

SENATE OF VIRGINIA

Senate Finance Committee

*A Key “Leak” in the Student Pipeline
to College and Career Success:*

**Improving Virginia’s
Lowest Performing Schools**

November 21, 2013



Public Education in Virginia - A Snapshot

- Public education is a shared responsibility of the state and localities. The General Assembly must ensure a high quality program and determine the cost and shares.
 - 1.2 million students in 1,827 schools in 132 school divisions.
 - The Standards of Quality (SOQ) framework estimates costs, with a state share of 55%, on average.
 - State aid equaled \$4,355 per pupil, on average for FY 2012.
 - Locals spent 85% more than their required minimum, on average.
 - *Slide 15 shows other key data.*
- State Aid to Public Education for FY 2014 totals \$5.3 billion GF plus \$462 million from Lottery Proceeds.
 - Down 6% from FY 2009, but up 36% since FY 2004.
- Local budget challenges in FY 2015 include the VRS contribution rate increase, Composite Index shifts, and federal cuts.
 - Several school divisions declined match to FY 2014 salary incentive.
- Possible 2014 Session issues include SOL tests, virtual learning, teachers, early childhood, dropouts and low performing schools.



Virginia Continues to Assist Lowest Performing Schools and Students

- In response to declines in the achievement of Virginia students on national assessments in the 1990s, the Standards of Learning (SOL) program was put in place to provide a statewide system of support and accountability.
- Despite targeted assistance over the years, there remain some chronically lower performing schools/districts, and the economic costs of low educational attainment -- i.e. dropping out -- are higher than ever.
- The new statewide Opportunity Education Institution (OEI) would take over certain schools beginning Fall 2014. A legal challenge was filed in September. Board members were announced in October; an Executive Director starts Monday.
- Regardless of the ultimate fate of the OEI, multiple approaches will likely be required to accomplish overall goals for all students to succeed in the global 21st century economy.



School Accreditation Reflects More Rigorous SOLs Now 25 Schools Not Fully Accredited for 3 or More Years

State Status	School-Level Accreditation	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
Fully Accredited	SOL pass rates of 75% for English (10), and 70% for Math (9), Science (6), and History/SS (10); plus graduation index for high schools	1,771	1,716	1,414
Provisionally Accredited	Due to graduation rate	27	6	3
Conditionally Accredited	New or reconstituted schools	9	12	11
Accredited with Warning	Technical Assistance:			
	Year 1: Trained contractor helps develop improvement plan	25	77	302
	Year 2: Additional assistance	3	20	72
Accreditation Denied	Year 3: Emphasis on division support to the school	2	2	19
	Year 4: MOU, emphasis on school leadership and teacher quality and external Lead Turnaround Partner if a federal “priority” school (i.e. lowest performing 5 percent of Title 1 schools)	3	4	6



Statewide Virginia's Dropout Rate Has Improved, But Economic Impact Remains Substantial

- With better data in place, the Board of Education required high schools—beginning with the 2011-2012 school year—to meet an annual benchmark for graduation.
 - Supported by a wide array of efforts over the last decade, including Project Graduation, the early warning system, and others.

Virginia's Four-Year Cohort Dropouts	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Number of Students	8,351	7,836	7,609	7,046	6,306	5,681
Percent	8.7%	8.0%	7.8%	7.2%	6.5%	5.9%

- **Fiscal Consequences:** Over a lifetime, each Virginia high school graduate is estimated to generate over \$350,000 more in taxes paid than imposed in direct costs, compared with a dropout (Council on Virginia's Future, 2008).
 - Theoretical improvement of \$935 million from 2008 to 2013 (i.e. 2,670 more graduates), but could have reaped another \$2 billion if each of the 2013 cohort had graduated.



National Organizations Bring Attention to the Issue and its Complexity

“Building a Grad Nation” Recommendations <i>Gen. Colin Powell’s America’s Promise Alliance</i>	College Completion Agenda Recommendations <i>College Board Commission on Access, Admissions and Success in Higher Education</i>
Grade level reading	Preschool
Chronic absenteeism	Middle and high school counseling
Early warning and intervention	Dropout prevention
Middle grades and transition support	Align K-12 standards with int’l./college expectations
Adult and peer wraparound community supports	Teacher quality
Align to jobs, college going culture, financial assistance	Simplify college admission process
Reform and redesign low-performing schools	Need-based aid; Affordability
Compulsory school age	Reduce college dropouts
Dropout recovery	Post-secondary opportunities to adults



