



Virginia Commission on Youth 2009 Legislative Studies and Initiatives

Blue text indicates that Recommendation was adopted by Commission on December 7, 2009.

STUDY OF TRUANCY AND SCHOOL DROPOUT PREVENTION – YEAR 2

TRUANCY AND ATTENDANCE

Findings/Conclusions	Recommendations	Comments
<p>Finding #1 — There is no statewide definition for truancy. In Virginia, the law does not specifically define a truant; it only defines a child who is habitually and without justification absent from school as a " child in need of supervision" when certain other conditions are met. Beginning with the 2005-2006 school year, federal requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act requires states to report to the U.S. Department of Education truancy rates on a school-by-school basis. Currently, Virginia’s Department of Education is using a proxy measure to report truancy, i.e., the number of students with whom a conference was scheduled after the student had accumulated six unexcused absences during the school year, in accordance with §22.1-258 of the <i>Code of Virginia</i>.</p>	<p>1. Support the Department of Education efforts in the development of a definition for truancy and request that the Department of Education provide an update to the Commission on Youth on the status of efforts to address truancy prior to the 2011 General Assembly Session. (Adopted)</p>	<p>The Virginia Chamber of Commerce supports efforts to define truancy and to make more consistent attendance policies across the Commonwealth.</p> <p>A high school social worker who works with students with attendance problems commented that defining excessive unjustified absence, as well as truancy, would be useful. Many students who miss a lot of days and ultimately drop out are not truant, but are missing school with parent awareness (or even support). Setting a limit on these absences (unless medical documentation is provided) would enable schools to hold parents more accountable, especially at elementary and middle school levels.</p> <p>Another commenter expressed appreciation that this Finding emphasized the importance of defining truancy and attendance terms. The commenter supported the focus on uniform practices throughout Virginia, given differences in practices which occur, stating that the <i>Code of Virginia</i> and the state Constitution should be honored in practices governing public education, unless both were properly changed.</p>

Findings/Conclusions	Recommendations	Comments
<p>Finding #2 — While a procedure is currently in place in §22.1-258 of the <i>Code of Virginia</i>, school divisions’ accounting and reporting on truancy to the Department of Education does not provide enough detail on actual school practices to assess compliance with the graduated approach to truancy outlined in §22.1-258. Department of Education staff has indicated that the Board of Education is currently developing regulations for reporting student absences and associated attendance policies. There have been anecdotal reports of inconsistencies with school compliance with §22.1-258 of the <i>Code of Virginia</i>. For instance, although the <i>Code</i> requires schools to create an attendance plan for any student having five unexcused absences and to schedule a conference with the parent following a sixth unexcused absence, this may not always occur.</p> <p>The <i>Code</i> also stipulates that the parent conference is to precede any court action; therefore, if the school does not initiate the parent conference, none of the subsequent steps set forth in the <i>Code</i> may be taken.</p>	<p>1. Request that the Department of Education provide an update to the Commission on Youth on the development of regulations for reporting of student absences and associated attendance policies. Such an update will occur prior to the 2011 General Assembly Session. (Adopted)</p>	<p>A high school social worker who works with students with attendance problems commented that the current timeline for meetings after 5 unexcused absences and then again after one day is difficult to follow. Also, if a student has an attendance meeting one year and improves, but starts having poor attendance again the following year, it is difficult to document it under the existing law without starting the process over again. The commenter stated that, while it was a good idea for the law to be specific, this seemed to be micromanaging. Having the first meeting after 5 days and then the follow-up conference after one or more days prior to referring to court is more realistic and allows time to try interventions.</p> <p>A principal for a school program within a juvenile detention center asserted that truancy enforcement was a major concern and that compulsory school attendance is a law that must be enforced. Statistics show that truant students generally become a burden on society. He urged consideration of more fines being imposed on parents of younger students. “There are a number of possibilities for increasing the penalties. It may take something as extreme as removing the earned income tax credit for students who are not in school.”</p> <p>In addition, the principal asserts that parents should not be allowed to withdraw their child from school if they are moving. The system should be set up such that, when a parent informs the school that the family is moving, the student remains on the roll until the receiving school contacts it for records. The</p>

Finding #2 (cont.)

commenter notes that the Commonwealth is losing a great number of students each year because parents say they are moving, withdraw their child and never move. The students show up later in juvenile court. In addition, where there is a "no show" student who does not report to school at the beginning of the school year, the school should file a petition in juvenile court against the parent. The parent should receive a warrant to appear in court to show cause. The child may be a danger or perhaps there has been foul play or an injury. The "no show" list for elementary students across the state grows each year.

One commenter stated they would like to see enrollment practices addressed. School divisions should not deny services to a child based on custody issues when a parent with joint custody resides in that school division and pays local taxes that support that division. This commenter expressed concern regarding the rights and Constitutional issues of this practice, as well as the emotional and academic impact of this practice.

This commenter also recommended that juveniles committed to the Department of Juvenile Justice have their time served in Juvenile Detention Centers after sentencing count in all instances, rather than having the Judge make that determination on a case-by-case basis. Juveniles have lengthy waits for space once committed, and it would seem that time served in the temporary care of the detention center should be counted under those circumstances.

Findings/Conclusions	Recommendations	Comments
<p>Finding #3 — There needs to be greater focus for truancy reduction efforts at the elementary school level. Truancy in elementary school is an indicator of impending truancy issues later in middle school and high school; serves as an early warning sign of future delinquent activity; and increases the risk that the student will dropout of school. The causes of truancy and school dropouts vary among students and may include: family difficulties at home; drug and alcohol abuse; illiteracy; teenage pregnancy; boredom in the classroom; school safety; and ineffective teaching staff. Early identification of those students who are beginning to develop patterns of non-attendance is crucial in order to provide the student and the family with the guidance and/or services that they need to help solve the problem of non-attendance and increase the likelihood that the student will be successful later in their educational career.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Request the Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals, Virginia School Board Association, Virginia Alternative Educators Association, Virginia PTA/PTSA, Virginia School Counselors Association, the Virginia Education Association and the Virginia Association of Community Services Boards include information on effective programs which reduce truancy of elementary school-aged youth at their annual conferences and trainings. (Adopted) 2. Request the Virginia PTA/PTSO work with its membership and parents of elementary school students to establish approaches, including the development of business partnerships, which are helpful in conveying to parents the benefits of school attendance at the elementary school level. (Adopted) 3. Encourage school divisions to include in all of their truancy prevention programs evidence-based practices for early intervention at the elementary level with focus on effective school engagement, the establishment of community partnerships and methods to engage students and parents in the school community. (Adopted) 4. Encourage school divisions to develop mechanisms, such as Student Assistance Programming, for identifying students who may need additional school or community supports and direct them and their families to the appropriate services. (Adopted) 	<p>The Virginia Chamber of Commerce supports a greater focus on early identification efforts at the elementary school level and continued efforts to support students who are at-risk of dropout out throughout their middle school and high school years.</p> <p>Another commenter stated that, while they understood the need for utilizing and funding evidence based practices, it would be difficult to create other practices which may be more appropriate or better if this requirement was in place.</p>

