

Update on Graduation and Dropout Rates in Virginia

Presentation to

**Senate Finance Subcommittee on Elementary and
Secondary Education**

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Legislative Study Related to Graduation and Dropout Rates

- **2007 Study of High School Dropout and Graduation Rates**
 - **Joint resolution 329 (SJR 329) from the 2007 General Assembly Session required the Virginia Board of Education (BOE) to study high school dropout and graduation rates in the Commonwealth.**
 - **The study results were communicated to the Governor and General Assembly in the attached October 29, 2007 report.**

SJR 329 Graduation and Dropout Study Requirements

- Evaluate the relevancy of the current process and procedures for defining, counting, and reporting school dropout statistics and consider the need for revisions in such process and procedures and compliance by school divisions
- Determine the number of students who dropped out of school before the 7th grade and the reasons, as well as the number of students who graduated annually, for school years 2003- 2006
- Ascertain whether, by whom, and the manner in which students at risk of dropping out are counseled to remain in school

SJR 329 Graduation and Dropout Study Requirements

- **Identify local school division initiatives and efforts to retain and retrieve students at risk of dropping out, particularly student populations with low high school graduation rates**
- **Recommend such policy, statutory, fiscal, or regulatory changes as the Board may deem necessary to increase the high school graduation rates, particularly among student populations with high dropout rates**

SJR 329 Graduation and Dropout Study Design

- **To meet the requirements of the study, the BOE and the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE):**
 - Reviewed relevant education and scientific literature;
 - Reviewed VDOE current policies;
 - Collected and analyzed data from the VDOE Education Information Management System (EIMS); and
 - Conducted a survey of local school divisions to gather information about initiatives and efforts to retain and retrieve students at risk of dropping out of school, including counseling services. Eighty-five (85) percent of Virginia's 132 school divisions responded to the survey.

SJR 329 Graduation and Dropout Study Results

Dropout Definition

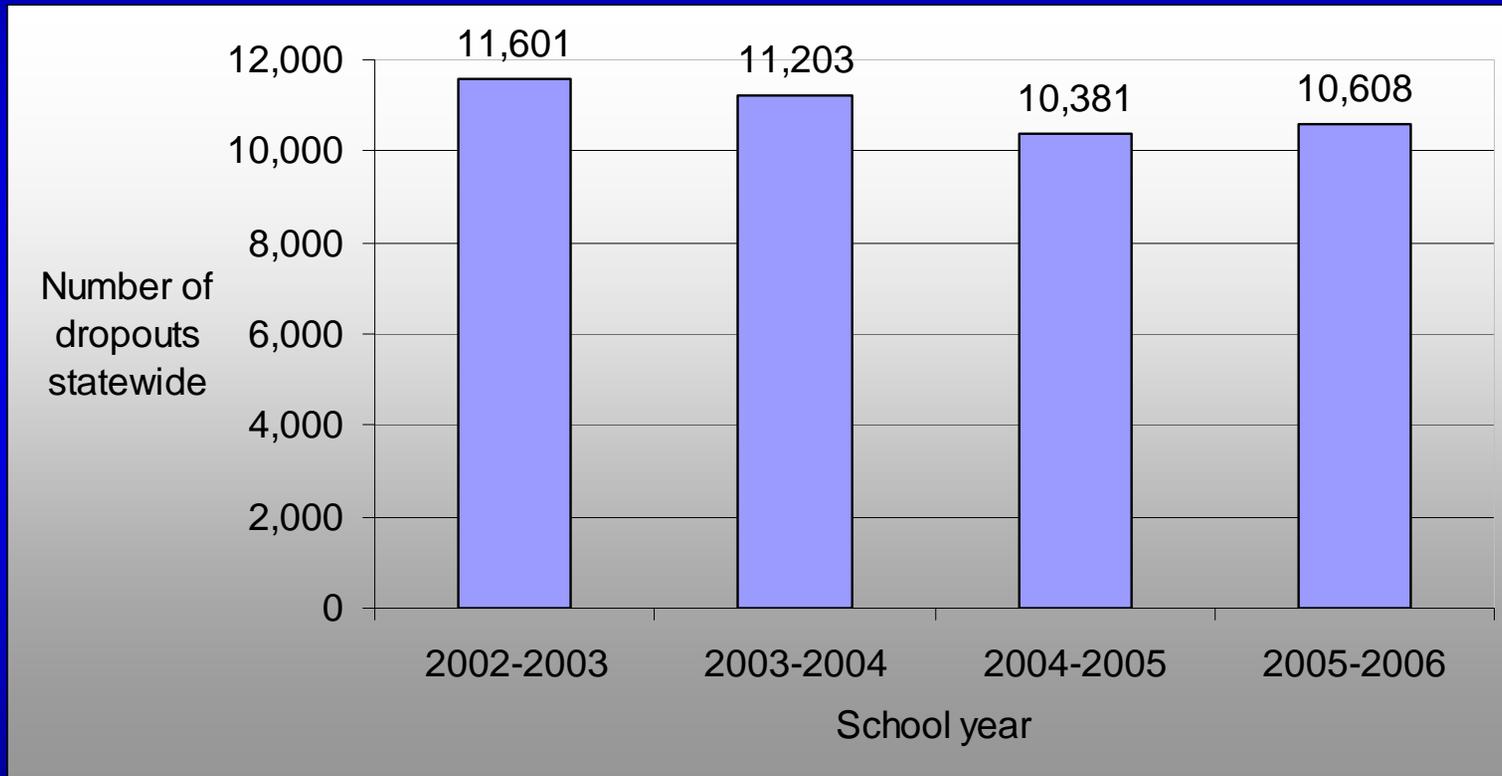
- **Virginia's definition of a student dropout is consistent with the definition developed by the National Center for Education Statistics.**
- **Experts have recommended that state departments of education report cohort dropout rates for each group of students who enter ninth grade. This rate requires at least four years of student-level data, which will be available for the first time in the fall of 2008.**
- **Historically, VDOE has calculated an annual dropout rate for students in grades 7-12. The rate reflects the number of students who drop out of school in a given year.**

