

**REPORT OF THE  
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**Progress Report in  
Response to HJR 123:  
Alternative Licensure Route for  
Principals and Assistant Principals**

**TO THE GOVERNOR AND  
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIRGINIA**



**HOUSE DOCUMENT NO. 33**

**COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA  
RICHMOND  
2005**



**COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA**  
**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

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January 12, 2005

Dear Governor Warner:

On behalf of the Board of Education, I am pleased to submit a progress report in response to House Joint Resolution 123 (HJR 123) approved by the 2004 General Assembly.

HJR 123 requested that the Board of Education review its regulations as may be necessary to incorporate an alternative licensure route for principals and assistant principals. In conducting such review, the board shall explore alternative routes that recognize the various and particular skills required for the particular functions of such positions as well as potential alternative sources of training for such licensure and present any recommendations regarding the implementation of such routes in the Commonwealth. Additionally, the resolution stipulated that the board shall submit to the Division of Legislative Automated Systems an executive summary and report of its progress in meeting the request of this resolution no later than the first day of the 2005 Regular Session of the General Assembly.

If you have questions or require additional information relative to this transmittal of the board's progress report on HJR 123, please do not hesitate to contact me at (804) 225-2023.

Sincerely,

Jo Lynne DeMary

JLD

Attachment

c: The Honorable Belle S. Wheelan, Secretary of Education  
Mr. Thomas Jackson, President, Board of Education

# **A PROGRESS REPORT IN RESPONSE TO HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 123 APPROVED BY THE 2004 VIRGINIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The 2002 Session of the Virginia General Assembly established the Commission to Review, Study, and Reform Educational Leadership. The Commission then established the Task Force to Evaluate and Redesign Preparation Programs and Professional Development for School Leaders. The Task Force presented 12 recommendations to the Commission, which, in turn, submitted the 12 recommendations and two additional recommendations to the 2004 Session of the General Assembly. The General Assembly then approved House Joint Resolution 123 that requires the Board of Education to study alternative licensure for principals and other school leaders.

The study of an alternative licensure route for school leaders began with the Department of Education sponsoring an Institute for Virginia Professors of Educational Leadership (VPEL) and an implementation task force for school leadership. The focus of the two-day institute was a discussion on developing a two-tiered licensure system that would include an alternative route. The School Leadership Task Force will assist the Department of Education with the design and development of recommendations for an alternative licensure route for principals and other school leaders.

Accomplishments in response to HJR 123 include the following:

- Convened the institute on school leadership at the University of Mary Washington on October 21 and 22, 2004, Fredericksburg, Virginia;
- Held a follow-up task force meeting on December 2, 2004;
- Submitted a Notice of Intended Regulatory Action (NOIRA) to the Board of Education to revise *Regulations Governing the Licensure of School Personnel*, for approval at its January 12, 2005, regular meeting;
- Reviewed literature on alternative licensure programs developed and implemented by other states; and
- Awarded five competitive grants of \$100,000 to each school division that demonstrated a partnership agreement with an institution of higher education or other entity for a defined leadership development training program.

Proposed licensure regulations, including recommendations to implement an alternative route to licensure, will be presented to the Advisory Board on Teacher Education and Licensure (ABTEL) for inclusion in the licensure revision proposal scheduled to be presented to the Board of Education by its April 2005 meeting.

**A PROGRESS REPORT IN RESPONSE TO  
HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 123  
APPROVED BY THE  
2004 VIRGINIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**INTRODUCTION**

The 2002 Session of the General Assembly (HJR 20 and SJR 58) established the Commission to Review, Study, and Reform Educational Leadership. This is acknowledging that *“effective leadership is inextricably linked to excellence in public education and student academic achievement in our public schools.”* The resolutions cite the Standards of Accreditation designation of the principal as the *“instructional leader of the school ... [who is] responsible for effective school management that promotes positive student achievement, a safe and secure environment in which to teach and learn, and efficient use of resources.”* (Executive Summary, HJR 20/SJR 58 Commission to Review, Study and Reform Educational Leadership, 2004)

The Commission then established the Task Force to Evaluate and Redesign Preparation Programs and Professional Development for School Leaders. The Task Force presented 12 recommendations addressing the creation of leadership academies, general leadership studies, assessment requirements for school administrators, linking professional development to school improvement, and allowing institutions of higher education to be entrepreneurial in crafting services to meet the needs of the various school divisions. The Commission considered these recommendations and received testimony on the recommendations. On November 17, 2003, the Commission approved its final report and submitted its written findings, the 12 initial recommendations and two additional recommendations to the 2004 Session of the General Assembly.

