

2011 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF

THE VIRGINIA COMMISSION ON YOUTH



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

**COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
RICHMOND
2011**



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Commission on Youth

Delegate Christopher K. Peace, *Chair*
Senator Harry B. Blevins, *Vice Chair*

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January 11, 2011

TO: The Honorable Robert F. McDonnell
and Members of the General Assembly

Pursuant to the provisions of the Code of Virginia (§§ 30-174 and 30-175) establishing the Virginia Commission on Youth and setting forth its purpose, I have the honor of submitting herewith the Executive Summary for the calendar year ending December 31, 2011.

This 2011 Executive Summary includes the interim activity and work conducted by the Virginia Commission on Youth during the 2011 study year, as required by § 30-175.

Final reports of the studies conducted will be published or made available on the General Assembly website. These reports will also be available on the Commission's website, <http://vcoy.virginia.gov>.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Christopher K. Peace".

Christopher K. Peace
Chair

2011

VIRGINIA COMMISSION ON YOUTH

House of Delegates

The Honorable Christopher K. Peace, Chair
The Honorable Mamyé E. BaCote
The Honorable Robert H. Brink
The Honorable Mark L. Cole
The Honorable Anne Crockett-Stark
The Honorable Beverly J. Sherwood

Senate of Virginia

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

Citizen Members

The Honorable Gary Close, Esq.
Mr. Anthony Dale
Ms. Joy Myers



2011

VIRGINIA COMMISSION ON YOUTH

Executive Director

Amy M. Atkinson

Senior Legislative Policy Analyst

Leah Hamaker

Executive Assistant

Joyce Garner

Access to the Internet

The Commission on Youth's homepage is located at
<http://vcoy.virginia.gov>

Acknowledgments

The Virginia Commission on Youth extends its sincere appreciation to the Office of the Clerk of the Senate, the Office of the Clerk of the House, the Division of Legislative Services, and the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for their assistance and support throughout 2011.

Legislative Initiative

Comparison of Academic Achievement in Virginia and in Leading Industrialized Nations

Study Author

Virginia Commission on Youth

Enabling Authority

§ 30-174 and § 30-175

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In a two-year study, the Commission on Youth is examining the issues of how Virginia school children compare academically to students in other countries. During Year 1, Commission staff will compile a “snapshot” of Virginia’s educational attributes/statistics compared to other states and compile country-by-country “snapshot” of other countries’ educational systems’ attributes and best-practices. Year 2 study activities include review of data gathered during the first year, convening a Workgroup of stakeholders to assist in process, and identifying international/national best practices which can be adopted in Virginia.

Identified study issues included the following:

- Educators, parents, community leaders and policymakers at the local, state, and federal level have focused attention on the need to address the academic achievement gap illustrated by grades, standardized-test scores, course selection, dropout rates, and college-completion rates.
- This finding is considered especially relevant, as today's high school graduates enter a global job market where highly skilled workers are in increasing demand and a number of countries have made significant improvements.
- U.S. industry, science, and technological innovation is being overtaken by competitors throughout the world, and U.S. employers have detailed specifically and candidly the problems with the American education system;
 - In a major survey conducted in 2005 by the National Alliance of Manufacturing, when companies were asked whether K-12 schools were doing a good job preparing students for the workplace, 84 percent of the 800 participating companies indicated “no.”
 - When controlling for industry segment, the Aerospace and Defense segment reported “no” 93 percent of the time.
 - The top three most frequently-cited deficiencies of the education system were: basic employability skills, math and science, and reading and comprehension.
- This achievement gap challenges the Commonwealth's ability to maintain a competitive advantage among industrialized nations. On international assessments of academic proficiency, U.S. students' performance is below other countries.
 - In the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) last conducted in 2007, middle-school students in the United States ranked 11th out of 48 participating countries.

- In the 2009 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), secondary school students' in the United States ranked 30th in Math, 23rd in Science, and 17th in Reading out of the 34-member Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries.
- In follow-up studies, researchers assert that international comparisons are problematic because the impact of other factors, such as culture and context, are difficult to measure. Variables such as curricula, amount and rate of preschool education, age of school enrollment, class sizes, discipline, quantity of education, attendance at additional schools, early tracking, and the use of central exams and tests which also impact student outcomes not accounted for by these studies.
- Other nations have started benchmarking their policies and practices with the world's top performers. A compilation of the attributes of leading industrialized nations' educational systems would be useful in order to gather best-practices to help Virginia keep up globally.

