

**BOARD OF EDUCATION  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: 2011-2016**



**Board of Education  
Commonwealth of Virginia**

**Adopted  
May 2011**

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As of May 19, 2011**

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# BOARD OF EDUCATION COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: 2011-2016

## *Executive Summary*

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

The Board of Education's *Comprehensive Plan: 2011-2016* updates the goals set forth in the Board's previous plan, which covered the years 2007-2012. Building upon the previous plan, the two-year update reflected in this document provides the framework for resources and policy development to continue Virginia's forward momentum in student achievement.

### **Board of Education's Mission: Ensuring Rigorous and High Quality Learning Standards**

Virginia's young people are the hope of a bright future not only for themselves and their families, but for the state, the nation, and the rapidly expanding global economy. Current economic conditions remind us more than ever that the key to economic recovery is education.

Within that context, the Board of Education's mission is to set education policies that support the life-long academic and career achievement of all students by establishing high standards and expectations for learning, utilizing evidence and research, measuring and effectively analyzing systemwide performance, as well as ensuring transparency and accountability to parents and the public.

The Board of Education's vision and mission statements and goals for public education provide the framework for a world-class statewide system of public schools. The statements are forward-looking and acknowledge the programs and services provided by Virginia's public schools to meet the increasingly diverse needs of students who will live, compete, and work in an expanding and complex global, high- tech economy.

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

### **Gauging Student Achievement**

The standards and the accountability set by the Board of Education provide benchmarks to gauge the academic achievement of Virginia's students compared to their peers across the state, the nation, and internationally.

### **Goals for Public Education: 2011-2016**

**Goal 1: Expanded Opportunities to Learn:** The Board of Education will continue to improve the standards for public schools in Virginia in order to expand learning opportunities needed for Virginia's public schools. Our schools will lead the nation in rigor and quality and our students will compete and excel in postsecondary education and/or in the global workplace.

**Goal 2: Accountability for Student Learning:** The Board of Education will support accountability for all public schools by providing leadership and by establishing policies that help schools and school divisions increase the academic success of all students, especially those who are at-risk or in underperforming school systems. Using improved longitudinal data systems, the Board will monitor schools' progress in closing achievement gaps among groups of students.

**Goal 3: Nurturing Young Learners:** The Board of Education will work cooperatively with partners and will promote new and innovative partnerships to help ensure that all young children are ready to enter kindergarten with the skills they need for success.

**Goal 4: Strong Literacy and Mathematics Skills:** The Board of Education will establish policies that support the attainment of literacy and mathematics skills for all students, pre-K through grade 12.

**Goal 5: Highly Qualified and Effective Teachers and Administrators:** The Board of Education will establish policies and standards that improve the preparation, recruitment, and retention of Virginia's educational personnel, including their meaningful and ongoing professional development, especially in teacher shortage areas and in hard-to-staff schools.

**Goal 6: Sound Policies for Student Success:** The Board of Education will provide leadership to develop and implement the provisions of state and federal laws and regulations in ways that improve and expand opportunities for all of Virginia's schoolchildren to excel academically.

**Goal 7: Safe and Secure Schools:** The Board of Education will provide leadership to create safe and secure school environments.

### **Opportunities for All Students to Learn and Excel**

The Board of Education is adamant that all of Virginia's children—regardless of their personal circumstances—must have the school environment, the resources, and the teachers to help them be successful at school. However, there remain persistent differences in the achievement level of students. Some students continue to struggle academically and need costly, intensive instructional support to succeed in school.

### **Record Enrollment Will Continue**

Record enrollment in public elementary and secondary schools will continue over the next five years, according to research conducted by The University of Virginia's Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service (2010). Total enrollment will increase from the current 1.21 million to 1.27 million students in the 2014-15 school year. Enrollment growth is centered in certain geographic regions of the state, while other areas are expected to shrink in enrollment. The variance in enrollment growth will have significant impact—a rippling effect on funding, school construction, school closings, consolidation of programs, the teaching work force, and economic viability of localities.

## Statutory Requirement for Updating the Comprehensive Plan

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

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

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

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## BOARD OF EDUCATION COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: 2011-2016

*This is a world in which a very high level of preparation in reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, science, literature, history, and the arts will be an indispensable foundation for everything that comes after for most members of the work force.*

National Center on Education and the Economy's  
Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce (2007)

### **Preparing Today's Students for the Future**

Virginia's students are the hope of a bright future not only for themselves and their families, but for the state, the nation, and the rapidly expanding global economy. Virginia's economic strength is directly tied to the quality of our work force and our education system. Can there be any doubt that Virginia's students will work and compete in a global economy---one that was almost unimaginable just a few years ago?

This theme is echoed in the report of the National Center on Education and the Economy's Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce (2007), which describes the education challenges ahead:

*It is a world in which comfort with ideas and abstractions is the passport to a good job, in which creativity and innovation are the key to the good life, in which high levels of education — a very different kind of education than most of us have had — are going to be the only security there is. . . . The best employers the world over will be looking for the most competent, most creative and most innovative people on the face of the earth and will be willing to pay them top dollar for their services. This will be true not just for the top professionals and managers, but up and down the length and breadth of the work force.*

The obvious questions for the Board of Education as it sets its goals for the coming years are: *Will Virginia's young people be ready? Will they be equipped with the knowledge and skills they need to be successful in the global economy? What is the role of the Board of Education in leading the charge for academic excellence?*

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

## **Board of Education Vision and Mission**

Virginia intends to be the best. The standards and the accountability set by the Board of Education provide benchmarks to gauge the academic achievement of Virginia's students compared to their peers across the state, the nation, and internationally.

The Board of Education's vision and mission statements and goals for public education provide the framework for a world-class statewide system of public schools for Virginia. The statements are forward-looking and acknowledge the programs and services provided by Virginia's public schools to meet the increasingly diverse needs of students who will live, compete, and work in an expanding and complex global, high tech economy.