Findings/Conclusions	Recommendations	Comments
<p>Finding #4 — The Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act (SDFSCA) supports programs that prevent violence in and around schools; prevents the illegal use of alcohol, tobacco, and drugs; involves parents and communities; and fosters a safe and drug-free learning environment that supports student academic achievement. However, funding for the State Grants portion of the SDFSCA was not included in President Obama’s budget and was not reinstated by the House of Representatives. In Virginia, there is already a shortage of school-based prevention programs that address issues such as violence prevention, anger management, conflict resolution and other behavioral health needs.</p>	<p>1. Encourage that stakeholder organizations contact Virginia’s Congressional Delegation to request that the State Grants portion of the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act (SDFSCA) be reinstated in the federal budget. (Adopted)</p>	<p>The Virginia Restorative Community Foundation states that there is a request before the U.S. Education Secretary for the appropriation \$50 million from available American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds for the Grants to Address Youth Violence and Related Issues for Persistently Dangerous Schools Program under the Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools. This request is to address the youth violence program is currently scheduled to receive zero funding in FY10.</p>
<p>Finding #5 — Law enforcement and school resource officers surveyed or interviewed by the Commission on Youth reported barriers to information-sharing within law enforcement (e.g., court service units and school resource officers). Law enforcement plays an important role as partners to help promote education and safety for students and the community. Many local school divisions partner with local law enforcement to provide Student Resource Officers (SROs) in the school. As stated by the Department of Criminal Justice Services, “the primary purpose of the SRO is to reduce and prevent crime by and against students, committed primarily in or in connection with the assigned school. The SRO performs other roles in addition to enforcement: the SRO conducts crime-prevention programs, functions as an additional educational resource, acts as a referral agent to help students obtain community resources not otherwise available, and guides students in solving problems.” SROs provide a valuable resource to schools in working with students and family members to help resolve non-attendance issues. Federal and state law provides certain confidentiality protections for juveniles involved with the criminal justice system; however, certain information-sharing is allowed to help assist those in law enforcement and others involved in the case.</p>	<p>1. Request the Department of Juvenile Justice and Department of Criminal Justice Services include in future trainings clarification on information-sharing between school resource officers, court service units and law enforcement. (Adopted)</p>	<p>The Virginia Chamber of Commerce encourages better communication among all agencies working with truancy cases.</p> <p>A commenter stated the idea of confidentiality and seeking enough information to best serve young people often conflicts. New practices must be determined in order to allow agencies to collaborate for the young person's benefit. This commenter stated their desire to see more uniform service delivery across the Commonwealth while promoting an environment that allows for new findings, and provide an environment that is supportive of emerging information. This would allow for the inclusion of research regarding the brain. New discoveries support the concept that juvenile offenders be treated differently from adults in a way to provide for the safety of all citizenry. There are costs involved with this work, but it is a matter of paying now, at a more reasonable cost, or paying later, at what will be a more unreasonable cost.</p>

Findings/Conclusions	Recommendations	Comments
<p>Finding #6 — There are statewide inconsistencies with the intake process for truancy cases, particularly with filing CHINSup petitions. Section 16.1-260 of the <i>Code of Virginia</i> requires the intake officer to file a petition with the court if the attendance officer has provided documentation to the intake officer that the school division has complied with the provisions § 22.1-258 of the <i>Code of Virginia</i>. However, the law allows the intake officer to defer filing the complaint for 90 days and proceed informally by developing a truancy plan. The student and his parent or parents must agree to the development of the truancy plan. In addition, §16.1-260 gives the intake officer the authority to refer the student to the appropriate public agency for the purpose of developing a truancy plan using an interagency interdisciplinary team approach. The team may include qualified personnel who are reasonably available from the appropriate department of social services, community services board, local school division, court service unit and other appropriate and available public and private agencies. If at the 90-day period the juvenile has not successfully completed the truancy plan or the truancy program, then the intake officer shall file the petition with the court. The use of informal diversion varies among court service units and is sometimes influenced by different judicial practices.</p>	<p>1. Encourage the Department of Juvenile Justice to establish guidelines for court service units on how best to expedite resolution of truancy matters when presented to court service units and to include expectations for court diversion programs for those cases. (Adopted)</p>	<p>A school social worker who works extensively with high school students having attendance problems commented that alternatives to detention are badly needed. Increasing diversion programs and court-ordered family service/therapy resources would be very helpful. Restoring the category of educational neglect under Child Protective Services for intractable cases of parental failure to send children to school would help many children.</p>
<p>Finding #7 — Localities need more flexibility in the current mandated procedure of pupils who fail to report to school for a total of five scheduled school days for the year. Consistently allowing local school divisions the option of allowing “the principal, his designee or the attendance officer” the authority to perform each of the mandated and crucial truancy intervention functions will provide clarity and flexibility to schools.</p>	<p>1. Amend Section 22.1-258 of the <i>Code of Virginia</i> to give more flexibility to local school divisions by consistently stating that “the school principal, his designee or the attendance officer” is responsible for notifying the parent; making direct contact with the parent; and developing a student’s attendance plan. (Adopted)</p>	<p>The members of the Advisory Group were supportive of this recommendation. Additional flexibility would be appreciated, particularly with the budget situation.</p>

Finding #7 (cont.)

Consistency in each of the steps of non-attendance would provide localities with flexibility in meeting the statutory requirements. Although § 22.1-258 of the *Code of Virginia* provides for the steps for non-attendance, there are inconsistencies, as shown in the following underlined provisions:

Whenever any pupil fails to report to school for a total of five scheduled school days for the school year and no indication has been received by school personnel that the pupil's parent is aware of and supports the pupil's absence, and a reasonable effort to notify the parent has failed, the school principal or his designee shall make a reasonable effort to ensure that direct contact is made with the parent, either in person or through telephone conversation, by the attendance officer to obtain an explanation for the pupil's absence and to explain to the parent the consequences of continued non-attendance. The attendance officer, the pupil, and the pupil's parent shall jointly develop a plan to resolve the pupil's non-attendance. Such plan shall include documentation of the reasons for the pupil's

non-attendance. If the pupil is absent an additional day after direct contact with the pupil's parent and the attendance officer has received no indication that the pupil's parent is aware of and supports the pupil's absence, the attendance officer shall schedule a conference within ten school days with the pupil, his parent, and school personnel, which conference may include other community service providers, to resolve issues related to the pupil's non-attendance. The conference shall be held no later than fifteen school days after the sixth absence. Upon the next absence by such pupil without indication to the attendance officer that the pupil's parent is aware of and supports the pupil's absence, the school principal or his designee shall notify the attendance officer or the division superintendent, as

the case may be, who shall enforce the provisions of this article by either or both of the following: (i) filing a complaint with the juvenile and domestic relations court alleging the pupil is a child in need of supervision as defined in § 16.1-228 or (ii) instituting proceedings against the parent pursuant to § 18.2-371 or § 22.1-262. In filing a complaint against the student, the attendance officer shall provide written documentation of the efforts to comply with the provisions of this section. In the event that both parents have been awarded joint physical custody pursuant to § 20-124.2 and the school has received notice of such order, both parents shall be notified at the last known addresses of the parents.

Finding #8 — Local attendance practices may be inconsistent with the *Code of Virginia*. Some schools divisions also employ policies where they may fail a student after a certain number of absences. This policy also may have an adverse affect on students if they would like to return to school after experiencing a certain number of absences. A student who exceeds the limit has no hope of catching up or passing. For example, if the student had six or more unexcused absences in the first grading period, they may have already failed the class. If there is no hope for passing the class, the student may stop attending school altogether.

1. Request the School Board Association to work with local school boards and Virginia Association of School Superintendents to encourage them to review their current practices and policies related to attendance and that they share effective attendance practice and policies. (Adopted)

The Advisory Group was supportive of this recommendation.

Fairfax County has recently changed its attendance policies to address the concerns noted in this Finding.

