



**FINAL REPORT OF
THE VIRGINIA COMMISSION
ON YOUTH**

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

Study of Alternative Education Options

Commonwealth of Virginia
November 2009



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Commission on Youth

Senator Yvonne B. Miller, *Chair*
Delegate Christopher K. Peace, *Vice Chair*

Suite 269
General Assembly Building
Richmond, Virginia 23219-0406

Executive Director
Amy M. Atkinson

804-371-2481
FAX 804-371-0574
<http://coy.state.va.us>

November 20, 2009

TO: The Honorable Timothy M. Kaine, Governor of Virginia

and

Members of the Virginia General Assembly

In May of 2006, the Virginia Commission on Youth was directed to review alternate education programs for suspended and expelled students in Virginia. The Commission continued this study in 2007 and 2008. At its December 3, 2008 meeting, the Commission on Youth approved the final recommendations for this study. Enclosed is the final report. The Commission received support from all affected agencies and gratefully acknowledges their input into this report.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William H. Fralin".

William H. Fralin
Chair

MEMBERS OF THE VIRGINIA COMMISSION ON YOUTH

From the Virginia House of Delegates

William H. Fralin, Jr., Chair
Mamye E. BaCote
Robert H. Brink
Mark L. Cole
Christopher K. Peace
Beverly J. Sherwood

From the Senate of Virginia

Yvonne B. Miller, Vice Chair
Harry B. Blevins
R. Edward Houck

**Gubernatorial Appointments
from the Commonwealth at Large**

Anthony Dale
Joy Myers
Marvin Wagner

Commission on Youth Staff

Amy M. Atkinson
Leah Hamaker
Joyce Garner

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Authority for Study	1
II. Study Mandate	1
III. Members	2
IV. Executive Summary	2
V. Study Goals and Objectives	4
A. Year One	
B. Year Two	
C. Year Three	
VI. Methodology	6
A. Research and Analysis	
B. Review of Suspension and Expulsion Data in Virginia	
C. Advisory Group	
D. Site Visits	
E. Survey of Local Alternative Education Programs	
VII. Study Issues	10
A. Federal Laws Impact upon Virginia’s Student Disciplinary Policies	
B. Virginia’s Student Disciplinary Policies	
C. Alternative Education Programs in Virginia	
D. Identified Issues Related to Virginia’s Alternative Education Programs	
E. Other Identified Issues	
VIII. Findings and Recommendations	36
A. Year One	
B. Year Two	
C. Year Three	
IX. Acknowledgments	44
Appendices	
<i>Appendix A.</i>	Advisory Group Membership
<i>Appendix B.</i>	<i>Regional Alternative Education Programs, Virginia Board of Education 2008 Annual Report</i>
<i>Appendix C.</i>	Virginia Commission on Youth Survey of Alternative Education Programs Relating to Suspended and Expelled Youth Appendix
<i>Appendix D.</i>	Virginia Department of Education Superintendents Memo No. 244, November 9, 2006, Subject: Survey of Alternative Education Programs
<i>Appendix E.</i>	Virginia Department of Education Unduplicated Student Suspensions and Expulsions School Years 2001-02 through 2004-05
<i>Appendix F.</i>	Map of Alternative Education Programs Offered by Virginia School Divisions 2008
<i>Appendix G.</i>	Listing of Alternative Education Programs Offered by Virginia School Divisions 2008

I. Authority for Study

Section 30-174 of the *Code of Virginia* establishes the Commission on Youth and directs it to "...study and provide recommendations addressing the needs of and services to the Commonwealth's youth and their families." The Commission studies and provides recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly on matters related to children, youth and families. The Commission also monitors the development of laws and policies impacting youth and their families thus contributing to the General Assembly's ability to make sound policy decisions on these matters.

At the Commission on Youth meeting on May 17, 2006, Commission staff was directed to conduct a review of alternative education programs for youth who are suspended, expelled or otherwise not succeeding in the traditional school setting. Additionally, the Commission was directed to explore data available at the Department of Education to determine whether a problem exists regarding the number of school suspensions and expulsions within Virginia public schools. The Commission continued this study in 2007 and 2008. Each year's findings and recommendations were to be presented to the Commission on Youth prior to the 2007, 2008 and 2009 General Assembly Sessions, respectively.

II. Study Mandate

Legislators, child advocates and others have expressed concern about the utilization of suspension and expulsion in Virginia's public school system. Research has revealed that such disciplinary actions may increase a student's risk of becoming disengaged from and dropping out of school. While student discipline laws and policies must maintain a student's right to a safe and orderly learning environment, there is concern that exclusionary discipline approaches have the potential to increase poor outcomes in students. In Virginia, alternative education programs are available to bridge this gap by providing educational services to disciplined students or students who have not been successful in a traditional learning environment. The question arises whether existing programs in Virginia are sufficiently meeting the needs of these students.

At the Commission on Youth meeting on May 17, 2006, Commission staff was directed to conduct a review of alternative education programs for youth who are suspended, expelled or at-risk. Additionally, the Commission was directed to explore data available at the Department of Education to determine whether a problem exists regarding the number of school suspensions and expulsions within Virginia public schools. That year's findings and recommendations were to be presented to the Commission on Youth prior to the 2007 General Assembly Sessions.

The Commission established an Alternative Education Advisory Group consisting of representatives from the Department of Education, School Board Association, Alternative Education Association, local school divisions, and other stakeholders as listed in Appendix A. The Advisory Group met in 2006 and recommended that the study be continued for a second year so the Commission could undertake a comprehensive survey of school divisions' local alternative education programs. At the April 2007 meeting, the Commission continued the study of alternative education options and directed staff to report findings and recommendations prior to the 2008 General Assembly Session. The issues to be addressed in the second year of study included the survey data which was received, assessing available funding for school-based prevention programs and reviewing whether there was a need for additional alternative education programs. At this time, the Advisory

Group recommended that the Commission continue the Advisory Group on Alternative Education Options for a third and final year and to invite representatives from the health and human resources agencies. The Advisory Group evaluated gaps in service in alternative education placements, as well as whether there were occurrences where students were not being offered educational services. A report on the Advisory Group's findings was to be made prior to the 2009 General Assembly Session. In fulfilling its legislative mandate, the Commission undertook the study.

III. Members Appointed to Serve

The Commission on Youth is a standing legislative commission of the Virginia General Assembly. It is comprised of twelve members: six Delegates, three Senators and three citizens appointed by the Governor.

Members of the Virginia Commission on Youth are:

Delegate William H. Fralin, Jr., Roanoke, Chair
Senator Yvonne B. Miller, Norfolk, Vice Chair
Delegate Mamyé E. BaCote, Newport News
Senator Harry B. Blevins, Chesapeake
Delegate Robert H. Brink, Arlington
Delegate Mark L. Cole, Fredericksburg
Senator R. Edward Houck, Spotsylvania
Delegate Christopher K. Peace, Mechanicsville
Delegate Beverly J. Sherwood
Mr. Anthony L. Dale, Richmond
Ms. Joy Myers, Arlington
Mr. Marvin H. Wagner, Fredericksburg

IV. Executive Summary

This study originated with the Commission on Youth's May 17, 2006 meeting and the approval of the study of Alternative Education Options. The Commission directed staff to study this issue and to present findings and recommendations to the Commission on Youth prior to the 2007 General Assembly Session. The study plan directed staff to conduct a review of alternative education programs for suspended and expelled youth. Additionally, the Commission was to explore data available at the Department of Education to determine whether a problem exists regarding the number of school suspensions and expulsions within Virginia public schools.

During the 2006 study year, the Virginia Commission on Youth researched the availability of alternative education programs for expelled and suspended students who could not be served in traditional public school settings. This investigation also addressed the various challenges facing school divisions in providing educational services to these students.

The Commission established an Alternative Education Advisory Group consisting of representatives from the Virginia Department of Education, the School Board Association, the Alternative Education Association, local school divisions, and other stakeholders as listed in Appendix A. The Advisory Group has provided assistance to the study throughout its three years.

In 2006, the Commission surveyed all 132 school divisions to gather information on Virginia's alternative education options. Responses provided information on:

- Virginia's 29 regional alternative education programs; and
- School divisions' locally-created alternative education programs for suspended, expelled or at-risk youth.

In 2007, a draft document, *Guide to Local Alternative Education Options for Suspended and Expelled Students in the Commonwealth*, was compiled by Commission staff using survey data provided by local school divisions and was submitted to the Commission on Youth for review. The document was published in Spring 2008 and made available on the Commission's and Legislative Information System's websites and mailed by the Department of Education to all school division superintendents. In 2008, the Commission published the *Interim Report on Alternative Education Options* (Research Document 194) to summarize the activities from the first and second year of the study.¹ Recommendations approved for all three years of the study are also detailed in Section VIII of this report.

At its December 3, 2008 meeting, the Commission on Youth approved the following recommendations from the third year of its Alternative Education Options study:

Recommendation 1

Introduce legislation to amend § 22.1-209.1:2 of the *Code of Virginia* to provide that regional alternative education options may also be utilized for students at-risk of a long-term suspension as authorized by the school superintendent. Due process protections regarding notice, hearings, and appeals required for students who are suspended or expelled required when a regional alternative education placement would also be recommended for students deemed at-risk of receiving a long-term suspension. Also, amend this section of the Code to clarify that this section refers to regional alternative education programs.

Recommendation 2

Request that the Chairman of the Virginia Commission on Youth write a letter to the Board of Education to ask that the revisions to the Standards of Accreditation (SOA) be amended to include provisions for requiring schools exhibiting suspension and expulsion rates above the state average implement evidence-based intervention programs designed to improve suspension and expulsion rates.

Recommendation 3

Introduce legislation to include a definition of alternative education programs in the *Code of Virginia* which is consistent with § 22.1-253.13:1 that describes instructional programs supporting the Standards of Learning (SOLs) and other educational objectives. This legislation would specify that alternative education options are for students whose needs are not met in programs prescribed elsewhere, as set forth in the SOLs. "Alternative education" will be replaced by "nontraditional education" except when referring to regional alternative education programs.

¹ Virginia Commission on Youth. 2008. Report Document 194, Alternative Education Options Interim Report. [Online]. Available: <http://leg2.state.va.us/DLS/h&sdocs.nsf/5c7ff392dd0ce64d85256ec400674ecb/d8d2ccb5d2ebd5f88525748a0072f721?OpenDocument>.

Recommendation 4

Write a letter requesting the Superintendent of Public Education to establish a central point of contact with the Department of Education in the area of nontraditional education options.

Recommendation 5

Write a letter requesting the Board of Education establish model guidelines for locally-created alternative education programs consistent with the guidelines established for the regional alternative education programs.

Recommendation 6

Request that the Chairman of the Virginia Commission on Youth write a letter requesting that the Virginia Department of Education establish a mechanism for school divisions to use the individual student tracking number system to indicate whether a student is enrolled in their home school, in a local alternative setting or in a regional alternative school.

V. Study Goals and Objectives

A. YEAR ONE

At the Commission's meeting on May 17, 2006, staff was directed to review alternative education options available within the Commonwealth. This study would also address the various challenges facing school districts regarding the use of expulsion or suspensions, including the number of students in the Commonwealth who have either been expelled or suspended.

The following study goals were developed by the staff and approved in May 2006 by the Commission:

- I. Review of Expulsion and Suspension Data
 - a. Identify number of students in the Commonwealth, by locality, who have been either expelled or suspended.
 - b. Determine whether issues that need to be addressed regarding the use of school expulsion and suspensions.
 - c. Review various challenges facing school districts in the Commonwealth regarding expulsion or suspensions.
- II. Review of Alternative Education Approaches
 - a. Clarify existing alternative education policies and practices.
 - b. Review other states' activities in the provision of alternative education to ascertain if they are appropriate for use in the Commonwealth.
 - c. Identify potential solutions, if appropriate, for school divisions to provide educational services to students who have been expelled.
 - d. Examine utilization of restorative justice and its potential as a solution for students facing disciplinary action by school divisions.
- III. Review Federal Legislation/State Legislation
 - a. Review impact of No Child Left Behind (NCLB).
 - b. Review impact of Standards of Learning (SOLs).
 - c. Review impact of House Bill 347 – General Educational Development Program (GED).
- IV. Analysis of Virginia practices
 - a. Review state and local Code of Student Conduct provisions.
 - b. Review school boards' suspension, exclusion, expulsion and appeals policies.
 - c. Review of school boards' utilization of alternative education practices.
 - d. Review existing alternative education programs.

B. YEAR TWO

In November of 2006, the Commission approved a recommendation to continue the study for a second year and to report findings to the Commission on Youth prior to the 2008 General Assembly Session.

The following study goals were approved by the Commission in April 2007:

- I. Complete analysis of Alternative Education Survey conducted by the Commission in the fall 2006.
 - a. Identify alternative education programs available in the Commonwealth that serve suspended and expelled youth.
 - b. Determine whether there are issues that need to be addressed in serving students in alternative education programs.
 - c. Review various challenges facing school divisions in the Commonwealth regarding alternative education programs.
 - d. Identify best practices employed by school divisions.
 - e. Compile best practices guide on Virginia's Alternative Education Approaches.
 - f. Clarify existing alternative education policies and practices.
 - g. Review Virginia's activities in the provision of alternative education to students using survey data and other sources.
 - h. Compile a best practices guide for alternative education programs/practices. The guide will include a listing of all existing alternative education programs across the Commonwealth, including local programs.
- II. Investigate funding opportunities for school-based prevention programs to supplant the Safe and Drug-Free Schools grants.
 - a. Investigate availability of federal grants through the United States Department of Justice, Center for Disease Control, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, United States Department of Education, Safe and Drug Free-Schools program, and the Center for Mental Health Services.
 - b. Investigate availability of state grants, such as funds available from the Department of Criminal Justice Services, Department of Health, and Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services.²
 - c. Investigate availability of other funding sources such as the Virginia Tobacco Settlement Fund.
 - d. Review other states' fundraising Initiatives for funding prevention programs such as private, non-profit, and foundation grants.
 - e. Review feasibility of conducting a comprehensive statewide youth risk survey to access untapped federal funds.
- III. Investigate the need for and feasibility of funding for a second tier of regional alternative education programs.
 - a. Utilize survey results to ascertain need for second tier of regional alternative education programs.
 - b. Offer funding proposal, if appropriate, prior to the 2008 General Assembly Session.
- IV. Review existing state programs that address prevention and discipline for at-risk youth.
 - a. Review Virginia's Student Assistance programs to ascertain their role in prevention of at-risk behavior in students.
 - b. Review the Behavioral Intervention Plans for Virginia's Schools offered through Virginia's Training/Technical Assistance Center to determine whether it is effective in meeting the needs of at-risk students.

² Effective July 1 2009, the name of the Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services changed to the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services.

C. YEAR THREE

In December 2007, the Commission approved a recommendation that the Advisory Group on Alternative Education Options meet for a final year and that health and human resources representatives be included to evaluate gaps in service in alternative education placements. A report on the findings from the Advisory Group was to be made to the Virginia Commission on Youth prior to the 2009 General Assembly Session.

The following study goals were developed by the staff and approved by the Commission in April 2008:

- I. Reconvene Advisory Group to assist in study effort and review previously proposed recommendations.
 - a. Invite representatives from agencies in the Health and Human Resources Secretariat.
- II. Continue to investigate school-based prevention programs and any funding opportunities.
- III. Investigate funding for a second tier of regional alternative education programs to serve students who are not succeeding in the regular school setting and who are at risk of dropping out.
- IV. Investigate private educational and other alternative educational options for students who have not been attending school for a designated period of time and/or who are not succeeding in the public school setting.
- V. Investigate dual-enrollment as an option for providing transitional or educational services to students who are at risk for school failure or who are currently not attending school.
- VI. Investigate waiving the compulsory education requirements for students who have fulfilled the pre-GED requirements, but are not otherwise eligible to test for the GED, including those provisions outlined in House Bill 355 (Cole) which was introduced during the 2008 General Assembly Session.
- VII. Investigate the Individual Student Alternative Education Plan (ISAEP) guidelines to determine whether it could be expanded to serve high school students who have not been attending school for a designated period of time and/or who are not succeeding in the public school setting.
- VIII. Investigate the need and feasibility of establishing Special Middle Schools for over-aged middle school students.
 - a. Develop recommendations.
- IX. Synthesize findings of statutory review and Advisory Group recommendations.
- X. Solicit feedback to recommendations from constituents and Department of Education/Board of Education.
- XI. Present recommendations to Commission on Youth.
- XII. Prepare final report.

VI. Methodology

The findings of the 2006, 2007 and 2008 study years are based on several distinct research activities.

Because the study activities spanned the course of three study cycles, data included in this report may date back to the 2004-2005 academic year. As the study activities commenced, more recent data was frequently made available by the Department of Education. Accordingly, staff has included the most recent data, as well as the data which was available and utilized during the course of the study.

A. RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS

Commission on Youth staff reviewed federal and Virginia education statute in order to ascertain the impact upon existing student disciplinary procedures in the Commonwealth. *The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*,³ *The Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994*,⁴ *the Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities Act of 1994*⁵ were also reviewed. Staff also studied *the Individuals with Disabilities Education (IDEA) Act of 2004*⁶ in order to understand federal requirements and procedures involved in disciplining students diagnosed with a disability.

Those sections of the *Code of Virginia* specifically addressing student discipline⁷ were reviewed, as were sections which addressed the definition and utilization of alternative education programs,⁸ the process for notifying school officials when students have been charged with serious crimes off of school property⁹ and discipline of a student convicted of such crimes.¹⁰ The regulations governing the discipline procedures for students with a disability were also analyzed.¹¹ Finally, the alternative education options available to these students were also assessed to ascertain whether these students were receiving educational services.

Various reports published by the Virginia Department of Education were also reviewed. These included: the Department's Annual Report on *Discipline, Crime, and Violence*; the annual report *Regional Alternative Education Programs; Summary of Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Programs in Virginia School Divisions*; and *Creating Community Service Opportunities for Suspended and Expelled Youth: a Final Report on Virginia's Experience*. The Board of Education's Report on *Student Conduct Policy Guidelines* was also reviewed, as was the Department's *Guidance Document on Manifestation Determination, New Requirements*.

Other states' research and reports on alternative education were also reviewed. Information about alternative education programs in Minnesota, Mississippi, Kansas, Massachusetts and Maine were reviewed, as were national reports published by the National Governors Association and the Urban Institute.

B. REVIEW OF SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION DATA IN VIRGINIA

In the first year of the study, the Commission on Youth reviewed data available at the Department of Education to determine the number of school suspensions and expulsions within Virginia public schools by locality. The challenges facing school districts in the Commonwealth regarding suspensions or expulsions was also addressed in this review. Finally, the alternative education options available to these students were also assessed to ascertain whether these students were receiving educational services. In order to gain a clear understanding of these intertwined issues, staff also reviewed both state and federal requirements for school divisions' suspension and expulsion policies. The Virginia Board of

³ 20 U.S.C. § 6301 *et seq.*

⁴ 20 U.S.C. § 8921.

⁵ 20 U.S.C. § 7101 *et seq.*

⁶ 20 U.S.C. § 1400 *et seq.*

⁷ Va. Code Ann. §§ 22.1-276-277.08.

⁸ Va. Code Ann. § 22.1-276.01.

⁹ Va. Code Ann. § 16.1-260(g).

¹⁰ Va. Code Ann. § 22.1-277.06.C.

¹¹ 8 VAC 20-80-68.

Education's *Student Conduct Policy Guidelines*, which outlines requirements for suspensions and expulsions, was also reviewed.¹²

C. ADVISORY GROUP

The Commission established an Alternative Education Advisory Group consisting of representatives from the following agencies and organizations:

- Virginia Parent Teacher Association;
- Virginia Education Association;
- Association of Elementary School Principals;
- Department of Criminal Justice Services;
- Department of Health (assisted in third year of study)
- Office of Comprehensive Services (assisted in third year of study)
- Department of Juvenile Justice;
- School Safety Specialists;
- Virginia Alternative Educators Association;
- Virginia School Board Association;
- Association of School Superintendents;
- Association of Secondary School Principals;
- Association of Middle School Principals;
- School Resource Officers;
- School Principals;
- School Administrators;
- Alternative Education Principals/Directors; and
- Commission on Youth Members.

The membership of the Advisory Group is provided as Appendix A.

The Advisory Group helped identify, refine and prioritize the issues of the study. During the study's first year, the Advisory Group met three times (July 12, August 9 and September 19, 2006). In 2007, the Advisory Group also met three times (June 25, July 24 and November 13. In the third year of the study, the Advisory Group membership was expanded to include representatives from the Health and Human Resources Secretariat. The Advisory Group met three times (June 30, July 31 and September 16, 2008).

D. SITE VISITS

Another research activity employed by staff was to conduct site visit interviews with personnel in regional alternative education programs. During the first year, staff visited several programs and learned about their policies and practices, as well as outcomes of the students served. The programs selected served students in both rural and urban school divisions and varied in service provision approaches.

During the first year of study, Commission on Youth staff conducted site visits at the following programs:

- Roland E. Cook School – Roanoke & Bedford Counties
- Project RETURN – Fluvanna, Alleghany Highlands, Bath, Botetourt, Buchanan, Charles City, Clarke, Craig, Culpeper, Floyd, Franklin, Giles, Grayson, Greene, Halifax, Highland, Lancaster, Madison, Orange, Shenandoah, and Smyth Counties; Radford City
- Bermuda Run Alternative Education Program – Petersburg, Colonial Heights, Hopewell Cities; Dinwiddie, Prince George, and Sussex Counties
- Metro-Richmond Alternative Education Program – Richmond City, Hanover and Henrico Counties

¹² Virginia Board of Education. 2004. Student Conduct Policy Guidelines, 2006 Update.

During the second year of study, staff visited additional programs administered by a local school division and a nonprofit entity to gain a broader perspective of alternative education programs in the Commonwealth. The following schools/programs were visited in the second year of the study:

- Project Discovery – Serving 22 localities
- Project Recovery – Roanoke City
- Woodlawn Learning Center – Hopewell City
- Office of Student Management and Alternative Programs – Prince William County

In the third year of the study, staff visited the following school divisions/organizations:

- Stafford County Public Schools – regional and local alternative education programs
- Roanoke City Public Schools – Forest Park Academy

Staff also met with representatives from the Virginia Department of Education to discuss students who are enrolled in the Individual Student Alternative Education Plan (ISAEP), exceptions to Virginia's compulsory education requirements, the role of private General Education Development (GED) preparation programs in local school divisions' alternative education programs, as well as other programs that serve over-age and under-credited students.

E. SURVEY OF LOCAL ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMS

During the first year of study, a major finding identified by the Advisory Group was the lack of information on the availability of local programs that provide educational services to suspended and expelled students. While there is an annual report on state-funded regional alternative education programs,¹³ there was no central inventory of locally-created and administered alternative education schools/programs. The Department of Education's 2008 Annual Report on regional alternative education programs is included as Appendix B. Commission staff determined that information on locally-created programs and schools would offer a more complete picture of unmet service needs, as well as promising practices utilized throughout the Commonwealth, and that surveying school divisions about available alternative education programs would be useful in determining whether there was a need for additional alternative education programs or program slots.

In November 2006, the Commission, in cooperation with the Department of Education, surveyed all 132 school divisions. The survey was designed by Commission staff and modified pursuant to the Advisory Group's recommendations to gather information from the 2005-2006 academic year. Surveys were sent to Virginia's school superintendents and accompanied by a letter of introduction. Instructions for completing the survey form, as well as instructions for accessing the survey on the Commission on Youth's website, were also included. The survey instrument is included as Appendix C. Concurrently, the Department issued a Superintendent's Memorandum with instructions for accessing the survey on the Commission's website, provided as Appendix D. Respondents were asked to complete and return the surveys by November 22, 2006, although surveys returned after that date were also accepted.

