



# POLICY POSITIONS

**Virginia Association for Supervision and  
Curriculum Development**

Updated 2004



An affiliate of ASCD

Virginia Association for Supervision  
and Curriculum Development  
1622 Baileys Retreat  
Charlottesville, VA 22901

Non-Profit Org.  
US Postage  
**PAID**  
Charlottesville, VA  
Permit No. 48

Meaningful partnerships that support student mentorships, internships, and/or apprenticeships programs should be expanded to provide more experiential learning for high school students. The increased development of public-private partnerships will assist in attracting and sustaining successful businesses in Virginia.

Adopted: 12/03



## **Virginia Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development**

### ***Policy Positions***

#### ***Updated 2004***

Founded in 1943, the Virginia Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development is a nonpartisan, nonprofit educational organization representing over 2000 members including school administrators, central office personnel, teachers, and consultants in elementary, secondary, and higher education. VASCD's mission statement commits the Association to provide resources and services to involve and influence educational decision makers in promoting quality instruction for lifelong learning.

The Board of Directors is pleased to present the 2003-2004 edition of its Policy Positions on education issues that have emerged over the past several years. The document includes a VASCD position on each identified issue, a rationale for each position, and recommendations to address the issues. The dates for the adoption and revision of each policy position by VASCD are cited for historical reference.

### **2004-2005 VASCD Officers and Board of Directors**

Regina Yitbarek, President	Lucia Sebastian, Awards
Chuck Maranzano, Past-President	Winston Odom, Region I Rep.
Michael Rettig, Influence	Nancy Dunn, Region II Rep.
Carol Wickersham, Secretary	William Kennedy, Region III Rep.
Wendy Geiger, Treasurer	Thomas DeBolt, Region IV Rep.
Vatara Slade, Membership	Joanne Reina, Region V Rep.
Peggy McMaster, Parliamentarian	Lorraine Lange, Region VI Rep.
David Bockes, Professional Development	Jeanne Edwards, Region VII Rep.
Yvonne Smith-Jones, Professional Development	Nancy Chappell, Region VIII Rep.
Laura McCullough, Professional Development	Alice Koziol, Tidewater ASC Rep.
Phyllis Milne, Newsletter	Rebecca Hayes, Northern VA Council
Betsy Poulson, Newsletter	Gail Pope, ASCD Board of Directors
Reba Greer, Journal Editor	William Owings, ASCD Board of Dir.
Sarah Armstrong, Research	

Executive Director: Ann Etchison, Virginia ASCD  
1622 Baileys Retreat  
Charlottesville, VA 22901

# Career and Technical Education

## Recommendation

VASCD recommends that a complete educational program for students balancing academic studies and career and technical studies be provided with meaningful, industry-recognized standards for programs, staff, and students. VASCD further recommends that categorical funding to local school divisions be increased to:

- support expanded professional development for teachers of career and technical education courses to align with the academic Standards of Learning and to adapt to the rapidly changing industry standards; and
- provide equipment to meet industry standards and workplace requirements in career and technical programs.

## Position

VASCD recognizes the important role that career and technical education plays in preparing all students for future educational experiences and for successful entry into the workforce in the 21st century. VASCD believes that Virginia should provide a curriculum with both college preparatory and career and technical courses to afford students opportunities to pursue diverse career options.

## Rationale

An educational system that incorporates rigorous academic subjects and career and technical courses prepares students to seek additional education at either four-year institutions, community colleges, or trade and technical schools, or to enter the workforce immediately upon graduation from high school.

It is Virginia's great challenge to create a skilled workforce equal to the demands that encompass local, state, and global economies. In response to this challenge, students will need both academic competencies and technical training to be successful. In as much as occupational standards change at a rapid pace, it is essential that teachers of career and education courses be provided with on-going professional development. Additionally, equipment must be regularly updated to meet industry standards and to provide the necessary training and experiences for Virginia's students to compete in the workplace.

# Arts Education

## Recommendation

VASCD recommends that education in the fine and performing arts be an integral part of a comprehensive K-12 school curriculum.

## Position

Education in the fine and performing arts is an essential element of a balanced curriculum. The study of music, dance, theatre, and visual arts should be a part of every student's education. VASCD supports increased state and local funding to provide a comprehensive arts curriculum in elementary, middle, and high schools.

## Rationale

VASCD recognizes that the arts help students develop multiple capabilities for understanding and for thinking. Arts education increases the capacity for self-expression and develops an understanding of the history of human achievement. If our civilization is to continue to be dynamic and nurturing, its success will ultimately depend upon how well we develop the capacities of our children to live a life rich in meaning and value. Arts speak to the shared human experience. They invite cross-cultural communication and teach openness towards those who are different than we, developing our capacity for empathy, compassion, and humaneness.

Brain research indicates that studying the arts may lay critical neural pathways important for overall development. Researchers report a wide range of positive impacts of arts learning on students' academic and personal success. Research also shows that children are more engaged and cognitively involved in school when the arts are part of, or integrated into, the curriculum. The arts require students to apply standards to their own work, to be self-critical, and self-correcting. All students deserve access to the rich education and understanding that the arts provide.