SCHOOL DROPOUT PREVENTION

Findings/Conclusions	Recommendations	Comments
<p>Finding #9 — Students who have been long-term suspended or expelled may be referred to an alternative education placement, either to one of Virginia’s 29 regional alternative education programs or to a local program. In addition, some local alternative education programs accept students who voluntarily request a placement for reasons other than a disciplinary nature. Alternative education is designed to respond to students who may not perform as well in a traditional school setting. At the regional level, a total of 116 school divisions worked in collaboration to form the 29 programs; some of the divisions have multiple subprograms and sites. Several divisions also support their own local programs. The Department of Education reported in 2007-2008 that 4,002 students were served by regional programs. The number of slots funded is 1,882. A Department of Education report addressing the success of these programs indicates, for 2007-2008, that students attending these programs realized improvements in academic performance; decreased disciplinary issues and high approval ratings for parental involvement. One of the purposes of Virginia’s alternative education programs is to reduce the dropout rate. However, not all at-risk students who might benefit from non-traditional/alternative educational services have access to those services. These students fall farther behind and may become involved in the criminal justice system. Parental support is a critical component for the educational success of these students.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support alternative education opportunities for students who have been long-term suspended or expelled. (Adopted) 2. Encourage cross-district collaboration to expand alternative education options for students. (Adopted) 3. Support distant and virtual learning programs for remediation efforts or credit recovery that adhere to the provisions of the Virginia Board of Education’s <i>Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia</i>. (Adopted) 4. Support paid career or on-the-job training opportunities for high school students which allow students to earn credits for their participation. (Adopted) 5. Support the maintenance and record keeping of those students who are long-term suspended or expelled who are referred to alternative education placements in order to track their success in completing the requirements for graduation. (Adopted) 	<p>One commenter, who is a clinical psychologist, stated that, as part of review of a long-term suspended or expelled student, there be a thorough review of the student’s entire academic career and testing history to determine whether learning disabilities or intellectual disabilities that might be contributing to academic failure and behavior problems have been overlooked or not adequately addressed.</p> <p>The Board for the Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals (VASSP) has concerns with the Recommendations for Finding #9 related to uncertainty over what they would be supporting: follow up on students in the school system and for whom they receive average daily membership (ADM), e.g., alternative education OR all students, including former students, e.g., students whose parents have allowed them to drop out of school or an alternative education program. The Association is concerned that this language sets up an expectation that there would be follow up in all situations. Resources are a concern; without additional funding or staff, this will not take place in most school divisions. The VASSP has asked if this language could be modified to ensure that this would be a review of current practice. The Board states that it is difficult to support something that is not current practice without giving the impression that you endorse its implementation.</p>

Finding # 9 (cont.)

The Virginia Restorative Community Foundation commented that there is an interest within their membership for the tracking of students on “long term leave of absence.” Statewide estimates are between 269 and 370 for students falling into the “long term leave of absence” category which can include: long term suspension, expulsion, emergency medical leave and emergency family leave. A related question came up about the record keeping of those students who are on long-term suspension and expulsion, specifically whether it is possible to ascertain whether these students received were/are eligible for free or reduced lunch. The Foundation asked that the Commission consider revising Recommendation#5 as follows:
Support the maintenance and record keeping of those students who are long-term suspended or expelled. Maintain records of these students in order to support the need for alternative educational opportunities and to track the success of alternative education placements that are referred to alternative education placements in order to track their success in completing the requirements for graduation.

Finding #10 — Dropout prevention requires comprehensive planning across multiple service agencies that do not share resources (e.g., education, family, youth agencies), and there is no single source of information regarding dropout prevention efforts across Virginia. However, the Governor’s Office for Substance Abuse Prevention (GOSAP) awards and administers federal prevention grant funds to state, local and community organizations. GOSAP’s mission is “to support positive youth development by providing strategic statewide leadership, fostering

- 1. Request the Governor’s Office of Substance Abuse Prevention to collaborate across multiple agencies, including the possibility of a university collaboration, for the purpose of developing a website dedicated to prevention and intervention, as well as school dropout prevention and intervention. (Adopted)**

The Advisory Group was supportive of this recommendation. Members noted that collaboration and communication were crucial and that a website where such resources could be listed would be a beneficial tool.

<p>Finding #10 (cont.) collaboration and the sharing of resources at all levels, and providing tools and training to practice evidence-based prevention so that Virginia’s youth will develop into productive citizens free from substance abuse, violence, delinquency, school drop-out, criminal gang participation, and related risky behaviors.” Having one state source that coordinates dropout prevention with other prevention efforts would be beneficial in reducing Virginia dropout rate.</p>		
<p>Finding #11 — Parents are not always aware of the factors that may put their child at-risk of dropping out of school or which options might be available to help reduce that risk. Research consistently finds that family engagement has a direct, positive effect on children’s achievement and is the most accurate predictor of a student’s success in school, regardless of socioeconomic, racial/ethnic, and educational background (National Center for Dropout Prevention). However, parents may not know how to recognize signs of risk or what to do if these signs appear. Most parents want to do what is right for their child, but they may lack the knowledge or resources they need to intervene. Therefore, schools and communities need to be more proactive in reaching out to educate and support families whose children may be at risk of dropping out of school.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Request the Virginia PTA and Virginia Education Association develop parent support materials that could be used to help educate parents about dropout risk factors, early indicators, prevention strategies, and available community resources. (Adopted) 2. Encourage districts/regions to establish volunteer parent support groups. (Adopted) 3. Request that Virginia’s Parent Resource Centers include information on their websites and IN mailings on the factors that place children at-risk of dropping out of school and the options which might be available to help reduce that risk. (Adopted) 	<p>The Advisory Group supported these recommendations.</p>
<p>Finding #12 — Not all school divisions have a mechanism for identifying and monitoring early indicators of dropout risk. In 2006, House Bill 19 (Fralin) required the Board of Education to collect, analyze and report high school graduation and dropout data using a formula prescribed by the Board of Education. As a result of this legislation, along with the Board’s action, the Department of Education (DOE) developed Education</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Request the Department of Education brief the Commission on Youth in the summer of 2010 on its work in addressing truancy and school dropout prevention, to include changes addressed in the Board’s Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia and other technical assistance efforts identified by the Department. (Adopted) 	<p>The Virginia Chamber of Commerce commented that, to reduce the high school dropout rate, the Virginia Chamber of Commerce is supportive of a statewide comprehensive dropout prevention plan that addresses important issues such as early identification and consistent policies to reduce the dropout rate and increase student recovery.</p>

Finding #12 (cont.)
 Information Management System (EIMS) that uses a unique student identifier to track students from school to school. Beginning with the graduating class of 2008, DOE had sufficient data to report accurate calculations of cohort graduation rates for schools, divisions and the Commonwealth. With the EIMS, the DOE was able to develop an on-time graduation tool pilot which is operating in four localities: Franklin City, Lee County, Richmond City and Pulaski County. This data collection tool allows school division to identify, monitor and provide interventions to students who are at-risk of dropping out of school. Recognizing the importance of improving graduation rates in Virginia, in February 2009, the Board of Education approved final regulations governing accreditation which includes incorporating graduation rates into Virginia's accountability system.

Finding #13 — Classroom and behavior management is a professional studies requirement for teacher licensure in Virginia (8 VAC 20-22-120 & 180), but not all school staff – administrators, teachers, and support staff – know how to identify and serve students most at-risk of dropping out of school, with and without classroom behavior problems.

- 1. Encourage on-going professional development to include training on dropout prevention. Training could include early indicators of dropout risk, techniques for developing protective factors in children, classroom and behavior management, and best practices in dropout prevention. (Adopted)**
- 2. Encourage school divisions to provide more cross-training between educators and agencies involved in youth and family services, including agencies that support families in crisis. (Adopted)**
- 3. Encourage school divisions to consider the implementation of evidence-based programs that provide training for classroom and behavior management and that help staff know how to identify and serve students most at-risk of dropping out of school. (Adopted)**

The Virginia Chamber supports a statewide comprehensive dropout prevention plan, including efforts to circulate best practices based on evidence-based programs to reduce the high school dropout rate and increase student recovery.

