilities in developing self-advocacy skills through the "I'm Determined" initiative. Through this program, students with disabilities are provided knowledge and skills to not only participate in, but also to lead their IEP meetings. Additionally these skills assist students to actively participate in their education as well as planning for careers.

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

English Language Learners

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

On September 26, 2007, the Virginia Board of Education adopted the ACCESS for ELLs (Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners) as the statewide English language proficiency (ELP) assessment for Virginia. The ACCESS for ELLs was developed by the World-Class Instructional Design Assessment (WIDA) consortium through a United States Department of Education (USED) Enhanced Assessment grant. On March 19, 2008, the Board adopted the WIDA English Language Proficiency (ELP) standards as the ELP standards for the Commonwealth. Since then, WIDA has released its enhanced version of the ELP standards, referred to as the 2012 Amplification of English Language Development (ELD) Standards, which Virginia has continued to use. The WIDA ~~ELP~~ ELD standards emphasize the need for academic language to support the four core content areas and thus reinforce the linguistic demands required for LEP students to be successful in Virginia's *Standards of Learning* program.

The five WIDA ~~ELP~~ ELD standards are as follows:

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

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

~~six~~ levels of English language proficiency as well as the four language domains. The levels of English language proficiency are: entering, emerging, ~~beginning,~~ developing, expanding, and 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~~ providing updated instructional resources that align the 2012 amplified ELD standards with recent revisions to the *Standards of Learning*.

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

Economically Disadvantaged Students

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

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

- March 22, 2012 – Grades 3-8 Mathematics tests

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

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

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

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

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

Instructional Materials and Resources

The revision of *Standards of Learning* (SOL) in specific content areas triggers a review of all accompanying instructional materials and supports for those standards. As such, the

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

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

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

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

In June 2012, the Department of Education conducted a survey of teachers regarding their knowledge of resource materials provided by the Department. A majority indicated they did

not receive this information on a regular basis. In response, in fall 2012, the Department launched Teacher*Direct* as a direct line of communication with classroom teachers and educators. Teacher*Direct* consists of a Web site and weekly e-mails to over 23,000 subscribers regarding instructional materials, professional development opportunities, and other topics of interest to all teachers, including those of students with disabilities and English Language Learners.

Professional Development

Virginia has provided targeted professional development in a "train-the-trainer" format through Mathematics SOL Institutes in 2009, 2010, ~~and~~ 2011, 2012, and 2013 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~~ ocurred across Virginia ~~beginning~~ in the ~~spring~~ summer 2012, with a second round completed in October 2013. The content of the new *English SOL*, *English SOL Curriculum Framework*, and *English SOL Scope and Sequence Sample Lesson Plans* ~~will be~~ was 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. Other professional development funded through the MSP grants include professional development models and materials, curriculum developed by projects or teachers participating in the project, and videos of science and mathematics teachers.

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. Subsequent Vision to Practice Institutes in 2012 and 2013 focused on the future of learning and emerging trends in education, respectively.
- The VDOE Colloquium, at the annual Virginia Middle and High School Principals Conference & Exposition, which addresses recent state mandates and the school leadership expectations of principals. The Colloquium focuses on resources and implementation strategies that have been successfully used in schools to improve instruction in the core curriculum areas – mathematics, science, English, and history and social science. The Colloquium occurs annually, with Department of Education staff continuing to participate in 2012 and 2013.
- Department of Education support of and participation in the 2011, 2012, and 2013 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 in 2011, 2012, and 2013.

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

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

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

Additionally, a number of instructional modules ~~are being~~ have been 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).

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

- STEM Teacher Recruitment and Retention Incentive Awards to attract, recruit, and retain high-quality diverse individuals to teach science, technology, engineering, or mathematics (STEM) subjects in Virginia's middle and high schools
- MonarchTeach at Old Dominion University, which will integrate requirements for majors in mathematics and science with specially designed teacher-preparation courses. This program was initially pioneered in Texas to increase the number of high quality mathematics and science teachers in the Commonwealth's middle and high schools.
- Virginia Center for Excellence in Teaching at George Mason University, which will provide professional development opportunities in instruction, education policy and leadership for 100 exemplary teachers annually
- Strategic Compensation Grants totaling $4.5 million to provide performance and incentive payments of up to $5,000 for teachers in 13 school divisions who meet goals related to student achievement, professional growth and leadership
- Virginia Middle School Mathematics Teacher Corps, which helps school divisions fill a critical teacher shortage area: middle school mathematics
- Virginia Teaching Scholarship Loan Program that provides financial support to students who are preparing to teach in one of Virginia's critical shortage teaching areas

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

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

- support student mastery of college-and career- ready reading and mathematics standards, and attainment of proficiency or better on corresponding college-and-career ready reading and mathematics assessments;
- meet annual measurable objective (AMO) targets for reading and mathematics that

demonstrate academic growth for all students and subgroups over time, and, for high schools with a graduating class, meeting the federal graduation indicator;
- ensure that students are taught by highly qualified and effective teachers; and
- provide meaningful professional development and support to promote effective instruction to increase student achievement.

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

Applications for federal funds are considered public documents and must go for review before the division's local School Board in public meetings. Once this approval has been given, multiple additional levels of review and approval are necessary at both the local and state levels. These reviews are assured through the electronic Online Management of Education Grant Awards (OMEGA) approval process. After initial submission, at least two levels of approval are required at the local level, one of which is the local school division superintendent. Each application is then reviewed by Title II, Part A, staff at VDOE to ensure that needs assessment information is provided and program activities reflect alignment to needs identified by the school division. The review also ensures that when a school division uses its funds for professional development, the activities reflect the required elements for high-quality, evidence-based professional development. Final approval is granted by the Director of the Office of Program Administration and Accountability at VDOE. Funding becomes available to school divisions upon approval of applications.

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

Furthermore, the school division must provide a description of the research-based activities that are supported with Title II, Part A, funding (Section 2122(b)(1)(A-B), Indicator 2.5), and 1) how the division monitors activities to ensure that they have a substantial, measurable, and positive impact on student academic achievement and 2) how the division evaluates the effectiveness of activities in helping to eliminate any identified achievement gaps. (Section

2122(b)(2), Indicator 2.6). Additionally, the school division must provide evidence that multiple stakeholders, including teachers and principals, are involved with the needs assessment and application development/review processes. (Section 2122(b)(7), Indicators 2.2 and 2.10).

Assessment Blueprints and Practice Tools

Standards of Learning (SOL) test blueprints 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 online ~~via the Virginia Electronic Practice Assessment Tool (ePAT) application~~ to familiarize students, teachers, and administrators with new 2009 *Mathematics SOL* and the 2010 English 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 and English 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 in mathematics 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~~ were effective for the end-of-course tests administered in fall 2011 and for grades 6 through 8 mathematics tests administered in spring 2012 and beyond.

~~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 English ~~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~~ An online writing page and vocabulary page are ~~is~~ available to serve as a resource for writing and vocabulary instruction and provide information on the new writing assessment.

An important additional mathematics professional development resource is a series of online presentations under the title "Using Statewide SOL Test Results to Guide Instruction." They present an analysis of statewide results on the mathematics SOL tests to identify specific content for which overall student performance was weak or inconsistent with suggestions of

SOL content that need to be reinforced more clearly to improve student performance.

Support for Teachers of LEP Students and Students with Disabilities

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

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

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

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

and the services provided, which is monitored to determine how 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 targeted technical assistance in implementing research-based effective practices and comprehensive services for students with autism. The center is funded through a start-up grant from the Department of Education.

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

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

~~, 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.~~

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

The state will transition the students who are currently eligible for VMAST to the regular SOL assessments by 2014-2015. ~~Upon approval of Virginia's ESEA flexibility application, staff at the Virginia Department of Education will inform school divisions that the VMAST assessments will no longer be available beyond the 2013-2014 administration and will provide technical assistance in preparing eligible VMAST students to take the SOL assessments in 2014-2015.~~ School divisions were notified via Superintendent's Memorandum #261-12 on September 21, 2012, that VMAST would no longer be available to eligible students beyond the 2013-2014 school year. VDOE staff will work with continue to work with its testing contractor to investigate future opportunities to incorporate research-based supports and simplifications such as those developed for the VMAST reading and mathematics assessments into the Virginia assessment program. In addition, VDOE will continue to work with school division personnel to ensure that students previously eligible for VMAST will participate in the SOL assessment program beginning in the 2014-2015 school year.
~~In addition, Virginia will work with its technical advisors and its testing contractor in seeking solutions to providing the supports inherent in the VMAST items within the SOL tests.~~

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

The *Technical Assistance Plan for the Implementation of Virginia's Standards of Learning in English, Mathematics, Science, and History and Social Science* (Attachment 18 – updated 2013) has been recently updated and provides a brief overview of assistance that occurred prior to 2011-2012, assistance that has occurred during school years 2011-2012, 2012-2013, and planned for the current school year. ~~the current school year (2011-2012), and assistance that is planned for the next school year (2012-2013)~~. Additional assistance will be developed as data are analyzed following each test administration to determine where to most effectively focus the resources of the Virginia Department of Education. Teachers of special education students and English language learners are included in the activities included in the plan and

have equal access to the documents, lesson plans, and other resources provided. Additionally, as described in the previous paragraphs, Virginia's regional TTACs provide specialized supplemental assistance to special education teachers, and the state uses Title III funds to provide supplemental professional development and technical assistance to teachers of English Language Learners.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

	~~2006-2007~~	~~2007-2008~~	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Student Enrollment, Grades 9 - 12	~~378,755~~	~~381,194~~	380,787	380,720	379,996	376,155	375,502
Students Enrolled in Governor's Schools	~~3,796~~	~~3,997~~	4,457	4,525	4,631	4,940	5,447
Senior IB Enrollment	~~1,057~~	~~1,254~~	1,270	1,098	1,284	1,258	1,374
Seniors Awarded IB Diplomas	~~773~~	~~847~~	734	765	821	789	881
Students Taking 1 or More AP Courses	~~55,147~~	~~58,019~~	63,070	67,170	71,192	76,845	80,550
Students Taking 1 or More AP Exams	~~48,481~~	~~51,148~~	57,346	57,703	62,800	67,967	67,024
Students Taking 1 or More Dual Enrollment Courses	~~22,882~~	~~17,465~~	23,127	23,740	20,966	25,809	Not Available At This Time

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

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

enrollment and achievement for Virginia high school graduates. State-level, division-level and school-level reports are available for all student subgroups.

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

International Mathematics and Science Comparison

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

The 2011 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)

- The average mathematics score for Virginia students in grade 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

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

than the national average.

- The average Virginia public school mathematics score of 511 is eight points higher than the national average.
- The average Virginia public school writing score of 494 is 14 points higher than the national average.

- Twenty-nine percent of the Virginia public school SAT takers were members of student subgroups – black, Hispanic and American Indian – historically underrepresented in higher education. Hispanic participation increased by seven percent compared with 2012.

- ~~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~~ 2013 ACT

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

- ~~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. With significant success in increasing participation in AP classes, when grant funding expired in 2013, VASS began a new phase with the creation of the Rural Math Excel Partnership (RMEP) project to develop a sense of shared responsibility among families, teachers, and communities in rural areas for student success in and preparation for advanced high school and postsecondary study.

~~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 2012 Advanced Placement (AP) course and test taking patterns in Virginia:

- The number of Virginia graduates taking at least one AP examination during high school has increased by 89 percent since 2002.
- 42.4 percent of Virginia 2012 graduates took at least one AP examination during high school, compared with 26.8 percent of 2002 graduates.
- 27.2 percent of 2012 Virginia graduates scored a three or higher on at least one AP examination, compared with 16.8 percent of 2002 graduates.
- More Virginia 2012 graduates scored a three or higher on at least one examination than took AP tests in 2002.

- ~~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 2012 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
All Students	70,862	1.1%	100%	136,662	2.6%	82,420	2.8%
Asian	9,511	8.2%	13.4%	21,757	9.5%	14,406	9.9%
Black	8,397	5.9%	11.8%	13,853	8.5%	4,518	7.6%
Hispanic	5,441	15.1%	7.7%	9,781	17.8%	5,054	18.3%
White	42,807	1.6%	60.4%	82,605	2.4%	53,620	2.7%

~~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~~
~~All Students~~	~~66,288~~	~~7.4%~~	~~100.0%~~	~~122,269~~	~~8.8%~~	~~71,469~~	~~7.0%~~
~~Asian~~	~~8,376~~	~~9.1%~~	~~12.6%~~	~~18,397~~	~~11.2%~~	~~11,606~~	~~11.7%~~
~~Black~~	~~7,550~~	~~9.7%~~	~~11.4%~~	~~11,865~~	~~12.2%~~	~~3,616~~	~~8.8%~~
~~Hispanic~~	~~4,436~~	~~12.9%~~	~~6.7%~~	~~7,469~~	~~14.4%~~	~~3,808~~	~~8.6%~~
~~White~~	~~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 have established the Virginia Early Participation PSAT Program by providing $1.83 million over two years to pay the PSAT test fees for all tenth-grade students in Virginia, assuming a 75 percent actual participation rate. The program would have provided professional development to high school teachers and guidance counselors in using the AP Potential tool provided by The College Board to identify more students who have the potential to succeed in college-level courses in high school and to intervene early with those students who are off-track to help them better prepare for life and a career post-graduation. While funding for this initiative was not appropriated by the 2012 General Assembly, the Department of Education ~~will~~ continues to encourage school divisions to provide opportunities for all students to take the PSAT and make full use of the College Board tools. All students participating in the PSAT receive free access to an online planning tool called QuickStart, which contains a personality test designed to match a student's personality, interests, and skills to potential careers and necessary steps and training for those careers, as well as detailed descriptions of hundreds of different careers, profiles of individuals who have pursued these careers, and guidance on next steps on a path toward these careers.

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

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

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

Virginia is a national leader in implementing online tests and is often consulted by other states and consortia that are transitioning to online testing. ~~By~~ Since 2013 all Standards of Learning (SOL) tests in Virginia ~~will be~~ have been administered online with the exception of those taken by a small number of students who have a documented need for a paper/pencil test. The

movement to all online testing has provided Virginia with the opportunity to develop next-generation assessments that include technology-enhanced items in addition to the multiple-choice items that have traditionally comprised the SOL tests. The technology-enhanced items provide for different ways to measure critical thinking and problem-solving skills and support the increased rigor inherent in Virginia's new content standards. New mathematics tests for grades 3-8, Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II that include technology-enhanced items ~~will be~~ were 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. New reading, writing, and science assessments that also include technology-enhanced items ~~are being~~ were implemented in 2012-2013. In addition to the new SOL tests, Virginia ~~is~~ also implement~~ing~~ed the Virginia Modified Achievement Standards Tests (VMAST) in mathematics for grades 3-8 and Algebra I in 2011-2012 and in reading for grades 3-8 and high school in 2012-2013. VMAST is intended for students with disabilities who are learning grade-level content but who are not expected to achieve proficiency in the same time frame as their non-disabled peers. (As noted in the response to Question 1.B, Virginia will discontinue the use of the VMAST assessments for federal accountability after the 2013-2014 school year.)

Both the SOL and the VMAST assessments are based on the content standards described in the responses to Questions 1.A and 1.B. Peer review documentation for the new mathematics and reading assessments will be submitted according to timelines established by the United States Department of Education ~~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~~ was also ~~be~~ developed to support a "college path" level. The Virginia Board of Education ~~is expected to~~ adopted a "college path" achievement level for the reading test in ~~early~~ 2013.

Student growth percentiles ~~will be~~ are calculated for both the mathematics tests and the reading tests to provide a measure of growth. Information about Virginia's student growth percentiles is available in Attachment 12. ~~In addition, Lexile scores for the reading test and Quantile scores for the mathematics tests will may 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.

Overview

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

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

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

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

percent of those Title I schools with the most significant proficiency gaps in reading, mathematics, and graduation rates for traditionally lower performing subgroups ~~will be~~ are considered for focus school status (a minimum of 72 schools total).

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

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

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

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

Key Features

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

Statewide System of Recognition and Support

Recognition

The *VIP Incentive Program*, *Blue Ribbon Schools Program*, and the *Title I Distinguished*

Schools Program, as described in the response to Question 2.C, provide incentives for continuous improvement of student achievement for Title I schools.

The state's accountability and support system for Title I schools that are not identified as priority or focus schools is the same as for non-Title I schools. Schools that do not receive a rating of *Fully Accredited* are supported through a rigorous academic review process and intensive interventions as described in the response to Question 2.F. These supports and interventions include a detailed academic review process conducted by a team of experienced educators and school improvement planning tools and resources to inform school improvement planning efforts. 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.

Support

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

Schools identified as priority and focus schools ~~will~~ receive targeted support and interventions through the statewide system of support. Priority schools ~~will~~ are expected to hire an external Lead Turnaround Partner (LTP) or other external partner that is agreed upon by the Virginia Department of Education and the local school board to assist in implementing, at a minimum, a model that meets the USED turnaround principles or one of the four USED models. Focus schools are required to work closely with 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. Further details about these interventions are included in the responses to Questions 2.D and 2.E of the proposal.

Title I schools not meeting proficiency gap group targets or participation rates that are not identified as focus or priority schools and schools not *Fully Accredited* ~~will be~~ are required to use *Indistar*® to plan, monitor, and implement a plan for improvement. *Indistar*® is also available to non-Title I schools not meeting proficiency gap group targets or participation rates as well. An overview of *Indistar*® including the portal page, indicators, an example of Wise Ways, an example of a division improvement plan, and an example of a school improvement plan is available at the following Web site: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/school_improvement/planning/waiver_request/x1_indistar.pdf.

