VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Virginia's Plan to Ensure Excellent Educators for All Students

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Section 1: Introduction	1
Section 2: Stakeholder Engagement	7
Section 3: Teacher Equity Gaps	10
A. Definitions	10
B. Highly Qualified Teachers (HQT) According to Poverty	12
C. Highly Qualified Teachers According to Minority Populations	13
D. Teacher Experience	13
E. Out-of-Field Teaching	16
F. English Language Learners	18
G. Special Education	20
H. Summary of Teacher Equity Gaps	21
Section 4: Root Cause Analyses and Strategies for Eliminating Teacher Equity Gaps	22
A. Teacher Equity Gaps Identified in Analysis of State-Level Data	22
B. Common Root Causes for Identified Equity Gaps and Strategies	22
C. Unique Root Causes for Certain Equity Gaps and Strategies	29
D. Performance Objectives	32
Section 5: Ongoing Monitoring and Support	33
A: State Implementation	33
B. State Monitoring of School Division Compliance and Implementation	33
C. Support to School Divisions	34
D. Implementation Timeline	35
Section 6: Conclusion	36
Appendices	

VIRGINIA'S PLAN TO ENSURE EXCELLENT EDUCATORS FOR ALL STUDENTS

Section 1: Introduction

Virginia consistently ranks as one of the top states in the nation in overall educational quality and performance in *Education Week's* annual Quality Counts report and receives frequent acclaim nationally for its effective educational policies and practices. Virginia has continued to develop a strong educational system spanning early pre-K learning through advanced coursework at some of the premier higher education institutions in the country. Crucial to the state's educational success is the high quality of its teaching force. Providing a highly qualified and effective teacher in every classroom is an integral component of Virginia's ongoing efforts to ensure all children receive a first-class education.

Several factors impacting teacher equity deserve concerted attention. As veteran teachers and principals retire, Virginia is working to ensure an adequate number of skilled educators are available and well prepared to enter the profession to fill those vacancies. However, the state must also be prepared to grow the pipeline of educators due to expected growth across the Commonwealth. According to the *Enrollment Projections for Virginia Public Schools, 2009-10 to 2014-15* from the Demographics and Workforce Group at the University of Virginia's Weldon Cooper Center for Public Services, 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. Total student enrollment increased from 1.21 million to 1.27 million students in the 2014-2015 school year alone. Consequently, it is critical that the state maintains focus on efforts to recruit, retain, and support effective educators for the growing demand.

Virginia's public schools are also challenged by the changing demographic shifts that indicate an increasingly diverse population. Important demographic trends that have implications for Virginia's public schools include:

- English language learners (ELLs) - In Virginia, the ELL population has almost quadrupled since 1998. In 1998-1999, the number of ELLs was 26,525. By 2013-2014, that number had almost quadrupled to 93,746.
- Economically disadvantaged students - The economically disadvantaged student population has grown significantly from 331,088 in 2003-2004, to nearly 510,054 in 2013-2014.
- Students with disabilities - The number of students with disabilities has increased slightly from 157,929 in 2003-2004 to 161,538 in 2013-2014.

With these data trends in mind, it is incumbent on the state to ensure each of these students has access to high quality educators who are well prepared to meet each student's unique needs. These efforts are important in all schools, but particularly critical in our state's high-poverty and high-minority schools, which traditionally experience the most challenges in recruiting and retaining teachers.

By 2006, in accordance with Section 1111(b)(8)(C) under Title I, Part A, of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965* (ESEA), as amended by the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB), states were required to develop plans to ensure that "poor and minority students are not taught at disproportionate rates by unqualified, inexperienced, or out-of-field teachers." Virginia developed its initial teacher equity plan at that time which provided baseline information on the state of teacher quality in the Commonwealth on the measures outlined in the statute from a state, regional, and school level perspective. Updates were posted to the plan in 2009, 2010, and 2012, outlining progress made on each of the measures, as well as updates related to the specific strategies and initiatives implemented to improve teacher and principal quality.

While the state has made significant progress in closing and even reversing several gaps that were evident in the initial plan, Virginia recognizes that ongoing efforts are necessary to bridge remaining gaps and engage in deeper analysis. This involves examining contextual factors at a regional, school division, and school level, with the ultimate goal of improving overall student achievement through ensuring all students have equitable access to high quality educators.

In July 2014, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan announced the *Excellent Educators for All Initiative* which included a requirement for all states to develop revised teacher equity plans. Draft guidance was provided to states in November 2014. In preparing for the development of the current equity plan, Virginia has undertaken the following steps:

1. Convened an internal Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) equity workgroup (internal VDOE Workgroup) in December 2014 to review the draft guidance provided by the United States Department of Education (USED);

2. Reviewed the state's previous plan, its updates, and strategy implementation to identify areas of progress and areas potentially in need of additional focus;

3. Reviewed the state educator data profiles provided by USED, based on 2011-2012 data, and more recent pertinent data available at the state level to conduct a data analysis to determine equity gaps for the initial plan development;

4. Participated in webinars and other technical assistance opportunities provided by USED and the Equitable Access Support Network (EASN);

5. Convened stakeholder groups, both internally at the state level, as well as from across the state, representing a wide variety of interest groups, regions, and school divisions to discuss root causes and develop strategies to reduce equity gaps;

6. Contacted Dr. Ellen Sherratt at the Center for Great Teachers and Leaders (CGTL) at the American Institute for Research (AIR) for expert advice and guidance, particularly about the state's plan for stakeholder engagement. Dr. Sherratt and a team from AIR provided valuable assistance and facilitation for a large external engagement session conducted in April 2015 that resulted in a comprehensive root cause analysis around identified equity gaps, along with identification of recommended strategies to address these gaps. The Department will engage in ongoing dialogue with her and her staff as Virginia moves forward in implementing its teacher equity plan;

7. Evaluated previous and current initiatives for effectiveness and alignment with identified root causes, and brainstormed potential additional strategies that may be considered;

8. Established measurable targets and created a plan for measuring and reporting progress with the goal of continuously improving this plan; and

9. Developed and began implementing a long-term strategy for engaging stakeholders in ensuring equitable access to excellent educators by identifying personnel and establishing timelines for follow-up on key activities during plan implementation.

This initial plan primarily relates to the statutory requirements around teacher distribution data to identify teacher access equity gaps according to poverty and minority status of schools and school divisions rather than focusing on achievement gaps. However, it was deemed important to review current student achievement results to determine whether gaps exist and to what extent. The results in the table below underscore the importance of this work in assuring that school divisions are able to adequately recruit and retain teachers in the neediest schools and that the teachers working in these schools are well prepared. The table below outlines student performance between high- and low-poverty and minority schools from 2013-2014 data.

Table 1: Student Achievement Performance on Federal Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs): 2013-2014

	Percentage of Schools Meeting All AMOs	Percentage of Schools Meeting Reading/English AMOs	Percentage of Schools Meeting Mathematics AMOS	Percentage of Schools Meeting Federal Graduation Indicator AMO
All Schools	51.3	77.5	61.2	76.9
High-poverty schools	26.6	74.1	45.3	76.0
Low-poverty schools	66.5	91.4	74.1	77.8
Gap	**39.9**	**17.3**	**28.8**	**1.8**
High-minority schools	28.9	52.9	45.0	67.8
Low-minority schools	60.0	82.7	69.3	85.3
Gap	**31.1**	**29.8**	**24.3**	**17.5**

The data indicate achievement gaps exist between high- and low-poverty schools in reading and mathematics, as well as overall attainment of all federal Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs). While only a minor gap exists regarding the Federal Graduation Indicator, gaps were evident across all areas when high- and low-minority school data were examined.

Although many factors contribute to overall school performance, research indicates that the greatest school-related factor for student achievement is the classroom teacher, followed closely by the building principal.[1] Therefore, it is incumbent on policy makers and education leaders to consider the most effective ways to not only recruit outstanding teacher candidates for these critical positions, but more importantly, to also ensure they are well prepared and well supported to improve student outcomes for all students.

Review of Initial Plan and Scan of Previous Strategies

The initial plan from 2006, along with the subsequent updates, provided information about the many and varied efforts the state and its local school divisions implemented with the ultimate goal of improving educational outcomes for all students, particularly students in high-poverty and high-minority schools. Strategies were categorized across six major areas: 1) Data Systems; 2) Teacher Preparation; 3) Recruitment and Retention; 4) Professional Development; 5) Working Conditions; and 6) Policy Coherence.

In a review with the internal VDOE stakeholders, previous strategies were examined to ascertain effectiveness. Virginia has implemented a host of initiatives directed at improving teacher quality across the state, particularly in high-poverty and high-minority settings. Among the efforts that were identified as being particularly effective were:

- **Middle School Mathematics Teacher Corps (MSTC)**
  The MSTC program focuses on reinforcing the quality of mathematics instruction in middle schools and ensuring that at-risk students receive a solid foundation in mathematics. The Virginia MSTC program provides the structure and incentives for school divisions to recruit and retain experienced mathematics teachers for middle schools that have been designated as "at risk in mathematics." Schools eligible to participate in the MSTC have the opportunity to take part in the initiative for at least three years and provide qualified teachers with incentive payments of $5,000 per year, pending available funding from the Virginia General Assembly. School divisions may apply for funding to provide an annual salary differential of $5,000 for three years for each approved MSTC position.

[1] Wahlstrom, K., Louis, K. S., Leithwood, K., & Anderson, S.E. (2010). *Investigating the links to improved student learning:Executive summary of research findings*. Retrieved from Wallace Foundation website: www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/school-leadership/key-research/Documents/Investigating-the-Links-to-Improved-Student-Learning-Executive-Summary.pdf

- **Technical Training and Assistance Centers (T/TACs) for Special Education**
  The mission of Virginia's Training and Technical Assistance Centers (T/TACs) is to improve educational opportunities and contribute to the success of children and youth with disabilities (birth - 22 years). The Centers provide quality training and technical assistance in response to local, regional, and state needs. The T/TAC's services increase the capacity of schools, school personnel, service providers, and families to meet the needs of children and youth.

- **Virginia's Tiered Systems of Support**
  The Virginia Tiered Systems of Supports (VTSS) is 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, systemwide 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 VTSS includes the following initiatives:
    - Response to Intervention (RtI)
    - Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS)
    - Content Literacy Continuum (CLC)

- **Summer Content Teaching Academies for Special Education and Regular Education Teachers**
  The Summer Content Teaching Academies offer high quality professional development that includes in-depth studies in a range of content areas. In addition, each Academy is designed to engage participants in critical dialogues of practice with instructional sessions conducted by scholars and master teachers who understand the challenges associated with today's classroom in working with diverse learners.

- **Mathematics and Science Partnership Grants**
  The Mathematics and Science Partnership (MSP) program is intended to increase the academic achievement of students in mathematics and science by enhancing the content knowledge and teaching skills of classroom teachers. Partnerships between high-needs schools and the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) faculty in institutions of higher education are at the core of these improvement efforts.

- **Aspiring Special Education Leaders**
  The Aspiring Special Education Leaders Academy is designed for educators who aspire to be in a leadership position and who are not currently a special education director. This is a yearlong program that includes workshops, seminars, observations, assignments, and field experiences. Participants have opportunities to gain knowledge, skills, and experiences that will help them excel in positions of special education leadership.

- **Professional Development for Educators of English Language Learners (ELLs)**
  A host of targeted professional development opportunities have been offered to educators of ELLs, including the following:

  - **Parents as Educational Partners (PEP)**
    The PEP training provides participants a curriculum designed to assist parents of ELLs in overcoming the language and cultural barriers that may prevent them from participating fully in their children's educational experience.

  - **English Language Development (ELD) Standards**
    This professional development opportunity allows school teams to work collaboratively on integrating Standards of Learning (SOL) and English Language Development (ELD) Standards to develop a custom design for the instruction and assessment of ELLs. Teams create instructional materials to assist in the implementation of the standards within their respective school divisions.

  - **English Language Proficiency (ELP) Assessment**
    The ELP assessment training offers educators of ELLs as well as Division Directors of Testing (DDOT) an opportunity to work collaboratively to strengthen their understanding of test administration of the ELP annual assessment, the underpinnings of the assessment, and the resources available after the training to strengthen the use of ELP assessment data in classroom instruction.