### The Board's Vision for the Public Schools in Virginia

The vision of the Board of Education and Superintendent of Public Instruction, in cooperation with their partners, is to create an excellent statewide system of public education that derives strength from our diversity and that ensures equality of opportunity for each student in a safe and healthy learning environment that prepares all students to be capable, responsible, and self-reliant citizens in the global society.

### The Board's Mission

The mission of the Board of Education and Superintendent of Public Instruction, in cooperation with their partners, is to set education policies that support the life-long academic and career achievement of all students by establishing high standards and expectations for learning, utilizing evidence and research, measuring and effectively analyzing systemwide performance, as well as ensuring transparency and accountability to parents and the public.

## **Goals for Public Education in Virginia: 2011-2016**

The Board of Education's goals are a roadmap for providing excellent educational opportunities for Virginia's public schools. The goals outline the important priorities for the actions and strategies the Board will use to set policies and directions for the public schools. The Board of Education's goals support holding schools accountable for measurable results, expanding learning opportunities for all students, and sustaining a public school system in which all students learn at high academic levels. The goals reaffirm the Board of Education's obligation to see each child as a unique learner and to ensure that Virginia's schools and teachers are equipped to tailor instruction to each child's needs. Finally, the goals, taken as a whole, embrace the student-centered approach that is instrumental in helping all of Virginia's children, regardless of their personal circumstance, make great strides in achievement.

**Goal 1: Expanded Opportunities to Learn:** The Board of Education will continue to improve the standards for public schools in Virginia in order to expand learning opportunities needed for Virginia's public schools. Our schools will lead the nation in rigor and quality and our students will compete and excel in postsecondary education and/or in the global workplace.

**Goal 2: Accountability for Student Learning:** The Board of Education will support accountability for all public schools by providing leadership and by establishing policies that help schools and school divisions increase the academic success of all students, especially those who are at-risk or in underperforming school systems. Using improved longitudinal data systems, the Board will monitor schools' progress in closing achievement gaps among groups of students.

**Goal 3: Nurturing Young Learners:** The Board of Education will work cooperatively with partners and will promote new and innovative partnerships to help ensure that all young children are ready to enter kindergarten with the skills they need for success.

**Goal 4: Strong Literacy and Mathematics Skills:** The Board of Education will establish policies that support the attainment of literacy and mathematics skills for all students, pre-K through grade 12.

**Goal 5: Highly Qualified and Effective Teachers and Administrators:** The Board of Education will establish policies and standards that improve the preparation, recruitment, and retention of Virginia's educational personnel, including meaningful and ongoing professional development, especially in teacher shortage areas and in hard-to-staff schools.

**Goal 6: Sound Policies for Student Success:** The Board of Education will provide leadership to develop and implement the provisions of state and federal laws and regulations in ways that improve and expand opportunities for all of Virginia's schoolchildren to excel academically.

**Goal 7: Safe and Secure Schools:** The Board of Education will provide leadership to create safe and secure school environments.

### **Achievement Measures for Goals**

The Virginia Board of Education is committed to assessing its progress in leading Virginia to create an excellent statewide system of public education. The metrics used to assess the Board's progress will provide information that describes how well the Board meets its goals and the current status of education in Virginia.

The Board's actions are intended to support all students' ability to achieve to their highest potential. The Board, however, is limited in the direct impact it can have on student achievement. As well, many of the actions taken by the Board will take years for any impact to be seen in achievement scores. Therefore, measures related to student outcomes will be considered over time and in conjunction with metrics that provide immediate information about the Board's progress in achieving its goals. There are several key indicators of student outcomes that provide critical information about the successes and challenges our schools face. These indicators are:

- High school graduation and dropout rates.
- Percent of graduates earning advanced studies diplomas.
- Percent of graduates who meet or exceed college or career ready performance expectations.
- Percent of graduates who enroll and are successful in postsecondary education.
- Percent of third-grade students reading on grade level.
- Percent of students scoring advanced proficient on statewide assessments.

- Number and percent of schools and divisions meeting or exceeding state and federal accountability measures.
- Number and percent of schools and divisions that demonstrate relatively high growth in student achievement, as measures become available.
- Number and percent of schools earning recognition under the Virginia Index of Performance.
- Number and percent of schools that are chronically low performing by state and federal standards.

Goal Statement	Measures to Gauge Progress in Meeting the Goal
<p><b>Goal 1: Expanded Opportunities to Learn:</b> The Board of Education will continue to improve the standards for public schools in Virginia in order to expand learning opportunities needed for Virginia’s public schools. Our schools will lead the nation in rigor and quality and our students will compete and excel in postsecondary education and/or in the global workplace.</p>	<p>Regularly review and revise the Standards of Quality (SOQ), Standards of Accreditation (SOA), and Standards of Learning (SOL); collect data and information that support ability to thoughtfully and deliberately make revisions that are research-based, cost-effective, and clearly aligned with student expectations.</p> <p>Use data from fourth and eighth grade NAEP scores to inform the Board’s work to review and revise Standards of Learning.</p> <p>Continue to review all Standards of Learning (SOL) to ensure they are college and career ready.</p> <p>Continue to review the accreditation standards in light of the assessment programs currently in place and consider new ways of testing and assessment of student achievement.</p>
<p><b>Goal 2: Accountability for Student Learning:</b> The Board of Education will support accountability for all public schools by providing leadership and by establishing policies that help schools and school divisions increase the academic success of all students, especially those who are at-risk or in underperforming school systems. Using improved longitudinal data systems, the Board will monitor schools’ progress in closing achievement gaps among groups of students.</p>	<p>Review longitudinal data (e.g., the Educational Information Management System) to examine student progress from early childhood to postsecondary and beyond.</p> <p>Review key indicators ensuring that the data are disaggregated by student groups, including ESEA subgroups, and gender.</p> <p>Document major Board of Education activities that assist chronically low-performing schools in becoming institutions that meet or exceed minimum accountability requirements.</p>
<p><b>Goal 3: Nurturing Young Learners:</b> The Board of Education will work cooperatively with partners and will promote new and innovative partnerships to help ensure that all young children are ready to enter kindergarten with the skills they need for success.</p>	<p>Document major Board of Education activities that support schools’ ability to facilitate pre-kindergarten children’s success.</p> <p>Calculate changes over time in the percent of students in kindergarten who are considered ready for kindergarten upon entry, based on screening or proficiency assessments provided in kindergarten.</p> <p>Calculate changes over time in the percentage of at-risk children served by the Virginia Preschool Initiative or other preschool programs with known quality standards.</p>