SJR 329 Graduation and Dropout Study Results

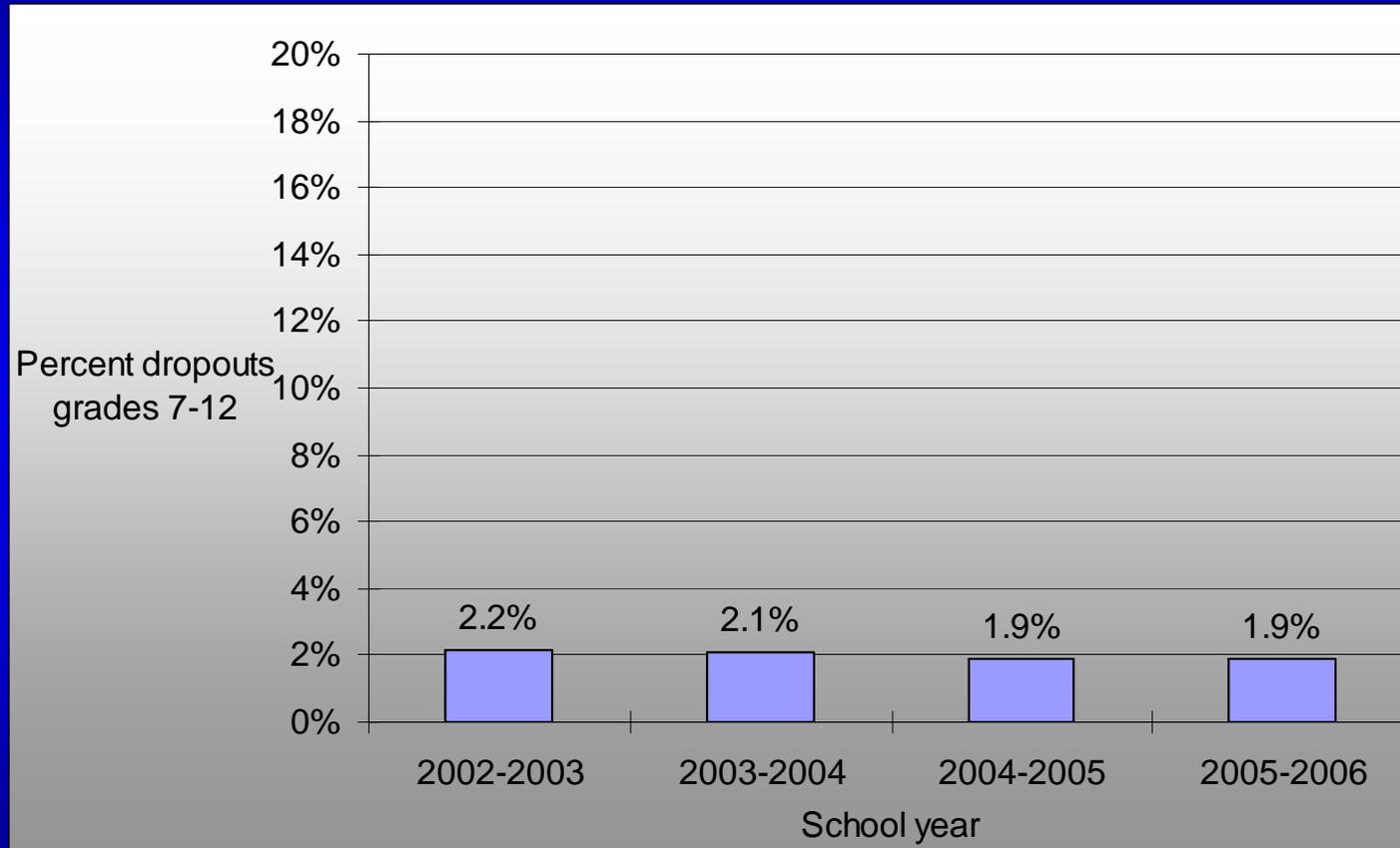
Annual Dropout Rate

- **Based on two years of available data, less than one percent of all students enrolled in grades K-6 voluntarily withdraw from school.**
