



Strategies to Address Virginia's Teacher Shortage

The unified position of the 12 organizations of the Virginia Public Education Coalition

The Virginia Public Education Coalition (VPEC) is made up of the 12 largest education stakeholder associations in the state, representing parents, school board members, teachers, principals, counselors, superintendents, curriculum development and higher education teacher training programs. We provide a unified voice in advocating for improving K-12 education in the Commonwealth of Virginia and believe that public education provides direct benefits to students and families, as well as society at large.

Since 1906, coalitions composed of the education stakeholder groups that now make up VPEC have collaborated to advocate for students and basic school supports which are now deeply embedded in our public education system. For more than a year, the members of the Virginia Public Education Coalition (VPEC) have collaborated on the best ways to solve our state's serious problems with teacher attraction, induction, and retention. Our work led to recommendations in three key areas: Compensation; Preparation and Support; and Working Conditions. We are unified in calling upon the Governor, General Assembly, and Board of Education to develop plans to turn these recommendations into reality.

As cost-of-living increases and Virginia teachers face the largest wage penalty in the country, the choice to stay or even enter the profession has become more challenging and is no longer a financially feasible option. Policy changes at the state level can set Virginia on track to be a best-in-class state to attract quality teachers and develop their talent over a career. The Commonwealth must invest in quality teaching and learning environments—our educators and students deserve no less.



The Virginia Public Education Coalition

Virginia Association of Colleges for Teacher Education
Virginia Counselors Association
Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals
Virginia Education Association
Virginia Association of School Superintendents
Virginia Middle School Association

Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals
Virginia Congress of Parents and Teachers
Virginia School Boards Association
Virginia School Counselor Association
Virginia Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
Virginia Professors of Educational Leadership



VPEC RECOMMENDATIONS

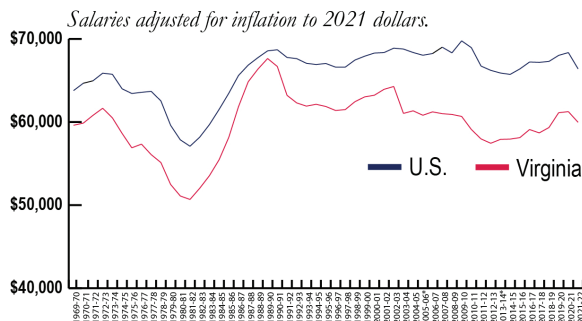
If we are serious about improving the quality of public education in the Commonwealth, we must work together to ensure that we are attracting educators into our classrooms, improving educator induction, and improving educator retention. The policy recommendations that follow all aim to meet these goals in a reasonable and sustainable manner so that our students can always count on receiving the highest quality instruction now and far into the future.

Compensation

- Establish compensation and benefits for public school educators that attract beginning educators and encourage educators to stay in the profession over time.
- Reverse the practice of using a linear weighted average when calculating prevailing wage for educator salaries and move to a practice of using the actual statewide average.
- Implement and support student loan reform legislation in Virginia, including the Student Loan Bill of Rights and the Student Loan Ombudsman.
- Expand loan forgiveness and incentive programs for students who choose to teach. Lower financial barriers to entering the teaching profession.
- Expand the Virginia Teaching Scholarship Loan program and initiate supports so that new educators can fulfill the service requirements.
- Improve salary structures that disincentivize mid-career educators from remaining in the profession.
- Establish opportunities and additional compensation for educators to grow in their profession and experience leadership roles without having to move directly into school administration.
- Reverse the recession-era budget language that caps state funding for support staff, in turn, offsetting local expenditures that are well above the required local effort and freeing local dollars for salary improvements.

Virginia Continually Fails to Reach National Teacher Pay Average

Over more than five decades, Virginia had several periods of coming close to reaching the national teacher pay average, only to fall further behind. Despite continuous political pledges to get there, a promise is no guarantee.



Source: VEA Analysis of NEA Rankings and Estimates.
Adjusted to 2021 dollars with CPI Consumer data
*NEA Estimate



