

# Assessment of Virginia's Disability Services System: Education



Virginia Board for  
People with Disabilities

# **2017 Assessment of Disability Services in Virginia Education**

First edition

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## **Virginia Board for People with Disabilities**

Washington Office Building  
1100 Bank Street, 7th Floor  
Richmond, VA 23219

804-786-0016  
804-846-4464 (Toll-free)  
804-786-1118 (Fax)

e-mail: [info@vbpd.virginia.gov](mailto:info@vbpd.virginia.gov)  
[www.vaboard.org](http://www.vaboard.org)

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***VBPD Chair***  
**Charles Meacham**

***VBPD Executive Director***  
**Heidi Lawyer**

***Author***  
**John Cimino, Director of Public Policy**

***Editing***  
**Nia Harrison, Director of Planning, Research, & Evaluation**  
**Benjamin Jarvela, Director of Communications**

***Design***  
**Benjamin Jarvela, Director of Communications**  
**Amberly Millis, Communications Assistant**



Charles Meacham  
*Chair*  
Angela Sadsad  
*Vice Chair*  
Matthew Shapiro  
*Secretary*  
Heidi L. Lawyer  
*Executive Director*

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA  
*Virginia Board for People with Disabilities*

*Washington Building, Capitol Square  
1100 Bank Street, 7th Floor  
Richmond, Virginia 23219*

804-786-0016  
1-800-846-4464  
804-786-1118 (Fax)  
info@vbpd.virginia.gov  
www.vaboard.org

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The Virginians with Disabilities Act § 51.5-33 directs the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities (VBPD), beginning July 1, 2017, to submit an annual report to the Governor, through the Secretary of Health and Human Resources, that provides an in-depth assessment of at least two major service areas for people with disabilities in the Commonwealth. In June 2016, the Board determined that the 2017 focus would be on the education and employment of individuals with disabilities as related to programs and services operated, licensed, administered, or funded by the Commonwealth. The Board, as part of its authority and responsibility as a Developmental Disabilities (DD) Council under the federal Developmental Disabilities and Bill of Rights Act (42 U.S.C. §15021-15029), is also required to complete a similar analysis as it develops and amends its federal State Plan goals and objectives.

The Assessments on Education and Employment, respectively, are not intended to be a comprehensive accounting of all services available to individuals with disabilities throughout the Commonwealth. For example, the Assessments do not include services provided in juvenile justice or correctional facilities. Nor do they cover the population of individuals with behavioral health disabilities other than those who have a concurrent developmental disability.

Rather, in this Assessment, VBPD seeks to identify critical issues, data trends, and unmet needs of people with developmental disabilities, and offer recommendations for improving the delivery of education and employment services and supports for people with developmental disabilities in the Commonwealth. Although the focus of the analysis and recommendations is on individuals with developmental disabilities, the recommendations would also benefit the broader population of people with disabilities.

The data for this Assessment was obtained from a variety of sources, including state and federal agency websites and planning and performance reports, legislative studies, federal agency websites and data reports, national nonpartisan policy and research organizations, and various research publications. We appreciate the assistance of the state agencies who provided information and clarification on the services relevant to their agencies. The policy recommendations contained within this Assessment were developed by an ad hoc committee of the Board and approved by the full Board at its March 15, 2017 meeting.

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## Statement of Values

*"And today, America welcomes into the mainstream of life all of our fellow citizens with disabilities. We embrace you for your abilities and for your disabilities, for our similarities and indeed for our differences, for your past courage and your future dreams."*

— President George H. W. Bush at the Signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act

The Virginia Board for People with Disabilities serves as Virginia's Developmental Disabilities Council. In this capacity, the Board advises the Governor, the Secretary of Health and Human Resources, federal and state legislators, and other constituent groups on issues important to people with disabilities in the Commonwealth. The following assessment of education services and outcomes is intended to serve as a guide for policymakers who are interested in improving the education of students with disabilities in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The Board's work in this area is driven by its vision, values, and the following core beliefs and principles:

**Inherent Dignity:** All people possess inherent dignity, regardless of gender, race, religion, national origin, or disability status.

**Presumed Capacity:** All students should be presumed capable of learning and participating in the life of their school; and all students deserve opportunities to demonstrate their abilities, skills, and talents.

**Self-determination:** People with disabilities and their families are experts in their own needs and desires and they must be included in the decision-making processes that affect their lives. Students with disabilities and their families must be active participants in the development of effective educational strategies and supports.

**Integration:** People with disabilities have a civil right to receive services and supports in the most integrated setting appropriate to their needs and desires, consistent with the Supreme Court's Olmstead decision. Inclusion in the general educational curriculum and in a general education classroom must be the first and preferred option for students with disabilities.

**Diversity:** Diversity is a core value. All people, including people with disabilities, should be valued for contributing to the diversity of our schools and of the Commonwealth.

**Freedom from Abuse and Neglect:** Students with disabilities must be protected from abuse and neglect in all settings where services and supports are provided, including from unnecessary restraint and seclusion and from overly harsh disciplinary practices.

**Fiscal Responsibility:** Fiscally responsible policies are beneficial for the Commonwealth and they are beneficial for people with disabilities.

## Executive Summary

Virginia's educational outcomes for students with disabilities have improved in some respects (see Table 1). The proficiency rates of students with disabilities in the Commonwealth, as measured on standardized assessments, have been slowly, but measurably, improving in recent years. Many students with disabilities are also spending more of their school day in general education classrooms.

However, opportunities remain to improve educational outcomes for students with disabilities (see Table 1). Fewer than half of students with disabilities are achieving academic proficiency, and nearly half are not graduating with a regular high school diploma. Fewer than three-quarters of students with disabilities are entering higher education, entering some other education or training program, or obtaining competitive employment within one year of graduating high school. More students with disabilities are being educated in separate schools or facilities.

Key education outcome	Most recent year for which data is available	Trend in recent years
<b>Academic proficiency</b>		
Academic proficiency rates of students with disabilities	48% in math 45% in English/reading	↑
Gap between students with and without disabilities in academic proficiency rates	31% in math 34% in English/reading	↑
<b>Graduation with a regular high school diploma</b>		
Students with disabilities who graduate with a regular diploma	53%	↔
Gap between students with and without disabilities in graduation rates with a regular diploma	32%	↔
<b>Postsecondary success</b>		
Students with disabilities who entered higher education, entered some other education or training program, or obtained competitive employment within one year of graduating high school	73%	↔
<b>Inclusion of students with disabilities</b>		
Students with disabilities spending at least 80% of school day in general education classroom	63%	↑
Students with disabilities educated in separate schools or facilities	4%	↑

Table 1: Key educational outcomes of students with disabilities.

The Virginia Board for People with Disabilities offers 19 recommendations to address these shortcomings in educational outcomes for people with disabilities in Virginia. The recommendations are grouped into five main approaches:



1. *Improve rates at which students with disabilities receive educational services in general education classrooms in their neighborhood schools and receive meaningfully inclusive educational experiences throughout the Commonwealth, especially in districts identified as including students with disabilities in regular education classrooms at exceptionally low rates.*
  - a. Realign Virginia’s funding of special education services, including Children's Services Act funding, to eliminate incentives to segregate students with disabilities and ensure that schools have adequate funding to provide supports to students with disabilities in general education settings;
  - b. Increase targeted technical assistance and training for schools with high rates of students with disabilities served in segregated settings to increase the capacity of these schools to serve students with developmental disabilities in general education settings;
  - c. Work with stakeholders to develop an inclusion implementation plan that addresses the barriers identified by stakeholders in the Virginia Department of Education’s Inclusive Practices Workgroup.
  