  - **Expediting Comprehension for English Language Learners (EXC-ELL)**
    The EXC-ELL training shares research based instructional strategies for integrating academic language, reading comprehension, and writing strategies for ELLs into content area instruction. Educators and administrators work in teams to develop a plan of implementation in their respective school divisions.

  - **Title III Statewide Consortium Conference**
    The Virginia Department of Education provides a two-day conference for program coordinators and other key instructional staff in over 60 divisions participating in Virginia's Title III Statewide Consortium. General and breakout sessions provide information related to creating effective Title III programs, examining best practices, ensuring compliance, and implementing instructional strategies to address the needs of ELLs, particularly in school divisions with low-incidence ELL populations. National experts, as well as local practitioners, are showcased at the conference, as well as current texts, which are recommended for book talks as a means of sharing current research strategies on ELLs.

In addition to the above initiatives, a table of strategies that have been undertaken to date is included in Appendix A.

Section 2: Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder input and ongoing stakeholder involvement are important elements in the process of ensuring teacher equity. Several meetings were planned to begin the process of stakeholder engagement, involving both an internal VDOE workgroup, as well as a large and diverse external stakeholder group largely comprised of individuals who work directly in and with school divisions and representatives from several professional organizations. Meetings focused on: 1) reviewing the data that identified the equity gaps; 2) conducting a root cause analysis; and 3) identifying potential strategies to address the root causes. The agendas for these meetings can be found in Appendix B.

The internal VDOE workgroup consists of representatives from the following offices:

- Federal Programs: Title I, Part A; Title II, Part A; and Title III, Part A;
- Office of Special Education and Student Services;
- Office of Teacher Education and Licensure;
- Division of Instruction; and
- Division of Student Assessment and School Improvement.

The internal VDOE workgroup met on several occasions to discuss elements of the plan. The first meeting was convened in December 2014 to: 1) discuss the required elements of the plan and how the 2015 plan differs from the original plan and subsequent updates; 2) review key definitions to be used within the plan, including modifications from previous plans; 3) review the draft guidance and available resources from USED; 4) review data provided from USED in the state data profiles; and 5) recommend potential data sources that would be available for review in preparation for determining equity gaps. To satisfy the elements necessary under the statute, the state would access and utilize the most recently available data (2013-2014) collected at the state level.

In early April 2015, the internal VDOE workgroup reconvened to discuss updated information about the plan and to engage in a discussion around the data analyses, root causes, and potential strategies. The meeting began with an overview of Virginia's previous equity plan and strategies already employed, along with results of the recent data analysis. The internal VDOE workgroup then discussed the current equity gaps and began to discuss possible root causes of the gaps. Next, the team reviewed the strategies in the previous plan to determine which ones might best continue to be employed (or further refined) to address current gaps. Additional discussion ensued to brainstorm additional strategies that may be beneficial for consideration. The information collected from this internal VDOE workgroup has been combined with the results of the external stakeholder meeting to determine the equity gaps and strategies that are addressed in the final Virginia Teacher Equity Plan.

A broader stakeholder group was invited to attend Virginia's Teacher Equity Plan External Stakeholder Workgroup meeting in late April 2015 to review data and equity gaps, and identify root causes. The letter of invitation is included in Appendix C. Early in the planning process, Virginia solicited the assistance of the CGTL at the AIR to facilitate the external stakeholder meeting. Seventy-two external stakeholders from all eight of the Superintendents education regions in Virginia were invited, along with deans and faculty members from higher education

institutions, representatives of professional and parent organizations, and several internal VDOE stakeholders. Of the 72 stakeholders invited, 59 people attended and engaged in in-depth discussions around teacher equity issues. A list of invitees can be found in Appendix D.

Following is a description of the groups that were invited to participate in the initial external stakeholder engagement meeting, along with eleven VDOE staff members from across several offices:

- Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals (VAESP);
- Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals (VASSP);
- Virginia Association of School Superintendents (VASS);
- Virginia Parent-Teacher Association (VPTA);
- Virginia Education Association (VEA);
- Virginia State Special Education Advisory Council (VSSEAC);
- Virginia English as a Second Language Supervisors' Association (VESA);
- Virginia Association of Science Teachers (VAST);
- Virginia Council of Teachers of Mathematics (VCTM);
- Virginia Association of Teachers of English (VATE);
- Virginia Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (VATESOL);
- Virginia Council for Exceptional Children (VCEC);
- Virginia State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV);
- Teach Plus Teaching Fellows; and
- Higher Education and Teacher Preparation Programs.

School division representatives in each of the state's eight superintendents' education regions were comprised of people serving in the following functions:

- Content Specialists/Instructional Directors;
- Teacher Coaches;
- Human Resource Directors;
- Federal Programs Directors;
- Superintendents;
- Teachers;
- Principals;
- Special Education Directors;
- ESL Specialists; and
- New Teacher Mentoring Coordinators.

The day began with an overview of the *Excellent Educators for All Initiative* and a review of Virginia's prior work with teacher equity planning, along with progress made to date. Next, an overview of the data analysis of the equity gaps was discussed, followed by breakout groups to discuss root causes and potential strategies and finally consensus building to address these root causes. The breakout sessions were facilitated by staff at the CGTL and resulted in engaging and thoughtful dialogue.

At the end of the Teacher Equity Plan External Stakeholder Workgroup meeting, participants were asked to complete a feedback form that would provide the state with information about the success of the meeting. A copy of this form is included in Appendix E. Stakeholders who participated were optimistic about the work that was completed during the workgroup meeting and the work that would follow. To date, 100 percent of the respondents who returned the survey form indicated high interest in participating in further discussions or meetings to review the implementation of the strategies suggested. Feedback from e-mail and telephone calls has been overwhelmingly positive. An example of feedback received is included in Appendix F. Suggestions for additional face-to-face and virtual meetings were well received, and additional methods will be explored.

Furthermore, a teaching fellow from the Virginia Teach Plus Teaching Fellows group attended the workgroup and subsequently brought a team of other teaching fellows to VDOE for a meeting in mid-May to provide feedback and offer additional specific suggestions for improving teacher equity in high-needs schools. These teachers demonstrate great passion for their work and are eager to offer support for ongoing dialogue and additional engagement throughout implementation of the plan.

After the external stakeholder meeting, the root causes and strategies were synthesized and presented at a subsequent internal VDOE workgroup meeting conducted in early May 2015. The workgroup reconvened to review all recommendations and to arrive at consensus about key initial strategies, priorities, and timelines to include in the final plan. Additionally, over the next year, the VDOE will continue to solicit feedback from local school divisions regarding strategies being implemented and will highlight effective practices as part of its ongoing outreach and communications strategy.

It is anticipated that the internal VDOE workgroup will continue to meet throughout the 2015-2016 school year to:

- Discuss additional data resources and analyses;
- Monitor effectiveness of strategies to meet short- and long-term goals; and
- Revise strategies, as needed.

Virginia will continue to engage all stakeholders in ongoing discussions as the work continues and strategies are implemented.

Section 3: Teacher Equity Gaps

Definitions

In accordance with the statute, Section 1111(b)(8)(C), that "poor and minority students are not taught at disproportionate rates by unqualified, inexperienced, or out-of-field teachers," the following definitions were used in development of this plan: See Appendix G for quartile breaks and metrics used.

Poor student. A poor student is defined as a student receiving or eligible to receive free or reduced lunch according to the National School Lunch Program.

High poverty. High poverty is defined as the 25 percent of schools (or school divisions) with the highest percentage of students eligible to receive free or reduced lunch. This was completed in accordance with the methodology used for identifying schools in the highest poverty quartile in the Consolidated State Performance Report.

Low poverty. Low poverty is defined as the 25 percent of schools (or school divisions) with the lowest percentage of students eligible to receive free or reduced lunch. This was completed in accordance with the methodology used for identifying schools in the lowest poverty quartile in the Consolidated State Performance Report.

Minority student. For the purposes of this report, a minority student in Virginia is defined as a "non-white" student.

High minority. High minority is defined as the 25 percent of schools (or school divisions) with the highest percentage of minority (non-white) students. This was completed in the same manner as the methodology used to determine poverty quartiles.

Low minority. Low minority is defined as the 25 percent of schools (or school divisions) with the lowest percentage of minority (non-white) students. This was completed in the same manner as the methodology used to determine poverty quartiles.

Qualified teacher. A qualified teacher is defined according to the federal definition of "highly qualified teacher." In Virginia, the following definition applies:

- Minimum of a bachelor's degree;
- A full state license, with an endorsement in the content area of assignment; and
- Satisfactory demonstration of content knowledge through rigorous testing, or a content major.

Experienced teacher. An experienced teacher is defined as a teacher with more than one year of teaching experience.

Inexperienced teacher. An inexperienced teacher is defined as a teacher in his or her first year of teaching. This is in accordance with the guidance provided by the United States Department of Education for the development of teacher equity plans under the *Excellent Educators for All Initiative*.

Out-of-Field teacher. An out-of-field teacher is a licensed teacher who is assigned to teach a class outside of the teacher's endorsement area.

See Appendix H for additional definitions not required by statute.

Calculation of Teacher Equity Gaps

The following data were examined, using the most recently available data collected by the state (2013-2014):

- Highly qualified teacher data from the state's Instructional Personnel and Licensure Reports (IPAL) within the state's Master Schedule Record Collection (MSRC) system. These reports include information about every teacher in the state, including the following information:
    - Teacher's Full Name;
    - School;
    - License type (Provisional; Collegiate Professional; Post-Graduate Professional);
    - Assignment(s) by each class taught;
    - Endorsement areas;
    - Praxis attainment; and
    - Highly qualified designation (by class/content taught);
- Teacher content area assignments by school and school division;
- Free and reduced lunch data by school;
- Student achievement results by school (mathematics; English/Language Arts; science; social science);
- Title I Focus and Priority School designations;
- Numbers and percentages of special education students by school and division;
- Numbers and percentages of English Language Learners by school and division;
- Teacher salary information by division; and
- Teacher experience by division. At the time of the analysis for this plan, the state only had these data available at the school division level. Plans are in place to collect this information at the school and teacher level for the 2015-2016 school year.

As further planning commences, the state will consider possible data sources for further analysis and potential methods for deeper analysis of available data. Thus far, stakeholder groups have indicated that additional data may be helpful in future iterations of the plan, including examination of the following:

- Teacher satisfaction data and working conditions data;
- Teacher turnover and reasons for turnover; and
- Special education conditional license data.

The VDOE Equity Workgroup will discuss these areas to determine the feasibility of collecting these types of data (as well as investigating other potential data sources), while also balancing efforts to minimize administrative burden on school divisions to collect and report any additional data over what is currently required. One potential approach may be to highlight effective use of local additional data collections that could be used for local decision making, while not

necessarily requiring additional statewide collections. An example of this would be to highlight school divisions currently using divisionwide Working Conditions Surveys effectively

Exploration of Data and Findings

The tables below reflect data analysis from 2013-2014 data files related to distribution of teachers according to qualifications, experience, and assignment to their content area endorsements.

Qualified Teachers According to Poverty Quartiles

The following table provides information on the percentage of qualified teachers in high- and low-poverty elementary and secondary schools, and includes the baseline data from the original 2006 plan to provide evidence of progress made since that time.

Table 2: Highly Qualified Teachers According to Poverty

	Data from 2006 Initial Plan	2013-2014 Data	Degree of change
State	96.8	98.8	**+2.0**
High-Poverty Elementary Schools	96.6	98.7	**+2.1**
Low-Poverty Elementary Schools	98.5	99.3	**+.8**
Gap	**1.9**	**.6**	**-1.3**
High-Poverty Secondary	93.5	97.8	**+4.3**
Low-Poverty Secondary Schools	98.1	99.1	**+1.0**
Gap	**4.6**	**1.3**	**-3.3**

Findings:

- The overall percentage of classes taught by highly qualified teachers (HQT) has increased at the state level, as well as within high-poverty and low-poverty schools at both the elementary and secondary levels.
- The gaps have decreased between high- and low-poverty schools at both the elementary and secondary levels.
- The greatest increase from 2006 to the present in HQT has been in high-poverty schools at the secondary level.