Title I high schools that do not meet the federal graduation indicator rate ~~will be~~ are required to use the Virginia Early Warning System (VEWS) to plan, monitor and implement a plan for

improvement. More information on VEWS can be found at the following Web site: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/school_improvement/early_warning_system/index.shtml.

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

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

Students with Disabilities

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

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

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

English Language Learners

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

On September 26, 2007, the Virginia Board of Education adopted the ACCESS for ELLs (Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners) as the statewide English language proficiency (ELP) assessment for Virginia. The ACCESS for ELLs was developed by the World-Class Instructional Design Assessment (WIDA) consortium through a United States Department of Education (USED) Enhanced Assessment grant. On March 19, 2008, the Board adopted the WIDA English Language Proficiency (ELP) standards as the ELP standards for the Commonwealth. Since then, WIDA has released its enhanced version of the ELP standards, referred to as the 2012 Amplification of English Language Development (ELD) Standards, which Virginia has continued to use. The WIDA ~~ELP~~ ELD standards emphasize the need for academic language to support the four core content areas and thus reinforce the linguistic demands required for LEP students to be successful in Virginia's *Standards of Learning* program.

The five WIDA ~~ELP~~ ELD standards are as follows:

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

The WIDA ~~ELP~~ ELD standards support the English language development of ELLs to provide the foundation for them to achieve academically in all content areas. The five WIDA ~~ELP~~ ELD standards are represented in the following grades/grade clusters: K, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9-10, 11-12 ~~Pre-K-K; 1-2; 3-5; 6-8; and 9-12~~. Additionally, each standard encompasses five ~~six~~ levels of English language proficiency as well as the four language domains. The levels of English language proficiency are: entering, emerging, ~~beginning,~~ developing, expanding, and 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~~ providing updated instructional resources that align the 2012 amplified ELD standards with recent revisions to the *Standards of Learning*.

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 and funded 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 2012 revision to Virginia's *Standards of Quality* requires that students in grades 3 and 4 who demonstrate reading deficiencies receive remediation prior to being promoted from grade 3 to 4.
- 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.

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~~ were released in the summer of 2012. Examples of the sample lesson plans aligned with the 2002 *English SOL* are available at: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/sol/standards_docs/english/index.shtml. The Enhanced

Scope and Sequence Sample Lesson Plans include resources and specific methods for differentiating the lessons for students with disabilities and English language learners.

Support for Teachers of LEP Students and Students with Disabilities

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

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

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

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

monitored to determine how 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 targeted technical assistance in implementing research-based effective practices and comprehensive services for students with autism. The center is funded through a start-up grant from the Department of Education.

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

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

~~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.~~

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

School Improvement Planning

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

Title I schools not meeting proficiency gap group targets or participation rates that are not identified as focus or priority schools and schools not *Fully Accredited* ~~will be~~ are required to use *Indistar*® to plan, monitor, and implement a plan for improvement. *Indistar*® is also available to non-Title I schools not meeting proficiency gap group targets or participation rates as well. An overview of *Indistar*® including the portal page, indicators, an example of Wise Ways, an example of a division improvement plan, and an example of a school improvement plan is available at the following Web site: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/school_improvement/planning/waiver_request/x1_indistar.pdf.

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

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

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

Not Applicable.

2.B SET AMBITIOUS BUT ACHIEVABLE ANNUAL MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES

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

Option A	Option B	Option C
☐ Set AMOs in annual equal increments toward a goal of reducing by half the percentage of students in the "all students" group and in each subgroup who are not proficient within six	☐ 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 another method that is educationally sound and results in ambitious but achievable AMOs for all LEAs, schools, and subgroups.

years. The SEA must use current proficiency rates based on assessments administered in the 2010–2011 school year as the starting point for setting its AMOs. i. Provide the new AMOs and an explanation of the method used to set these AMOs.	use the average statewide proficiency based on assessments administered in the 2010–2011 school year as the starting point for setting its AMOs. i. Provide the new AMOs and an explanation of the method used to set these AMOs.	i. Provide the new AMOs and an explanation of the method used to set these AMOs. ii. Provide an educationally sound rationale for the pattern of academic progress reflected in the new AMOs in the text box below. iii. Provide a link to the State's report card or attach a copy of the average statewide proficiency based on assessments administered in the 2010–2011 school year in reading/language arts and mathematics for the "all students" group and all subgroups. (Attachment 8)

Revised Annual Measurable Objectives

Under Virginia's revised ESEA accountability system: 1) Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) that require a 95 percent participation rate and academic progress over time in reading and mathematics ~~will be established for~~ are established for all students, three proficiency gap groups, and individual subgroups; and 2) schools with a graduating class ~~will be~~ are expected to meet the Federal Graduation Indicator. The methodology for setting AMO targets ~~will be~~ is based on, but not identical to, the methodology required in Section 1111 of the ESEA. Performance on AMOs inform the identification of reward, priority, and focus schools as described in the responses to Question 2.C, 2.D, and 2.E, respectively. Finally, to help identify proficiency gaps in schools with smaller subgroups, the minimum group size ~~will be~~ was lowered to 30 students starting with results from the 2012-2013 administration of state assessments.

Summary of ESEA Performance and Participation Expectations

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

	proficiency gaps for traditionally underperforming students in a Proficiency Gap Dashboard • Report performance on AMOs of all students and individual subgroups on report card ~~(in addition to state accreditation ratings as described in Attachment 17)~~

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

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

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

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

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

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

1. Determined the pass rate of the school at the 20th percentile of enrollment.
2. Determined the pass rate of the school at the 90th percentile of enrollment.
3. Calculated the point difference in the pass rate between #2 and #1.
4. Divided the point difference in half to calculate the gains in pass rates needed to cut the proficiency gap in half over the next six years in mathematics and reading.
5. Divided the number calculated in #4 by six for mathematics and reading.
6. Set increasing pass rates at six equal* intervals for mathematics and reading starting with the 2011-2012 assessment year, for accountability ratings for the 2012-2013 school year.

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

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

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

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

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

Meeting AMO Requirements

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

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

Accountability Determinations

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

Expectations for Maintaining High Achievement

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

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

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

~~**Setting Expectations for Continuous Progress**~~

~~Schools with pass rates higher than the established AMOs for one or more subgroups are required to maintain or improve those pass rates annually to ensure all subgroups in every school make continuous progress. Every school is expected to meet the AMOs or the prior year's pass rate, ***whichever is higher***, up to 90 percent, for all students and every student subgroup.~~

~~**Safe Harbor Provisions**~~

~~Safe harbor and other flexibility provisions remain in effect that are permitted in ESEA and included in Virginia's ESEA Flexibility Plan. An additional safe harbor provision is included~~

~~for schools that exceed the AMOs, but fall short of the previous year's passing rate.~~

~~**Summary of AMO Expectations**~~

~~***Mathematics:***~~

- ~~Beginning in the 2013-2014 accountability year (2012-2013 assessments), all schools are expected to meet or exceed the AMO passing rate target or their previous year's passing rate, whichever is higher, up to 90 percent.~~

~~***Safe Harbor:***~~

- ~~Federal requirements may be met if the failure rate is reduced by 10 percent or greater or if the AMO target is met using a three-year average.~~
- ~~Federal requirements may be met if the passing rate exceeds the AMO target and falls within five percent of the previous year's passing rate. This provision may not be used for more than two consecutive years.~~

~~***Reading:***~~

~~AMO targets for the 2013-2014 accountability year were recalculated based on the new 2012-2013 reading assessments.~~

- ~~Beginning in the 2013-2014 accountability year (2012-2013 assessments), all schools are expected to meet or exceed the AMO passing rate target.~~
- ~~Beginning in the 2014-2015 accountability year (2013-2014 assessments), all schools are expected to meet or exceed the AMO passing rate target or their previous year's passing rate, whichever is higher, up to 90 percent.~~

~~***Safe Harbor:***~~

- ~~Federal requirements may be met if the failure rate is reduced by 10 percent or greater or if the AMO target is met using a three-year average.~~
- ~~Beginning in the 2014-2015 accountability year (2013-2014 assessments), federal requirements may be met if the passing rate exceeds the AMO target and falls within five percent of the previous year's passing rate. This provision may not be used for more than two consecutive years.~~

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

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

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

~~*Every school is expected to meet the AMOs or the prior year's pass rate, ***whichever is higher***, up to 90 percent, for all students and every student subgroup.~~ *Safe harbor and other flexibility provisions remain in effect that are permitted in ESEA and included in Virginia's ESEA Flexibility ~~Plan. An additional safe harbor provision is included for schools that exceed the AMOs, but fall short of the previous year's passing rate.~~

- ~~Federal requirements may be met if the failure rate is reduced by 10 percent or greater.~~
- ~~Federal requirements may be met if the passing rate exceeds the AMO target and falls within 5 percent of the previous year's passing rate. This provision may not be used for more than two consecutive years.~~

Reading Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs)*

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

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

~~*Every school is expected to meet the AMOs or the prior year's pass rate, ***whichever is higher***, up to 90 percent, for all students and every student subgroup.~~ *Safe harbor and other flexibility provisions remain in effect that are permitted in ESEA and included in Virginia's ESEA Flexibility Plan. ~~An additional safe harbor provision is included for schools that exceed the AMOs, but fall short of the previous year's passing rate.~~

- ~~Federal requirements may be met if the failure rate is reduced by 10 percent or greater.~~
- ~~Federal requirements may be met if the passing rate exceeds the AMO target and falls within 5 percent of the previous year's passing rate. This provision may not be used for more than two consecutive years.~~

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

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

The use of proficiency gap groups for accountability purposes ~~will~~ allows the state to target supports and interventions related to subgroup performance on Virginia's historically underperforming groups of students. The Consolidated State Performance Report (CSPR) data show that the reading and mathematics performance of students with disabilities, English language learners, and economically disadvantaged students are the lowest in comparison to the statewide average performance of "all students" in both subjects. Furthermore, grouping the three subgroups together mitigates the effect of the minimum group size concealing the results of these traditionally lowest-performing groups, allowing more schools to be identified for supports and interventions for the subgroups that need the most assistance.

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

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

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

The performance results of proficiency gap groups ~~will be~~ are considered in designing supports and interventions for schools. Title I schools not meeting proficiency gap group targets or participation rates that are not identified as focus or priority schools and schools not *Fully Accredited* are required to use *Indistar*® to plan, monitor, and implement a plan for improvement. *Indistar*® is available to non-Title I schools not meeting proficiency gap group targets or participation rates as well. An overview of *Indistar*® including the portal page, indicators, an example of Wise Ways, an example of a division improvement plan, and an example of a school improvement plan is available at the following Web site:

http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/school_improvement/planning/waiver_request/x1_indistar.pdf.

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

Division Accountability

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

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

Future Revisions of Annual Measurable Objectives

~~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.

Considerations for Growth Indicators

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

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

2.C REWARD SCHOOLS

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

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

VIP Incentives Program

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

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

VIP Incentives Program

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

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

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

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

The VIP program uses a weighted methodology to calculate a VIP achievement index based on assessment results in each content area (English, mathematics, science, and history/social science), and provides opportunities for schools and school divisions to earn additional or "bonus" points to the content area indices by meeting additional VIP indicators.
The VIP Base Index weights the proficiency levels on statewide assessments as follows: (a) Advanced proficient: 100; (b) Proficient: ~~75~~ 80; (c) Basic: 25; and (d) Fail: 0. The weighted index is applied to all assessments taken in the school or division. Separate base scores are calculated for each content area – English, mathematics, science, and history/ social science - using the following formula: (# Advanced Proficient scores x 100) + (# Proficient scores x ~~75~~ 80) + (# Basic scores x 25) divided by total tests administered.

Schools and divisions may earn additional VIP bonus points based on criteria established by the Board. When earned, they can be added to a school or division's VIP index points in one or more content areas to meet award criteria. The bonus points are based on measures of student progress, student achievement, and schools' and divisions' progress in their work to increase student access to and enrollment in advanced level and college- and career-ready

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

~~Virginia anticipates that the introduction of assessments aligned to more rigorous standards in mathematics in 2011-2012 and reading in 2012-2013 will substantially reduce the number of schools earning VIP awards. Virginia expects a reduction in VIP eligibility as a result of not being fully accredited or not meeting federal accountability standards. As well, the state anticipates that the percentage of students earning advanced proficient on mathematics assessments will drop substantially in 2011-2012 and in reading and writing beginning in 2012-2013, thereby reducing the points earned in the VIP weighted index.~~

Blue Ribbon Schools Program

Virginia participates in the NCLB Blue Ribbon Program. Although Virginia is allowed only seven entries each year, all Title I schools that met the Blue Ribbon criteria ~~will~~ are recognized for meeting the requirements for either an exemplary high performing or improving school (high-progress). Schools nominated for the National Blue Ribbon Schools must meet one of two eligibility criteria:

1. **Exemplary High Performing Schools**: (a) the achievement of the school's students in the most recent year tested places the school among the highest performing schools in the state on state assessments of reading and mathematics; and (b) disaggregated results for student subgroups, including students from disadvantaged backgrounds, must be similar to the results for all students tested.
2. **Exemplary Improving Schools***:* If at least 40 percent of the school's students are from disadvantaged backgrounds, a school may qualify if it places among schools that have made the most progress in improving student achievement. Additionally: (a) the school is among the top 10 percent of schools that have shown the greatest improvement in student achievement in the state over the previous five years on state assessments of reading (or English language arts) and mathematics, and (b) disaggregated results for student subgroups, including students from disadvantaged backgrounds, must show improvement similar to that of all students.

~~Virginia's criteria for Blue Ribbon Schools is located at the following Web site: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/administrators/superintendents_memos/2011/316-11.shtml~~

Title I Distinguished Schools and School Divisions

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

1. **Title I Distinguished School:** (a) achieves a mean score at the 60th percentile for both English and mathematics; and (b) meets full accreditation ~~for a minimum of two consecutive years~~ in the current year. High schools must also meet or exceed the FGI target for all students.
2. **Title I Highly Distinguished School:** (a) achieves a mean score at the 60th percentile for both English and mathematics; (b) meets full accreditation for a minimum of two consecutive years; and (c) exceeds the statewide average for English and mathematics in the current and previous year for all proficiency gap groups of students. High schools must also exceed the FGI target in the current and previous year for all students.
3. **Title I Distinguished School Division:** exceeds the SOA proficiency targets for English and mathematics for the current year and the FGI target 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 the FGI benchmark 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, Blue Ribbon Schools Program, and Title I Distinguished Schools criteria, are provided in the response to Question 2.C.iii and directly below Table 2. Schools meeting the Blue Ribbon criteria for high performing or improving (high-progress) schools are indicated at the following Web site: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/school_improvement/planning/index.shtml.

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

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

i. **Governor McDonnell & Board of Education Honor High-Performing Virginia Schools & School Divisions** – *2011 Virginia Index of Performance Awards Announced*
ii. **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. If the SEA's methodology is not based on the definition of priority schools in *ESEA Flexibility* (but instead, e.g. based on school grades or ratings that take into account a number of factors), the SEA should also demonstrate that the list provided in Table 2 is consistent with the definition, per the Department's "Demonstrating that an SEA's Lists of Schools meet ESEA Flexibility Definitions" guidance.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The number of priority schools included in Table 2 represents those schools that would have been identified as such in the 2011-2012 school year, based on 2010-2011 assessment results, according to the criteria describe in 2.D.i. An updated and accurate list of priority schools for 2012-2013, based on 2011-2012 assessment results, ~~will be~~ was made available in early fall of 2012. An updated list of priority schools is available at: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/federal_programs/esea/flexibility/index.shtml.

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~~ are expected to continue to implement the model according to the timeline indicated in its approved application for SIG funding.