At the Commission on Youth's April 5, 2011 meeting, the Commission adopted a two-year study plan for the comparison of academic achievement in Virginia and leading industrialized nations to include the following study activities:

Study Activities

Year One

1. Compile a "snapshot" of Virginia's educational attributes/statistics compared to other states.
 - a. Determine secondary data sources
 - i. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) of U.S. students
 - ii. The Institute for Education Sciences' *Projections of Education Statistics*
 - iii. U.S Department of Education' Consolidated State Performance Report (CSPR)
 - b. Select metrics for inclusion in this comparison
 - i. Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM)
 - ii. No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Accountability Scores
 - iii. Graduation Rates
 - iv. Adequate Yearly Progress Data/Test Scores
2. Compile country-by-country "snapshot" of other countries' educational systems' attributes and best-practices.
 - a. Determine secondary data sources
 - i. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
 - ii. American Institute for Research
 - iii. Harvard's Program on Education Policy
 - iv. Education Commission of the States
 - v. Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS)
 - vi. 2009 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)
 - vii. American Institutes for Research
 - viii. National Center for Education Statistics
 - b. Select countries to be included
 - i. Group of Eight (G-8)
 - ii. OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) survey participants
 - c. Select elements to include for comparison
 - i. Student data
 1. Age upon school enrollment
 2. Age upon graduation
 3. Economic status
 4. Gender

- ii. System attributes
 - 1. Early education/Pre-K
 - 2. Curriculums
 - 3. Student/teacher ratio
 - 4. Per pupil expenditures
 - 5. Funding
 - 6. Time spent learning
 - 7. Teacher selection/preparation
 - 8. Professional development
 - 9. Student demographic
 - 10. Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM)
 - 11. Length of school year
 - 12. Standardized tests
- iii. Educational outputs
 - 1. Achievement scores
 - 2. Proficiency scores on standardized assessments
- d. Synthesize findings of literature review and formulate recommendations.
- e. Solicit feedback to recommendations from stakeholders and impacted agencies.
- f. Refine findings and recommendations.
- g. Present findings and recommendations to the Commission on Youth.

Year Two

1. Review data gathered during the first year.
 - a. Select a sample of high performing countries based on educational outcomes, test scores, and ability to apply findings to the United States/Virginia.
 - b. Select specific international outcomes/data.
 - c. Select attributes based on clarity and portability of outcomes.
2. Convene Workgroup to assist in process
 - a. Invite a representative from impacted groups

Secretary of Education
 Superintendent of Public Instruction
 Representatives from Higher Education/Academia
 Virginia Department of Education
 Virginia School Boards Association
 Virginia Association of School Superintendents

Board of Education
 Virginia PTA
 Virginia Manufacturers Association
 Career and Technical Education Officials
 Virginia Education Association
 Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals
 Governor's Academies/STEM
 Educators/Guidance Counselors
 State Council of Higher Education
 Virginia Community College System
 Private School Representatives

Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals
 Alternative Education Representatives
 Court Service Unit Representatives
 Business Representatives
 Industry & Technology Representatives

3. Identify international/national best practices which can be adopted in Virginia.
 - a. Review other states'/nations' research and studies
 - b. Review findings from Virginia's Governor's Commission on Higher Education Reform, Innovation and Investment
 - c. STEM initiatives
 - d. Practices from schools that excel
 - e. Innovative methods used to measure students' progress
4. Develop consensus.
5. Develop recommendations.
6. Synthesize findings of literature and workgroup recommendations.
7. Solicit feedback to recommendations from constituents and DOE/Board of Education.
8. Refine recommendations.
9. Present recommendations to Commission on Youth.
10. Prepare final report.

At Commission on Youth meetings on November 9, 2011 and December 19, 2011, Commission members received presentations from Amy M. Atkinson, Commission Executive Director, and Dr. Patricia Popp, Clinical Associate Professor of the School of Education for the College of William and Mary.

The Commission will continue the work of this study in 2012.

Legislative Initiative

School Enrollment Practices for Virginia's Kinship Caregivers

Study Author

Virginia Commission on Youth

Enabling Authority

§ 30-174 and § 30-175

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Kinship care complements federal requirements of providing children with stability and permanency. Children in kinship care experience less trauma, have positive perceptions of their placements and have fewer behavioral problems. Virginia policy requires that family members be considered first when out-of-home placements are sought for children. However, Virginia ranks last in the nation in the use of kinship care.

Kinship care arrangements can be either informal or formal. In Virginia, informal is the more common of the two types. Unlike formal kinship care (which typically refers to relative foster placements) informal kinship care allows parents to make temporary arrangements with a family member when they are unable to care for their child during a serious family hardship and/or absence, but do not want to relinquish their parental rights. There is no child welfare involvement or formal action by a local department of social services and, as a rule, caregivers do not go through the custody process.