A coordinator for a local office of Families & Children Services commented that It has been found that the more children are involved in social, community activities (i.e. sports) and/or have positive mentors the less they have truancy, juvenile justice issues. Mentoring is not always "evidence-based" but can have a great impact on a child. If there could be some incentive to have churches, colleges, etc. provide interested mentors or even programs that would provide children with the opportunity to develop appropriate social skills, there would

<p>Finding #13 (cont.)</p>	<p>4. Encourage school divisions to consider the implementation of student assistance programming which provide wraparound services to students in need. (Adopted)</p>	<p>be a decrease the number of at-risk children entering the many mental health services.</p> <p>There are parents who are parenting adolescents who were never parented themselves. Parenting classes in general do not work. What we need are parent aides who provide support and assistance within the parent's and children's comfort zone, their own home. Parent mentoring with 1:1 parent aides would be beneficial to families who have given up or are giving up. For a number of parents, they never saw someone working at being a parent when they were growing up. Sometimes simple serves better.</p>
<p>Finding #14 — The 140-hour seat rule may be a barrier to graduation. Guidance is needed on how this rule may be waived for students who can demonstrate course mastery.</p>	<p>1. Direct the Commission on Youth to include in its final report on the Study of Truancy and Dropout Prevention information on the Department of Education's actions in 2009 to inform school divisions of the 140-hour seat rule. (Adopted)</p>	<p>One commenter stated they would like to see GED offerings available to students when sufficient time allows for completion. Reading deficiencies and frustration related to age and grade level attainment often relate to those served in such situations dropping out. With the push for GED as an option, this may be the best option that many will accomplish, and if a student has made such a choice, it may be a path to new attainments and hope. Methods of securing permission for the GED from parents that are unwilling to offer appropriate support to their child need to be determined.</p>

STUDY OF CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

Findings/Conclusions	Recommendations	Comments
<p>Finding #1 – Virginia’s Career and Technical Education (CTE) program is nationally recognized for its broad offering of industry credentials and for the rate of Virginia student attainment of these credentials. Virginia’s Board of Education, as of October 2009, has approved 265 credentials including three types:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ State Licensure; ➤ NOCTI (National Occupational Competency Testing Institute); and ➤ Pathway Exams <p>Virginia employers report that industry certifications, particularly state licensure, are an extremely valuable component of CTE programs. However, some industry credentials offered by CTE programs, while valuable, are not familiar to or acknowledged by employers or Virginia’s community colleges or universities. For example, the NOCTI exam receives limited recognition among employers. Educating employers about the value of these credentials, as well as input from labor and industry to prioritize the credentials to be offered would be helpful to bridge this gap.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support the Department of Education and the Board of Education’s Career Advisory Committee’s plans to work with local Career and Technical Education advisory committees to continue to educate the business community about the benefits of industry certifications, including National Occupational Competency Testing Institute (NOCTI). (Adopted) 2. Request the Secretary of Education and the Virginia Career Pathways System Working Group identify those credentials and certificates valued by Virginia employers and are appropriate for inclusion in Virginia’s CTE Pathways. Regional variation in demand and program offerings will be acknowledged in this review. A report on the status of this review will be submitted to the Virginia Commission on Youth, the Board of Education and the Council on Career and Technical Education prior to the 2011 General Assembly Session. (Adopted) 	<p>The Advisory Group is supportive of these recommendations. Members encouraged policymakers to acknowledge and address variations from region to region.</p> <p>A former member of Board of Education’s CTE Advisory Committee suggested that there may be a disconnect in the marketing efforts for Virginia CTE. The Virginia Career Education Foundation (VCEF), founded by Governor Warner, should be a major part of any allocated funds for marketing. The commenter urged that these funds be looked at very carefully. Utilizing the VCEF website more fully may enhance efforts and save marketing dollars.</p> <p>It was noted that industry credentials would be valuable for all students, not just CTE students.</p> <p>A local CTE Advisory Committee member commented that Finding #1 is appropriately ranked and that credentialing is important to employers and a value to the students. The member also stated that Recommendation # 2 is something that should be done prior to #1.</p> <p>One commenter noted that a strategy for educating juvenile probation officers, social workers, and case managers about the many options, such as Career Coaches, Workplace Readiness Skills, and Career Readiness Certification, is needed to improve linkages for vulnerable youth to the most appropriate path to school completion and employment.</p>

Finding #1 (cont.)

A business teacher stated that there should be less focus in high schools on industry certifications and more time getting students employable. Test-taking skills are being emphasized in lieu of employability skills. Teachers are required to complete the state competencies for each course and try to get the Industry certifications for specific courses which, the commenter observed, is not helping students get workplace readiness skills within the classroom anymore and that students were much more qualified for employment 10 years ago when there was time to teach specific workplace readiness skills within the classroom. This teacher explained that, in the past, students would spend a week (5 one-hour classes), thus 5 hours of instruction on, for example, how to answer the telephone. Now, they can spend only one 90 minute period to complete the competency for the class and move on to the next thing. These students do not get to practice the skill.

Finding #2 – According to research conducted by the University of Virginia’s Weldon Cooper Center, employers desire entry-level workers who come ready to work. Employers want workers who display a range of “workplace readiness skills”. The top priority skills identified by employers include: understanding the workplace, demonstrating a positive attitude and work ethic, and having appropriate skills for communication, teamwork, and self-presentation. Employers also highly value applicants who come with prior work experience and industry credentials. Accomplishment school may actually rank last. Roundtable participants and those interviewed in the Cooper Center studies report difficulty finding workers with these skills for work in the trades,

1. Introduce a resolution to support the update of Virginia’s Workplace Readiness Skills (WRS) and test revision. Request that the status of the update to the WRS, and its accompanying assessment instrument, be shared by the Department of Education with Virginia’s network of Career and Technical Education (CTE) administrators and school counselors during all upcoming conferences and trainings. Also, encourage local school divisions to communicate regularly with and invite the participation of the local employer community about workplace readiness initiatives and results from student testing on this and other credentialing tests. (Adopted)

The Advisory Group requested this recommendation because members felt very strongly about the WRS and the value of the unified test for the WRS.

A member of the Advisory Group, who was a CTE administrator, commented that there was a need for data on WRS so schools could share with employers the number of students who have achieved mastery of WRS. A data point would bring focus and accountability to WRS.

Accordingly, this commenter requested that the Commission consider the following addition to this recommendation, which also has the support of the Virginia Chapter of the Associated Builders & Contractors:

Finding #2 (cont.)

manufacturing, technology, health and even white-collar professions. Roundtable participants also noted that, once employers conduct a credit check, a criminal background check and a drug screen, as many as 80 percent of all applicants may be eliminated.

Virginia’s Workplace Readiness Skills (WRS), which included 13 skills identified in 1997 by Cooper Center research, were fully integrated as performance standards in all of Virginia’s CTE courses. The Virginia Career and Technical Education (CTE) Resource Center developed curriculum materials and resources for educators to assist them teach the skills so highly-rated by Virginia employers from all sectors. The WRS help teachers and students understand the demands of the workplace and, through resource materials, help students achieve validated competencies considered essential for success in the world of work.

CTE offers an exam to verify student mastery of the skills. The Virginia Board of Education approved the use of the NOCTI WRS exam, accompanied by one of three IC3 tests (to measure technological competence), to allow students to obtain verified credit. In order for school divisions to be reimbursed for testing costs, both the NOCTI WRS test and an IC3 test must be completed. A single, unified test is the ideal, and work toward that end is underway.

In 2008, the process of updating the list of Virginia’s workplace readiness skills commenced, including national research and comments from employers from across the Commonwealth. The skills list is being refined and expanded from 13 to 21 skills, and will be

Finding #2 (cont.)

increase the number of students verifying their knowledge and skills on the current or future versions of the Virginia Workplace Readiness Skills (21st Century Skills) assessment by requesting local school boards to report annually to the Board of Education the number students passing this industry assessment and including this data as a separate category on the school's achievement report card. First reporting date would be July 2011.”