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

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

- providing strong leadership by: (1) reviewing the performance of the current principal; (2) either replacing the principal if such a change is necessary to ensure

strong and effective leadership, or demonstrating to the SEA that the current principal has a track record in improving achievement and has the ability to lead the turnaround effort; and (3) providing the principal with operational flexibility in the areas of scheduling, staff, curriculum, and budget;

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

The four USED models include:

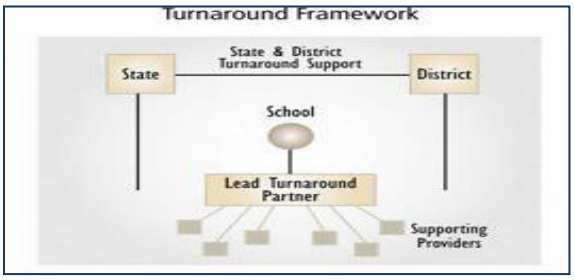
- **Turnaround Model**: Replace the principal, screen existing school staff, and rehire no more than half the teachers; adopt a new governance structure; and improve the school through curriculum reform, professional development, extending learning time, and other strategies.
- **Restart Model**: Convert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

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

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

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

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

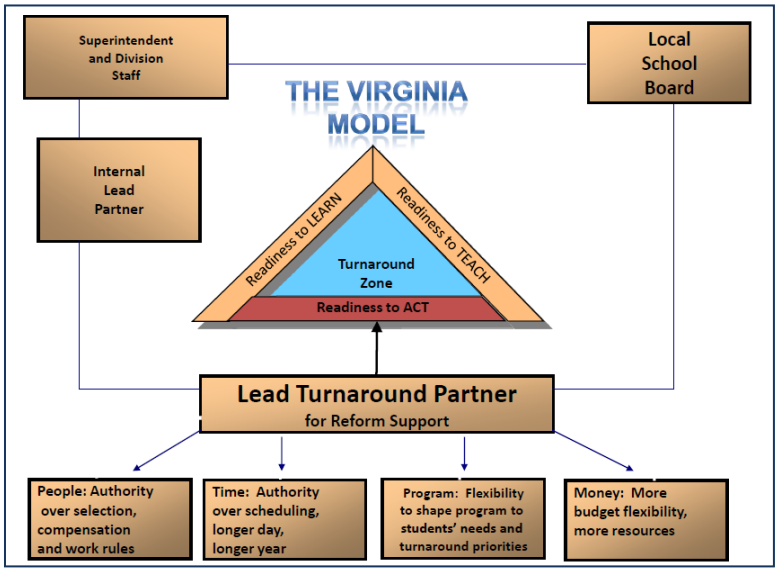


Additional priority schools will be identified for the turnaround zone as part of the state's ESEA flexibility application for a total of 36 priority schools served. Divisions form a consortium to engage the LTP to work with the division's schools assigned to a "turnaround zone." The purpose of this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

The LTP, under contract with the local school board, brings increased resources and support for deep, systemic reform. This model is centered on the LTP providing an outside-the-system approach inside-the-system. Under the ultimate authority of the school divisions' local school

boards, the LTP leads the reform effort within the turnaround zone and has been given the ability to act and authority to make choices. The program within the turnaround zone focuses on instruction in the four core content areas of math, science, history and social science, and reading/language arts.

Below is an illustration of the Virginia Model for LTPs:



The school division and LTP must select to implement one of the four USED models or the USED turnaround principles. A crosswalk showing the alignment of the MASS Insight model, the requirements of the USED Turnaround Principles, the requirements of the USED Transformation model, and Virginia's scope of work awarded to vendors as part of the state contract is available at the following Web site: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/school_improvement/planning/waiver_request/x4_crosswalk_between_rfp_and_sig.pdf.

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

As presently required, Virginia will continue to require schools that select the restart model to hire one of the currently approved vendors. Thus, the school must implement, at a minimum, all requirements included in the state contract. In addition, the school will be managed by an Education Management Operator (EMO) that has met a rigorous review process. Virginia expects major reform efforts by the LTP if the restart model is selected.

Once a LTP is selected, priority schools will complete an application for funding. Emphasis in the application will be on the budget and assurances. Assurances are indicated below:

The school division must assure that it:

1. Ensures schools receiving funds implement one of the four USED models or USED turnaround principles;
2. Uses its funds to implement fully and effectively an intervention in each school that the LEA commits to serve consistent with the final requirements;
3. If implementing a restart model select a LTP from the state contract, agrees to hold the LTP accountable for complying with the selected model;
4. Uses *Indistar*™, an online school improvement tool;
5. Establishes annual goals for student achievement on the state's assessments in both reading/language arts and mathematics;
6. Collects meeting minutes, professional development activities, strategies for extending learning opportunities, and parent activities as well as indicators of effective leadership and instructional practice;
7. Sets leading and lagging indicators, including monitoring leading indicators quarterly and lagging indicators annually;
8. Completes an analysis of data points for quarterly reports to ensure strategic, data-driven decisions are made to deploy needed interventions for students who are not meeting expected growth measures and/or who are at risk of failure and dropping out of school;
9. Ensures forty percent of a teacher's evaluation will be based on multiple measures of student academic progress; when data are available and appropriate, teacher performance evaluations incorporate student growth percentiles (SGPs) as one measure of student academic progress;
10. Uses an electronic query system to provide principals with quarterly data needed to make data driven decisions at the school-level (see Web site: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/school_improvement/dashboard/index.shtml);
11. Uses an adaptive reading assessment program approved by Virginia Department of Education to determine student growth at least quarterly for any student who has failed the SOL assessment in the previous year, a student with a disability, or an English language learner.
12. Uses the *Algebra Readiness Diagnostic Test* (ARDT) for all schools with grade 6 or higher for all students who have failed the SOL assessment in the previous year, a student with a disability, or an English language learner (fall, mid-year, and spring at minimum).
13. Attends OSI technical assistance sessions provided for school principals, division staff, and LTPs;
14. Collaborates with assigned VDOE contractor to ensure the LTP, division, and school maintain the fidelity of implementation necessary for reform;
15. Provides an annual structured report to a panel of VDOE staff and turnaround leaders detailing the current action plan, current leading and lagging indicators, and modifications to be made to ensure the reform is successful; and
16. Reports to the state the school-level data required under the final requirements of this grant.

Additionally, prior to receiving any reimbursement for funding, each division with a priority

school must enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the LTP. The MOU provides details of what is expected of the LTP, the division and school leadership. This document serves as additional accountability for both the school and LTP. An example of the MOU between and division and a LTP is available at the following Web site: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/school_improvement/planning/waiver_request/5x_northampton_edisonLearning_contract.pdf.

As stated in Section 2.A.i., *Indistar*® is used by priority schools. Two sets of indicators are available for priority schools: 1) Transformation Tool Kit (from the Center on Innovation and Improvement based on the requirements of the Transformation model); and 2) the 25 Indicators in the State Contract for a LTP. Virginia has developed another set of indicators to include all of the USED turnaround principles. These indicators are available at the following Web site: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/school_improvement/planning/waiver_request/x1_indistar.pdf.

As in the current SIG schools, Virginia will continue to monitor the reform practices of all LTPs assigned to priority schools. OSI will intervene and facilitate discussions for required changes to the MOU, if needed. As an example, in the administration of the SIG grants, Virginia has requested amendments to the MOU when the LTP was not able to bring about the changes needed to implement the reform strategies. An example of an addendum between a LTP and a school division is available at the following Web site: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/school_improvement/planning/waiver_request/x6%20_contract_agreement_addendum.pdf.

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

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

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

working with the various entities involved in school improvement.

For the new priority schools, OSI provides similar training regarding background research and information about selected strands of the improvement models, facilitate sharing, and suggest promising strategies and timelines for implementation of the selected model, and make recommendations to division teams regarding compliance and the implementation of the selected reform model. Using the strands from the Center on Innovation and Improvement's *Transformation Toolkit*, OSI provides five technical assistance sessions as follows: 1) Strands B & G: Building Autonomy & Leading Change; 2) Strand K: Reforming Instruction; 3) Strands D & H: Working with Stakeholders and Building Support & Evaluating, Rewarding and Removing Staff; 4) Strands I & J: Professional Development & Increasing Time, and 5) Reflections & Planning. More information on these strands and the Transformation Toolkit is available at the following Web site: http://www.centerii.org/resources/Transformation_Toolkit-0409.pdf.

A VDOE-trained contractor is assigned to each school to monitor the implementation of the school's reform program and report findings monthly to the OSI. This effort ensures that the LTP, division, and school maintain the fidelity of implementation necessary for the reform. Contractors are selected directly through the OSI; provide extensive training from the OSI and the College of William and Mary; and are assigned to schools based on a match of expertise and identified needs of schools. More information regarding how contractors are selected is included in the response to Question 2.E.iii.

In each year of the reform, schools sets leading and lagging indicators. Leading indicators are be reviewed quarterly to ensure that the actions undertaken as part of the reform will lead to expected outcomes (lagging indicators). These indicators are posted on *Indistar*® and used to evaluate the progress of the school and LTP.

Examples of Leading Indicators

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

Examples of Lagging Indicators

- Accreditation and increase in student achievement and graduation
- Priority status change in ranking

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

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

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

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

- 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?

More information is available at the following Web site: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/school_improvement/dashboard/index.shtml.

If a school does not have an adaptive reading assessment program to determine student growth at least quarterly, one approved by the Department of Education will be required for students who failed the SOL assessment in the previous year, with a particular focus on underperforming subgroups. Schools in improvement are currently using an online computer adaptive testing (CAT) system that administers short tests to determine each student's overall reading ability. The system adjusts the difficulty of questions based on performance, and tracks the performance of individual students, classrooms, and the school over time. Students are assessed monthly and then grouped by tiers and skills needed. This information provides data to develop and focus on interventions for those students who are most at risk.

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

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

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

- Analyze and provide feedback to teachers on the effectiveness of instruction and the quality of teacher's student achievement goals;
- Analyze summative ratings of all reported teachers (including the student growth measures); and,

- Provide job-embedded leadership and professional development to focus on what evidence to look for when observing classrooms, coaching for literacy and mathematics, effective modeling practices, planning based on classroom observations, research-based intervention practices and response to intervention.

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

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

If actions requested by the panel are not undertaken by the division, the panel may request that funding be withheld until certain conditions are met. If the division does not adhere responsibly even after withdrawal of funds, the school could be referred to the Virginia Board of Education's Committee on School and Division Accountability. A division-level review may be recommended. The *Code of Virginia* Regulation 8-VAC-700 (regarding a division-level review) can be found at the following Web site: http://leg1.state.va.us/000/reg/TOC08020.HTM#C0700. This regulation allows for the Board of Education to consider the school division's federal accountability determination for student achievement in order to require a division-level review. Below are the corrective action steps required by the regulation:

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

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

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

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

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

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

An example of a Memorandum of Understanding developed as part of a division-level review is available at the following Web site:
http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/school_improvement/planning/waiver_request/x7_petersburg_ps_mou2010.pdf.

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

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

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

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

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

The Office of School Improvement will begin reviewing the practices and supports in place in previously-identified priority schools that do not meet the state's exit criteria after two years of implementing interventions aligned with the turnaround principles. A transition plan will be developed to move these schools from the LTP to the state's direct oversight if the school does not meet the exit criteria after the third year of implementation. The VDOE may require the division to continue with the LTP or may require other actions needed to ensure that the school improves through a Memorandum of Understanding established with the VDOE and the local school board. The local board and school will be required to provide updates on actions prescribed in the Memorandum of Understanding periodically to the Virginia Board of Education.

2.E FOCUS SCHOOLS

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

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

Methodology for Identifying Focus Schools

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The number of focus schools included in Table 2 represents those schools that would have been identified as such in the 2011-2012 school year, based on 2010-2011 assessment results,

according to the criteria describe in 2.E.i. An updated and accurate list of priority schools for each subsequent year will be made available in early fall of each school year. An updated list of focus schools is available at: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/federal_programs/esea/flexibility/.

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

Focus School Implementation Timeline

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

Virginia's Focus School Improvement Process

Virginia emphasizes the participation and continuous involvement of division-level administrators in the school improvement process as well as targeted interventions at the school-level for students at-risk 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).

It is important to understand that Virginia embarked on building state capacity to implement the model that will be used to improve focus schools over the past ten years. Specifically, the work began with the academic review process in 2000. To further differentiate work needed in schools, the academic review process was revised in 2005. In 2011, Virginia's accreditation benchmarks were revised to include high school graduation benchmarks. The academic review process was revised to include actions for those high schools not meeting graduation targets (Web site: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/meetings/2011/07_jul/agenda_items/item_h.pdf). Throughout this process, Virginia has leveraged the human capacity needed to implement the work by contracting with outstanding retired educators with experience in working with high-poverty and high achievement schools. The academic review process will be revised if the state's ESEA flexibility application is approved to reflect the revisions made to federal accountability. The proposed changes are available at the following Web site:

http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/school_improvement/planning/waiver_request/x8_proposed_acad_review_for_schools_if_waiver_approved.pdf.

In addition, Virginia has leveraged other federal resources, such as the Appalachia Regional Comprehensive Center (ARCC) and the Center on Innovation and Improvement, for the past six years in order to build state and division capacity to support low-performing schools. This work, in part, is based on the work of William Slotnik as published by the Community Training and Assistance Center (CTAC). The reform efforts in Virginia are designed to build capacity of the school division to make sustained improvement in the areas of student achievement; strategic management and policy; leadership; human resources development and management; and stakeholder satisfaction and ownership. A history of the reform in Virginia of moving from working with schools to working with divisions to support those schools is available at the following Web site:
http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/school_improvement/planning/waiver_request/x9_building_capay_brief_final.pdf.

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

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

The process of using the change map begins by conducting needs sensing interviews with divisions. The process determines the level of support needed to affect change at the division-level. The *VDOE Change Map for Capacity Building* and the *Needs Sensing Interview Protocol* is available at the following Web site:
http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/school_improvement/planning/waiver_request/x10_change_map_and_needs_sensing.pdf. Through collaboration with representatives from various VDOE offices as well as partnering organizations, the change map was developed in August 2011 based on the following theory of action:

> *Effective school divisions demonstrate the ability to continuously improve, adhere to a vision, maximize student learning, provide strong leadership, offer high quality instruction, and conduct relevant professional development. The school division leadership team cultivates a culture of capacity-building and continuous improvement. The school division consistently adheres to a vision that drives strategic planning and subsequent actions* ***(strategic planning)****. The school board*

and superintendent intentionally organize the division to maximize student learning ***(system organization)****. Leaders are proactive and intentional, and allocate resources to achieve the vision. Leaders model systemic thinking by communicating and making transparent decisions* ***(leadership)*** *Leaders continuously align curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Leaders implement and monitor differentiated, research-based instruction, and services provided to meet diverse student needs* ***(curriculum, instructional practices, and services)****. The school division provides and assesses the effectiveness of professional development that is needs-based and job-embedded* ***(professional development)****.*

The needs sensing interview is conducted by VDOE division liaisons. Liaisons (contractors) are highly skilled educators who are trained and assigned to work with division teams to support schools in improvement. These contractors provide guidance regarding the division's improvement efforts. The contractors model assistance to the schools, if needed, until the division team can do so on their own. Activities that the VDOE division liaisons might be involved with include site visits, modeling teacher practices, modeling data analysis, assistance with developing and monitoring division and school improvement plans, and recommending outside differentiated technical assistance provided by OSI. VDOE division liaisons are funded by state funds earmarked for school accreditation and federal funds earmarked for school improvement administrative expenditures. VDOE's OSI supports its division liaisons via meetings, webinars, book studies, the OSI Technical Assistance Guide, newsletters, partnerships, site visits, and individualized technical assistance focused on division liaisons' needs. For focus schools, only contractors approved by the OSI will be used and OSI will match the contractor with the needs of the school and division. Contractors meet with the OSI at least five times during the school year and again in the summer to ensure fidelity of implementation.

Meeting topics will include:

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

At the beginning of the academic year, each division with one or more focus schools will be assigned an external VDOE contractor. The contractor will facilitate the needs sensing interview with key division staff. The needs sensing interview is based on the following areas presented in the change map:

- Strategic planning;
- System organization;
- Leadership;

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

Information gleaned from the needs sensing interview 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 division will select indicators based on their specific needs. Not all indicators are selected. The division liaison will work with the division team to select the most appropriate indicators. Additional information is available at the following Web site:
http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/school_improvement/planning/waiver_request/x1_indistar.pdf.

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 VDOE-assigned and state-approved contractor via a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with VDOE. The MOU will 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. A draft MOU is available at the following Web site:
http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/school_improvement/planning/waiver_request/x12_memorandum_of_understanding.pdf. The contractor will help the division and school build their capacity to support leadership practices to support improved teacher effectiveness (as described in the teacher and principal performance standards in Principle 3):

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

on students with disabilities and English language learners; and

5. Build the division's capacity to support low-performing schools and increase student achievement.

The school must develop an intervention strategy for students who have failed an SOL assessment in the past, with a special focus on low performing subgroups. This includes students who 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~~ is 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~~ are used by school improvement teams each quarter to adjust school- and division-level improvement plans to address emerging needs of the focus school(s).

To allow the state to better monitor school improvement progress throughout the school year and over the course of the interventions, division teams and school teams of focus schools ~~will be~~ are required to use *Indistar*®, which is an online portal created and managed by the Center on Innovation and Improvement. *Indistar*® ~~will be~~ is required for focus schools and division staff to develop, coordinate, track, and report division- and school-level improvement activities. A number of evidence-based practices and indicators are provided to inform improvement efforts. The system can also be customized to reflect individualized division or school indicators of effective practice or rubrics for assessment.

Indistar® ~~will be~~ 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 were taped inVirginia schools. Virginia's Rapid Improvement indicators for focus schools allow the school/division to select a set of indicators that differentiate the actions needed for improvement. In addition, Virginia has created a portal in *Indistar*® to collect meeting minutes, quarterly data, and other data throughout the year. One other advantage of using *Indistar*® is the use of "Wise Ways". This is a short written summary that provides the reader with the research behind each indicator. An overview of *Indistar*® including the portal page, indicators, an example of Wise Ways, an example of a division improvement plan and an example of a school improvement plan is available at the following Web site: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/school_improvement/planning/waiver_request/x1_indistar.pdf.

The Office of School Improvement will continue to collaborate with The College of William and Mary to support and develop leadership at the division level through the Division Leadership Support Team (DLST) Project. The goal of the project is to achieve efficient and effective division policies, programs, and practices to enhance growth in student learning through differentiated support to schools. Each participating division leadership team receives ongoing support from a VDOE division liaison with extensive experience in public education. Using the *Indistar*® district improvement indicators as a foundation, the VDOE works with a division liaison to assist the division leadership team with developing a formalized system of support reflecting best practices to promote and support positive change at the central office and school

level.