2013 Session: Takeover of Lowest Performing Schools into a Statewide District

- The 2013 Appropriation Act adopted language, under the Virginia Department of Education (Item 134), implementing the new Opportunity Educational Institution (OEI) pursuant to Senate Bill 1324.
 - Administered and supervised by a nine-member board that is vested with all the powers and duties of a local school board.
 - Operates schools that have been Denied Accreditation for the previous two years, in whatever manner the OEI Board determines most likely to result in full accreditation, possibly including:
 - Directly operated by the OEI using different personnel;
 - Contracted back to the home school division; or
 - Charter schools.
 - **Funding:** Each student enrolled in a school under the supervision of the OEI must have his or her proportional state, local, and federal per pupil funding transferred from the local school division of residence to the OEI.



Reconvened Session Substitutes Not Approved, Leaving Inconsistencies and Admin Costs Unresolved

	Enrolled Budget Bill/ Chapter 806	Reconvened Session Proposal	Enrolled SB 1324/ Chapter 805	Reconvened Session Proposed Substitute
Transfer In of Schools	<p>“Pursuant to 22.1-27.2”</p> <p>Any school denied accreditation for previous two years</p>	<p>No change</p> <p>And any school accredited with warning for three years by majority vote of the OEI Board</p>	<p>22.1-27.2 = Any school denied accreditation; and any school accredited with warning for three years by the choice of the OEI Board</p>	<p>Any school upon being denied accreditation; and a school board may request transfer of school accredited with warning for three years</p>
Transfer Out of Schools	<p>“eligible to return upon achieving full accreditation”; by the 5th year the Board must decide whether to retain the school</p>	<p>No change</p>	<p>Same as enrolled budget</p>	<p>Schools must remain in OEI for a minimum of five years, to transition back after five consecutive years achieving full accreditation unless 60% of parents want to remain</p>
Funding Provisions	<p>All state, local, and federal funding to be transferred</p> <p>FY14 = \$150,000 GF</p>	<p>Up to 35% of transferred funds for non-instructional, including administration (unless more approved by <u>the Board</u>)</p> <p>FY14 = \$600,000 GF (5 FTE)</p>	<p>Total per pupil funding to follow the students, using most recent FY data as reported in the Annual School Report</p>	<p>All state, local, and federal funding to be transferred</p> <p>Local funds must only be used for the schools from which they were derived, except for a portion for administration of the OEI (up to 35%, unless Governor approves more)</p>



JLARC Study Due June 30 Could Inform Decisions

- The 2013 Conference Report also included the Senate's language directing the Joint Legislative and Review Commission (JLARC) to report on options for restructuring lowest performing schools or districts, to include:
 - Options used in other states/cities, the outcomes of mergers, takeovers, charter schools, and other turnaround efforts, including in Virginia;
 - Other current successful approaches for high poverty urban schools within Virginia and whether they could be replicated in other areas;
 - An estimate of the resources and expertise that would be required at the state level to effectively implement and oversee any such models;
 - Appropriate criteria for intervention decisions; and
 - Analysis of the primary reasons for low school or district performance.
- With a report date of June 30, 2014, the study will not be available for use by the 2014 General Assembly.



Other Possible Approaches to Consider: Jointly Operated Divisions or Other Partnerships

By: [Bill Boshier](#)

The results of the school accreditation race have been released, and the persistent failure of some schools triggers a discussion about Governor McDonnell's program to "takeover" schools in Alexandria, Petersburg, and Norfolk.

The "Opportunity Educational Institution" is a new school division whose single purpose would be to oversee failing schools. The Virginia School Board Association and the City of Norfolk are testing the program's constitutionality.

Education Editorial: School takeovers



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The reality is that the state has taken many steps, including court orders, to address and fix failing schools. Whether or not it is found to be constitutional, Governor McDonnell's move was an effort to get someone to pay attention to the problem.

As a state function the young people in Petersburg should have no less an opportunity to be well educated than children in Falls Church. But maybe there are some other approaches that should be considered as well:

1. Fairfax City has schools and a school board but no students...they are educated by the Fairfax County...
2. Maybe schools that don't work should not be "reconstituted" but simply closed...
3. Perhaps we should contract private sector models that work, and
4. Why not incentivize high performing divisions to "takeover" a failing school in a neighboring community.