2. *Decrease the use of overly harsh discipline and harmful behavioral interventions in the Commonwealth and minimize the disparate impact that these practices have on students with disabilities.*
  - a. Develop a school quality survey to capture data on the frequency of exclusionary disciplinary practices used in Virginia’s schools, and include discipline use and discipline disparities in the online School Quality Protocol;
  - b. Pass legislation to decrease the use and duration of exclusionary discipline practices for students with disabilities in the Commonwealth;
  - c. Continue to provide technical assistance and training targeted to schools with excessive rates of exclusionary discipline and/or law enforcement referrals, which should include an emphasis on positive behavior interventions and supports (PBIS) and other alternatives to exclusionary discipline;
  - d. Adopt regulations that ensure restraint and seclusion are used only as a last resort and only when necessary to prevent serious bodily harm, injury, or death to students or others;
  - e. Adopt regulations that ensure schools that choose to employ third party School Resource Officers (SROs) adopt MOUs that explicitly define the appropriate roles of SROs and school personnel with respect to student discipline.
  
3. *Ensure that students with disabilities and their parents receive clear and accurate information about the future impact of current educational decisions.*
  - a. Continue to develop and continuously update information for parents to understand the long-term impact of educational decisions made early in a child’s educational career;
  - b. Develop written material that can be provided to parents at critical decision points during the Individualized Education Program (IEP) development process to ensure that they understand the potential impact of a present decision on the student’s ability to graduate with a regular diploma, and coordinate this with decision-point reminders in the statewide IEP system;
  - c. Continue to provide ongoing technical assistance and training to implement the state systemic improvement plan to increase the number of students with disabilities who obtain a standard diploma.
  
4. *Increase the number of students with disabilities who have access to employment-related education and real-world experiential employment opportunities, both during and immediately after high school.*
  - a. Develop guidance on the development of effective employment-related IEP goals, which should include a non-exhaustive list of employment-related skills matched with potential activities to



aid in developing those skills, as well as information on the appropriate points in the transition process to address these skills;

- b. The Virginia Department of Education and Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) should continue to collaborate to support and expand upon Project SEARCH and Start on Success and to invest in other innovative employment programs;
  - c. Review Virginia Board of Education (VBOE) approved state-issued professional licensure, industry certification examination, and occupational competency assessment requirements to identify practices that unnecessarily screen out otherwise capable students with disabilities, and ensure that students with disabilities are afforded necessary testing accommodations to provide them an equal opportunity to participate in these programs.
5. *Increase postsecondary educational opportunities for students with disabilities, including students with significant developmental and other disabilities.*
- a. Review postsecondary community college and vocational education program eligibility criteria and testing requirements to ensure that they are narrowly tailored to the skills requisite to completing the program and do not unnecessarily screen out students with disabilities;
  - b. Fund pilot program(s) to provide inclusive college experiences to students with significant developmental and other disabilities at community college(s) in the Commonwealth;
  - c. Invest in a postsecondary education scholarship fund for students with developmental disabilities to attend integrated college programs for students with disabilities;
  - d. Develop easily accessible information about postsecondary educational opportunities for students with disabilities, including success stories that highlight how individuals with disabilities have successfully participated in integrated postsecondary college and vocational educational programs;
  - e. Develop guidance and/or training for college administrators and professors at two- and four-year institutions of higher education about integrating individuals with disabilities into college classrooms, specifically focusing on the types of accommodations that can help students with disabilities succeed.



**Virginia Board for  
People with Disabilities**

## Background

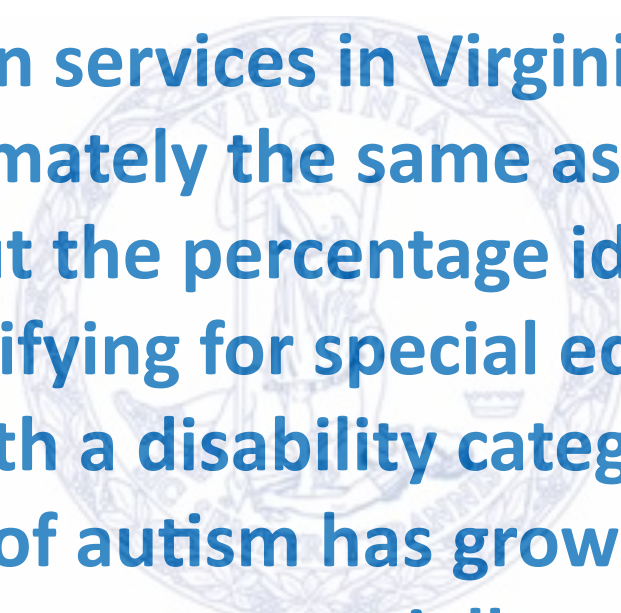
The services and supports that students with disabilities receive to allow them to participate in and benefit from public education are broadly referred to as special education services. Special education is governed by a web of federal and state laws and regulations, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) at the federal level, and Title 22.1-213 – 215 of the Virginia Code at the state level.

The U.S. Department of Education evaluates states annually to determine their compliance with the Federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Virginia is one of 23 states that were rated as “meets requirements” by the U.S. Department of Education for compliance with IDEA in 2016. This is the highest rating possible, and 2016 was the fourth year in a row that the Commonwealth received this rating. Virginia’s repeated favorable rating is a testament to the Commonwealth’s commitment to meeting its obligations to serve students with disabilities in accordance with federal law.

Over 165,000 students received special education services in Virginia in 2016, according to Virginia’s Child Count Reports (VDOE 2009-2015). While this is roughly equivalent to the number of students who were receiving IDEA services in 2010, there have been significant changes in the prevalence of disability categories among students who are receiving IDEA services (see Table 2). For instance, the number of Virginian students in a primary disability category of autism has increased 81 percent since 2010, from 10,061 to 18,256. Likewise, the identification of deaf-blindness has increased by 25 percent.

The increased identification of autism and deaf-blindness within Virginia’s student population have been offset by decreases in the number of students identified in other disability categories. Orthopedic impairments and speech or language impairments, for instance, have each decreased by 18 percent; and the percentage of students with developmental delays has decreased by 15 percent.

**The number of students receiving special education services in Virginia today is approximately the same as six years ago, but the percentage identified as qualifying for special education with a disability category of autism has grown exponentially.**



<b>Disability Category</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>Percentage change</b>
Autism	10061	11703	13141	14624	15859	17030	18256	81%
Deaf-Blindness	20	25	34	29	32	32	25	25%
Other Health Impairments	27767	28703	29530	30261	31006	31546	32283	16%
Visual Impairments	610	618	598	594	592	646	656	8%
Multiple Disabilities	3092	3325	3461	3464	3400	3356	3290	6%
Hearing Impairments	1488	1473	1455	1449	1404	1475	1511	2%
Traumatic Brain Injury	400	390	395	396	419	392	408	2%
Specific Learning Disability	57518	56971	55690	54742	54030	53534	54162	-6%
Emotional Disturbance	10098	9589	9474	9414	9051	9209	9345	-7%
Intellectual Disabilities	9785	9934	9572	9424	9220	9079	9045	-8%
Developmental Delay	13226	10425	10911	11191	10982	11155	11291	-15%
Orthopedic Impairments	911	905	834	794	784	771	747	-18%
Speech or Language Impairments	29769	28974	27354	26093	25040	24735	24536	-18%
Severe Disability	785	465	199	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total	165530	163500	162648	162475	161819	162960	165555	<1%

Table 2: Prevalence of disability categories among students receiving IDEA services in Virginia as reported in December 1 child count data (VDOE 2009-2015)

## Key Education Outcomes

### Proficiency Rates

The proficiency rates of students with disabilities in math and English/reading increased between the 2012-13 and 2014-15 school years, as have the proficiency rates of their peers without disabilities.

Between the 2012-13 and 2014-15 school years, students with disabilities saw modest improvements in their academic proficiency rates, as measured by state Standards of Learning (SOL) tests in both math and English/reading.

Proficiency rates in math increased from 41 percent in 2012-13 to 48 percent in 2014-15 (see Table 3). Proficiency rates in English/reading also increased, but by a smaller margin: from 43 percent in 2012-13 to 45 percent in 2014-15.

However, the gap in proficiency rates between students with and without disabilities slightly increased. The proficiency rates of all students in math increased from 71 percent in 2012-13 to 79 percent in 2014-15; and in English/reading, from 75 percent in 2012-13 to 79 percent in 2014-15 (see Table 3). Because these gains in overall proficiency rates were slightly more than the gains among students with disabilities, the gap between students with and without disabilities slightly increased.