The school and division support teams ~~will be~~ are tasked with developing, implementing, and monitoring the school and division improvement plan. The division liaison ~~will~~ facilitates the process and ~~will~~ asks for OSI support if needed. OSI ~~will~~ provides ongoing technical assistance through webinars and technical assistance visits/training throughout the year. An overview of many of the OSI training activities provided in 2011-2012 is provided at the following Web site: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/school_improvement/training/index.shtml

Technical assistance recommended by division liaisons and VDOE may include one or more of the following:

1. **Peer mentors –** The school/division may be paired with a similar school/division performing highly in an area of identified need in order to help the school learn new skills via a mentor/mentee relationship.
2. **Direct technical assistance** – Office of School Improvement staff and/or technical assistance team members may provide targeted assistance via telephone, e-mail, on-site visit, or a combination of these methods. Technical assistance can address a variety of topics including, but not limited to, the webinar topics described below.
3. **Webinar series** – Division liaisons may choose one or more series of webinars to be attended by the principal and other school and division leaders as needed. It is recommended that the division liaison invite division staff including the division's representative for the school's team to attend webinars.

A corps of contractors ~~will~~ develops and delivers webinar series as well as provide on-site technical assistance to schools. Differentiated Technical Assistance Team (DTAT) members are selected based on expertise in one or more areas of technical assistance, as well as their availability to devote time exclusively to technical assistance. The DTAT provides assistance in the following areas:

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

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

year and/or that may not be addressed by existing menu items from the technical assistance menu.

If a school does not have an adaptive reading assessment program to determine student growth at least quarterly, one approved by the Department of Education will be required for students who failed the SOL assessment in the previous year, with a particular focus on underperforming subgroups. Schools in improvement are currently using an online computer adaptive testing (CAT) system that administers short tests to determine each student's overall reading ability. The system adjusts the difficulty of questions based on performance, and tracks the performance of individual students, classrooms, and the school over time. Students are assessed monthly and then grouped by tiers and skills needed. This information provides data to develop and focus on interventions for those students who are most at risk.

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

Focus schools ~~will be~~ are required to use 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~~ is required to analyze a variety of data points on a quarterly basis using the "Virginia Dashboard," a Web-based data analysis and reporting tool. 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 are 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?

More information on is available at the following Web site: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/school_improvement/dashboard/index.shtml.

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

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

The school improvement team ~~will be~~ is 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 appropriate support to schools identified as having the most significant proficiency gaps for the gap groups identified in the response to Question 2.B, Virginia ~~will~~ identifies focus schools for a period of two years based on the methodology described in the response to

Question 2.E.i. with the total number of schools not to exceed 10 percent of the state's Title I schools. Once identified as a focus school, a school ~~will be~~ is expected to implement interventions for a minimum of two consecutive years, with the support of a state-approved contractor.

A school will exit the focus status if the following criteria are met:

- The proficiency gap group(s) for which the school was originally identified meet(s) the AMOs described for proficiency gap groups in the response to Question 2.B for two consecutive years; and
- The school no longer falls into the bottom 10 percent of Title I schools for the subsequent school year based on the focus school methodology described in the response to Question 2.E.

~~Virginia will take necessary steps to ensure meaningful consequences for focus schools that do not make progress after full implementation of the interventions. If a school continues as a focus schools for three years, in the fourth year of the reform, key division staff and the principal will provide a structured report on the details of the current action plan, progress on meeting indicators, and what modifications will be made to ensure the reform is successful. This report will be reviewed by a panel of VDOE staff, successful turnaround principals and central office staff from divisions with high achieving, high poverty schools. The panel will provide feedback to the school and division to ensure that modifications made to the corrective action plan will produce desirable outcomes. If actions requested by the panel are not undertaken by the division, the panel may request that funding be withheld until certain conditions are met.~~

Previously-identified focus schools that have not met the state's exit criteria after implementing interventions will be required to hire a LTP or other entity such as a university partner or contractor with expertise in school reform and approved by the Office of School Improvement. Services provided by an LTP or other approved entity will be paid for using the division's federal Title I set-aside or other available funds. The LTP or other approved entity will support the school and division in identifying strategies that are based on the needs of students and designed to improve the performance of low-performing students and reduce achievement gaps among subgroups.

TABLE 2: REWARD, PRIORITY, AND FOCUS SCHOOLS

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

TABLE 2: REWARD, PRIORITY, AND FOCUS SCHOOLS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

D-2. Title I-eligible high school with graduation rate less than 60% over a number of years **E.** Tier I or Tier II SIG school implementing a school intervention model	

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

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

Recognition

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

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

Support

As stated in the response to Question 2.A.i, *Fully Accredited* schools that have significant proficiency gaps and/or low graduation rates and are *not* identified as priority or focus schools ~~*will be*~~ are required to write an improvement plan that addresses the specific needs of the students in the identified gap groups. Divisions may work with appropriate offices at the Virginia Department of Education to select appropriate technical assistance and professional development that support schools with subgroups failing to meet annual measurable objectives. These services are described below.

Title I schools not meeting proficiency gap group targets or participation rates that are not identified as focus or priority schools and schools not *Fully Accredited* ~~*will be*~~ are required to use *Indistar*® to plan, monitor, and implement a plan for improvement. *Indistar*® is also available to non-Title I schools not meeting proficiency gap group targets or participation rates as well. An overview of *Indistar*® including the portal page, indicators, an example of Wise Ways, an example of a division improvement plan, and an example of a school improvement plan is available at the following Web site: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/school_improvement/planning/waiver_request/x1_indistar.pdf.

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

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

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.

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

On September 26, 2007, the Virginia Board of Education adopted the ACCESS for ELLs (Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners) as the statewide English language proficiency (ELP) assessment for Virginia. The ACCESS for ELLs was developed by the World-Class Instructional Design Assessment (WIDA) consortium through a United States Department of Education (USED) Enhanced Assessment grant. On March 19, 2008, the Board adopted the WIDA English Language Proficiency (ELP) standards as the ELP standards for the Commonwealth. Since then, WIDA has released its enhanced version of the ELP standards, referred to as the 2012 Amplification of English Language Development (ELD) Standards, which Virginia has continued to use. The WIDA ~~ELP~~ ELD standards emphasize the need for academic language to support the four core content areas and thus reinforce the linguistic demands required for LEP students to be successful in Virginia's *Standards of Learning* program.

The WIDA ~~ELP~~ ELD standards support the English language development of ELLs to provide the foundation for them to achieve academically in all content areas. The five WIDA ~~ELP~~ ELD standards are represented in the following grades/grade clusters: K, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9-10, 11-12 ~~Pre-K-K; 1-2; 3-5; 6-8; and 9-12~~. Additionally, each standard encompasses five ~~six~~ levels of English language proficiency as well as the four language domains. The levels of English language proficiency are: entering, emerging, ~~beginning,~~ developing, expanding, and 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~~ providing updated instructional resources that align the 2012 amplified ELD standards with recent revisions to the *Standards of Learning*.

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

Assistance to All At-Risk Students

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 and the General Assembly funded 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 2012 revision to Virginia's *Standards of Quality* requires that students in grades 3 and 4 who demonstrate reading deficiencies receive remediation prior to being promoted from grade 3 to 4.

- 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.

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~~ were released in the summer 2012. Examples of the sample lesson plans aligned with the 2002 *English SOL* are available at: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/sol/standards_docs/english/index.shtml. The Enhanced Scope and Sequence Sample Lesson Plans include resources and specific methods for differentiating the lessons for students with disabilities and English language learners.

Support for Teachers of LEP Students and Students with Disabilities

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

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

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

The Virginia Department of Education also directs and supports regional T/TACs (Training/Technical Assistance Centers) based in seven institutions of higher education that comprise a statewide system emphasizing collaboration in the planning and provision of services to improve educational opportunities and contribute to the success of children and youth with disabilities (birth - 22 years). The T/TACS provide quality training and technical assistance in response to local, regional, and state needs. T/TAC services increase the capacity of schools, school personnel, service providers, and families to meet the needs of children and youth. The T/TACs meet these needs through activities such as consultation, long-term systems change initiatives, information services, linking and networking resources together, a lending library of multimedia resources and technology, referral to other services, and workshops. In addition to responding to requests for services, TTAC staff members

are deployed to schools and school divisions identified by the Virginia Department of Education as needing improvement through the School Improvement Office and/or the Federal Program Monitoring Office. Throughout the school improvement process, local school divisions can also request specific training and technical assistance from their local TTAC. The Virginia Department of Education has a comprehensive database of requests made to the ~~on~~ TTACs and the services provided, which is monitored to determine how 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 targeted technical assistance in implementing research-based effective practices and comprehensive services for students with autism. The center is funded through a start-up grant from the Department of Education.

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

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

~~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.~~

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

School Improvement Planning

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

Title I schools not meeting proficiency gap group targets or participation rates that are not identified as focus or priority schools and schools not *Fully Accredited* ~~will be~~ are required to use *Indistar*® to plan, monitor, and implement a plan for improvement. *Indistar*® is also available to non-Title I schools not meeting proficiency gap group targets or participation rates as well. An overview of *Indistar*® including the portal page, indicators, an example of Wise Ways, an example of a division improvement plan, and an example of a school improvement plan is available at the following Web site: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/school_improvement/planning/waiver_request/x1_indistar.pdf.

To ensure that Title I high schools not meeting the FGI rate take action to improve the rate of students graduating on time, any Title I high school not meeting the FGI rate ~~will be~~ is required to use the Virginia Early Warning System (VEWS). The VEWS indicators are based upon predictors of drop out and graduation that have been validated by national research and by four Virginia school divisions that

participated in a pilot program. The VEWS data provide quarterly reports to the school team to track progress on selected indicators. The Office of School Improvement ~~will~~ provides technical assistance for each school and division using VEWS to inform interventions on graduation rates. More information on VEWS can be found at the following Web site: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/school_improvement/early_warning_system/index.shtml.

Academic Review

The SOA requires schools that are *Accredited with Warning, Accredited with Warning-Graduation Rate,* or *Provisionally Accredited – Graduation Rate* to undergo an academic review and prepare a three-year school improvement plan. An overview of the proposed academic review process is available at the following Web site: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/school_improvement/planning/waiver_request/x8_proposed_acad_review_for_schools_if_waiver_approved.pdf.

As stated in the response to Question 2.A.i, it is important to understand that Virginia embarked on building SEA capacity to implement the model that ~~will be~~ is used to improve focus schools over the past ten years. Specifically, the work began with the academic review process in 2000. To further differentiate work needed in schools, the academic review process was revised in 2005. In 2011, Virginia's accreditation required high schools to meet specific graduation rate targets. The academic review process was revised to include actions for schools not meeting high school graduation benchmarks. Throughout this process, Virginia has leveraged the human capacity needed to implement the work by contracting with outstanding retired educators with experience in working with high-poverty and high achievement schools.

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

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

These areas of review are based on state and federal regulations, and research-based practices found to

be effective in improving student achievement. Within each of these areas, indicators reflecting effective practices have been identified for review (with an emphasis on effective pedagogy and teaching practices). The comprehensive academic review handbook can be found at the following Web site: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/school_improvement/academic_reviews/academic_review_handbook.pdf.

The academic review team collects and analyzes data that demonstrate the school's status in implementing these practices. A report of essential actions is provided to the division and school team. The essential actions have been aligned with *Indistar®*. Schools *Accredited with Warning* are required to use this tool to write the school improvement plan. The school will use the essential actions provided in the report of findings to select the indicators the must be addressed in the school improvement plan. Indicators, essential actions and the alignment to *Indistar®* are available at the following Web site: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/school_improvement/planning/waiver_request/x11_ari_ea_cwi.pdf.

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

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

An academic review team, either state or locally directed, conducts an on-site review and 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.

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

1. **Peer mentors –** The school/division may be paired with a similar school/division performing highly in an area of identified need in order to help the school learn new skills via a mentor/mentee relationship.
2. **Direct technical assistance** – Office of School Improvement staff and/or technical assistance team members may provide targeted assistance via telephone, e-mail, on-site visit, or a combination of these methods. Technical assistance can address a variety of topics including, but not limited to, the webinar topics described below.
3. **Webinar series** – Division liaisons may choose one or more series of webinars to be attended by the principal and other school and division leaders as needed. It is recommended that the division liaison invite division staff including the division's representative for the school's team to attend webinars.

A corps of contractors develops and delivers webinar series as well as provide on-site technical assistance to schools. Differentiated Technical Assistance Team (DTAT) members are selected based

on expertise in one or more areas of technical assistance, as well as their availability to devote time exclusively to technical assistance. The DTAT provides assistance in the following areas:

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

The OSI has established an intra-agency technical assistance team to meet on a quarterly basis. The technical assistance team includes representatives from Special Education, Student Support, Instruction, Response to Intervention, Safe and Supportive Schools, and Program Administration and Accountability. The purpose of the team is to share information about resources and technical assistance to better coordinate VDOE support of schools. The VDOE technical assistance team responds to specific technical assistance needs that are identified throughout the year and/or that may not be addressed by existing menu items from the technical assistance menu.

If a school does not have an adaptive reading assessment program to determine student growth at least quarterly, one approved by the Department of Education will be required for students who failed the SOL assessment in the previous year, with a particular focus on underperforming subgroups. Schools in improvement are currently using an online computer adaptive testing (CAT) system that administers short tests to determine each student's overall reading ability. The system adjusts the difficulty of questions based on performance, and tracks the performance of individual students, classrooms, and the school over time. Students are assessed monthly and then grouped by tiers and skills needed. This information provides data to develop and focus on interventions for those students who are most at risk.

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

Schools may be required to use 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~~ are 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 are 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?

More information on is available at the following Web site:
http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/school_improvement/dashboard/index.shtml.

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*.

High School Academic Process

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

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 provides 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, are provided throughout the year. The Web conferences meet the needs of Virginia's schools that have low graduation rates and/or low academic achievement and are aligned with the research-based strategies available from the NHSC and high school rapid improvement indicators from CII are at Web site: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/meetings/2011/07_jul/agenda_items/item_h.pdf).

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

The school team includes the school's principal and membership from guidance, special education and instruction. At least one member, other than the principal, of the division team serve on the school

team as well, preferably the division's top instructional leader. For high schools, the school team 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

The division and school teams 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 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 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. An example of a division reporting to the Board of Education on the status of an *Accreditation Denied* school can be found at this Web site:
http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/committees_standing/meetings/2011/accountability/minutes_accountability_10_26_11.pdf.

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. An example of a division seeking approval from the Board of Education for a school to be rated *Conditionally Accredited* can be found at this Website:
Accepted the Request -
http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/meetings/2011/10_oct/agenda_items/item_d.pdf.
Not Accepting the Request -
http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/meetings/2011/10_oct/agenda_items/item_i.pdf.

If a local school board chooses to reconstitute a school, it may annually apply for an accreditation rating of *Conditionally Accredited*. The *Conditionally Accredited* rating is granted for a period not to exceed three years if the school is making progress toward a rating of *Fully Accredited* in accordance with the terms of the Board of Education's approval of the reconstitution application. The school will revert to a status of *Accreditation Denied* if it fails to meet the requirements to be rated *Fully Accredited* by the end of the three-year term or if it fails to have its annual application for such rating renewed.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

As the state implemented new rigorous assessments in mathematics and in reading, it was anticipated that assistance would be needed to help divisions and schools align their curriculum with the revised standards, versus a smaller number of divisions and schools that will need continued support with instructional pedagogy.

Overseeing improvement efforts in numerous divisions and schools across a state requires a strong support infrastructure. The Department of Education uses a variety of systems to facilitate and streamline data collection, file sharing, and reporting mechanisms for priority and focus schools. The division engages a VDOE-assigned and state-approved contractor via a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with VDOE. The MOU supports 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. A draft MOU is available at the following Web site:

http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/school_improvement/planning/waiver_request/x12_memorandum_of_understanding.pdf. The contractor helps the division and school build their capacity to support leadership practices to support improved teacher effectiveness (as described in the teacher and principal performance standards in Principle 3):

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

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

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

- *Indistar*®, which is an online portal created and managed by the Center on Innovation and Improvement (CII). *Indistar*® is used by both focus and priority schools and division and LTP staff to develop, coordinate, track, and report improvement activities. A number of evidence-based practices and indicators are provided to inform improvement efforts, but the system can also be customized to reflect customized division or school indicators of effective practice or rubrics for assessment. *Indistar*® is used to collect meeting minutes, professional development activities, strategies for extending learning opportunities, parent activities, and indicators of effective leadership and instructional practice. *Indistar*® also provides online tutorials on the indicators, including video of teachers, principals, and teams demonstrating the indicators. An overview of *Indistar*® including the portal page, indicators, an example of Wise Ways, an example of a division improvement plan and an example of a school improvement plan is available at the following Web site: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/school_improvement/planning/waiver_request/x1_indistar.pdf.
- A state-approved 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 other reading programs. Priority and focus schools are required to utilize this progress monitoring tool to track the efficacy of interventions for selected students. The system automatically reports student achievement each month. This information is used by the assigned external consultants and the state to determine subsequent actions. Using the system's indicators of progress, the state 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 are required to utilize this diagnostic tool and report the results to the state quarterly.
- Datacation, which is an electronic query system that provides principals with data needed to make data-driven decisions at the school-level. Each focus and priority schools are 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 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.

More information on Datacation is available at the following Web site: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/school_improvement/dashboard/index.shtml.

Analysis of the data points from the quarterly reporting system is 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 provides 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 appoints an experienced external educational consultant to work closely with a division team to monitor division- and school-level improvement efforts. This technical assistance is monitored by a monthly online reporting system.

