



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

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January 7, 2025

The Honorable Ghazala Hashmi
Chair, Senate Education and Health
P. O. Box 396
Richmond, Virginia 23218

The Honorable Sam Rasoul
Chair, House Education
P. O. Box 13842
Roanoke, Virginia 24037

Dear Madam and Sir:

As required by Senate Bill 1288 (Chapter 452, Acts of Assembly 2021 SSI) and House Bill 2299 (Chapter 451, Acts of Assembly 2021 SSI) from the 2021 Special Session I of the Virginia General Assembly, the Virginia Department of Education submits the attached statewide plan for improving (i) its ongoing oversight of local practices related to transition planning and services and (ii) its technical assistance and guidance provided for post-secondary transition planning and services.

If you have any questions or require additional information relative to this report, please do not hesitate to contact the Associate Superintendent of Special Populations and Board Operations, Dr. Samantha Marsh Hollins, at Samantha.Hollins@doe.virginia.gov, or (804) 750-8738.

Sincerely,

Lisa Coons

LC/SMH

STATEWIDE PLAN TO ENSURE EFFECTIVE LOCAL IMPLEMENTATION OF SECONDARY TRANSITION PLANNING AND SERVICES

Chapters 451 and 452 (2021 Acts of Assembly)

[Interim Report]

Presented to: General Assembly of Virginia Chairmen, Senate Committee on Education and House Committee on Education

January 7, 2025



LEGISLATIVE DIRECTIVE

This report has been prepared and submitted to fulfill the requirements of Senate Bill 1288 (Chapter 452, Acts of Assembly 2021 SSI) and House Bill 2299 (Chapter 451, Acts of Assembly 2021 SSI) from the 2021 Special Session I of the Virginia General Assembly which required the Virginia Department of Education to develop and maintain a robust statewide plan for improving (i) its ongoing oversight of local practices related to transition planning and services and (ii) its technical assistance and guidance provided for post-secondary transition planning and services. At a minimum, such plan shall articulate how VDOE will reliably and comprehensively assess the compliance and quality of transition plans and services for children with disabilities on an ongoing basis and communicate findings to local school division staff and local school boards.

The VDOE shall, no later than December 1 of each year, update the Chairmen of the Senate Committee on Education and Health and the House Committee on Education on its progress in implementing such plan.

Improvement Plan Update

Over the past year, the VDOE and its collaborative partners have implemented a plan to ensure effective local implementation of secondary transition planning and services. Progress has been attained on the following strategies to improve transition planning and services in Virginia:

Training and Technical Assistance

- Beginning November 2023 through August 2024, the VDOE and its partner agencies provided 38 trainings and/or resources to build awareness of and knowledge about transition planning and services to a variety of stakeholders and organizations. This work was undertaken with the collaboration of the Virginia Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services as well as with the support of the Virginia Commonwealth University Center on Transition Innovations and the VDOE's Training and Technical Assistance Centers.
- On March 11-12 and May 7-9, 2024, the VDOE received additional support and technical assistance, as needed, from the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition: The Collaborative funded by the United States Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs.
- On December 4 and 7, 2023, and August 1, 2024, training and technical assistance efforts focused on supporting school counselors in being equipped to support all students in their transition planning and services and supporting school division leadership in ensuring policies and procedures were provided to support school counselors in these efforts.
- On April 25, June 17, and July 26, 2024, the VDOE convened a work group to develop a coordinated professional learning plan to ensure that educators, families, and community members have the knowledge and understanding of transition planning and services and can successfully implement transition services and drive meaningful postsecondary outcomes for students with disabilities.
- On May 1, June 21, and August 6, 2024, the VDOE convened a work group with a variety of stakeholders to explore secondary transition strategies, from research and high-

performing states in transition, that can be adopted and/or applied in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Policy Development

- On February 1 and June 10-13, 2024, stakeholder groups explored innovative ways to continue to promote self-determination as well as ways to measure self-determination to monitor progress and outcomes.
- On August 1 and 15, 2024, the VDOE supported school divisions in updating policies and procedures to ensure all staff is responsible for supporting transition and confirming processes are documented to ensure staff turnover does not affect implementation fidelity
- With the adoption of the School Performance and Support Framework high schools will receive 5% of points for Readiness for their 5 and 6 year cohort which supports schools in prioritizing students with disabilities in skill building and success.