### Least Restrictive Environment Versus Inclusion

**Available data allows for assessment of the extent to which Virginia schools provide services to students with disabilities in regular education classrooms, but does not allow for assessment of meaningful inclusion practices.**

The concepts of “least restrictive environment” and “inclusion” are distinct, but closely related. The concept of the least restrictive environment comes from the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which requires school districts to provide educational services to students with disabilities in the least

restrictive environment consistent with their needs. IDEA contemplates a continuum of placements, and it requires that:

*To the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are non-disabled; and special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular education environment occurs only if the nature or*

### Proficiency Rates

	Students with Disabilities			All Students		
	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
<b>Math</b>	41%	43%	48%	71%	74%	79%
<b>English/Reading</b>	43%	43%	45%	75%	74%	79%

Table 3: Proficiency rates in math and English/reading among students with and without disabilities (VDOE 2017)

*severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily (20 U.S.C. § 1412(a)(5)(A); 34 C.F.R. § 300.114(a)(2))*

In other words, the least restrictive environment requirements of IDEA create a statutory preference for the provision of educational services to students with disabilities in the regular education classroom. This statutory preference can only be overridden when education cannot be satisfactorily provided in that setting, even with the use of supplementary aids and services.

Inclusion, although more difficult to define, is a broader concept. There is no universally accepted definition of inclusion. It is not defined in federal law, and the term is sometimes used differently by different individuals. Nonetheless, it is often used to refer not only to the physical presence of a child with a disability in a regular education classroom, but also to the effective delivery of services in that classroom in a way that allows the child with a disability to be an active participant of the classroom community.

Data is not available on the extent to which students with disabilities are fully included in regular education

classrooms. Available data cannot tell us if the broader aspects often associated with the concept of “inclusion” are present. They only tell us about the typical locations in which students with disabilities receive educational services.

**Least Restrictive Environment Data – Ages 3 – 5**

**The percentage of children ages 3 through 5 with IEPs who receive special education services in regular early childhood programs has remained flat at approximately 30 percent in recent years.**

Children with disabilities who receive early childhood education in integrated settings alongside peers without disabilities are better prepared for participation in regular education classroom settings during their elementary and secondary education years (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and U.S. Department of Education 2015). Despite this, little progress has been made at increasing the rate at which children with disabilities receive special education services in regular early childhood programs.

The provision of special education services in regular early childhood programs has decreased between the 2011-12 and 2013-14 school years, according to Virginia’s Special Education Performance Reports

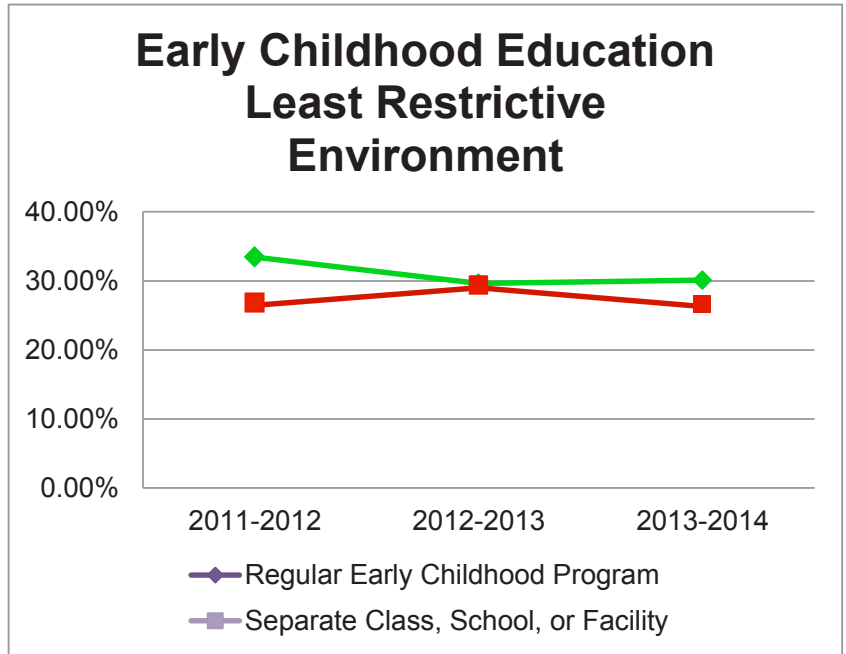


Figure 1: Virginia’s early childhood education services for students with IEPs by setting (Special Education Performance Reports 2012-2014)

(see Figure 1). Approximately 33 percent of children between three and five years of age with an Individualized Education Program received a majority of early childhood education and related services in a regular early childhood program in 2011-12, according to Virginia’s 2011-12 Special Education Performance Report. Another 27 percent attended a separate special education class, separate school, or residential facility. In the 2013-14 school year, the percentage of children with disabilities who received early childhood education services in a regular early childhood program was 30 percent, and the percentage in separate classes or facilities was 27 percent.

**Least Restrictive Environment Data – School-Aged Children**

**More school-age students with disabilities are spending more of their day in general education classrooms in Virginia today than 10 years ago; but a greater number are also segregated in separate facilities today than 10 years ago.**

Virginia has made some progress in the provision of special education services within a regular education

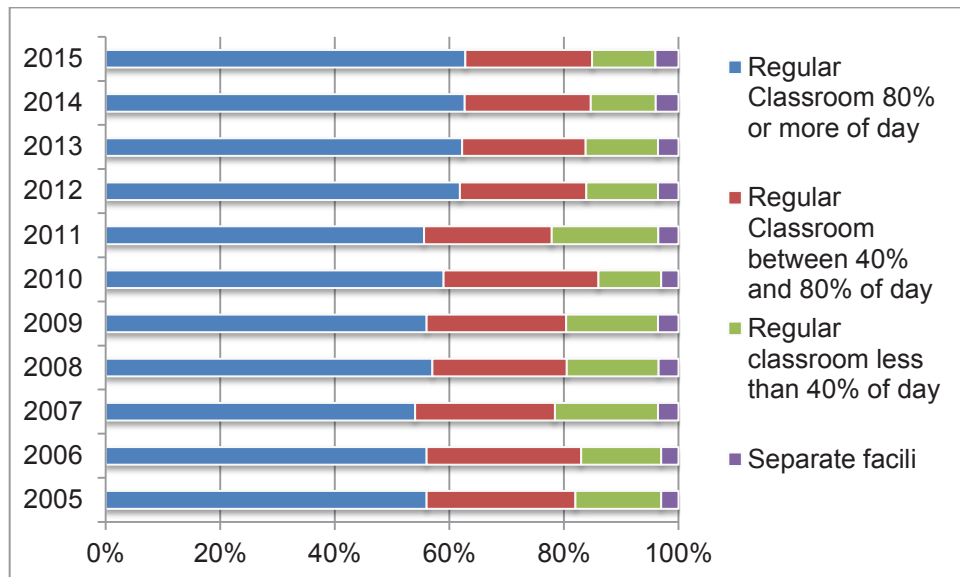


Figure 2: Virginia's school age least restrictive environment (LRE) data (Special Education Performance Reports 2005-2015)

classroom. Between the 2005-06 and 2014-15 school years, the percentage of students with IEPs who spent 80 percent or more of their school day in a regular education classroom increased from 56 percent to 63 percent (see Figure 2). Virginia ranked 30th among all states and the District of Columbia on this measure in the 2014-15 school year.

However, the provision of special education services to students with disabilities in separate schools or facilities also increased during this same time frame. The percentage of students with IEPs who were served in a separate school, or in a residential, home-based or hospital facility increased from three to four percent between the 2005-06 and 2014-15 school years (see Figure 2).

One of the chief difficulties in assessing the appropriateness of separate placements is the lack of data to compare educational outcomes between students who are and are not served in segregated educational facilities. A recent report by the Secretary of Health and Human Resources recommended that the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) begin collecting such data (Virginia Secretary of Health and Human Resources 2016). Even without this data, however, there is already a significant body of research that supports the conclusion that inclusive educational environments produce better academic and social results for students with and without disabilities than do segregated settings.