Better yet, add Governor McDonnell's proposal to a menu of options for failing schools...and prohibit localities from simply engaging in the annual rite of apologetics.



Low Performing Students and Schools of Concern to Education Subcommittee of Senate Finance

- Low performing students and schools have been a focus of the Education Subcommittee of Senate Finance for a number of years. During 2013 and prior, the subcommittee heard a variety of briefings related to this topic:
 - Lessons from the Tennessee Achievement School District (ASD)
 - Update from Petersburg Schools (2013, 2012, 2007, 2006)
 - Also updates from Alexandria and Norfolk Schools
 - Update on Virginia’s school improvement academic review assistance
 - Also external Lead Turnaround Partners
 - 2012 JLARC study on year round schools
 - Visits to An Achievable Dream, Inc. and a Communities in Schools, Inc. Performance Learning Center (PLC) site
 - Virginia529 SOAR early commitment pilot



Tennessee Achievement School District (ASD)

Rapid Growth, Start-Up Funds, Charge Back Oversight Fee

- The CFO of the Tennessee ASD, which was cited as a best practices model for the Virginia OEI, presented a briefing to the Education Subcommittee (April 2, 2013):
 - Tennessee was ranked 47th in the nation in educational achievement with many chronically failing schools.
 - The ASD’s growth plan is to go from 0 schools in 2011-12 to 35 schools in 2013-14, with up to 85 schools beyond 2015.
 - In Tennessee, the bottom 5% of schools are currently concentrated in Memphis (68), Nashville (6), and Chattanooga (6).
 - Start-up financed with \$22 million over four years from federal Race to the Top, as well as several million in other federal grants to some schools.
 - Schools receive all per pupil revenue and must “break even” over time. Schools pay back for certain oversight and services (about 38 central staff), averaging less than 2.5% for charters and 9% for managed schools.



Of the 25 Schools Not Accredited 3 or More Years: 18 in Petersburg, Norfolk, Richmond, and Newport News

School Division	School	Yrs. Not Fully Accredited	Yr. Last Fully Accredited	Updates Since April
<u>Schools Denied Accreditation (2011-2012 SOLs)</u>				
Petersburg	Peabody Middle (6-7)	12 out of 12		Year round school, efficiency review update
Alexandria	Jefferson-Houston Elem. (K-8)	11 out of 12	2008-09	New supt. this Fall
Norfolk	Lafayette-Winona Middle (6-8)	10 out of 12	2005-06	<u>10-School Transformation:</u> Intl. Baccalaureate
Norfolk	William Ruffner Middle (6-8)	9 out of 12	2008-09	Expanded Young Scholars
<u>Additional Schools Denied Accreditation (2012-2013 SOLs)</u>				
Norfolk	Lindenwood Elementary (PK-5)	9 out of 12	2007-08	Intl. Baccalaureate
Petersburg	A.P. Hill Elementary (K-5)	11 out of 12	2009-10	Year round school, efficiency review update



Of the 25 Schools Not Accredited 3 or More Years: 7 School Divisions Have 1 School Each

- **Update:** With new, more rigorous “college and career ready” math SOLs administered two years ago, and new English and Science SOLs administered last school year, 19 schools were accredited with warning for a third consecutive year.
 - For illustrative purposes, if all 25 schools were transferred to the OEI, total per pupil funding available could be approximately \$137 million, based on state average per pupil funding from all sources of \$10,969 (next slide) and approx. 500 students per school.

Accredited with Warning for a Third Consecutive Year, 9/20/2013

Norfolk (4) - Booker T. Washington HS, Campostella Elem., Lake Taylor Middle, Tidewater Park Elem.

Richmond (5) - Armstrong HS, Thompson Middle, George Wythe HS, John Marshall HS, Boushall Middle

Newport News (3) - Newsome Park Elementary, Sedgefield Elementary, Willis A. Jenkins Elementary

Petersburg - Vernon Johns Junior HS

Dinwiddie – Dinwiddie County Middle

Hampton - Jane H. Bryan Elementary

Henrico - L. Douglas Wilder Middle

Lynchburg - Sandusky Middle

Portsmouth - I.C. Norcom HS

Virginia Beach - Bayside Middle



Virginia School Divisions Vary in Many Ways *Petersburg is Small and Has High Student Poverty*