- There is currently a .6 percent gap between high and low-poverty schools at the elementary level.
- There is currently a 1.3 percent gap between high- and low-poverty schools at the secondary level. The state considers this to be a minor gap due to the progress made in this area, particularly in light of the fact that the most significant improvements have occurred in high-poverty schools.

Qualified Teachers According to Minority Quartiles

The following table provides information on the percentage of qualified teachers in high- and low-minority schools, and includes the baseline data from the original 2006 plan to provide evidence of progress made from that time.

Table 3: Highly Qualified Teachers According to Minority Populations

	Data from 2006 Initial Plan	2013-2014 Data	Degree of change
State	96.8	98.8	**+2.0**
High-Minority Schools	95.9	98.7	**+2.8**
Low-Minority Schools	98.1	98.9	**+.8**
Gap	**2.2**	**.2**	**-2.0**

Findings:

- The overall percentage of classes taught by highly qualified teachers has increased at the state level, as well as within high- and low-minority schools.
- The greatest increase from 2006 to the present in HQT has been in high-minority schools, compared to low-minority schools.
- The gap between high-minority and low-minority schools has decreased to .2 percent. The state does not consider this to be a significant gap, particularly in light of the improvements made in high-minority schools over time.

Teacher Experience

Teacher experience data at the school level were not available for the update of Virginia's Teacher Equity Plan. Steps have been taken to collect these data in the 2015-2016 school year. Consequently, a more comprehensive school-level analysis will be conducted in the next update

of the plan when the data become available. A division-level analysis was conducted for development of the current plan.

Additionally, a review of the progress made from the time of the initial equity plan in 2006 to the last update in 2012 is provided.

It should also be noted that the definition of "inexperienced teacher" in the original 2006 plan and subsequent updates through 2012 was "a teacher with three or less years of experience." Virginia has modified its definition of "inexperienced teacher" to be one year or less, in accordance with the recommendations outlined in the guidance provided by USED in preparation for the creation of the equity plans under the *Excellent Educators for All Initiative*, and because research indicates that the greatest increase in educator effectiveness occurs after one year on the job.[2]

Table 4: Inexperienced Teachers: Division-Level Analysis (2013-2014)

	Percent inexperienced
All school divisions	4.8
High-poverty school divisions	5.8
Low-poverty school divisions	4.5
Gap	**1.3**
High-minority school divisions	5.8
Low-minority school divisions	3.8
Gap	**2.0**

Findings:

- The gap between high-and low-poverty school divisions related to inexperienced teachers is 1.3 percent.
- The gap between high- and low-minority school divisions related to inexperienced teachers is 2.0 percent.

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[2] Rice, J. K. (2010). *The impact of teacher experience: Examining the evidence and policy implications.* Washington, DC: National Center for the Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Education Research, Urban Institute. Retrieved from http://www.urban.org/uploadedpdf/1001455-impact-teacher-experience.pdf

Table 5: Inexperienced Teachers By School From Prior Equity Plan Analysis (3 years or less experience)

	Percent inexperienced in 2006 report	Percent inexperienced in 2012 update (from 2010-2011 data)
All schools	24.6	18.2
High-poverty schools	24.7	22.8
Low-poverty schools	22.2	16.3
Gap	**2.5**	**6.5**
High-minority schools	28.9	22.8
Low-minority schools	21.3	14.9
Gap	**7.6**	**7.9**

Findings:

- There was a gap of 6.5 percent inexperienced teachers between high- and low-poverty schools. This gap had increased by 4.0 points from the initial equity plan.
- There was a gap of 7.9 percent inexperienced teachers between high- and low-minority schools. This gap had increased by .3 points since the initial equity plan was submitted.

Even though the current gaps from 2013-2014 data on Table 4 at the division level appear to be relatively minor, in light of the increasing gap that was apparent in the state's 2012 updated equity plan, the state opted to include the gap of inexperienced teachers between high- and low-minority schools in its root cause analysis discussions with stakeholders to solicit feedback.

Out-of-Field Teaching

The following table reflects an analysis that was conducted regarding the percentage of teachers in each content area assigned a class within his/her area(s) of endorsement in high- and low-poverty schools. Teachers who are assigned to teach a class outside their area of endorsement are considered to be teaching out of field.

Table 6: Gap for Content Area and Out-of-Field Teaching between High- and Low-Poverty Schools in Federal Core Content Areas

	State Average of Teachers Holding Appropriate Content Endorsement	Percent of Teachers in High-Poverty Schools With Appropriate Content Endorsements	Percent of Teachers in Low-Poverty Schools With Appropriate Content Endorsements	Gap
Art	99.4	99.0	99.5	**.5**
Elementary	99.3	99.0	99.6	**.6**
English	98.9	98.9	99.2	**.3**
Foreign Language	99.1	97.3	99.6	**2.3**
History/ Social Science	98.7	98.6	98.8	**.2**
Mathematics	97.8	98.9	98.1	**-.8**
Music	99.9	99.7	99.8	**.1**
Science	97.8	96.0	98.7	**.7**
Special Education	99.1	97.3	99.7	**2.4**

Findings:

- The content areas with the lowest percentage of highly qualified teachers overall are mathematics and science.
- The greatest gaps between high- and low-poverty schools are in the areas of foreign language (2.3 percent gap) and special education (2.4 percent gap).
- There was a reverse gap in the area of mathematics. High-poverty schools had slightly more highly-qualified mathematics teachers than low-poverty schools (.8 percent).

The following table reflects an analysis that was conducted regarding the percentage of teachers in each content area assigned a class outside of his/her area(s) of endorsement in high- and low-minority schools.

Table 7: Gap for Content Area and Out-of-Field Teaching between High- and Low-Minority Schools in Federal Core Content Areas

	State Average of Teachers Holding Appropriate Content Endorsement	Percent of Teachers in High-Poverty Schools With Appropriate Content Endorsements	Percent of Teachers in Low-Poverty Schools With Appropriate Content Endorsements	Gap
Art	99.4	99.3	99.6	**.3**
Elementary	99.3	99.0	99.6	**.6**
English	98.9	98.8	98.9	**.1**
Foreign Language	99.1	98.9	98.0	**-.9**
History/ Social Science	98.7	98.3	99.0	**.7**
Mathematics	97.8	96.5	97.8	**1.3**
Music	99.9	99.7	99.7	**0**
Science	97.8	97.2	96.1	**-1.1**
Special Education	99.1	98.2	100	**1.8**

Findings:

- The greatest gaps between high- and low-minority schools are in the areas of mathematics (1.3 percent) and special education (1.8 percent).

While the percentages do not appear to reflect large gaps, due to feedback from VDOE staff, stakeholder discussions, and feedback from school divisions during federal program monitoring, it was determined that a focus on mathematics and special education teachers was warranted during root cause analysis and strategy development discussions. In future iterations of the plan, the state intends to delve more deeply into additional distribution analyses to determine if there are particular regional or division-specific issues that should be addressed.

Additionally, the state conducts an annual "Top Ten Critical Shortage Endorsement Areas" survey to determine the areas with the greatest shortage of qualified candidates statewide. The results are in Appendix I, which further support the focus areas of this plan.

Special Populations

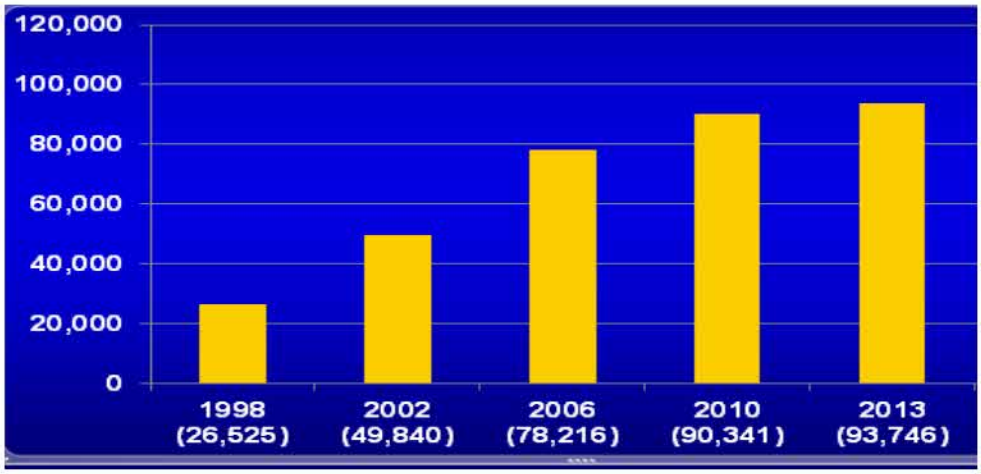
Special attention must be given to ensuring that English language learners and special education students are receiving access to qualified and well-prepared teachers to meet each student's unique needs.

English Language Learners (ELLs)

Virginia has a highly diverse population. According to the Demographics & Workforce Group at the University of Virginia's Cooper Center for Public Service, one in ten Virginians is foreign-born, representing a wide variety of languages and cultures. There are approximately 223 languages spoken by students in the state. Over the past decade, all eight educational regions saw increasing diversity, particularly through growing Hispanic and Asian populations. Statewide, there has been a 350 percent growth in the enrollment of ELLs over the last 16 years. Out of 132 school divisions in the state, only eight school divisions report having no ELLs.

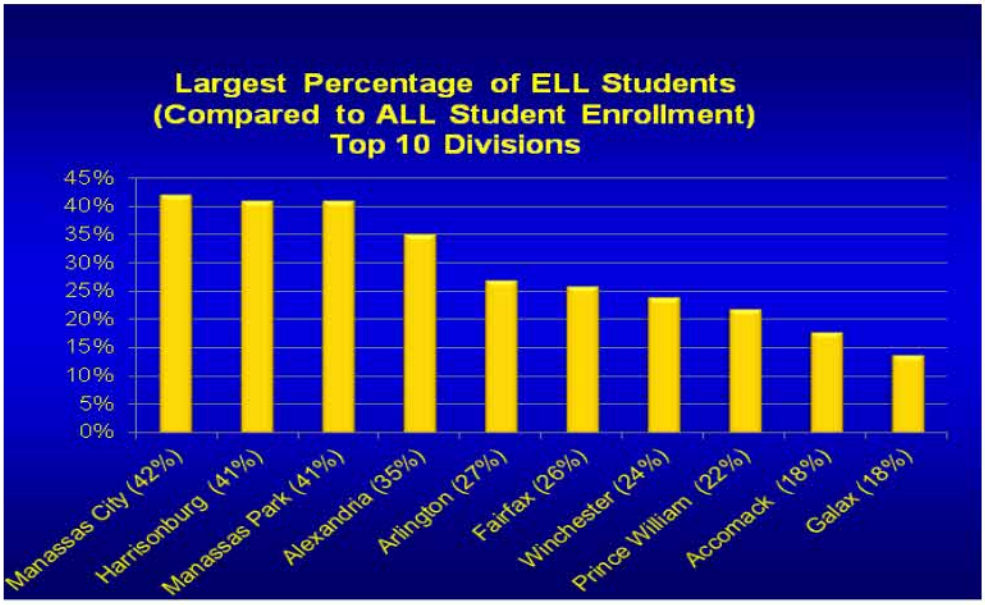
The following chart shows the growth in enrollment of ELLs since 1998.

Chart 1: Growth of ELL Population in Virginia from 1998-2013



Many school divisions now have significant ELL populations, approaching 50 percent of the entire student body, as the chart below demonstrates:

Chart 2: School Divisions With Highest ELL Populations (2013-2014)



Many school divisions struggle to find teachers with the requisite endorsements or expertise for working with ELLs. In 2013-2014, there were 16 school divisions in the state that had an ELL population but did not have any teachers endorsed to teach English as a Second Language (ESL). There were an additional 14 divisions that at least had one teacher on staff with an ESL endorsement; however, the number of teachers was insufficient to satisfy the demand, so there were still some classes being taught by unqualified teachers in this area.

The chart below shows the percent of school divisions across the state that reported having ELL students taught by teachers not holding an ESL endorsement during the 2013-2014 school year.