### Disparities in Inclusion Rates

**There are significant disparities in rates of inclusion between different school districts in Virginia.**

The rates at which students with disabilities receive

### Receipt of services in regular education classrooms for 40 percent or less of day (top and bottom 10 districts)

School Division	40% or less
Highland County Public Schools	0%
Lexington City Public Schools	0%
Buena Vista City Public Schools	1.48%
Botetourt County Public Schools	1.51%
Bland County Public Schools	1.74%
Montgomery County Public Schools	2%
Radford City Public Schools	2.04%
Wythe County Public Schools	2.22%
Falls Church City Public Schools	2.51%
Norton City Public Schools	2.52%
Pulaski County Public Schools	20.37%
Petersburg City Public Schools	22.52%
Dinwiddie County Public Schools	23.52%
Prince Edward County Public Schools	23.64%
Sussex County Public Schools	23.65%
Buckingham County Public Schools	24.20%
King and Queen County Public Schools	24.27%
Halifax County Public Schools	24.30%
Fredericksburg City Public Schools	24.51%
Essex County Public Schools	26.60%

Table 4: Use of Regular Education Classroom for Students with IEPs in Virginia

services in regular education buildings and classrooms differ significantly from one division to another, according to VDOE data for the 2014-15 school year. Although nearly 63 percent of students with IEPs statewide spent at least 80 percent of their day in a regular education classroom, the rate was less than 25 percent in two schools divisions.<sup>1</sup> Although only 11 percent of students with IEPs statewide spent less than 40 percent of their day in a regular education classroom, the rate was over 20 percent in 10 school districts (see Table 4).<sup>2</sup> While 4 percent of students with IEPs statewide received services in a separate facility, the rate was as high as 10 percent or more in 12 school divisions.<sup>3</sup> On the other end of the spectrum, there are five school districts in Virginia where students with IEPs have less than a one in 100 chance of receiving special education services outside of a regular school building.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Dinwiddie County and Brunswick County public schools.

<sup>2</sup> Essex County, Fredericksburg City, Halifax County, King and Queen County, Buckingham County, Sussex County, Prince Edward County, Dinwiddie County, Petersburg City and Pulaski County Public Schools.

<sup>3</sup> Covington City, Southampton County, King and Queen County, Buena Vista City, Appomattox County, Charlottesville City, Buckingham County, Rockbridge County, Wythe County, Lynchburg City, Alleghany County, and Sussex County Public Schools.

<sup>4</sup> Highland County, Scott County, Virginia Beach City, Patrick County, Rockingham County, and Henry County Public Schools.

## Recommendations to Improve Education Outcomes

This section identifies factors that currently limit the educational outcomes of students with disabilities and presents recommendations to address them. These recommendations, if implemented, have the potential to meaningfully improve the extent to which students with disabilities are served in regular education classrooms and achieve success in postsecondary education and beyond.

### Integration Mandate of the Americans with Disabilities Act

**The unnecessary segregation of students with disabilities can constitute a violation of the integration mandate of the Americans with Disabilities Act.**

Virginia's special education funding mechanisms provide perverse incentives for school districts to educate students with special education needs in segregated settings. These incentives should be carefully analyzed to ensure that they do not result in the unnecessary segregation of students with disabilities in a manner that violates the integration mandate of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If Virginia is in violation, the state could be subject to legal action by the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ).

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires states to “administer services, programs, and activities in the most integrated setting appropriate to the needs of qualified individuals with disabilities.” (28 C.F.R. § 35.130(d)). The Supreme Court first addressed the ADA's integration mandate in *Olmstead v. L.C.*, explaining that “Congress described the isolation and segregation of individuals with disabilities as a serious and pervasive form of discrimination,” and finding that “undue institutionalization qualifies as discrimination ‘by reason of ... disability.’” (527 U.S. 581).

The DOJ recently entered into a settlement agreement with the state of Georgia related to the unnecessary segregation of students with disabilities in regional disability-specific settings. This case is the first time that a state-run educational system has been the subject of an *Olmstead* enforcement action. The DOJ alleged that the Georgia Network for Educational and Therapeutic Support (GNETS) program violated the ADA's integration mandate by unnecessarily segregating stu-

dents who could successfully receive special education services in general education classrooms. Some of the students in question were segregated in separate educational facilities, while others were provided services in regular education school buildings, but were segregated within the general education building from their peers.

Virginia's state-supported Regional Tuition Education Program (RTRP), discussed in the next section, has some similarities to Georgia's GNETS program. Like GNETS, Virginia's RTRP funds support regional special education programs in some parts of the state. Some of these programs provide special education services in segregated, disability-specific schools, while others provide RTRP services inside regular school buildings. It is not clear how many of the latter provide special education services in integrated settings and how many provide them in segregated parts of buildings or in segregated rooms. To the extent that these additional state funds encourage or enable some school divisions to segregate students with disabilities from their peers to a greater extent than they would without access to these funds, however, the GNETS case should provide a cautionary example.

### Virginia's Special Education Funding Mechanisms

**Virginia's special education funding mechanisms create funding inequities between districts, as well as incentives to segregate students with disabilities from their non-disabled peers.**

Funding for special education services for students with disabilities in Virginia comes from several sources. Every school district in the Commonwealth receives a base amount of funding per enrolled student, as well as add-on amounts for each child who receives special education services, and additional add-on amounts for other specified purposes. There are two additional funding mechanisms for students with disabilities in Virginia that deserve some discussion: Virginia's Special Education RTRP and Children's Services Act (CSA) funding.

Virginia established the RTRP in 1977 to provide a cost-effective means of serving students with very high needs and low-incidence disabilities, although

the program does not accurately target disabilities that are currently low-incidence. Disabilities that were considered low-incidence were enumerated within the statute, including emotional disabilities, autism, multiple disabilities, hearing impaired, deaf-blindness, and traumatic brain injury. This list has not been updated in decades and it does not accurately reflect low-incidence disabilities today. Autism, for instance, is now the fourth most common disability category among students receiving special education in Virginia. Over half of the students served with RTRP funding have autism as their primary disability category; and 14.5 percent of students with autism are served with these funds (Eisenberg, RTRP Report 2015).

RTRP provides substantially more funding per student than would otherwise be available. General fund appropriations for RTRP increased by an average of \$4.1 million per year between the 2010-11 and 2014-15 school years, for a total increase of over \$16.3 million. The average per-pupil cost of the program from all funding sources in the 2014-15 school year was \$29,097, of which \$17,392 came from state funds;

versus the \$13,497 total per-pupil cost of serving individuals with disabilities outside of regional programs, \$3,014 of which was from state funds (Eisenberg, RTRP Follow Up Report 2016).

Only school districts that have approved regional programs may receive RTRP funds. Participating school districts may receive RTRP funds to support the education of eligible students in a regional program in lieu of the standard base amount with special education add-on that districts otherwise receive for special education eligible students. As of FY 2016, there were 11 approved regional programs serving 57 school districts in Virginia. Schools without an approved regional program have no access to these funds, which results in an inequitable distribution of state funds towards special education, with those districts that have established regional programs enjoying larger per-pupil funding than districts without such programs.

