

K-12 EDUCATION – PANDEMIC EFFECTS

Pandemic Impact on K–12 Public Education, 2022

Defining direct counseling ► The General Assembly may wish to consider amending the Code of Virginia to define direct school counseling services to include only those activities established as direct counseling services by the Virginia Department of Education Principals' Memo 1014-19 and to expressly exclude from the definition administrative and support activities that are not considered direct counseling. (Recommendation 1)

Provisional licenses for school psychologists ► The General Assembly may wish to consider amending the Code of Virginia to allow qualified, licensed psychologists in other fields to be provisionally licensed as a school psychologist. (Recommendation 2)

Math instructional program ► The General Assembly may wish to consider including language and funding in the Appropriation Act to create and fund a temporary math instructional improvement program to help elementary school students who fail their math Standards of Learning test. (Recommendation 4)

Hiring instructional assistants ► The General Assembly may wish to consider including language and funding in the Appropriation Act to provide additional, temporary funding for a subset of schools accredited with conditions to hire more instructional assistants to (i) help teachers provide small group and individualized instruction necessitated by widening academic needs within classrooms, (ii) help teachers manage challenging student behaviors within classrooms, and (iii) reduce teacher workloads. (Recommendation 5)

Teacher retention bonuses ► The General Assembly may wish to consider including language and funding in the Appropriation Act to provide the state share of funding to divisions that experienced an increase in teacher turnover during the pandemic to be used for providing retention bonuses for teachers. Retention bonuses should be structured to maximize the financial incentive for teachers to remain in their position. (Recommendation 6)

Tuition assistance for provisionally licensed teachers ► The General Assembly may wish to consider including language and funding in the Appropriation Act to provide the state share of funding for teacher tuition assistance to divisions that experienced an increase in the number of provisionally licensed teachers during the pandemic to help provisionally licensed teachers in those divisions become fully licensed. (Recommendation 7)

POLICY OPTIONS

Staff typically propose policy options rather than make recommendations when (i) the action is a policy judgment best made by elected officials—especially the General Assembly, (ii) evidence suggests action could potentially be beneficial, or (iii) a report finding could be addressed in multiple ways.

Training on disruptive behavior ► The General Assembly could include language and funding in the Appropriation Act for Virginia Tiered Systems of Supports to provide training and technical assistance to help staff at more schools better address disruptive classroom behavior. (Option 1)

School division partnerships with mental health providers ► The General Assembly could include language in the Appropriation Act directing the Virginia Department of Education to collect and report information from school divisions about existing and potential partnerships between school divisions and mental health providers, including the partner organization, type of partnership, scope, cost, and funding source. (Option 2)

School division partnerships with mental health providers ► The General Assembly could include language and funding in the Appropriation Act to help develop and support existing partnerships between school divisions and mental health providers to provide enhanced mental health services to students. (Option 3)

Teacher signing bonuses ► The General Assembly could include language and funding in the Appropriation Act to provide the state share of funding for one-time signing bonuses to be offered to teachers who agree to accept employment with a school division that has experienced an increase in teacher vacancies during the pandemic. (Option 4)

Review of teacher licensure requirements ► The General Assembly could include language in the Appropriation Act directing the Virginia Department of Education and the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia to review Virginia's teacher licensure requirements and process, and propose updates, improvements, and simplifications. A summary of proposed changes could be submitted to the Virginia Board of Education and House Education and Senate Education and Health committees by November 1, 2023. (Option 5)