Table 8: ESL Endorsement Comparisons in High- and Low-Poverty and High- and Low-Minority School Divisions

	Percent Divisions With Unendorsed ESL Teachers 2013-2014
All school divisions	**21.9**
High-poverty school divisions	24.2
Low-poverty school divisions	18.2
Gap	**6.0**
High-minority school divisions	21.2
Low-minority school divisions	18.2
Gap	**3.0**

Findings:

- The gap between high- and low-poverty school divisions related to out-of-field ESL teachers is 6.0 percent.
- The gap between high- and low-minority school divisions related to out-of-field ESL teachers is 3.0 percent.

Rural school divisions are at a particular disadvantage in locating and retaining teachers with the requisite endorsements and skills to effectively work with an increasingly diverse student population; however, even in larger divisions, when the enrollment of ELLs increases significantly over a relatively short period of time, finding qualified and prepared ESL teachers is challenging. While it is both a state requirement and a basic civil right that these students are taught by appropriately endorsed teachers, in many situations, there is an inadequate supply of teachers to fulfill the demand. Consequently, recruiting, retaining, and supporting teachers to work with English language learners is a critical need in the Commonwealth.

Special Education

In 2013-2014, schools in Virginia provided services to 157,929 students identified with some form of disability. This figure represents approximately 12 percent of the student population statewide. With the broad range of disabilities and the need to provide individualized instruction to best meet each student's unique needs, it is critical that schools are able to attract, retain, and support teachers with the necessary skills to best serve these students.

Special education is an area to be examined in more detail in subsequent years, as this student subgroup is of critical concern for the state to ensure optimal student outcomes. When conducting the out-of-field analysis, it was determined that there was a gap between high- and low-poverty and high- and low-minority schools with respect to the number of classes taught by appropriately endorsed special educators of 2.4 and 1.8 percent respectively. Additionally, due to feedback regarding the difficulties faced in filling special education positions, as well as retaining and supporting these teachers from stakeholders, VDOE staff, and school division staff during federal program monitoring visits, the state elected to include special educators within its root cause analysis and strategy development discussions for this initial equity plan report.

Summary of Teacher Equity Gaps Identified in Analysis of State-Level Data

EXPERIENCE

- There was a 2.0 percent gap between inexperienced teachers between high- and low-minority school divisions.

OUT OF FIELD

- There was a 1.3 percent gap between high- and low-minority schools relative to mathematics being taught by out-of-field teachers
- There was a 2.3 percent gap between high- and low- poverty schools relative to foreign language being taught by out-of-field teachers.
- There was a 6.0 percent gap between high- and low-poverty schools relative to ESL being taught by out-of-field teachers.
- There was a 2.4 percent gap between high- and low-poverty schools relative to special education being taught by out-of-field teachers.
- There was a 1.8 percent gap between high- and low-minority schools relative to special education students being taught by out-of-field teachers.

Section 4: Root Cause Analyses and Strategies for Eliminating Equity Gaps

During the external stakeholder workgroup sessions, stakeholders were pre-assigned to one of four discussion groups based on their administrative, classroom, or policy experience or interest in the identified equity gaps below. The four discussion groups conducted separate root cause analyses in isolated conditions. Teacher Equity Gaps 4 and 5 were discussed concurrently.

Teacher Equity Gaps Identified In Analysis Of State-Level Data

- **Teacher Equity Gap #1:** School divisions with a large proportion of minority students have ***more first year teachers*** than low-minority school divisions.

- **Teacher Equity Gap #2:** School divisions with a large proportion of minority students have a greater proportion of ***out-of-field mathematics teachers*** than low-minority school divisions.

- **Teacher Equity Gap #3:** School divisions with a large proportion of low-income students have a greater proportion of ***out-of-field foreign language teachers*** than high income school divisions.

- **Teacher Equity Gap #4:** School divisions with a large proportion of low-income students have a greater proportion of ***out-of-field ESL teachers*** than high income school divisions.

- **Teacher Equity Gap #5:** School divisions with a large proportion of low-income or minority students have a greater proportion of ***out-of-field special education teachers*** than low-minority, high income school divisions.

Common Root Causes For Identified Equity Gaps

Certain discussion groups identified unique root causes for their assigned teacher equity gap; however, general root causes emerged as common across each of the teacher equity gaps. The discussion groups identified current initiatives that have been impactful that will be continued and also generated recommendations for additional potential strategies to address the root causes. These strategy recommendations included suggestions for implementation both at the state level as well as at the local level. Therefore, the state has developed action steps not only for state action, but also to both increase awareness of teacher equity issues and identify and highlight promising practices by localities that may be shared in an effort to encourage their expanded uses in other school divisions experiencing similar challenges.

The root causes identified in stakeholder meetings, recommended strategies, and initial action steps are summarized below, beginning with common root causes that cut across each of the equity gaps.

Teacher Preparation Programs

Root Causes

- Additional teacher preparation in working across the following areas may be beneficial:
  - Diverse needs of at-risk students;
  - High-minority or high-poverty populations; and
  - Different grade spans.
- Insufficient numbers of teacher candidates are becoming licensed or endorsed for high-needs content or specialty areas.
- Teacher demographics do not reflect student demographics in high-needs schools.
- Teacher preparation programs at institutes of higher education (IHE) are of disparate quality.

Current/Ongoing Strategies

- The VDOE periodically revises the *Licensure Regulations for School Personnel* and the *Regulations Governing the Review and Approval of Education Programs in Virginia* to ensure that these standards reflect current needs of Virginia's teaching work force.
- The VDOE continually works to strengthen the teacher preparation approval process.
- The Virginia Teaching Scholarship Loan Program provides scholarship funding for pre-service teachers to enter a high-needs school.

Potential Strategies Recommended by Stakeholders

- The IHE should strengthen alignment of teacher preparation programs, such as clinical experience, and practical classroom experiences. They should consider placing teachers in a variety of schools to gain experience in diverse settings.
- The IHE should strengthen diversity education in teacher preparation coursework so that all educators have an understanding of the needs of different subgroups of students such as students in poverty, English language learners, and students with disabilities.
- The VDOE should strengthen regulatory oversight of teacher preparation programs to ensure consistent program delivery across the state.
- The VDOE should strengthen preparation of teacher candidates to better prepare them for working in high-poverty and/or high-minority schools.

Theory of Action:

If teacher preparation programs are strengthened to include specific professional development and experiences to prepare teacher candidates for working with students from diverse backgrounds, then high-needs schools will better be able to staff open positions with qualified and well-prepared teachers.

Action Steps:

Step	Personnel Involved	Organizer	Time	Frequency
A workgroup will be established to recommend short and long-term goals and action steps around teacher preparation, to include discussions about clinical experiences, diversity training, and better preparation for working in high-poverty or high-minority settings.	VDOE, IHE	Teacher Education Director	Fall 2015	Quarterly

Recruitment Challenges

Root Causes

- The teaching profession is not afforded prestige and respect by the public.
- Many rural school divisions are unable to:
    - Attract enough qualified candidates to meet demands;
    - Offer competitive salary packages and other incentives in comparison to more urban or affluent neighboring divisions; and
    - Offer an attractive quality of life to younger teachers.

Potential Strategies Recommended by Stakeholders

- The VDOE and school divisions should initiate a public service campaign to highlight the positive aspects of the teaching profession and school successes, such as "I Am the One" for special education or the former "Teachers Rock" campaign.
- The VDOE should make an online statewide recruitment tool available as a resource to recruit teachers.
- School divisions should use a variety of hiring strategies to attract teachers to hard-to-fill positions. For example:
    - Host regional job fairs;
    - Advertise through career centers at regional institutes of higher education;
    - Revise hiring timeline to be able to provide "early contract" options;
    - Provide signing bonuses; and/or
    - Offer loan forgiveness incentives or highlight existing loan forgiveness options.

Theory of Action:

If a comprehensive recruitment campaign is developed, then high-needs schools will better be able to attract qualified teachers.

Action Steps

Step	Personnel Involved	Organizer	Time	Frequency
A workgroup will be established to recommend short- and long-term goals and action steps for development of campaign to highlight the teaching profession.	VDOE, IHE, stakeholders	Teacher Licensure Director	Fall 2015	Quarterly
Renew statewide teacher recruitment database.	VDOE	Teacher Education specialist	Spring 2015	Annual renewal
Develop opportunities to highlight effective hiring strategies from successful high-poverty or high-minority school divisions (e.g., webinar series, conference presentations, etc.)	VDOE, school divisions	Title II, Part A, specialists	Fall	Annual

Working Conditions

Root Causes

- Many teachers experience stress or "burnout" due to intensive demands and expectations, such as:
    - State or federal documentation requirements for instruction to certain subgroups;
    - State or federal school improvement requirements; and
    - Uncompensated duties such as remediating students or tutoring.
- Some school divisions do not provide sufficient support for school administrators.
- Many teachers feel they do not have enough leadership opportunities or voice in decision making.

Current/Ongoing Strategies

- The VDOE provides targeted assistance to school divisions with schools required to implement state or federal school improvement requirements to identify achievement gaps and improve academic achievement.
- The state School Leaders Licensure Assessment measures whether entry-level school administrators have the relevant knowledge necessary for competent professional practice.
- Regional Principal Coaching Initiatives strengthen school leadership through development of targeted mentoring programs for school administrators.

- A variety of state leadership conferences are hosted for school administrators through the Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals, the Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals, and the Virginia Association of School Superintendents.
- Specialized leadership training initiatives in the area of Special Education provide valuable training for school and division leaders:
    - The **Aspiring Special Education Leaders Academy** is a yearlong program designed for educators who aspire to be in a leadership position and who are not currently a special education director.
    - The **New Special Education Directors Academy** offers seminars throughout the year addressing relevant in-depth topics for new special education directors.
- Recent funding appropriated by the General Assembly is targeted for leadership development in high-needs schools and school divisions.
- Virginia was awarded over 13 million dollars in two five-year federal grants to support school climate transformation efforts and improve mental health services for students. "Project Aware" will provide training to teachers across the state to respond to mental health issues in students, while the "School Climate Transformation" grant augments funding appropriated by the Virginia General Assembly to expand training for teachers to implement "Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support" (PBIS) training.

Potential Strategies Recommended by Stakeholders

- School divisions should strengthen school leadership in high-needs schools by placing accomplished principals at these schools. School divisions should also provide division-level support to principals and other school leaders to ensure they are able to properly support teachers.
- School divisions should consider conducting a working conditions survey to accurately identify sources of stress for teachers that impact long-term stability in employment.

Theory of Action:

If working conditions are improved, particularly through assuring well-prepared and capable leadership at the school level, then high-needs schools will better be able to attract and retain qualified teachers.

Action Steps

Step	Personnel Involved	Organizer	Time	Frequency
Implement school leadership training series.	VDOE, school divisions	School Improvement Office	Fall 2015	Ongoing
Conduct webinar highlighting effective uses of working conditions surveys by school divisions.	VDOE, school divisions	Title II, Part A, specialists	Spring 2016	Annual

Professional Development Offerings

Root Causes

- Some school divisions lack comprehensive training and support programs for teachers, including:
  - Ineffective induction and mentoring programs;
  - Lack of job-embedded coaching in content areas;
  - Lack of collaborative work groups, or professional learning communities, to address high-needs subgroups; and
  - Lack of sufficient teacher preparation or professional development on instructional strategies to address content gaps.

Current/Ongoing Strategies

- The VDOE provides targeted assistance grants to high-needs regions for professional development. The **Region VIII Education Center for School Improvement** is an example of an effort to provide funding for professional development intended to support academic improvement in one of the state's most impoverished and rural regions.

- **Technical Training and Assistance Centers** (T/TAC) provide professional development support for special education through regional offices in each of the state's eight superintendents' education regions.

- **State Agency for Higher Education (SAHE) Teacher Quality Activities** grants fund professional development opportunities in high-needs schools. The state may explore the idea of adding an equity component as a priority to be included within the request for proposals.

Mathematics Institute: Math Classrooms that Work for Students with Disabilities

Two institutes were offered in the summer 2014 for general and special educators. Teachers were provided with practices that use a hands-on approach to mathematics instruction as well as methods and strategies to specially design instruction that can enhance student learning in the co-taught classroom.

- **Co-Teaching demonstration** sites showcase general and special education teachers sharing responsibility for the achievement of all students in the general education classroom through co-teaching, collaboration, and implementation of inclusive and research-based practices. The VDOE selected 27 middle and high school classrooms to serve as co-teaching demonstration sites during the 2014-2015 school year and plans to continue the initiative into the 2015-2016 school year.

