



VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION **NEWS**

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Board of Education Report to Governor and General Assembly Details K-12 Accomplishments and Challenges

Implementing more rigorous academic standards and assessments, closing achievement gaps and raising student achievement in chronically low-performing schools are the greatest challenges facing public education in Virginia, according to the state Board of Education's annual report to the governor and General Assembly.

The report on the conditions and needs of the state's public schools – which was approved by the board yesterday – highlights improving graduation rates and increasing achievement on state and national tests as evidence of continuing progress under the Standards of Learning program and related reforms.

"This is a balanced report," Board of Education President David M. Foster said. "While we have much to celebrate, there are still schools and school divisions where far too many students are not on the road to college and career readiness."

The report also includes the Board of Education's recommendations for revising the Standards of Quality (SOQ), which mandate minimum staffing ratios and other elements of the foundational educational program all Virginia school divisions must provide. The board's recommended SOQ revisions include:

- One reading specialist for every 1,000 K-12 students and one mathematics specialist for every 1,000 K-8 students;
- One educational data coordinator for every 1,000 K-12 students;
- One full-time assistant principal for every 400 K-12 students and one full-time principal for all elementary schools; and
- Inclusion of the state's Early Intervention Reading Initiative and Algebra Readiness Initiative in the SOQ funding model.

"The recommendations are aligned with the critical needs identified in the board's annual report," said Billy K. Cannaday Jr., who led the board's review of the SOQ. "We also have prioritized our recommendations, rather than adopt an 'all or nothing' approach at a time when new resources are scarce."

The state constitution requires the Board of Education to prescribe minimum quality standards for the commonwealth's public schools, subject to revision only by the General Assembly. Under state law, the board reviews the SOQ and recommends revisions every two years. State law also requires the board to report annually on the condition and needs of the commonwealth's public schools.

The [2012 Annual Report on the Condition and Needs of Public Schools in Virginia](#) is available on the Virginia Department of Education website.

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