- **In grades 7-12, the annual dropout rate dropped from 2.2 percent in the 2002-2003 to 1.9 percent in the 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 school years.**

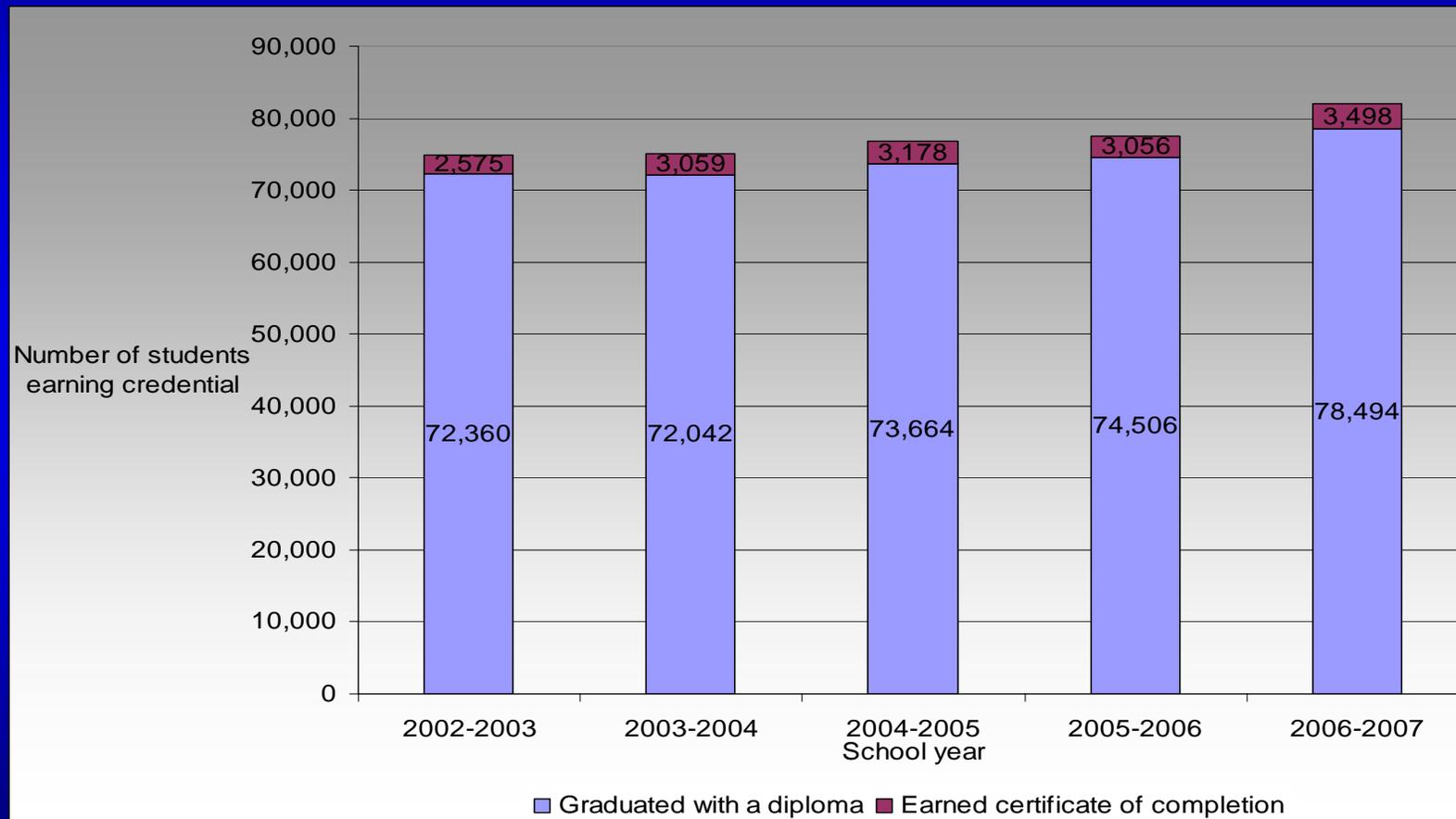
Number of Students Who Dropped Out Annually Grades 7-12



