

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION DROPOUT PREVENTION ACTION PLAN

VISION STATEMENT

Every child in Virginia will earn a Board of Education-approved high school diploma that at minimum, prepares students to make a successful transition to work, postsecondary academic experiences, or the military after graduation.

STRENGTHENING SCHOOL DIVISIONS

The Virginia Department of Education will align its work and target resources to provide leadership, expertise and technical assistance to support school divisions' and schools' efforts in critical areas such as academics, student supports, policies and organization management to prevent school dropout and promote school graduation, modeling an integrated approach.

- **Action 1- Meet with diverse representation of the Virginia Department of Education divisions and offices to identify and coordinate internal goals, activities and initiatives in the following areas: academic instruction, student support services, internal/external policies and regulations, and organizational management structure that affect school dropout and school completion outcomes. (February 2008 - through the 2008 - 09 school year and ongoing)**
- **Action 2 - Develop a strategic approach in planning, promoting, and facilitating eight regional meetings to gather information and identify region specific needs and issues. (January 09 – March 09)**
- **Action 3 – Update and complete contact information for school division representatives/staff responsible for dropout prevention and intervention issues, and program initiatives in all offices (Spring 2009)**
- **Action 4 - Develop a self-assessment tool/instrument that school divisions will use to evaluate their systemic approaches to policies, practices and procedures for academic instruction, student supports, promotion/retention and related policies, as well as, organizational management practices and procedures in addressing the issue of dropout prevention/intervention and school completion (ex. Institute of Education Sciences Practice Guide – *Dropout Prevention*, September 2008). (By Spring 2010)**
- **Action 5 - Prepare a guidance document that provides strategies and assistance to help school divisions conduct a self-assessment of programs, activities and initiatives that promote dropout prevention and school completion. (By Spring 2010) Train staff and pilot self-assessment tool /instrument. (Fall 2010)**
- **Action 6 – Meet with the cross-sector Dropout Project Leadership Committee to consolidate long and short-term plans for moving forward on**

- the vision to increase graduation outcomes for all students. Designate work groups from the project leadership committee to address topic specific issues for further examination and to engage their stakeholders. (March 2009)
- Action 7 – Plan, organize and schedule the *Vision to Practice* summer institute to engage school division staff in practical application approaches and strategies to address dropout prevention and school completion. (November 2008 - July 2009)

SUPPORTING STUDENTS/FAMILIES

The Virginia Department of Education will provide strategies and assistance to school divisions to promote collaboration and improve alignment and integration of services across divisions and units that help support students and families.

- Action 1 – Develop a student/family support component of the self-assessment checklist to evaluate major departments’ and units’ integration of programs and activities that support schools and school divisions in the areas of student/family engagement with schools; effective transition services; appropriate social behaviors; academic success; and the use of data to monitor outcomes and record trends and patterns. (Fall 2010)
- Action 2- Assist school divisions in examining internal organizational processes and procedures to facilitate collaboration, alignment and integration of services to ensure that students and families make positive connections with the school and are a part of the support provided to achieve success. (Fall 2010)
- Action 3 – Research, promote, and train school divisions on tools that use student-level (EIMS) data in areas such as academics, behavior and attendance to identify and monitor students who need additional support to stay on-track or get back on track. (2008 - 2012)
- Action 5 - Collaborate with individuals and community organizations in efforts to engage students and families in activities, such as service learning, mentoring, after-school tutoring and volunteering. VDOE will apply for the Learn & Serve Grant funding for the next three years. (2009 – 2012)

EFFECTIVE POLICY UPDATES AND IMPLEMENTATION

The Virginia Department of Education supports and carries out the Board of Education’s mandate to improve student success by increasing graduation rates while maintaining or increasing graduation requirements.

- Action 1 - Prioritize steps to implement the Commission on Youth’s recommendations specific to the Study of Truancy and Dropout Prevention and Study of Alternative Education Options. (February 2009 –2010)

- **Action 2 – Develop the policy component to the self-assessment tool to assist school divisions in reviewing their policies, practices and procedures that may impact a student’s ability to graduate on-time. (By Spring 2010)**
- **Action 3 – Publicize on a dedicated Web site the findings from studies of effective practices and review options for implementation. (Fall 2009)**
- **Action 4 - Identify and promote national best practices and models for policies and procedures that have significantly impacted dropout prevention and school completion. (Spring 2009 – Fall 2010)**
- **Action 5 – Support and facilitate implementation of the Board of Education’s regulations and objectives addressing student graduation. (Winter 2009 – Fall 2012)**
- **Action 7 – Enhance and refine the working relationship with juvenile court system judges and staff to improve policies and practices for school related issues. (Ongoing – 2012)**

DATA COLLECTION, MONITORING, RESEARCH AND ACCOUNTABILITY

VDOE collects, analyzes, reports and provides information from multiple data sources on a variety of issues targeted towards persistence to graduation and decreasing the dropout rate. These reports include attendance rates, achievement scores, retentions, and disciplinary infractions, as well as evidence-based best practices from educational research.

- **Action 1 - Monitor, accurately report, and work to reduce dropout rates by gathering accurate data for key student groups, helping school divisions to establish benchmarks for eliminating dropouts, and employing a standardized reporting method. (Winter 2009 – Fall 2012)**
- **Action 2- Conduct a pilot project to determine whether a data collection tool to identify students at risk of school failure is helpful to schools in their support to students. Develop data indicators for the tool in conjunction with four local school divisions. (2008-09 School Year)**
- **Action 3 - Design the reporting format to use with the tool and provide technical assistance to support implementation of the tool. (In process – 2010)**
- **Action 4 - Prepare a K-12 at-risk report to help school divisions identify students at all grade levels who demonstrate academic or behavioral indicators that are risk factors for school failure. (Fall 2009)**
- **Action 5- Expand the use to all school divisions of a variety of measures during the school year to monitor students’ academic progress in school and to provide a full picture of their learning to help teachers make sure students do not fall behind academically. (February 2009 – Fall 2010)**
- **Action 5 - Identify data systems that document a student’s entire academic history (Winter 2009 - Fall 2011)**
- **Action 6- Report the On-Time Graduation rate – an adjusted cohort rate (March 2009)**

- **Action 7 – Report other data, including disaggregated rates and cohort dropout rates; cohort completion rates; and the percentage of students in the adjusted cohort who stay in school beyond their on-time year. (Spring 2009 – Spring 2012)**
- **Action 8 – Obtain data on college enrollment and develop a method to allow school divisions to analyze their success in helping students meet their postsecondary enrollment goals. (Spring 2009 – Fall 2012)**