A business instructor stated that Workplace Readiness Skills help, but are not enough, without training in Business Ethics skills. Parent(s) working two or more jobs are not in the picture and their children must raise themselves. Fortune 500 companies are hiring people from outside the Commonwealth and even from outside of the U.S. because they cannot find people without attitude who are willing to work. These companies indicate they would rather hire an untrained worker they can train over a trained one who does not work well with others or does not have a work ethic. There needs to be greater focus on helping this generation develop the skills necessary to be employable and the accompanying business ethics.

Another commenter noted surprise by employers’ ranking of desired attributes for high school students.

- 1. Work Ethic
- 2. Team Work
- 3. Oral Communications
- 4. Ethics
- 5. Critical Thinking

With the exception of #5, it would not appear that these are testable traits, but rather traits observed over time. The commenter expressed concern that the recommendation discusses a credentialing process that requires an examination and the top needs of industry may not be met by this method.

fully implemented as part of the CTE curriculum in the fall of 2010. A revised NOCTI WRS to replace NOCTI WRS + IC3 test will be presented to the Board of Education in January 2011 for their consideration for verified credit. Once the new test is approved by the Board, it can be used immediately in the 2010-2011 school year and school divisions will receive reimbursement from the state for tests administered.

Finding #3 – Virginia’s Career Readiness Certification (CRC) is a nationally recognized certification of three specific workplace skills (Reading, Math, and Locating Information). The CRC, which has been in place in Virginia since 2004, measures a portion of the full range of workplace readiness skills and is a well-recognized and concise addition to the menu of available certifications across all programs and regions in the state. The CRC verifies to employers that job applicants have essential core employability skills. Employers associate the CRC with productivity, quality, business processes, and profitability. Its use is endorsed by the Virginia Workforce Council, Chamber of Commerce, AFL-CIO and the Virginia Manufacturers Association. A major healthcare system, Inova Health System, now requires the CRC for all prospective new hires in allied health positions (clinical care tech, CNA, patient transport, etc.). Certification is required by the Virginia Council on Advanced Technology Skills (VCATS) initiative for Advanced Manufacturing Technician positions in biotech and semi-conductor manufacturing, both are high growth areas in Virginia’s economy.

The CRC is currently not included on the Board of Education’s list of recognized industry credentials for Virginia’s CTE program.

1. Request the Virginia Community College System, the Virginia Workforce Council and the Department of Education include the Career Readiness Certification (CRC) with the Academic and Career Plans for Career and Technical Education Pathways, as appropriate. (Adopted)

A career specialist endorsed the CRC as an extremely valuable certification. Indiana's "Core 40 with Technical Honors" requires WorkKeys for the three skills. The State of Michigan's mandatory test for juniors is the WorkKeys, as well as the ACT. Illinois's mandatory test for juniors includes two of the three skill sets, as well as the ACT. The University of Cincinnati will give one free course to any holder of a CRC Gold Certificate.

The National Association of Manufacturers uses the NCRC as its entry point for all manufacturing certificates. NCCER, the construction trades group, will soon announce a similar program. When Michigan was investigating WorkKeys, Kent ISD (Grand Rapids area) tested almost all freshman through seniors for three straight years. They found that, on average, seniors were no more prepared to use math in the workplace than freshman. They were much better prepared for college. Several states use WorkKeys and the NCRC for Perkins testing.

Findings/Conclusions	Recommendations	Comments
<p>Finding # 4 – The traditional education model in Virginia places a tremendous amount of emphasis on college preparatory classes and liberal arts and, in so doing, runs the risk of ignoring the realities of the labor market. The educational system has focused on, and been rewarded and recognized for offering academic courses that prepare students to enter four-year colleges often at the expense of meeting the needs of all students, some who will not go directly on to postsecondary education – and some who perhaps never will, but who can nonetheless achieve career and economic success and contribute to their local communities and the Virginia economy. This college-focused approach also runs the risk of ignoring the needs of Virginia employers, including the skilled trades, manufacturing, or other CTE pathways. These pathways lead to jobs that are likely found in every community in Virginia and can generate strong earnings and a diverse workforce. The U.S. Department of Labor tells us that, while many jobs in the future may require some study after high school (including apprenticeships), 76% of the jobs created over the next 20 years will not require completion of a four-year college degree. Job growth in skilled trades is expected to surpass employment growth in most other occupations. According to the Virginia Manufacturers’ Association, there may be a shortfall as high as 12,000, in trained workers between 2007 and 2012.</p> <p>In addition, students very much need workplace preparation in high school because they are not obtaining workplace experience outside of school. The employment rate for teens is the lowest ever recorded in post-World War II</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support the Board of Education’s Career and Technical Education Advisory Committee’s efforts to advocate and market CTE. (Adopted) 2. Support the Department of Education revisions to the <i>R U Ready Parent’s Guide</i> and request that it be shared with parents of 7th grade, rather than 8th grade, students and request that the Department consider making the <i>R U Ready Guide for Students</i>, which provides information about students’ educational opportunities, available to high school students in their sophomore, rather than junior, year. (Adopted) 3. Request that the Virginia Association of School Counselors Association and Virginia PTA/PTSO include information on Virginia’s rising labor force needs, as well as the benefits of Virginia’s Career and Technical Education programs, in all trainings, newsletters and appropriate media. Also request that this message be shared with parents of kindergarteners. (Adopted) 4. Support the Virginia Workforce Investment Council and the local workforce boards’ work with local school divisions to communicate the value of Virginia’s Career and Technical Education programs. (Adopted) 	<p>A member of the CTE Advisory Committee and sub-committee member for Public Relations stated that CTE issues were well-outlined in this Finding.</p> <p>A commenter representing a private-sector apprenticeship program stated that the Commission may want to include Virginia’s Career Coach program in these efforts (Career Coaches are discussed in Finding #7.) The success of Career Coaches was mentioned as highly effective from the Roundtable Issues Summary. In many ways, that is a more important group to focus on since school counselors are so overwhelmed with the job of registering students for high school classes and college applications. The whole system is under-funded, under-manned and has lost focus. “The majority of the applicants for my program have one year of college/one year at low-paying jobs. At age 21 they are now ready to focus on a career. A good Career Coach could shave two years off this cycle.”</p> <p>A member of a local CTE Advisory Committee commented that CTE and the potential opportunities it offers is not a well understood part of the public education, even for families involved with the public school system. One subject not addressed in the Findings was how CTE relates to nontraditional careers by gender. The commenter acknowledged the Weldon Cooper Center’s compelling case for such a focus. “I believe the report should reflect that, in 2006, 41 occupations employing 20 million workers were nontraditional for men and 94 occupations employing 28 million workers were nontraditional for women. It may be beneficial to include this in Finding #4 with regards to nontraditional careers and CTE.”</p>

Finding #4 (cont.)

history. Since employers increasingly value applicants who have work experience, this puts Virginia youth at risk of not being able to compete effectively for good entry-level jobs.

CTE provides pathways for young people to attend college, to secure good jobs, and to be life long learners. In fact 77% of CTE completers pursue formal education of some form after high school. Finally, CTE offers challenging courses for careers that did not exist until recently and that may be essential to keep the Virginia economy at the forefront. These include:

- Imaging Technology
- Internet Marketing
- Networking
- Robotics
- Sports Medicine
- Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM)

The Governor's Career and Technical Academies in Virginia expand options for the general student population to acquire STEM literacy and other critical skills, knowledge, and credentials that will prepare students for high-demand, high-wage and high-skill careers in Virginia. The Governor's Career and Technical Academies have high standards and are aligned with Virginia's STEM goals. These academies are essential since, over the past ten years, the percentage of ACT-tested students who said they were interested in majoring in engineering has dropped steadily from 7.6 percent to 4.9 percent.