KEY SCHOOL DIVISION DATA	State Avg.	Lowest	Highest	Petersburg*
FY 2012 Per Pupil (PP), All Sources	\$10,969	\$8,304 (Norton)	\$18,762 (Arlington)	\$10,655
Avg. Ann. 5-Yr. Change in State Aid PP	-1.6%	-7.8% (Northumberland)	3.8% (Nottoway)	-2.7%
Avg. Ann. 10-Yr. Change in State Aid PP	2.7%	-1.5% (Northumberland)	5.6% (Harrisonburg)	2.1%
% Above Required Local Effort	85%	12% (Lee)	254% (Covington)	54%
Composite Index of Local Ability-to-Pay	0.4500	0.1691 (Lee)	(9 capped at) 0.8000	0.2255
ADM Enrollment	9,219	213 (Highland)	172,698 (Fairfax Co/City)	4,104
Eligibility for Free/Reduced Lunch	40%	7% (Falls Church)	83% (Sussex)	80%
Average Teacher Salary	\$52,115	\$36,152 (Russell)	\$70,557 (Alexandria)	\$40,644
Student-Teacher Ratio	12.8	6.5 (Highland)	16.2 (Prince Wm.)	11.3
Dropout Rate (2013)	5.9%	0% (Madison)	17.4% (Richmond)	14.7%
Passed English SOL (Reading)	89%	73% (Franklin City)	98% (West Point)	77%
Passed Mathematics SOL	68%	42% (Franklin City)	88% (Falls Church)	51%

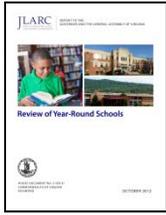
*See Appendix for these same data points for ALL 132 SCHOOL DIVISIONS.



Federally-Funded External Experts Noted Lack of Quality Teachers as a Key Obstacle to Achieving Accreditation Goals

Lead Turnaround Partners (LTP)	Virginia Schools	Effective Turnaround Strategies	Obstacles as an LTP	Recommendations
	Richmond (3), Petersburg (2), Northampton (3), Franklin	Professional development , collaborative planning, focus on student learning, positive language and attitudes, daily coaching and mentoring teachers	Inconsistent implementation, resistance to change, teacher turnover, large numbers of ineffective and marginal teachers , low parent and community involvement	Consistent implementation, highly qualified motivated teachers , identify change agents, professional development , coach marginal teachers , systemic approach to data and decision making
	Brunswick, Prince Edward, Sussex (2), Petersburg (2)	Common planning time, systematic data analysis , rigorous teacher evaluation, professional development , extended learning time , stakeholder communication	School boards and central office limited understanding of the process, lack of clarity of roles, data , lack of central office structures to support improvement, recruiting and retaining teachers and leaders	Strong, stable leadership team; high quality professional development ; shared vision; reliable and accessible data ; maintenance of highly competent teaching force
	Danville, Norfolk (2)	Continuous improvement	Resources, school level autonomy, engagement and students and parents, high quality teachers	Develop leadership skills, foster collaboration, high quality instruction, reach all students





JLARC Finds Year-Round Schools Help Certain Students

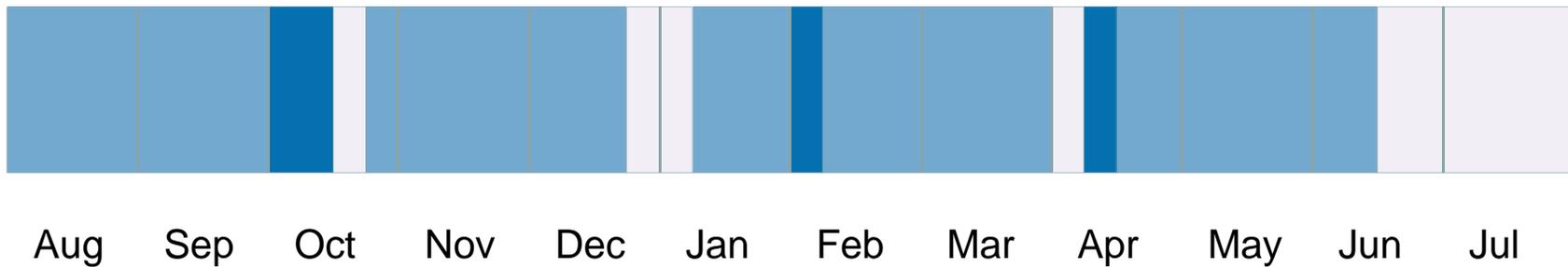
- Findings from JLARC study (briefed in October 2012, pursuant to HJR 646, 2011) on year-round schools in Virginia and elsewhere.
 - Certain student groups, in particular black students, were more likely to improve their SOL scores at year-round schools than their peers at traditional calendar schools.
 - Practitioners interviewed believed that intersessions and shorter breaks (see next slide) contributed to the improvement, with timely and targeted remediation often delivered in different ways.
 - Although there was considerable variation, year-round schools spent just 3 percent more on average.
- The 2013 Conference Report on the budget included \$412,500 in FY 2014 for planning grants of up to \$50,000 for school divisions pursuing the creation of new year-round school programs for divisions or individual schools, consistent with the JLARC report.