<p><b>Goal 4: Strong Literacy and Mathematics Skills:</b> The Board of Education will establish policies that support the attainment of literacy and mathematics skills for all students, pre-K through grade 12.</p>	<p>Document new Board of Education policies that support literacy in all students.</p> <p>Assess Virginia's outcomes on NAEP assessments.</p> <p>Assess outcomes on other national assessments, such as SAT, ACT, Advanced placement Exams.</p> <p>Assess statewide SOL assessment results.</p> <p>Use national and international assessment data to analyze the progress of Virginia's students (e.g., TIMSS and PISA comparisons to NAEP).</p>
<p><b>Goal 5: Highly Qualified and Effective Teachers and Administrators:</b> The Board of Education will establish policies and standards that improve the preparation, recruitment, and retention of Virginia's educational personnel, including meaningful and ongoing professional development, especially in teacher shortage areas and in hard-to-staff schools.</p>	<p>Calculate changes over time in the percent of teachers who are highly qualified, as defined by the ESEA provisions. Incorporate measures of teacher effectiveness as they become available.</p> <p>Document that school divisions are meeting the SOQ professional development requirements.</p> <p>Calculate annual retention rates for educational personnel in Virginia.</p> <p>Evaluate results of field study for the new Model Teacher and Administrator Evaluation Systems.</p>
<p><b>Goal 6: Sound Policies for Student Success:</b> The Board of Education will provide leadership to develop and implement the provisions of state and federal laws and regulations in ways that improve and expand opportunities for all of Virginia's schoolchildren to excel academically.</p>	<p>Review Board of Education policies and regulations with an eye toward helping schools do more with less, increasing effectiveness and efficiency, and ensuring that regulations are cost-effective and research-based to the extent possible.</p> <p>Document Board of Education policies and practices that demonstrate leadership in and compliance with implementing provisions of state and federal laws and regulations.</p> <p>Evaluate initial implementation procedures for the criteria for charter school proposals, which are reviewed by the Board of Education.</p> <p>Evaluate initial implementation procedures for the criteria for college partnership laboratory school proposals, which are reviewed by the Board of Education.</p> <p>Evaluate initial implementation procedures for the Virtual School criteria and application process, which are reviewed by the Board of Education.</p>
<p><b>Goal 7: Safe and Secure Schools:</b> The Board of Education will provide leadership to create safe and secure school environments.</p>	<p>Document the Board's actions that demonstrate leadership in creating safe and secure environments, especially in the area of electronic communications and in bullying and cyberbullying prevention programs.</p> <p>Calculate changes over time in quantitative measures of school safety and security. Measures will be developed using Virginia's Web-based reporting system and evidence from other sources, as available.</p>

## **Strategies to Implement Goals: 2011-2016**

The Board of Education's goals for Virginia's public education system are constantly evolving. The goals are revised every two years; therefore, they must be viewed as a continuous process of assessment and evaluation, all of which lead to adjustments as needed. Perhaps most importantly, the Board of Education's goals, as well as the strategies and activities to implement them, are tied closely to the requirements of state and federal statutes and regulations and on the availability and appropriation of funding for public education.

### **Goal 1: Expanded Opportunities to Learn**

*The Board of Education will continue to improve the standards for public schools in Virginia in order to expand learning opportunities needed for Virginia's public schools. Our schools will lead the nation in rigor and quality and our students will compete and excel in postsecondary education and/or in the global workplace.*

The Board wishes to be clear in its intent to lead the country in the rigor and quality of standards. This clarity of intent is especially important in light of the national discussion on Common Core State Standards. Virginia will continue to monitor work at the national level related to the Common Core State Standards and the Common Assessments. The state will take the opportunity to benefit from Common Core products and processes, which are being developed in the public domain. The Board recently revised the curriculum framework for both the *English Standards of Learning* and the *Mathematics Standards of Learning*. Taken together, the revised curriculum frameworks have a strong alignment with the English/Language Arts and the Mathematics Common Core State Standards, and in some areas, exceed the content of the Common Core State Standards. Thus, Virginia's standards meet or exceed national standards in English as well as mathematics.

In the meantime, Virginia's Curriculum Framework, other instructional material, and professional development events continue to support teaching and learning in the Commonwealth. For example, in 2010 the Board adopted revised curriculum frameworks for both science and English. New enhanced mathematics assessments will be administered for the first time in Virginia in 2011-2012, two years before the Common Standards assessment consortia anticipate administration of the common assessments, followed by new Virginia English SOL assessments in 2012-2013. In addition, the Virginia Board of Education recently took several important actions related to the revision of the state textbook approval process. The new procedures will strengthen and guide the adoption process for future years.

The Board of Education's constitutional responsibility is "to determine and prescribe" the Standards of Quality (SOQ) for Virginia's school divisions. The Standards of Accreditation (SOA) and the Standards of Learning (SOL) are both integral parts of the requirements contained in the SOQ, as established in the *Code of Virginia*. Thus, the SOQ, the SOA, and the SOL form the three-pronged foundation of quality standards for public schools in Virginia.