Students served with RTRP funds are more likely to be served in segregated settings than students who are not served with these funds, even though school dis-

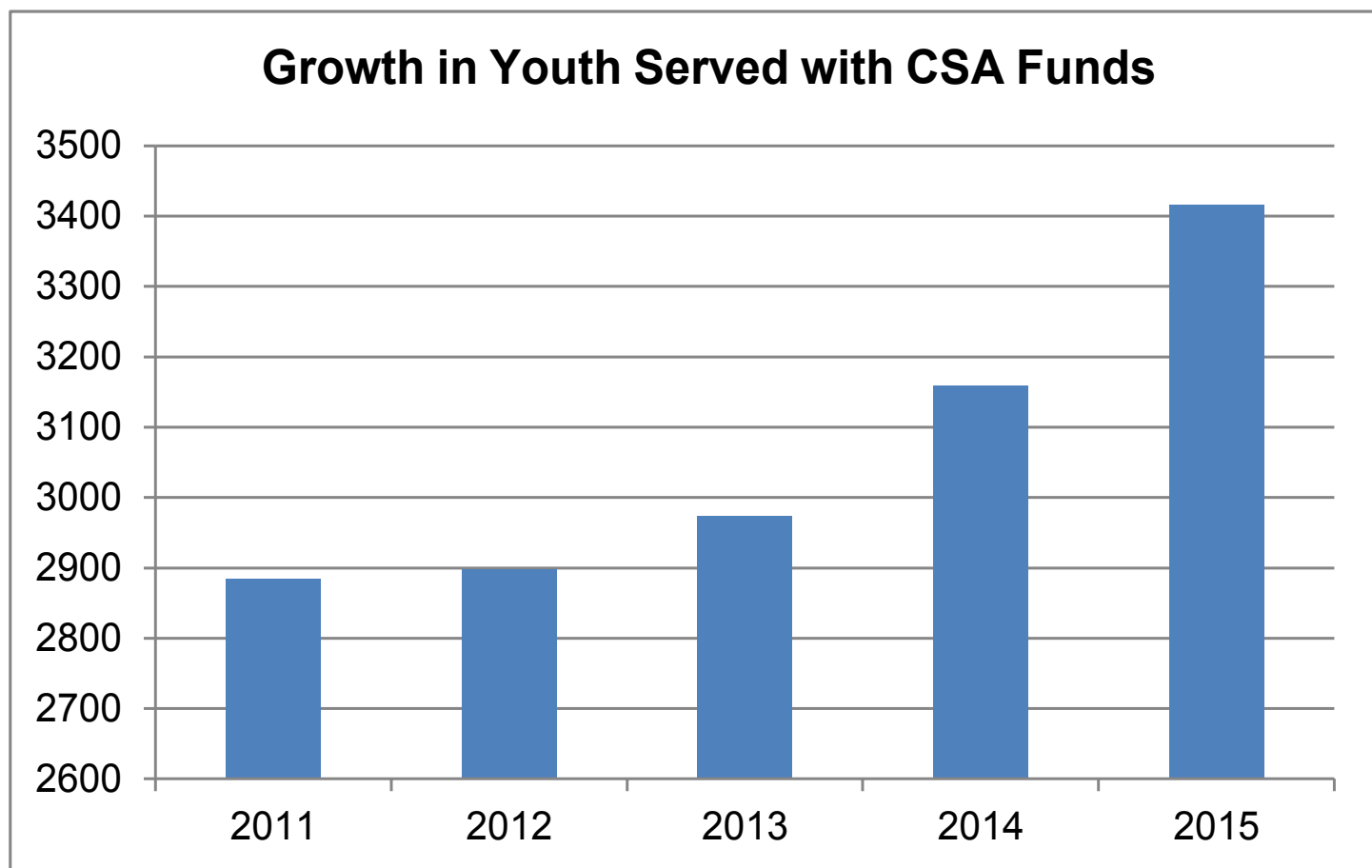


Figure 3: Growth in Youth Served with CSA Funds (Eisenberg, RTRP Report 2015)



districts are not required to provide services in segregated buildings or in segregated classrooms in order to receive RTRP funds. Twenty-five percent of students receiving RTRP-funded services were served in separate disability-specific schools, compared to only 15 percent of students whose services were not funded through RTRP (Eisenberg, RTRP Report 2015). Some of the remaining students who received services in a regular school building may have received those services in segregated sections of the school buildings or in segregated classrooms and may not have been included in general education classes. Data on this aspect is currently unavailable, but would be necessary to assess the true effect of RTRP funding on the integration or segregation of students with disabilities.

Another key mechanism for funding services for students with disabilities in Virginia is the CSA. The CSA creates a pool of state funds to assist localities with a variety of costs, including the costs associated with the provision of special education in private schools specific to students with disabilities. These funds are subject to a local match. Between 2011 and 2015, the number of students with disabilities served in private day schools with CSA funds increased 18 percent, from 2,884 to 3,416 (see Figure 3); while CSA expenditures on private day schools increased by 45 percent from \$85.6 million to \$124.3 million (see Figure 4). Per pupil CSA private school expenditures increased 23 percent over the same time period from \$29,696 to \$36,385 per pupil (CSA Private Day School Funding Report 2016).

The CSA may artificially lower the financial cost to local schools of serving students with disabilities in segregated private school settings. Students receiving CSA-funded private school services are excluded from the local school district's base funding formula and add-on calculations. Instead of paying the full difference in costs between public and private education, the locality only pays the local match required to re-

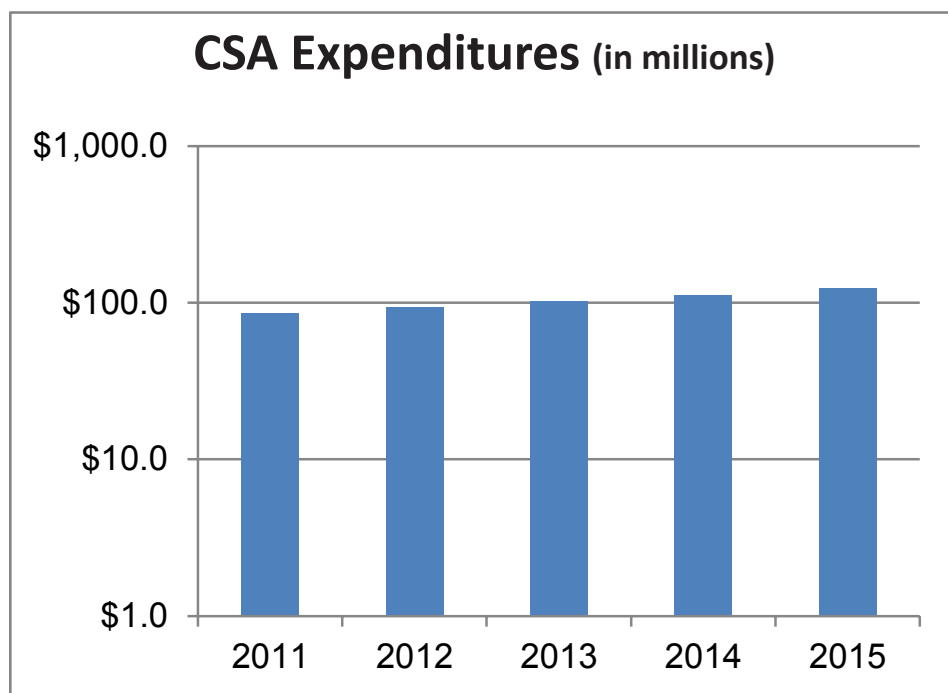


Figure 4: CSA Expenditures (Eisenberg, RTRP Report 2015)

ceive the state CSA funds.

Changes to the CSA and RTRP should be made to reduce the incentives for schools to serve students with disabilities in segregated educational settings. In December 2015, the VDOE reported to the Legislative Virginia Commission on Youth on the RTRP funding mechanism and offered options for how the program can be modified in the future. One option involves transforming the RTRP program to untie the program from regional schools, allow funds to be distributed equitably to all school districts based on the needs of each district's special education population, and allow funds to be used to deliver services to students with intense support needs in integrated school settings. This realignment of Virginia's RTRP funding would be an improvement, but the Commonwealth should go further by designing this program so as to provide financial incentives for schools to provide services in integrated classroom settings whenever possible. Additionally, the Commonwealth's CSA program should be reviewed to determine how best to realign this program with the goal of keeping students with disabilities in regular classrooms in their neighborhood schools whenever possible.

It is also important to set the bar higher than mere presence in a regular education classroom. The Commonwealth's strategy going forward should focus on

the broader concept of inclusion, in addition to mere presence as measured by least restrictive environment data. This will require the development of a common understanding of what “inclusion” means, a mechanism for measuring inclusion in classrooms, and a strategy for increasing its use.