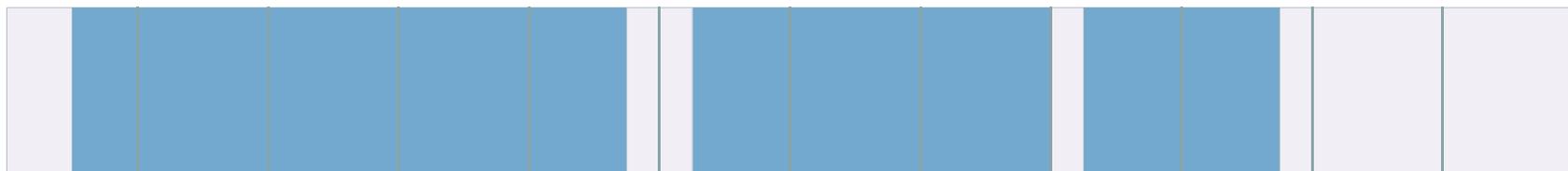
Earlier Start, With 3 Interessions Allows Additional Weeks of Remediation or Enrichment



Year-Round



Traditional



Source: JLARC

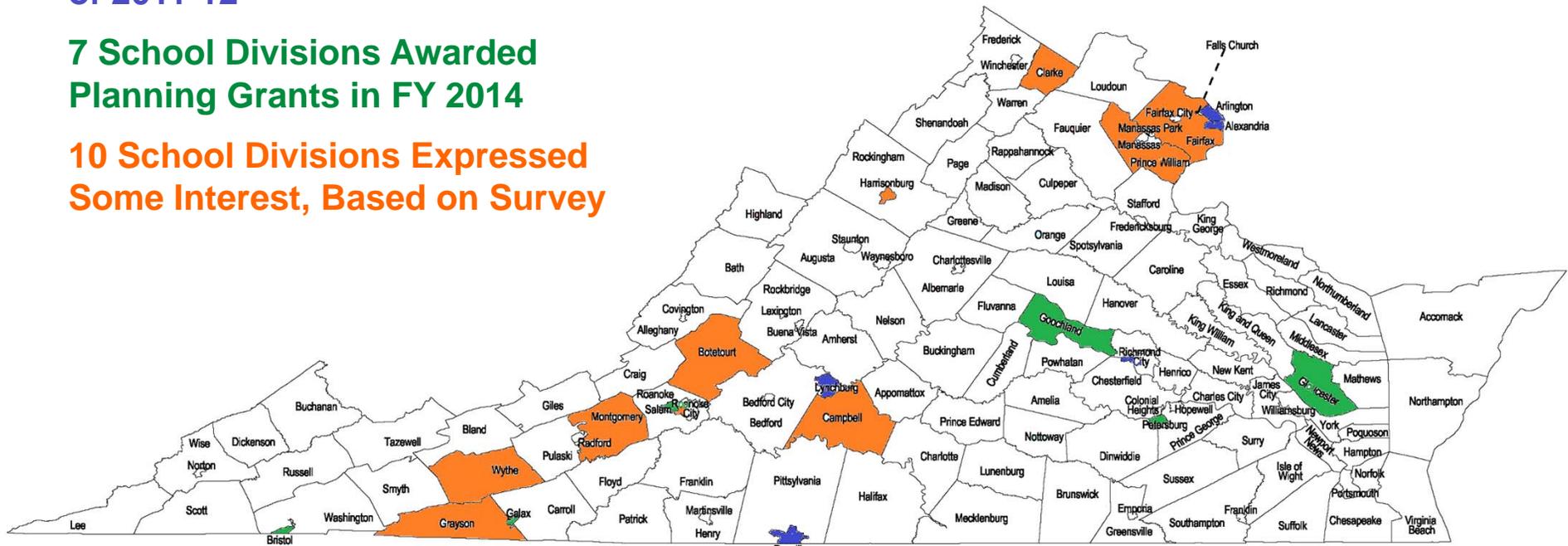


Few Virginia Schools Use Year-Round Schedules, Planning Grants Targeted Per JLARC Findings