As in the current SIG schools, Virginia will continue to monitor the reform practices of all LTPs assigned to priority schools. OSI will intervene and facilitate discussions for required changes to the MOU, if needed. As an example, in the administration of the SIG grants, Virginia has requested amendments to the MOU when the LTP was not able to bring about the changes needed to implement the reform strategies. An example of an addendum between a LTP and a school division is available at the following Web site: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/school_improvement/planning/waiver_request/x6%20_contract_agreement_addendum.pdf.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Title I schools not meeting proficiency gap group targets or participation rates that are not identified as focus or priority schools and schools not *Fully Accredited* are required to use *Indistar*® to plan, monitor, and implement a plan for improvement. *Indistar*® is also available to non-Title I schools not meeting proficiency gap group targets or participation rates as well. An overview of *Indistar*® including the portal page, indicators, an example of Wise Ways, an example of a division improvement plan, and an example of a school improvement plan is available at the following Web site: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/school_improvement/planning/waiver_request/x1_indistar.pdf.

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

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

Students with Disabilities

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

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

For students with disabilities who have the most intensive support needs, there are two model initiatives supported by the Virginia Department of Education: Project SEARCH and the Post-High School Community College Program. Project SEARCH, a business-led model, is a collaborative

between school divisions and local businesses that provide employability skills training and workplace internships that occur entirely in the workplace. The Post-High School Community College Program is a supported education model that provides individualized supports to students with significant disabilities seeking postsecondary education to enhance their skills for employment, in an age-appropriate setting. The Department of Education provides support and technical assistance to increase the number of partnerships between school divisions and institutions of higher education.

English Language Learners

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

On September 26, 2007, the Virginia Board of Education adopted the ACCESS for ELLs (Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners) as the statewide English language proficiency (ELP) assessment for Virginia. The ACCESS for ELLs was developed by the World-Class Instructional Design Assessment (WIDA) consortium through a United States Department of Education (USED) Enhanced Assessment grant. On March 19, 2008, the Board adopted the WIDA English Language Proficiency (ELP) standards as the ELP standards for the Commonwealth. Since then, WIDA has released its enhanced version of the ELP standards, referred to as the 2012 Amplification of English Language Development (ELD) Standards, which Virginia has continued to use. The WIDA ~~ELP~~ ELD standards emphasize the need for academic language to support the four core content areas and thus reinforce the linguistic demands required for LEP students to be successful in Virginia's *Standards of Learning* program.

The WIDA ~~ELP~~ ELD standards support the English language development of ELLs to provide the foundation for them to achieve academically in all content areas. The five WIDA ~~ELP~~ ELD standards are represented in the following grades/grade clusters: K, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9-10, 11-12 ~~Pre-K-K; 1-2; 3-5; 6-8; and 9-12~~. Additionally, each standard encompasses five ~~six~~ levels of English language proficiency as well as the four language domains. The levels of English language proficiency are: entering, emerging, ~~beginning,~~ developing, expanding, and 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~~ providing updated instructional resources that align the 2012 amplified ELD standards with recent revisions to the *Standards of Learning*.

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

Assistance to All At-Risk Students

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.

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~~ were released ~~by the~~ in summer 2012. ~~Examples of the sample lesson plans aligned with the 2002 *English SOL* are available at: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/sol/standards_docs/english/index.shtml.~~ The Enhanced Scope and Sequence Sample Lesson Plans include resources and specific methods for differentiating the lessons for students with disabilities and English language learners.

Support for Teachers of LEP Students and Students with Disabilities

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

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

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

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

funded through a start-up grant from the Department of Education.

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

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

~~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.~~

The *Technical Assistance Plan for the Implementation of Virginia's Standards of Learning in English, Mathematics, Science, and History and Social Science* (Attachment 18 – updated 2013) has been recently updated and provides a brief overview of assistance that occurred prior to 2011-2012, assistance that has occurred during school years 2011-2012, 2012-2013, and planned for the current school year. ~~the current school year (2011-2012), and assistance that is planned for the next school year (2012-2013)~~. Additional assistance will be developed as data are analyzed following each test administration to determine where to most effectively focus the resources of the Virginia Department of Education. Teachers of special education students and English language learners are included in the

activities included in the plan and have equal access to the documents, lesson plans, and other resources provided. Additionally, as described in the previous paragraphs, Virginia's regional TTACs provide specialized supplemental assistance to special education teachers, and the state uses Title III funds to provide supplemental professional development and technical assistance to teachers of English Language Learners.

School Improvement Planning

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

Title I schools not meeting proficiency gap group targets or participation rates that are not identified as focus or priority schools and schools not *Fully Accredited* will be required to use *Indistar*® to plan, monitor, and implement a plan for improvement. *Indistar*® is also available to non-Title I schools not meeting proficiency gap group targets or participation rates as well. An overview of *Indistar*® including the portal page, indicators, an example of Wise Ways, an example of a division improvement plan, and an example of a school improvement plan is available at the following Web site: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/school_improvement/planning/waiver_request/x1_indistar.pdf.

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

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

Virginia will require a rigorous process for providing interventions and supports to low-achieving

students in Title I schools when one or more subgroups miss AMO(s), including federal graduation rate targets, over a number of years. In the second year of missing an AMO target, the school and division will be required to submit, in addition to an Indistar plan, quarterly data through Datacation to the Office of School Improvement regarding all students who did not pass a state assessment. The school and division will be required to evaluate each of the student's interventions based on the effectiveness of increasing each student's performance and report in aggregate in Indistar.

PRINCIPLE 3: SUPPORTING EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION AND LEADERSHIP

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

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

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

Governor's ~~Proposed~~ 2012 Legislation

The Governor of Virginia ~~proposed~~ initiated bold legislation in the 2012 General Assembly session to eliminate continuing contract status (referred to as tenure in some states) and improve the evaluation process for teachers and principals (includes assistant principals). ~~The legislation proposed that the statute would become effective on July 1, 2013.*~~
~~The legislation proposed the following:~~

- ~~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 was proposed to strengthen the evaluation of teachers and principals in Virginia. Although the Board of Education's *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers and Principals* call for student academic progress to be a significant component of teacher and principal evaluation, the proposed legislation would codify that student academic progress 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.~~

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

In addition, the Governor's budget requested $277,000 the first year (Fiscal Year 13) and $138,500 the second year (Fiscal Year 14) from the general fund to be used to provide performance evaluation training to teachers, principals, division superintendents. This is in addition to the funds that were appropriated ~~this year~~ for the Performance-Pay Pilot that ~~is~~ implemented~~ing~~ the new *Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers*.

2013 Legislation

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

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

Code of Virginia

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

…B. Consistent with the finding that leadership is essential for the advancement of public education in the Commonwealth, teacher, principal, and superintendent evaluations shall be consistent with the performance standards included in the Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers, Principals, and

Superintendents. Evaluations shall include student academic progress as a significant component and an overall summative rating. Teacher evaluations shall include regular observation and evidence that instruction is aligned with the school's curriculum. Evaluations shall include identification of areas of individual strengths and weaknesses and recommendations for appropriate professional activities.

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

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

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

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

…B. Each local school board shall adopt for use by the division superintendent clearly defined criteria for a performance evaluation process for principals, assistant principals, and supervisors that are consistent with the performance standards set forth in the Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers, Principals, and Superintendents as provided in § 22.1-253.13:5 and that includes, among

other things, an assessment of such administrators' skills and knowledge; student academic progress and school gains in student learning; and effectiveness in addressing school safety and enforcing student discipline. The division superintendent shall implement such performance evaluation process in making employment recommendations to the school board pursuant to § 22.1-293. Principals and assistant principals who have achieved continuing contract status shall be formally evaluated at least once every three years and evaluated informally at least once each year that they are not formally evaluated. Probationary principals and assistant principals shall be evaluated each school year. The division superintendent shall consider such evaluations, among other things, in making recommendations to the school board regarding the nonrenewal of the probationary contract of any principal or assistant principal.

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

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

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

22.1-295. Employment of teachers.

…C. School boards shall develop a procedure for use by division superintendents and principals in evaluating teachers that is appropriate to the tasks performed and addresses, among other things, student academic progress and the skills and knowledge of instructional personnel, including, but not limited to, instructional methodology, classroom management, and subject matter knowledge.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

22.1-307. Dismissal of teacher; grounds.

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

Teacher Evaluation

Virginia has adopted all guidelines required for teacher evaluation.

Background: In response to the *1999 Education Accountability and Quality Enhancement Act* (HB2710 and SB1145) approved by the Virginia General Assembly, the Virginia Board of Education approved the *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers, Administrators, and Superintendents* in January 2000. In May 2008, the Board of Education approved the guidance document, *Virginia Standards for the Professional Practice of Teachers* that responded to a recommendation from the Committee to Enhance the K-12 Teaching Profession in Virginia established by the Board of Education and the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia. In 2010, the Virginia Department of Education embarked on a major statewide initiative to revise the uniform performance standards and evaluation criteria for teachers, principals, and superintendents.

The *Code of Virginia* (state law) requires the Virginia Board of Education to establish

performance standards and evaluation criteria for all teachers, principals, and superintendents to serve as guidelines for school divisions to use in implementing educator evaluation systems. The *Code of Virginia* requires that (1) teacher evaluations be consistent with the performance 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. It is important to note that the performance standards and evaluation criteria outlined in the *Guidelines* apply to all teachers, including teachers of English language learners and students with disabilities. The 2013 General Assembly passed major legislation to revise state statute impacting teacher evaluation as noted in the section entitled 2013 Legislation.

~~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

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

The Virginia Department of Education established a statewide work group to conduct a comprehensive study of teacher evaluation in July 2010. The work group included teachers, principals, superintendents, human resources representatives, a higher education representative, and representatives from professional organizations (Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals, Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals, Virginia Association of School Superintendents, Virginia Education Association, Virginia School Boards Association and the Virginia Parent Teacher Association), expert consultants, and Department of Education personnel.

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~~ and conducted a comprehensive study of teacher evaluation.

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

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

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

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

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

- compile and synthesize current research on:
    - comprehensive teacher evaluation as a tool to improve student achievement and teacher performance, improve teacher retention, and inform meaningful staff development, and

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

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

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

Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers
State statute requires that teacher evaluations be consistent with the performance standards (objectives) included in this document and evaluations must address student academic progress. The document is provided as guidance for local school boards in the development of evaluation systems for teachers. It is important to note that the performance standards and evaluation criteria outlined in the *Guidelines* apply to *all* teachers, including teachers of English language learners and students with disabilities.

Virginia Standards for the Professional Practice of Teachers
The standards in this document define what teachers should know and be able to do, and they establish a foundation upon which all aspects of teacher development from teacher education to induction and ongoing professional development can be aligned. The revised *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers* incorporate these teaching standards. This document serves as a resource for

school divisions in the implementation of the Board of Education's performance standards and evaluation criteria for teachers and for colleges and universities in teacher preparation.

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

Teacher Performance Standards, Including Student Academic Progress

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

Performance Standard 1: Professional Knowledge
The teacher demonstrates an understanding of the curriculum, subject content, and the developmental needs of students by providing relevant learning experiences.

Performance Standard 2: Instructional Planning
The teacher plans using the Virginia Standards of Learning, the school's curriculum, effective strategies, resources, and data to meet the needs of all students.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Teacher Performance Ratings

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

Definitions of Terms Used in Rating Scale

Rating	Description	Definition
Exemplary	The teacher performing at this level maintains performance, accomplishments, and behaviors that consistently and considerably surpass the established standard. This rating is reserved for performance that is truly exemplary and done in a manner that exemplifies the school's mission and goals.	Exceptional performance: • consistently exhibits behaviors that have a strong positive impact on learners and the school climate • serves as a role model to others • sustains high performance over a period of time
Proficient	The teacher meets the standard in a manner that is consistent with the school's mission and goals.	Effective performance: • meets the requirements contained in the job description as expressed in the evaluation criteria • demonstrates willingness to learn and apply new skills • exhibits behaviors that have a positive impact on learners and the school climate
Developing/Needs Improvement	The teacher often performs below the established standard or in a manner that is inconsistent with the school's mission and goals.	Ineffective performance: • requires support in meeting the standards • results in less than quality work performance • leads to areas for teacher improvement being jointly identified and planned between the teacher and evaluator

Unacceptable	The teacher consistently performs below the established standard or in a manner that is inconsistent with the school's mission and goals.	Poor-quality performance: • does not meet the requirements contained in the job description as expressed in the evaluation criteria • may result in the employee not being recommended for continued employment

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

1. Student learning, as determined by multiple measures of student academic progress, accounts for a total of 40 percent of the evaluation.
2. At least 20 percent of the teacher evaluation (half of the student academic progress measure) is comprised of student growth percentiles as provided from the Virginia Department of Education when the data are available and can be used appropriately.

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

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

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

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

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

- make explicit the connection between teaching and learning;
- make instructional decisions based upon student data;
- provide a tool for school improvement;
- increase the effectiveness of instruction via continuous professional growth;
- focus attention on student results; and ultimately
- increase student achievement.[ii]

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

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

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

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

In choosing measures of student academic progress, schools and school divisions should consider individual teacher and schoolwide goals, and align performance measures to the goals. In considering the association between schoolwide goals and teacher performance, it may be appropriate to apply the state growth measure -- student growth percentiles (SGP) -- as one

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

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

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

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

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

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

On April 28, 2011, the Board of Education approved the revised documents, *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers* and the *Virginia*

Standards for the Professional Practice of Teachers. The guidelines set forth seven performance standards and call for student academic progress to be a significant factor in the evaluation of all teachers. The documents may be accessed at the following Web site: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/teaching/performance_evaluation/index.shtml.

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

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.

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

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

The goals of the principal evaluation work group were to:

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

- examine the use of principal evaluation to improve student achievement.

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

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.

Principal Evaluation Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria: Policy Development

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

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

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

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

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

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

July 1, 2013
Implementation Date: The Virginia Board of Education approved the *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Principals* to become effective July 1, 2013; however, school boards and divisions ~~are~~ were authorized to implement them prior to July 1, 2013.

Pursuant to state law, principal evaluations must be consistent with the following performance standards (objectives):

Performance Standard 1: Instructional Leadership
The principal fosters the success of all students by facilitating the development, communication, implementation, and evaluation of a shared vision of teaching and learning that leads to student academic progress and school improvement.

Performance Standard 2: School Climate
The principal fosters the success of all students by developing, advocating, and sustaining an academically rigorous, positive, and safe school climate for all stakeholders.

Performance Standard 3: Human Resources Management
The principal fosters effective human resources management by assisting with selection and induction, and by supporting, evaluating, and retaining quality instructional and support personnel.

Performance Standard 4: Organizational Management
The principal fosters the success of all students by supporting, managing, and overseeing the school's organization, operation, and use of resources.

Performance Standard 5: Communication and Community Relations
The principal fosters the success of all students by communicating and collaborating effectively with stakeholders.

Performance Standard 6: Professionalism
The principal fosters the success of all students by demonstrating professional standards and ethics, engaging in continuous professional development, and contributing to the profession.

Performance Standard 7: Student Academic Progress
The principal's leadership results in acceptable, measurable student academic progress based on established standards.

Included within the *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Principals* are guidelines for implementing Virginia's Principal Evaluation System. Virginia's Principal Evaluation System is a performance appraisal process that articulates the duties and responsibilities of principals and the criteria by which to judge their effectiveness. It is designed to help focus principals as they implement practices to improve student learning and to support the professional growth of school and division staff. The system is used both formatively and summatively for improvement and accountability.

Principal Performance Ratings

The major consideration used to assess job performance during the principal's summative evaluation is documentation of the actual performance of the standards through evidence. To assist with making a judgment regarding performance on each of the ratings a four-point rating scale along with performance appraisal rubrics for each of the principal standards are provided as part of Virginia's Principal Evaluation System.