## Recommendation I

<b>Recommendation 1:</b> Take steps to improve rates at which students with disabilities receive educational services in general education classrooms in their neighborhood schools and receive meaningfully inclusive educational experiences throughout the Commonwealth, especially in districts identified as including students with disabilities in regular education classrooms at exceptionally low rates:		
Sub-recommendation		Responsible Party
1A.	Realign Virginia’s funding of special education services, including CSA funding, to eliminate incentives to segregate students with disabilities and ensure that schools have adequate funding to provide supports to students with disabilities in general education settings;	General Assembly, VDOE, CSA
1B.	Increase targeted technical assistance and training for schools with high rates of students with disabilities served in segregated settings to increase the capacity of these schools to serve students with developmental disabilities in general education settings;	VDOE
1C.	Work with stakeholders to develop an inclusion implementation plan that addresses the barriers identified by stakeholders in the VDOE’s Inclusive Practices Workgroup.	VDOE, VBPD, VCU Partnership for People with Disabilities, Community Stakeholders

### Disciplinary Rates – Effects on Students

#### Harsh disciplinary measures adversely affect the students who are subjected to them

Rates of exclusionary discipline have been on the rise throughout the United States since a wave of zero tolerance policies first swept through the nation’s schools in the 1970s, the impact of which has been borne disproportionately by students with disabilities and students of color (Rumberger 2016). Both nationally and in the Commonwealth of Virginia, students with disabilities are subjected to exclusionary discipline at more than twice the rate of students without disabilities: while six percent of students without disabilities nationwide received out-of-school suspensions during the 2011-12 school year, 13 percent of students with disabilities received this punishment. The disparity between students with and without disabilities is even greater with respect to the use of restraint and seclusion to manage student behavior: students with disabilities made up just 13 percent of all students in Virginia, but 76 percent of all students subjected to restraint and seclusion in the 2011-12 school year (U.S. Department of

Education Office for Civil Rights 2014).

Overly harsh disciplinary practices have been shown to yield negative educational, developmental, and societal outcomes. Multiple studies have suggested that harsh disciplinary practices do more harm than good for the students subjected to them, as well as for the communities in which these students live. Studies have linked harsh disciplinary practices to:

- Diminished academic performance
- Negative impacts on overall school climate
- Increased likelihood of school dropout
- Higher rates of future challenging behavior
- Increased likelihood of involvement in the juvenile and criminal justice system

The 2014 School Discipline Consensus Report published by the Council of State Governments explains that harsh disciplinary tactics can have the adverse effect of promoting, rather than preventing, future disciplinary problems and creating a toxic educational environment. “Schools that rely on suspensions, expul-

sions, and arrests to address student misconduct,” the authors explain, “may be creating an atmosphere in which students and staff feel that the high number of disciplinary actions reflect a persistent threat to their safety. When large numbers of these actions are for minor offenses, students may also feel a level of insecurity and fear of disciplinary action that undermines the very conditions needed for learning.” (Morgan 2014).

A 2011 study by the Council of State Governments Justice Center also found evidence of adverse effects from suspension and expulsion. The suspension and expulsion rates of seventh grade students in Texas varied based on race and disability status, and even between similar school districts. The study also found that suspension and expulsion increase the likelihood of students being held back in school, dropping out of school, and becoming involved in the criminal justice system, while yielding no noticeable benefit to the schools that regularly employed them (Fabelo 2011).

### **Discipline and Criminal Justice Referral – Disproportionate Impact**

**The overuse of harsh disciplinary tactics and referrals to the criminal justice system by Virginia’s public schools disproportionately affect students with disabilities and students of color in the Commonwealth.**

Virginia schools increasingly suspend and expel students with disabilities disproportionately compared to students without disabilities. One in every three school divisions in Virginia was identified by VDOE in the 2014-15 school year as having “significant discrepancy in the rate of suspensions and expulsions of greater than 10 days in a school year for children with IEPs.” This was a significant increase from the one in four school divisions in the 2013-14 school year, and the approximately one in 10 school districts or fewer in the 2011-12 and 2012-13 school years. It is not clear what accounts for the sharp increase in the percentage of identified districts between the 2012-13 and 2013-14 school years. It is clear, however, that the data is not trending in a desirable direction.

Virginia’s Discipline, Crime, and Violence Annual Report suggests that students often face exclusionary discipline for relatively minor infractions. The top three reported reasons for short-term suspensions during the 2014-15 school year, accounting for nearly two out of every five incidents of short-term suspension,

were: 1) “Defiance of Authority/Insubordination”, 2) “Classroom or Campus Disruption”, and 3) “Disruptive Demonstrations.” These same three offenses also make up three of the top four reported causes of long-term suspensions, accounting for over one in five long-term suspensions reported. Only three of the top twelve reported causes of short-term suspensions involve violent or threatening behavior: 1) “Minor Physical Altercation”, 2) “Fighting: Mutual Contact--No/Minor Injuries, No Med Attn.”, and 3) “Threatening Student (physical or verbal threat or intimidation)”. Together, these three reasons involving violent or threatening behavior account for less than 20 percent of all short-term suspensions.

Virginia’s public schools refer students to law enforcement at higher rates than the public schools of any other state in the United States, according to a 2015 report by the Center for Public Integrity (Wieder 2015). In the 2011-12 school year, Virginia referred about 16 students to law enforcement for every 1,000 students enrolled in its public schools while it referred about 33 students with disabilities for every 1,000 students with disabilities enrolled in its public schools. The average referral rates nationwide were about six for every 1,000 students overall and about 11 for every 1,000 students with disabilities. Washington, D.C., was at the opposite end of the spectrum from Virginia: its public schools referred only one student for every 1,000 students overall, and two students for every 1,000 students with disabilities. Figure 5 (next page) compares the referral rates of Virginia’s public schools to those of the public schools in Virginia’s bordering states.

### **Every Student Succeeds Act – Accountability Measures**

**Under the Every Student Succeeds Act, states can choose to include school accountability measures on the use of restraint and seclusion.**

The 2015 Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) reauthorizes the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and makes significant changes to its predecessor law, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). Among the most important changes under ESSA is the devolution of authority to define accountability within the education system from the U.S. DOE to the states, and increased flexibility in how states spend some federal grant money. In particular, states can now expand upon the list of academic quality indicators already

specified in the Act by including at least one nonacademic measure such as school climate and safety, student engagement, access to advanced coursework, or other quality measures other than standardized test results. School climate and safety may include such factors as effective disciplinary practices, implementation of a school-wide positive behavior support program, and the frequency with which practices such as restraint and seclusion are employed. Given the harmful effects of harsh disciplinary tactics, Virginia should hold schools accountable for their overuse and their disproportionate use on students with disabilities.

### Seclusion and Restraint

**Virginia is currently drafting regulations on the use of restraint and seclusion in public schools.**

The use of restraint and seclusion is only ethically justifiable when necessary to prevent serious harm, injury, or death to students or others. Restraint and seclusion are dangerous interventions. Their use, even when applied by highly trained and conscientious individuals, poses a risk of harm, injury, or death to the individuals subjected to them. For this reason, some version of an imminent danger to self or others standard is the most common standard for the use of restraint and seclusion in facilities where these interventions are used as emergency interventions. It is the standard that applies to virtually all hospitals, mental health facilities, nursing facilities, assisted living facilities, and regulated residential facilities across the United States. It is the standard that applies to schools for students with disabilities in Virginia today, and it is the standard that applies to all public schools in at least a dozen states in the United States (Butler 2016).