Technology

- On February 6, 28-29, June 12, and July 25, 2024, the VDOE partnered with its regional Training and Technical Assistance Centers (TTACs) and the Virginia Assistive Technology Network to ensure assistive technology is being considered by all teams to ensure access to classroom instruction and as an imperative part of transition planning and services to ensure the student has access to and can engage in transition opportunities as independently as possible.
- On April 16 and 24, May 17 and 19, June 4 and 21, and August 8, 2024, the VDOE convened a work group with a variety of stakeholders, including technology specialists, to explore a community mapping platform for Virginia's community resources and transition services and opportunities.

Resources and Supports

- Beginning November 2023 through July 2024, the VDOE, in partnership with other stakeholders on 147 opportunities, developed and/or disseminated a variety of resources available to students, educators, families, and the community that address a wide range of topics regarding transition planning and services including writing effective transition plans; considering all areas of transition for all students in transition planning; transition assessment; specially designed instruction for transition services; youth voice; engagement in Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS); and establishing work-based learning opportunities, postschool completion planning, and community resources.
- On March 18, 2024, training and technical assistance, including coaching, were provided to support school divisions in building practices around data, including the implementation of a school division transition self-assessment, the development of a data system, collecting data to monitor progress, and analyzing data to make informed decisions from the individual student to the division level. During the next implementation year, the VDOE will strategically partner with its regional TTACs and the Virginia Tiered Systems of Supports (VTSS) to ensure alignment and integration within the school division's established Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS).

- On November 9, 2023, April 8, May 17, July 8, and September 6, 2024, the VDOE expanded the use of the Applied Studies Curriculum Map to support school divisions in aligning curriculum, evidence-based practices, and Community Based Instruction (CBI) in the areas of employment, education, training, and independent living for students working toward an Applied Studies Diploma.
- On February 12, April 9, 16, 23, July 24, 27, and August 1, 2024, the VDOE provided an awareness of the federal definition of competitive employment to ensure the understanding, interpretation, and impact on Indicator 14 data.

The VDOE has developed an action plan on accountability and implementation of the School Performance and Support Framework. This includes collaboration with local school divisions to focus on preparing all students for success at the next level. For example, the VDOE's Department of Instruction is supporting a peer to peer network of schools focused on improvements to literacy instruction for students with disabilities. Part of the framework is also recognizing the readiness of local schools with the extended year graduation rate utilized as part of the high school portion of the School Performance and Support Framework. A part of the continuing focus on transition programs and supports for students with disabilities will focus on opportunities for career exploration, preparation and planning leading to employment, enlistment, and enrollment experiences that prepare students for sustainable pathways following high school graduation. The VDOE has also worked to create a new support section for educators and parents to help with readiness conversations for every student.

CONCLUSION

The VDOE Department of Special Populations and Board Operations will continue to build, promote, and advance practices to improve effective teaching, student learning, and achievement with a focus on transition planning and services at the secondary level and expansion of practices at the elementary level. With the closure of Virginia's monitoring by the United States Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs, the VDOE is reiterating its priorities around the implementation of high-leverage practices in the area of transition for students with disabilities. These strategies will ensure graduation pathways and implementation of activities that will assist youth with access to employment; postsecondary education; training and independence within the community; and continuous improvement with secondary education indicators (graduation, dropout, Individualized Education Program (IEP) requirements, and postschool outcomes). This work will also continue in concert with developments related to legislation passed during the 2024 General Assembly session that focuses on the professional development of administrators, general and special education teachers, and programmatic improvements to the services and supports within special education in the Commonwealth.