

Recommendations and Policy Options: Virginia's K-12 Teacher Pipeline

JLARC staff typically make recommendations to address findings during reviews. Staff also sometimes propose policy options rather than recommendations. The three most common reasons staff propose policy options rather than recommendations are: (1) the action proposed is a policy judgment best made by the General Assembly or other elected officials, (2) the evidence indicates that addressing a report finding is not necessarily required, but doing so could be beneficial, or (3) there are multiple ways in which a report finding could be addressed and there is insufficient evidence of a single best way to address the finding.

Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION 1

The General Assembly may wish to consider including language in the Appropriation Act directing the Virginia Department of Education to report (i) which higher education institutions and school divisions have been approved to have apprentice programs, (ii) when they expect to begin preparing prospective teachers, (iii) how many individuals are expected to be prepared through each program annually, and (iv) how each program will be funded. The report should be submitted to the Board of Education and House Education and Senate Education and Health committees by June 30, 2024. (Chapter 3)

RECOMMENDATION 2

The General Assembly may wish to consider including language in the Appropriation Act directing the Virginia Board of Education to either (i) replace the Virginia Communications and Literacy Assessment with a nationally recognized teacher licensure test that is more relevant for assessing prospective teachers or (ii) eliminate the Virginia Communications and Literacy Assessment as a requirement for a full 10-year renewable Virginia teaching license. (Chapter 3)

RECOMMENDATION 3

The General Assembly may wish to consider amending the Code of Virginia to create a waiver through which the Board of Education shall issue a full 10-year renewable Virginia teaching license to qualified individuals attending approved higher education teacher preparation programs who have not passed the Virginia Communication and Literacy Assessment but meet established criteria. (Chapter 3)

RECOMMENDATION 4

The Virginia Board of Education should revise section 8-VAC-20-543-50 of the Virginia Administrative Code to remove the incentive traditional higher education teacher preparation programs currently have to establish admission policies that unnecessarily restrict the number of individuals enrolling in such programs. (Chapter 3)

RECOMMENDATION 5

The General Assembly may wish to consider including language and funding in the Appropriation Act to increase the annual funding for the Virginia Teaching Scholarship Loan Program. (Chapter 3)

RECOMMENDATION 6

The Virginia Department of Education should work with Virginia higher education institutions that offer teacher preparation courses to develop, publish on its website, and periodically update a list of specific professional studies and subject-matter courses that fulfill licensure requirements in each endorsement area for provisionally licensed teachers pursuing full licensure. (Chapter 4)

RECOMMENDATION 7

The Virginia Department of Education should list and periodically update on its website the specific teacher license types and endorsement areas in other states that qualify for a Virginia teaching license through reciprocity, prioritizing states from which Virginia receives the most reciprocity applications. (Chapter 4)

RECOMMENDATION 8

The Virginia Department of Education should report on the status of its teacher licensure process, staffing, and information technology improvements to the Board of Education and House Education and Senate Education and Health committees by December 15, 2023, and again by June 30, 2024. (Chapter 4)

RECOMMENDATION 9

The General Assembly may wish to consider including language and funding in the Appropriation Act directing the Virginia Department of Education to (i) hire a contractor to develop a database that can store and maintain teacher information; (ii) regularly collect information on the teacher preparation pathway, licensure status, place of employment, indicators of instructional quality, and public K–12 teaching tenure for each teacher who is prepared in Virginia; and (iii) share such information about these teachers with the Virginia preparation programs from which they graduated. (Chapter 5)

RECOMMENDATION 10

The General Assembly may wish to consider amending the Code of Virginia to direct the Virginia Department of Education to biennially report on the preparedness and tenure of teachers prepared through each of Virginia's teacher preparation pathways and programs and recommend improvements to specific preparation pathways and programs as needed. The report should be submitted to the Board of Education and House Education and Senate Education and Health committees by November 1 every other year. (Chapter 5)

Policy Options to Consider

POLICY OPTION 1

The General Assembly could include language and funding in the Appropriation Act to create a pilot program for provisionally licensed teachers to complete a curriculum and instruction course or classroom and behavior management course by the end of their first semester as a teacher of record at no cost. (Chapter 3)

POLICY OPTION 2

The General Assembly could include language and funding in the Appropriation Act for the Virginia Department of Education to increase funding for teacher residency programs to help cover the cost of preparation for additional teacher residents. (Chapter 3)

POLICY OPTION 3

The General Assembly could include language and funding in the Appropriation Act to provide state general funds for the Competitive Grant for Praxis and Virginia Licensure and Certification Assessment program. (Chapter 3)

POLICY OPTION 4

The General Assembly could include language and funding in the Appropriation Act to provide state general funds for the Paid Internship Scholarship for Aspiring Virginia Educators program. (Chapter 3)

POLICY OPTION 5

The General Assembly could include language and funding in the Appropriation Act directing the Virginia Department of Education to administer a three-year pilot program that provides targeted mentorship assistance to divisions with high teacher vacancies using mentors trained and coordinated by Virginia higher education institutions. (Chapter 5)