Revising and updating the SOQ to ensure that the standards are adequate and appropriate for today's schools and students is ongoing. The *Code* requires the Board to review the SOQ in even-numbered years. During 2009, the Board conducted a review of the Standards of Quality and proposed recommendations for revisions to the Standards of Quality, which were

communicated to the 2010 session of the General Assembly. In 2010, the Board reviewed the 2009 recommendations and authorized a 30-day public comment period. In January 2011, the Board of Education reaffirmed its support for those recommendations. The Board's legislative proposal was adopted by the General Assembly, effective on July 1, 2011. The legislation codifies flexibility already in the Appropriation Act to permit school divisions to use existing sources of funds for data coordinators, reading specialists, mathematics specialists, and additional instruction for English language learners. The legislation also provides school divisions with flexibility in the deployment of principals.

Revisions to the *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia* (SOA) were adopted by the Board of Education on February 19, 2009. Legislation passed by the 2009, 2010, and 2011 General Assembly delayed the effective date for some of the new provisions. The provisions prohibiting students from having to take more than one test in any content area in any year, requiring the same State Testing Identifier (STI) to be used when students transfer from one Virginia public school to another, requiring credits earned through Virtual Virginia to be accepted in Virginia public schools became effective in 2009-2010. Implementation of the Graduation and Completion Index became effective in 2010-2011 for accreditation ratings awarded for 2011-2012. The new graduation requirements for Standard and Advanced Studies Diplomas, including the requirement for a standard credit in economics and personal finance will become effective with the ninth-grade class of 2011-2012. The provisions requiring the Academic and Career Plan, the new accreditation benchmarks (75 percent for English in grades 6-12, and 70 percent for science and history/social science in grade 3), and the implementation of the new technical diplomas are now scheduled to become effective in 2012-2013.

Standards of Learning (SOL) are revised by content area according to an existing schedule. The SOL describe the Commonwealth's expectations for student learning and achievement in grades K-12 in English, mathematics, science, history/social science, technology, the fine arts, foreign language, health and physical education, and driver education. As students move through the grades---whether they remain in a Virginia public school or move to another state---they must not be at an academic disadvantage.

The Board is also working to implement new initiatives for charter schools, college partnership laboratory schools, and multidivision online providers. The Board approved the criteria, the application, and the process and procedures for receiving and reviewing the applications, and established new charter school and college partnership laboratory school committees to focus attention on priorities for action. The Board has set procedures for action that will move the Board closer to meeting its goal of expanding learning opportunities for all students. In addition, the Board will continue to support work undertaken by the Virginia Department of Education that directly relates to the priorities of the Board, such as the college and career readiness initiative and the uniform evaluation system for classroom teachers.

In the planning period ahead, the Board will undertake review of a significant part of its education regulations to ensure that all regulations currently in place are relevant, necessary for the promotion of student and teacher success, and as effective as possible.

## STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE GOAL 1

Action	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Review and revise the Standards of Quality; required review in even-numbered years.	X		X		X		X
Review and revise (as needed) the Standards of Accreditation.	X				X		
Review and revise the Standards of Learning in:							
Computer Technology			X				
Fine Arts				X			
Foreign Languages					X		
Health, Physical Education, & Driver Ed						X	
History and Social Sciences						X	
Mathematics							X
English	X						(2017)
Science	X						(2017)
Review the English Language Proficiency standards	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Implement Academic and Career Plan requirements	X	X	X				
Implement Technical Diploma requirements	X	X	X				
Implement Economics and Personal Finance Standards of Learning	X	X	X				

### **Goal 2: Accountability for Student Learning**

*The Board of Education will support accountability for all public schools by providing leadership and by establishing policies that help schools and school divisions increase the academic success of all students, especially those who are at-risk or in underperforming school systems. Using improved longitudinal data systems, the Board will monitor schools' progress in closing achievement gaps among groups of students.*

The Board of Education's priority for providing challenging academic standards is that they be student-centered, results-oriented, and supportive of local flexibility. This priority also addresses the need to support the skill development and accountability of local school leaders—superintendents, principals, and teachers. Moreover, the Board of Education intends to help build capacity of school divisions to address their issues successfully with limited intervention from the state and with maximum flexibility for local decision making.

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

There is a great deal of data available to measure the performance of the state's public schools and its students. The Board has a number of ways to support school accountability, including taking the lead in developing solutions for schools and school divisions that are not meeting accountability requirements. The Board will continue to study and consider new ways to assess student performance. The Board also wants to ensure rigor and ensure that all students increase their academic achievement by continuing to examine and revise cut-scores for the assessment program. One example of the actions taken by the Board in the past year is the adoption of revised passing scores for the new end-of-course history/social science tests that measure the 2008 Standards of Learning.

Virginia now has a powerful resource to examine student progress. Virginia is one of 20 states to receive a 2010 Longitudinal Data Systems Grant, funded through the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act* of 2009. The grant supports the development and implementation of data systems to examine student progress from early childhood to postsecondary and beyond, including matching teachers to students, while protecting student privacy and confidentiality.

Virginia's grant improves the Educational Information Management System (EIMS) and puts additional high quality, actionable data into the hands of teachers, administrators, researchers, policymakers and the public.

There is much to be learned from divisions that are seeing real improvements within and among student subgroups. In addition to recognizing these divisions for their success, the Board has the opportunity to provide leadership to help schools and school divisions eliminate the achievement gap through greater use of disaggregated data, including test results and graduation rates by subgroups. The Board can emphasize the importance of using data throughout the public school system to manage school performance. The Board should also do more to highlight and share best practices from divisions that are seeing real improvement in achievement gaps.

## STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE GOAL 2

Action	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Support the establishment of data manager/ test coordinator positions to serve as a resource to principals and classroom teachers in analyzing and interpreting data for instructional purposes.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Support professional development and technical assistance for instructional staff, especially in low-performing schools.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Support a focus on civics, international education, technological literacy, and financial literacy to ensure the preparation of all students to be productive citizens.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Encourage school divisions to find innovative ways to bring foreign language study for all students, starting at the earliest elementary school level possible.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Support effective use of federal funds to provide supplemental instruction and services to disadvantaged students.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Support policies that promote opportunity and access to postsecondary study for all students.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Promote the use of the Academic and Career Plan to help students identify the areas of strength and interest and pursue a high school course of study that will prepare them to pursue additional training or education.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Support and encourage school divisions in efforts to establish and maintain Governor's Schools, STEM academies, and participate in Foreign Language Academies	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Receive periodic reports of findings of academic review teams, review and adopt policies to address recommendations in team reports, and continue to refine the academic review and division level review procedures.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Adopt policies that promote student preparation for college and work readiness in the 21 <sup>st</sup> century.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Establish modified achievement standards for students with disabilities who can make significant progress but may not reach grade-level achievement standards within the same time frame as other students.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Seek opportunities for assessing LEP students' English language proficiency and content knowledge in an equitable manner.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Support school divisions in conducting annual assessment in English language proficiency for all limited English proficient (LEP) students.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Establish policies that promote accountability for graduation and dropout rates for all student subgroups in schools and school divisions.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Provide incentives to schools and school divisions that succeed in closing the achievement gap and in improving student achievement.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Support programs and initiatives that make it clear that high schools take all steps possible to help students earn a high school diploma.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Support opportunities for students to have access to college-level courses in high school, including Advanced Placement courses, International Baccalaureate courses, Cambridge courses, and dual enrollment courses.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Support strategies for improving the academic success of both high- and low-performing groups of students.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Promote the identification of industry certification opportunities for CTE teachers who lack such credentials and for students who seek them.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Promote technical assistance on research-based instructional interventions that help improve the academic achievement in schools that are low-performing and those that are identified as in need of improvement under the ESEA Act.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Establish and monitor the memorandum of understanding with and monitor the reconstitution of schools denied accreditation.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Establish and monitor the memorandum of understanding of school divisions in division level academic review.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Establish recognitions and incentives for schools, school divisions, and school personnel that demonstrate significant improvement in student achievement, closing the achievement gap, and addressing overall educational excellence.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Recognize Highly Distinguished Title I schools and school divisions.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Provide innovative options to support school improvement, such as charter schools and lead turnaround partners.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

### **Goal 3: Nurturing Young Learners**

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

This goal reflects the commitment of the Board to ensure that all children are adequately prepared for school when they enroll. Research shows that from the time of birth to the first day of kindergarten, childhood development proceeds at a pace exceeding that of any subsequent stage of life. Efforts to understand this process have revealed the many remarkable accomplishments of the pre-school years, as well as the serious problems that confront some young children and their families. Striking disparities in what children know and can do are evident well before they enter kindergarten.

A study by Virginia’s Joint Legislative Audit Review Commission found that “test results indicate that Virginia Preschool Initiative students gain in literacy skills during the pre-K year and outperform other kindergarteners. Longer term student-level data are needed to assess VPI’s impact on test scores in later grades. A survey of kindergarten teachers and principals indicates that most at-risk pre-K graduates are well prepared for kindergarten and later elementary grades.”

Pre-K programs provide a school turnaround strategy. The Board of Education will seek new and effective ways to work cooperatively with other agencies and organizations concerned with the development of children of pre-school age. Closing the achievement gap requires close alignment with the entire spectrum of community and social services, as well as with programs for Virginia’s youngest children (age 0-5).

If funding for such programs decreases, the Board will encourage collaborations to maintain and enhance current programs. The Department of Education collaborates with the Department of Social Services in the implementation of programs, initiatives, and funding opportunities that care for and educate young children. The goal of the collaboration efforts is to promote quality preschool education programs and policies proven to reduce achievement gaps; improve literacy; reduce grade retention; improve graduation rates through teacher training; enhance pre-K to third-grade teacher certification; and develop school readiness standards.

### STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE GOAL 3

Action	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Continue to collaborate with other entities in maintaining and enhancing learning standards for preschool education, preparation programs for preschool teachers, and professional development opportunities for preschool teachers.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Support the Virginia Preschool Initiative, the Title I Preschool Program, the Early Childhood Special Education Program, Start Strong, and the Even Start Family Literacy Program.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Seek ways to cooperate with and encourage the Head Start programs.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Support a coordinated approach to delivering preschool programs with a variety of service delivery options.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Promote increased participation in and expansion of high quality preschool components, such as the Foundation Blocks for Early Learning and the QRIS rating system.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Collaborate with VCCS and SCHEV to promote consistent standards and a smooth transition to licensure for early childhood educators.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Continue to collaborate with the Department of Social Services and other partners to promote quality preschool education programs and policies proven to reduce achievement gaps, improve literacy, reduce grade retention and to improve graduation rates through teacher training, pre-K to third-grade teacher certification, developing school readiness standards.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Support coordination and alignment between early childhood programs and the K-12 system, including the inclusion of school readiness in school assessment criteria.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Support assessment tools to support and recognize Pre-K quality as well as facilitate a smooth transition from Pre-K to Kindergarten.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

### **Goal 4: Strong Literacy and Mathematics Skills**

*The Board of Education will establish policies that support the attainment of literacy and mathematics skills for all students, pre-K through grade 12.*

Literacy has traditionally been described as the ability to read and write. Mathematical literacy refers to ways “to use and engage with mathematics in ways that meet the needs of that individual’s life as a constructive, concerned and reflective citizen.” This goal reflects the Board’s understanding that skills in reading and writing as well as in mathematics are absolutely essential for all students to master---and master well---if they are to perform successfully in school and in a career later on. Literacy implies that a person is able to read, write, speak, reason, analyze, and solve problems in a real-world setting. Literate individuals are informed citizens and intelligent consumers. They have the ability to interpret, analyze, and communicate the vast amount of information they are inundated with daily in newspapers, on television, and on the Internet.