The rating scale consists of four levels of how well the performance standards are performed on a continuum from *Exemplary* to *Unacceptable*. The use of the scale enables evaluators to acknowledge principals who exceed expectations (i.e., *Exemplary*), note those who meet the standard (i.e., *Proficient*), and use the two lower levels of feedback for principals who do not meet expectations (i.e., *Developing/Needs Improvement* and *Unacceptable*). The following definitions offer general descriptions of the ratings:

Definitions of Terms Used in Rating Scale

Rating	Description	Definition
Exemplary	The principal performing at this level maintains performance, accomplishments, and behaviors that consistently and considerably surpass the established performance standard, and does so in a manner that exemplifies the school's mission and goals. This rating is reserved for performance that is truly exemplary and is demonstrated with significant student academic progress.	Exceptional performance: • sustains high performance over the evaluation cycle • empowers teachers and students and consistently exhibits behaviors that have a strong positive impact on student academic progress and the school climate • serves as a role model to others
Proficient	The principal meets the performance standard in a manner that is consistent with the school's mission and goals and has a positive impact on student academic progress.	Effective performance: • consistently meets the requirements contained in the job description as expressed in the evaluation criteria • engages teachers and exhibits behaviors that have a positive impact on student academic progress and the school climate • demonstrates willingness to learn and apply new skills
Rating	**Description**	**Definition**
Developing/ Needs Improvement	The principal is starting to exhibit desirable traits related to the standard, but has not yet reached the full level of proficiency expected or the principal's performance is lacking in a particular area. The principal often performs less than required in the established performance standard or in a manner that is inconsistent with the school's mission and goals and results in below average student academic progress.	Below acceptable performance: • requires support in meeting the standards • results in less than expected quality of student academic progress • requires principal professional growth be jointly identified and planned between the principal and evaluator
Unacceptable	The principal consistently performs below the established performance standard or in a manner that is inconsistent with the school's mission and goals and results in minimal student academic progress.	Ineffective performance: • does not meet the requirements contained in the job description as expressed in the evaluation criteria • results in minimal student academic progress • may contribute to a recommendation for the employee not being considered for continued employment

The *Code of Virginia* requires that school boards' procedures for evaluating principals address student academic progress as a significant component of the summative rating. The Board's *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Principals* 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, accounts for 40 percent of the summative evaluation. There are three key

points to consider in this model:

1. Student learning, as determined by multiple measures of student academic progress, accounts for a total of 40 percent of the evaluation.
2. For elementary and middle school principals:
   - At least 20 percent of the principal evaluation (half of the student academic progress measure) is comprised of the student growth percentiles in the school as provided from the Virginia Department of Education when the data are available and can be used appropriately.
   - Another 20 percent of the principal evaluation (half of the student academic progress measure) should be measured using *Student Academic Progress Goals* with evidence that the alternative measure is valid. ***Note:*** Whenever possible, it is recommended that the second progress measure be grounded in validated, quantitative, objective measures, using tools already available in the school. These should include improvement in achievement measures (e.g., *Standards of Learning* assessment results, state benchmarks) for the school.
3. For high school principals: The entire 40 percent of the principal evaluation should be measured using Student Academic Progress Goals with evidence that the alternative measure is valid. These should include improvement in achievement measures (e.g., *Standards of Learning* assessment results, state benchmarks) for the school.

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

The ultimate goal of Virginia's Principal Evaluation System is to support principal growth and development. By monitoring, analyzing, and identifying areas of strength and areas for growth within these comprehensive standards, principals and their supervisors can be assured that principal performance is continually enhanced and refined. In other words, leadership development is an ongoing and valued aspect of the Virginia Principal Evaluation System.

Virginia Board of Education Approval of Guidelines and Evaluation Criteria for Principals

The document, *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Principals,* was presented to the Virginia Board of Education for first review on January 12, 2012. The Board of Education adopted the *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Principals* at its February 23, 2012, meeting. The guidelines set forth seven performance standards and call for student academic progress to be a significant factor in the evaluation of all principals. School divisions must have aligned principal evaluation systems with the Board approved performance standards and evaluation criteria for principals by July 1, 2013; however, school boards and divisions ~~are~~ were 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. The 2013 General Assembly passed legislation to revise state statute impacting superintendent evaluation as noted in the section entitled 2013 Legislation.

~~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.~~ The Virginia Department of Education established a work group to conduct a comprehensive study of superintendent evaluation in spring 2012. The work group included principals, teachers, superintendents, a human resources representative, a parent representative, and representatives from professional organizations (Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals, Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals, Virginia Association of School Superintendents, Virginia Education Association, Virginia School Boards Association, and the Virginia Parent Teacher Association), expert consultants, and Department of Education personnel. Work group meetings were held in Richmond in April and May 2012. The work group concluded its work in late May 2012, and a subcommittee of the work group met in June 2012 to review the draft documents before the final recommendation was made to the Virginia Board of Education.

On September 27, 2012, the Board of Education approved the revised document, *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Superintendents*. The guidelines

and standards will become effective on July 1, 2014; however, school boards and divisions are authorized to implement them prior to July 1, 2014.

3.B ENSURE LEAS IMPLEMENT TEACHER AND PRINCIPAL EVALUATION AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS

3.B Provide the SEA's process for ensuring that each LEA develops, adopts, pilots, and implements, with the involvement of teachers and principals, including mechanisms to review, revise, and improve, high-quality teacher and principal evaluation and support systems consistent with the SEA's adopted guidelines.

The Board of Education's performance evaluation standards are mandated statewide. Teacher evaluations shall include regular observation and evidence that instruction is aligned with the school's curriculum. Evaluations shall include identification of area of individual strengths and weaknesses and recommendations for appropriate professional activities.

The indicators and procedures used to evaluate each performance standard may be tailored by each school division. The state has provided sample rubrics; however, divisions may design their own rubrics to measure the seven required performance standards.

The *Code of Virginia* requires teacher, administrator, and superintendent evaluations be consistent with the performance 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. The 2013 General Assembly passed legislation to revise state statute impacting teacher, principal, and superintendent evaluation as noted in the section entitled 2013 Legislation.

~~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 in 2010-2011: The Virginia Department of Education developed an automated system to collect and review information from each school divisions on their performance standards and evaluation systems. The first collection was for the 2010-2011 school year and was due to the Virginia Department of Education in August 2011. School divisions ~~are~~ were required to submit the following information annually to the Virginia Department of Education:

- Description of the teacher and principal evaluation system;
- How the results of performance evaluations are used in decisions regarding teacher and principal development, compensation, promotion, retention, and removal;

- How student achievement outcomes or student growth data are used as evaluation criteria for both teachers and principals; and
- Information on the number of teachers (by school) and number of principals (by division) receiving each evaluation rating.

The information was collected from the 132 school divisions is posted on the Department of Education's Web site and reviewed by Department staff.

Required Reporting on Teacher and Principal Evaluation in 2011-2012: As a result of the approval of Virginia's ESEA Flexibility Plan and guidance provided by the United States Education Department (i.e., January 31, 2012, *Federal Register*, page 4666 and 4667; February 2012 USED Revisions to Reporting Requirements under the SFSF Descriptors and Indicators PowerPoint, slide 16; May 2, 2013) the Virginia Department of Education collected evaluation ratings for schools receiving School Improvement Grant (SIG) 1003(g) funds. (SIG schools are required to report these data as a part of the federal grant requirements.) SIG schools submitted a narrative description of how the evaluation system was used to make decisions regarding professional development, employee compensation, employee promotion, employee retention, and employee removal. SIG schools provided definitions of rating levels used. The number of teachers rated at each rating level for each of the domains (performance standards) or the number of teachers rated at each level on summative ratings were submitted. Due to the small number of SIG schools (less than 10) in each school division, rating levels for principals were not collected to ensure that evaluation ratings were not personally identifiable.

Virginia modified its automated system to collect and review data and feedback from school divisions on the implementation of teacher and principal evaluation systems, including use of student academic progress as a part of those systems. In accordance with Virginia's approved ESEA Flexibility Plan, school divisions were required to provide:

1. a narrative description of the teacher and principal evaluation systems used during the 2011-2012 school year;
2. certify that the teacher evaluation system implemented in 2011-2012 included student achievement outcomes or student growth data as an evaluation criteria;
3. certify that the teacher evaluation standards being implemented during the 2012-2013 school year were consistent with the seven Board approved standards; and
4. certify that student academic progress accounted for a total of 40 percent of the summative evaluation for teachers.

Data and feedback from the 2011-2012 TPEC indicated that eight school divisions reported that student academic progress accounted for less than 40 percent of the summative evaluation for teachers during the 2012-2013 school year. The eight identified school divisions were required to submit a corrective action plan describing how the school division would take the necessary steps to ensure that the portion of a teacher's evaluation that is based on Standard 7: Academic Progress is equal to 40 percent of the total evaluation by July 1, 2013. School divisions' progress was monitored throughout the school year. All school divisions have now reported that Standard 7: Academic Progress is weighted as 40 percent of teachers' summative performance rating for the 2013-2014 school year.

Required Reporting on Teacher and Principal Evaluation in 2013-2014: In order to ensure that school divisions established teacher and principal evaluation and support systems that included

as a significant factor student academic progress data for all students in determining teacher and principal performance levels, new data collection elements were added to the Virginia Department of Education's automated Teacher and Principal Evaluation Collection System. The Teacher and Principal Evaluation Collection Survey (TPEC-Survey) due to the Virginia Department of Education on September 13, 2013, included gathering data and feedback from school divisions and to certify the following:

1. division's performance standards and evaluation criteria for teacher's are consistent with the Board approved performance standards;
2. teachers and principals are given an overall summative performance rating;
3. summative rating levels are being implemented; and
4. student academic progress (Standard 7) accounts for a total of 40 percent of the summative evaluation for teachers and principals.

School division superintendents or designees, reported that 100 percent of Virginia's school divisions are currently implementing teacher and principal evaluation systems that are consistent with Virginia's performance standards and weight Standard 7: Academic Progress as 40 percent of teachers' and principals' summative performance ratings during the 2013-2014 school year.

Certification and Monitoring of Student Academic Progress: The Board of Education *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers and Principals* establish performance evaluation standards that must be used by school divisions in evaluating personnel. These guidelines call for student academic progress to be a significant component of school divisions' evaluation systems for teachers and principals. The Board of Education guidelines define "significant" as 40 percent of the evaluation. In order to ensure that school divisions have established teacher and principal evaluation and support systems that include as a significant factor student academic progress data for all students in determining teacher and principal performance levels, new data collection elements ~~will be~~ were added to the Virginia Department of Education's automated Teacher and Principal Evaluation Collection System. Effective in the 2012-2013 school year for teachers and the 2013-2014 school year for principals,* school divisions ~~will be~~ are required to certify that student academic progress (Standard 7) is a significant component of their overall teacher and principal evaluations. If a school division does not certify that student academic progress is a significant component and comprising at least 40 percent of their evaluation system, the division must submit a corrective action plan to the Virginia Department of Education describing how the division will meet this requirement in the following school year. Department of Education staff will be assigned to work with those school divisions and monitor progress toward meeting the 40 percent requirement. A quarterly progress report will be required to be submitted to the Department of Education.

*Note: The *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers* ~~become~~ became effective statewide on July 1, 2012, and the *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Principals* ~~become~~ became effective statewide on July 1, 2013.

Next Steps for Teacher and Principal Evaluation Collection and Reporting: Because teachers and principals are so fundamentally important to school improvement and student academic progress, improving the evaluation of teachers' and principals' performance in Virginia's underperforming schools (priority schools) and schools with underperforming proficiency gap

groups (focus schools) is a high priority. Virginia's emphasis for collecting and publicly reporting teacher and principal evaluation ratings will be for schools designated as priority schools [including schools receiving School Improvement Grant (SIG) 1003(g) funds] or focus schools. Virginia's approach to assisting school divisions with increasing student achievement in these schools is maximized by the implementation of Virginia's model teacher and principal evaluation systems. Requirements for these designated schools are outlined below.

Priority Schools

School divisions with schools newly identified as priority schools will be required to hire a Lead Turnaround Partner (LTP) to implement, at a minimum, to implement all requirements of the USED turnaround principles. As such, Virginia's LTP program is consistent with certain turnaround principles directly aligned to teacher and principal evaluation.

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

1. Providing strong leadership by:

    - reviewing the performance of the current principal;
    - either replacing the principal if such a change is necessary to ensure strong and effective leadership, or demonstrating to the SEA that the current principal has a track record in improving achievement and has the ability to lead the turnaround effort; and
    - providing the principal with operational flexibility in the areas of scheduling, staff, curriculum, and budget.

2. Ensuring that teachers are effective and able to improve instruction by:

    - reviewing the quality of all staff and retaining only those who are determined to be effective and have the ability to be successful in the turnaround effort;
    - preventing ineffective teachers from transferring to these schools; and
    - providing job-embedded, ongoing professional development informed by the teacher evaluation and support systems and tied to teacher and student needs.

As a part of supporting the division and school team in ensuring that highly effective teachers are hired to support the instructional program and that students with a high need for highly effective instruction receive the benefits of having a highly effective teacher all priority schools, including those priority schools designated as School Improvement Grant or SIG schools, will be required to collect and report the following evaluation data to the Virginia Department of Education:
1) number of teachers rated at each summative rating level by school (schools with less than ten teachers evaluated will not be reported) and 2) number of principals rated at each summative rating level aggregated to the division level (divisions with less than ten evaluated principals of SIG, priority, and focus schools will not report principal ratings).

Focus Schools

Virginia will take steps to ensure meaningful interventions for focus schools. The VDOE contractor assigned to each focus school will help the division and school build their capacity to support leadership practices to improve teacher effectiveness by:

1. Providing 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. Providing implementation support and coaching throughout the year for principals and teachers. Modeling effective practices and providing guided practice until practices are in-place independently of the contractor.
3. Providing modeling to principals in providing feedback to teachers, and provide guided practice to principals until the principal is able to exhibit practices independently;
4. Implementing, monitoring, and supporting an intervention model at the school-level with a focus on students with disabilities and English language learners; and
5. Building the division's capacity to support low-performing schools and increase student achievement.

To ensure that highly effective teachers are hired to support the instructional program and that students receive the benefits of having a highly effective teacher, all focus schools will be required to collect and report the following evaluation data to the Virginia Department of Education:

1. number of teachers rated at each summative rating level by school; and
2. number of principals rated at each summative rating level aggregated to the division level.

Note: In order to protect personally identifiable evaluation results, schools with less than ten teachers evaluated and school divisions with less than ten principals evaluated (priority and focus schools) will not report ratings.

The timeline for collection and reporting of this teacher and principal evaluation data is as follows:

Date	**Action**
Spring 2014	Communicate with school divisions, that have designated priority and focus schools in fall 2013, regarding collection and reporting requirements for teacher and principal evaluation ratings. Redesign automated Teacher and Principal Evaluation Collection (TPEC) tool to accommodate ESEA Flexibility reporting requirements.
Fall 2014	As a pilot for collecting teacher and principal evaluation ratings, priority and focus schools designated in fall 2013 will report teacher and principal evaluation ratings from the 2013-2014 school year through the automated TPEC.
Winter 2015	Design and build a Virginia Department of Education Web page for public reporting TPEC data from priority and focus schools.
Fall 2015	Priority and focus schools report teacher and principal evaluation ratings from the 2014-2015 school year through the automated TPEC. Evaluation ratings for priority and focus schools are publicly displayed on the Virginia 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 principals;
3. Provide modeling to principals in giving feedback to teachers;
4. Implement, monitor, and support an intervention model at the school-level; and
5. Build the division's capacity to support low-performing schools and increase student achievement.

Assurance of Compliance Required: Each year as a part of the annual report to the General Assembly on the condition and needs of public education in Virginia, the Board of Education is required to report the level of compliance by local school boards with the requirements of the *Standards of Quality* (state law). As part of the report to the General Assembly, the division superintendent and chairman of the school board must certify divisionwide compliance with the requirements that instructional personnel be evaluated according to the law.

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

The Board of Education adopted the *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Principals* at its February 23, 2012, meeting. As of July 1, 2013, school divisions ~~must~~ aligned principal evaluation systems with the Board approved performance standards and evaluation criteria for principals ~~by July 1, 2013;~~. ~~however, school boards and divisions are~~were ~~authorized to implement the guidelines and standards prior to July 1, 2013.~~

Evaluations and Ratings of Teachers and Principals

The *Code of Virginia* (§ 22.1-253.13.5) requires evaluations to include identification of individual strengths and weaknesses and recommendations for appropriate professional activities. Virginia's model teacher and principal evaluation systems are designed to assess the effectiveness of the performance of teachers and principals while identifying the strengths and weaknesses of both teachers and principals. In so doing, evaluation results inform professional

development for teachers and principals. In addition to the overall summative rating provided, each of the seven performance standards are evaluated separately providing specific data on performance related to job responsibilities. The Teacher Summative Performance Report and the Principal Summative Performance Report both include the following sections for the evaluator to complete in order to guide professional development: 1) commendations; 2) areas noted for improvement; 3) improvement goals; and 4) recommended for placement on a Performance Improvement Plan.

The model teacher and principal evaluation systems provide two tools that may be used at the discretion of the evaluator. The first is the Support Dialogue, a division-level discussion between the evaluator and the principal – a process to promote conversation about performance in order to address specific needs or desired areas for professional growth. The second is the Performance Improvement Plan which has a more formal structure and is used for notifying a teacher or principal of performance that requires improvement due to less-than-proficient performance and includes professional development activities to be completed by the employee.

Major legislation was passed by the 2012 General Assembly to change the date from April 15 to June 15 for school divisions to notify teachers of contract status for the following school year. This law became effective on July 1, 2012. The *Code of Virginia* (§ 22.1-304), the new deadline for notifying continuing contract teachers of noncontinuation of the contract is June 15; therefore, teacher evaluations need to be completed by June 15 to make personnel decisions. This change in statute allows school divisions more time to evaluate teachers and receive results of assessments before making decisions about summative ratings on evaluations.

Legislation was passed by the 2013 General changing the date from April 15 to June 15 for school divisions to notify principals of contract status for the following school year. The *Code of Virginia* (§ 22.1-294) requires a school board to notify principals under continuing contract of their reassignment to teaching positions by June 15; therefore, principal evaluations need to be completed by June 15 to make personnel decisions. This change in statute allows school divisions more time to evaluate principals and receive results of assessments before making decisions about summative ratings on evaluations and before making personnel decisions.

Teacher Equity Plan

Virginia's Current Teacher Equity Plan

Providing a highly qualified and effective teacher in every classroom is an integral component of Virginia's plan to ensure all children receive a high-quality education. Inherent in Virginia's education plan is the commitment to:

1. address inequities in the distribution of highly qualified teachers between high- and low-poverty schools; and
2. ensure that poor and minority children are not taught at higher rates than other children by inexperienced, unqualified, or out-of-field teachers.