- **The VDOE Content Teaching Academies** offer high quality professional development that includes in-depth studies in a range of content areas. In addition, each Academy is designed to engage participants in critical dialogues of practice with instructional sessions conducted by scholars and master teachers who understand the challenges associated with today's classroom in working with diverse learners.

- The VDOE offers extensive **professional development to educators working with ELLs** at no cost. These offerings include trainings on English language development standards and lesson planning and effective instructional strategies for content area instruction for ELLs.

- The **Title III Statewide Consortium Conference** is a two-day conference for Title III program coordinators and other key instructional staff participating in Virginia's Title III Statewide Consortium. The conference provides information related to creating effective Title III programs, examining best practices, ensuring compliance and implementing instructional strategies to address the needs of ELLs, particularly in school divisions with low numbers of ELLs. National experts, as well as local practitioners, are invited to present at the conference.

Potential Strategies Recommended by Stakeholders

- School divisions should establish pre-service and in-service division-level support structures that include:
  - Quality mentorship programs with tiered support;
  - Job-embedded coaching for content or specialty areas;
  - Appropriate induction and ongoing support; and
  - Collaborative working groups, or professional learning communities, to share interdisciplinary approaches to instruction and address high-needs subgroups. The VDOE can support these efforts by highlighting divisions with effective practices.
- School divisions should collaborate with regionally-based IHE to enhance professional development support for teachers. They should:
  - Negotiate tuition discounts to ease the financial burden of extra coursework for teachers interested in taking courses to strengthen their classroom management, content area knowledge, or pedagogy; and
  - Identify and apply for partnership grants to provide targeted trainings to teachers that address content-specific knowledge.
- The VDOE and school divisions should promote and encourage regional collaboration for joint professional development offerings.

Effective Regional Collaboration

Several school divisions in southwestern Virginia are working collaboratively to improve student achievement through the Comprehensive Instructional Program (CIP). Successful teachers from the highest performing divisions in Region VII were recruited in summer of 2014 to create and share materials aligned to Virginia's Standards of Learning (SOL) curriculum frameworks. http://portals.wise.k12.va.us/cip/Home.aspx

Theory of Action:

If school divisions strengthened professional development opportunities, then high-needs schools will better be able to attract and retain qualified teachers.

Action Steps

Step	Personnel Involved	Organizer	Time	Frequency
Develop a plan to highlight effective professional development models from successful high-poverty or high-minority school divisions (e.g., webinar series, conference presentations, etc.)	VDOE, school division representation	Title II, Part A, specialists	Fall 2015	Ongoing

Unique Root Causes For Certain Equity Gaps

While most of the root causes identified by the discussion groups were common to the four teacher equity gaps, some unique root causes were noted for teacher equity gap #2, **out-of-field mathematics teachers**, and teacher equity gap #4, **out-of-field ESL or foreign language teachers**. The unique root causes and recommended strategies for these two teacher equity gaps are summarized below.

Equity Gap #2: Out-of-Field Mathematics Teachers

Unique Root Causes

- Because of the demand for mathematics majors to enter other professions, most school divisions are unable to offer salaries that are competitive with the private non-education sector of the work force.
- Teachers who enter the profession through an alternate route to licensure do not complete student teaching, which may contribute to greater challenges in the classroom.
- Elementary teachers of mathematics may not have the content area expertise needed for effective instruction.

Current/Ongoing Strategies

- The Virginia Middle School Mathematics Teacher Corps places mathematics specialists in high-needs middle schools.
- Mathematics and Science Partnership (MSP) grants fund professional development opportunities in high-needs schools.
- The VDOE Mathematics Content Institutes provide in-depth content training to teachers to enhance content knowledge and instructional strategies.
- Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Teacher Recruitment and Retention Incentive Awards provide incentives to attract and retain teachers in STEM content areas to work in high-needs schools.

Potential Strategies Recommended by Stakeholders

- Encourage IHE to develop a pilot program designed to prepare pre-service mathematics teachers to work in high-needs schools.
- School divisions should design "Grow Your Own" programs to increase diversity in the mathematics teaching force. One example is the "Call Me Mister" program at Clemson University which recruits young black males to the teaching profession. Another example is to create a "teacher cadet" program at local high schools.

Theory of Action:

If focused efforts are developed specific to the area of mathematics, then high-needs schools will better be able to attract and retain qualified mathematics teachers.

Action Steps

Step	Personnel Involved	Organizer	Time	Frequency
Convene workgroup to develop recommendations and develop action steps regarding pilot pre-service preparation programs for mathematics teachers.	VDOE, IHE	Mathematics Director; Chief Academic Officer	Fall 2015	Quarterly
Develop opportunities to highlight effective grow-your-own strategies from successful high-poverty or high-minority school divisions (e.g., webinar series, conference presentations, etc.)	VDOE, School divisions	Title II, Part A, specialists	Winter 2015	Ongoing

Impact of Content-Specific Professional Development: An Elementary Teacher's Perspective

"The VDOE Math Institute was a high-quality training due to several factors: it was grade-band specific with elementary broken into K-2 and 3-5 and the training focused on mathematical process skills and number sense understanding critical to developing mathematicians. We were able to look at student work samples and discuss the models we saw students using for problem-solving, saw videos of teachers implementing techniques to build students; use of the skill (subitizing), and we were given the opportunity to build and practice using practical tools to use in the classroom to supplement this work. These factors put together gave us the opportunity to dive deep into the math content as well as walk away with things to use in our classroom the very next day."

-Lindsay Stuart, Title I Elementary Teacher, TeachPlus Fellow

Equity Gaps #3 and #4: Out-of-Field Foreign Language Teachers and ESL Teachers

Unique Root Causes

- Many school divisions face challenges planning for unexpected increases in English language learner enrollment.
- Because the ESL endorsement is often sought after a teaching license is obtained, many teachers cannot absorb the additional expense of the 24 credit hours associated with the ESL endorsement.
- Insufficient numbers of teachers are dually endorsed for ESL and special education.
- Teacher candidates face challenges passing the Praxis exams for foreign language endorsements.

Current/Ongoing Strategies

- The VDOE has partnered with certain IHE to offer no-cost ESL endorsement programs for teachers in school divisions with critical ESL endorsement shortages.
- EducateVA is an alternate route certified career switcher program that provides ESL endorsement opportunities to candidates through community colleges.

Potential Strategies Recommended by Stakeholders

- School divisions should create a cohort of teachers already employed by the school division to complete ESL endorsement programs. Consideration should be given toward the development of regional cohorts as well.
- The VDOE should continue to develop and offer opportunities for teachers in high-needs divisions to enroll in ESL endorsement programs at a reduced rate or no cost.
- The IHE should create cohorts of pre-service teachers to work with cohorts of practicing teachers seeking ESL endorsements.

Theory of Action:

If focused efforts are developed specific to recruiting, retaining and preparing teachers who work with English Language Learners and partnerships with universities that offer preparation programs are strengthened, then high-needs schools will better be able to attract and retain qualified ESL teachers.

Action Steps

Step	Personnel Involved	Organizer	Time	Frequency
Dedicate a full-time position at VDOE for professional development for teachers of ELLs.	VDOE	Program Administration and Accountability Director	Spring 2015	One time
Plan and coordinate programs to assist high-needs school divisions to increase the number of ESL teachers on staff.	VDOE, School divisions, IHE	ESL Professional Development Coordinator	Spring 2015	Ongoing

Step	Personnel Involved	Organizer	Time	Frequency
Plan and coordinate professional development offerings targeted to needs of teachers of ELLs.	VDOE, School divisions	ESL Professional Development Coordinator	Spring 2015	Ongoing

Performance Objectives

The action steps outlined in the Teacher Equity Plan focus on these three areas:

- Mathematics teachers in high-minority schools;
- Special education teachers in high-poverty and high-minority schools; and
- ESL-endorsed teachers in high-poverty schools.

It was determined that a more focused examination of factors around inexperienced teachers may be more instructive in subsequent equity plan updates after collecting teacher and school-level experience data through the VDOE's annual Master Schedule Data Collection Report. Regarding foreign language teachers, stakeholders agreed that the greater priorities at the current time existed in the area of ESL-endorsed teachers working with ELLs, as well as mathematics and special education; however, the state will continue to monitor the data and make adjustments as warranted in future updates.

Since several of the root causes cut across all of the identified equity gap areas (including foreign language and inexperienced teachers), it is expected that the results of strategies employed to address these common root causes may also positively impact these other gap areas as well. While the state is prioritizing efforts in the three areas above, as ongoing planning occurs, the VDOE will continue to review data to determine if priorities should be adjusted in subsequent years.

The following performance objectives have been established to measure overall effectiveness of targeted strategies for the three prioritized equity gaps.

- *By December 2017, the gap in the percentage of out-of-field special education teachers between high- and low-minority and high- and low-poverty schools will be reduced.*

- *By December 2017, all high-poverty school divisions in the state will have a properly endorsed ESL teacher to provide services to ELLs.*

- *By December 2017, the gap in the percentage of out-of-field mathematics teachers between high- and low-minority schools will be reduced.*

Section 5: Ongoing Monitoring and Support

State Implementation

The internal VDOE workgroup will meet at least semi-annually to:

- Review data;
- Discuss implementation of key strategies and effectiveness;
- Generate additional strategies to address ongoing challenges; and
- Plan ongoing stakeholder engagement opportunities.

Additionally, workgroups will be established to focus on key priorities and to ensure strategy implementation. It is expected these workgroups will consist of internal and external stakeholders.

Public reporting will be accomplished via the following mechanisms:

- The state equity plan will be posted on the VDOE's Web site and updated on an ongoing basis. It is expected that data analysis will be conducted annually, with an updated plan to be posted at least every two years, as recommended in the *Excellent Educators for All Initiative* draft guidance. Stakeholders will be convened on an ongoing basis throughout each school year through a variety of means.
- Presentations regarding the equity plan will be made to a variety of audiences, including, but not limited to:
    - Federal program coordinators at the annual state federal program coordinators' academy;
    - The annual Virginia Federal Education Programs Association (VAFEPA) conference; and
    - Other association conferences, such as the Virginia Elementary School Principals' conference (VAESP) and the Virginia Secondary School Principals' conference (VASSP).

Ongoing communication will be established with stakeholders via a variety of means, including face-to-face meetings, webinars, online focus groups, and e-mail.

State Monitoring of School Division Compliance and Implementation

Because local school divisions are also responsible for ensuring equitable access to qualified teachers, their efforts will be monitored to ensure that low-income students and minority students are not taught at higher rates than other students by unqualified, out-of-field, inexperienced, or ineffective teachers in the following ways:

- *Instructional Personnel and Licensure Report (IPAL) and Master Schedule Record Collection (MSRC)* – Each school division submits data on an annual basis that outlines the qualifications of each teacher. Reports are created that provide a detailed analysis for each school division and school that list all teachers who are not highly qualified, their current assignments and areas of endorsement, and the reasons why they are not highly qualified. Designated personnel in each division are able to access these reports through a

secure Internet connection. Additionally, the VDOE provides a hard copy of a verified report for each school division superintendent on an annual basis to assist with program planning and targeting of funds for the subsequent year.

- *Annual Grant Applications for ESEA Funding* – Title II, Part A, requires each school division to outline, in its annual application for funds, any teacher equity gaps it has identified and the strategies being employed to address these gaps.
- *Title II, Part A, Federal Program Monitoring* – All school divisions receive formal program reviews on a five-year cycle for Title II, Part A, federal program monitoring. As part of this monitoring, school divisions must provide evidence that low-income students and minority students are not taught at higher rates than other students by unqualified, out-of-field, inexperienced, or ineffective teachers. A copy of the Title II, Part A, monitoring protocol is available at the following link: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/federal_programs/esea/title2/part_a/forms/title2_parta_monitoring_protocol.doc.

Support to School Divisions

Technical assistance is provided to school divisions through the following means:

- Annual Federal Program Coordinators' Academy;
- Presentations at VAFEPA and other professional organizations; and
- Online technical assistance modules to assist with ESEA application development.

Additionally, the VDOE plans to explore other ways to provide additional technical assistance, such as convening a state workshop and/or developing a webinar series to focus on teacher equity and to highlight current and promising practices from the field.