The Board of Education will continue and expand efforts to support and improve family/parent and student literacy. As stated by the National Council on Family Literacy: “Literacy is at the root of a person’s ability to succeed, and the family is at the heart.” Family literacy ensures the cycle of learning and progress passes from generation to generation, and the Board can be a bully pulpit through various programs and policies. The Lexile Measure program is a good example of strategies the Board can encourage. The Board also has the ability to influence policy in areas that affect the teaching and learning of reading and mathematics through supporting efforts to enhance the literacy, mathematics, and science skills of all teachers, especially those in the early grades.

#### **STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE GOAL 4**

<b>Action</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>
Implement the requirement for the reading assessment for initial licensure for elementary teachers, specified special education teachers, and reading specialists.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Provide leadership for preschool to adult literacy initiatives, including programs that address the needs of speakers of languages other than English and students with disabilities.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Support teacher preparation programs and pre-service programs for teachers to improve their skills in teaching reading and mathematics.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Support programs to promote improved adolescent reading in all content areas.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Continue to establish and enhance policies in the SOQ and SOA to promote reading and mathematics literacy.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Support initiatives that provide additional information to parents and teachers to help them identify areas of strength in reading and mathematics among students and target assistance to students in areas of greatest weakness.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Review and amend, as needed, the State Literacy Plan, as may be promoted by the U.S. Department of Education.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

**Goal 5: Highly Qualified and Effective Teachers and Administrators**

*The Board of Education will establish policies and standards that improve the preparation, recruitment, and retention of Virginia’s educational personnel, including meaningful and ongoing professional development, especially in teacher shortage areas and in hard-to-staff schools.*

The Board of Education will take a strong leadership stance to advocate for and develop new and innovative partnerships with school systems and the colleges and universities that prepare, develop, and support classroom teachers and school personnel. At its heart, teacher education is a shared responsibility. Partnerships between school systems and the higher education community are critical in providing the training and clinical practice experiences that “teachers need to be prepared to use research-based developmentally appropriate strategies, assess student progress, and change practice as appropriate for the purpose of improving student learning and meeting students' developmental needs.” (NCATE. *Blue Ribbon Panel on Clinical Preparation and Partnerships for Improved Student Learning*, 2010)

In developing this goal, the Board of Education can play an important role in coordinating and exploring effective strategies for ensuring quality and results. The Virginia Department of Education licenses teachers and administrators according to regulations adopted by the Board of Education. The department also administers regulations governing educator preparation programs to ensure that teachers enter the classroom with content knowledge and instructional skills aligned to the Standards of Learning and other objectives for learning and achievement.

The department also administers programs to help school divisions recruit and retain highly qualified teachers and recognize instructional excellence. This goal encompasses the training and quality of educational administrators, such as principals, assistant principals, counselors, and other key school personnel. Woven into the Board’s work is the need to promote policies to recruit and retain minority teachers.

The Board can evaluate license renewal policy and identify and disseminate national “best practices” for recruiting and retaining teachers. The Board may also want to consider partnering with teacher education schools to teach their students how to use data at the teacher and administrator levels.

**STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE GOAL 5**

<b>Action</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>
Support initiatives to increase the number of high quality teachers, especially for hard-to-staff schools, such as the mentoring programs in hard-to-staff schools, the Virginia Middle School Teacher Corps, and other incentive programs for qualified teachers.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Promote increasing the pool of teachers entering the profession by supporting strategies such as the career switcher program, the Teaching Scholarship Loan Program, and Teacher Cadet programs, to teach in general and critical shortage areas.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Supporting incentives for National Board Certification that are aligned with efforts to help hard-to-staff schools including placing National Board Certified Teachers in such schools, and encouraging teachers from these schools to pursue National Board Certification.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Support ways to attract and retain career and technical education teachers whose training and expertise meet the demands of students and employers in the Commonwealth.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Support executive education opportunities to assist established school administrators in providing skilled leadership in chronically low-performing schools.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Support professional development and technical assistance for educational personnel, working with professional education associations and teacher educators.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Support, in conjunction with school divisions, professional development strategies that the local schools will use to help ensure the development of highly qualified professional educational personnel and paraprofessionals.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Study and develop model teacher and administrative evaluation systems, field test the models, and develop related guidance documents	X	X	X				
Establish STEM credentialing program for Career and Technical education teachers and for other teachers as needed.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Seek new ways and opportunities to form partnerships with colleges and universities as well as other organizations	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

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

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

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

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

## STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE GOAL 6

Action	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Continue to monitor progress of schools, divisions, and the state in meeting Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirements.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Receive annual report cards on progress of students in meeting state standards, graduation rates, elementary school attendance rates, names of schools needing improvement, professional qualifications of teachers, percentages of students not tested, and other information as required by ESEA.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Support Virginia's participation in NAEP program in reading and mathematics for 4 <sup>th</sup> and 8 <sup>th</sup> grades.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Support programs of technical assistance for schools identified as in the first and second year of school improvement.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Support procedures and disseminate via Web site notice to parents and the public of any pending corrective actions.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Support efforts to enlarge the pool of Supplemental Educational Services providers to provide remediation for low-performing students in Title I schools.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Continue to assist school divisions in implementing charter schools and other public school choice options.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Develop and submit the state plan for the Carl D. Perkins Act.				X	X	X	X
Receive reports on the Workforce Investment Act, as necessary.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Review and revise annually Virginia's Consolidated State Application Accountability Workbook under ESEA.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Monitor the reauthorization of ESEA and take appropriate action as needed.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Support the Turnaround Partners program.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Respond to the increased demand for data related to the State Fiscal Stabilization Funds and other programs under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA).	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Increase transparency in reporting and posting (on the Internet) all information for the public, including expenditures, school division improvement grant applications, jobs created with federal stimulus funds, etc.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Review and approve criteria and processes for Virtual School offerings and provide ongoing technical assistance.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Develop and implement procedures for receiving, reviewing and ruling on applications to create college laboratory schools and provide ongoing technical assistance.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Provide technical assistance and guidance in the development of charter school program proposals to be received by school divisions.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Support efforts to maintain the state-level Educational Information Management System (EIMS) to enable the department to meet increasing state and federal reporting requirements and to enable stakeholders at all levels of education to make informed educational decisions based on accurate and timely information.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Conduct a periodic review and revision of all Board of Education regulations that have not undergone such review within the past four years.		X	X				
Review guideline documents and policy statements to update as necessary to comport with state or federal legislative changes.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