Recognizing the critical role that teacher quality plays in ensuring a high-quality education for all students, Virginia examines a variety of teacher distribution and student achievement data

on an ongoing basis and reports the results annually through equity plan updates. The most recent report was completed in September 2012. This update provides details on progress made since that time, and examines trend data since 2006 when the initial Virginia State Teacher Equity Plan was developed and approved by the United States Department of Education (USED).

Based on the results of the data, Virginia has developed and implemented a wide range of targeted strategies designed to address the following three key goals.

GOAL 1: Meet the federal benchmark of 100 percent of classes being taught by highly qualified teachers;

GOAL 2: Ensure that poor and minority students are not being taught at higher rates than other students by inexperienced, unqualified and out-of-field teachers; and

GOAL 3: Improve teacher effectiveness to ensure that all children are being taught by effective teachers.

Activities for meeting these goals provided in the original plan and each updated plan have been organized around the following six categories:

1. data and reporting systems;
2. teacher preparation and out-of-field strategies;
3. recruitment and retention strategies;
4. professional development and specialized skills;
5. improving working conditions; and
6. policy coherence.

By examining data, implementing and refining the strategies and activities outlined in the plan, Virginia continues to achieve success in ensuring that all students, particularly those in high-poverty or high-minority schools, have access to highly qualified and effective teachers. As evidence of the progress made, the gap between high- and low-poverty elementary schools relative to highly qualified teachers has dropped from 1.9 percentage points to .4 percentage points over the last five years. At the secondary school level, the gap has narrowed from 4.6 to 1.2 percentage points. Similar progress has been made in relation to high- and low- minority schools, dropping from a gap of 2.2 percentage points to .5 over the last five years.

The data the Virginia Department of Education and school divisions are using to measure progress towards meeting these goals may be accessed in the document *An Update to Virginia's Teacher Equity Plan September 2012* (Attachment 19. These reports are also posted on the VDOE Website at: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/school_finance/arra/stabilization/reported_data/assurance_a.shtml.

In addition to the ongoing updates made at the SEA level, school divisions provide updates related to teacher distribution trends in their annual applications for Title II, Part A funds. School divisions must describe how they assure that students in high poverty and/or high minority schools are not taught by inexperienced, unqualified, or out-of-field teachers at a higher rate than students in other schools. To do this, divisions examine highly qualified teacher (HQT) data and teachers' experience levels at the highest poverty and/or highest

minority schools at each grade span and indicate whether these percentages are similar in other schools with lower poverty or minority percentages. If issues are identified, divisions must outline the steps being taken, including whether and how Title II, Part A funds will be used to address the issue(s).

Furthermore, as part of ongoing federal program monitoring for the Title II, Part A, program, school divisions must provide evidence that students in high poverty/high minority schools are not taught by inexperienced, unqualified, or out-of-field teachers at a greater rate than students in other schools. (Section 1111(b)(8) (C), Indicator 1.4).

Planning for Virginia's Revised Comprehensive Equity Plan

Virginia will develop a comprehensive equity plan to be submitted by October 2015 that describes how it will ensure that poor and minority students statewide are not taught at higher rates than other children by inexperienced, unqualified, or out-of-field teachers. Virginia is committed to providing support and interventions through a statewide system of support to schools that are underperforming (priority schools) and to schools with significant gaps in subgroup performance in reading and mathematics (focus schools). As a part of Virginia's proposed equity plan, school divisions with schools designated priority or focus schools must describe how they will ensure that poor and minority students in the school division are not taught at higher rates than other children by ineffective teachers. The timeline for submitting a comprehensive equity plan to meet ESEA Flexibility renewal requirements is as follows:

Date	**Action**
Spring 2014	Review the Instructional Personnel and Licensure Report (IPAL) data elements currently collected and make appropriate revisions.
Summer 2014	Establish a Virginia Department of Education work group to develop key elements of the comprehensive equity plan.
Fall 2014	As a pilot for collecting teacher and principal evaluation ratings, priority and focus schools, designated fall 2013, will report teacher and principal evaluation ratings from the 2013-2014 school year through the automated TPEC. This data will be used to inform the writing of the comprehensive equity plan.
Winter 2015	Complete draft of comprehensive equity plan. Seek stakeholder input of comprehensive equity plan through the Committee of Practioners
May/June 2015	Proposed draft of comprehensive equity plan presented to the Virginia Board of Education for first review and approval.
October 2015	Submit comprehensive equity plan to the United States Education Department

Performance Pay-Incentives Initiative

Performance-Pay Pilot

On July 21, 2011, Governor Bob McDonnell announced that teachers in 25 schools across the Commonwealth would participate in performance-pay pilot programs. With participating schools located in 13 of the 132 school divisions in the Commonwealth, or 10 percent of Virginia's school divisions, the program has broad participation for a pilot. The participating schools must implement the performance standards and model teacher evaluation system approved by the Board of Education in April 2011.

The 2011 General Assembly approved Governor Robert F. McDonnell's request for $3 million to reward teachers in hard-to-staff schools based on student growth and other performance measures during the 2011-2012 school year. The legislation authorizes incentive payments of up to $5,000 for teachers earning exemplary ratings. In addition, incentive payments of up to $3,000 based on performance during 2012-2013 are available for exemplary-rated teachers in participating schools with federal School Improvement Grants. The competitive grant application packet for the Virginia Performance Pay Incentives (VPPI) in Hard-to-Staff Schools may be accessed on the following Web site: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/teaching/career_resources/performance_pay/index.shtml.

Extensive training was held for teams from the 25 pilot schools during the summer of 2011. An additional training was held in October, and another session was held in January 2012. Consultants provided a review of the evaluation components as outlined below:

1. Analyze and provide feedback to principals in the schools on the quality of student achievement goals.
    a. Analysis will be conducted based on "SMART" criteria and "Level of Rigor" rubric.
    b. Selected goals will be revised, as needed, to improve quality based on "SMART" criteria and "Level of Rigor" rubric.
    c. A minimum of four goals or 10 percent of all submitted goals for each school will be selected for analysis and revision.
    d. Recommendations for revisions of selected goals will be delivered to principals.
2. Selected student achievement goals will be collected to create a handbook of recommended goals.
3. Analyze summative ratings of all reported teachers.
    a. Ratings of the seven teacher performance standards will be analyzed to investigate frequency of ratings for each standard.
    b. Patterns for ratings of the seven teacher performance standards will be documented.
    c. Final summative ratings will be analyzed in terms of frequency of ratings for the four levels on the performance appraisal rubric.
    d. A comparison of summative ratings for teachers with student growth percentiles (SGPs) and those without SGPs will be reported.

Site Visits and Support

1. An on-site visit will be made to each of the schools by a member of the Virginia

Teacher Evaluation team.

a. A conference will be held with the school administrative team, as desired by the school administrators, to discuss progress made and support needed as part of the evaluation pilot.
b. A minimum of one classroom observation of a participating teacher will be conducted with the principal of each school.
c. Feedback will be provided to the principal of each school regarding areas of inter-rater agreement in the observation and discrepancies in the observation that should be considered.

2. Based on the site visits, additional support that may be beneficial to the administrative team will be provided.
   a. Guidance that may be pertinent to observation will be offered to each principal.
   b. Recommended materials that may be pertinent to improved implementation of the pilot will be provided.

Below is a brief overview of the primary activities, including a timeline, for the Teacher Performance-Pay Initiative.

Project Description	Primary Teacher Performance-Pay Initiative Activities	Timeline
Development of training materials	• Conducted research on performance-pay initiatives • Prepared training materials	Spring 2011
Administrator orientation training in use of teacher evaluation system	• Planned training for administrators and key instructional leaders • Held a three-day workshop– participants received copies of training materials, five texts related to the new system, and electronic access to resources	Summer 2011
Teacher orientation in use of performance evaluation system	• Developed and provided fact sheets to update teachers and other educators on development and design features of new teacher evaluation system • Scheduled school trainings with consultants • Conducted a follow-up webinar for teachers on student achievement goal setting • Held on-site_workshops to orient teachers to the evaluation system and introduce student achievement goal setting conducted August-October. • Reviewed goals	Spring 2011 – Fall 2011
Administrator inter-rater reliability training: teacher evaluation	• Planned training workshop materials, including simulations of teacher evaluation • Delivered workshop – one-day training in October was available to administrators in pilot schools • Conducted joint teacher observations with principals and expert consultants	Fall 2011

Administrator training on making summative decisions	• Planned training workshop materials, including simulations of teacher evaluation • Delivered workshop (held January 26, 2012)	Winter 2012
Training Materials and Continued Support	• Produced the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document and an electronic newsletter with updates and new resources • Posted sample goals and appropriate assessments on Wiki • Conducted follow-up session from October training	Fall 2011-Spring 2012
Pilot year evaluation	• Conduct an evaluation of the pilot by outside evaluators	Fall 2011 - Fall 2012
Refinement of teacher evaluation system	• Reconvene teacher design team to review pilot year results and modify evaluation system, as needed • Revise teacher evaluation system based on recommendations from design team	Fall 2012

Training and On-Site Support for Pilot Schools

Extensive training on teacher evaluation was held for teams from the 25 pilot schools during the summer of 2011. An additional training was held in October 2011, and another session was held in January 2012.

Expert consultants, with national expertise on teacher evaluation, provided extensive training to the school divisions participating in the pilot. In addition to the professional development workshops, the consultants will provide additional support to the schools, including the following:

1. Analyze and provide feedback to principals in the schools on the quality of student achievement goals.
    a. Analysis will be conducted based on "SMART" criteria and "Level of Rigor" rubric.
    b. Selected goals will be revised, as needed, to improve quality based on "SMART" criteria and "Level of Rigor" rubric.
    c. A minimum of four goals or 10 percent of all submitted goals for each school will be selected for analysis and revision.
    d. Recommendations for revisions of selected goals will be delivered to principals.

2. Collect selected student achievement goals to create a handbook of recommended goals.
3. Analyze summative ratings of all reported teachers.
    a. Ratings of the seven teacher performance standards will be analyzed to investigate frequency of ratings for each standard.
    b. Patterns for ratings of the seven teacher performance standards will be documented.
    c. Final summative ratings will be analyzed in terms of frequency of ratings for the four levels on the performance appraisal rubric.
    d. A comparison of summative ratings for teachers with student growth percentiles (SGPs) and those without SGPs will be reported.

In addition, the following on-site support will be provided to each of the pilot schools:

1. An on-site visit will be made to each of the schools by a member of the Virginia Teacher Evaluation team.
    a. A conference will be held with the school administrative team, as desired by the school administrators, to discuss progress made and support needed as part of the evaluation pilot.
    b. A minimum of one classroom observation of a participating teacher will be conducted with the principal of each school.
    c. Feedback will be provided to the principal of each school regarding areas of inter-rater agreement in the observation and discrepancies in the observation that should be considered.

2. Based on the site visits, additional support that may be beneficial to the administrative team will be provided.
    a. Guidance that may be pertinent to observation will be offered to each principal.
    b. Recommended materials that may be pertinent to improved implementation of the pilot will be provided.

Training Materials and Professional Development

TRAINING SUPPORT

July-August 2011
Performance-Pay Pilot Training: Six days of extensive training on the *Revised Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers* were provided to administrators and key instructional leaders.

Statewide Training Materials: New resources, *Training Materials for the Implementation of Virginia's Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers*, are posted for use by all school divisions in the state at the following Web site: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/teaching/performance_evaluation/index.shtml.

October 2011
Performance-Pay Pilot Training: Administrators and key instructional leaders received training in the Student Achievement Goal Setting process.

Teacher Evaluation Statewide Training: The Virginia Department of Education collaborated with the Virginia Association of School Superintendents to launch a workshop series for school division leaders, school leaders, and lead teachers on improving teacher performance by improving teacher evaluation using Virginia's model evaluation system.

Student Growth Percentiles Statewide Training: The Virginia Department of Education partnered with The Center for Educational Partnerships at Old Dominion University (TCEP) and the Center for Innovative Technologies (CIT) to develop and deliver professional development workshops designed to increase division leadership teams' knowledge of the student growth measure and how it can be used as a tool to inform decision making. Student Growth Percentiles are one of the recommended measures to be used for making teacher and principal evaluation decisions.

December 2011
State Budget Action: The Governor's 2012-2014 Introduced Budget requested funding in Fiscal Year 2013 and Fiscal Year 2014 for the Department of Education to conduct intensive, training of principals, division superintendents, and other administrators who will conduct evaluations using the revised uniform performance standards and guidelines.

January 2012
Performance-Pay Pilot Training: Administrators and key instructional leaders received training in making summative rating decisions on each teacher performance standard and an overall summative rating using the state recommended four-level rating scale.

Spring 2012
Performance-Pay Pilot Training: Expert consultants ~~will continue to provide~~ provided support to the pilot schools.

Summer 2012 – Fall 2013
Refer to Attachment 20 for training support provided Summer 2012 through Fall 2013.

Training materials, accessible on the following Web site: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/teaching/performance_evaluation/index.shtml, were developed for the 2011-2012 performance pay pilot schools. The training materials are intended to help all school divisions in aligning their current evaluation systems with the revised *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers*. The training materials provide practice in implementing a teacher evaluation system that is aligned with the guidelines through simulations and activities. Based on the implementation of the teacher evaluation system by pilot schools, there may be revisions to these training materials. Additionally, training materials will be available to assist all Virginia school divisions in aligning their evaluation systems with the revised *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Principals*.

The Governor's 2012-2014 Introduced Budget requests funding in Fiscal Year 2013 and Fiscal Year 2014 for the Department of Education to conduct intensive, training of principals, division superintendents, and other administrators who will conduct evaluations using the revised uniform performance standards and guidelines. By undergoing this training, principals, division superintendents, and other administrators will have the opportunity to be documented as trained evaluators of teachers and principals based on the Board's uniform standards and criteria. Two waves of on-site training are being planned, for evaluators of teachers and evaluators of principals.

In order to ensure that all school divisions have the capacity to implement teacher evaluation that aligns with the Board of Education's *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers*, extensive training will be provided to teams of evaluators from each school division during the summer of 2012. These nine regional Teacher Evaluation Summer Institutes will be offered through a train-the-trainer delivery method. School divisions will be encouraged to send a team of educators, including individuals who work with teachers of students with disabilities and teachers of English Learners, who will be responsible for returning to the school division to train evaluators and teachers in the evaluation system. Follow-up training will be offered later in the 2012-2013 school year to assist school divisions' teams in the ongoing implementation process. Topics of focus for the institutes and follow-up training will include the following:

- using multiple measures of student academic progress for evaluating teacher performance Standard 7 (e.g., what assessments can be used, what criteria should be used before using the assessment, use of teacher-developed assessments, use of performance-based assessments, determining validity of assessments);
- implementing student achievement goals setting;
- determining teacher performance on Standards 1- 6 with multiple measures (e.g., student surveys, observations, document logs, portfolios);
- using teacher evaluations to promote differentiated professional development;
- working with teachers who instruct students with disabilities and English Learners; and
- establishing inter-rater reliability.

Training materials developed and used in the regional training sessions are made available for use by all school divisions in conducting more intensive sessions at the local level.

Evaluation of the Performance-Pay Pilot

The Virginia Department of Education secured an outside evaluator to determine the outcomes of the pilot, the quality of the training provided, the strengths and weaknesses of the teacher evaluation standards and performance-pay model, and the lessons learned from the pilot. Results will be used to inform the state as school divisions implement revised teacher evaluation systems.
The evaluation of the performance-pay pilot will serve to answer key questions regarding the implementation of the revised *Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers* and the use of the state's performance-pay model. Key questions to be answered include:

1. What were the outcomes of the pilot (e.g., summative ratings of participating teachers, number of teachers receiving performance pay)?;

2. What was the quality of the training and technical assistance provided by the state to implement the performance-pay model?;
3. What lessons were learned in the pilot period about the implementation of the Pay for Performance model overall?;
4. What if any were challenges in the implementation of the *Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers*?;
5. What if any were the suggested changes to the performance standards for teachers?; and
6. What were the attitudes and beliefs of participants regarding the performance-pay pilot?

Answers to these questions will be used to inform and guide the ongoing and future work of teacher evaluation both at the state and local levels.

A Pilot: Strategic Compensation Initiative Grants

Governor Robert F. McDonnell and the 2013 General Assembly approved the Strategic Compensation Grants (SCG) initiative for fiscal year 2014. The grants were awarded for fiscal year 2014 (July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2014).

The groups or types of teachers targeted for incentives in the compensation system were designated in the proposals submitted by interested school divisions. Specific proposals requirements included the following:

1. Provide a detailed description of the school division's compensation system that provides incentives based on the division's strategic goals and objectives; clearly identify in the proposal the division's strategic goals and objectives.
2. Provide a detailed description of how the division will meet the following required criteria:
   a. stakeholder involvement in the development and implementation of the strategic compensation model at the school division;
   b. evaluation of teachers in the initiative using an effective evaluation system with quality measure systems, consistent with the Board of Education's evaluation standards and criteria, including a weight of 40 percent on student academic progress for the summative evaluation;
   c. measurable and appropriate achievement goals for student academic progress (a significant component of the model for awarding incentives); and
   d. professional development, an integral component of the model, including how a teacher will be supported to develop a school culture of teaching and learning, to improve instruction, and to increase student achievement.
3. Designate the groups or types of teachers targeted for incentives in the compensation system. Incentives may focus on all teachers where quantitative student achievement data are available or specific groups of teachers within a division or school. [Detail the numbers of the teachers targeted for incentives and the schools where these teachers are assigned.] These proposals may include, but are not limited to, the following incentives:
   a. rewarding teachers who help students make significant academic progress;
   b. rewarding teachers who seek opportunities to assist in the leadership needs of the school division, such as serving as instructional coaches or professional developers;

c. providing pay incentives for effective teachers with needed expertise who are willing to transfer to hard-to-staff or low-performing schools;
d. providing incentives for team performance in schools that achieve student learning goals; or
e. rewarding effective teachers who are assigned to teach critical shortage areas, such as mathematics and special education.