The survey instrument contained two sections. The first section requested information about the number of children suspended or expelled by the school division, the number of students offered educational services, and whether the school division had alternative

¹³ Virginia Board of Education. 2008. Report on Regional Alternative Education Programs.

educational programs, either regional or locally-created. The second section requested a description of the locally-created programs/schools, the number of students, the funding for the program, the teacher-student ratio, and other specific characteristics about the program. This section also requested information about school divisions without alternative education programs or schools to specify the reasons for the lack of programs/schools.

The response rate from school divisions was 95 percent (126 of 132). Survey responses included information on:

- Virginia's 29 regional alternative education programs; and
- School divisions' practices for offering alternative educational services to suspended/expelled students.

The *Guide to Local Alternative Education Options for Suspended and Expelled Students in the Commonwealth (Report Document 144, 2008)*, was compiled by Commission staff using survey data and submitted to the Governor and General Assembly. The Commission also mailed the *Guide* to all school division superintendents and made it available on both the Commission's and the Department of Education's websites.

Additional information obtained from the survey is discussed in the sections which follow.

VII. Study Issues

The educational system in Virginia is structured to provide local school divisions with significant discretion. As in other states, federal and state statutory and case law and local school board policies provide the legal framework for education in Virginia. In conducting this study, various issues pertaining to student discipline, alternative education and educational programming were analyzed. The results of this analysis not surprisingly vary significantly among school divisions. The mandates and structures which shape Virginia's educational system pertaining to discipline and alternative education are outlined below.

A. FEDERAL LAWS IMPACT UPON VIRGINIA'S STUDENT DISCIPLINARY POLICIES

In accordance with the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)¹⁴, local school divisions must ensure that students will be educated in learning environments that are safe, drug-free, and conducive to learning. Local school divisions must ensure that schools have:

- Appropriate and effective school discipline policies that prohibit disorderly conduct, illegal possession of weapons, and the illegal use, possession, distribution, and sale of tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs;
- Security at school and while students are on the way to or from school;
- Prevention activities designed to create and maintain safe, disciplined, and drug-free environments; and
- A crisis management plan for responding to violent or traumatic incidents on school grounds.¹⁵

Also pursuant to NCLB, local school divisions must have a code of conduct policy clearly stating the responsibilities of students, teachers, and administrators in maintaining a classroom environment which:

- allows a teacher to communicate effectively with all students in the class;
- allows all students in the class to learn;

¹⁴ 20 U.S.C. § 6811. No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB).

¹⁵ 20 U.S.C. § 7114(d)(7). NCLB.

- has consequences that are fair, and developmentally appropriate;
- considers the student and the circumstances of the situation; and
- is enforced accordingly.¹⁶

Under the Virginia Board of Education’s “Unsafe School Choice Option” policy adopted in May 2002, local school divisions must allow students who attend a “persistently dangerous” public school or who become victims of a “violent criminal offense” on school grounds to transfer to a “safe” public school. Schools exceeding the established threshold over a three-year timeframe may be designated “cautioned,” “on probation,” or “persistently dangerous” and must develop corrective action plans and are subject to graduated interventions.¹⁷

Another federal law shaping school disciplinary policies is the federal Gun-Free Schools Act (GFSA), originally passed in 1994 and reauthorized in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) following several high profile shootings in public schools.¹⁸ NCLB provisions require each state receiving federal funds to have in effect a law requiring local educational agencies (LEAs) to expel from school for a period of not less than one year a student who was determined to have brought a weapon to school. The chief administering officer of the LEA in question may modify the expulsion requirement on a case-by-case basis.¹⁹

Federal laws strive to balance a student’s right to a public education and their right to a safe learning environment. Schools develop procedures and laws to protect students from arbitrary and wrongful discipline and procedures to discipline disruptive and dangerous students. Federal laws also support the development of programs that prevent violence and the illegal use of alcohol, tobacco and drugs. Public schools in Virginia receive federal funds so they may develop programs for students in grades K-12 to help them form the knowledge and skills to resist participation in harmful behaviors.

Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act Title IV Grant

The Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act (SDFSCA) authorizes activities designed to prevent school violence and youth drug use, and to help schools and communities create safe, disciplined, and drug-free environments that support student academic achievement.²⁰ The majority of federal funding made available through the SDFSCA occurs in the form of State Grants (Subpart 1) which are allocated to State Education Agencies (SEAs). The SEAs distribute a portion of the funds to Local Education

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Virginia Board of Education. No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Unsafe School Choice Option, Persistently Dangerous Schools, Identification Process and Criteria. April 29, 2003. [Online]. Available: <http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/nclb/nclbdangerousschools.pdf>. [July 2009].

¹⁸ McCarthy, M. and L. Soodak. The politics of discipline: balancing school safety and rights of students with disabilities. *Exceptional Children*. Summer 2007. [Online]. Available: http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_hb3130/is_4_73/ai_n29356517/. [September 2009].

¹⁹ U.S. Department of Education. No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Unsafe School Choice Option, Guidance Concerning State and Local Responsibilities Under the Gun-Free Schools Act. May 2004. 1146.

²⁰ U.S. Department of Education Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools. Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Community Act, Guidance for State and Local Implementation of Programs. December 2002. [Online]. Available: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/sdfsca/docs/sdfs_2004_usd_doe_draft_guidance_for_regulations_.doc.pdf. [September 2009].

Agencies (LEAs) as well as nonprofit and community-based organizations. The SEAs may appropriate grants for:

- The establishment, operation, and improvement of local programs of school drug and violence prevention and early intervention;
- Partnerships with community-based organizations and public and private entities for programs of drug and violence prevention and early intervention, including community-wide drug and violence prevention planning and organizing activities; and
- The development of training, technical assistance, and coordination activities.²¹

Eighty percent of the funding for Virginia is provided to the SEA. These funds flow to school divisions by formula, and divisions may use this funding for a wide range of drug- and violence-prevention activities and strategies. The SEA maintains 7% of the funds for state-level activities, including technical assistance and training, evaluation and program improvement services.²² The SDFSCA requires that programs comply with the Principles of Effectiveness set forth in Section 4115(a).²³ To be funded, programs must be:

- based on an assessment of objective data about the drug and violence problems in the schools and communities,
- based on performance measures;
- grounded in scientifically based research;
- based on an assessment of objective data;
- include meaningful and ongoing consultation with and input from parents; and
- evaluated periodically against locally selected performance measures.²⁴

In Virginia, the SDFSCA grant funds are the only source of funding for school based prevention which targets students in grades K-12. These funds are managed and monitored by the Virginia Department of Education. Schools apply for these funds through their school division. Department staff provides school staff with information, technical assistance, evaluation and oversight of grant requests and spending in compliance. Alternatives to suspension and expulsion may also receive SDFSCA funds. Funds are allocated based on the number of students in each state, as well as Title I funds appropriated in the previous fiscal year.²⁵ The result of this formula is that funds are spread thinly across the school divisions in Virginia. Small divisions may receive only \$200 or \$300.²⁶ There are no state dollars to support prevention efforts in Virginia schools.

In addition, existing programs have been negatively impacted by recent reductions to federal Safe and Drug-Free School grants:

- In 2006, the level of funding decreased 21%;
- In 2007, there was an additional 11% reduction; and
- In 2008, there was a 15% reduction.²⁷

²¹ Ibid.

²² Governor's Office for Substance Abuse Prevention. (N/D) Potential Funding Sources. [Online.] Available: http://www.gosap.virginia.gov/pdf/funding_sources_chart.pdf. [September 2009].

²³ Safe and Drug-free School Act, § 400 NCLB Act of 2001. Title IV, Part A.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ National Center for Education Statistics. (N/D). Annual Reports. [Online]. Available: <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/AnnualReports/pdf/sdfs20030428.pdf>. [September 2009].

²⁶ Virginia Commission on Youth. 2008. Decision Matrix. [Online]. Available: <http://coy.state.va.us>.

²⁷ Virginia Department of Education. Office of Student Services. (April 22, 2008). Presentation to the Safe and Drug Free Schools Workshop. Update: Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program. Technical Assistance Workshop.

In 2007, Virginia’s Fall Enrollment was 1,231,987 students. The projected level of Virginia’s allocation was \$5,429,816, or approximately \$4.41 per student.²⁸ Grants awarded under the SDFSCA may be used for alternative educational services.²⁹ SDFSCA funds may be used only to supplement (not supplant) existing funds that support such activities.

B. VIRGINIA’S STUDENT DISCIPLINARY POLICIES

The Virginia Board of Education is required by law to establish guidelines and develop model policies for codes of student conduct to aid local school boards in the implementation of such policies.³⁰ The guidelines are required to include, but not be limited to the following:

1. Criteria for the removal of a student from a class, the use of suspension, expulsion, and exclusion as disciplinary measures, the grounds for suspension and expulsion and exclusion, and the procedures to be followed in such cases, including proceedings for such suspension, expulsion, and exclusion decisions and all applicable appeals processes.
2. Standards, consistent with state, federal and case laws, for school board policies on alcohol and drugs, gang-related activity, hazing, vandalism, trespassing, threats, search and seizure, disciplining of students with disabilities, intentional injury of others, self-defense, bullying, dissemination of such policies to students, their parents, and school personnel.
3. Standards for in-service training of school personnel in and examples of the appropriate management of student conduct and student offenses in violation of school board policies.

The length of time a student may be removed from attendance at school is defined in the *Code of Virginia*.³¹ Table 1 outlines the differences between short-term suspension, long-term suspension and expulsion in Virginia.³²

Table 1

Differences Between Suspensions and Expulsion

Short-term suspension is any disciplinary action whereby a student is not permitted to attend school for a period not to exceed ten school days.
Long-term suspension is any disciplinary action where a student is not permitted to attend school for more than ten school days but less than 365 calendar days.
Expulsion is any disciplinary action imposed by a school board or a committee, as provided in school board policy, where a student is not permitted to attend school within the school division and is ineligible for readmission for 365 calendar days after the date of the expulsion.

Source: Va. Code § 22.1-277. As of July 1, 2009, students may not be suspended from school if the sole cause for the suspension is truancy.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Virginia Department of Education. (N/D). Safe and Drug-Free Schools Coordinators Handbook, Section 3. [Online]. Available: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/sdfsca/toolkit/handbook/section_03.pdf. [September 2009].

³⁰ Va. Code § 22.1-279.6.

³¹ Va. Code § 22.1-276.01.

³² Ibid.

In Virginia, students may also be suspended or expelled for acts off school property when the acts lead to an adjudication of delinquency, a conviction of certain offenses, or a charge that would be a felony if committed by an adult. In these cases, schools are authorized to suspend or expel students “for sufficient cause,” including acts off school property.³³ Schools are also required to expel students who bring a firearm or other destructive device onto school property or to a school-sponsored event in violation of the Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994.³⁴ Schools are also required to expel students who bring a controlled substance, imitation controlled substance, or marijuana onto school property or to a school-sponsored event.³⁵ This applies for any student when it has been determined that they have brought a controlled substance, imitation controlled substance, or marijuana as defined by the *Code of Virginia*, onto school property or to a school-sponsored activity.³⁶ A school board may establish policy for determining whether special circumstances exist to allow for no disciplinary action or another disciplinary action, based on facts of a particular situation and may authorize a preliminary review of such cases.³⁷

School boards are authorized to consider factors in determining “special circumstances,” in particular cases that would justify another disciplinary action. Recommendations for expulsion for other than weapons and drug offenses are required to be based on consideration of factors specified in the *Code*, including the nature and seriousness of the violation and the student’s disciplinary history.³⁸

Each school division’s *Code of Conduct* is tailored to address the diverse needs of the school division. Accordingly, there are significant differences in policies among school divisions. Such differences affect the manner that a disciplinary offense is counted and reported along with a resulting disciplinary action.³⁹ The *Code of Virginia* gives teachers the authority to remove a student from a class for disruptive behavior and requires all school boards to establish the criteria for teachers to remove disruptive students.⁴⁰ Requirements for reporting incidents of disruptive behavior, procedures for written notification to a student and the student’s parents, guidelines for alternative education assignment and procedures for the return of students to class and teacher participation in the decision are also to be developed by the local school board.⁴¹

While local policies governing student conduct are required to be consistent with state and federal laws, they reflect differences in local perspectives.⁴² These differences can affect both how certain conduct is classified and how the disciplinary sanctions imposed.⁴³ Administrative discretion also contributes to differences in the classification of a behavior and the resulting disciplinary action.

³³ Va. Code § 22.1-277.

³⁴ Va. Code § 22.1-277.07.

³⁵ Va. Code § 22.1-277.08.

³⁶ Virginia Board of Education. (2009). Student Conduct Policy Guidelines– 2009 Update. [Retrieved online September 2009 at http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/Instruction/Sped/stu_conduct.pdf].

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Va. Code § 22.1- 277.06.

³⁹ Virginia Department of Education. *Annual Report on Discipline, Crime, and Violence for 2006-2007*.

⁴⁰ Va. Code § 22.1-276.2.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Virginia Department of Education. *Annual Report on Discipline, Crime, and Violence for 2006-2007*.

⁴³ Ibid.

Table 2

Examples of Variation Among School Divisions' Student Conduct Policies

Differences in student conduct policy and administrative discretion can be seen in two incidents involving one student pushing another student.

In the first incident, a sixth grader shoves another sixth grader while they are walking to the school cafeteria. In the second incident, a tenth grader shoves another tenth grader in the hallway during a change of classes. The local student conduct policy and administrative discretion could result in different disciplinary outcomes.

The incident involving the sixth grader could be viewed as a minor physical altercation and would not be required to be reported to the Virginia Department of Education unless it resulted in a suspension or expulsion.

The incident involving the tenth grader could be deemed an altercation or even assault, depending on the circumstances. The altercation incident would be reported only if it resulted in a suspension; the assault incident would be required to be reported regardless of disciplinary sanction.

In both examples, local student conduct policy and administrative discretion would affect reporting.

Source: Virginia Department of Education. *Annual Report on Discipline, Crime, and Violence for 2006-2007*.

Because each school division has latitude within state law in the creation of their code of conduct and in how consequences are assigned to their students, the rate of suspension, expulsion and placement in alternative education programs varies between school divisions. School divisions may employ diverse methods for student discipline and frequently invoke alternatives to suspension or expulsion that are unique to the individual school, as well as the age group of the students. Such approaches may include restorative justice approaches, use of alternative scheduling, community service, in-school suspension or positive behavioral approaches. A small number of schools may enforce strict punishment of students, including the removal of disciplined students from school, to promote the learning environment for other students. It is also important to note that there is a separate process in place for students who receive special education services.

Discipline of Special Education Students

The most recent reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004 specifies how schools may discipline students with disabilities. Students with disabilities can be suspended or expelled for violating their school's Code of Conduct. However, IDEA provides some additional procedures that schools must follow when disciplining students with disabilities. These procedures were put into IDEA to prevent schools from suspending or expelling students without considering the effects of the child's disability. The information contained in the following paragraphs is taken from the Regulations Governing Special Education Programs for Children with Disabilities (IDEA) in Virginia.⁴⁴

A student with a disability may be removed from the student's current educational setting up to ten cumulative days in a school year for any violation of school rules to the extent removal

⁴⁴ Virginia Department of Education. Regulations Governing Special Education Programs for Children with Disabilities in Virginia. 2009. [Online]. Available: <http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/Instruction/Sped/varegs.pdf>. [May 2009].

would be applied to a student without a disability. When the special education student is removed from his current educational setting, schools are not required to provide services during the first 10 school days in a school year if services are not provided to a student without a disability who has been similarly removed. However, for every additional removal from school that is less than 10 school days in the school year, but exceeds 10 cumulative school days of removal, and is not deemed a change in placement, the school is required to provide the student with services that are necessary in achieving the goals in the student's Individualized Educational Placement (IEP).

The procedures for determining services during periods of removals greater than 10 school days are:

- For removals which do not constitute a change in placement, school personnel, in consultation with the student's special education teacher, make the service determinations; and
- For removals that constitute a change in placement, the IEP team determines what services are needed.

Parents may request that the school continue educational services for the student during the time of the disciplinary action or allow the parent to facilitate the student's completion of school work. While the school is not required to grant such requests, many will agree so that the student doesn't fall behind.

A change in placement occurs when a student is removed from special education services for more than ten school days at a time.⁴⁵ School personnel may to consider unique circumstances on a case-by-case basis when deciding whether to remove a student with a disability long term as a result of a violation of the Code of Conduct. Within ten school days of a decision to change the placement by removing the student on a long-term basis, the school must convene a manifestation determination review (MDR) meeting. During the meeting, a review must take place to assess all relevant information from the student's file, including the student's IEP, any teacher observations, and any relevant information provided by the parent, to determine whether or not the student's behavior was a manifestation of their disability. A behavior will be considered a manifestation of the student's disability if the conduct was:

- caused by or had a "direct and substantial relationship" to the child's disability; or the
- "direct result" of the LEA's failure to implement the student's IEP.⁴⁶

A student may be removed for not more than 45 school days to an interim alternative education setting (IAES) if the student, while at school, or at a school function, inflicts "serious bodily injury" upon another person, regardless of whether or not the behavior is a manifestation of the student's disability.⁴⁷ All students, regardless if they have a disability, have certain due process rights when they are removed from school.

Due Process Rights

Specific due process rights are guaranteed to a student as soon as a determination has been made to remove that student from school. These rights apply to all students, although there are additional protections for students receiving special education services, as noted in Section A. Due process rights and the accompanying steps may vary, depending on

⁴⁵ Virginia Department of Education. Guidance Document Required Modifications to Local Policies and Procedures. 2005. [Online]. Available: <http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/sess/spedannualplan/guidancedocument.pdf>. [November 2005].

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

whether the student receives a short-term suspension, long-term suspension or is expelled. As in all cases of suspension or expulsion, any student whose presence at school poses a continuing danger to persons or property or threat of disruption may be removed from school immediately.⁴⁸

Short-term Suspension

The procedures for short-term suspension are set forth in the *Code of Virginia*.⁴⁹ A short-term suspension can be imposed by a principal, an assistant principal, or a designee teacher in the principal's absence. The principal or assistant principal is responsible for telling the student of the charges against him or her. If the student denies them, he or she is given an explanation of the facts as known to the school and an opportunity to present his version of what occurred. Notice to the parent may be oral or written, depending on local school board policy, and must include information on the length of the suspension, the availability of community-based educational options, and the student's right to return to regular school attendance when the suspension period has expired.

Long-Term Suspension

For instances of long-term suspension, local school board policy is required to state the authority to suspend a student and establish procedures for written notice to the pupil and parent of the action, its reason, and right to appeal.⁵⁰ The following information is also set forth in the Virginia Board of Education's Student Conduct Guidelines. A school board may prescribe, if the appeals of long-term suspensions may be to the school board, a committee, or the division superintendent or his designee.⁵¹ If the review is to be a hearing by the superintendent or designee, then there must also be an appeal of the decision to the full school board within thirty days. If the hearing is by a committee of the school board, then the committee may confirm or disapprove the student's suspension. The committee must have at least three members and, if the committee's decision is not unanimous, the student can then appeal to the full school board. This appeal must then be decided by the school board within thirty days.⁵²

As set for in the Guidelines by the State Board, school board policy must require that the written notice of a suspension for more than ten days include the following:

- a. The length of the suspension;
- b. Information concerning the availability of community-based educational, alternative education, or intervention programs; and
- c. The student's eligibility to return to regular school attendance upon the expiration of the suspension or to attend an appropriate alternative education program approved by the school board during or upon the expiration of the suspension.

School board policy may permit or require students suspended for more than 10 days to attend an alternative education program provided by the school board for the term of the suspension.⁵³ The cost of any community-based educational program, or alternative

⁴⁸ Va. Code Ann. § 22.1-277.04.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ Va. Code Ann. § 22.1-277.05.

⁵¹ Virginia Board of Education. 2009. Student Conduct Policy Guidelines—2009 Update. [Online]. Available: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/Instruction/Sped/stu_conduct.pdf. [September 2009].

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ Va. Code Ann. § 22.1-277.2:1.

education program which is not a part of the school division, is the responsibility of the parent of the student.⁵⁴

Expulsions

The information contained in this section is taken from the Virginia Board of Education *Student Conduct Policy Guidelines–2009 Update*.⁵⁵ In Virginia, expulsion can only be imposed by the school board, or a committee of the school board. Local school board policy is required to state the authority to expel the student and establish the procedures for written notice to the student and parent of the action, its reason, and right to a hearing and confirmation.⁵⁶ A school board may determine whether the hearing is before the school board or a committee of the school board. If a hearing is held by a committee of the school board, the committee may confirm or disapprove the expulsion. However, the committee is to have at least three members and, if the committee's decision is not unanimous, the student may appeal the decision to the full school board. If this occurs, the appeal must be decided within thirty days. The policy must also provide for confirmation or disapproval of a proposed expulsion by the school board, or committee, even if the student does not pursue a hearing.

As stated in the *Code of Virginia*,⁵⁷ written notice of expulsion is to include the following:

1. The length of the expulsion;
2. Information to the parent of the student concerning the availability of community-based educational, training, and intervention programs;
3. Whether or not the student is eligible to return to regular school attendance, or to attend an appropriate alternative education program approved by the school board, or an adult education program offered by the school division, during or upon the expiration of the expulsion;
4. A notice advising that the student may petition the school board for readmission to be effective one calendar year from the date of the student's expulsion, if the school board determines that the student is ineligible to return to regular school attendance or to attend during the expulsion an alternative education program or an adult education program in the school division; and
5. The terms and conditions, if any, under which readmission may be granted.

The cost of any community-based educational program, or alternative education program or educational option which is not a part of the school division is the responsibility of the parent of the student. School board policy may permit or require students expelled to attend an alternative education program provided by the school board for the term of the expulsion.⁵⁸

Virginia's Disciplinary Statistics

Information on Virginia's suspensions and expulsions, by school division, from 2001 to 2005 is included as Appendix E. As stated previously, the data on school divisions' suspension and expulsion rates reflect differences in school divisions' local student conduct policies. Therefore, it is important to remember, when comparing discipline rates, that local disciplinary policies vary and it is not appropriate to compare school divisions' disciplinary

⁵⁴ Virginia Board of Education. 2009. *Student Conduct Policy Guidelines–2009 Update*.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ Va. Code Ann. § 22.1-277.06.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ Va. Code Ann. § 22.1-277.2:1.

statistics since their corresponding codes of conduct may also be dissimilar. Moreover, the level of administrative discretion granted to school officials within a school division may also be disparate. In addition to establishing local codes of conduct, school divisions are also required to submit data to the Virginia Department of Education on all incidents of discipline, crime and violence.⁵⁹ It is important to note that a single incident may involve multiple students and result in multiple disciplinary actions and more than one offense.⁶⁰

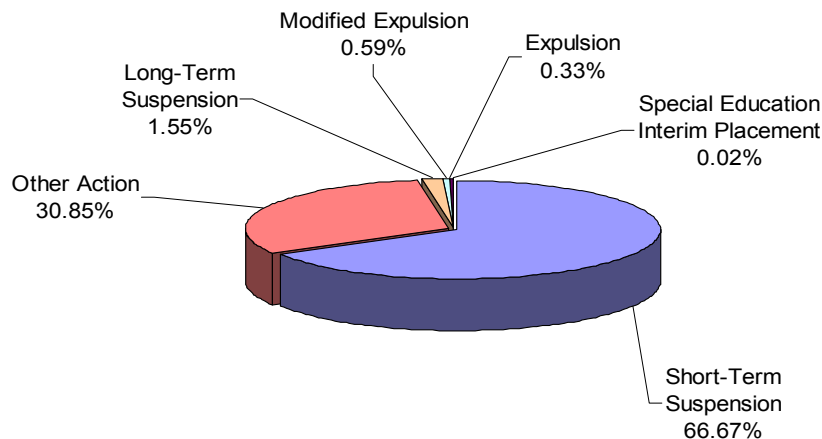
The disciplinary outcomes in Virginia school divisions in the 2004-2005 academic year are.⁶¹

- Over 66 percent (200,945) of the disciplinary actions involved short-term suspensions.
- Over 30 percent (92,996) involved “other action” that did not involve suspension or expulsion.
- Long-term suspension constituted 1.55 percent (4,661) of disciplinary actions.
- Expulsion constituted only 0.33 percent (985) of disciplinary actions.
- Expulsions were reported modified 1,771 times, representing .59 percent of disciplinary actions.
- Special education interim placements were used 63 times, resulting in 0.02 percent of disciplinary actions.