Adopted: 12/02

## Table of Contents

Position Summary .....	1
Financing Public Education .....	2
Attracting, Hiring, and Retaining Quality Educators .....	4
Standards and Accountability .....	5
Instruction and Assessment .....	7
Early Childhood Education .....	8
Reading .....	10
Time and Learning .....	11
Technology and Its Infrastructure .....	12
Strengthening Family and Community Involvement .....	13
Respecting and Honoring Diversity .....	14
Vouchers and Tax Credits .....	15
Safe Schools .....	16
Arts Education .....	18
Career and Technical Education .....	19

contributing citizens through service to their school, community, and each other.

***Renewed dialogue on the democratic purposes of schooling:*** Families, students, educators and political leaders need to discuss what it means to be an active participant in a democratic way of life.

***Research-based conflict resolution:*** Conflict resolution programs, properly designed and implemented offer students and educators the skills to handle constructively the conflicts that naturally arise in learning situations.

***Educating for character:*** The missing piece in many violence prevention programs is character development through the cultivation of empathy and self discipline—taught hand-in-hand with academic content. Families and schools have an obligation to help students understand that learning is connected to character and the moral imperatives that bind us as individuals and a society.

Adopted: 12/99

Revised: 9/01

## Safe Schools

### Recommendation

The Virginia Board of Education and the Legislature should enact measures to ensure safe schools. VASCD joins ASCD and 20 education, health, and religious organizations in recommending support and adequate funding for:

- Student mental health and counseling services
- School staff training on recognizing early warning signs of potential violence
- Development of comprehensive school-based safety programs and increased security in schools
- Additional school counselors and related student services personnel

### Position

VASCD supports increased public funding for programs designed to improve school safety.

### Rationale

Legislators, state agencies, local school divisions, and professional and community organizations must work together to prevent violence in and around our schools. This effort extends beyond lock-down approaches such as metal detectors, gun control, and heightened security. Reducing school violence requires comprehensive plans for intensive intervention and prevention. Consideration should be given to:

**Personalization of schooling:** Smaller classes and smaller schools enable schools to become communities in which teachers and students know and value each other. Schools within schools, block scheduling, mentoring programs and increased use of paraprofessionals are some ways to create more opportunities for working directly with students.

**Improved academic achievement:** Students achieving high levels in student-centered instructional environments are less prone to the frustrations and anxieties that may lead to violent behaviors.

**Student service:** More students need the opportunity to practice becoming

## Virginia ASCD Policy Position Summary 2003-2004

Financing Public Education	VASCD supports increased state funding to eliminate the gap between the actual cost of required educational programs and facilities and existing state funding.
Attracting, Hiring and Retaining Quality Educators	VASCD supports increased expenditures of resources to attract and retain quality educators through the development and implementation of a comprehensive plan.
Standards and Accountability	VASCD supports the accountability of both public schools and the citizenry for student learning. VASCD supports the use of multiple criteria for assessing student achievement and school success.
Instruction and Assessment	VASCD promotes the implementation of challenging and appropriately aligned instruction and assessment to equip all learners with the knowledge and skill needed in the future.
Early Childhood Education	VASCD supports increased public funding for preschool programs for all children who need such services, full-day kindergarten, and smaller class size for the early grades.
Reading	VASCD supports increased public funding for programs designed to improve reading achievement, especially in the early years of school.
Time and Learning	VASCD believes the effective use of school time supports student achievement. VASCD promotes alternatives such as beginning the school year earlier, extending the school day and year, and providing effective use of time within the school day.
Technology and Its Infrastructure	VASCD recognizes the importance of technology in education, the workforce, and society. VASCD supports increased state funding for Virginia's school divisions in order to provide the needed structure, resources, and personnel in technology.
Strengthening Family and Community Involvement	VASCD recommends family and community members be involved in their children's education and provide support to strengthen public education for all children and society.
Respecting and Honoring Diversity	VASCD believes that an understanding of the diverse population in America strengthens teaching and learning. VASCD entreats all educators to respect the diversity that exists within schools and communities.
Vouchers and Tax Credits	VASCD opposes any policy decisions or actions that make Virginia's public schools less than public. VASCD opposes the use of public funds for tuition credits and/or vouchers.
Safe Schools	VASCD supports continued public funding for programs designed to improve school safety.
Arts Education	VASCD recommends that education in the fine and performing arts be an integral part of a comprehensive K-12 curriculum.
Career and Technical Education	VASCD recommends funding a program that balances academic studies and career and technical studies with meaningful, industry-recognized standards.

## Financing Public Education

### Recommendation

VASCD recommends that the level of state financial support and its distribution be updated and linked to the actual requirements school divisions must face.

### Position

Adequate resources are crucial to providing educational programs and learning environments that enable students to achieve their potential. VASCD supports increased state funding to eliminate the gap between the actual cost of required educational programs and facilities and existing state funding. Standards of Quality (SOQ) funding should be expanded to reflect realistic staffing requirements, salary compensation, and other funding formula issues in order to reduce the disparity between wealthy and poor school divisions.