**Goal 7: Safe and Secure Schools**

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

Everyone wants safe schools in which students, teachers and support staff can concentrate on learning and not have to worry about disruption due to misbehavior, crime, or violence. Especially in the earliest years, the nonacademic skills (motivation, self-control) are critical. These are the skills that make a person more likely to graduate and a good employee, as well.

The Board of Education supports programs and policies for schoolwide and divisionwide safety and prevention plans that consistently address the needs of all students and encourage a safe and healthy learning environment. The Board is committed to policies that provide a healthy positive learning environment for all children and teachers. This includes emphasis on healthy nutrition programs. Through partnerships, resources, data collection, and evaluation, the Board of Education can do much to address the needs of children as well as those who are providing services that protect our children.

As more and more research in Internet safety shows, it is clear that cyberbullying is one of the most pressing issues involved in keeping public schools and the children in them safe. The Virginia Department of Education has provided resources on the use of online, interactive, story-based lessons on various Internet safety issues, including cyberbullying. The department has also published two information briefs to help divisions update their own policies and procedures relating to current issues. Additionally, in the area of electronic communications the Board of Education is issuing guidelines to help school divisions create and implement policies and procedures that establish clear and reasonable boundaries for electronic interactions between students and teachers, other school board employees, and adult volunteers.

## STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE GOAL 7

Action	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Promote annual, and ongoing, staff training that address the health, nutrition, and safety needs of students and staff.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Build a foundation to work towards the goal of establishing a coordinated school health program.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Encourage school divisions to find innovative ways to keep students with behavioral challenges in school; Support opportunities for students with behavioral challenges to have access to high quality alternative programs in lieu of suspension or expulsion.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Support professional development and technical assistance in classroom management for instructional staff.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Support programs and initiatives that emphasize prevention and creation of a positive school climate, especially including antibullying and cyberbullying awareness and prevention.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Provide incentives and rewards to schools that maintain low rates of, or reduce, disciplinary incidents, suspensions and expulsions, and threats to school safety.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Support technical assistance for conducting threat assessments.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Promote the establishment of student assistance programs to provide comprehensive services to address the needs of students.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Collect and analyze discipline data and support the use of the Prevention through Information data system and programs.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Encourage annual training to school divisions on discipline-related data collection to ensure accurate and consistent data collection, analysis, and statewide reporting.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Provide technical assistance and resources to school divisions for policies and programs to create and implement policies and procedures for electronic interactions between students and school personnel.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

### Enrollment Projections for Virginia's Schools

Between 2000 and 2009, Virginia's population grew by more than 800,000—a growth rate of 11.4 percent over nine years. The growth rate has huge implications for Virginia's public school system. Dr. Michael Spar, research associate for the Demographics and Workforce Section of the Weldon Cooper Center at the University of Virginia, explained it this way in the 2010 study, *Enrollment Projections for Virginia Public Schools, 2009-10 to 2014-15*:

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

Digging deeper, the Weldon Cooper Center’s research finds that the growth is centered in certain areas, while other areas are expected to shrink in enrollment. (The full text, along with detailed tables, may be viewed at: <http://www.coopercenter.org/demographics/school-forecasts#fallmembership>.) Excerpts from the 2010 report show the following variance in the growth and reduction of enrollments across the state:

### Enrollment Projections

The Weldon Cooper Center’s forecast indicates that most enrollment growth will be confined to the elementary grades. Exactly two-thirds of total statewide growth will occur in elementary grades. Increases in the number of middle school students will account for nearly a third of total student growth. Only two percent of school population growth will be due to an increase in the number of high school students.

### Local Trends

Statewide school enrollment growth over the next five years is attributable largely to growth in a relatively small number of metropolitan and suburban school divisions. Most school divisions are not growing. Particularly rapid growth in several northern Virginia divisions account for much of the statewide growth. The report states that three northern Virginia divisions—Loudoun, Prince William, and Fairfax—will experience large student increases next year. Other school divisions in northern Virginia, around Richmond, and in Tidewater will experience moderate growth. Most of the school divisions expected to grow are located in an arc running from Hampton Roads in the south, through the Richmond metropolitan area, west to Albemarle, and then northeast to northern Virginia.

### Impact of Enrollment Trends

The Weldon Cooper Center’s sums up the impact of enrollment trends by stating:

*In this time of declining state fiscal resources, the impact of school enrollment changes will depend on factors unique to each school division. Divisions with declining enrollment will receive fewer state funds to support education; yet local tax dollars will stretch further. Divisions with growing student enrollment may receive increases in state support, but possibly not enough to offset the additional costs of educating more children. Additionally, local budgetary adjustments to compensate for declining revenues; the willingness of localities to raise property tax rates to mitigate the impact of budget cuts; and other fiscal resources available to each jurisdiction (including the extent to which federal assistance may become available) will determine how school enrollment changes impact each locality*

### **Important Demographic Trends for Virginia’s Schools**

The challenges for our public schools become more acute in light of Virginia’s changing demographics, which show clearly that diverse population groups (i.e., limited English proficient and economically disadvantaged) are increasingly making up a larger proportion of the overall population. Some students often require additional labor-intensive and cost-intensive services in order to be successful in school. Important demographic trends include the following that have powerful implications for our public school system.