Disciplinary actions reported for all violations in 2004-2005 totaled 301,421.⁶² Two-thirds of the disciplinary actions involved short-term suspensions and under one-third involved “other action” not involving out-of-school suspension or expulsion. These other actions may include in-school detention, bus suspension, or Saturday detention.

Chart 1

**Disciplinary Outcomes
in Virginia School Divisions
2004-2005**



Source: Virginia Department of Education. Annual Report on Discipline, Crime, and Violence for 2004-2005.

⁵⁹ Va. Code Ann. § 22.1-279.3:1.

⁶⁰ Virginia Department of Education. Annual Report on Discipline, Crime, and Violence for 2004-2005.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

Table 3

**Suspension/Expulsion Options
in Virginia School Divisions
2004-2005**

Type Option	Percent
Out-of-school suspension (released to parent/guardian supervision)	97%
In school suspension	87%
Alternative suspension program (division-based out-of-school program)	50%
Alternative suspension program (regionally-based out-of-school program)	46%
Alternative suspension program (school-based out-of-school program)	29%
Alternative expulsion program for drug offenses	81%
Alternative suspension program (referred to non-profit organization)	20%
Other	15%

Source: Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services. 2005. The 2005 Virginia School Safety Survey.

Virginia's disciplinary statistics show that school divisions utilize short-term suspension the most frequently. This data also reveals that school divisions are striving to employ other alternatives to suspension or expulsion in order to keep students in school. For example, a survey conducted by the Virginia Center for School Safety shows that nearly 92 percent of all school divisions said that they employ in-school suspension. These and other types of suspension/expulsion options are listed in below in Table 3. Information about alternative education programs in Virginia will be discussed in greater detail in the following sections.

C. ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN VIRGINIA

Alternative education has historically served diverse populations of students, including those who were unsuccessful within the regular public school system.⁶³ Regardless of the form the alternative education program takes, two characteristics are typically present:

1. alternative education programs are designed to respond to a group of students who appear to not be optimally served by the regular school setting, and
2. these programs tend to be designed differently from the traditional school environment.⁶⁴

Just as there are many types and settings for alternative schools, there are many delivery models based on the programs' philosophy and the needs of the students they serve. However, alternative education programs are distinguishable from the students' regular school placement and program types include but are not limited to:

- alternative classrooms;
- school-within-a-school programming;
- separate alternative schools; and
- second or last-chance schools for disruptive students.⁶⁵

⁶³ National Center for Education Statistics. Public Alternative Schools and Programs for Students At Risk of Education Failure: 2000-01. [Online]. Available: <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2002/2002004.pdf>. [September 2002].

⁶⁴ Ibid.

In Virginia, alternative education programs are designed to help students acquire knowledge and develop skills and attitudes reflected in the goals of education for Virginia's public schools.⁶⁶ Alternative education programs are authorized but not required to be established.⁶⁷ By definition, programs may include those for gifted and talented students, as well as for students enrolled in vocational education classes; however, alternative education is not limited to these programs.⁶⁸ Virginia's statute is vague in that it defines alternative education programs as

*...including, but not limited to, night school, adult education, or any other educational program designed to offer instruction to students for whom the regular program of instruction may be inappropriate.*⁶⁹

Alternative education programs are typically established for students who have been removed from the regular school program, through suspension or expulsion. Virginia statute also allows school boards to either permit or require students expelled for weapons or drug-related offenses to attend an alternative education program provided by the school board for the term of the expulsion.⁷⁰ In addition to students who have been expelled, school board policy may permit or require students suspended for more than ten days to attend an alternative education program provided by the school board for the term of the suspension.⁷¹

Additionally, alternative education programs can serve as a bridge to postsecondary education or training and employment. School divisions are struggling with the challenges of keeping at-risk or disengaged students on their roles. Alternative education programs are a crucial component in the public education system in that they provide a meaningful option to students who are no longer able to participate and/or not succeeding in the traditional educational environment.

Regional Alternative Education Programs

Virginia's regional alternative education programs were established to provide options for students who no longer have access to traditional school programs. Students are assigned to regional alternative education programs because they have received long-term suspensions, are returning from juvenile correctional centers, or have other serious offenses. The information contained in the following paragraphs is taken from Department of Education's *Annual Report on Regional Alternative Education Programs*.⁷²

Virginia's regional alternative education programs were established by the General Assembly in 1993-1994 to allow two or more school divisions to establish options for students who have a pending violation of school board policy, have been expelled or suspended on a long-term basis, or are returning from juvenile correctional centers. Regional alternative education programs are typically small, with a low teacher to student

⁶⁵ Indiana Department of Education. Alternative Education Programs. [N/D]. [Online]. Available: <http://www.doe.in.gov/alted/altedlinkpg.html>.

⁶⁶ 8 VAC 20-330-10.

⁶⁷ Virginia Board of Education. 2009. Student Conduct Policy Guidelines–2009 Update.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Va. Code Ann. § 22.1-276.01.

⁷⁰ U.S. Department of Education. January 2004. Guidance Concerning State and Local Responsibilities under the Gun-Free Schools Act 9.

⁷¹ Va. Code Ann. § 22.1-277.2:1.

⁷² Virginia Board of Education. 2008. Report on Regional Alternative Education Programs.

ratio and offer academic and other services to help students succeed. The programs are designed to:

- reduce dropout rates;
- improve students' self-esteem and responsibility;
- correct students' dysfunctional and/or dangerous behaviors;
- return students to their sending high school so they may continue their education and graduate; and
- assist in the identification of interests.

A total of 116 school divisions worked in collaboration to form the 29 operational programs. Several of these participating school divisions have multiple subprograms and sites. The Department of Education reported that, in 2007-2008, 4,002 students were served by regional programs. The number of slots funded is 1,882. A map detailing the location of Virginia's regional alternative education programs is included as Appendix F; a corresponding listing, as Appendix G.

Regional alternative education programs are funded through based on the state's share of the incremental per pupil cost for providing such programs. The General Assembly intended that this incremental per pupil amount be in addition to the basic aid per pupil funding provided to the affected school division for such students. The Department of Education has generated a funding formula for the regional alternative education programs based on staffing patterns and the composite index of local ability to pay. No local matching funds are required.⁷³

State funding increased from the initial General Assembly appropriation of \$1.2 million for 1993-1994 to over \$6.7 million for 2007-2008.⁷⁴ School divisions provide in-kind support for such items as instructional materials, additional staff, pupil transportation and facilities.⁷⁵ An example of the funding is shown below.

Regional Alternative Education per Pupil Cost	10,565
Basic Aid per Pupil for Sample School Division	- <u>5,000</u>
Regional Alternative Education per Pupil Amount	5,565

Virginia's regional alternative education programs are required to have certain program components, as set forth in the *Code of Virginia*.⁷⁶ These program components include the following:

1. An agreement between participating school divisions and approved by their respective governing bodies;
2. A plan for the administration, management, and support of the program;
3. A procedure for obtaining the parents' or caregivers' participation or support;
4. An interagency agreement for cooperation executed by the local agencies;
5. A curriculum for instruction designed to establish high standards and academic achievement for participating students;
6. An emphasis on building self-esteem and the promotion of personal and social responsibility;
7. A low pupil/teacher ratio;

⁷³ Department of Education. October 2006. Personal Communication with Cynthia Cave.

⁷⁴ Virginia Board of Education. 2008. Report on Regional Alternative Education Programs.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Va. Code Ann. § 22.1-209.1:2

8. An extended day program for tutoring; counseling; organized, age-appropriate, developmental education for elementary and middle school children; and opportunities that enhance acculturation and permit students to improve their social and interpersonal relationship skills;
9. Community outreach to build strong school, business, and community partnerships, and to promote parental involvement;
10. Specific, measurable goals and objectives and an evaluation;
11. A plan for transitioning the enrolled students into the relevant school division's regular program; and
12. A current program of staff development and training.

The annual evaluation data gathered by the Department of Education consistently indicates that students who have attended these programs realized improvements in academic performance; have had decreases in disciplinary infractions and have had high ratings for parental involvement.⁷⁷ Students served by these programs frequently have significant behavioral problems, low self-esteem, and academic failure. Most programs reported that students placed or assigned to their program come to the program as “a last chance option.” Most of these students were at risk of dropping out, being expelled permanently, or failing academically. Some were previously incarcerated.

In the most recent evaluation of the regional alternative education programs, 84 percent of the enrolled students remained in school (either remaining in the program or transitioning to their home school).⁷⁸ A majority of program administrators reported perceived changes in student academic performance. Program administrators also reported decreased violence, firearms, and weapons possession incidences as well as decreases in substance abuse and property offenses. Parental involvement, technology, staff development, resources, discipline policies, selection process, student assessments, student services, and the academic program were also rated as being either good or excellent.

Local Alternative Education Programs

In Virginia, local school divisions have independently taken an active role in providing alternative education programs for students. A significant percentage of school divisions have opted to offer locally-created alternative education programs. These programs may be in addition to the regional alternative programs or, in some school divisions, may be in lieu of the regional alternative programs. School divisions have created these local programs to meet the diverse needs of the students and the community.

Survey of Local Alternative Education Programs

A major finding that emerged from the Commission's various study activities was the lack of information on the availability of local programs which provide alternative educational services. While there is an annual report on state-funded regional alternative education programs,⁷⁹ there is no central inventory of locally-created and administered alternative education schools/programs. A survey of school divisions regarding available alternative education programs would be helpful in determining what school divisions had created local alternative education programs to meet the needs of their students as well as whether there was a need for additional state-funded, regional alternative education programs or program slots.

⁷⁷ Virginia Board of Education. 2008. Report on Regional Alternative Education Programs.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Va. Code Ann. § 22.1-209.1:2.

In response to this finding, in 2006, the Commission on Youth partnered with the Department of Education to survey school divisions on locally created alternative education programs. The survey was designed to obtain data on these programs and to ascertain whether there were any unmet educational needs. The results of the survey were communicated to the Virginia Commission on Youth and the findings from the survey were subsequently published in the Commission's *Guide on Local Alternative Education Programs in the Commonwealth*.⁸⁰ The details about these local alternative education programs are discussed below.

Survey results produced information on the structure, program goals, program components, students served, teacher/student ratio, financing and mission of local alternative education programs as well as the barriers to serving students. The response rate from school divisions was 95 percent (126 of 132). Survey responses included information on:

- Virginia's 29 regional alternative education programs; and
- School divisions' practices for offering alternative educational services to suspended/expelled students.

Overview of Local Alternative Education Programs

The survey findings discussed in the following section are for 124 of the 160 identified local alternative education programs, as well as for the responding regional alternative education programs, and depict activity during 2005-2006 academic year. It is important to note that the Fairfax County Public School Division created thirty-six separate alternative education programs to serve the needs of their students. These 36 programs are quite diverse and tailored for specific student populations. The specific program details for these programs are not included in the data below.⁸¹ Information discussed below specifically pertains to the 124 programs for which survey data was submitted, as well the regional programs that were included in the survey.

Local school divisions reported, in the survey, that over 15,000 students were served by 124 local alternative education programs during the 2005-2006 academic year. Alternative programs may include online courses, court educational services, GED preparation and the opportunity to make up assignments for short-term suspensions.

Educational Services for Disciplined Students

A major finding from the survey was that only half of Virginia's school divisions offered all disciplined students some form of educational service. Of the 123 school divisions that responded to the survey, 57 reported occurrences where suspended/expelled students were not offered educational services. The number of students not offered educational services when suspended or expelled was reported to be 8,820 during the 2005-2006 academic year. It is not certain if these students were expelled or removed from school on a short-term or long-term basis.

⁸⁰ Virginia Commission on Youth. 2008. Report Document 144, Guide to Local Alternative Education Options for Suspended and Expelled Students in the Commonwealth.

⁸¹ More information about Fairfax County Public Schools' Alternative Education Programs is available at the Office of Alternative School Programs, <http://www.fcps.edu/dss/ips/nontraditional-schools/Functions.htm>. [September 2009].

Availability and Composition of Virginia's Alternative Education Programs

While there are 29 regional programs, the survey revealed there are approximately 160 local alternative education programs.⁸²

- 65 school divisions had access to regional programs.
- 54 had both local and regional programs.
- 16 school divisions had local division programs only.
- Four had no access to alternative education programs.
- The average number of programs per locality is 2.5 and more than half of divisions reported access to at least one program.

A map detailing the location of these programs is included as Appendix F. A listing of the schools divisions and whether the programs contained within the division are local and/or regional is included as Appendix G.

Several school divisions cited the following reasons for not having a local alternative education program:

- financial;
- lack of facility space;
- rare occurrence of suspensions and expulsions;
- use of homebound instruction for special instances;
- prefer to use of creative methods to educate students in their home schools; and
- their division's school board policy supports the concept of student discipline.

Placement Delays in Local and Regional Programs

A majority of respondents indicated that, while they did not have difficulty in locating an alternative education placement for their students, students frequently had to wait to be served. For 124 of the 160 local programs, the reported placement delay was typically a week or less. This occurred in almost half (55) of the reported incidents of placement delay (113). There were 26 reported incidents of placement delay where students had to wait between one to four weeks for a slot. However, there were also 20 reported incidents of placement delay for students waiting more than four weeks for a slot.

Placement delays in regional alternative programs were also captured in the survey. Respondents reported 43 instances of placement delay for the regional programs. Primarily, the reported delays were under a week (16). However, there were 12 reported incidents of up to two weeks and 14 reported incidents of three weeks or greater. Seasonal demands may account for a percentage of placement delays, e.g., students could be placed more quickly at the beginning of the academic year rather than the winter or spring months.

Profile of Students Served by Local Alternative Education Programs

The survey revealed that the local alternative education programs served primarily students who were referred due to disciplinary issues. These students were:

- Expelled;
- Suspended (primarily long-term suspensions. but some short-term);
- In danger of being suspended or expelled;
- Returning from detention-incarceration;
- Experiencing truancy concerns; and
- Placed because of behavioral issues which kept them from the traditional school setting.

⁸² Regional programs accounted for the largest proportion of programs available to local divisions.

The breakdown of the student population served by local programs is as follows:

- 75 percent students were expelled/long-term suspended;
- 72 percent students were in danger of being suspended or expelled;
- 10 percent academic reasons;
- 7 percent in danger of dropping out;
- 6 percent require non-traditional classroom setting;
- 6 percent misbehavior/mental health or medical issues;
- 5 percent GED Prep/Individual Student Alternative Education Plan (ISAEP);
- 3 percent released from a juvenile correctional/detention center.

These local programs served a much smaller percentage of students who were placed because of issues other than discipline. Respondents stated a smaller number of students attended the local alternative program for other reasons including:

- The need for flexible schedules due to a job outside of the classroom;
- Lack of success in the traditional classroom and/or at-risk of dropping out;
- Inability to attend their home school for documented medical/psychological reasons;
- Acquire additional credits in order to graduate;
- Preparing to take their GED; and
- Participating in the Individualized Student Alternative Education Plan (ISAEP).⁸³

Local Alternative Education Programs Mission/Goals

Over 50 of the survey respondents indicated that the alternative education program(s) in their school division had the primary goal of transitioning students back to their regular academic setting.⁸⁴ This goal is identical to the primary goal of Virginia's Regional Alternative Education Programs. Table 4 describes the goals of the participating alternative education programs.

Components of Local Alternative Programs

A significant proportion of the local alternative education programs allow for verified credits.⁸⁵ Eighty-nine of 124 identified local programs allow students to earn verified credits. Thirty three of these local programs do not; however, 23 of these programs serve students with diverse needs, such as elementary or middle-school aged students. The breakdown of these 23 programs is shown in Chart 2.

Another component which varied was the number of hours each week the local programs operated. Of the 124 responding local programs, over 60 percent of the programs operated between 21 to 30 hours each week. Fifteen percent operated fewer than 20 hours per week. Only six programs operated more than 30 hours per week. Table 5 discusses the breakdown of the weekly operating hours for these programs.

⁸³ The Individual Student Alternative Education Plan (ISAEP) program is for students ages 16 to 18 and having difficulty finding success in a regular classroom environment. Most school divisions provide program ISAEP services, which includes career guidance counseling, mandatory enrollment in a GED preparation program and career and technical education.

⁸⁴ This applied to the responding regional and local alternative education programs.

⁸⁵ As established by 8 VAC 20-131-110, a verified unit of credit is based on a minimum of 140 clock hours of instruction, successful completion of the requirements of the course, and the achievement by the student of a passing score on the end-of-course SOL test for that course. A student may also earn a verified unit of credit pursuant to criteria established in guidelines adopted by the Board of Education.

Table 4

Goals of Alternative Education Programs in Virginia

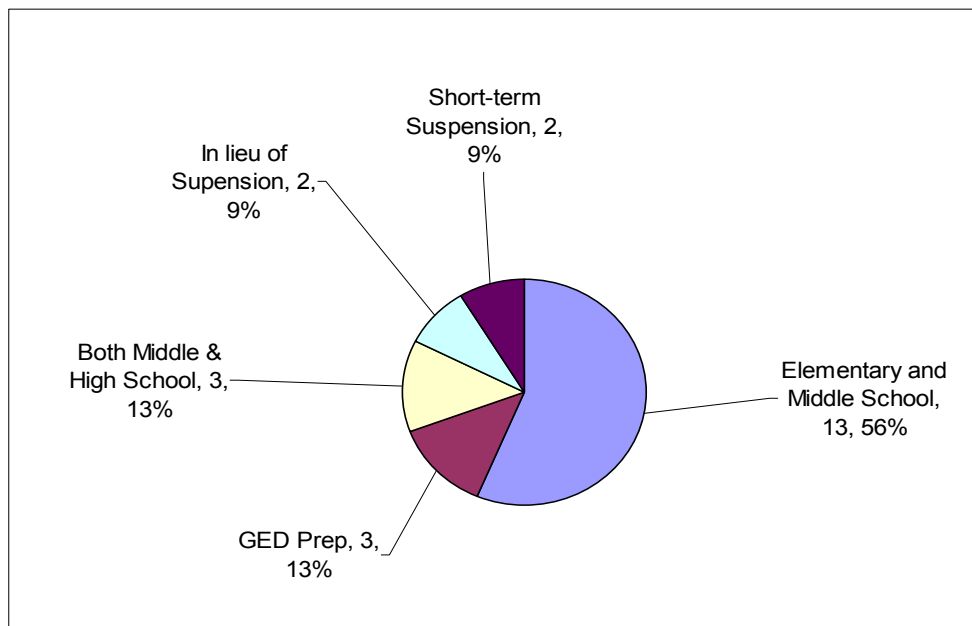
Program Goals	Percentage of Programs
Transition students to regular academic setting	50.54%
Afford students the opportunity to acquire remediation and to socially mature.	11.96%
Earn GED	10.33%
Keep students in program for remainder of their education	10.87%
Improve behavior, attendance, and academic progress	4.35%
Graduate with a diploma	3.26%
Continue students' education while preventing interruption in the classroom	2.17%
Alternative to suspension	2.72%
Provide core academics during period of suspension	2.17%
First-time violators related to drug and alcohol	0.54%
Hold until felony charges are cleared	0.54%
Community involvement & community service	0.54%
N/A	2.17%
Total	100.00%

Source: Commission on Youth Survey of Local Alternative Education Programs, 2007.

Chart 2

Local Alternative Education Programs Not Offering Verified Credits & Characteristics of Students Served

n=23



Source: Commission on Youth Survey of Local Alternative Education Programs, 2007.

Table 5

Local Alternative Education Programs Weekly Operating Hours

Hours/Week	Frequency	Percentage
0-10 hours	16	13
11-20 hours	15	12
21-30 hours	77	62
More than 30 hours	6	5
N/A	10	8
Total	124	100

Source: Commission on Youth Survey of Local Alternative Education Programs, 2007.

Local alternative programs have an array of program components and services, varying by school division. Core academic classes and academic remediation/training were the most frequently identified program components. Program components identified by the local programs were:

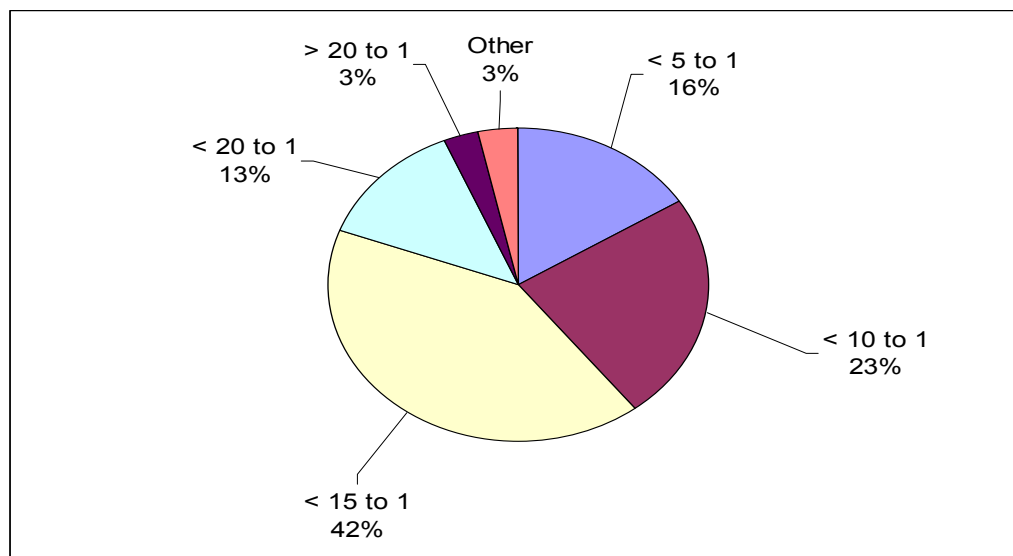
- Core academic classes
- Academic remediation or tutoring
- Behavior management/social skills training
- Community service
- Conflict resolution training
- Crisis intervention
- Drug/substance abuse prevention training
- Work participation – not school-based
- Student assistance programming
- Restorative justice/practices
- Mediation
- Elective classes
- In-house counseling
- Life skills training
- Parent/family involvement
- Peer mediation
- Partnerships with community-based organizations
- Technology-based instruction
- GED Prep

Student to Teacher Ratio

Local alternative education program typically had a smaller student to teacher ratio than the traditional school setting. Student to teacher ratios are most frequently identified as being less than 15 to 1 (42%). A significant percentage of the local alternative programs (23%) had student to teacher ratios less than 10 to 1. Several respondents noted that ratios may be adjusted based on the age and the need of the students being served by the programs. Chart 3 outlines the local alternative education programs student to teacher ratios.