There are only two types of facilities where restraint and seclusion are commonly used as emergency interventions and are regulated by something lesser than a danger to self or others standard: correctional facilities and the public schools of many states, including Virginia. The U.S. DOE has recommended that restraint and seclusion be limited to situations that pose imminent

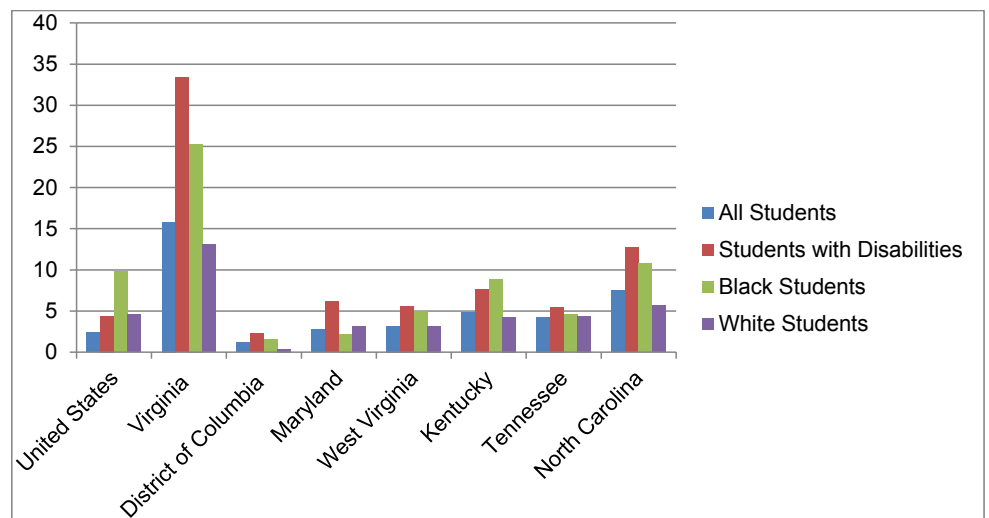


Figure 5: Referrals to Criminal Justice System per 1000 students, Virginia and surrounding states (Center for Public Integrity 2015)

danger of physical harm to the self or others (U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights 2016). The U.S. DOE has also explained that the disproportionate use of restraint and seclusion on students with disabilities can amount to discrimination and a violation of the IDEA’s guarantee of a Free and Appropriate Public Education. Nonetheless, Virginia and many other states continue to use restraint and seclusion in situations that do not pose imminent danger to self or others.

In 2015, the Virginia General Assembly directed the Virginia Board of Education to adopt regulations on the use of restraint and seclusion in Virginia’s public schools that are “consistent with its Guidelines for the Development of Policies and Procedures for Managing Student Behavior in Emergency Situations and the Fifteen Principles contained in the U.S. Department of Education’s Restraint and Seclusion: Resource Document” (VA Code § 22.1-279.1:1). The VDOE’s Guidelines (2009) and the Fifteen Principles (USDOE 2012) referenced in the restraint and seclusion statute both state that restraint and seclusion should only be used when necessary to prevent harm, injury, or death to students or others. The regulatory process related to this statutory directive is ongoing at the time of this writing. Early drafts of proposed restraint and seclusion regulations, however, provide for broader use of these interventions than a strict danger to self or others standard would allow.

The overuse of harsh discipline and restraint and seclusion on students with disabilities can be exacerbated by the improper use of School Resource Officers

(SROs). SROs serve as sworn law enforcement officers, law-related counselors, and law-related educators for the school system, but are not intended to enforce school codes of conduct or intervene in routine school disciplinary matters. Schools that apply for funding towards an SRO from the Federal Community Oriented Policies Services' (COPS) Supporting Safe Schools program must enter into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the supplying police department that, among other things, *“must clearly indicate that SROs*

*will not be responsible for requests to resolve routine discipline problems involving students”* (U.S. Department of Justice 2015) (bold type in original). Likewise, the National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) encourages schools and police departments to enter into MOUs that “prohibit SROs from becoming involved in formal school discipline situations that are the responsibility of school administrators” (National Association of School Resource Officers 2015).

## Recommendation II

<b>Recommendation 2:</b> Decrease the use of exclusionary discipline and harmful behavioral interventions in the Commonwealth and minimize the disparate impact that these practices have on students with disabilities:		<b>Responsible Party</b>
<b>Sub-recommendation</b>		
2A.	Develop a school quality survey to capture data on the frequency of exclusionary disciplinary practices used in Virginia’s schools, and include discipline use and discipline disparities in the online School Quality Protocol;	VDOE, School Quality Profile
2B.	Pass legislation to decrease the use and duration of exclusionary discipline practices for students with disabilities in the Commonwealth;	General Assembly
2C.	Continue to provide technical assistance and training targeted to schools with excessive rates of exclusionary discipline and/or law enforcement referrals, which should include an emphasis on positive behavior intervention and supports and other alternatives to exclusionary discipline;	VDOE
2D.	Adopt regulations that ensure restraint and seclusion are used only as a last resort and only when necessary to prevent serious bodily harm, injury, or death to students or others;	Virginia Board of Education (VBOE)
2E.	Adopt regulations that ensure schools that choose to employ third party SROs adopt MOUs that explicitly define the appropriate roles of SROs and school personnel with respect to student discipline.	VBOE, Dept. of Criminal Justice Services

### Graduation Data – Regular Diploma

**Nearly half of students with disabilities in Virginia fail to graduate from high school with a regular diploma.**

Graduation from high school with a regular diploma is an important step on the road to postsecondary success. The inability to access a regular high school diploma limits the postsecondary options available to many students with disabilities. The percentage of students with disabilities who entered higher education within one year after graduating from high school, entered into some other type of education or training program, or obtained competitive employment changed little from 2011 through 2015. All told, nearly three in 10 students with disabilities are neither employed, nor engaged in postsecondary education or training.

Virginia has made little progress in increasing the percentage of students with disabilities who graduate with a regular high school diploma. The rate at which students with disabilities graduated from high school with a regular high school diploma decreased from 53 percent in 2011 to 48 percent in 2012. Then the rate slowly increased over the next four years to 53 percent in 2015. The dropout rate for students with disabilities in Virginia remained relatively stable during this time period, at about 1.5 percent.

Virginia's graduation rates for students with disabilities continues to lag behind most other students and states on this measure. Only 53 percent of Virginia’s high school students with IEPs graduated with a regular diploma

in 2015. This rate is substantially lower than the 85 percent of all Virginia students who graduated with a regular high school diploma, resulting in a gap of 32 percentage points between Virginia students with and without disabilities. This rate is also substantially lower than the national average of 63 percent for students with disabilities. The ability to compare graduation rates across states is somewhat limited because states have different graduation requirements, diploma tracks, and levels of overall student performance, but the comparison is nonetheless useful in determining how well Virginia's special educational system is performing overall.

As with inclusion rates, this statewide data masks significant regional disparities within Virginia. While an average 53 percent of students with IEPs graduated from Virginia high schools with a regular diploma in 2015, 69 school divisions fell below this statewide average while 43 school divisions fell above the statewide average.<sup>5</sup> At the far extremes, more than eight in 10 students with disabilities graduated with a regular diploma in two school districts in 2015,<sup>6</sup> while fewer than two in 10 did in four school divisions.<sup>7</sup>

## Recommendation III

**Recommendation 3:** Ensure that students with disabilities and their parents receive clear and accurate information about the future impact of current educational decisions:

Sub-recommendation		Responsible Party
3A.	Continue to develop and continuously update information for parents to understand the long-term impact of educational decisions made early in a child's educational career;	VDOE
3B.	Develop written material that can be provided to parents at critical decision points during the IEP development process to ensure that they understand the potential impact of a present decision on the student's ability to graduate with a regular diploma, and coordinate this with decision-point reminders in the statewide IEP;	VDOE
3C.	Continue to provide ongoing technical assistance and training to implement the state systemic improvement plan to increase the number of students with disabilities who obtain a standard diploma.	VDOE

### Work Experience

**While many students with disabilities have difficulty transitioning from school to work, programs that provide students real world work experience during secondary education show considerable promise.**

Decisions made during high school can have a substantial impact on a student's future employment options. Early access to competitive integrated employment experiences during high school is among the strongest predictors of post-school vocational success for students with disabilities (Cobb 2013). These experiences may be most effective when coupled with classroom vocational education opportunities (Mazzotti 2014). Every student with a disability should be offered an opportunity to participate in employment-related experi-

ences and vocational preparation during high school.