As a result of the recommendations of the Commission, the 2004 Session of the General Assembly approved House Joint Resolution 123 (HJR 123) that requires the Board of Education to study alternative licensure for principals and other school leaders. The resolution also stipulated that the board shall explore alternative routes that recognize the various and particular skills required for the particular functions of such positions as well as potential alternative sources of training for such licensure and present any recommendations regarding the implementation of such routes in the Commonwealth. Finally, the board shall submit to the Division of Legislative Automated Systems an executive summary and report of its progress in meeting the request of this resolution no later than the first day of the 2005 Regular Session of the General Assembly.

## ALTERNATIVE LICENSURE ROUTE FOR PRINCIPALS AND ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS

*...That the Board of Education be requested to review its regulations as may be necessary to incorporate an alternative licensure route for principals and assistant principals...*

*House Joint Resolution 123*

HJR 123 requested the Board of Education to study alternative licensure for school leaders. This resolution moves forward in Virginia the need to improve the system of leadership development that is also promoted by the National Governors Association. States should remove barriers for “talented” individuals to enter the profession and move toward a more performance-based system of licensing and rewarding school leaders. States should allow and expand alternative preparation programs and develop a rigorous and defensible system of accreditation for programs and institutions that prepare school leaders. Schools of the twenty-first century will require a school leader whose main responsibility will be defined in terms of instructional leadership that focuses on strengthening teaching and learning. The challenge for states will be to redesign their systems of licensure, preparation, and professional development to produce and reward school leaders who have these kinds of skills. (*National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Issue Brief, September 2003*)

The National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Issue Brief, September 2003, provides a recommendation and an immediate and a long-term plan for improving school leadership. The report suggests that the central goal for states should be directed toward producing high-quality school leaders and getting these leaders into the neediest schools. States will need to take immediate and long-term actions to improve the entire system of leadership development. For immediate action, the Governor’s brief recommends the removal of barriers for talented individuals to enter the profession.

**Rigid rules requiring three or more years of teaching experience should be replaced with more flexible provisions that allow candidates to share evidence of teaching, leadership, or youth development experience that makes them promising principal candidates. This evidence could be provided via a portfolio or through assessments that stimulate the kinds of leadership tasks that principals must master. Preparation programs should be given the discretion to admit promising potential leaders with varying professional backgrounds. States should require preparation for licensure candidates but afford flexibility in the scope, design, and delivery of these programs.**

Long-Term Action: *Develop a tiered, performance-based alternative licensure system.*

**States should develop systems that require candidates to show evidence of their skills and on-the-job performance to renew their licenses. Such efforts should be built on tiered licensure systems that exist in other states. Under such models, principals would earn an “initial” license after completing an approved preparation program with the expectation that they would apply for an “advanced” license after a set period on the job (e.g., three to five years). Performance assessments would need to be developed at both the initial and advanced levels. These assessments also could be used to enable candidates to demonstrate their skills at any time during their professional careers, accelerating the licensure process for some and opening the profession to others who possess the demonstrated competencies.**

Finally, the National Governors Association brief on school leadership recommends that states should work with school divisions to tie salary schedules and compensation to advanced licensure. These changes should seek to factor in pay differentials for highly skilled principals who agree to work in the neediest schools. They also should limit raises for teachers who earn advanced degrees to teachers who obtain a master’s degree in a content area or an area directly relevant to their classroom and school responsibilities.

The Department of Education sponsored an Institute for Virginia Professors of Educational Leadership (VPEL) and an implementation task force on October 21-22, 2004, at the University of Mary Washington. The focus of the discussion centered on incorporating an alternative route to licensure into a two-tier licensure system. The general direction of the discussion was that Level I would have two options. The first option would be the traditional preparation programs that are presently in place through institutions of higher education. The second option would be an alternative route where the candidate would have to hold an earned master’s degree and pass the SLLA. Level II for all candidates who advance from Level I would be a combination of an induction program and the demonstration of effective leadership skills on the job. The candidates would participate in the induction program and would demonstrate effective performance-based school leadership skills during the first five years of the licensure renewal cycle.

The School Leadership Task Force was formed to assist the Department of Education with the design and development of proposals to implement the recommendation for an alternative licensure route for principals and other school leaders in Virginia. The task force held its initial meeting in conjunction with the Institute at the University of Mary Washington. This group of practicing school leaders, professional organization representatives, human resources officials, teacher education representatives, teachers, and others, also will be a resource to the Department of Education as the other recommendations advanced by the Commission are designed and developed. It is anticipated that the task force will be organized into subcommittees

around the remaining Commission recommendations and charged with the responsibility of developing a proposal for consideration by the full task force membership. A set of recommended proposals will be presented to the Advisory Board on Teacher Education and Licensure (ABTEL) for inclusion in the licensure revision proposal scheduled to be presented to the Board of Education by its April 2005 meeting.