Implementation Timeline

The following timeline includes action steps the state will take toward implementing its state teacher equity plan.

Table 9: State Implementation Timeline

Major Activities	Parties Involved	Organizer	Time Frame	
			Start	Frequency
Submission of 2015 State Teacher Equity Plan.	VDOE	VDOE Title II, Part A, specialists	June 1, 2015	To be updated every two years
Review of school division Title II, Part A, applications with results of teacher equity analysis.	VDOE, School divisions	VDOE Title II, Part A, specialists	Summer 2015	Annually
Overview of state equity plan and highlight of school division strategies at statewide Federal Program Coordinators' Academy	VDOE, School divisions	VDOE Title II, Part A, specialists	Summer 2015	Annually
Release data collection requirements to school divisions, to include collection of teacher experience at the school level	VDOE, School divisions	VDOE Teacher Licensure office	Fall 2015	Annually
Overview of state equity plan and highlight of school division strategies at statewide Virginia Federal Education Program Association Conference (VAFEPA)	VDOE, school division federal program coordinators	VDOE Title II, Part A, specialists	Fall 2015	Annually
Host webinars/discussion forums for external stakeholders to review equity plan	VDOE, External stakeholders	VDOE Title II, Part A, specialists	Fall 2015	Quarterly
Host equity plan webinars for school division federal coordinators	VDOE, School division federal program coordinators	VDOE Title II, Part A, specialists	Fall 2015	Twice annually
Host webinar series highlighting effective practices around: • Recruitment • Professional development • Working conditions	VDOE, School divisions	Title II, Part A, specialists	Fall 2015	Quarterly

Major Activities	Parties Involved	Organizer	Time Frame	
			Start	Frequency
Conduct school division Title II, Part A, monitoring on-site and through virtual reviews, to include equitable access plan monitoring	VDOE and selected school divisions	Title IIA specialists	Spring/Summer 2016	Annually
Teacher preparation workgroup meetings	VDOE, IHE, stakeholders	Director of Teacher Education	Fall 2015	Quarterly
Mathematics workgroup meetings	VDOE, IHE, stakeholders	Director of Mathematics; Chief Academic Officer	Fall 2015	Quarterly
ESL Workgroup meetings	VDOE, IHE, stakeholders	ESL Professional Development Coordinator	Fall 2015	Quarterly
Host annual Rural Schools Symposium	VDOE, School divisions	Title I specialists	Fall 2015	Annually
Host Title III Statewide Consortium conference	VDOE, School divisions	Title III specialists	Winter 2016	Annually
State equity plan Year 2 progress analysis with input from stakeholders	Internal VDOE workgroup, stakeholders	Title II, Part A, specialists	Fall 2017	One time
Submit updated equity plan	Internal VDOE workgroup	Title II, Part A, specialists	Winter 2017	Every two years

Section 6: Conclusion

Virginia's plan to ensure equitable access to qualified teachers outlined in this plan aligns with the state's existing foundation of policies and initiatives aimed at growth for all students, closing achievement gaps, and assuring that all students, particularly our most vulnerable, have equitable access to well-prepared, dedicated, and excellent educators.

The plan reflects the priorities set forth in the Virginia Board of Education's strategic priorities and goals. Outlined in the Comprehensive Plan for 2012-2017, the Board made teacher quality one of its three major priorities and established strategic goals around recruiting, retaining, and supporting teachers, particularly in hard-to-staff schools.

The teacher equity plan is also in alignment with the state's recently approved ESEA Flexibility Plan, for which Virginia was one of five states to earn expedited renewal due to demonstrated

progress and implementation across each of the overarching principles. The work outlined in this plan adheres to and complements the efforts established within Principle 3 regarding teacher and principal effectiveness.

Throughout the process of developing this plan, and as a result of each of the state's stakeholder discussions, the importance of this work was underscored and Virginia looks forward to continuing efforts in this critical endeavor. Virginia also anticipates additional opportunities to network with stakeholders and other states as the technical assistance offered through EASN continues to be developed.

Virginia's Steps to Support and Ensure the Equitable Distribution of Highly Qualified and Effective Teachers (from previous equity plan outline 2012)

The table below outlines several of the steps that Virginia has taken to assure the equitable distribution of highly qualified and effective teachers. The steps are organized to reflect required elements in the Teacher Equity Plan submitted to USED in September 2006. Examples are provided of programs that are in place or were planned in order to address each of the areas. While Virginia has developed a host of programs designed to improve instruction in all schools, the activities listed in this table are examples of some that specifically address issues in high-needs schools.

Element 1: Data Systems			
	Steps To Be Taken	**Examples of Strategies/Programs**	**Status**
1.1	Collect and report on the distribution of highly qualified teachers for elementary and secondary schools by poverty level.	1) Consolidated State Performance Report 2) Instructional Personnel and Licensure Report (IPAL) and Master Schedule Record Collection (MSRC) 3) State and Local Report Cards	Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing
1.2	Collect data on teachers' endorsements/licenses held and HQT status; Enable educators, parents and other stakeholders to review up-to-date information on the qualifications of teachers and administrators through a Web-based data system.	1) Instructional Personnel and Licensure Report (IPAL) and Master Schedule Record Collection (MSRC) 2) Online Public Teacher Licensure Query	Ongoing Ongoing
1.3	Monitor, on an ongoing basis, the specific staffing needs of Virginia's schools through the generation of data reports that identify subject area shortages.	Top Ten Critical Shortage Areas Report (Annual)	Ongoing
1.4	Improve data systems related to licensure to decrease turnaround time for processing licenses so that areas of shortage will be identified earlier.	Teacher Education and Licensure (TEAL)	Ongoing

1.5	Utilize and continuously improve a Web-based recruitment system that matches divisions' teaching vacancies with prospective teachers and administrators.	Teachers.Teachers.com	Annual renewal
1.6	Develop data system that is able to link student achievement data to teacher and classroom data.	Virginia Longitudinal Data System	Ongoing
1.7	Develop a data system to collect and report longitudinal teacher quality data, including information on teacher preparation programs, teacher retention and effectiveness, to include school and division factors, such as poverty and student diversity.	1) Virginia Improves Teaching and Learning (VITAL) 2) Virginia Longitudinal Data System	Ongoing Ongoing
1.8	Collect data related to teacher salaries by school to identify disparities between high- and low-poverty/minority schools.	School Salary Survey	Annual

Element 2: Teacher Preparation and Out-of-Field Teaching			
	Steps To Be Taken	**Examples of Strategies/Programs to address each step**	
2.1	Revise licensure standards and ensure that these standards serve as the foundation for preparing all of Virginia's teachers.	Revised *Licensure Regulations for School Personnel* (adopted September 2007) Under current review (2015)	Ongoing
2.2	Develop an annual report on the quality of teacher education in Virginia that provides data on passing rates and the number and specialization of teachers produced by each institution of higher education.	Annual Accountability Measurement of Partnerships and Collaborations for Approved Teacher Education Programs	Ongoing
2.3	Advocate for college loan forgiveness programs to channel prospective teachers toward schools that have difficulty attracting sufficient numbers of qualified teachers; provide up-to-date information on available federal loan forgiveness programs to prospective students.	1) Virginia Teaching Scholarship Loan Program 2) Federal Teacher Loan Forgiveness Program	Ongoing Ongoing
2.4	Provide a variety of professional development opportunities for teachers to become highly qualified in targeted high-poverty school divisions.	1) Highly Qualified Teacher Scholarships (targeted to high-poverty schools with low HQT)	Completed
2.5	Provide a variety of professional development opportunities for teachers to become highly qualified in targeted critical shortage areas.	1) Summer Content Area Academies for Special Education and Regular Education Teachers 2) Math-Science Partnership grants	Ongoing Ongoing

2.6	Provide assistance to divisions in developing "Grow-Your-Own" initiatives to identify and support promising individuals to go into the teaching field. http://www.doe.virginia.gov/teaching/educator_preparation/teachers_for_tomorrow/index.shtml (Contact Helen Fuqua)	Teachers for Tomorrow	Ongoing
2.7	Promote partnerships that help divisions recruit and hire qualified international teachers of hard-to-fill subjects and specializations.	Visiting International Faculty	Ongoing
2.8	Expand high quality alternate routes to licensure.	1) Career Switcher Program 2) Experiential Learning Credit	Ongoing
2.9	Revise teacher performance standards.	Teacher and Principal Performance Standards and Evaluation Workgroup	Completed

Element 3: Recruitment and Retention of Experienced Teachers			
	Steps To Be Taken	**Examples of Strategies/Programs**	**Status**
3.1	Require and fund high-quality mentoring programs for all new teachers, including those who enter the profession through alternative routes.	1) Virginia New Teacher Mentoring 2) Career Switcher Mentoring 3) Clinical Faculty Mentoring	Ongoing
3.2	Provide additional funding to support high-quality mentoring programs in hard-to-staff schools.	Hard-to-Staff Mentoring	Defunded
3.2	Provide incentives and specialized training to highly qualified, highly effective teachers to teach and provide support to other teachers in high-needs schools.	Virginia Middle School Mathematics Teacher Corps	Ongoing
3.3	Provide prioritized funding for teachers seeking National Board Certification in high-needs schools.	Prioritized Funding for National Board Certification	Ongoing
3.4	Provide assistance to school divisions in recruitment efforts through the development of Web-based recruitment tools.	1) Teachers-Teachers.com 2) Teachers Rock Campaign 3) Teach-In Virginia Web site	Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing
3.5	Provide additional funding to encourage recruitment and retention of effective teachers in high-needs schools.	Teacher Performance Pay Pilot for Hard-to-Staff Schools	Piloted
3.6	Encourage and support interested school divisions with high-needs schools to apply for Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) Grants from USED.	Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) Grants for Richmond City, Henrico County, and Prince William County	Local initiatives underway

Element 4: Professional Development and Specialized Training			
	Steps To Be Taken	**Examples of Strategies/Programs**	**Status**
4.1	Provide targeted assistance to teachers in chronically low-performing schools and school divisions that focuses on the use of data to help identify achievement gaps and raise academic performance of all students.	1) Classroom Management Course for new teachers in targeted schools 2) Inclusion Training for teachers in targeted schools 3) Indistar® School Improvement Tool and Rapid Improvement Indicator training for schools in improvement 4) School and division coaches for schools in improvement	Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing
4.2	Provide targeted assistance to school divisions through regional service offices.	1) Region VIII School Improvement Center 2) Technical Training and Assistance Centers (T/TACs) for special education	Continuing Ongoing
4.3	Develop professional development academies focused on teachers in critical shortage areas.	1) Regional Summer Content Academies 2) Become One (focused on special education)	Ongoing Ongoing
4.4	Place mathematics specialists in high-needs middle schools.	Virginia Middle School Mathematics Teacher Corps	Ongoing
4.5	Provide professional development opportunities to address performance issues in high-needs schools.	1) Mathematics and Science Partnerships 2) State Agency for Higher Education (SAHE) Teacher Quality Activities 3) Virginia Tiered Systems of Support Program 4) Adolescent Content Literacy Training	Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing Completed
4.6	Provide professional development opportunities to address performance issues for particular high-needs student populations.	1) Differentiated Instruction Across the Curriculum Training for Teachers of English Language Learners	Expanded

Element 5: Working Conditions			
	Steps To Be Taken	**Examples of Strategies/Programs**	**Status**
5.1	Strengthen school leadership through the development and implementation of new principal standards.	1) Revised *Licensure Regulations for School Personnel* (adopted September 2007) to include Level II, Principal of Distinction designation 2) School Leaders Licensure Assessment 3) Teacher and Principal Performance Standards and Evaluation Workgroup	Ongoing Ongoing Completed
5.2	Strengthen school leadership through the development of mentoring and induction programs for new building level administrators.	Virginia Elementary Principal Mentoring Program	Completed
5.3	Require building administrators to demonstrate effective leadership skills through rigorous testing to obtain licensure.	School Leaders Licensure Assessment	Yes
5.4	Provide recognition to high-poverty, high-minority schools that significantly raise student achievement.	1) Title I Distinguished Schools Awards 2) Governor's and Virginia Board of Education's Academic Excellence Awards	Annual Annual
Additional Since 2012	Strengthen school leadership through development of targeted mentoring programs for building level administrators	SURN Regional Principal Coaching Initiative	Local/ regional initiative-ongoing