Too often, however, students with disabilities suffer from low expectations of their potential for future employment and an insufficient focus on employment goals in the student's IEP. It is important for IEP teams to develop effective employment goals for students as early as possible. Many education professionals, however, lack the knowledge and experience to develop effective goals in this area. It is imperative, therefore, for the VDOE, DARS, and, as appropriate, the Dept. for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI) to work together to develop the resources that educators need to help students succeed.

Virginia is one of 44 states with Project SEARCH sites

<sup>5</sup> Twenty school divisions graduated too few students to provide any data on this measure.

<sup>6</sup> Greene County and Page County Public Schools

<sup>7</sup> Martinsville City, Charlotte County, Petersburg City and Sussex County Public Schools.

established within the state (Project SEARCH). Project SEARCH is a school-to-work program that provides students with significant disabilities an opportunity to engage in career exploration and hands-on employment training coupled with coursework. It allows students opportunities to gain real work experience in a variety of different jobs at one of 17 participating healthcare centers throughout the state.

In the 2015-16 school year, 130 high school students from Virginia with intellectual and other developmental disabilities participated in Project SEARCH internships to gain work experience and skills. All 13 of the Project SEARCH programs that operated in Virginia during the 2014-15 school year were recognized at the 10th annual Project SEARCH conference for their employment outcomes and Virginia won the “Exceptional Outcomes Award” for being 100 percent in compliance with data entry requirements. Six of Virginia’s project SEARCH sites had 100 percent placement rates that year and all had at least a 70 percent placement rate.

Project SEARCH and programs like it show great promise as an avenue toward setting more students with disabilities on a path towards employment and independence. Unfortunately, not all students with disabilities have opportunities to participate in this or other similar employment-focused programs in the Commonwealth.

Another example of a school-to-work program for students with disabilities that was introduced in Virginia more recently is Start on Success (SOS). This program was first developed in 1995 by the National Organization on Disability to provide a path to employment for students with high-incidence disabilities. The program was first introduced in Virginia in Norfolk City Public Schools, which is developing the program with support from the Center on Transition Innovations (CTI) at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU). Through SOS, students with learning disabilities, emotional disabilities, and/or other health impairments receive half-day paid internships. Students must be on track to earn a standard diploma, but at risk of dropping out of school, in order to participate in this program. Support for additional employment programs is needed to expand opportunities for students with disabilities across the Commonwealth.

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## Project SEARCH shows incredible promise as an avenue toward setting more students with disabilities on a path towards employment and independence.

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### Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act – Transition Age Youth

**WIOA contains key provisions focused on transition-age youth and offers an opportunity for states to reconsider how they address this population’s employment needs.**

The 2015 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) also has the potential to improve postsecondary outcomes for students with disabilities. While not primarily an education-focused law, it has some important provisions related to transition-age youth with disabilities. Together, WIOA’s changes to the workforce system will require state education agencies to collaborate with the state workforce systems to better meet the employment-related needs of students and youth with disabilities. Some of the principal provisions of WIOA include:

- Requiring 15 percent of vocational rehabilitation funds to be invested in pre-employment transition services to prepare youth for postsecondary education and employment.
- Requiring better alignment of employment, training, and education with human services programs.
- Emphasizing competitive integrated employment, especially for youth.
- Promoting work-based training, internships, and other forms of work experience.
- Limiting the use of subminimum wages for youth with disabilities, including prohibiting schools from subcontracting with such providers.

## Recommendation IV

<b>Recommendation 4:</b> Increase the number of students with disabilities who have access to employment-related education and real-world experiential employment opportunities both during and immediately after high school:		
<b>Sub-recommendation</b>		<b>Responsible Party</b>
4A.	Develop guidance on the development of effective employment-related IEP goals, which should include a non-exhaustive list of employment-related skills matched with potential activities to aid in developing those skills, as well as information on appropriate points in transition process to address these skills;	VDOE, DARS, DBVI
4B.	VDOE and DARS should continue to collaborate to support and expand upon Project SEARCH and Start on Success and invest in other innovative employment programs;	VDOE, DARS
4C.	Review Virginia Board of Education approved state-issued professional licensure, industry certification examination, and occupational competency assessment requirements to identify practices that unnecessarily screen out otherwise capable students with disabilities, and ensure that students with disabilities are afforded necessary testing accommodations to afford them an equal opportunity to participate in these programs.	VDOE, VBOE, VBPD, DBVI

### Postsecondary Education

#### Postsecondary education opportunities for students with disabilities are increasing, but remain out of reach for too many people with disabilities.

Despite research linking postsecondary education and vocational training to better employment outcomes and increased independence (Migliore 2008), access to such programs remains very limited. The percentage of students with disabilities who entered higher education within one year after graduating from high school, entered into some other type of education or training program, or obtained competitive employment changed little from 2011 through 2015. All told, nearly three in 10 students with disabilities are neither employed, nor engaged in postsecondary education or training.

Students with disabilities face several barriers to accessing postsecondary educational opportunities, including expectations, processes, and financial barriers. For example, many students and parents are unaware of the availability of postsecondary education programs and of financial aid to attend them. This combination of lack of awareness and low expectations lead too few students with disabilities to consider postsecondary education as a goal when developing their IEPs and to select the regular high school standard diploma track. Each of these barriers must be addressed in or-

der to meaningfully improve access to postsecondary opportunities for students with disabilities.

The number of postsecondary education programs for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities has grown in recent years. In Virginia, at least five such programs exist today, including the ACE-IT program at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU); the Mason LIFE Program at George Mason University (GMU); the On-Campus Transition Program at Virginia Tech (VT); the Program for Adults in Vocational Education at J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College; and the College Steps program at Northern Virginia Community College. Similar programs for youth with disabilities are appearing in colleges across the United States, but there is little consistency in program design. Some programs offer truly inclusive college experiences, while others are separate programs within an existing institution.

Virginia should consider further studying, promoting, and/or developing inclusive college programs for students with disabilities like several other states have done. Colorado, for instance, passed the Inclusive Higher Education Act in June 2016 (SB 196). This bill created a pilot program for inclusive higher education specifically for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities at two four-year institutions of higher education and one community college. Each of the



participating campuses must create new courses for students with intellectual disabilities, and ensure that participating students take at least two on-campus undergraduate courses in their area of interest every semester. The Florida Legislature passed the 2015 Florida Postsecondary Comprehensive Transition Program

Act (SB 672), which established a scholarship program to allow transitioning students with intellectual disabilities to access higher education opportunities. The scholarship provides up to \$7,000 per student, and a total of \$3 million, to attend a Florida Postsecondary Comprehensive Transition Program (FPCTP).

## Recommendation V

<b>Recommendation 5:</b> Increase postsecondary educational opportunities for students with disabilities, including students with significant developmental and other disabilities:		
<b>Sub-recommendation</b>		<b>Responsible Party</b>
5A.	Review postsecondary community college and vocational education program eligibility criteria and testing requirements to ensure that they are narrowly tailored to the skills requisite to completing the program and do not unnecessarily screen out students with disabilities;	State Council of Higher Education in Virginia (SCHEV), Community College System; Secretary of Education
5B.	Fund pilot program(s) to provide inclusive college experiences to students with significant disabilities at community college(s) in the Commonwealth;	General Assembly, SCHEV, Community College System
5C.	Invest in a postsecondary education scholarship fund for students with developmental disabilities to attend integrated college programs for students with disabilities;	General Assembly
5D.	Develop easily accessible information about postsecondary educational opportunities for students with disabilities, including success stories that highlight how individuals with disabilities have successfully participated in integrated postsecondary college and vocational educational programs;	VDOE, VCU Center for Transition Innovations
5E.	Develop guidance and/or training for college administrators and professors at two- and four-year institutions of higher education about integrating individuals with disabilities into college classrooms, specifically focusing on the types of accommodations that can help students with disabilities succeed.	SCHEV, DARS, DBVI, VCU Partnership for People with Disabilities



Virginia Board for  
People with Disabilities

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## **Virginia Board for People with Disabilities**

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1100 Bank Street, 7th Floor | Richmond, VA 23219  
800-846-4464 | [info@vbpd.virginia.gov](mailto:info@vbpd.virginia.gov) | [www.vaboard.org](http://www.vaboard.org)