Our Commitment to Virginians

High Expectations and Excellence for All Students

May 2022

Virginia Department of Education
There are heroic educators and leaders in every school and community.
The perception of how Virginia thinks children are doing in school is different than reality.
VIRGINIA EDUCATION:

Sporadic Sharing of Data

Lowered Expectations

Declining Achievement
We need to move Virginia forward in a new direction, focused on students first.
**Widening Gaps**

Low-income and students of color do not always receive the same access to excellent learning opportunities, programs, or even school buildings, creating disparities that continue after they cross the graduation stage.
**2014: Top 10 AP States**  
Grades with Qualifying Scores

- **Maryland**: 31.8%
- **Connecticut**: 30.8%
- **Virginia**: 30.0%
- **Florida**: 30.0%
- **Massachusetts**: 29.4%
- **California**: 29.1%
- **Colorado**: 26.8%
- **New York**: 26.8%
- **Utah**: 25.2%
- **New Jersey**: 24.9%

**2021: Top 10 AP States**  
Grades with Qualifying Scores

- **Massachusetts**: 31.1%
- **Connecticut**: 30.7%
- **New York**: 30.4%
- **Maryland**: 30.2%
- **Florida**: 30.1%
- **New Jersey**: 29.1%
- **Califonia**: 28.8%
- **Colorado**: 27.6%
- **Virginia**: 26.9%
- **Illinois**: 26.9%
Virginia SAT 2019
Percentage of Students Meeting Benchmarks by Race/Ethnicity

- **White**
  - Reading and Writing: 81%
  - Math: 65%

- **Hispanic**
  - Reading and Writing: 75%
  - Math: 46%

- **Black**
  - Reading and Writing: 56%
  - Math: 24%

- **Asian**
  - Reading and Writing: 90%
  - Math: 55%

- **All Public School Students**
  - Reading and Writing: 81%
  - Math: 55%
Learning Loss

The shift to remote learning has only served to increase the urgency behind this call to action, as we continue to learn the extent of the harm done to all students.

**Literacy**

**Virginia**
- From Winter to Winter, the percentage of students at or above benchmark decreased by 3%.
  - Winter 2021-22: 19% (17%) 16% (14%) 15% (14%) 52% (53%)
  - Winter 2020-21: 18% (17%) 15% (16%) 14% (15%) 52% (51%)

**Nationwide**
- From Winter to Winter, the percentage of students at or above benchmark decreased by 2%.
  - Winter 2021-22: 13% (17%) 15% (16%) 14% (14%) 53% (53%)
  - Winter 2020-21: 12% (13%) 15% (13%) 12% (12%) 62% (62%)

**Math**

**Virginia**
- From Winter to Winter, the percentage of students at or above benchmark decreased by 9%.
  - Winter 2021-22: 12% (13%) 13% (13%) 12% (12%) 64% (62%)
  - Winter 2020-21: 17% (13%) 13% (12%) 14% (12%) 53% (51%)

**Nationwide**
- From Winter to Winter, the percentage of students at or above benchmark decreased by 2%.
  - Winter 2021-22: 13% (13%) 13% (13%) 12% (12%) 62% (62%)
  - Winter 2020-21: 12% (12%) 12% (12%) 12% (12%) 64% (64%)

Source: Renaissance: How Kids Are Performing.
Percent of K-2 Students At or Above the PALS Benchmark

Fall 2015-2021

- Kindergarten
- First Grade
- Second Grade

Year 2015-2021
Parents of almost 60,000 school-age children chose to homeschool their children during the 2020-2021 school year - an increase of 56% over the 2019-2020 school year.
Our Commitment to Virginians

High Expectations and Excellence for All Students

May 2022

Virginia Department of Education
GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR VIRGINIA EDUCATION

HIGH EXPECTATIONS
All students deserve to be held to high expectations aligned to the needs of the knowledge economy. We will prioritize resources for those students and communities furthest behind and teach comprehensive history.

EMPOWER PARENTS AND TEACHERS
Parents are their child’s first and most important teacher. They must be an integral player in our education systems. Next to parents, having a quality teacher is the greatest determinant of a child’s success. Great teachers must be celebrated and rewarded.

TRANSPARENCY & ACCOUNTABILITY
Our education systems will be held accountable for preparing all learners for success in life. This requires an emphasis on evidence and transparency.

INNOVATION
There is excellence in education in Virginia, but there are many children who have not had access to that excellence. We will create a culture of innovation that breaks the “one size fits all” education model by increasing school choice. (e.g. lab schools)

POST-SECONDARY READINESS
Learners must be empowered with multiple pathways to post-secondary success, including apprenticeships, internships, workforce training, dual enrollment, and other opportunities.

ZERO-TOLERANCE FOR DISCRIMINATION
We will not allow the ascribing of traits or behavior based on race, gender, political beliefs, or religion. We will reinforce that every person has a right to reach his or her full potential. Education should provide them with the tools and knowledge to do so.

FREEDOM OF SPEECH & INQUIRY
Our institutions of learning will embody a commitment to free speech and the exploration of diverse ideas. Our democracy rests on the foundation that education must teach every generation how to think, not what to think.