Chart 3

Local Alternative Education Programs Student to Teacher Ratio



Source: Commission on Youth Survey of Local Alternative Education Programs, 2007.

Funding and Per Pupil Costs of Local Alternative Education Programs

Just as there was variation in the program components of local alternative education programs, there was also variation in the per pupil costs. Again, these statistics are attributable to the 124 local programs included in the survey. Variation in program can be attributed to the program design and mission.

The average cost per pupil was reported to be \$4,850.75, with the per pupil program cost ranging from \$100 to \$22,702. The median per pupil cost was \$6,000. Chart 4 shows the number of programs and breakdown of per pupil funding.

Survey respondents noted that half of all local alternative education programs were funded entirely with local dollars. Table 6 shows a breakdown of the local funding. Slightly over twenty percent of the local alternative education program received at least 73 percent of their funding from local funds. The remaining programs received a mixture of state, federal and/or grant funding.

Recap of Survey Findings

Local programs offer a variety of program components tailored to meet the needs of their students and a majority of local programs serve youth in danger of being suspended or expelled. Identified program challenges discussed by respondents include challenges in offering students more instructional time, lack of facility space, transportation concerns, and retaining qualified staff. The most frequently identified challenge by all respondents was the lack of family involvement/interest is the challenge most frequently identified.

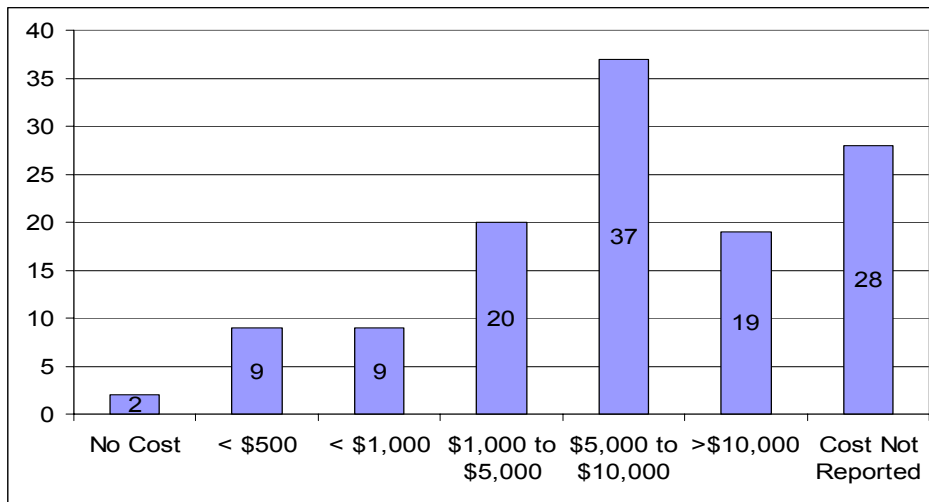
Local alternative programs were utilized as a bridge back into the school system and served to transition students back to the traditional school setting. The primary mission of

these local programs is to serve youth who have been suspended or expelled from their home schools. Local alternative education programs, based on their mission, were also being used to reduce disruptive behavior, reduce academic failure, improve academic performance, and reduce the likelihood that a student will leave school without a diploma or GED.

Chart 4

**Local Alternative Education Programs
Programs and Per Pupil Funding**

n=124



Source: Commission on Youth Survey of Local Alternative Education Programs, 2007.

Table 6

**Local Alternative Education Programs
Percentage of Local Funding**

Percentage Local \$	Frequency	Percentage
0	1	0.81%
20-25	13	10.48%
33-36	5	4.03%
40-48	5	4.03%
50-55	7	5.65%
60-62	2	1.61%
73-75	5	4.03%
80-85	7	5.65%
90-98	7	5.65%
100-110	61	49.19%
N/A	11	8.87%
Total	124	100.00%

Source: Commission on Youth Survey of Local Alternative Education Programs, 2007.

D. IDENTIFIED ISSUES WITH VIRGINIA'S ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Alternative education programs play an important role by ensuring that all students receive educational services, particularly when they have been unsuccessful in the traditional school setting. Accordingly, it is crucial that all of Virginia's alternative education programs have a well-defined role in Virginia's public school system. The following issues were identified throughout the course of this study.

Lack of Clarity on Virginia's Alternative Education Programs

Alternative education programs help school divisions keep at-risk or disengaged students on their roles and provide them with instruction, as well as other important services. However, there is no consistent and established definition of what an alternative program/school is and what components must be present for Virginia's locally created alternative education programs. As shown by the survey results, there is great diversity among the local alternative education programs, such as program hours and the ability to earn verified credits. In Virginia, the term "alternative education" covers all educational activities that fall outside the traditional K-12 school system, including vocational programs, special programs for gifted children and programs for the handicapped.⁸⁶

The *Code of Virginia* specifies that the Board of Education is to establish educational alternatives for students whose needs are not being met in existing standards.⁸⁷ There is also a statutory framework for regional alternative education programs for students who have violated school board policies, have been long-term suspended or expelled from school attendance, or have been released from a juvenile correctional center.⁸⁸ The statute is clear in describing the mission of Virginia's regional alternative education programs as programs that provide options for students who no longer have access to traditional school programs. However, a more unified definition of alternative education could also be helpful to more accurately describe Virginia's regional and locally-operated programs. A clearer definition of the regional and the local programs would also allow for both funding opportunities and evaluation purposes. The Advisory Group received information about improving the definition of alternative education programs and agreed that nontraditional education was a more accurate description of the options currently available in the Commonwealth. Henrico County currently categorizes its programs in this manner.⁸⁹ Improving the manner that existing programs are classified can only help with how they are developed, administered and perceived as being a viable option to the traditional public school setting.

Gaps in Alternative Education Services

The Department of Education has conducted an annual evaluation of the regional alternative education programs and the results have consistently shown that these programs are working and efficiently leveraging funds to serve youth across the Commonwealth. However, some localities do not participate in these programs. A listing of participating school divisions is included as Appendix G. Furthermore, some programs have indicated that there were delays in placing students into the existing programs. School divisions have stated there are unmet needs for students requiring alternative education placements. Findings from site visits were that the traditional school environment is

⁸⁶ 8 VAC 20-330-10.

⁸⁷ VA Code Ann. § 22.1-253.13:1.

⁸⁸ VA Code Ann. § 22.1-209.1:2.

⁸⁹ Henrico County Public Schools. Nontraditional Programs. [Online]. Available:

http://www.henrico.k12.va.us/administration/instruction/nontraditional/Mission_Vision.html. [September 2009].

becoming less effective for increasing numbers of students. This is especially true for at-risk, vulnerable, and disengaged students. At the same time, students are finding success in the Commonwealth's regional alternative education programs. These programs create sustained, small support systems of peers and caring adults. They have rigorous standards and high expectations for students while paying attention to the quality of staff. Most importantly, these programs focus on developing and transforming the student. Allowing at-risk students to access the educational services provided in the regional alternative education programs without a disciplinary offense would be an effective way to possibly prevent suspension, expulsion or even dropping out.

Enrollment in alternative education programs can be an option for students at-risk of long-term suspension due to a violation of school board policy and not only be a "last-chance model". Alternatives to the traditional school setting are a proactive response to the needs of students for whom existing school structures are a bad fit. Alternative education can promote excellence and high expectations within a nontraditional school setting. Additionally, alternative education programs can serve as a bridge to postsecondary education or training and employment. School divisions are struggling with the challenges of keeping at-risk or disengaged students on their rolls in order to provide them with instruction so they may receive diplomas. Unfortunately, these students may not ever return to the traditional school setting. These students may be "recovered" and receive educational services at an alternative education program in lieu of returning to school. However, these students frequently drop out and may opt to receive their GEDs.

Allowing students at-risk of receiving a long-term suspension to attend a regional alternative education program is one way to intervene with students before a violation of school board policy occurs. Moreover, as a strategy to make schools safer and more secure, the Board is encouraging school divisions to "find innovative ways to keep students with behavioral challenges in school."⁹⁰

Lack of Information on Alternative Education Options

Another issue identified in this study is that there is still very little information regarding the availability of local programs that provide educational services to suspended and expelled students. A complete picture of alternative education programs, supported by data, is important for collecting and sharing information on unmet service needs and existing programs and promising practices throughout the Commonwealth.

While there is an annual report on Regional Alternative Education Programs pursuant to §22.1-209.1:2 of the *Code of Virginia*, there is no central inventory of locally created and administered alternative education schools/programs. Such a resource would be helpful to provide educators, health and human service workers, juvenile justice officials, caregivers and others with information on all available alternatives to students who have been suspended or expelled and would be a resource to local school divisions which may be unaware of programs that exist in the Commonwealth. This information is valuable in that it could also guide local school divisions in building programs to address unmet service needs of at-risk and disciplined students. Moreover, a resource outlining available local programs could provide a more complete picture of existing programs and promising practices throughout the Commonwealth.

⁹⁰ Board of Education. September 26, 2007. Comprehensive Plan: 2007-2012, Objective 8, Strategy 3.

Lack of Guidance/Standards for Local Alternative Education Schools/Programs

In Virginia, there are approximately 160 local alternative education programs and all are very diverse. Alternative education programs are a crucial element of states' public education systems because they provide an option to educate students for whom traditional education systems are responsible but may be ineffective. Typically, students enrolled in alternative education programs are older and face a range of issues that may have contributed to their exit from traditional school systems. These students may require stronger program components to help them catch up and to be successful. It is important that these students also have the opportunity to earn a diploma, meet high academic standards and prepare for postsecondary options.

Twenty percent of local alternative education programs do not allow students to earn verified credits. Per pupil program costs ranged from \$100 to \$22,702 and the median cost was \$6,000. Half of all local programs were entirely locally funded. Twenty-five percent of local alternative education programs operate fewer than 20 hours per week.

Local alternative education programs determine their own program design to meet the needs of their school division. It is important that alternative education programs have the flexibility to design their programs to respond to higher standards in ways that are not contrary to their mission. Model guidelines may be helpful to offer consistency in programs, such as the guidelines set out for the regional alternative education options. Guidelines could address instruction, teacher/student ratio, assessment and parent/community involvement.

No Central Point of Contact for Alternative Education

In Virginia, there is no central point of contact for information about alternative education programs. Local school divisions' alternative education programs are very diverse and are not monitored by the Department. Alternative education programs are on the continuum of educational services and dropout prevention. Improving coordination of alternative education programs would allow for improved utilization and transition of students from alternative to traditional educational settings.

A central point of contact could monitor and advise on policies and procedures as they impact alternative education programs, help disseminate research on alternative education practices; conduct training on alternative education for school divisions, review and assist with the publication of literature and data regarding alternative education; educate the public about alternative education; and develop start-up processes for new alternative programs.

Tracking Students After They Attend Alternative Education

Frequently, it is unknown what happens to students after they are referred to alternative education, in particular if these students attend a local alternative education program. Students could successfully transition to their home school, remain in the alternative program, return to their home school but later be readmitted into an alternative program, drop out or leave the program but later return or acquire a GED. Student identifiers developed by the Department of Education could be used to ascertain the alternative education placement as well as the educational outcome. This could help localities track at-risk students and determine whether they are reenrolling into school or dropping out. This tracking could also show which alternative education programs are successful in transitioning students back to their home schools or helping them secure a diploma or a GED.

E. OTHER IDENTIFIED ISSUES

The paragraphs which follow describe issues not directly related to Virginia's alternative education programs, specifically, the shortage of school-based prevention programs and effective disciplinary programs.

Shortage of School-based Prevention Programs in Virginia

There is a shortage of school-based prevention programs that address violence prevention, anger management, conflict resolution and other behavioral health needs. These programs reduce suspensions and expulsions by offering valuable prevention services for youth who may be considered "at-risk."

The Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act distributes federal funds to schools to operate a wide variety of programs that address drug abuse prevention, violence prevention and the creation of safe educational environments. Alternatives to suspension and expulsion may also receive funds. The law divides the available funds on the basis of the number of students in each state. The result of this formula is that funds are spread thinly across the school divisions in Virginia. In addition, existing programs have been negatively impacted by recent reductions to federal Safe and Drug-Free School grants:

- In 2006, the level of funding decreased 21%;
- In 2007, there was an additional 11% reduction; and
- In 2008, there was a 15% reduction.

Currently there are no state dollars to support prevention efforts in Virginia schools. The projected level of Virginia's allocation is approximately \$4.41 per student.

However, Virginia possesses a program model in place to meet the prevention programming needs of local school divisions. Student Assistance Programs (SAPs) utilize a comprehensive systems approach of evidence-based strategies to respond to K-12 student challenges. In Virginia, 36 school divisions reported having SAPs. In 2006, 297,700 students (20% of the total student population) were served by SAPs.

SAPs provide case management, substance abuse counseling, student assessment or pre-assessment, community liaison work and faculty consultation. The most common referrals are to community services boards, substance abuse counselors, psychologists, substance abuse treatment agencies and the health department. Expected outcomes are improved attendance and grades, as well as promotion or graduation.

SAPs create a flexible process intervention plan that is consistently monitored. The basic goals of SAPs are to:

- provide collaboration between in-school and community resources;
- encourage parent involvement;
- increase the opportunity to help students participate in positive activities;
- promote a safer school environment;
- seek to improve grades, attendance and social challenges;
- examine the best method for transitioning students back into a traditional school setting following alternative education; and
- surround students with support services.

Outcomes from a study conducted of Pennsylvania's SAPs reveal improved school outcomes, improved attendance, decreased discipline problems, increases in grade

promotion, and increases in graduation rates. One-third of the students who were served had improved attendance, while two-thirds of students were not suspended after an SAP referral and were either promoted or graduated from school.⁹¹ While Virginia's SAPs have consistently high satisfaction ratings, there is an inability to measure the effectiveness of existing SAP services. The Board of Education, in its Comprehensive Plan for 2007-2012, is promoting the establishment of student assistance programming.⁹²

Although most school divisions with SAPs have written policies and standard procedures to guide SAP services, there are some administrative gaps. Only half of the school divisions with SAP have policies describing the purpose of their SAP, how to refer students, and the limits of student confidentiality. About two-thirds of school divisions have systematic methods of informing school personnel, students, and parents about SAP services. Nearly two-thirds of the school divisions maintain records of SAP services, but fewer than half document student outcomes from SAP services.⁹³

Effective Disciplinary Programs in Virginia

Training school staff and educators in effective classroom management may increase the consistency of discipline, which can potentially reduce suspensions and expulsions. Evidence exists that imposing negative consequences for unacceptable behavior can increase antisocial acts, school vandalism, tardiness and truancy and the dropout rate. In many instances, suspension provides little more than a respite from the students' academic or behavior problems. Students typically do not return to school with a more positive attitude or increased enthusiasm toward learning. With each suspension, the probability increases that a student will fall farther behind academically, which frequently only serves to trigger more misbehavior. A school-wide system of effective discipline that focuses on teaching and rewarding student behavior can have a significant impact on academic performance and social behavior.

The Virginia Department of Education, in its Comprehensive State Plan, has offered a strategy to encourage school divisions to utilize innovative ways to keep students with behavioral challenges in school.⁹⁴ Effective School-wide Discipline (ESD) is one program being used in Virginia schools that is yielding improvements in both academics and in disciplinary referrals. ESD is a collaborative, proactive process to developing effective strategies for addressing inappropriate behavior that impeded successful teaching/learning. This alternative education method replaces punishing a child for inappropriate behavior with teaching a child how to behave appropriately. When a school deficit exists, ESD encourages teaching the appropriate skill.

Because ESD is a process and not a program, it is often easier to implement in the school system. A core team is established, representative of the entire school staff. This team receives training on each component of ESD. There is then a change in focus from reactive (focusing on what the student did wrong) to proactive (teaching and recognizing what students do right). The team uses discipline data to identify patterns and possible causes of inappropriate student behavior. This information serves as the basis for

⁹¹ Retrospective Analysis of the Pennsylvania Student Assistance Program Outcome Data. 2003.

⁹² Virginia Board of Education. Comprehensive Plan: 2007-2012, Objective 8, Strategy 8.

⁹³ Student Assistance Programs in Virginia: 2006 Status Report.

⁹⁴ Virginia Board of Education. Comprehensive Plan: 2007-2012, Objective 8, Strategy 3.

developing effective intervention to decrease inappropriate behavior and increase desired behavior. The following are components of ESD.

- Discipline data is used to help track progress and identify areas to target for intervention.
- A consistent discipline referral process and procedures exist throughout the school.
- Schools make use of school-wide expectations and rules in specific setting to teach students appropriate behavior.
- Schools use a reward system to encourage appropriate behavior and effective consequences to discourage inappropriate behavior.

In July of 2007, there were 101 schools (29 school divisions) in Virginia participating in the *Effective School-wide Discipline* program in Virginia schools. In 53 schools, there was a decrease in discipline referrals to the principal's office from 913 in 2007 to 562 in 2008. School divisions also reported the following results:

- one middle/high school reduced the number of discipline referrals by two-thirds;
- administrators with another middle school found that they saved the equivalent of 20 eight-hour days;
- teachers found they gained 430 more hours of instruction time;
- statewide achievement scores increased dramatically over a four-year period; and
- the number of elementary school students who met state achievement standards in reading increased from 20 percent to 79 percent over a four-year period.⁹⁵
- National data show a gain of 10,620 instructional minutes over a two-year period. Time gained due to reduced behavioral interruptions was over 27 days in year one and 31 days in year two.⁹⁶

In Virginia, a school division's student code of conduct is the primary means of communication with parents and families about how students must behave in school at the beginning of each year. Since ESD programs require schools to come up with positive behavioral goals, encouraging school divisions to utilize it might encourage more schools to seek out training. ESD, and evidence-based programming, which focuses on teaching school rules, social-emotional skills, reinforcing appropriate student behavior, effective classroom management and evidence-based programs that are designed to prevent discipline programs. Moreover, schools exhibiting high suspension and expulsion rates may benefit from employing an evidence-based intervention program such as ESD as a way to decrease their suspension and expulsion rates.

VIII. Findings and Recommendations

A. YEAR ONE

Findings

Lack of Data on Locally Administered Alternative Education Programs

Virginia's Regional Alternative Education programs were established to provide options for students who no longer have access to traditional school programs because they were suspended or expelled. There are 114 school divisions participating in these 29

⁹⁵ Virginia Department of Education, in collaboration with the Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice, American Institute of Research. 2008. *An Introduction of Effective School-wide Discipline in Virginia*, Third Edition.

⁹⁶ Scott, T., and S. Barrett. 2004. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*. Using Staff and Student Time Engaged in Disciplinary Procedures to Evaluate the Impact of School-Wide PBS. Vol. 6, No. 1, 21-27.

regional programs. These regional programs are required to report data to the Department of Education. However, there is a lack of data on local alternative education programs/practices.

Recommendation 1

The Commission on Youth will survey school divisions to receive a complete picture of locally created alternative education programs and ascertain whether there are unmet service needs. The results of the survey shall be communicated to the Virginia Commission on Youth.

Findings

Lack of Information of Programs Serving Suspended or Expelled Youth

There is no available information on the programs/practices that effectively serve youth who have been suspended or expelled. There is a need for more awareness of best practices in alternative education programs. Moreover, local school divisions are frequently unaware of available programs that exist in the Commonwealth. Such information could guide local school divisions in building programs and meeting service needs.

Recommendation 2

The Commission on Youth will compile a best practices guide for alternative education programs/practices. The guide will include a listing of all existing alternative education programs across the Commonwealth, including local programs. This compilation will commence once survey data is analyzed and shall be conducted. The Commission shall complete the guide prior to the 2008 General Assembly Session.

Findings

Additional Slots for Regional Alternative Education Programs

Regional Alternative Education programs are working and efficiently leveraging funds to serve youth across the Commonwealth. However, some localities do not participate in these programs. Furthermore, some programs indicate that they have waiting lists and that the division has unmet needs for students requiring alternative education placements.

Recommendation 3

The Commission on Youth, in conjunction with other child-serving agencies, shall investigate ways to increase funding for a second tier of regional alternative education programs. Such an investigation will be based on an analysis of survey results. Any proposal for a second tier of funding shall not dilute the funding already distributed to existing regional programs. The findings from this investigation shall be reported to the Commission on Youth prior to the 2008 General Assembly Session.

Findings

Shortage of School-based Prevention Programs

There is a shortage of school-based prevention programs that address issues such as violence prevention, anger management, conflict resolution, and other behavioral health needs. These programs reduce suspensions and expulsions by offering valuable

prevention services for youth who may be considered "at-risk." These programs have been negatively impacted by the reductions to the federal Safe and Drug-Free School grants. In 2006, the level of funding has decreased 21% and it is anticipated that there will be an additional 11% reduction in 2007.

Recommendation 4

The Commission on Youth, in conjunction with various child-serving agencies, including the Department of Education, Department of Criminal Justice Services, Department of Juvenile Justice, Department of Health, and Department of Social Services, will investigate ways to fund prevention programs to supplant funding lost in recent years from the decreases in the federal Safe and Drug-Free School grants. The findings from this investigation will be reported to the Commission on Youth prior to the 2008 General Assembly.

Findings

Continuation of Study

In 2006-2007, the Virginia Commission on Youth convened the Alternative Education Advisory Group to examine barriers in providing alternative education options to suspended and expelled youth. A survey was conducted as were site visits of various alternative education programs. The Advisory Group recommended that the study be continued so that the survey data could be analyzed and reported to the Commission on Youth.

Recommendation 5

The Commission on Youth will continue to study alternative education program options and report findings to the Commission on Youth prior to the 2008 General Assembly Session.

B. YEAR TWO

Findings

Lack of Information on Locally Administered Alternative Education Programs

There is a lack of information regarding local programs/schools providing educational services to suspended and expelled students. While there is an annual report on Regional Alternative Education Programs pursuant to §22.1-209.1:2 of the Code of Virginia, there is no central inventory of locally created and administered alternative education schools/programs. Such a guide would be helpful to provide educators, health and human service workers, juvenile justice officials, caregivers and others with information on all available alternatives to students who have been suspended or expelled and would be a resource to local school divisions which may be unaware of programs that exist in the Commonwealth. Such information could also guide local school divisions in building programs to address unmet service needs of at-risk and disciplined students. Moreover, such a guide could provide a more complete picture of existing programs and promising practices throughout the Commonwealth.

Recommendation 1

The Virginia Commission on Youth shall finalize its report on *Local Alternative Education Options for Suspended and Expelled Youth* and request the Virginia Association of School Superintendents to assist in disseminating it to all interested organizations via the Internet or any other cost-effective dissemination method they choose.

Recommendation 2

The Virginia Commission on Youth shall contact all child-serving agencies and inform them of the availability of the report on *Local Alternative Education Options for Suspended and Expelled Youth*. The Commission will also request the Secretariats of Health and Human Resources, Public Safety, and Education, and all affected agencies delivering services to children, to link this report on their websites.

Recommendation 3

The Virginia Department of Education, in cooperation with the Virginia Alternative Education Association and the Virginia Association of Independent Education Specialized Education Facilities, will continue to collect data on locally administered alternative education programs. Data collected will include the number of students served, service needs, funding, components of the programs, and any other information that evaluates both the performance of the programs and the students served by the program. This information will be submitted biennially to the General Assembly.

Findings

Shortage of School-based Prevention Programs

There is a shortage of school-based prevention programs that address issues such as violence prevention, anger management, conflict resolution, and other behavioral health needs. These programs reduce suspensions and expulsions by offering valuable prevention services for youth who may be considered "at-risk." These programs have been negatively impacted by the reductions to the federal Safe and Drug-Free School grants. In 2006, the level of funding decreased 21% and there was an additional 11% reduction in 2007. Moreover, there is no designated state funding for school-based prevention programs.