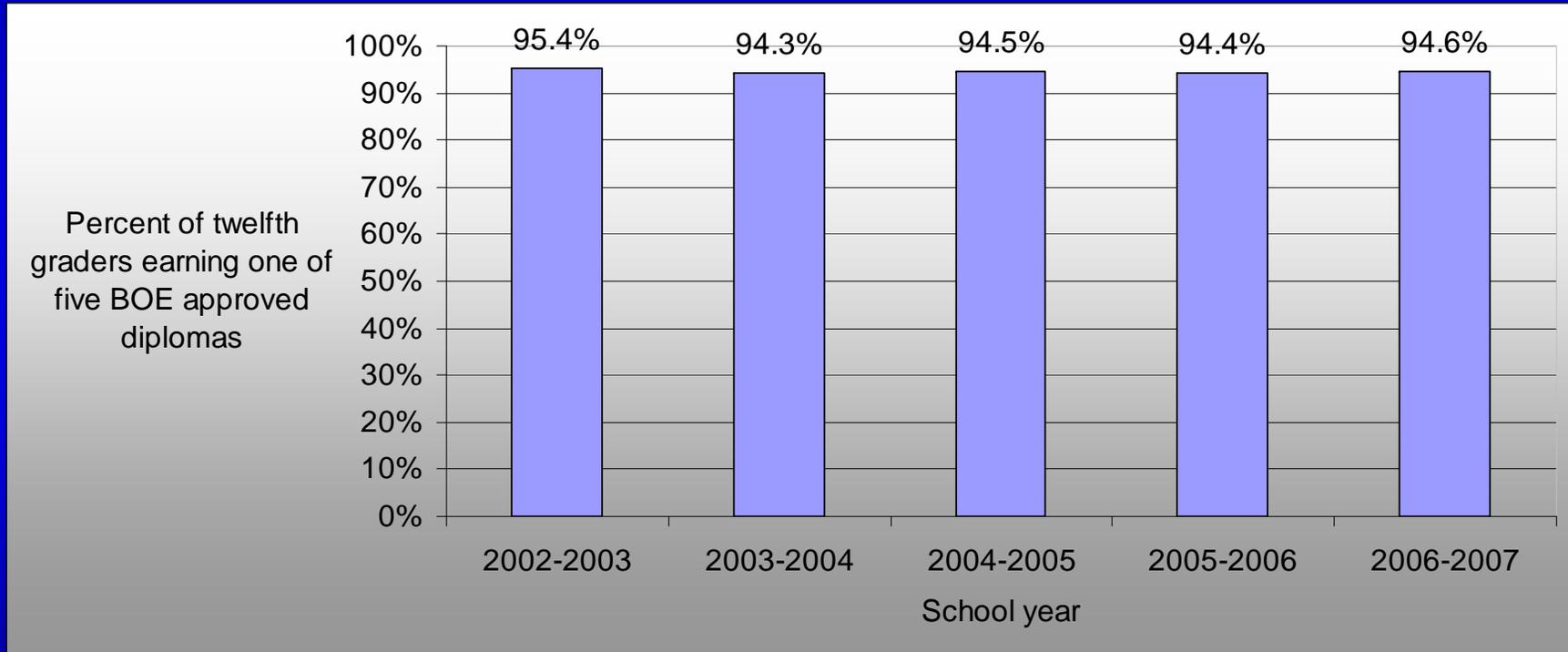
Annual Dropout Rate Grades 7-12



Number of Students Who Graduated or Completed High School



Percent of Students in Grade 12 Who Earned a Diploma



Estimated Four-Year High School Graduation Rate

	2005-2006	2006-2007
All Students	73%	74%
African American Students	62%	62%
Hispanic Students	64%	63%
White Students	78%	78%
Students with Disabilities	not available	61%
Students Identified as Disadvantaged	not available	53%
Limited English Proficient Students	not available	59%

