

## HIGHLIGHTS OF VIRGINIA'S ESEA FLEXIBILITY REQUEST

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### COLLEGE- AND CAREER-READY EXPECTATIONS FOR ALL STUDENTS

Virginia has adopted college- and career-ready Standards of Learning developed through a process involving its institutions of higher education and other stakeholders. Virginia plans to fully implement standards and assessments in mathematics in 2011–2012 and in English in 2012–2013. Students with disabilities and English Learners will have the same Standards of Learning expectations as peers and will take the same high-quality online assessments.

### IMPROVED STATE AND DISTRICT ACCOUNTABILITY AND SUPPORT FOR ALL STUDENTS

**Ambitious Performance Targets:** Virginia established new performance targets for reading and mathematics that increase equally over six years. Virginia will set separate performance targets for each ESEA subgroup and the “proficiency gap groups.” For schools with a graduating class, Virginia will also set graduation rate targets.

**Renewed Focus on Closing Achievement Gaps:** Virginia will identify the schools in the State with the greatest challenges for groups of students as “Focus schools” and demand interventions to improve student performance. To identify schools with large achievement gaps, Virginia created three “proficiency gap groups”: (1) students with disabilities, English Learners, and economically disadvantaged students, (2) African American students, not of Hispanic origin, and (3) Hispanic students, of one or more races. Virginia will identify the 10 percent of schools with the largest average gap between performance targets and the performance of each of the three gap groups in mathematics and reading. To exit Focus school status, the proficiency gap group for which the school was originally identified must meet its performance targets for two consecutive years.

**Holding More Schools Accountable for the Achievement of All Students:** To capture more schools in the accountability system, Virginia lowered the minimum number of students necessary for individual subgroup performance to be considered (known as “n-size”) from 50 to 30. Under Virginia’s new accountability system, 99 percent of Title I schools will be held accountable for students with disabilities, English Learners, and economically disadvantaged students using the new combined subgroup. Additionally, by lowering the n-size for subgroups, Virginia will increase the approximate number of schools accountable for African American students from 353 to 451, for Hispanic students from 122 to 183, students with disabilities from 105 to 396, English Learners from 104 to 139, and free and reduced price lunch students from 672 to 717.

**Aggressive Plan for Turning Around the Lowest-Performing Schools:** Virginia will identify the lowest-performing schools in the State as “Priority schools” and ensure that districts implement meaningful interventions in these schools. Priority schools will be required to hire a Lead Turnaround Partner (LTP) to assist in implementing a rigorous school turnaround model. Priority schools will be required to conduct a needs assessment; design an improvement plan; conduct formative assessments of low-achieving students, students with disabilities, and English Learners; and use a State data tool to support data-based decision-making at least once a quarter.

**Increased Accountability and Support for Districts:** Virginia has put in place a strong State and district-level support and monitoring system that will measure the progress of the lowest-performing schools throughout the school year and support districts and schools as they work to improve student achievement.

**Transparently Reporting on Students' Progress:** Virginia will provide annual school report cards that display how a school performs over time and whether the school's proficiency gap groups and ESEA subgroups met their performance targets.

## **SUPPORTING EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION AND LEADERSHIP**

**Assessing Performance using Multiple Valid Measures:** Virginia is putting in place a redesigned statewide teacher and principal evaluation system that uses multiple measures to determine educator effectiveness and to target professional development to support teachers and school leaders. Virginia's districts will fully implement the new teacher evaluation and support system during the 2012–2013 school year. Virginia is also in the process of developing a superintendent evaluation system.

Districts must use the educator evaluation system guidelines when developing their local evaluation systems. Districts will have to certify that their teacher and principal evaluation systems include student academic progress for at least 40 percent of the total evaluation.