Virginia has an infrastructure in place to meet the programming needs of local school divisions. Student Assistance Programs (SAPs) utilize a comprehensive systems approach of evidence-based curricula, practices, principles, and strategies to respond to K-12 student challenges. They are designed to reduce risk factors, promote protective factors, increase asset development and foster resilience.

SAPs create a flexible process intervention plan that is consistently monitored. In Virginia, 36 school divisions reported having SAPs. In 2006, 297,700 students (20% of the total student population) were served by SAPs.

The basic goals of SAPs are to:

- provide collaboration between in-school and community resources;*
- encourage parent involvement;*
- increase the opportunity to help students participate in positive activities;*
- promote a safer school environment;*
- seek to improve grades, attendance and social challenges;*
- examine the best method for transitioning students back into a traditional school setting following alternative education; and*
- surround students with support services.*

Recommendation 4

Request the Virginia Department of Education to establish guidelines for statewide implementation of Student Assistance Programs (SAPs). The guidelines for SAPs will be shared with school divisions to ensure consistent and uniform application and implementation of SAP, based on best practices.

Recommendation 5

Request a budget amendment for the Virginia Department of Education to construct a database to capture data on utilization of Student Assistance Programs (SAPs) in Virginia. Such a database will allow for ongoing assessment of the efficacy of SAP and for the development of a framework to guide future evaluations.

Findings

Effective Schoolwide Discipline Programs & Reductions in Disciplinary Referrals

Research indicates that exclusionary discipline approaches potentially increase poor outcomes. Training school staff and educators in effective classroom management may increase the consistency of discipline, which can potentially reduce suspensions and expulsions.

A schoolwide system of effective discipline consists of proactive strategies that focus on teaching and rewarding student behavior, which in turn contributes to improved academic performance and social behavior. Results of implementing effective schoolwide discipline programs in Virginia are:

- one middle/high school reduced the number of discipline referrals by two-thirds;*
- another middle school saved the equivalent of 20 eight-hour days;*
- teachers gained 430 more hours of instruction time;*
- statewide achievement scores increased over a four-year period; and*
- the number of elementary school students who met state achievement standards in reading increased from 20% to 79% over a four-year period.*

Recommendation 6

Request the Virginia Department of Education and the Virginia Department of Education's Training and Technical Assistance Center to continue to include information on effective schoolwide discipline programs to all school divisions. Information will be offered to school divisions to educate them on the effectiveness of this program model.

Recommendation 7

Request the Virginia Department of Education and the Virginia Department of Education's Training and Technical Assistance Center to continue to provide information on all evidence-based school-based programs to all school divisions.

Findings

Lack of Definition for Alternative Education for Disciplined Youth

There is no consistent and established definition of what an alternative program/school is and what components must be present. Currently, there is great diversity among the local alternative education programs regarding program components, such as program hours and the ability to earn verified credits. The term "alternative education" covers all

*educational activities that fall outside the traditional K-12 school system, including vocational programs, special programs for gifted children, and charter schools.*⁹⁷

A broad definition of alternative education programs that describes the full array of alternatives may be an important element in encouraging the development of the most effective programs. A unified definition of alternative education could also be helpful for both funding opportunities and evaluation purposes.

Recommendation 8

Request the Virginia Alternative Education Association to research alternative education definitions established by the National Education Association. Request the Virginia Alternative Education Association to report its progress and any suggested language to the Virginia Department of Education and the Virginia Commission on Youth prior to the 2009 Session of the General Assembly.

Findings

Continue the Alternative Education Advisory Group

In 2006-2007, the Virginia Commission on Youth convened the Alternative Education Advisory Group to examine barriers in providing alternative education options to suspended and expelled youth. Affected agencies participated in this effort. During the course of the study, it was noted that these youth were also being served by other health and human service agencies, child welfare agencies, as well by the juvenile justice system. The Advisory Group formulated initial recommendations to assist in strengthening service provision to students who have been suspended, expelled, or at risk for disciplinary referral. Gaps in service, along with best practices, were identified; however, more evaluation needs to be conducted to determine whether these approaches can be applied effectively across the Commonwealth. Adding representatives from all child-serving agencies to the Advisory Group would strengthen the study findings.

Recommendation 9

Request the Virginia Commission on Youth to continue its Advisory Group on Alternative Education Options and to invite representatives from all child-serving agencies. The Advisory Group will monitor recommendations adopted by the Commission and will work to evaluate gaps in service in alternative education placements, as well as the reasons that students are not offered educational services. A report on the findings from the Advisory Group will be made to the Virginia Commission on Youth prior to the 2009 General Assembly Session.

C. YEAR THREE

Findings

Students Not Receiving Educational Services

There are gaps in alternative education services in Virginia, such as lack of placements for middle school students and credit recovery for overage middle and high school students. Existing alternative education programs do not have the capacity to keep students permanently, even if students are succeeding. In 2007-2008, 3,996 students were served by regional programs. The number of slots funded is 1,882. 26 of the 30 programs indicated that they would have placements for all slots assigned to each

⁹⁷ 8 VAC 20-330-10.

division in each regional program. 26 slots were transferred in four of the 30 regional alternative programs. The requested number of additional slots totaled 413. Over 50% of alternative education programs reported their primary goal as transitioning students back to their regular academic setting.

Recommendation 1

Introduce legislation to amend § 22.1-209.1:2 of the Code of Virginia to provide that, based on available space, a school division may assign a student to a regional alternative education program and a parent may request, with the consent of the division superintendent, that his child be assigned to a regional alternative education program. Also, clarifies that the program described by the section is a "regional alternative education program."

Findings

Effective Disciplinary Programs in Virginia

Imposing negative consequences for unacceptable behavior may increase antisocial acts, school vandalism, tardiness and truancy and the dropout rate. Suspension provides little more than a respite from the students' academic or behavior problems. With each suspension, the probability increases that a student will fall farther behind academically, which may trigger additional misbehavior? Training school staff and educators in effective classroom management may increase the consistency of discipline, which can potentially reduce suspensions and expulsions. A schoolwide system of effective disciplinary practices contributes to improved academic performance and social behavior.

Recommendation 2

Request that the Chairman of the Virginia Commission on Youth write a letter to the Board of Education to ask that the revisions to the Standards of Accreditation (SOA) be amended to include provisions for recommending schools exhibiting suspension and expulsion rates above the state average implement evidence-based intervention programs designed to improve suspension and expulsion rates.

Findings

Lack of Clarity Regarding Alternative Education

There is no consistent and established definition of what an alternative program/school is and what components must be present. There is great diversity among the local alternative education programs in program components, such as program hours and the ability to earn verified credits. The term "alternative education" covers all educational activities that fall outside the traditional K-12 school system, including vocational programs, special programs for gifted children and programs for the handicapped. A broad definition of alternative education programs is important for program development and evaluation.

Recommendation 3

Request that the Chairman of the Virginia Commission on Youth write a letter to the Board of Education to ask that the revisions to the regulations be made to assert alternative education options are for students whose needs are not met in programs prescribed elsewhere, as set forth in the SOLs. "Alternative education" will be replaced by "nontraditional education" except when referring to regional alternative education programs.

Findings

No Central Point of Contact for Alternative Education

In Virginia, there is no central point of contact or office for information about alternative education programs. Improving coordination of alternative education programs would allow for improved utilization and transition of students from alternative to traditional educational settings. Such a contact could monitor and advise on policies and procedures which impact alternative education programs, conduct training on alternative education for school divisions, review and assist with data collection on alternative education, and develop start-up processes for new alternative education programs.

Recommendation 4

Write a letter requesting the Superintendent of Public Education to establish a central point of contact with the Department of Education in the area of nontraditional education options.

Findings

Lack of Guidelines for Local Alternative Education Schools/Programs

In Virginia, there are approximately 160 local alternative education programs and all are diverse. Students enrolled in alternative education programs may require stronger program components to help them catch up and to be successful. It is important that these students also have the opportunity to earn a diploma, meet high academic standards and prepare for postsecondary options. Twenty percent of local alternative education programs do not allow students to earn verified credits. Per pupil program cost ranged from \$100 to \$22,702, with median cost being \$6,000. Half of all local programs were entirely locally funded. Twenty-five percent of local alternative education programs operate fewer than 20 hours per week.

Recommendation 5

Write a letter requesting the Board of Education establish model guidelines for locally-created alternative education programs consistent with the guidelines established for the regional alternative education programs.

Findings

Tracking Students after Placement in Alternative Education

It is frequently unknown what happens to students after they are referred to a local alternative education program. Students could: successfully transition to their home school, remain in the alternative program/school, drop out, or leave the program but later return or acquire a GED. Tracking students placed in alternative education could help determine whether they were returning to and re-enrolling in their home school. Tracking would also help show which alternative education programs were successfully transitioning students to their home schools or helping them to secure a diploma or a GED.

Recommendation 6

Request that the Chairman of the Virginia Commission on Youth write a letter requesting that the Virginia Department of Education establish a mechanism for school divisions to use the individual student tracking number system to indicate whether a student is enrolled in their home school, in a local alternative setting or in a regional alternative school.

IX. Acknowledgments

The Virginia Commission on Youth extends its appreciation to the Department of Education and to the Commonwealth's school divisions who participated in the survey and to the following individuals and agencies for their assistance and cooperation on this study:

Division of Legislative Automated Systems

Troy Crawford
Diane Seaborn
Laura Wilborn

Just Children

Sarah Geddes

Office of Comprehensive Services

Stacie Fisher
Dave Nichols
Brady Nemeyer
Carol C. Wilson
Dawn Howard

Prince William Office of Student Management and Alternative Program

Renee Lacey
Marie Sobers

Project Discovery

Jeffry North
Gloria Charlton
Bill Scharrer

Project Recovery

Annette Lewis
Ron Jones

Roland E. Cook Alternative School

Gail Hagerty
Susan McQuail

Virginia Alternative Education Association

Jan McKee
Marie Sobers

Virginia Department of Education

Cynthia Cave
Arlene Cundiff
Joann Burkholder
Nancy Campbell
Susan Fitzpatrick
Diane Jay
Ron Nusbaum

Woodlawn Learning Center

Joyce Jones

Appendix A

Study of Alternative Education Options ADVISORY GROUP

Accomack County Public Schools

Leander Roberts, Director of Student Services
Jeanne Lawrence, Specialist in At-Risk Behaviors &
School Safety

The Hon. Mamye E. BaCote
Virginia House of Delegates

Susan Bridges
Principal, A.G. Richardson Elementary School

The Hon. Robert H. Brink
Virginia House of Delegates

Willie Carrington, Ed.D.
Principal, Enterprise Academy

Chesterfield County Public Schools
Susan Dandridge, Grants Coordinator
Lynne Foote, Project Coordinator
Brenda Philbin, Coordinator of Student Conduct

Deborah Coles
Virginia Education Association

Angela B. Cook
Deputy Sheriff
Charlotte County Sheriff's Office

Arlene D. Cundiff
Former Education Specialist

Darnella Cunningham
Principal, Lee Hill Elementary School

Pat Finneran
Legislative Liaison, Newport News Public Schools

Pamela Fisher
Office of Comprehensive Services

Bill Flora, Ed.D.
Executive Director
Virginia Middle Schools Association

The Hon. William H. Fralin, Jr.
Virginia House of Delegates

Sarah Geddes, Esq.
Education Law Attorney
JustChildren Program

Valerie P. Gooss
Henrico County Public Schools

Joyce Jones
Director of Alternative Education, Hopewell City Schools

D. Patrick Lacy, Jr.
Virginia School Board Association

Laurel Marks
Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services

The Hon. Yvonne B. Miller
Senate of Virginia

Bet Neale
Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals

Melissa Nehrbass
Virginia PTA

Christa Pierpont
Restorative Community Foundation

Roanoke City Public Schools
Rita D. Bishop, Superintendent
Asia R. Jones, Executive Director for Student
Support Services

Anne Rollins
Virginia Department of Health

Pat Russo, Ph.D.
Virginia Association of School Superintendents
Superintendent, Hampton City Schools

Derrick Scarborough
Principal, Benjamin Franklin Middle School

Tom Shortt, Ph.D.
Executive Director, Virginia Association of Elementary
School Principals

Stafford County Public Schools
Ellen Delano
Don Upperco, Administrator of Alternative
Education

Angela Valentine
Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice

Virginia Alternative Educators Association
Jan McKee, President
Marie Sobers, Secretary

Virginia Department of Education
Cynthia Cave, Director, Office of Student Services
Anne Wescott, Asst. Supt. for Policy and
Communications
Michelle Vucci, Director of Policy

Gina Wilburn
Co-chair, Virginia Association of Community Services
Boards
Child and Family Services Task Force



VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION

2007 Annual Report

REGIONAL ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMS

PRESENTED TO

**GOVERNOR TIMOTHY M. Kaine
AND THE
VIRGINIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

September 26, 2007



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

P.O. Box 2120
Richmond, Virginia 23218-2120

BILLY K. CANNADAY, JR., Ed.D.
Superintendent of Public Instruction

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

October 5, 2007

The Honorable Timothy M. Kaine
Governor of Virginia
Patrick Henry Building, 3rd Floor
1111 East Broad Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Members of the General Assembly of Virginia
Patrick Henry Building
1111 East Broad Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Dear Governor Kaine and Members of the General Assembly:

I am pleased to submit the Board of Education's report on Regional Alternative Education Programs pursuant to Section 22.1-209.1:2 of the *Code of Virginia*. The *Code* requires the Board of Education to report annually on the effectiveness of the Regional Alternative Education Programs.

If you have questions or require additional information relative to this transmittal, please do not hesitate to contact Diane Jay at 225-2905 or by e-mail at Diane.Jay@doe.virginia.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Billy K. Cannaday, Jr.".

Billy K. Cannaday, Jr.

BKCJr/dj
Attachment

c: The Honorable Thomas Morris, Secretary of Education
Dr. Mark Emblidge, President, Board of Education

PREFACE

Section 22.1-209.1:2 of the *Code of Virginia* requires that a report be provided annually by the Board of Education to the Governor and the General Assembly on the effectiveness of the Regional Alternative Education Programs. The primary objectives of this evaluation are as follows:

1. Provide a general overview of the programs, student populations, staff, program resources and support, and parental and community support.
2. Review the program administrators' perceptions of the adequacy of the programs.
3. Evaluate the performance of the programs and students.

The staff member assigned to the preparation of the report was Diane L. Jay, associate director, Office of Program Administration and Accountability, Division of Instruction, Virginia Department of Education, P. O. Box 2120, Richmond, Virginia 23218-2120. Questions concerning the report should be directed to Ms. Jay at (804) 225-2905 or by e-mail at Diane.Jay@doe.virginia.gov.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SUMMARY REPORT	Page
Executive Summary	iii
Chapter One	1
Purpose	1
Objectives and Scope of Evaluation	1
Data Sources	2
Chapter Two	3
Background and Summary Information	3
Chapter Three	4
Regional Alternative Education Program Overview	4
A. Characteristics of Programs and Student Population	4
B. Staff	9
C. Program Resources and Support	10
D. Parental and Community Involvement	10
Chapter Four	11
Program and Student Performance	11
A. Considerations for Evaluating Regional Programs and Student Performance	11
B. Measures of Achievement	11
ATTACHMENTS	
Attachment A1: Listing of Programs	14
Attachment A2: Profile of Programs	17
Attachment A3: Profile of Student Status End of School Year	18
Attachment A4: <i>Code of Virginia</i> Citation for Alternative Education Programs for Certain Students	19

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The evaluation was conducted on Virginia's 29 regional alternative education programs. These programs were established by the General Assembly in 1993-1994 with the intent of involving two or more school divisions working in collaboration to establish options for students who have a pending violation of school board policy, have been expelled or suspended on a long-term basis, or are returning from juvenile correctional centers. Section 22.1-209.1:2 of the *Code of Virginia* requires that a report be provided annually by the Board of Education to the Governor and the General Assembly on the effectiveness of the regional alternative education programs.

These regional alternative education programs are designed to meet the specific individual needs of students assigned to the programs. While there is some variation in programs, the legislation outlines the following components:

- an intensive, accelerated instructional program with rigorous standards for academic achievement and student behavior;
- a low pupil-teacher ratio to promote a high level of interaction between the student and teacher;
- a plan for transitioning the enrolled students into the relevant school division's regular program;
- a current program of staff development and training;
- a procedure for obtaining the participation and support from parents as well as community outreach to build school, business, and community partnerships; and
- measurable goals and objectives and an evaluation component to determine the program's effectiveness.

The number of students enrolled has increased from 217 students in four regional programs in 1993-1994 to 4,205 students in 29 programs during 2006-2007. The state funding level has increased 418 percent during this same time period. Conclusions related to the program, services, and policies for the 2006-2007 school year follow:

- A majority of program administrators reported academic improvement in their responses regarding perceived changes in student academic performance.
- The program administrators reported decreased violence, firearms, and weapons possession incidences for students while in the program as well as a decrease in substance abuse and property offenses.
- Program administrators reported ratings of good or excellent for parental involvement, technology, staff development, resources, discipline policies, selection process, student assessments, student services, and the academic program.
- Of the 293 teachers employed, 95 percent are licensed. Student-to-teacher ratios range between 4:1 and 15:1.

- The Standards of Learning (SOL) tests in English and mathematics were taken by 1,916 alternative education students during the 2006-2007 school year. These students achieved a 48 percent pass rate on the English SOL and a 33 percent pass rate on the mathematics SOL.
- The dropout rate for these students is 4.9 percent. The expulsion or dismissal rate is 7.6 percent.
- Of the students who were not eligible to graduate in the 2006-2007 school year, approximately 70 percent remained in school at the end of the 2006-2007 school year. Of these students, 48.9 percent plan to return to their regular school beginning in 2007-2008, and 21.3 percent will remain in the alternative education program.

Overall, the regional alternative education programs appear to be achieving their program purposes. The return on the public's investment for regional alternative education programs appears favorable.

CHAPTER ONE

Purpose

Virginia's regional alternative education programs are established to provide options for students who no longer have access to traditional school programs because they were suspended for violations of school board policy. Assignment to these programs include violations related to weapons, drugs or alcohol, intentional injury, chronic disruptive behavior, theft, verbal threats, malicious mischief, chronic truancy, vandalism, and other serious offenses. These programs also accommodate students returning from juvenile correctional centers or those who are otherwise assigned by the school divisions. The evaluation examined the 29 programs in operation during the 2006-2007 school year. A total of 114 school divisions worked in collaboration to form these 29 programs; some of the divisions have multiple subprograms and sites. A listing of the programs and participating school divisions is provided in Attachment A1.

Objectives and Scope of Evaluation

Section 22.1-209.1:2 of the *Code of Virginia* requires that a report be provided annually by the Board of Education to the Governor and the General Assembly on the effectiveness of the regional alternative education programs. The primary objectives of this evaluation are as follows:

1. Provide a general overview of the programs, student populations, staff, program resources and support, and parental and community support;
2. Review the program administrators' perceptions of the adequacy of the programs; and
3. Evaluate the performance of the programs and students.

The goals of the 29 regional alternative education programs are similar in that they are all designed to provide alternative and experiential learning opportunities for their students. They serve students who have been assigned to the school by a local board of education because: (1) the traditional school systems are not equipped to address their needs; and (2) the alternative education programs can provide a wide variety of student services and educational approaches that are tailored to these needs. While the general goals among programs are similar, there are also differences such as:

- grade levels served;
- size of the student bodies;
- characteristics of the students enrolled;
- characteristics of the student enrollment expectations (e.g., very short-term versus long-term);
- educational approaches and priorities; and
- program resources available.

Data Sources

The information, observations, and findings in this summary report are primarily based on the following sources:

- Information collected by the Virginia Department of Education through an annual information data collection instrument and supplemental information provided with these reports. In June 2006 the reports were submitted by each of the 29 programs for the 2006-2007 school year.
- Follow-up communications with program administrators and personnel.
- Relevant information included in previous regional alternative education program evaluations published by the Virginia Department of Education.

CHAPTER TWO

Background and Summary Information

In 1993, the General Assembly directed the Board of Education to establish and implement four regional pilot projects to provide an educational alternative for certain students in violation of school board policy. The General Assembly subsequently provided state funding, augmented for several years by federal funds, to make regional alternative education programs available on a statewide basis. A Virginia Department of Education formula based on staffing patterns and the composite index of local ability to pay determines state funding. No local matching funding is required; however, local school divisions sometimes use local and federal monies to augment these programs by providing in-kind support for such items as instructional materials, additional staff, pupil transportation, and facilities.

Alternative education programs are designed to meet the specific individual needs of students assigned to the programs. While there is some variation in programs, the legislation outlines the following components:

- an intensive, accelerated instructional program with rigorous standards for academic achievement and student behavior;
- a low pupil-teacher ratio to promote a high level of interaction between the student and teacher;
- a plan for transitioning the enrolled students into the relevant school division's regular program;
- a current program of staff development and training;
- a procedure for obtaining the participation and support from parents as well as community outreach to build school, business, and community partnerships; and
- measurable goals and objectives and an evaluation component to determine the program's effectiveness.

The delivery of services includes traditional and non-traditional forms of classroom instruction, distance learning, and other technology-based educational approaches. Delivery of services also includes day, after-school, and evening programs. Alternative education centers have flexibility with regard to their organizational structure, schedule, curriculum, programs, and disciplinary policies. While the centers may differ in method of delivery, the services they provide typically fall into the following categories:

- educational (core subject instruction, vocational, remediation, tutoring);
- counseling (individual, group, family);
- social skills training;
- career counseling (transitioning to the world of work, job shadowing, mentoring, work/study agreements);
- technology-related education (direct instruction, Internet research, keyboarding);
- conflict resolution and mediation; and
- drug prevention education.

CHAPTER THREE**Regional Alternative Education Program Overview**

This chapter provides an overview of program and student trends, program purposes, organization, innovative practices, reasons for student enrollment, student selection processes, academic offerings, student services, student assessments, and general and discipline policies of the regional alternative education programs.

A. Characteristics of Programs and Student Population

Statistical Overview – Of the 29 regional programs, all except one serve students in grades 9-12. The remaining program serves only middle school students in grades 6-8. Eighty-six (86) percent of the programs also serve grades 7-8; and 72 percent also serve 6th grade students. Three programs also serve students in grades K-5. Additionally, 62 percent of the programs report serving General Educational Development (GED) certificate students.

The programs report having 2,424 assigned slots and serving 4,205 students during the 2006-2007 school year. Since students are assigned for short periods of time in some programs (e.g., a week in some cases), multiple students can be served per slot. Attachment A2 provides a more detailed overview of the 29 programs.

Over the first four years of Virginia's regional alternative education program, the number of programs grew rapidly from the four pilot sites in 1993-1994 to 29 programs by 1996-1997. Since that time, the number of programs has remained constant. A new regional program was approved by the General Assembly in 2000-2001 bringing the number of programs to 30. In 2003-2004, one regional program dissolved, thus reducing the number of programs to 29. During this same period, state funding increased from the initial General Assembly appropriation of \$1.2 million for 1993-1994 to a total state funding level of slightly over \$6.2 million for 2006-2007. Programs are permitted to receive additional funding and in-kind support from other sources although no local match is required.

The number of students enrolled increased from 217 students in four regional programs in 1993-1994 to 4,205 students in 29 regional programs in 2006-2007. The state funding level has increased by 418 percent during this same time period.

Table 1 summarizes trends for the number of regional alternative education programs in Virginia, state funding levels for these programs, and numbers of students served since the 1993-1994 school year.

VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION

Table 1.
Trends in Regional Alternative Education Programs

School Year	Number Of Programs [1]	State Funding [2]	Number of Students Served
1993-1994	4	\$1,200,000	217
1994-1995 [2]	13	\$1,200,000	849
1995-1996 [2]	19	\$1,200,000	1,550
1996-1997	29	\$4,142,000	2,297
1997-1998	29	\$3,716,652	2,350
1998-1999	29	\$4,431,089	3,255
1999-2000	29	\$4,484,123	3,494
2000-2001	30	\$5,766,626	3,347
2001-2002	30	\$5,386,590	3,895
2002-2003	30	\$5,386,590	3,509
2003-2004	29	\$5,210,891	3,534
2004-2005	29	\$5,486,348	3,903
2005-2006	29	\$5,561,410	4,155
2006-2007	29	\$6,220,518	4,205

Note [1]: Some data refer to sites and some refer to programs.

Note [2]: Federal funds were used to supplement state funds to expand the program during the 1994-1995 and 1995-1996 school years.

Program Purpose – The regional alternative education programs are designed to meet the specific individual needs of students assigned to the programs. These needs dictate a different set of “program purposes,” or objectives than would be encountered in the traditional school system. As part of the 2006-2007 data collection effort for the evaluation, administrators were asked to identify the objectives most appropriate for the various sites operating within their programs. The “program purposes” reported by the majority of programs are to:

- reduce the dropout rate;
- build self-esteem and responsibility;
- correct dysfunctional and/or dangerous behavior;
- return students to sending high school to graduate; and
- identify career interests.

VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION

The list of program purposes, as reported by the responding program administrators, is portrayed in Figure 1.

Figure 1.
Purpose of Program



Program Organization and Innovative Practices – The programs included in this evaluation reflect a wide variety of educational, operational models, and processes. Most programs report operating between 9 and 10 months a year, but the range is 9 to 12 months. Over 30 percent of the programs offer morning and evening classes. Over 80 percent organize classes by subject or course, and 50 percent organize classes by grade level. Over 80 percent of the programs report that students work independently on computer-based curricula.

Program administrators were asked to identify innovative practices they believe to have been most effective in their program. Their responses included: 1) differentiated or individualized instruction; 2) anger management counseling; 3) computer-assisted instruction; 4) small group learning; 5) small student-to-teacher ratio; 6) psychological counseling; 7) support of parents, guardians, and resource officers; and 8) service learning activities.

VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION

Reasons for Student Enrollment and Student Selection Process – Students are typically assigned to regional alternative education programs because they have received long-term suspensions, are returning from juvenile correctional centers, or are otherwise identified by the school divisions to be best served by these programs. Consequently, these programs are structured to address the special needs of these students. Table 2 provides insight as to the primary reasons leading to student enrollments for the 2006-2007 school year.

Table 2.
Reasons for Enrollment in Regional Alternative Education Programs 2006-2007

Reasons for Enrollment	Total	Percent
Suspensions for violation of School Board Policy [2]	4,102	97.6 [1]
Chronic Disruptive Behavior	781	19.0 [3]
Drugs or alcohol	502	12.2 [3]
Intentional Injury	310	7.6 [3]
Weapons	243	5.9 [3]
Theft	36	0.9 [3]
Combination of above	502	12.2 [3]
Other [4]	2,374	57.9 [3]
Released from youth correctional centers	93	2.2 [1]
Total Suspensions and Released from Youth Correctional Centers	4,205	100

Note [1]: Percentage of 4,205 (the total number of students served).

Note [2]: Included pending violations.

Note [3]: Percentage of 4,102 (the total number of students suspended for violation of policy).

Note [4]: Verbal threats, malicious mischief, bomb threats, destruction of property, chronic truancy, vandalism, and other serious offenses.

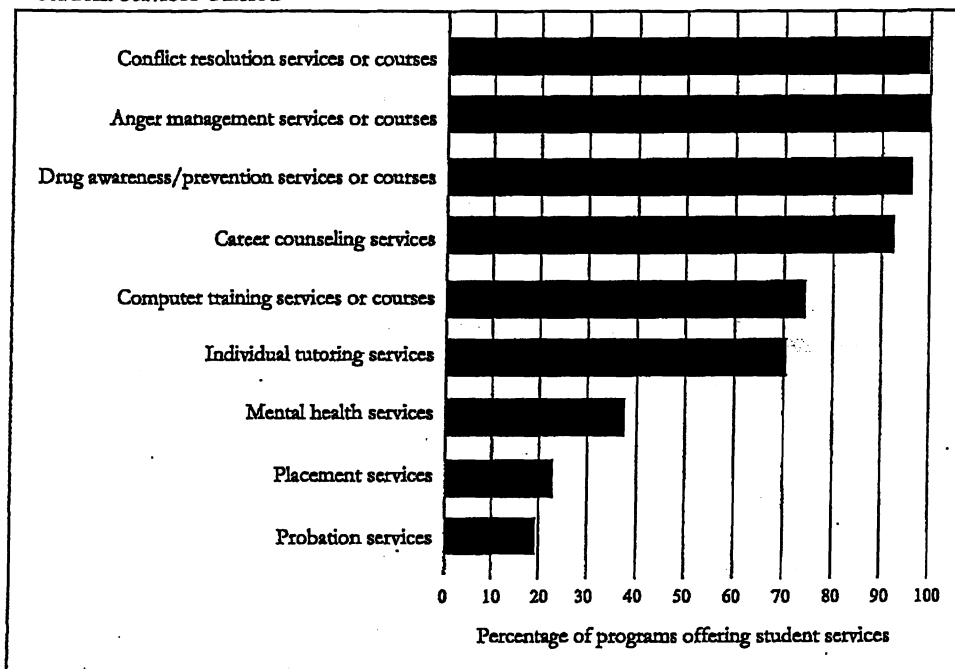
There is no standardized student selection process. The student selection process includes guidelines and criteria for admittance, and denial of admission varies from program-to-program. Most of the programs report that students were assigned to them "as a last chance option." All of the program administrators report that parents and students are required to participate in an interview prior to an admission decision. About 83 percent of the administrators indicate that they have the option to deny admission, and almost 80 percent state that students and parents have to sign a contract (e.g., commit to the program) before admission.

Academic Offerings and Student Services – An intense, accelerated instructional program with rigorous standards for academic achievement and student behavior is a legislative requirement of the regional alternative education programs. The range of students served (e.g., K-12 grade levels, a wide variety of behavioral issues, a wide range of cognitive capabilities) and academic approaches used produce a wide spectrum of courses offered,

VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION

academic initiatives, and student services. At a general level, there are many core academic offerings and student services common to these regional alternative education programs. All 28 programs that serve high school students offer standard diploma courses. About 72 percent of these programs also offer GED preparatory courses, 55 percent offer vocational coursework, 55 percent offer independent study, and 30 percent offer work study components. Administrators indicated a need for more career and technical courses, more electives, a greater focus on literacy, and additional teachers to teach electives and assist special education students. Figure 2 provides an overview of student services offered in the regional alternative education programs.

Figure 2.
Student Services Offered



Student Assessments – Other legislative requirements for these programs include a set of measurable goals and objectives and an evaluation component to determine student performance and program effectiveness. In this context, over 85 percent of the programs report employing traditional assessments (e.g., an A, B, C, D, F letter grading systems, end-of-year examinations) for all students enrolled. Over 60 percent use nontraditional assessments (e.g., oral presentations, portfolios, self-assessments, grading rubrics shared in advance, behavior) for all students. About 70 percent of the programs use combinations of traditional and nontraditional approaches to assessing their students.

VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION

General Policies – General policies vary among programs. Administrators report that the following policies are employed by their programs. Since most of these policies apply only to high schools, percentages are for programs serving grades 9-12.

- Specific criteria must be met before a student can return to a regular high school. (90 percent of programs).
- Students with an Individual Education Plan (IEP) are allowed to enroll in the alternative programs (90 percent of the programs).
- Students are limited to a certain number of academic credits earned while attending the alternative program (52 percent of programs).
- Students are allowed to take needed courses at a regular high school that cannot be provided by the alternative program (52 percent of programs).
- Students are required to return to their sending high school if they want to graduate with a standard diploma (35 percent of programs).

Discipline Policies – Discipline policies vary among programs.

- Eighty-six (86) percent of the programs state that students are subject to the rules of the sending high schools and/or have their own discipline system.
- Forty-eight (48) percent have a zero tolerance policy for misbehavior.
- Seventy-six (76) percent use behavioral contracts.
- Most programs report use of behavioral evaluation sheets daily or weekly.

B. Staff

Program Staffing – Administrators of the 29 programs reported a total of 293 teachers (in full-time equivalents). Of that number, 95 percent are licensed. Additionally, programs reported 85.5 counselors and 51.25 school psychologists. A low pupil-to-teacher ratio is a legislative requirement for these programs. In 2006-2007, the programs reported student-to-teacher ratios between 4:1 and 15:1.

Professional Development – A current program of staff development and training is another legislative requirement for this program. The extensive and diverse special needs and challenges of the students assigned to the regional alternative education programs present additional needs for staff development.

Improving and expanding staff development is frequently mentioned as a primary concern of program administrators. These needs include a broad spectrum of professional development related to content areas, use of technology, programmatic and administrative issues, as well as an even broader spectrum of areas that relate to the behavioral problems common to the students served. Table 3 provides information regarding the extent to which the needs for staff professional development in the regional alternative education programs were addressed during the 2006-2007 school year.

VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION

**Table 3.
Professional Development**

Staff Development Programs	Percentage of Teachers in Program
Technology	97.6
Content work	94.5
Discipline	91.4
Alternative education practices	87.1
Conflict management	80.0
Alcohol and drug abuse	78.7
Violence	77.1
Counseling	62.6

C. Program Resources and Support

General Resources – The regional alternative education programs report that their program resources are generally satisfactory. Approximately 80 percent of all responses from the program administrators, across all categories, indicate that they perceived their program resources as either “excellent” or “good” and only three percent of the responses reflect a “poor” ranking.

External Program Support – A program for community outreach to build school, business, and community partnerships is a legislative component of the regional alternative education programs. All programs report extensive efforts to build external support, and the program administrators report that they generally receive very good external support.

Administrators report that their school boards, localities, and area agencies generally provide excellent support. Over 80 percent of the responses regarding these sources indicate “excellent” or “good” support.

D. Parental and Community Involvement

A procedure for obtaining the participation and support from parents is a legislative requirement of the regional alternative education program. Each program reports initiatives addressing these objectives. Of the responding administrators, 24.1 percent report that parental involvement in their program is “excellent”; 62.1 percent report “good” parental involvement; 13.8 percent report “fair” parental involvement; and zero percent reported that the parental involvement in their program was “poor.”

Perceptions regarding community involvement in the regional alternative education programs are mixed. Of the responding administrators, 6.9 percent report that community involvement in their program is “excellent”; 58.6 percent report “good” community involvement; 31 percent report “fair” community involvement; and 3.5 percent reported that the community involvement in their program was “poor.”

CHAPTER FOUR

Program and Student Performance

Defining and measuring performance are different for the alternative education population than it would be in the traditional school systems.

A. Considerations for Evaluating Regional Alternative Education Program and Student Performance

The student populations in the regional alternative education programs present challenges because the assigned students often have histories of behavioral problems, low self-esteem, and academic failure. Since these are generally students who have been suspended, these programs are deemed as the only remaining academic option. Almost 97 percent of programs report that students are placed or assigned to their program as "a last chance option."

The student body of any given program has less continuity from year-to-year (often from month-to-month) than a traditional school. Programs are generally small and address an array of needs. The combination of these needs and the operational constraints of the programs dictate different policies, administrative procedures, and academic approaches. They also dictate a different approach to evaluating both program and student performance. One approach for assessing program and student performance is the programs' self-reported "program purposes" as presented in Figure 1. These include:

- reduce the dropout rate;
- build self-esteem and responsibility;
- correct dysfunctional and/or dangerous behavior;
- return students to high school to graduate;
- identify career interests;
- gain admission to an institution of higher education;
- secure employment or work/study;
- obtain diploma from sending school in absentia; and
- earn a General Educational Development (GED) certificate through an Individual Student Alternative Education Plan (ISAEP).

B. Measures of Achievement

It is difficult to consider standard measurements such as Standards of Learning (SOL) tests, attendance, and dropout rates in the same way as they would be considered for traditional schools because the student populations, educational models, and operational models are different.

VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION

Standards of Learning – The ability to report SOL test results for students that were served in a regional alternative education program was available for the first time in the 2005-2006 school year. The figures for 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 are reported in Table 4. There were 1,916 alternative education students who took the Standards of Learning tests in English and mathematics in 2006-2007. These students achieved a 48 percent pass rate on the English SOL, and a 33 percent pass rate on the mathematics SOL for 2006-2007, however the data below do not represent cohort data because students move in and out of these programs. It is difficult to know if these same students would have performed better or worse in their home schools.

Table 4.
Standards of Learning Assessment Results in English and Mathematics [1]

Year	Students Taking SOL Tests	English Pass Rate Percentage	Mathematics Pass Rate Percentage
2005-2006	1,762	32	19
2006-2007	1,916	48	33

Note [1]: These assessment results reflect students who were in the regional alternative program during test administration.

Dropout/Dismissal Rates –The total 2006-2007 dropouts reported by the program administrators for this evaluation was 4.9 percent (i.e., 207 dropouts). The state average for dropouts for traditional schools was 1.88 percent. Most regional alternative education students are considered dropout risks prior to being assigned to these programs. The dismissal/expulsion rate for 2006-2007 was 7.6 percent, and 321 students were dismissed or expelled from the alternative programs.

Perceptions of Changes in Student Academic Performance – Administrators were asked to provide their perceptions of changes in their students' academic performance. The administrators perceive somewhat or substantial improvement in approximately 80 percent of students served.

Table 5.
Reported Perceptions of Change in Academic Performance

Reported Change During Assignment to Alternative Education	Substantially Improved	Somewhat Improved	Somewhat Decreased	Substantially Decreased	No Apparent Change	Total Responses
Middle Grades – Mathematics	11.5%	53.8%	3.8%	0.0%	30.8%	26
Middle Grades – English	15.4%	61.5%	0.0%	0.0%	23.1%	26
High School – Mathematics	25.0%	60.7%	0.0%	0.0%	14.3%	28
High School – English	25.0%	71.4%	0.0%	0.0%	3.6%	28

VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION

Perceptions of Changes in Student Disciplinary Incidences – Correcting behavior is a primary goal of regional alternative education programs. Over 70 percent of the administrators reported decreases in physical violence. Slightly over 60 percent reported decreases in firearms violations. Over 70 percent reported decreases in possession of other weapons. Decreases in substance abuse use were reported by 62 percent, and 24 percent reported no change in substance abuse use. Sixty-two (62) percent reported decreases in offenses against property, while 31 percent reported no change in offenses against property.

End-of-Year Status of 2006-2007 Students – Data discussed previously in this report suggest that many of the students that the programs served in 2006-2007 were assigned as a final alternative. Most of these students were at-risk of dropping out, being expelled permanently, or failing academically. Some had already been incarcerated, and the violations that led to their enrollment in the alternative education program (see Table 2) suggest many others were candidates for future incarceration. Table A3 in Attachment A3 summarizes the status of the 2006-2007 students served by the regional alternative education programs based on data provided by the programs as of June 2007. Based on these data, approximately 70 percent of students served in the 2006-2007 regional alternative education programs remain in school, either returning to the regional alternative program for 2007-2008 (21.3 percent), or returning to their sending school for 2007-2008 (48.9 percent). For this population, remaining in school is an accomplishment and a stated goal of the regional alternative education programs.

VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION

ATTACHMENTS**Attachment A1****Listing of Regional Alternative Education Programs – 2006-2007****Table A1.****Regional Alternative Education Programs – 2006-2007**

School Division-Fiscal Agent	Other Participating Divisions	Program Name
Bristol City Public Schools	Washington County Public Schools	Crossroads Alternative Education Program
Brunswick County Public Schools	Greensville and Mecklenburg County Public Schools	Southside LINK
Carroll County Public Schools	Galax City Public Schools	Carroll-Galax Regional Alternative Education Program (The RAE Center)
Fairfax County Public Schools	Alexandria City Public Schools	Transition Support Resource Center
Fauquier County Public Schools	Rappahannock County Public Schools	The Regional Continuum of Alternative Education Services
Fluvanna County Public Schools	Alleghany, Bath, Botetourt, Charles City, Clarke, Craig, Culpeper, Floyd, Franklin, Giles, Grayson, Greene, Halifax, Highland, Lancaster, Madison, Orange, Shenandoah, and Smyth County Public Schools, Radford City Public Schools	Project RETURN
Henry County Public Schools	Martinsville City and Patrick County Public Schools	Breaking Barriers
King William County Public Schools	Gloucester, Mathews, Middlesex, Essex, King and Queen, and New Kent County Public Schools, Town of West Point Public Schools	Middle Peninsula Regional Alternative Education Program
Lynchburg City Public Schools	Appomattox, Amherst, Bedford, and Nelson County Public Schools	Regional Alternative Education Project

VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION

School Division-Fiscal Agent	Other Participating Divisions	Program Name
Montgomery County Public Schools	Pulaski County Public Schools	Regional Program for Behaviorally Disturbed Youths
Newport News City Public Schools	Hampton City Public Schools	Enterprise Academy
Norfolk City Public Schools	Chesapeake, Franklin, Portsmouth, Suffolk, and Virginia Beach City Public Schools, Isle of Wight and Southampton County Public Schools	Southeastern Cooperative Education Program
Northampton County Public Schools	Accomack County Public Schools	Project Renew
Nottoway County Public Schools	Amelia, Buckingham, Charlotte, Cumberland, Lunenburg, and Prince Edward County Public Schools	Piedmont Regional Alternative School
Petersburg City Public Schools	Dinwiddie, Prince George, and Sussex County Public Schools, Colonial Heights and Hopewell City Public Schools	Bermuda Run Educational Center Regional Alternative Program
Pittsylvania County Public Schools	Danville City Public Schools	Pittsylvania County/Danville City Regional Alternative School
Powhatan County Public Schools	Goochland and Louisa County Public Schools	Project Return Regional Alternative Education Program
Prince William County Public Schools	Manassas and Manassas Park City Public Schools	New Dominion Alternative School
Richmond City Public Schools	Hanover and Henrico County Public Schools	Metro-Richmond Alternative Education Program
Roanoke City Public Schools	Salem City Public Schools	Roanoke/Salem Regional
Roanoke County Public Schools	Bedford County Public Schools	R. E. Cook Regional Alternative School

VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION

School Division-Fiscal Agent	Other Participating Divisions	Program Name
Russell County Public Schools	Tazewell County Public Schools	Project BRIDGE
Scott County Public Schools	Lee County Public Schools	Renaissance Program
Stafford County Public Schools	Caroline, King George, and Spotsylvania County Public Schools, and Fredericksburg City Public Schools	Regional Alternative Education Program
Staunton City Public Schools	Harrisonburg and Waynesboro City Public Schools, and Augusta County Public Schools	Genesis Alternative School
Westmoreland County Public Schools	Northumberland and Richmond County Public Schools	Northern Neck Regional Alternative Education Program
Wise County Public Schools	Dickenson County Public Schools and Norton City Public Schools	Regional Learning Academy
Wythe County Public Schools	Bland County Public Schools	Wythe/Bland Alternative Education Program
York County Public Schools	Poquoson City and Williamsburg-James City County Public Schools	Three Rivers Project-Enterprise Academy

VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION

Attachment A2

Profile of Regional Alternative Education Programs – 2006-2007

Table A2.

Profile of Available Slots, Students Served, and Grades Served – 2006-2007

School Division Fiscal Agent	Grades Served by Each of the Regional Alternative Education Programs												Number of Students Served*	Number of State Slots Available*	Number of Grades Served	
	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11				12
Bristol City										x	x	x	x	59	26	4
Brunswick County							x	x	x	x	x	x	x	83	87	7
Carrroll County								x	x	x	x	x	x	59	32	6
Fairfax County								x	x	x	x	x	x	63	44	6
Fauquier County								x	x	x	x	x	x	119	65	6
Fluvanna County	X	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	578	63	13
Henry County							x	x	x	x	x	x	x	44	31	7
King William County							x	x	x	x	x	x	x	185	110	7
Lynchburg City							x	x	x	x	x	x	x	85	67	7
Montgomery County							x	x	x	x	x	x	x	405	61	7
Newport News City							x	x	x	x	x	x	x	474	166	7
Norfolk City							x	x	x	x	x	x	x	433	116	7
Northampton County										x	x	x	x	65	22	4
Nottoway County							x	x	x	x	x	x	x	90	77	7
Petersburg City							x	x	x	x	x	x	x	54	28	7
Pittsylvania County							x	x	x	x	x	x	x	55	36	7
Powhatan County							x	x	x	x	x	x	x	55	55	7
Prince William County							x	x	x					176	64	3
Richmond City							x	x	x	x	x	x	x	57	41	7
Roanoke City							x	x	x	x	x	x	x	224	54	7
Roanoke County				x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	47	26	10
Russell County	X	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	252	162	13
Scott County							x	x	x	x	x	x	x	78	61	7
Stafford County										x	x	x	x	165	55	4
Staunton City							x	x	x	x	x	x	x	107	99	7
Westmoreland County							x	x	x	x	x	x	x	71	41	7
Wise County										x	x	x	x	54	59	4
Wythe County									x	x	x	x	x	20	25	5
York County							x	x	x	x	x	x	x	48	46	7
Totals =	2	2	2	3	3	3	21	24	25	28	28	28	28	4,205	1,819	

*Since students are assigned for short periods of time in some programs, multiple students can be served per slot.

VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION

Attachment A3

Profile of Regional Alternative Education Program Student Status
End of School Year – 2006-2007Table A3.
Status of Students at the End of the 2006-2007 School Year [1]

School Division Fiscal Agent	Number of Students Served	Total Number of Students Who...			
		Remain in the Program for 2007-2008 [2]	Returned to Sending School for 2007-2008 [2]	Dropped out in 2006-2007 [2]	Were Expelled/Dismissed in 2006-2007 [2]
Bristol City Public Schools	59	15 (25.4%)	13 (22.0%)	5 (8.4%)	4 (6.8%)
Brunswick County Public Schools	83	47 (56.6%)	6 (7.2%)	1 (1.2%)	16 (19.3%)
Carroll County Public Schools	59	17 (28.8%)	5 (8.5%)	3 (5.1%)	2 (3.4%)
Fairfax County Public Schools	63	8 (12.7%)	40 (63.5%)	1 (1.6%)	1 (1.6%)
Fauquier County Public Schools	119	55 (46.2%)	29 (24.4%)	2 (1.7%)	0 (0.0%)
Fluvanna County Public Schools	578	68 (11.8%)	200 (34.6%)	20 (3.5%)	36 (6.2%)
Henry County Public Schools	44	8 (18.2%)	16 (36.4%)	8 (18.1%)	6 (13.6%)
King William County Public Schools	185	24 (13.0%)	113 (61.2%)	2 (1.1%)	8 (4.3%)
Lynchburg City Public Schools	85	20 (23.5%)	40 (47.1%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (2.4%)
Montgomery County Public Schools	405	36 (8.9%)	368 (90.9%)	2 (0.5%)	38 (9.4%)
Newport News City Public Schools	474	57 (12.0%)	417 (88.0%)	15 (3.2%)	79 (16.7%)
Norfolk City Public Schools	433	136 (31.4%)	151 (34.9%)	66 (15.2%)	8 (1.8%)
Northampton County Public Schools	65	25 (38.5%)	4 (6.2%)	1 (1.5%)	0 (0.0%)
Nottoway County Public Schools	90	0 (0.0%)	90 (100.0%)	5 (5.6%)	7 (7.8%)
Petersburg City Public Schools	54	2 (3.7%)	22 (40.7%)	4 (7.4%)	27 (50.0%)
Pittsylvania County Public Schools	55	2 (3.6%)	27 (49.1%)	0 (0.0%)	13 (23.6%)
Powhatan County Public Schools	55	10 (18.2%)	30 (54.6%)	2 (3.6%)	1 (1.8%)
Prince William County Public Schools	176	89 (50.6%)	52 (29.6%)	7 (4.0%)	28 (15.9%)
Richmond City Public Schools	57	3 (5.3%)	53 (93.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (1.8%)
Roanoke City Public Schools	224	89 (39.7%)	76 (33.9%)	17 (7.6%)	1 (0.4%)
Roanoke County Public Schools	47	16 (34.0%)	10 (21.3%)	0 (0.0%)	6 (12.8%)
Russell County Public Schools	252	60 (23.8%)	62 (24.6%)	24 (9.5%)	2 (0.8%)
Scott County Public Schools	78	19 (24.4%)	23 (29.5%)	7 (9.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Stafford County Public Schools	165	11 (6.7%)	133 (80.6%)	8 (4.8%)	13 (7.9%)
Stunton City Public Schools	107	50 (46.7%)	6 (5.6%)	2 (1.9%)	10 (9.3%)
Westmoreland County Public Schools	71	7 (9.9%)	30 (42.3%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (1.4%)
Wise County Public Schools	54	15 (27.8%)	12 (22.2%)	5 (9.3%)	0 (0.0%)
Wythe County Public Schools	20	4 (20.0%)	3 (15.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (5.0%)
York County Public Schools	48	2 (4.2%)	27 (56.3%)	0 (0.0%)	10 (20.8%)
Totals =	4,205	895 (21.3%)	2,058 (48.9%)	207 (4.9%)	321 (7.6%)

Note [1]: Data collection regarding the number of graduates or GED recipients and students who otherwise left the program was incomplete at the time of this report and those numbers are not reflected in this chart; therefore, percentages do not total 100 percent.

Note [2]: Estimates based on data reported by the programs and follow-up communications.

VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION

Attachment A4

Code of Virginia Citation for Alternative Education Programs for Certain Students

§ 22.1-209.1:2. Alternative education programs for certain students.

A. With such funds as may be appropriated for this purpose, the Board of Education shall establish a program consisting of alternative education options for elementary, middle, and high school students in compliance with subdivision D 6 of § 22.1-253.13:1 who (i) have committed an offense in violation of school board policies relating to weapons, alcohol or drugs, or intentional injury to another person, or against whom a petition or warrant has been filed alleging such acts or school board charges alleging such policy violations are pending; (ii) have been expelled from school attendance or have received one suspension for an entire semester, or have received two or more long-term suspensions within one school year; or (iii) have been released from a juvenile correctional center and have been identified by the Superintendent of the Department of Correctional Education and the relevant division superintendent as requiring an alternative education program. However, no child shall be assigned to any alternative education program described in this section for more than one school year without an annual assessment of the placement to determine the appropriateness of transitioning the child into the school division's regular program. On and after July 1, 1994, the program shall consist of up to 10 regional pilot projects; any additional pilot projects shall be located in regions throughout the state to provide greater geographical distribution of such projects. All such projects shall be awarded on a competitive basis to applicants responding to requests for proposals, giving priority in awarding any new sites, to the extent practicable, to applicants in areas with high student suspension and expulsion rates that meet the requirements in subsection B of this section. The Board of Education shall promulgate regulations for the implementation of the program.

B. Upon the appropriation of funds for the purposes of this section, the Department of Education shall issue a request for proposals for regional projects to pilot selected alternative education options by July 1, 1993. The first such grants shall be awarded by August 20, 1993.

In the 2001 fiscal year, and upon the appropriation of funds for these purposes, the Department of Education shall issue a request for proposals for regional pilot projects for selected alternative education options for elementary school students. The first such grants shall be awarded by September 1, 2001.

Applications for grants shall include the following components:

1. An agreement executed by two or more school divisions and approval of their respective governing bodies to pilot an alternative education option as provided in subsection A, and a plan for the apportionment of responsibilities for the administration, management, and support of the program, including, but not limited to, the facilities and location for the program, daily operation and oversight, staffing, instructional materials and resources, transportation, funding and in-kind services, and the program of instruction.

VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION

2. A procedure for obtaining the participation in or support for the program, as may be determined, of the parents, guardian or other person having charge or control of a child placed in the program.
 3. An interagency agreement for cooperation executed by the local departments of health and social services or welfare; the juvenile and domestic relations district court; law-enforcement agencies; institutions of higher education and other postsecondary training programs; professional and community organizations; the business and religious communities; dropout prevention and substance abuse prevention programs; community services boards located in the applicants' respective jurisdictions; and the Department of Correctional Education.
 4. A curriculum developed for intensive, accelerated instruction designed to establish high standards and academic achievement for participating students.
 5. An emphasis on building self-esteem and the promotion of personal and social responsibility.
 6. A low pupil teacher ratio to promote a high level of interaction between the students and the teacher.
 7. An extended day program, where appropriate, to facilitate remediation; tutoring; counseling; organized, age-appropriate, developmental education for elementary and middle school children; and opportunities that enhance acculturation and permit students to improve their social and interpersonal relationship skills.
 8. Community outreach to build strong school, business, and community partnerships, and to promote parental involvement in the educational process of participating children.
 9. Specific, measurable goals and objectives and an evaluation component to determine the program's effectiveness in reducing acts of crime and violence by students, the dropout rate, the number of youth committed to juvenile correctional centers, and recidivism; and in increasing the academic achievement levels and rehabilitative success of participating students, admission to institutions of higher education and other postsecondary education and training programs, and improving staff retention rates.
 10. The number of children who may be assigned to the regional pilot alternative education program during the school year.
 11. A plan for transitioning the enrolled students into the relevant school division's regular program.
 12. A current program of staff development and training.
- C. Beginning with the first year of program implementation, the Department of Education shall be entitled to deduct annually from the locality's share for the education of its students a sum equal to the actual local expenditure per pupil for the support of those students placed by the relevant school division in any such pilot program. The amount of the actual transfers shall be based on data accumulated during the prior school year.

VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION

D. A school board shall require written notification to the pupil's parent, guardian, or other person having charge or control, when a pupil commits an offense in violation of school board policies, which school officials determine was committed without the willful intent to violate such policies, or when the offense did not endanger the health and safety of the individual or other persons, of the nature of the offense no later than two school days following its occurrence. A school board shall require the principal of the school where the child is in attendance or other appropriate school personnel to develop appropriate measures, in conjunction with the pupil's parent or guardian, for correcting such behavior.

E. The Board shall require submission of interim evaluation reports of each pilot program biannually and shall compile these reports and other program materials and report the status of such programs on a periodic basis, as may be established, during the 1993 legislative interim to the Special Joint Subcommittee on School Crime and Violence. The Board shall report the effectiveness of such programs and their components annually to the Governor and the General Assembly beginning by December 1, 1994.

F. For the purposes of this section, "regional pilot program" means a program supported and implemented by two or more school divisions which are either geographically contiguous or have a community of interest.

G. For the purposes of this section, "one school year" means no more than 180 teaching days.

(1993, cc. 819, 856; 1994, c. 762; 1995, c. 533; 1996, cc. 755, 914; 2000, c. 739; 2004, cc. 939, 955.)



VIRGINIA COMMISSION ON YOUTH

Survey of Alternative Education Programs Relating to Suspended and Expelled Youth

The Virginia Commission on Youth, a bipartisan commission of the Virginia General Assembly, is studying alternative education options available within the Commonwealth. This study addresses the various challenges facing school divisions in their use of **expulsion or suspensions** and the availability of **alternative education options** currently available.

The purpose of this survey is to increase knowledge on alternative education programs in Virginia for students who have been suspended or expelled. A complete picture of alternative education programs, as supported by data, is important for collecting and sharing information on: 1) existing programs and promising practices throughout the state and 2) unmet service needs.

For purposes of this survey, alternative education programs serve students when any of the following circumstances exist:

- a violation of school board policy related to weapons, drug and substance abuse or intentional injury to another,
- an expulsion or suspension, and/or release from a correctional/detention center, if placement is thought to be appropriate,
- an expulsion or suspension imposed by a school division in response to any disciplinary infraction outlined in school board policy,
- a placement in lieu of suspension or expulsion.

When completing this survey, include:

- only alternative schools or programs for at-risk students or those students who have been suspended, expelled, or released from a juvenile correctional center,
- only alternative schools or programs administered by your division,
- privately-run sites contracted by your division,
- homebound instruction tailored specifically for students who have been suspended, expelled, or released from a juvenile correctional/detention center, and/or
- alternative schools or programs that operate during weekday evenings or weekends.

A staff person knowledgeable about the alternative education programs/schools in your division should complete this survey. We encourage you to complete this survey online at <http://coy.state.va.us>.

PLEASE PRINT.

Name of Person Completing Survey _____

Title _____ Phone _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip Code _____

School Division _____

Email _____

This survey can be completed online. Please visit <http://coy.state.va.us>.

Section I – Basic Information

1. During 2005-2006, in your school division, what is the total number of suspended or expelled youth who were offered educational services during the time of their suspension or expulsion? _____
2. During 2005-2006, in your school division, what is the total number of suspended or expelled youth who were not offered educational services during the time of their suspension or expulsion? _____
3. Does your division have an Alternative Education school/program for youth who have been suspended, expelled or utilized in lieu of suspension or expulsion?
 Yes
 No ***If NO, please proceed to Question 28.***
4. How many Alternative Education schools/programs are there in your division? _____

Please list separately each Alternative Education school or program name/title with the accompanying information. Please photocopy this survey in order to list all of the Alternative Education schools/programs in your school division. You will be prompted at the end of this survey to provide information on additional Alternative Education programs not listed below.

School Division

Alternative Education Program/School

Contact Name/Title

Address/City Zip Code

Contact Phone

Contact Email

What year did this program/school open or begin? _____

Does this school/program serve: *(Check all that apply.)*

- Suspended/Expelled Youth
- Youth in danger of being suspended or expelled
- Other *Please specify.* _____

Have you had difficulty placing students in this program?

- Yes
- No

In the past two years, how many students in your division have had to wait to be placed, based on lack of available slots?

- 1-5
- 6-10
- 11-15
- 16-20
- Greater than 20

This survey can be completed online. Please visit <http://coy.state.va.us>. 2/7

Please estimate the average length of any placement delay, if applicable.

1. Under one week
2. 1 to 2 weeks
3. 2 to 4 weeks
4. More than 4 weeks

Is this a Regional Alternative Education program/school?

- Yes ***If YES, please proceed to Question 29.***
 No ***If NO, please proceed to Question 5.***

5. Which operational setting best describes this Alternative Education program? (*Please check the appropriate response.*)

- Solely operated by this division
 Jointly operated with other division
 Jointly operated with other organizations or agencies
 Privately operated
 Other – *Please explain.*

6. If this program is affiliated with multiple schools and/or divisions, please name all of these below.

7. Please list the fiscal agent/program administrator for this program.

8. Which of these categories does the Alternative Education program/school best fit? (*Please check all that apply.*)

- High School program/school (Grades 9-12)
 Middle School (Grades 6-8)
 Elementary School (Grades K-5)
 Other – *Please explain.*

9. What is the capacity for the program/school? (maximum number of students who can be served at one time)?

10. What was the total number of students served in the 2005-06 school year? (unduplicated count)

11. What is the estimated total number of students to be served in the 2006-07 school year?
12. Is there currently a waiting list for this program/school?
 Yes Approximately how many students are on the list from your school division? _____
 No
13. What are the student eligibility criteria for participation in the Alternative Education program/school?
Please check all that apply.
 Expelled
 Short-term Suspended (for 10 days or less)
 Long-term Suspended (more than 10 days but less than 365 days)
 Released from Juvenile Correctional/Detention Center
 In lieu of suspension or expulsion
 Pending disposition of community charges
 Other – *Please describe.*
14. How are students enrolled in the program/school? *Please check all that apply.*
 Outside service provider referral
 Parent/family referral
 Required by school division or school board policy
 Self-referral
 Teacher or staff referral
 Other – *Please describe.*
15. What are the goals for this program/school? *Please check all that apply.*
 Transition students to regular academic setting
 Other – *Please describe.*

16. What are the components of the program/school? *Please check all that apply.*
- Academic remediation or tutoring
 - Behavior management training
 - Community service
 - Conflict resolution training
 - Core academic classes
 - Crisis intervention
 - Drug/substance abuse prevention training
 - Elective classes
 - In-house counseling
 - Life skills training
 - Parent/family involvement
 - Peer mediation
 - Referrals to external counseling
 - Services provided through a partnership with a community-based organization
 - Social skills training
 - Technology-based instruction
 - Work participation – not school-based
 - Student assistance program
 - Restorative justice/practices
 - Mediation
 - Other – *Please describe.*

17. What is the approximate percentage of students in the program who have an Individual Education Plan (IEP)?
- 0-10 percent
 - 11-20 percent
 - 21-30 percent
 - 31-40 percent
 - 41-50 percent
 - 51-75 percent
 - More than 75 percent

18. When does the Alternative Education program/school operate? *Please check all that apply.*
- Before school
 - Regular school hours
 - After school – afternoon
 - After school – evening
 - Weekend
 - Summer
 - Other – *Please describe.*

19. How many hours does this school/program operate per week?
- 0-10 hours
 - 11-20 hours
 - 21-30 hours
 - More than 30 hours

20. What is the student/teacher ratio?
21. What is the approximate per pupil cost?
22. What is the approximate percentage of the per pupil cost that is provided with local funds?
23. What is the approximate percentage of the per pupil cost that is provided with federal funds?
24. Do students have the opportunity to earn verified credits while participating in the program/school?
 Yes
 No
25. What are the most significant strengths of the program/school?
26. What are the most significant challenges for the program/school?
27. Please include any additional comments or concerns not addressed in previous questions or information on other initiatives that address alternative education issues in your division. Use additional sheets if necessary.

Survey is complete. Thank you!

Please make sure you have completed Question 4 through 27 for every Alternative Education programs in your school division. You may photocopy this survey in order to list each Alternative Education program/school.

Please continue to the end of the survey for directions on submitting the survey to Commission on Youth.

This survey can be completed online. Please visit <http://coy.state.va.us>. 6/7

Section II — If your division does NOT have an Alternative Education program or school

If your division does NOT have an Alternative Education program or school

28. Please identify the reasons why your division does not currently having an alternative education program/school. Please check all reasons that may apply.

- Lack of financial resources
- Lack of information on alternative education models
- Lack of time and staff resources available to create program
- Not consistent with other division initiatives
- Other initiatives have higher priority
- Other — *Please specify.*

29. Please include any additional comments, concerns not addressed previously, or information on other initiatives that address alternative education issues in your division.

Survey is complete. Thank you!

**PLEASE RETURN BY WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 2006
VIA FAX OR ELECTRONICALLY TO**

**Leah Hamaker
Legislative Analyst
Virginia Commission on Youth
517B General Assembly Building
Richmond, Virginia 23219
Email lhamaker@leg.state.va.us
Fax 804-371-0574**

If questions, please email them to the address above or telephone 804-371-2481.

This survey can be completed online. Please visit <http://coy.state.va.us>. 7/7

Appendix D

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
P.O. BOX 2120
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA 23218-2120

SUPTS. MEMO NO. 244
November 9, 2006

INFORMATIONAL

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: Billy K. Cannaday, Jr.
Superintendent of Public Instruction

SUBJECT: Survey of Alternative Education Programs
Related to Suspended and Expelled Youth

The Virginia Commission on Youth, a bipartisan commission of the Virginia General Assembly, is studying alternative education options available within the Commonwealth. This study will investigate and report on the availability of regional and local alternative education programs that provide educational services for expelled and suspended students who cannot be served in traditional public school settings.

The study's purpose also includes identifying various challenges facing school divisions in serving these students, and collecting information about alternative education options available within the Commonwealth. In order to accomplish this goal, the Commission on Youth is conducting a survey which focuses on alternative education programs currently being operated during the 2006-07 school year. School divisions are being requested to complete the survey.

"The Survey of Alternative Education Programs Relating to Suspended and Expelled Youth" may be accessed at <http://coy.state.va.us>. The Commission on Youth will be sending each division superintendent an explanatory letter and a hard copy of the survey. If preferred, the hard copy of the survey may be returned. Regardless of the method selected, the survey should be returned by November 27, 2006, to Leah Hamaker, Legislative Policy Analyst, Virginia Commission on Youth, Suite 517 B, General Assembly Building, Richmond, VA 23219-0406, fax 804-371-0574.

An individual survey should be completed for each alternative education program/school for suspended or expelled youth in the division. The school division that serves as fiscal agent for the regional alternative education program should complete the survey.

Questions regarding the survey content should be directed to Leah Hamaker, legislative policy analyst at 804-371-2481, lhamaker@leg.state.va.us. Other questions may be directed to Cynthia A. Cave, director, office of student services at 804-225-2818, or by e-mail at Cynthia.Cave@doe.virginia.gov.

BK CJr/ADC/fta

Virginia Department of Education
Unduplicated Student Suspensions and Expulsions
School Years 2001-02 through 2004-05
Data Compiled June 2006

Div. No.	School Division	School Year	Short-Term Suspension	Long-Term Suspension	Expulsion	Modified Suspension to Expulsion
1	Accomack County	2001-02	865	11	10	0
		2002-03	869	15	4	0
		2003-04	849	10	0	0
		2004-05	828	28	5	12
2	Albemarle County	2001-02	848	32	2	0
		2002-03	879	32	0	0
		2003-04	856	28	0	32
		2004-05	829	13	0	17
3	Alleghany County	2001-02	152	0	0	0
		2002-03	235	1	1	0
		2003-04	238	7	0	2
		2004-05	171	6	5	5
4	Amelia County	2001-02	244	1	4	0
		2002-03	208	11	13	0
		2003-04	177	8	3	0
		2004-05	84	6	1	1
5	Amherst County	2001-02	340	20	1	0
		2002-03	402	26	0	0
		2003-04	341	0	15	0
		2004-05	516	3	0	12
6	Appomattox County	2001-02	193	2	2	0
		2002-03	183	0	0	0
		2003-04	201	0	0	3
		2004-05	259	2	10	3
7	Arlington County	2001-02	661	0	2	0
		2002-03	588	0	2	0
		2003-04	819	0	1	33
		2004-05	667	0	2	27
8	Augusta County	2001-02	820	3	0	0
		2002-03	795	17	0	0
		2003-04	839	7	0	22
		2004-05	824	3	0	15
9	Bath County	2001-02	70	0	3	0
		2002-03	28	5	0	0
		2003-04	27	0	1	3
		2004-05	57	0	5	0
10	Bedford County	2001-02	573	8	0	0
		2002-03	614	10	4	0
		2003-04	605	9	1	14
		2004-05	628	3	0	20

Div. No.	School Division	School Year	Short-Term Suspension	Long-Term Suspension	Expulsion	Modified Suspension to Expulsion
11	Bland County	2001-02	47	1	4	0
		2002-03	75	0	2	0
		2003-04	60	0	0	1
		2004-05	47	1	4	2
12	Botetourt County	2001-02	273	0	2	0
		2002-03	286	1	2	0
		2003-04	146	0	1	0
		2004-05	263	1	1	11
13	Brunswick County	2001-02	475	8	7	0
		2002-03	556	9	1	0
		2003-04	542	20	2	3
		2004-05	582	21	0	0
14	Buchanan County	2001-02	587	3	4	0
		2002-03	474	3	1	0
		2003-04	118	0	2	0
		2004-05	189	0	0	5
15	Buckingham County	2001-02	287	2	0	0
		2002-03	366	9	0	0
		2003-04	451	3	0	0
		2004-05	423	1	0	0
16	Campbell County	2001-02	552	35	28	0
		2002-03	704	2	9	0
		2003-04	968	33	37	0
		2004-05	823	26	23	1
17	Caroline County	2001-02	634	2	0	0
		2002-03	334	0	9	0
		2003-04	133	2	7	0
		2004-05	806	2	0	10
18	Carroll County	2001-02	161	14	10	0
		2002-03	275	14	17	0
		2003-04	526	12	26	3
		2004-05	459	19	10	2
19	Charles City County	2001-02	140	0	0	0
		2002-03	161	0	0	0
		2003-04	123	0	0	1
		2004-05	156	1	0	0
20	Charlotte County	2001-02	273	1	2	0
		2002-03	294	4	0	0
		2003-04	264	9	6	3
		2004-05	255	2	6	0
21	Chesterfield County	2001-02	2511	154	73	0
		2002-03	4046	83	71	0
		2003-04	4915	85	158	19
		2004-05	4177	184	55	121
22	Clarke County	2001-02	7	0	0	0
		2002-03	43	3	0	0
		2003-04	32	0	0	8
		2004-05	10	0	0	6

Div. No.	School Division	School Year	Short-Term Suspension	Long-Term Suspension	Expulsion	Modified Suspension to Expulsion
23	Craig County	2001-02	42	0	1	0
		2002-03	37	0	0	0
		2003-04	26	0	0	0
		2004-05	31	1	0	0
24	Culpeper County	2001-02	463	21	5	0
		2002-03	502	51	17	0
		2003-04	557	25	14	2
		2004-05	592	38	14	1
25	Cumberland County	2001-02	290	1	0	0
		2002-03	240	2	0	0
		2003-04	251	3	0	0
		2004-05	277	1	0	0
26	Dickenson County	2001-02	224	0	0	0
		2002-03	205	0	0	0
		2003-04	130	0	0	2
		2004-05	158	0	0	2
27	Dinwiddie County	2001-02	597	1	5	0
		2002-03	666	5	21	0
		2003-04	307	16	10	4
		2004-05	752	9	17	2
28	Essex County	2001-02	131	2	1	0
		2002-03	136	0	1	0
		2003-04	162	0	6	0
		2004-05	235	1	0	2
29	Fairfax County	2001-02	5583	411	38	0
		2002-03	5363	590	26	0
		2003-04	5714	547	26	308
		2004-05	5250	598	27	200
30	Fauquier County	2001-02	656	35	2	0
		2002-03	513	40	2	0
		2003-04	518	40	1	32
		2004-05	547	50	0	32
31	Floyd County	2001-02	124	0	1	0
		2002-03	169	0	0	0
		2003-04	176	5	0	5
		2004-05	181	8	1	6
32	Fluvanna County	2001-02	336	35	0	0
		2002-03	345	52	0	0
		2003-04	390	50	2	10
		2004-05	185	76	2	2
33	Franklin County	2001-02	642	1	0	0
		2002-03	645	0	6	0
		2003-04	670	8	12	24
		2004-05	647	10	11	14
34	Frederick County	2001-02	540	66	1	0
		2002-03	753	80	0	0
		2003-04	860	55	0	21
		2004-05	972	87	5	18