Source: Virginia Board of Education Annual Reports
<http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/reports/index.shtml>

Board of Education Focus on Graduation and Dropout Rates

- **Fall 2006 - Board of Education President appointed a committee of the Board to examine policies and data related to:**
 - Middle-to-high school transition
 - Ninth-grade retention
 - Dropout and graduation rates
- **Committee also charged with identifying best practices to:**
 - Reduce ninth-grade retention
 - Increase the percentage of students who complete high school by earning a diploma
- **Board of Education committee discussions led to two policy actions:**
 - Adoption of a graduation rate formula
 - Decision to address graduation and dropout rate concerns in revisions to the Standards of Accreditation

BOE Adopted Graduation Rate Formula

- **Fall 2006 – The Board of Education adopted an on-time graduation rate formula that was championed by former Governor Mark Warner as chair of the National Governor’s Association.**
- **The formula:**
 - **Includes all of Virginia’s high school diplomas**
 - **Acknowledges that certain special education and limited English proficient (LEP) students may take longer than four years to graduate**
- **Beginning in 2008, Virginia will be able to establish a new and more accurate graduation rate baseline for accountability and reporting purposes.**

NGA Graduation Rate Formula (Adopted by Board of Education)

$$\frac{OG_y}{[(M_{y-4,fg9}) + (TI) - (TO)]}$$

Will be calculated for the class of 2008

Note:

The numerator (on-time graduate) includes all diplomas recognized by the Board: Standard, Advanced, Modified Standard, and Special Diploma recipients. Technical diplomas also will be included.

The denominator includes first-time ninth-graders four years earlier plus transfers in minus transfers out, deceased, and incarcerated students. Certain LEP and special education students are allowed additional time.

School Accreditation and Graduation Rate

- **January 2007 - The Board of Education expressed its desire to begin public discussions on the role of graduation rate in the Standards of Accreditation (SOA).**
- **The state board believes very strongly that we must deal with graduation rates in Virginia in an aggressive, but fair, manner.**

Proposed SOA Revision: Graduation and Completion Index

- At its January 10, 2008 meeting, the Board of Education approved for public comment proposed revisions to the SOA that:
 - Incorporate recommendations of legislative studies and the Board’s committee on graduation and dropout rates.
 - Include a graduation and completion index as an additional accountability measure for high school accreditation.
- High schools would earn weighted “index points” towards accreditation based on the status of the 9th-grade cohort and all other students in the 12th grade class.

Proposed Graduation and Completion Index

- **The Graduation and Completion Index (GCI) would include weighted percentage points for students who:**
 - Graduate from high school in four years or less
 - Graduate from high school in more than four years
 - Earn a GED certificate
 - Remain in school for more than four years
 - Earn a certificate of completion
- **The highest number of index points would be assigned to high school diploma graduates.**

Students Included in Graduation and Completion Index

- **The proposed graduation and completion index would account for:**
 - All students in the graduating class's 9th grade cohort
 - Plus transfers into the school
 - Minus transfers out of the school and students who are deceased
- **Students who remain in school or earn a credential after their assigned cohort year would also be included in the index.**

Accreditation Ratings and Graduation and Completion Index

- For full accreditation, schools with a graduating class would be required to meet:
 - Prescribed benchmarks or thresholds on the Board's Graduation and Completion Index
 - Required pass rates on the Standards of Learning (SOL) assessments
- A phase-in period would be established for full implementation of the Board's Graduation and Completion Index.

Reporting of Graduation and Dropout Rates

- Beginning in 2008, the School Performance Report Card would report a school's
 - Graduation and completion index
 - On-time graduation rate based on the Board's formula and by subgroup
 - Completion rate as well as diploma and credential types
 - Annual and cohort dropout rates

Every Child a Graduate

Legislative Support Assists At-Risk Students

- **At-risk students in Virginia receive targeted support that will help ensure every child is a graduate:**
 - **Early Intervention**
 - **Additional Instructional Time**
 - **Intense and Targeted Content Instruction**
 - **High Quality Teachers**
 - **Stronger School Leadership**
 - **A Better Chance for Success**