5. Request the Department of Education include in the training materials for Academic and Career Plans, as well as in the sample plan:

- a. the value of work-based learning for students, such as cooperative education, internships, job shadowing, mentorships, projects, service learning or a combination;
- b. the value of skilled occupations for students; and
- c. information for students and parents regarding the importance of having an industry credential or certification. (Adopted)

6. Support the Department of Education's efforts to promote private-public partnerships which offer real-world experiences to students. These partnerships include, but are not limited to: 4-H, Ag in the Classroom and Junior Achievement. (Adopted)

7. Support the Governor's Career and Technical Academies in Virginia as programs designed to expand options for the general student population to acquire Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM). (Adopted)

8. Request the Virginia Broadcasters Association to develop a public service campaign to inform the public of the benefits and value of career and technical education. (Adopted)

A former secondary school principal commented that offers a comprehensive program that allows a student to graduate with a vocational certificate or college credit, along with their diploma, is visionary in concept and should be modeled across the Commonwealth. More needs to be done to determine need within service area through businesses that have hiring needs and to match training to those needs.

Finally, getting the R U Ready Magazine out to parents at middle school or at least by 9th/10th grade is an excellent idea.

Finding #4 (cont.)

While CTE programs provide an economic benefit to both students and to the Commonwealth, and while Virginia has an extremely strong and diverse CTE program, there is still a stigma associated with CTE, as many people (students, parents, schools counselors, and others) mistakenly consider it a choice only for those who will not attend college. While there is information available about Virginia’s CTE programs, not many parents or employers are aware of the 16 career clusters and 79 career pathways – all specified to help students make informed career choices and solid academic plans. There is a need for a media campaign/strategic plan to highlight the benefits of CTE. Schools, counselors and parents need to know the benefits and how their children can access programs. According to a Michigan study, the people most influential in a student’s decision to enroll or not to enroll in CTE are friends and parents. To help erase the stigma of CTE, a message sharing the rigor and relevance of CTE should be taken to these individuals.

Finding #5 – Dual enrollment is a viable and low cost pathway to a job or to further education, and many CTE courses qualify students for dual enrollment credit. Dual enrollment credit encourages students to graduate from high school and continue on to college with some already-earned credits, which makes further education more affordable. However, there is no regularity in the processes for dual enrollment across the Commonwealth. While there is an overall plan for dual enrollment between Virginia’s public schools and the

1. Request the Chancellor of the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) provide guidelines on the requirements for credentials Career and Technical Education (CTE) instructors need to satisfy the requirements to teach courses qualified for dual enrollment credit. Request that, once these guidelines are completed by VCCS, they be shared with the Department of Education and the Board of Education’s Advisory Council for CTE, Virginia CTE Resource Center and Virginia Association for Career and Technical Education (VACTE). (Adopted)

One commenter stated that Finding # 5 was headed in the right direction, but caused concern. A report from the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) revealed that the graduation rate for the two-year institutions is very low. The concern is that the student outcome for a dual enrolled class that really only matriculates to the community college system may not be what is expected.

Finding #5 (cont.)

VCCS, there is still confusion about the requirements and the framework for establishing dual enrollment arrangements.

In 2005, there were over 426 articulation course agreements in effect between school divisions and community colleges; however, these agreements generally do not extend beyond a single community college service region. Also, there are significant differences in both the requirements of community colleges for students to receive articulated credits and the intake processes through which community colleges advise and award credits to students qualified to receive college credits for high school course work. CTE administrators, school officials and business representatives, assert that it would be helpful to have portability of credentials and transparency. However, it is important to acknowledge the significant local variability among the course offerings within the Commonwealth's high schools and community college system.

There is also a lack of clarity and consistency with the requirements for teacher credentials pertaining to dual enrollment. It is perceived that dual enrollment instructors for CTE must have a master's degree and 18 credit hours in their subject area, which is the same qualification required for a community college instructor. While this is true for dual enrollment for core academic courses, this is not always the case for CTE dual enrollment course offerings. Other qualifications, such as advanced industry experience, industry experience or additional bachelor's level courses, may suffice.

2. Request the Secretary of Education provide an update to the Commission on Youth on the progress of developing a template for statewide articulation agreements for Career and Technical Education as recommended in House Document 33 (2005, HJR 125) and to provide a report addressing the feasibility of establishing a unified agreement of dual enrollment in the Commonwealth, the barriers of pursuing uniform implementation of dual enrollment, and the costs of standardizing dual enrollment offerings. (Adopted)

A VCCS representative stated that the HJR 125 legislation may not be the correct reference point - that legislation has been implemented with a focus on 2 to 4 year transfer. A better approach for Recommendation #2 may be the following:

Provide a report addressing the feasibility of establishing a unified agreement of dual enrollment in the Commonwealth, the barriers of pursuing uniform implementation of dual enrollment, and the costs of standardizing dual enrollment offerings.

Findings/Conclusions	Recommendations	Comments
<p>Finding #6 – CTE is now and will in the future suffer from significant shortages of qualified teachers. The availability of teachers in critical shortage areas and hard-to-staff schools continues to be a major challenge in the nation and in Virginia. According to the VACTE, in 2006-2007, specific CTE teacher shortages occurred in Business and Information Technology, Family and Consumer Sciences, Trade and Industrial Education, and Technology Education. The only critical shortages ranking higher than CTE were in special education and mathematics. This shortage is predicted to become more serious within the next five years. CTE administrators collectively project 613 openings within five years—more than eight times as many as in 2006-2007. As student enrollment in CTE programs continues to grow and workforce readiness skills become an increasingly clear priority for Virginia business, highly qualified CTE teachers must be available to keep pace with the demand.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support the Department of Education’s efforts to address the shortage of Career and Technical Education teachers in the Commonwealth. (Adopted) 2. Support the efforts of the Board of Education’s Advisory Committee for Career and Technical Education (efforts to address teacher shortages, including teacher recruitment and the involvement of local CTE advisory committees. (Adopted) 	<p>A commenter representing the Fairfax County Council of PTAs and the Fairfax CTE Advisory Committee expressed disappointment in Finding #6 and recommendations to address CTE teacher shortages. The commenter noted that there is no emphasis on specific actions needed to recruit and retain CTE teachers. There was discussion at the Northern Virginia Roundtable about certification requirements in some areas being overly stringent and unrealistic to the point it was almost impossible to find qualified teachers. For example, to be certified in Construction Technology, the teacher has to have three separate licenses: one in plumbing, one in electrical, and one in general contracting. The commenter felt it is “totally unrealistic” to expect a teacher to have all three licenses; a single license in general contracting should be sufficient and would widen the pool of potential instructors. The commenter urged a review of the requirements for certification.</p>
<p>Finding #7 – Virginia’s Career Coaches are community college employees based in local high schools, with the mission of helping students define their career aspirations and recognize post-secondary programs and services that can help them achieve their goals. The Virginia Community College System (VCCS) administers the Career Coach program, which targets high school students who most need career planning services and those middle students who will comprise the mainstay of Virginia’s workforce but who often graduate from high school without a definitive plan or resources for postsecondary education and training. Currently, Coaches are located in all community college service areas. The types of services</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support the continuation and expansion of Virginia Community College System (VCCS) Career Coaches program and request the Virginia Association of School Superintendents, the Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals and the Virginia School Board Association include information on the effectiveness of the Virginia Career Coach Program in upcoming conferences and trainings, as appropriate. (Adopted) 	<p>Roundtable participants indicated that Career Coaches were very effective in connecting students with career pathways and post-secondary educational options.</p> <p>One commenter noted that this Finding may not properly illustrate how Career Coaches succeed in connecting students with CTE sequences of study. The following additional recommendation was suggested for consideration:</p> <p><i>Request that Career Coaches emphasize CTE in their work in some way, either by encouraging students to explore CTE options, by working directly with CTE students, or by easing the transition (including through dual enrollment) of CTE students into community college study upon graduation.</i></p>

Finding #7 (cont.)

provided align with the VCCS Career Coaching model and include: contacting students, providing individual/small group coaching, administering career assessments, developing career plans, providing assistance with college placement, and referring students to early college placement programs, such as dual enrollment or Tech Prep. Coaches also connect students to local employers who serve as career advisors and mentors to students. The Career Coaches program is funded by both VCCS and local educational institutions.