At the Commission's meeting on April 5, 2011, the Commission adopted a study plan to assess school enrollment practices for Virginia's kinship caregivers. The approved study plan included the following activities:

- Convene Advisory Group to assist in study effort.
 - Invite representatives from the impacted groups including:

Virginia Department of Social Services	Virginia Department of Aging
Local Departments of Social Services	Area Agency on Aging
Virginia League of Social Service Executives	Local School Divisions
Special Advisor to the Governor on Virginia's Children's Services System	Advocacy Organizations
Virginia Association of School Superintendents	Parent Representatives
Educators/Guidance Counselors	Virginia School Boards Association
Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals	Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals
Virginia Department of Education	Project HOPE – Virginia

- Review Virginia laws, regulations, and terminology.
 - Current school enrollment statutes
 - Legal guardianship statutes pertaining to school enrollment
 - Statutes applicable to military families
- Analyze Virginia practices and data.
 - Review Virginia Department of Education's policies
 - Review local school divisions practices and procedures for school enrollment
 - Review state and local Department of Social Services' (LDSS) policies and practices
- Analyze other states' practices and procedures.
 - California, New York kinship care policies
 - Maryland's recent statutory changes easing school enrollment practices for informal kinship caregivers
- Develop recommendations.
 - Synthesize findings from school divisions, other states and constituent groups
 - Develop recommendations for improvement
 - Solicit feedback to recommendations from constituents, families and school officials
- Solicit feedback to recommendations.
- Refine findings and recommendations.
- Present findings and recommendations to the Commission on Youth.
- Prepare final report.

At its December 19, 2011 meeting, the Commission on Youth approved the following recommendation:

Request the State Executive Council to review the work of the Commission on Youth and develop a plan to ensure school stability for children in out-of-home care, including children in kinship care arrangements, both formal and informal.

Legislative Initiative

Update of *Collection of Evidence-based Treatments for Children and Adolescents with Mental Health Disorders*

Study Author

Virginia Commission on Youth

Enabling Authority

§ 30-174 and § 30-175

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2002 General Assembly, through Senate Joint Resolution 99, directed the Virginia Commission on Youth to coordinate the collection of empirically-based information on treatments recognized as effective for children, including juvenile offenders, with mental health treatment needs. The resulting publication entitled *Collection of Evidence-based Treatments for Children and Adolescents with Mental Health Treatment Needs* was compiled by the Commission on Youth with the assistance of an advisory group of experts pursuant to the resolution. The *Collection* was published in *House Document 9* and presented to the Governor and the 2003 General Assembly.

The 2003 General Assembly subsequently passed Senate Joint Resolution 358, which required the Commission to update the *Collection* biennially. The Commission on Youth designed this initiative to be assisted by an advisory group, which was to provide overall guidance, including direction and philosophy for the update of the *Collection*. The *Collection 2nd Edition* was published as *Senate Document 10*; the 3rd Edition was published as *House Document 21*; and the 4th Edition was published as *House Document 9, 2010*. Each of the *Collection* reports was presented to the Governor and the General Assembly.

Senate Joint Resolution 358 also mandated that the Commission disseminate the *Collection* via web technologies. As specified in the resolution, the Commission received assistance in disseminating the *Collection* from the Advisory Group, the Secretary of Health and Human Resources, the Secretary of Education, and the Secretary of Public Safety.

During 2011, activities in dissemination efforts included sending letters to encourage the use of evidence-based practices to all health and human resources, public safety and education agencies within state government and private provider associations, including pediatric and psychiatric societies.

Another approach was to encourage the use of evidence-based practices at the post-secondary level. The chair of the Commission accordingly sent letters to the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, the Community College System and public universities with graduate programs in psychology, psychiatry, social work & counseling

Commission staff met with stakeholder groups on February 23, May 18 and June 27, 2011 to receive their input on the *Collection*. The Advisory Group convened on September 7, 2011.

At its November 9, 2011 meeting, the Commission on Youth adopted the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1

The Commission on Youth will revise the Autism Spectrum Disorders and Intellectual Disabilities sections of the *Collection 4th Edition* and limit these sections to discussion of co-occurring mental health disorders.

Recommendation 2

The Commission on Youth will add a disclaimer to the *Collection 5th Edition* to acknowledge that Intellectual Disability and Autism Spectrum Disorders are not mental health disorders.

Recommendation 3

The Commission on Youth will convene the Advisory Group prior to the 2013 biennial update and discuss further modifying the Intellectual Disability and Autism Spectrum Disorders sections to include best practices in service delivery for developmental disabilities.

Recommendation 4

The Commission on Youth will disseminate the *Collection 4th Edition* to licensing boards, department chairpersons, and program directors in the departments of social work, psychology, rehabilitation counseling, nursing, psychiatry, and human services in all Virginia colleges and universities and request that it be shared with undergraduate program directors and administrators.

Recommendation 5

Request that Virginia's health profession licensing boards post the *Collection 4th Edition* on their websites and request that continuing education requirements include credits on evidence-based practices in the field of child mental health.