4. Verify that the teacher population eligible to receive an award from the incentive program administered by the local school division and supported by the state SCG initiative must meet the following eligibility criteria as well as other requirements established by the school division to receive incentives:
   a. The teacher must be licensed to teach in Virginia and endorsed in the subject or grade level of the assignment;
   b. In the case of federal core areas, the teacher must be highly qualified;
   c. The teacher must be employed under a teacher contract (substitute teachers, hourly employees, or teacher aides are not eligible for an award);
   d. The teacher must be employed by the local school board and provide or support direct instruction;
   e. The teacher must be evaluated using an effective system, consistent with the evaluations and criteria of the Board, including a weight of 40 percent on student academic progress for the summative rating; and
   f. The teacher receiving the award must be rated as successful, which shall be defined as "proficient or above" in performance evaluation ratings.
5. Provide a detailed narrative budget based on the number of anticipated incentives to teachers that adhere to the following requirements and includes proposed costs. The Budget Summary form in Appendix C must also be included.
   a. Designate incentive payments as a range or tiers for target groups, such as differentiating between the teacher of record or teachers in support positions; proposals shall include the amount of funds requested by the division and the number of anticipated incentives to be awarded.
   b. Have a maximum payment to a teacher of $5,000 per year; in addition, the proposal may include cost of the employer share of the Federal Insurance Contributions Act (FICA) tax.
   c. Request no more than five percent of the grant funding to design and implement, as well as administer, this compensation program, and this funding shall not exceed five percent of the final reimbursement for the year
   d. Prorate payments for teachers who have taught for less than a full school year; and
   e. Performance evaluations for participating teachers must be completed in a timeline that provides sufficient time to distribute incentive funds to teachers and submit reimbursement requests to the Department of Education no later than June 1, 2014.
6. Include a description of how the program will be evaluated to determine whether the division achieved its goal(s) and objectives. Include the data that will be collected; how the data will be reported and analyzed; and the process for identifying weaknesses and making adjustments to address them.

Grant Application Process and Awards

The Secretary of Education partnered with the Virginia Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development to host a one-day Symposium for all interested divisions. The

Virginia Department of Education convened an application review panel composed of representatives from the Virginia Association of School Superintendents, Virginia Education Association, Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals and Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals. Thirteen school divisions were awarded Strategic Compensation Initiative Grants.

More than 1,400 teachers in the 13 divisions could receive performance and incentive payments by meeting the goals identified in the applications and earning positive performance evaluations.

2013 Strategic Compensation Grant Recipients

- Amelia County – $536,904 to provide incentive payments of up to $5,000 for 95 teachers who achieve goals related to professional growth, increased parental involvement, increased student achievement and coaching and mentoring other teachers
- Chesapeake – $39,637 to provide incentive payments of $2,500 for 14 teacher coaches selected for their success in raising achievement of low-performing student subgroups
- Cumberland County – $107,650 to provide incentive payments of up to $5,000 for 20 teachers who demonstrate that they have met goals for increasing student learning and achievement
- Dinwiddie County – $471,783 to provide incentive payments of up to $5,000 for 344 teachers who meet goals related to increased student achievement, professional growth and leadership
- Fluvanna County – $212,920 to provide incentive payments of up to $5,000 for 65 teachers at Fluvanna Middle School who meet goals related to increased student achievement and school-wide accountability
- Gloucester County – $331,874 to provide incentive payments of $5,000 for seven lead teachers and payments of $4,000 to 66 middle and high school teachers and intervention specialists who meet goals related to increased student achievement, professional development and improved teaching
- Goochland County – $450,000 to provide incentive payments of up to $5,000 for 135 "exemplary-rated" teachers who meet individual and school-wide goals related to increased student achievement, professional development, improved teaching, community engagement and accepting challenging assignments
- Harrisonburg – $432,011 to provide incentive payments of up to $5,000 for 159 teachers who meet goals related to achieving dual-language endorsements and proficiency in Spanish, including bonuses to attract or retain already qualified teachers
- Lynchburg – $26,250 to provide $5,000 incentive payments to five experienced and successful mathematics teachers selected to serve as coaches for mathematics teachers in the city's middle and high schools
- Portsmouth – $72,340 to provide incentive payments for 24 middle and high school teachers who meet goals related to increased student achievement in mathematics as follows: $5,000 for eight master mathematics teachers, $2,000 for eight partner mathematics teachers and $1,000 for eight partner special education teachers
- Roanoke – $706,307 to provide incentive payments of $5,000 for 125 teachers at Garden City Elementary, Morningside Elementary and Westside Elementary who meet performance goals related to increased student achievement
- Salem – $850,000 to provide incentives of up to $5,000 for 302 teachers who meet

individual, school and division goals for increased student achievement and use of technology

- Suffolk – $259,975 to provide incentives of up to $5,000 for 46 high school mathematics and special education teachers who meet individual, school and division goals for increased student achievement in mathematics

Endnotes:

[1] Tucker, P. D. & Stronge, J. H. (2005).

[1] Tucker, P. D. & Stronge, J. H. (2005).

Stakeholder Input on ESEA Flexibility Renewal Request

Letters from Educator Associations

Virginia Association of School Superintendents

1805 Chantilly Street Richmond, Virginia 23230
Phone (804) 562-4430 ✦ Fax (804) 355-1196

August 12, 2013

David M. Foster, President
2607 North Wakefield Street
Arlington, VA 22207

Mr. ~~Foster~~: David

I write to inform you of our serious concerns regarding Virginia's new accountability provision labeled "Meeting High Expectations" (MHE). In essence, this new accountability standard penalizes schools that "backslide" in SOL passing rates from last year to this year, even if the new passing rates still meet all AMO standards.

One aspect of our concern relates to the combined impact of implementing new versions of selected SOL tests as the MHE requirement is added. Historically, the introduction of new versions of SOL tests results in an "achievement dip" until schools gain an understanding of new question formats and testing expectations. This "initial dip" has occurred in almost every implementation year for new SOL tests, most recently with the introduction of new mathematics exams in the 2011-12 testing year. So it is well known that the first year of any new SOL tests results in lower passing rates across Virginia.

For the 2012-13 testing year, Virginia implemented new versions of reading, writing, and science SOL exams. The implementation of new versions of the exams brought an expected result of lower passing rates during the implementation cycle. In fact, the Department of Education's own Press Release (June 7, 2013) noted this expected result in a statement from State Superintendent, Dr. Patricia Wright:

> "Temporary declines in scores and pass rates on state tests are inevitable whenever academic standards are raised," Wright said. "The lower scores and pass rates are a sign that the state is expecting more of students so they will be better prepared for college or the work force, not that students are learning less. Just as Virginia students and schools began a new trend line last year in mathematics, this year marks new beginnings in reading, writing and science."

In her published statement, the State Superintendent stated that lower results for the 2012-13 testing year were "inevitable". But the State Board added consequences if the 2012-13 results were lower.

The logical interpretation of these two separate events (implementation of new SOL tests and the addition of the new MHE accountability standard) has resulted in a real Catch -22 for Virginia's schools. **The state accurately forecast that the 2012-13 year results would be lower due to the implementation of new tests and then added consequences if test results were, indeed, lower.**

Put more simply, Virginia's schools will receive the negative consequence for an achievement dip that you publicly forecast and, at least partially acknowledged, was created by your own actions.

Later, in the same June 7 Press Release, a heading asks:
"Will the new SOL tests impact school and division accountability ratings?"

The written response states:
"Three-year averaging – as allowed under Virginia's accountability program – will mitigate the impact of the new tests on federal ratings under No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and state accreditation ratings for the 2013-2014 school year."

I ask if you believe this statement remains an accurate descriptor for Virginia's schools.

I also ask you to reflect on the reasonableness of this most recent accountability addition.

This correspondence provides just one of the reasons that VASS has serious concerns about the accountability system in Virginia as currently configured. We will provide expanded comments at your upcoming meeting later this month. In the meantime, for short term consideration, please note our serious concerns for the "Meeting High Expectations" accountability provision for the 2012-13 testing cycle. It is our sincere hope that the State Board will consider immediate adjustments for this new expectation.

I would be happy to discuss this further with you as you desire.

Thank you for your attention to our concerns.

Sincerely,

Steven R. Staples, Ed.D
Executive Director
VASS

VIRGINIA ASSOCIATION
OF SECONDARY SCHOOL
PRINCIPALS

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The Professional Association of Middle and High School Administrators

November 5, 2013

Dr. Patricia I. Wright
Superintendent of Public Instruction
Virginia Department of Education
P.O. Box 2120
Richmond, Virginia 23218

Dear Pat:

The Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals wishes to express its opposition to the "maintaining higher expectations" or "backslide" provision currently being considered by the Virginia Board of Education as part of the Commonwealth's Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) waiver renewal application. While we fully support the desire to promote and sustain standout scholastic achievement in schools, this proviso, as currently crafted, can actually penalize those campuses. For example:

- It seems inherently unfair, and misleading to the public, that a school meeting academic goals for sub-groups set by the state be designated as failing to achieve standards set by the federal government;
- One year certainly "does not a pattern make." Is it fair to have a school meeting state standards stigmatized by the blemish of a "does not maintain higher expectations" moniker? Such a mark can not only demoralize students, staff, and the school community, but hinder and stymie continued good work in a most positive direction;
- Should a school rightfully be asked to endure a "does not maintain higher expectations" rating if it enjoys a particularly banner year (e.g., an 89% pass rate), followed by a modest decline the following year? Is it accurate to characterize such a school as one which does not thrive – in any form or fashion?
- Need the growth standard be so focused on a year-to-year comparison, a mere "snapshot" of overall progress, when schools work diligently to focus on growth patterns over more extended periods of time? We maintain that such upward trends over protracted periods, even when they may not be uninterrupted increases each successive spring, should be lauded.

Thus, VASSP respectfully requests that the Board of Education permit the meeting of targeted annual measurable objectives in reading and mathematics be the standard, in this regard, by which schools, working conscientiously across the Commonwealth, are assessed.

Sincerely,

Randy D. Barrack, Ed.D., Ph.D.
Executive Director

cc: VASSP Board of Directors

NASSP AFFILIATE
4909 Cutshaw Avenue • Richmond, VA 23230

E-mails from ESEA Stakeholders

From: ----------
Sent: Wednesday, October 23, 2013 9:34 PM
To: DOE - ESEA
Subject: Request to reconsider changes to the "no backsliding" provisions

This memo is a comment on the proposed revision of Virginia's Waiver of Certain ESEA Requirements, specifically under Principle 2 on page four of the Executive Summary:

For the following reasons, I ask the Department to consider retaining the current "no backsliding" provisions intended to maintain continuing progress for high achieving students but allow schools to achieve compliance through a three year average (as in other provisions).

I have spent the majority of my life working in support of the public school system as a teacher, college professor, administrator, parent, school board member and member of the VSBA board of Directors. I have a deep and continuing commitment to public education. For this reason, it disturbs me to see public education losing credibility with some segments of the public and losing students as a result. I believe that one reason for this is that the federal and state governments, the media, and therefore increasingly the public define the public schools almost exclusively in terms of the percentage of students failing to meet basic competency standards.

The massive national, state and local efforts to decrease the percentage of students failing to meet minimal competencies are admirable and necessary. **But they should not become virtually the only mission and measure of the public schools.** While laudably intentioned, this approach largely ignores (and invites schools to ignore) the needs of a majority of our students who do achieve minimal competencies but need higher goals. Reviewing the Waiver proposal one gets the impression that reducing the percentage of students failing the standardized tests **has** become the sole concern, (largely because the proposal is a response to NCLB which itself measures schools almost entirely in terms of the percentage of "failing" students).

The current draft revision goes even further in this direction by significantly weakening the "no backsliding" provisions requiring continuing progress for higher performing students. I agree that schools should not be "punished" for a single year's decline. But if stasis or decline persist over two or three years that should send a clear message that there is indeed a problem that needs to be addressed. I ask that the department consider retaining the "no backsliding" provisions but allowing schools to meet it with a three year average.

While unfortunately not a part of the current dialogue, the best way to rebalance the exclusive emphasis solely on the percentage of students failing standardized tests would be to give some weight to increasing the percentage who achieve at the Pass Advanced (500) level.

From: ----------
Sent: Friday, November 01, 2013 4:24 PM
To: DOE - ESEA
Subject: Waiver Application Revision

Good afternoon,

We respectfully request that the committee writing the next waiver application for NCLB/ESEA please remove the "Meets Higher Expectations" methodology. The new methodology has impacted far too many high performing schools.

Superintendent

From: ----------
Sent: Monday, November 04, 2013 6:08 PM
To: DOE - ESEA
Subject: Renewal of NCLB Waivers

Dear DOE Representatives:

Thank you for the opportunity to express my opinion regarding the waivers attached to the ESEA Flexibility or NCLB Waiver application. As a principal of a school that did not meet AMO requirements this past year due to the addition of the Meets High Expectations (MHE) provision, I want you to know that I support 100% the language included in the waiver renewal application. The proposal to meet federal AMO objectives in Reading and Math that includes three ways to do this seems more fair and reasonable. If the 3-year average provision had been in effect this past year, our school would have met AMO. It was very disappointing to our students, families, and staff to score above the established targets and still not make AMO because two of our subgroups dipped a little. Statistically, this is going to occur once in awhile and that is why I understood that the 3-year average provision was included. The goal is to see steady overall growth through the years, in much the same way that a business may see a down year, but still is pleased with overall climbing profits. I encourage you to adopt and propose to the United States Department of Education your proposed application that includes this change.

Please call with questions or clarification.

Sincerely,

Principal

From: ----------
Sent: Monday, October 28, 2013 1:56 PM
To: DOE - ESEA
Subject: Input- MHE

Greetings,

I am writing to voice my support of the recommended amendments to the higher expectations formula. The rationale is accurate and describes the unfair designation ---- Elementary School in ----- received "Did not

meet all federal AMOS- MHE" when they exceeded the math AMO by 12% points. This data phenomena was very difficult to explain to parents for the reasons stated in the proposed revisions.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond.

From: ----------
Sent: Friday, November 01, 2013 2:54 PM
To: DOE - ESEA
Subject: ESEA Waiver

Good Afternoon,

The proposed language to the "backslide provision" for the ESEA Waiver request is probably the best option at this point in time.

Division Superintendent

From: ----------
Sent: Thursday, November 07, 2013 8:46 AM
To: DOE - ESEA
Cc: --------
Subject: Flexibility Waiver Comments

Hello,

In ---------- County, we are significantly affected by the "no backsliding" provision. In almost every AMO category for reading and math, our achievement has been higher than the state targets, and it seems contrary that we would be punished for achieving at a higher level than the state and federal targets. In fact, as I explained this to our teachers last year, there was a sense of dismay because our students had done "too well" in the previous year. One teacher said, "so we are going to be punished for how well our kids have done?" Of course, I shared a positive outlook that I know our students would continue to achieve as well as they did in the previous year, but it is easy to see why she would feel that way.

In a small district like ours, the fact that every group of students is different is magnified in this situation. Some years we have large (for us) groups of ELL students (12 to 14%) and in others we do not; this has a significant effect on our reading scores. The same goes for years in which we have large numbers of students with disabilities. Another factor that has great impact on our achievement is hiring new teachers. For example, we have only one 7th grade math teacher, whose scores have been significantly above the state average, who retired last year. We have a brand new teacher in that position; I have complete confidence in her ability, but also understand that student achievement this year will likely be lower.

I like the idea of noting schools as "Meeting Higher Expectations," rather than attaching a punitive measure to high achievement. It provides appropriate motivation for achievement without the attending negative impacts of "no backsliding."

Thank you,

Assistant Superintendent of Instruction

From: ----------
Sent: Thursday, November 07, 2013 1:57 PM
To: DOE - ESEA
Subject: MHE and the ESEA Waiver

Members of the Virginia Board of Education and State Superintendent Wright:

Please approve the change in the provisions of the ESEA Flexibility Waiver which would adjust the "Meeting High Expectations" (or "backsliding) provision to an incentive rather than a punitive measure in calculating Federal Accountability.

Thank you for allowing input.

Superintendent

From: Alan Seibert [mailto:aseibert@salem.k12.va.us]
Sent: Monday, November 11, 2013 2:12 PM
To: DOE - ESEA
Subject: Support for converting MHE to "a reward" vs. the current punitive approach

Comment regarding the BOE Agenda Item related to the ESEA Waiver Application

I am writing to commend staff for conceiving of a positive solution to the vexing problem of unintended consequences of the previously adopted MHE "no backsliding" requirements.

Changing MHE to a special, positive designation (a "reward") that encourages the desired outcome of continuous improvement without the unintended mislabeling of schools by comparing a very small number of students (n=30) one year to be a wholly different yet still very small number of students another year is a terrific idea!

Thank you for your consideration,
Alan Seibert

H. Alan Seibert, Ed.D.
Division Superintendent, Salem City Schools
President, Virginia Association of School Superintendents