### Growth in the enrollment of Limited English Proficient (LEP) students

In Virginia, the Limited English Proficient population has doubled in just the past five years, and this trend is expected to continue. In 1998, Virginia's public schools enrolled 37,000 LEP students. In 2010, that number had increased to more than 90,300.

The latest data (2010) show that more than 90 percent of Virginia's school divisions now have Limited English Proficient (LEP) students enrolled. While more than two-thirds of Virginia's LEP students are enrolled in divisions in the northern Virginia region, pockets of sizable concentrations of LEP students dot many areas of the state.

Virginia's population is becoming increasingly diverse. International immigrants comprise one quarter of the Commonwealth's recent population growth. Until 1970, one in every 100 Virginians was born outside the United States. In 2006, one in every 10 Virginians was foreign-born. (Weldon Cooper Center, 2009)

### Diversity of economic and educational opportunity factors

For the 2010-2011 school year, more than 38 percent of the students in Virginia's public schools were eligible for free and reduced-price lunch. The percent varies widely across the school divisions, from a high of more than 75 percent to a low of 8 percent.

Based on the latest census data (2000), more than 700,000 adults in Virginia are without high school credentials. Virginia has the 21st highest percentage of adults without high school diplomas (18.5 percent) among the 50 states. (Weldon Cooper Center, 2009)

On the other side of the economic spectrum, Virginia has the highest percentage of the work force in science and engineering occupations of the 50 states. The relatively high percentage reflects Virginia's large knowledge-intensive sector. (Weldon Cooper Center, 2009)

Clearly, this is a case of the educational haves and have-nots with profound implications for the economic well-being of our citizens and the state as a whole. The public schools have a huge role in providing the education necessary for equal opportunities for economic success.

### Virginia's teacher work force

Virginia had a total of 99,524 classroom teachers in 2009-2010, compared to 100,908 in 2008-2009. Slightly more than 80 percent were female. Eighty-two percent were white, 13 percent were African American, two percent were Hispanic, and 1.4 percent were Asian.

Data show that more than 21 percent of Virginia's current classroom teachers are aged 55 or more; thus, many may be eligible to retire or are very near retirement. This has potential to exacerbate teacher supply and demand in the coming few years. Moreover, close to 16 percent of Virginia's school principals are at or near retirement age.

## **Additional Planning Documents**

The *Code of Virginia* requires the Board of Education to include in its comprehensive plan an assessment of the needs of public education and a plan to integrate educational technology into the Standards of Learning and the curricula, including career and technical education programs.

Pursuant to that requirement, the Board of Education has adopted three documents in addition to its comprehensive plan: (1) the Board of Education's Annual Report on the Condition and Needs of the Public Schools in Virginia; (2) the Six-Year Plan for Technology; and (3) the state plan for career and technical education. When viewed with the comprehensive plan contained herein, the documents provide a comprehensive view of the Board's priorities, the condition and needs upon which the priorities are based, and the future direction and needs of our system of public education.

The Board of Education's *Annual Report on the Condition and Needs of the Public Schools in Virginia* may be viewed at [http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/VA\\_Board/home.shtml](http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/VA_Board/home.shtml) and the *Six-Year Plan for Technology* may be viewed at <http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/Technology/OET/resources.shtml#etp>. Information about Virginia's career and technical programs may be viewed at <http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/Instruction/CTE/>.

### **Key Policy Documents for Implementing Goals**

Of particular note, the Board of Education's priorities for Virginia's public schools are embedded throughout the provisions of the Standards of Quality, the Standards of Accreditation, and the Standards of Learning. These and other key policy and regulatory documents of the Board of Education may be viewed on the Department of Education's Web site: [www.doe.virginia.gov](http://www.doe.virginia.gov).

### **The Challenges Ahead**

The Board of Education's goals contained in this document address critical areas of need and attention. The Board's primary actions will focus on achieving those goals.

In addition, the Board of Education anticipates a number of critical issues arising during the next year or two that will need to be dealt with head-on. The full impact and the response required to deal with the fallout are not totally known at this point. Emerging issues that must be addressed include the following:

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

- Dealing effectively with schools that do not meet full accreditation because of difficulty in meeting the aggressive objective for graduation rates set by the Board of Education.
- Funding the Standards of Quality (SOQ) and other valued initiatives and programs in the current fiscal and economic climate.
- Keeping up with increasingly burdensome and time-consuming federal reporting and accountability requirements, especially those related to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (previously known as No Child Left Behind), the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund.

The Board of Education sees challenging years ahead as the state faces economic headwinds that have developed over the last several years. A critical part of the Board's ability to accomplish its mission is the interwoven, day-to-day partnership with the Virginia Department of Education. The department staff provides arms and legs for the Board's work—the advice, expertise, and background data needed for the Board to make informed policy decisions—and to build a stronger system of public schools here in Virginia. Today, the Board asks for major efforts, and the department staff is being asked to do more tasks with fewer staff.

State funding for public education across Virginia was deeply impacted by the recent recession. It is no surprise that it has been a difficult time for almost all of Virginia localities. Local schools—as well as the Virginia Department of Education—are under a tremendous amount of pressure to reduce costs, trim programs, streamline the work force, and redefine how work gets done. Finding ways to maintain positive momentum and do more with less has been and will continue to be a challenge.

Current economic conditions remind us more than ever that the key to economic recovery is education. As always, the Board of Education will continue to think creatively and make sure that its goals and strategies are relevant, evidence-based, practical, and cost-effective.