Element 6: Policy Coherence			
	Steps To Be Taken	**Examples of Strategies/Programs**	
6.1	Allow teachers to add endorsements by rigorous testing.	Revised *Licensure Regulations for School Personnel* (adopted September 2007)	Ongoing
6.2	Encourage continual growth and career paths for classroom teachers through revised licensure regulations to include designations of Career Teacher, Mentor Teacher, and Teacher as Leader.	Revised *Licensure Regulations for School Personnel* (adopted September 2007)	Ongoing
6.3	Require school divisions to outline progress of local equity plans to ensure equitable distribution of highly qualified and effective teachers between and within schools.	1) Title II, Part A, Federal Program Monitoring 2) Annual application for Title II, Part A, funds	Annual Annual
6.4	Encourage continual professional growth for teachers and administrators through development of revised teacher and principal performance standards and evaluation tools.	1) Teacher and Principal Performance Standards and Evaluation Workgroup 2) Teacher Quality Community of Practice through the Appalachian Regional Comprehensive Center (ARCC)	Completed Completed

Ensuring Access to Excellent Educators
SEA Teacher Equity Plan Stakeholder Workgroup Session
Agenda
December 3, 2014

- Background
- Comparison between 2006 Plan/Updates and Current Revised Plan
- Required Elements vs. Suggested Elements
- Decision Points:
  - Definitions
  - Data: Available/Unavailable
  - Stakeholders
- Key Dates:
  - Plan is due to USED by June 1, 2015
  - December 9, 2014: Understanding Your Data Webinar
  - December 12, 2014: USED to post state-by-state data profiles
  - February 3-4, 2015: Equitable Access Convening: Requirements of Plan and Review of Data Profiles (Center for Great Teachers and Leaders)
  - May 2015: Peer Review of State Plans (CGTL)

SEA Teacher Equity Plan Stakeholder Workgroup Session
Wednesday, April 1, 2015
1 p.m. – 4 p.m.

1:00-1:10 Introductions

1:10-1:30 Overview and Background

1:30-2:00: Scan of Previous Programs and Strategies

2:00-2:30: Review of Current Data/Equity Challenges at State, Local and Regional Levels

2:30-2:45 Break

2:45-3:15: Root Cause Analysis Activity

3:15-3:45: Discuss and Begin Prioritizing Potential Strategies

3:45-4:00 Next Steps

External Equity Plan Stakeholder Workgroup: Friday, April 24, 2015 from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Conference Rooms D and E on Lobby Level of James Monroe Building

VIRGINIA TEACHER EQUITY PLAN STAKEHOLDER MEETING

Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended by the

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB)

Virginia Department of Education
James Monroe Building
Conference Rooms D and E

April 24, 2015

10 a.m.

Agenda

10 a.m.-10:20 a.m.	Welcome, Introductions, Background/Overview *Conference Room E: Lobby Level*
10:20 a.m.-10:50 a.m.	Data Analysis and Equity Gaps
10:50 a.m.-11:10 a.m.	Root Cause Analysis Overview
11:10 a.m. – 11:20 a.m.	Break
11:20 a.m.-12:30 p.m.	Root Cause Analysis Breakout Discussions **Inexperienced Teachers:** *Conference Room E* **Mathematics Teachers**: *Conference Room D* **Special Education Teachers:** *Conference Room B* **ESL Teachers/Foreign Language:** *Monroe Conference Room: 23rd Floor*
12:30 p.m.-1:10 p.m.	*Working Lunch* - Continuation of Root Cause Analysis Discussions
1:10 p.m. – 1:20 p.m.	Break: *Reconvene in Conference Room E*
1:20 p.m.-2:00 p.m.	Full Group Share Out of Root Cause Discussions *Conference Room E*
2:00 p.m. – 3 p.m.	Strategy Brainstorming Breakout Discussions **Inexperienced Teachers:** *Conference Room E* **Mathematics Teachers**: *Conference Room D* **Special Education Teachers:** *Conference Room B* **ESL Teachers/Foreign Language:** *Monroe Conference Room: 23rd Floor*
3 p.m. – 3:10 p.m.	Break
3:10 p.m. -3:45 p.m.	Full Group Share Out of Strategies and Consensus Building *Conference Room E*
3:45 p.m. -4 p.m.	Next Steps
4 p.m.	Adjournment

SEA Teacher Equity Plan Stakeholder Workgroup Session
Tuesday, May 11, 2015
11 a.m.

I. Review of Equity Gaps
- Inexperienced Teachers in High-Minority School Divisions
- Mathematics Teachers in High-Minority School Divisions
- Special Education Teachers in High-Poverty and High-Minority School Divisions
- ESL Teachers in High-Poverty School Divisions
- Foreign Language Teachers in High-Poverty School Divisions

II. Decision Points:

a. Equity Gap Review and Discussion

b. Setting progress targets and timeline

c. Review of Strategies

i. Immediate Priority
ii. Long-term
iii. Convene workgroup for further study

d. Action Steps, Timeline, Personnel Responsible, and Resources

III. Next Steps

Appendix C

Sample Letter to External Stakeholders

COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Steven R. Staples, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Public Instruction

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
P.O. BOX 2120
Richmond, Virginia 23218-2120

Office: (804) 225-2023
Fax: (804) 371-2099

March 27, 2015

Dr. Brenda Hess
Division Superintendent
Russell County Public Schools
PO Box 8
Lebanon, Virginia 24266

Dear Dr. Hess: (b)(6)

The purpose of this letter is to invite you to participate in a state workgroup focused on ensuring that all students in the Commonwealth are taught by excellent teachers.

In July 2014, United States Secretary of Education Arne Duncan announced the *Excellent Educators for All* initiative, which includes the requirement for each state educational agency (SEA) to submit to the U.S. Department of Education (USED) by June 1, 2015, a State Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators (State Plan). Under Section 1111(b)(8)(C) of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965* (ESEA), as amended, the State Plan must describe the steps the state will take to ensure that "…poor and minority children are not taught at higher rates than other children by inexperienced, unqualified, or out-of-field teachers." Virginia developed its first State Plan in 2006, according to guidance from USED. Updates were created and posted to the Department's Web site in 2009, 2011, and 2012. The most recent update may be found at http://www.doe.virginia.gov/federal_programs/esea/title2/part_a/reports/update_equity_plan_2012.pdf.

As part of the process to develop the 2015 State Plan, each state agency is required to seek input from key stakeholders. Due to your expertise and experience in the area of teacher quality, you have been identified as someone who would be able to provide important input into the process.

The Department is convening a Teacher Equity State Plan Workgroup meeting on **Friday, April 24, 2015,** from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. in **Conference Rooms D and E** on the Lobby Level of the Monroe Building, 101 N. 14th Street, Richmond, Virginia 23219. We invite you to attend this workgroup session where it is anticipated that the following topics will be discussed:

1) An overview of the federal requirements for the State Plan;
2) A review of the prior plan, strategies, and progress made;
3) An overview of recent key data elements and equity gaps;
4) A discussion of possible root causes of identified equity gaps; and
5) A discussion of potential strategies to be included in the revised State Plan.

No preparation is required to participate in the meeting. Reimbursement for travel expenses is available, and a working lunch will be provided. Please indicate your intent to participate in the workgroup meeting by e-mailing Heather Brunner, executive administrative assistant, at heather.brunner@doe.virginia.gov by **Monday, April 20, 2015**. Please use "Intent to Participate" as the subject of the e-mail, and include your name, contact information, affiliation or school division, and whether you will be able to attend.

We hope that you will be able to attend and look forward to working with you. If you have any questions about participating in the workgroup meeting, please contact Carol Sylvester, Title II, Part A, specialist, Office of Program Administration and Accountability, at (804) 371-0908 or Carol.Sylvester@doe.virginia.gov; or Tiffany Frierson, education specialist, Office of Program Administration and Accountability, at (804) 371-2682 or Tiffany.Frierson@doe.virginia.gov.

Sincerely,

Steven R. Staples, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Public Instruction

SRS/cs

State Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators
Recommended Participants for Stakeholder Workgroup

ORGANIZATION and IHE REPRESENTATIVES (18)		
The organizations below are represented by their president, executive director, or other lead position on the Committee of Practitioners. They will be invited to nominate a representative from their membership to participate in the stakeholder work group.		
Dr. Jim Baldwin Executive Director Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals (VAESP) 1805 Chantilly Street Richmond, VA 23230 (b)(6)	**Dr. Randy D. Barrack** Executive Director Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals 4909 Cutshaw Avenue Richmond, VA 23230 (804) 355-2777 rbarrack@vassp.org	**Dr. Howard B. Kiser** Executive Director Virginia Association of School Superintendents 1805 Chantilly Street Richmond, VA 23230 (434) 924-0538 b.kiser@vassonline.org
Ms. Brenda Sheridan President Virginia Parent Teacher Association 1027 Wilmer Avenue Richmond, VA 23227-2419 (703) 615-2153 president@vapta.org	**Ms. Meg Gruber** President Virginia Education Association 116 South Third Road Richmond, VA 23219 (804) 648-5801 mgruber@veanea.org	**Ms. Lori Jackson-Black** Chair Virginia State Special Education Advisory Council P. O. Box 442 Mathews, VA 23109 (804) 384-2444 lori@lorijacksongenealogy.com
Megan Moore President Virginia English as a Second Language Supervisors Association (VESA) Director of ESOL Manassas City Public Schools 8700 Centreville Road Manassas, VA 20110-5700 mmoore@mcpsva.org	**Jim Gallagher** President Director of Special Education Amherst County Schools PO Box 1257 Amherst, VA 24521 jgallagher@amherst.k12.va.us	
The organizations below will be invited to nominate one representative from their membership to participate in the stakeholder work group.		
Jenny Sue Flannagan President Virginia Association of Science Teachers (VAST) 2601 Alleghany Loop Virginia Beach, VA 23456 president@vast.org	**Cathy Shelton** President Virginia Council of Teachers of Mathematics (VCTM) 5824 Apple Wood Lane Burke, VA 22015 cshelt@verizon.net	**Tori Otstot** President Virginia Association of Teachers of English (VATE) Bruton High School 185 East Rochambeau Drive Williamsburg, VA 23188 totstot@ycsd.york.va.us
Paul Phillips President Virginia Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (VATESOL) pphillips1958@outlook.com	**Deanna Keith** President Virginia Council for Exceptional Children Liberty University 1971 University Boulevard Lynchburg, VA 24515 dlkeith@liberty.edu	

The individuals below will be invited to represent higher education.		
Virginia (Ginny) McLaughlin Chancellor Professor of Education The College of William & Mary School of Education PO Box 8795 Williamsburg, VA 23185-8795 (757) 221-2337 vamcla@wm.edu	**Dr. Monica Osei** Assistant Director for Academic Affairs and Student Programs State Council of Higher Education for Virginia James Monroe Building 101 North 14th Street, 9th Floor Richmond VA 23219 (804) 225-2610 MonicaOsei@schev.edu	**Dr. Phillip Wishon** Dean, College of Education James Madison University Memorial Hall, Room 3175, MSC 6907 Harrisonburg VA 22807 (540) 568-3664 wishonpm@jmu.edu
Gresilda Tilley-Lubbs ESL Program Leader Virginia Tech University Dept. of Foreign Languages and Literatures/Teaching and Learning 328 Major Williams Hall Blacksburg, VA 24061-0225 (540) 231-4658 glubbs@vt.edu		