Since its inception in December 2004, the program has increased dramatically from 11 coaches in 13 high schools to approximately 120 coaches in over 170 high schools. Analysis of data indicates that the Career Coach program positively impacts short and long term education goals of students and the high schools that coaches work in. Some of the impacts of the program in 2007-08 include:

- Increased enrollments in postsecondary education;
- Increased enrollments in early college programs such as dual-enrollment and Tech Prep;
- Increased enrollments in postsecondary CTE programs; and
- Increased completion of postsecondary education programs.

Students would likely realize major benefits if Career Coaches were situated in every Virginia high school, but there is currently not funding available to accomplish this.

Findings/Conclusions	Recommendations	Comments
<p>Finding #8 – During the 2010-2011 academic year, all schools in Virginia are to develop a personal Academic and Career Plan (ACP) for each seventh-grade student. These ACPs are to be completed by the fall of the student’s eighth-grade year. The components of the ACP will include the student’s program of study for high school graduation and a postsecondary career pathway based on the student’s academic and career interests. The ACP will be developed based on guidelines established by the Board of Education and signed by the student, student’s parent or guardian, and school official(s) designated by the principal. The ACP is to be included in the student’s record and may be reviewed and updated before the student enters the ninth and eleventh grades.</p> <p>While the ACP is designed to maximize student achievement by helping students identify their goals and begin to map out a plan to accomplish them while in middle and high school, school divisions are concerned about the implementation of the ACP with budget shortfalls and the burden already placed on school staff and guidance counselors. However, the VCCS has developed a tool that will help school divisions achieve the goals set forth in the ACP. The Virginia Education Wizard (www.vawizard.org) is a one-stop, online resource that brings together information about careers, curriculum and financial assistance. Users can visit the Wizard to get tailored information about where they are in their career journey and create a path that will get them to future goals. On Wizard, students can identify career paths; curriculum choices, including</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support the Department of Education and the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) plan to integrate and implement the Academic and Career Plan (ACP) with the Virginia Education Wizard. (Adopted) 2. Support the Department of Education’s efforts to provide information in upcoming training and training materials on Virginia’s Career Coaches, including ways Career Coaches can assist in the implementation of the Academic and Career Plan (ACP) and school divisions may establish partnerships with the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) and parents to support the Career Coaches. (Adopted) 	<p>One commenter asked whether the Workplace Readiness Skills could be included in all discussion in the implementation of the ACP and whether this may also fit with Finding #2.</p>

Finding #8 (cont.)
 potential transfers to four-year institutions; and financial assistance. The student may utilize the Virginia Education Wizard to construct a personal profile linking their career interests with selected degree programs. The Wizard provides comprehensive, real-time information. While the Virginia Education Wizard is currently available online, Wizard 3.0, which will be launched in the summer of 2010 and is being developed in conjunction with the Department of Education, will allow school divisions to create ACPs for their students. The ACP guidelines will be merged with the Virginia Education Wizard 3.0 to offer school divisions a user-friendly, comprehensive tool. The Wizard will offer a comprehensive strategy to fulfill the requirements of the ACP without any additional programming costs.

Finding # 9 – Students with disabilities in special education may benefit from participation in CTE programs. National Transition Network research shows that students with disabilities in secondary CTE programs were less likely to drop out, more likely to be employed, to have paid competitive jobs, and to work full time after high school. Those students with work experience had better employment outcomes, higher wages, more hours and more continuous employment. Furthermore, those who mainstreamed into regular CTE or academic classrooms secured competitive jobs more often and felt better prepared to keep their jobs. While there are challenges to coordinating the distinct requirements of CTE and special education, bridging this gap can help students with disabilities obtain higher levels of independence and economic stability. CTE should be part of the solution for educating students with disabilities.

- 1. Request the Board of Education’s State Special Education Advisory Committee address barriers to appropriate placements of students with special needs into Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs by developing (or sharing) written guidelines for use by school personnel. (Adopted)**

An Advisory Group member representing a Regional Program for Special Education commented that the transition requirement in an Individualized Education Program (IEP) has “pretty strong language,” however, increased dialogue between CTE and Special Education is critical. While the State Special Education Advisory Committee can play a role in helping create the dialog, stronger language may be helpful to ease this transition. There is not always support for CTE students with disabilities because, “everyone is struggling for their piece of the pie.” It is also difficult to address this because it impacts a small percentage of students, especially when the bar is being set higher. It would be helpful if CTE and Special Education staff developed guidelines for school personnel.

SJR 358 (2003)

Update of Collection of Evidence-Based Treatments for Children and Adolescents with Mental Health Disorders

Findings/Conclusions	Recommendations	Comments
<p><u>CONTINUATION OF STATEWIDE DISSEMINATION EFFORTS</u></p> <p>The rapid emergence of data regarding evidence-based treatments has made it difficult for these treatments to be utilized. Clinicians and decision-makers have difficulty identifying appropriate evidence-based practices which can be successfully implanted into their systems. Another impediment to their application is that there may be uncertainty and vagueness about evidence-base treatments. Although there are specific evidence-based treatment guidelines, such as the <i>American Psychiatric Association Practice Guidelines for the Treatment of Psychiatric Disorders</i>, implementation of these treatments can be very complex. Utilization of evidence-based treatments requires a deliberate and carefully planned approach. Even for well-developed interventions with training materials and documented training procedures, implementation requires intensive efforts. Key factors to be addressed include adequate organizational supports, attention to the fit between the values of the program and those of the organization, and commitment to implement the program with fidelity. Implementation efforts should acknowledge these factors, as well as other administrative hurdles. A crucial first step to counter such concerns is the dissemination of information regarding the benefits of evidence-based practices to public funding agencies, governing agencies, third-party payers, parents and professional organizations.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Request all agencies in the Secretariat of Health and Human Resources, the Secretariat of Public Safety and the Secretariat of Education; post the <i>Collection, 4th Edition</i> to their respective web sites to cost-effectively and efficiently facilitate access to this information. (Adopted) 2. Contact behavioral health providers, as well as local juvenile justice officials, to inform them of the <i>Collection, 4th Edition</i> and how it may be accessed. Such contact will be via the Virginia Association of Community Services Boards and the State and Local Advisory Team, through the State Executive Council, and through the Department of Criminal Justice Services. (Adopted) 3. Request that the Children’s Services System Transformation include on their website, and in any appropriate conferences and trainings, information on the <i>Collection, 4th Edition</i>, as well as how it may be accessed. (Adopted) 4. Request that the Intensive Care Coordinator Network, through the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services and the Children’s Services System Transformation, include information on the <i>Collection, 4th Edition</i> and how it can be accessed. (Adopted) 5. Request that the SJR 358 Advisory Group assist with the dissemination of the <i>Collection, 4th Edition</i>, as well as how it can be accessed. (Adopted) 	<p>The Advisory Group was in support of these recommendations.</p> <p>The Virginia Community Services Board (VACSB) is supportive of all of these recommendations.</p> <p>A member of the advisory group noted that it may be helpful to request the new administration to have the impacted secretaries submit a plan for dissemination of the information to all agencies under their individual secretariats.</p>