Div. No.	School Division	School Year	Short-Term Suspension	Long-Term Suspension	Expulsion	Modified Suspension to Expulsion
35	Giles County	2001-02	54	0	4	0
		2002-03	126	4	1	0
		2003-04	137	3	0	6
		2004-05	117	2	0	5
36	Gloucester County	2001-02	539	47	19	0
		2002-03	469	59	15	0
		2003-04	441	49	12	14
		2004-05	430	23	17	22
37	Goochland County	2001-02	217	1	0	0
		2002-03	201	12	0	0
		2003-04	204	0	0	7
		2004-05	154	4	6	0
38	Grayson County	2001-02	186	1	5	0
		2002-03	197	0	0	0
		2003-04	204	1	0	0
		2004-05	274	5	5	0
39	Greene County	2001-02	343	1	0	0
		2002-03	354	0	0	0
		2003-04	269	2	0	0
		2004-05	313	0	0	6
41	Halifax County	2001-02	670	20	2	0
		2002-03	802	34	2	0
		2003-04	901	27	0	13
		2004-05	583	18	2	5
42	Hanover County	2001-02	538	45	1	0
		2002-03	646	27	0	0
		2003-04	614	55	0	45
		2004-05	629	60	5	46
43	Henrico County	2001-02	2971	145	39	0
		2002-03	4326	172	31	0
		2003-04	4924	205	56	103
		2004-05	5004	208	70	48
44	Henry County	2001-02	1204	0	39	0
		2002-03	1071	7	27	0
		2003-04	894	17	16	9
		2004-05	1002	13	38	4
45	Highland County	2001-02	22	1	0	0
		2002-03	11	0	0	0
		2003-04	13	0	0	0
		2004-05	23	1	0	1
46	Isle Of Wight County	2001-02	299	0	0	0
		2002-03	411	6	13	0
		2003-04	474	29	3	12
		2004-05	480	45	0	3
48	King George County	2001-02	200	4	0	0
		2002-03	150	0	3	0
		2003-04	110	3	4	1
		2004-05	103	12	0	1

Div. No.	School Division	School Year	Short-Term Suspension	Long-Term Suspension	Expulsion	Modified Suspension to Expulsion
49	King & Queen County	2001-02	126	1	1	0
		2002-03	135	2	0	0
		2003-04	155	1	1	0
		2004-05	128	4	10	0
50	King William County	2001-02	144	0	0	0
		2002-03	158	2	7	0
		2003-04	125	7	1	0
		2004-05	151	8	9	0
51	Lancaster County	2001-02	164	0	2	0
		2002-03	146	0	0	0
		2003-04	140	2	0	4
		2004-05	173	2	1	0
52	Lee County	2001-02	426	1	4	0
		2002-03	505	2	2	0
		2003-04	416	2	0	0
		2004-05	379	0	1	0
53	Loudoun County	2001-02	892	24	11	0
		2002-03	1220	27	16	0
		2003-04	1235	72	24	68
		2004-05	1192	68	20	62
54	Louisa County	2001-02	388	3	3	0
		2002-03	476	0	1	0
		2003-04	450	1	8	13
		2004-05	408	17	8	13
55	Lunenburg County	2001-02	242	2	0	0
		2002-03	224	2	1	0
		2003-04	199	6	0	0
		2004-05	198	0	0	1
56	Madison County	2001-02	139	5	0	0
		2002-03	183	13	0	0
		2003-04	144	16	0	0
		2004-05	155	6	0	0
57	Mathews County	2001-02	88	0	1	0
		2002-03	92	1	0	0
		2003-04	61	0	0	0
		2004-05	39	0	0	8
58	Mecklenburg County	2001-02	690	1	0	0
		2002-03	488	0	0	0
		2003-04	700	0	12	2
		2004-05	845	4	9	5
59	Middlesex County	2001-02	133	3	9	0
		2002-03	155	0	10	0
		2003-04	153	2	0	1
		2004-05	148	1	4	1
60	Montgomery County	2001-02	658	13	12	0
		2002-03	715	2	2	0
		2003-04	731	14	13	27
		2004-05	761	19	6	19

Div. No.	School Division	School Year	Short-Term Suspension	Long-Term Suspension	Expulsion	Modified Suspension to Expulsion
62	Nelson County	2001-02	220	4	0	0
		2002-03	155	6	0	0
		2003-04	258	7	0	0
		2004-05	219	4	0	1
63	New Kent County	2001-02	270	0	0	0
		2002-03	236	0	0	0
		2003-04	225	5	0	2
		2004-05	242	1	0	5
65	Northampton County	2001-02	377	4	1	0
		2002-03	433	3	0	0
		2003-04	424	0	7	0
		2004-05	333	0	23	0
66	Northumberland Co.	2001-02	153	0	0	0
		2002-03	177	0	2	0
		2003-04	102	0	0	0
		2004-05	157	0	0	0
67	Nottoway County	2001-02	214	8	3	0
		2002-03	273	1	2	0
		2003-04	320	7	0	2
		2004-05	264	19	3	0
68	Orange County	2001-02	374	17	2	0
		2002-03	648	9	1	0
		2003-04	471	0	4	7
		2004-05	451	8	6	15
69	Page County	2001-02	311	0	1	0
		2002-03	272	9	2	0
		2003-04	210	1	0	0
		2004-05	269	0	1	1
70	Patrick County	2001-02	211	8	0	0
		2002-03	185	9	0	0
		2003-04	187	5	0	5
		2004-05	212	1	0	4
71	Pittsylvania County	2001-02	1417	0	19	0
		2002-03	1185	1	28	0
		2003-04	1272	1	23	0
		2004-05	1107	13	21	0
72	Powhatan County	2001-02	218	7	4	0
		2002-03	173	2	0	0
		2003-04	205	6	17	0
		2004-05	206	5	1	12
73	Prince Edward Co.	2001-02	401	2	2	0
		2002-03	332	4	0	0
		2003-04	352	3	0	9
		2004-05	378	1	0	5
74	Prince George Co.	2001-02	496	4	5	0
		2002-03	583	20	11	0
		2003-04	750	11	26	0
		2004-05	754	23	19	41

Div. No.	School Division	School Year	Short-Term Suspension	Long-Term Suspension	Expulsion	Modified Suspension to Expulsion
75	Prince William Co.	2001-02	3610	76	96	0
		2002-03	281	215	57	0
		2003-04	3015	160	61	86
		2004-05	4620	284	64	98
77	Pulaski County	2001-02	68	46	14	0
		2002-03	504	0	7	0
		2003-04	595	3	8	8
		2004-05	545	24	3	8
78	Rappahannock Co.	2001-02	52	0	0	0
		2002-03	63	3	1	0
		2003-04	48	2	0	1
		2004-05	48	7	2	0
79	Richmond County	2001-02	110	0	0	0
		2002-03	114	1	3	0
		2003-04	115	0	0	0
		2004-05	169	0	0	0
80	Roanoke County	2001-02	439	1	3	0
		2002-03	447	0	5	0
		2003-04	394	1	3	33
		2004-05	551	0	1	13
81	Rockbridge County	2001-02	67	1	1	0
		2002-03	80	17	0	0
		2003-04	274	2	0	9
		2004-05	350	4	8	1
82	Rockingham County	2001-02	616	6	4	0
		2002-03	672	0	7	0
		2003-04	585	12	2	39
		2004-05	665	16	8	16
83	Russell County	2001-02	363	0	2	0
		2002-03	337	0	0	0
		2003-04	325	0	0	2
		2004-05	275	1	0	2
84	Scott County	2001-02	170	2	0	0
		2002-03	213	1	22	0
		2003-04	248	10	3	26
		2004-05	210	5	1	13
85	Shenandoah County	2001-02	400	0	2	0
		2002-03	377	0	6	0
		2003-04	399	0	17	1
		2004-05	420	0	6	1
86	Smyth County	2001-02	303	1	0	0
		2002-03	328	0	0	0
		2003-04	516	0	0	8
		2004-05	346	0	0	2
87	Southampton County	2001-02	218	7	0	0
		2002-03	378	11	4	0
		2003-04	285	1	1	4
		2004-05	369	3	0	0

Div. No.	School Division	School Year	Short-Term Suspension	Long-Term Suspension	Expulsion	Modified Suspension to Expulsion
88	Spotsylvania County	2001-02	1305	6	27	0
		2002-03	1495	12	62	0
		2003-04	1456	9	66	14
		2004-05	1675	24	58	30
89	Stafford County	2001-02	1836	102	28	0
		2002-03	1756	99	23	0
		2003-04	1822	99	36	64
		2004-05	2171	85	39	15
90	Surry County	2001-02	258	1	8	0
		2002-03	119	1	0	0
		2003-04	172	0	3	0
		2004-05	190	1	10	0
91	Sussex County	2001-02	322	1	0	0
		2002-03	334	1	0	0
		2003-04	350	2	2	0
		2004-05	353	6	2	0
92	Tazewell County	2001-02	510	0	14	0
		2002-03	530	0	8	0
		2003-04	617	7	4	0
		2004-05	544	10	4	2
93	Warren County	2001-02	618	1	2	0
		2002-03	612	3	0	0
		2003-04	665	4	0	0
		2004-05	576	1	0	2
94	Washington County	2001-02	387	2	0	0
		2002-03	416	3	1	0
		2003-04	519	0	0	14
		2004-05	478	2	0	11
95	Westmoreland Co.	2001-02	240	0	6	0
		2002-03	274	0	0	0
		2003-04	192	1	0	0
		2004-05	140	0	1	0
96	Wise County	2001-02	446	0	0	0
		2002-03	515	0	0	0
		2003-04	439	0	0	0
		2004-05	234	0	0	0
97	Wythe County	2001-02	193	4	1	0
		2002-03	257	8	0	0
		2003-04	269	1	0	10
		2004-05	283	3	0	10
98	York County	2001-02	692	2	0	0
		2002-03	656	24	0	0
		2003-04	718	40	1	21
		2004-05	607	32	4	23
101	Alexandria City	2001-02	845	13	15	0
		2002-03	716	37	12	0
		2003-04	936	29	11	15
		2004-05	1025	69	0	14

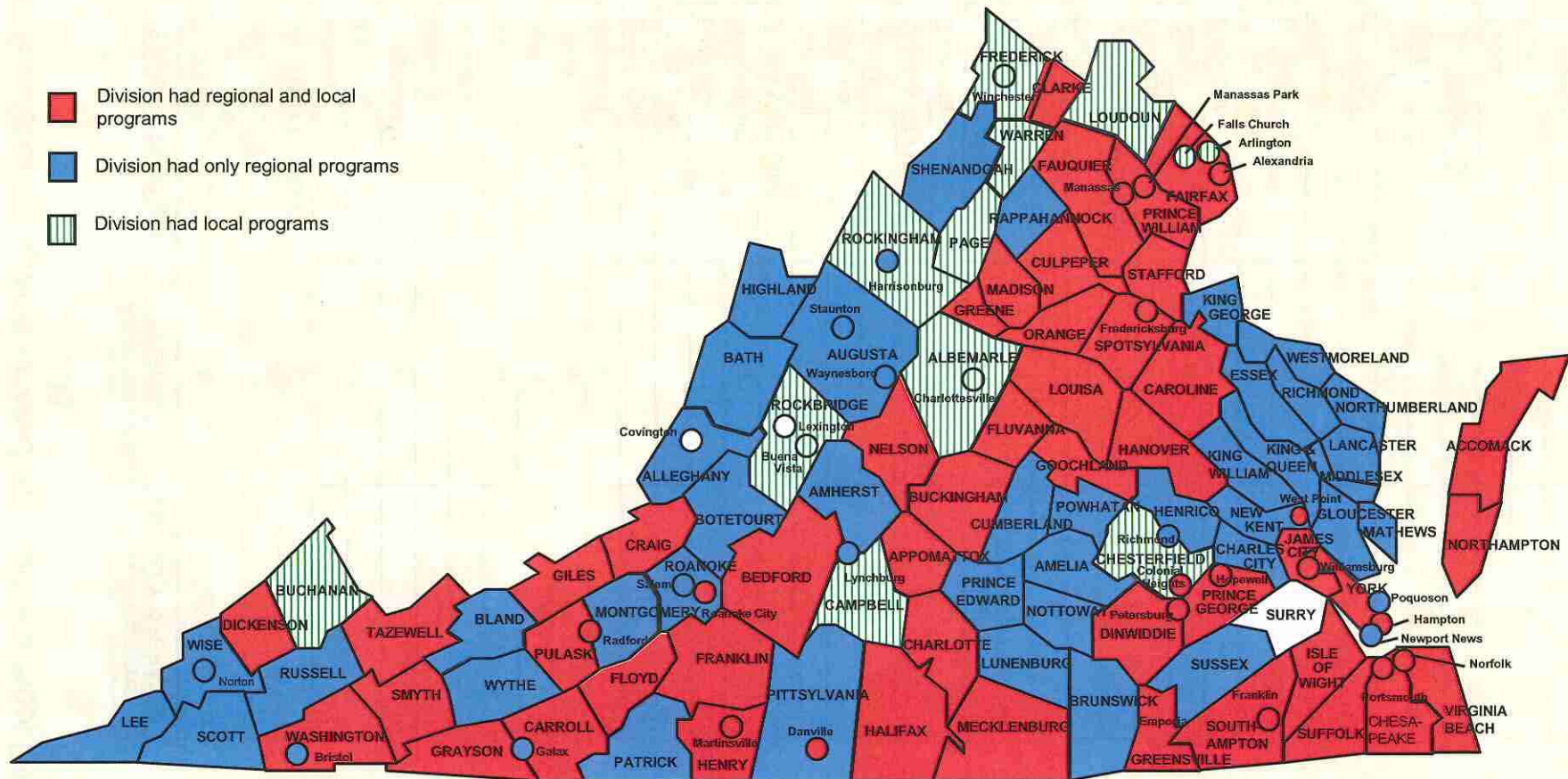
Div. No.	School Division	School Year	Short-Term Suspension	Long-Term Suspension	Expulsion	Modified Suspension to Expulsion
102	Bristol City	2001-02	225	1	3	0
		2002-03	239	6	0	0
		2003-04	333	4	4	1
		2004-05	335	5	0	1
103	Buena Vista City	2001-02	108	0	0	0
		2002-03	114	0	0	0
		2003-04	79	0	0	0
		2004-05	63	0	0	0
104	Charlottesville City	2001-02	522	10	2	0
		2002-03	554	13	1	0
		2003-04	608	2	4	4
		2004-05	567	9	1	10
106	Colonial Heights City	2001-02	241	9	5	0
		2002-03	142	11	2	0
		2003-04	169	0	7	0
		2004-05	178	15	13	0
107	Covington City	2001-02	46	0	0	0
		2002-03	70	0	0	0
		2003-04	42	0	0	6
		2004-05	65	0	0	2
108	Danville City	2001-02	1036	48	17	0
		2002-03	1010	58	24	0
		2003-04	1097	74	21	10
		2004-05	1243	60	9	7
109	Falls Church City	2001-02	61	0	0	0
		2002-03	55	0	1	0
		2003-04	47	0	0	3
		2004-05	38	0	0	0
110	Fredericksburg City	2001-02	245	3	0	0
		2002-03	272	0	2	0
		2003-04	282	4	0	6
		2004-05	223	0	6	0
111	Galax City	2001-02	85	0	1	0
		2002-03	69	1	0	0
		2003-04	51	0	0	6
		2004-05	29	0	0	5
112	Hampton City	2001-02	3650	128	9	0
		2002-03	3782	191	12	0
		2003-04	4957	281	15	74
		2004-05	4295	161	25	45
113	Harrisonburg City	2001-02	212	0	1	0
		2002-03	248	0	0	0
		2003-04	290	1	10	9
		2004-05	200	0	4	3
114	Hopewell City	2001-02	791	72	7	0
		2002-03	667	18	8	0
		2003-04	601	17	6	0
		2004-05	698	24	5	15

Div. No.	School Division	School Year	Short-Term Suspension	Long-Term Suspension	Expulsion	Modified Suspension to Expulsion
115	Lynchburg City	2001-02	1447	86	0	0
		2002-03	1538	64	0	0
		2003-04	1390	49	13	17
		2004-05	1505	47	0	15
116	Martinsville City	2001-02	369	0	1	0
		2002-03	355	3	5	0
		2003-04	382	9	0	5
		2004-05	238	0	0	7
117	Newport News City	2001-02	4583	362	52	0
		2002-03	4970	382	56	0
		2003-04	4793	359	75	0
		2004-05	4864	432	77	22
118	Norfolk City	2001-02	5746	629	1	0
		2002-03	6180	620	0	0
		2003-04	6387	561	0	84
		2004-05	6332	535	1	83
119	Norton City	2001-02	105	0	0	0
		2002-03	89	0	0	0
		2003-04	25	0	0	0
		2004-05	59	0	0	3
120	Petersburg City	2001-02	993	17	17	0
		2002-03	779	12	2	0
		2003-04	749	4	0	8
		2004-05	519	0	0	0
121	Portsmouth City	2001-02	2368	38	27	0
		2002-03	2111	254	23	0
		2003-04	2331	59	28	49
		2004-05	2522	33	25	27
122	Radford City	2001-02	88	0	4	0
		2002-03	73	1	1	0
		2003-04	71	0	0	0
		2004-05	70	1	3	0
123	Richmond City	2001-02	4463	15	25	0
		2002-03	4490	17	2	0
		2003-04	5362	21	7	72
		2004-05	5421	14	0	93
124	Roanoke City	2001-02	1608	1	4	0
		2002-03	2000	0	15	0
		2003-04	2132	64	8	28
		2004-05	2090	25	10	36
126	Staunton City	2001-02	262	7	4	0
		2002-03	393	5	0	0
		2003-04	402	5	0	0
		2004-05	194	2	6	3
127	Suffolk City	2001-02	2938	0	16	0
		2002-03	3206	0	2	0
		2003-04	2549	12	3	29
		2004-05	1606	11	5	37

Div. No.	School Division	School Year	Short-Term Suspension	Long-Term Suspension	Expulsion	Modified Suspension to Expulsion
128	Virginia Beach City	2001-02	5835	501	20	0
		2002-03	5943	641	8	0
		2003-04	5762	635	7	142
		2004-05	5509	650	1	129
130	Waynesboro City	2001-02	257	9	1	0
		2002-03	229	0	2	0
		2003-04	199	1	0	6
		2004-05	196	1	0	0
132	Winchester City	2001-02	181	19	8	0
		2002-03	167	0	0	0
		2003-04	255	5	0	8
		2004-05	208	6	4	8
135	Franklin City	2001-02	209	0	0	0
		2002-03	210	2	0	0
		2003-04	248	2	3	0
		2004-05	239	1	9	0
136	Chesapeake City	2001-02	3933	3	35	0
		2002-03	4453	9	26	0
		2003-04	4111	11	39	56
		2004-05	3786	13	44	62
137	Lexington City	2001-02	2	0	0	0
		2002-03	7	1	2	0
		2003-04	9	0	0	0
		2004-05	6	0	0	0
139	Salem City	2001-02	178	11	5	0
		2002-03	205	13	2	0
		2003-04	214	19	2	1
		2004-05	211	12	6	2
142	Poquoson City	2001-02	117	4	0	0
		2002-03	119	0	2	0
		2003-04	90	0	0	1
		2004-05	131	0	0	2
143	Manassas City	2001-02	124	0	0	0
		2002-03	406	0	0	0
		2003-04	457	1	9	18
		2004-05	538	10	15	18
144	Manassas Park City	2001-02	101	6	1	0
		2002-03	78	5	2	0
		2003-04	123	1	4	0
		2004-05	101	0	2	2
202	Colonial Beach	2001-02	104	6	1	0
		2002-03	56	0	1	0
		2003-04	41	0	1	0
		2004-05	34	4	0	0
207	West Point	2001-02	78	0	0	0
		2002-03	82	0	0	0
		2003-04	84	0	0	1
		2004-05	92	5	0	1

Div. No.	School Division	School Year	Short-Term Suspension	Long-Term Suspension	Expulsion	Modified Suspension to Expulsion
40	Greensville County	2001-02	96	0	1	0
		2002-03	524	6	0	0
		2003-04	587	8	7	0
		2004-05	317	1	3	0
131	Williamsburg-James City County	2001-02	5	30	53	0
		2002-03	493	59	36	0
		2003-04	449	39	14	16
		2004-05	594	50	7	19

Alternative Education Programs for Suspended and Expelled Students in the Commonwealth 2005 and 2006



Source: Virginia Commission on Youth Superintendent's Survey on Alternative Education Options, 2007.

Appendix G

**Alternative Education Programs Offered by Virginia School Divisions
2008**

SCHOOL DIVISION	Alternative Education Programs	
	REGIONAL	LOCALLY-OPERATED
Accomack	√	√
Albemarle		√
Alexandria City	√	√
Alleghany Highlands	√	
Amelia	√	
Amherst	√	
Appomattox	√	√
Arlington		√
Augusta	√	
Bath	√	
Bedford	√√	√
Bland	√	
Botetourt	√	√
Bristol City		√
Brunswick		
Buchanan		√
Buckingham	√	√
Buena Vista City		√
Campbell		√
Caroline	√	√
Carroll		√
Charles City County	√	
Charlotte	√	√
Charlottesville City		√
Chesapeake City	√	√
Chesterfield		√
Clarke	√	√
Colonial Heights City	√	√
Covington City		
Craig	√	√
Culpeper	√	√
Cumberland	√	
Danville City	√	√
Dickenson	√	√
Dinwiddie		
Essex	√	
Fairfax		√
Falls Church City		√
Fauquier		√
Floyd		√
Fluvanna		

Appendix G

**Alternative Education Programs Offered by Virginia School Divisions
2008**

SCHOOL DIVISION	REGIONAL	LOCALLY-OPERATED
Franklin	√√	√
Franklin City		√
Frederick		√
Fredericksburg City	√	√
Galax City	√	
Giles	√	√
Gloucester	√	
Goochland	√	√
Grayson	√	√
Greene	√	√
Greensville	√	
Halifax	√	√
Hampton City	√	√
Hanover	√	√
Harrisonburg City	√	
Henrico	√	√
Henry		√
Highland	√	
Hopewell City	√	√
Isle Of Wight	√	√
King And Queen	√	
King George	√	
King William		
Lancaster	√	
Lee	√	
Lexington City		
Loudoun		√
Louisa	√	√
Lunenburg	√	
Lynchburg City		
Madison	√	√
Manassas City	√	√
Manassas Park City	√	√
Martinsville City	√	√
Mathews	√	
Mecklenburg	√	√
Middlesex	√	
Montgomery		
Nelson	√	√
New Kent	√	
Newport News City		
Norfolk City		√

Appendix G

**Alternative Education Programs Offered by Virginia School Divisions
2008**

SCHOOL DIVISION	REGIONAL	LOCALLY-OPERATED
Northampton		√
Northumberland	√	
Norton City	√	
Nottoway		
Orange	√	√
Page		√
Patrick	√	
Petersburg City		√
Pittsylvania		
Poquoson City	√	
Portsmouth City	√	√
Powhatan		√
Prince Edward	√	
Prince George	√	√
Prince William		√
Pulaski	√	√
Radford City	√	√
Rappahannock	√	
Richmond	√	
Richmond City		
Roanoke		
Roanoke City		√
Rockbridge		√
Rockingham		√
Russell		
Salem City	√	
Scott		
Shenandoah	√	
Smyth	√	√
Southampton	√	√
Spotsylvania	√	√
Stafford		√
Staunton City		
Suffolk City	√	√
Surry		
Sussex	√	
Tazewell	√	√
Virginia Beach City	√	√
Warren		√
Washington	√	√
Waynesboro City	√	
West Point	√	

Appendix G

**Alternative Education Programs Offered by Virginia School Divisions
2008**

SCHOOL DIVISION	REGIONAL	LOCALLY-OPERATED
Westmoreland		
Williamsburg-James	√	√
Winchester City		√
Wise		
Wythe		
York		√

Source: Virginia Commission on Youth Graphic of Virginia Department of Education Data, 2008