LEA REPRESENTATIVES BY REGION (45)		
Region I		
Lynn Smith Elementary Language Arts Specialist Henrico County Public Schools 3820 Nine Mile Road Henrico, VA 23223-0420 (804) 652-3768 brsmith@henrico.k12.va.us	**Vickey Drew** Career Coach - Teacher Residency Program Richmond City Public Schools/VCU 301 North 9th Street, 17th Floor Richmond, VA 23219-1927 (804) 780-7875 vdrew@richmond.k12.va.us	**Cheryl Perkins** Human Resource Director Dinwiddie County Public Schools PO Box 7 Dinwiddie, VA 23841 (804) 469-4190 cperkins@dcpsnet.org
Dr. Rodney Berry Director of Instruction Sussex County Public Schools PO Box 1368 Sussex, VA 23884-0368 (434) 246-1050 rberry@sussex.k12.va.us	**Dr. Shawnrell Blackwell** Supervisor of Federal Programs Petersburg City Public Schools 255 South Boulevard, East Petersburg, VA 23805-2700 (804) 862-7089 shblackwell@petersburg.k12.va.us	
Region II		
Dr. Elie Bracie, III Superintendent Portsmouth City Public Schools PO Box 998 Portsmouth, VA 23705-0998 (757) 393-8742 elie.bracy@pps.k12.va.us	**Adria Faison Merritt** 788 Childress Drive Newport News, VA 23602 English teacher Crittenden Middle School Newport News Public Schools (757) 591-4900 adria.merritt@nn.k12.va.us	**Rick Fraley** Principal Ruffner Middle School 610 May Avenue Norfolk, VA 23501 Norfolk City Public Schools (757) 628-2466 rfraley@nps.k12.va.us
Marianne Elebash Title I Coordinator Accomack County PO Box 330 Accomac, VA 23301 marianne.elebash@accomack.k12.va.us	**Dr. Tonya Taylor** Director of Special Education Southampton County Public Schools PO Box 96 Courtland, VA 23837 (757) 653-2692 toniat@southampton.k12.va.us	**Dr. Annette Gray** Associate Superintendent Northampton County Public Schools 7207 Young Street Machipongo, VA 23405 (757) 678-5151 agray@ncpsk12.com

Region III		
Cora Coefield Director of Human Resources and Professional Learning King and Queen County Public Schools PO Box 97 King and Queen C.H., VA 23085-0097 (804) 785-5981, Ext. 2046 ccoefield@kqps.net	**Nicholas Roman** Principal Rocky Run Elementary Stafford County Public Schools 95 Reservoir Road Fredericksburg, VA 22406 (540) 286-1956 romannr@staffordschools.net	**Tracey Tunstall** Director of Federal Programs Colonial Beach Public Schools 16 N. Irving Avenue Colonial Beach, VA 22443-2324 ttunstall@cbschools.net
Dolly Lindsay Director of Federal and Education Programs Caroline County Public Schools 16261 Richmond Turnpike Bowling Green, VA 22427 dlindsay@ccps.us	**Esmeralda Medina** ELL/Migrant Program Coordinator Westmoreland County Public Schools 141 Opal Street Montross, VA 22520-1060 (804) 493-8018 medinaea@wmlcps.org	**Virginia Botoh** Coordinator of Science/Social Studies Lancaster County Public Schools PO Box 2000 Kilmarnock, VA 22482 (804) 462-5100 vbooth@lcs.k12.va.us
Region IV		
Heather Hotchkiss Teach Plus Fellow Science Teacher 4201 31st Street S. Arlington, VA 2206 Robert E. Lee High School Fairfax County Public Schools hjhotchkiss@fcps.edu	**Dr. Betty Hobbs** Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources Arlington County Public Schools 1426 N. Quincy Street Arlington, VA 22207 (703) 228-6110 betty.hobbs@apsva.us	**Donna Smith** Director of Special Education Page County Public Schools 735 W. Main Street Luray, VA 22835 (540) 743-6533 dmsmith@pagecounty.k12.va.us
Richard Culp Director Great Beginnings New Teacher Mentoring Program Fairfax County Public Schools 8115 Gatehouse Road Falls Church, VA 22042-1203 riculp@fcps.edu	**Evonne DeNome** Director of Federal Programs Loudoun County Public Schools 21000 Education Court Ashburn, VA 20148 Evonne.denome@lcps.org	**David Hinegardner** Director for Middle and Secondary Education Shenandoah County Public Schools 600 N. Main Street, Suite 200 Woodstock, VA 22664-1855 (540) 459-6708 dahinegardner@shenandoah.k12.va.us
Region V		
Nancy Toms Reading Specialist Spotswood Elementary School 400 Mountain View Drive Harrisonburg, VA 22801 Harrisonburg City Schools (540) 434-3429 ntoms@harrisonburg.k12.va.us	**Carole Nelson** Human Resource Director Charlottesville City Public Schools 1562 Dairy Road Charlottesville, VA 22903-1304 (434) 245-2963 nelsonc3@charlottesvilleschools.org	**Tammy Lindsay** Title I Coordinator Bath County Public Schools PO Box 67 Warm Springs, VA 24484 (540) 839-5395 tammyl@bath.k12.va.us
Nancy Lantz Director of Federal Programs Rockingham County Public Schools 100 Mount Clinton Pike Harrisonburg, VA 22802 (540) 564-3207 nlantz@rockingham.k12.va.us	**LuAnne Unruh** Assistant Superintendent for Instruction Louisa County Public Schools 953 Davis Highway Mineral, VA 23117 (540) 894-5115 unruhal@lcps.k12.va.us	

Region VI		
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Brenda McGrath Director of Federal Programs Franklin County Public Schools 25 Bernard Road Rocky Mount, VA 24151-6614 (540) 483-5138 brenda.mcgrath@frco.k12.va.us	**Elizabeth Craig** Director of Middle and Secondary Education Pittsylvania County Public Schools PO Box 232 Chatham, VA 24531 (434) 432-2761 elizabeth.craig@pcs.k12.va.us	
Region VII		
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Feedback and Reflections
Teacher Equity Plan State Workgroup Meeting
April 24, 2015

From your perspective, what are the greatest teacher equity challenges in your division/region/area of work?

What potential strategies do you believe would help to address these challenges?

Other Comments:

Would you be interested in participating in further dialogue around these challenges?
Do you have a preference for frequency of discussions/format/size/topics?

If you are interested in further dialogue, please provide information below:

Name _____

Organization/School Division: _____

E-mail:_____

Sample Response from Stakeholder

From: Almarode, John - almarojt [mailto:almarojt@jmu.edu]
Sent: Thursday, April 30, 2015 2:44 PM
To: Tate, Veronica (DOE)
Subject: Teacher Equity Plan State Workgroup Meeting

Good afternoon,

First of all, thank you for an outstanding day last Friday. I want to say how much I enjoyed the time together last Friday. As our schedules fill up with so many meetings, it is so refreshing when one of those meetings ends with such excitement about the next steps. I drove home motivated and ready for what could come from the days exercises. Melissa, our facilitator, did a magnificent job leading the group, bringing out great ideas and laughs from start to finish!

With regard to feedback and reflections, I would be honored to participate in any future discussions or dialog around these challenges.

Please have an excellent end to your week and a super weekend.

I look forward to working with you again in the very near future.

Take care,
John

John Almarode, Ph.D.
Department Head and Assistant Professor
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Appendix G

Quartiles and Metrics

Poverty is the percent of students who are classified as economically disadvantaged. Virginia uses the percentages of students who qualify for the free or reduced-price lunch program to determine this designation. The table below outlines the quartile breaks established and included in annual consolidated state performance reports (CSPR) for 2013-2014.

Table G.1

Poverty Quartiles at School Level				
	High-poverty elementary schools	**Low-poverty elementary schools**	**High-poverty secondary schools**	**Low-poverty secondary schools**
2013-2014	Greater than 67.2%	Less than 29.7%	Greater than 58.1%	Less than 27.5%

Table G.2

Poverty Quartiles at Division Level		
	High-poverty school division	**Low-poverty school division**
2013-2014	Greater than 59.5%	Less than 37.8%

Minorities are defined as those students identified in Virginia's Education Information Management System (EIMS) in all non-White categories. The table below outlines the quartile breaks, which were established in the same manner that poverty breaks were recommended and established for CSPR reporting. Schools and school divisions were rank ordered highest to lowest according to the percentage of minority students in each school or division. The list was then divided into four equal groups. Schools/divisions in the first group (highest group) were designated as high-minority schools/divisions. Schools/divisions in the last group (lowest group) were designated as low-minority schools/divisions.

Table G.3

Minority Quartiles at School Level		
	High-minority schools	**Low-minority schools**
2013-2014	Greater than 65.6%	Less than 20.9%

Table G.4

Minority Quartiles at Division Level		
	High-minority school division	**Low-minority school division**
2013-2014	Greater than 56.9%	Less than 16.4%

Additional Definitions
Not Required Under Statute

Effectiveness. In Virginia, teacher and principal evaluation systems are developed by the local school division, with approval by the school board, and are required to adhere to Virginia's *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers* established by the Virginia Board of Education in 2011. The *Code of Virginia* requires that all instructional personnel receive formal evaluations and that the evaluation of instructional personnel must be based, to a significant degree, on student academic progress and school gains in student learning. This accounts for at least 40 percent of a teacher's summative rating. Because teacher and principal evaluations are conducted at the local level, localities may define effectiveness in a manner that best applies to the local context. These ratings and evaluations are maintained at the division level to be used in a variety of ways, including professional development planning, personnel and staffing decisions, etc., and are not collected at the state level. Consequently, they were not used or available for the development of this plan.

Excellent educators. Excellent educators are typically identified at the local level as educators who receive summative ratings equivalent to "Proficient," "Satisfactory," "Effective," or higher on local educator evaluations that use multiple performance measures. The state provides a model educator evaluation for school divisions to use when developing their systems. This model uses the four summative ratings: 1) Exemplary; 2) Proficient; 3) Developing/Needs Improvement; and 4) Unacceptable. However, school divisions have the latitude to use modified naming conventions for these performance levels based on local context, as long as they comport to Virginia's *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers.*

Commonwealth of Virginia Critical Shortage Teaching Endorsement Areas

for

2013-2014 School Year

Prescribed Methodology for Determining Critical Shortage Teaching Endorsement Areas in Virginia

Overview:

The **Appropriation Act (Item 138, paragraph G.1, Chapter 3, 2012 Acts of Assembly)**, requires the Department of Education to report annually to the General Assembly on the critical teaching shortage areas in Virginia. In response to this requirement, data were obtained from the Supply and Demand Survey for School Personnel sent by the Department of Education to each of Virginia's school division superintendents in October 2011, to determine qualifications for teachers and administrators. Information requested on the survey was based on school data reports as of October 1, 2011. These data were used to determine 2013-2014 critical shortage teaching endorsement areas in Virginia.

In Virginia, "critical shortage" may be defined in two ways: (1) shortages by subject matter as designated from the top ten academic disciplines identified in an annual survey of school divisions; or, (2) a school personnel vacancy for which a school division receives three or fewer qualified candidates for a position. Determination of critical shortages in specific teaching endorsement areas and their rankings are dependent on the method of calculation used. As such, specific shortage areas identified will differ among school divisions (i.e., geographic regions) and statewide analysis of subject matter designations.

The 2013-2014 top ten critical shortage teaching endorsement areas identified statewide were determined based on method number one as noted above and prescribed methodology for designation of teacher shortage areas outlined by the U.S. Department of Education. The top ten critical shortage teaching endorsement areas will be reported to the Virginia Retirement System and will be used to determine candidate eligibility for the Virginia Teaching Scholarship Loan Program. Endorsement areas were ranked according to the most severe academic teaching shortage areas.

The ranking is based on an aggregation of the following: a) total number of teaching positions that are unfilled; b) teaching positions that are filled by provisionally licensed teachers; and c) teaching positions that are filled by teachers who are licensed, but who are teaching in academic subject areas other than their area of preparation.

Data analyses include calculated rankings in the three areas noted as of October 1, 2011, as reported in the 2011-2012 Supply and Demand Survey for School Personnel. All 132 school divisions responded to the survey. A total of 95,762 full-time equivalent (FTE) teaching positions as of October 1, 2011, were reported for SY2011-2012 in the Instructional Personnel and Licensure annual data collection for school divisions. The percentage of FTE teaching positions for all rankings is less than the five percent limit allowed by the U. S. Department of Education. Rankings were totaled and the resulting sum ranked to determine teaching area shortages.

2013-2014 Top Ten Critical Shortage Teaching Endorsement Areas in Virginia

1. Special Education
2. Elementary Education preK-6
3. Middle Education Grades 6-8
4. Career and Technical Education
5. Mathematics Grades 6-12 (including Algebra I)
6. School Counselor preK-12
7. Science Grades 6-12
8. Foreign Languages preK-12
9. English
10. Health and Physical Education preK-12