5 School Divisions (9 Elementary Schools) Operating Year-Round as of 2011-12

7 School Divisions Awarded Planning Grants in FY 2014

10 School Divisions Expressed Some Interest, Based on Survey



Achievable Dream Partnership with Newport News Includes Extended Year and Other Features

- The Achievable Dream program was not included in JLARC’s review but does operate an extended program with a longer day, Saturday instruction, and a required summer program.
 - Partnership with Newport News Public Schools, 1,250 students in grades K-12 (Middle/high school opened in 2007).
 - 100% eligible for free/reduced-price lunch, touts 100% graduation rate.
 - Provides a social component to the standard curriculum, including a morning program, uniforms, etiquette, “Speaking Green”, conflict resolution, financial know-how.
 - Partnerships with Ft. Eustis, local sheriffs/police, and corporations.
 - Spends about \$2,000 more per student.
 - \$1.9 million in tax credits in FY 2013 from the state’s Neighborhood Assistance Program.
 - College scholarships and guaranteed acceptance agreements.



Virginia Partners in Dropout Prevention and Post-Secondary and Career Success

- Numerous entities across Virginia support students' post-secondary aspiration, qualification, application, and enrollment.
- **Recommendation:** Develop longitudinal data on college access services, as a follow-up to the SCHEV study (2009), to improve coordination of services across Virginia to better address highest need areas, younger students, financial literacy, and parental programs.

Communities in Schools

- Virginia-affiliate of a national dropout prevention program.
- Wraparound services, help address non-school issues as well as college and career prep.
- **Five Basics:** One-on-one relationship with a caring adult, safe place, healthy start, marketable skill, chance to give back.

Project Discovery

- Grades 4-12, post-secondary access program encourages students to stay in school and graduate high school.



Potential of Early Commitment Programs to Impact Academic Preparation

- Research indicates that the foundations for college aspiration and qualification are set early.
 - Even relatively small amounts of college savings can have an impact on college entry and success.
- **Recommendation:**
Develop a targeted strategy around early post-secondary savings, including review of outcomes from programs that start with newborns or kindergarteners.

Virginia529 SOAR Pilot

- Eligible 9th-12th grade students receive \$500 per year if they pledge to maintain a 2.5 GPA, complete financial literacy training, attend school regularly, participate in community service activities, complete a FAFSA, apply to a 2- or 4-year college or technical school.
- Anticipating 1,200 students served in 2013-14 in 42 schools, served by GRASP, VCCS, and ACCESS College Foundation.
- \$410,000 awarded to student accounts in Years 1-3.



Recruiting and Retaining Teachers in Hard-to-Staff Schools

- Some Lead Turnaround Partners in Virginia schools identified teacher recruitment and retention as a key obstacle to accreditation.
- **Recommendation:** Re-evaluate options for attracting teachers to hard-to-staff schools, including incentives and virtual courses, as well as attracting more top students into the teaching profession (2013 reforms to the Virginia Teaching Scholarships).

Update: Teach for America (TFA) in VA

- Authority to operate in Virginia approved in the 2013 Session, no placements made this school year.
- TFA has been working towards placing 35-50 teachers in Petersburg and Richmond for the 2014-15 school year.
- Local school division pays the teachers' salaries, but TFA spends about \$40,000 per placement for recruitment/selection, training/support. (Funding has typically been private, but states can contribute.)
- Roughly 800 graduates of Virginia colleges and universities have joined TFA in the past five years, including 45 from UVA in 2013.



Challenges and Opportunities

- Further minimizing high school dropout rates across the Commonwealth.
- Prioritizing among statewide efforts that target the preparation for post-secondary and career success, particularly for disadvantaged students.
- Working through the “decision tree” of options regarding state intervention in lowest performing schools.
- Supporting the larger number of schools not yet meeting standards under more rigorous “college and career ready” math and English SOLs.
- Evaluating complementary innovative initiatives that bridge the continuum from K-12 to post-secondary.