<p><u>DISSEMINATION EFFORTS (continued)</u></p>	<p>6. Request that provider associations, such as the Virginia Coalition of Private Provider Associations, the Virginia Medical Society, the Psychiatric Society of Virginia, the Virginia Academy of Pediatrics and other appropriate professional associations, inform their members of the <i>Collection, 4th Edition</i>, and how it can be accessed. (Adopted)</p> <p>7. Request that family advocacy organizations and consumer groups, including the Virginia Federation of Families be informed of the <i>Collection, 4th Edition</i>, as well as how such information may be accessed so they may share it with their membership. (Adopted)</p>	
<p><u>ENCOURAGING THE USE OF EVIDENCE-BASED TREATMENTS</u></p> <p>Evidence-based practices may possess elements that hinder their utilization in real-world settings. Evidence-based practices which survive clinical trials are often unintelligible to those working outside academic settings. Policies and approaches encouraging their use will help foster demand among consumers, providers, and administrators in the public mental health system. Sharing information about evidence-based treatments in a user-friendly and approachable format is a key strategy for making evidence-based practices more accessible to both line-level staff and consumers.</p>	<p>1. Request that the Secretary of Health and Human Resources, the Department of Juvenile Justice, the Department of Education, and the Department of Criminal Justice Services continue to encourage the use of proven practices for child and adolescent behavioral health and developmental services in the programming and development of any future projects. (Adopted)</p> <p>2. Request the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, the Office of Comprehensive Services, and other impacted agencies, include information regarding proven practices for child and adolescent behavioral health and developmental services, including juvenile offenders, in any workforce development efforts, such as conferences or training, as applicable. (Adopted)</p>	<p>The Advisory Group was in support of these recommendations.</p> <p>The VACSB is supportive of these recommendations.</p> <p>The new Campaign for Children’s Mental Health, launched by Voices for Virginia’s Children, will work to address many issues with impact children’s mental health services. One topic addressed in the campaign is the shortage of mental health professionals trained specifically to treat children’s problems, particularly in evidence-based best practices.</p>

Findings/Conclusions	Recommendations	Comments
<p><u>SCHOOL-BASED DISSEMINATION OF EVIDENCE-BASED TREATMENTS</u></p> <p>Schools nationally are the major providers of mental health services for children. Due to the critical, daily role they play, schools provide a setting for the early identification of emotional and behavioral problems and provision of services,. Although schools are not the primary agency responsible for addressing emotional and behavioral issues, educators cannot ignore them if they intend to fulfill their mandate to educate all children. The Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA) requires that schools follow specific procedures to meet the educational needs of children with disabilities. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is another federal statute designed to protect the rights of qualified school-aged persons who have a disability.</p> <p>Furthermore, many studies have underemphasized school-relevant outcomes, such as the effects of programming on student achievement, attendance, school-related behavior, and dropout prevention. This is especially problematic because these issues are often directly related to serious emotional and behavioral disturbance. For example, research has found that students who exhibit problems in the school setting or who are truant often have anxiety disorders, mood disorders, or conduct disorder. However, the available research does little to guide school officials in determining how to address these issues as manifestations of mental health disorders.</p>	<p>1. Request that the Department of Education inform school divisions of the <i>Collection, 4th Edition</i> so that it may be utilized by school counseling offices, school nurses, school-based health offices, school special education services and parent organizations. (Adopted)</p>	<p>The Advisory Group was in support of this recommendation.</p> <p>The VACSB is supportive of this recommendation.</p>

Findings/Conclusions	Recommendations	Comments
<p><u>INCLUSION OF BEST PRACTICES IN UNDERGRADUATE AND POST-GRADUATE CURRICULA</u> The academic community is a key partner in the promotion of and utilization of proven practices in the field of child and adolescent behavioral health. Course offerings at the university may not be in line with what is needed in the field, particularly for public-sector mental health providers. There needs to be greater discussion on how to include the academic field so that the needs of the mental health community can be met. This is important because the ability to deliver best practices will become a decisive factor in future reimbursement and hiring. The Council of Southwestern Education, the Virginia Community College System the Council of Southwestern Education and the Southern Association of Colleges accredit and implement accreditation and curricula on a school-by-school basis.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Contact each of the Commonwealth’s post-graduate programs in psychology, psychiatry, social work and counseling and encourage them to utilize the <i>Collection, 4th Edition</i> and provide course offerings which are consistent. (Adopted) 2. Contact the Virginia Secretary of Education, Virginia’s State Council of Higher Education, the Virginia Community College System, the Council of Southwestern Education and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to encourage the evaluation of existing course offerings to ensure that they are in line with what is needed in the field and include information on proven practices in child and adolescent behavioral health and developmental services in all curricula, practicums and internships. (Adopted) 	<p>The Advisory Group was in support of these recommendations.</p> <p>The VACSB is supportive of these recommendations.</p>
<p><u>FUTURE BIENNIAL UPDATES</u> The current emphasis in evidence-based medicine for mental health treatments is on promoting effective use of resources and simultaneously allowing for improvements in the clinician’s knowledge base. The primary benefit of evidence-based practices is that the best-evaluated methods of health care are utilized. Another driving force in the utilization of evidence-based medicine is the potential for cost savings. With rising awareness of mental health issues and a demand by purchasers to know they are obtaining the best treatment for the best price, emphasis on evidence-based practices is justified. Few people have time to conduct research and evaluate best practices. Evidence-based medicine provides a structured process for clinicians and patients to access information on what is effective. Treatment interventions have the research to show that they produce the intended or expected results.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Include in the Commission’s workplan for the <i>Collection, 5th Edition</i> approaches which encourage the utilization of proven practices in child and adolescent behavioral health and developmental services and encourage the individualization of treatments based on the strengths and needs of the client. (Adopted) 2. Include in the Commission’s workplan for the <i>Collection, 5th Edition</i> discussion of whether using proven practices in child and adolescent behavioral health and developmental services should be mandatory, evaluating the pros and cons of differential reimbursement and assessing instances when the Commonwealth reimburses for treatments not proven to be effective. All capacity and funding issues relating to these topics will also be 	<p>The Advisory Group was in support of Recommendation #1, but did not reach consensus about Recommendation #2, which some members felt was outside the scope of updating the <i>Collection</i>.</p> <p>The VACSB is supportive of this recommendation.</p> <p>The VACSB is supportive of this recommendation; however, offered the following for consideration should the recommendation be adopted: These considerations are briefly summarized below.</p>

FUTURE BIENNIAL UPDATES (cont.)

addressed in this review. The Commission will request to brief the Senate Finance and House Appropriation Committees on the relevant costs and funding issues related to evidence-based treatments. (Adopted)

VACSB members' experiences show that using evidence-based treatments is costly and appropriated funding is inadequate to cover the initial and long-term costs of using them.

Evidence-based practices have licensing and training requirements for individuals, staff to client ratios, etc. If individuals leave agency employment, those initial and on-going licensing and training requirements must be replicated for new staff.

Whether by means of state, state/local grant funds or Medicaid reimbursement, providers must have the resources to maintain these high quality services. This may mean a higher rate or special differential than other services which are more basic in nature and lack the highly specialized focus of the evidence-based treatment.

The expectation that Virginia should provide high quality services is appropriate and important and to do so, there must be changes involving higher standards, monitoring, and adequate rates to cover costs. Recent examination of the increased percentage in the provision of Medicaid-reimbursed intensive in-home services indicates that some providers have taken advantage of the system of reimbursement. This is now being corrected but points to the need for defined standards and practices in the provision of what can be a highly valuable and beneficial service if provided in a quality manner.