Preparation and Support

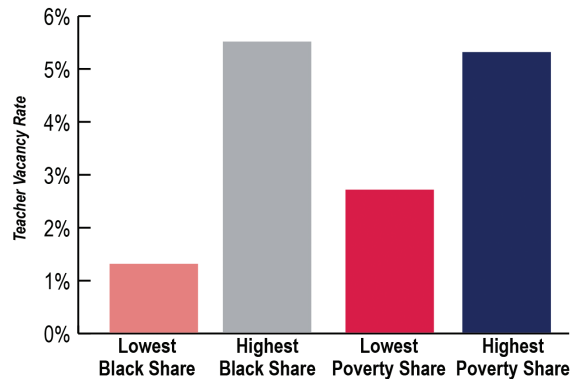
- Ensure that the competencies included in the Profile of a Virginia Leader and Profile of a Virginia Educator are reflected in Virginia's educator preparation programs.
- Provide state funding to expand "grow-your-own," career pathways, and other incentive programs to grow and diversify the educator profession.
- Update educator preparation programs to reflect the Profile of a Graduate and the needs of modern learners.
- Revise the guidelines as needed to ensure that mentoring and coaching for educators and administrators reflect evidence-based practice.
- Update the educator evaluation model to reflect the Profile of an Educator and research.
- Increase the number and scope of research-based professional development opportunities for school staff and provide direct state aid to school divisions for such purposes

Working Conditions

- Connect experienced and effective educators, who hold renewable contracts, with new educators, as mentors during the new educator's probationary period. A reduced teaching load should be provided to the new educator and the mentor to protect time for observations, reflection, and guidance.
- Fund training, mentoring, and professional development opportunities for new school administrators so that they offer improved instructional support to their educators.
- Continue to reduce the emphasis on standardized testing for accountability. Recognize that deep and personalized learning requires that educators have more autonomy to design their instructional practices.
- Update the staffing standards in the SOQ to reflect research-based practice rather than prevailing practice or currently funded levels.
- Honor and cultivate educator leadership by elevating educator voices and viewpoints through the creation of meaningful opportunities for educators to be embedded in decision-making and leadership of mission-critical work at every school.

Teacher Vacancies Highest in Divisions with Most Student Need

Divisions with the highest share of Black students had more than 4 times the teacher vacancy rate than divisions with the lowest share in October, 2021. The highest poverty divisions had vacancy rates around twice as high as divisions with the least poverty.



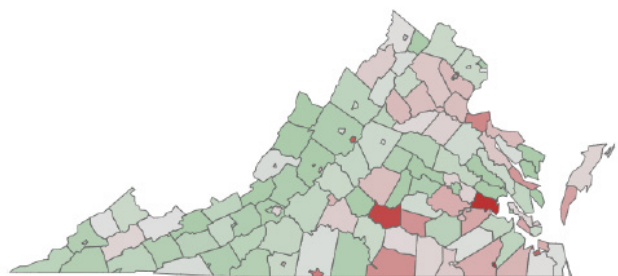
Source: VEA analysis of Exits and Positions survey vacancy data from Oct. 1, 2021. Highest and lowest share determined by quintile (i.e. lowest share = lowest 20% of divisions)



Teacher Vacancies Severe In Many Virginia School Divisions

Divisions with the highest share of Black students had more than four times the teacher vacancy rate compared to divisions with the lowest share. Similarly, divisions with the highest student poverty rates had nearly twice the teacher vacancy rates as divisions with the lowest rates.

Percent Unfilled Teaching Positions
0.0% 15.0%



Source: VEA analysis of Exits and Positions Survey, VDOE. Data reflects October 1, 2021 reported division vacancies. Richmond City data excluded due to pending update.

<https://vea.link/VacancyMap>



RESOURCES

Among educators, there's general agreement on the pressing need to make educator attraction, induction, and retention a priority in Virginia.

Virginia Board of Education – Board Priorities and Goals - 2018-2023 Advance policies that increase the number of candidates entering the teaching profession and encourage and support the recruitment, development, and retention of well-prepared and skilled teachers and school leaders: <http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/plan/comprehensive-plan.pdf>

EdTrust - Teacher Diversity Score Card and Strategies:
<https://edtrust.org/educator-diversity/>

Report of the Advisory Committee on Virginia's Teacher Shortages
www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/meetings/2018/03-mar/item-l-attachment.pptx

Virginia Teacher Licensure Policy: Biases and Barriers to Diversifying the Workforce (SJR15-2020)
<https://rga.lis.virginia.gov/Published/2022/SD6/PDF>

The Learning Policy Institute – Tackling Teacher Shortages: What Can States and Districts Do?
<https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/blog/teacher-shortage-what-can-states-and-districts-do>

Grow Your Own Presentation to Senate Finance Committee
<https://vea.link/UsingGrowOwn>

New School Staff Vacancy Data Should be a Wake-Up Call to State Lawmakers

Virginia is facing a growing shortage of qualified teachers in many localities. The number of unfilled teacher positions across the state has increased by 40 percent over the past 10 years and has reached crisis proportions in certain divisions—especially those with high levels of poverty
<https://www.veanea.org/new-school-staff-vacancy-data-should-be-a-wake-up-call-to-state-lawmakers/>