### Rationale

Since the 1968-70 biennium, the percentage of Virginia's general fund balance appropriated for elementary and secondary education had declined substantially. For 1968-70, 50.6 percent of the general fund budget was devoted to elementary and secondary education. In the 2002-2004 biennium, the percentage dropped to 33.2 percent. The drastic shift downward has required localities in Virginia to assume an increasingly greater share of the cost of public education.

Virginia ranks as the 12th wealthiest state in the nation based upon 2002 per capita income, while it ranks 40th out of 50 states in the percent of spending on elementary and secondary education. At a time when fewer graduates are selecting teaching as a career and when many teachers are retiring, the average salary in 2002-2003 for teachers in Virginia was \$2,775 below the national average.

Concerns about the state's funding system are related to both adequacy and equity. A 2001 report by the Joint Legislative Review Committee found that the State was under-funding the state-mandated Standards of Quality by over \$1 billion. Based on 2002 information, localities needed to fund 22% more teachers than the state funds provide in order to carry out the requirements of the standards. The equity issue is a major concern because certain

## Vouchers and Tax Credits

### Recommendation

VASCD recommends that all persons responsible for making educational decisions review the broad purposes for public education and keep at the center of decision-making the principle that public schools are essential to the public good in a democratic society.

### Position

VASCD opposes any policy decisions or actions that make our public schools less than public. VASCD opposes the use of public funds for tuition credits and/or vouchers.

### Rationale

VASCD believes that use of public funds for vouchers and/or tax credits will have serious consequences—not only for our children but for a nation formed around the belief that there will always be a need for public education to develop a literate, competent citizenry. Public education, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights forge our democracy.

The public schools exist for the following purposes:

- building a nation created on common principles, such as individual freedom and justice,
- developing a self-governing citizenry,
- ensuring social order,
- providing opportunity for all, and
- developing skills essential to both individual economic enterprise and general prosperity.

VASCD subscribes to the premise that public education creates a unified and responsible citizenry.

Adopted: 12/97

Revised: 12/99

Revised: 9/01

# Respecting and Honoring Diversity

## Recommendation

VASCD recommends personal and professional development programs to increase awareness of and sensitivity to diversity issues; curricula that promote an inclusive democracy; and teaching and assessment strategies that are clear in purpose and respectful of cultural and linguistic differences.

## Position

The American education system serves a diverse population. An understanding of that population strengthens teaching and learning. All educators must value equality and justice, and respect the diversity that exists within schools and communities.

## Rationale

VASCD actively promotes diversity. The fundamental concern for people, both individually and collectively, fosters a strong education. Moreover, educating for a multicultural democracy is vital to a pluralistic society. Diversity includes understanding of the impact made by culture, ethnicity, race, age, and gender.

History illustrates how diversity strengthens society and schools. Classrooms and communities are enriched by the differences in peoples' backgrounds. It is essential that schools and communities work collaboratively to honor and protect the educational and developmental needs of all children, regardless of culture, ethnicity, race, age, or gender.

Adopted: 12/97  
 Revised: 12/99  
 Revised: 9/01

localities are better able to fund education than others; thus children's education is determined to a great extent by where they live.

Adequate funding is essential so that school divisions throughout the state can attain the SOQ requirements and advance the learning of all students in Virginia.

Adopted: 12/97  
 Revised: 12/99  
 Revised: 9/01  
 Revised: 1/04

## Attracting, Hiring and Retaining Quality Educators

### Recommendations

VASCD recommends the development and implementation of a comprehensive plan for attracting, hiring, and retaining quality teachers, administrators, and support staff. In developing the plan VASCD recommends that special attention be devoted to competitive salaries, increased benefits, comprehensive mentoring programs for new teachers, differentiated contracts based upon identified staffing needs, service in high-risk areas, and incentive programs for securing and retaining staff.

### Position

VASCD supports increased expenditures of resources to attract and retain quality educators.

### Rationale

Currently Virginia and the nation face an increasing shortage of teachers and administrators. Research studies document that student achievement requires quality instruction. Maintaining well-qualified educators and staff in order to provide a quality educational program for students is vital to Virginia's economic future. Surveys among college graduates and practicing educators suggest that incentives such as smaller class sizes, monetary rewards for teaching, increased benefits, student loan forgiveness, mentoring programs, and professional development programs are needed to attract and retain a competent educational staff. Renewed collaboration between school divisions, universities and the state is essential to seek and sustain careers in education.

Adopted: 12/98  
Revised: 12/99  
Revised: 9/01

## Strengthening Family and Community Involvement

### Recommendation

VASCD recommends family and community members be involved in their children's education and participate in the efforts to strengthen education for all children and society.

### Position

VASCD promotes state-funded programs that foster family and community involvement in schools as a vital component in the education of young people. VASCD also supports partnership opportunities for informed parents, educators, and community members to give input to educational reform and policy efforts at local and state levels.

### Rationale

A child's education requires parents, extended family, and caregiver involvement. Families bear the responsibility of being active participants in the student's learning program by seeking the advice, guidance, and expertise of educators and also offering insights, feedback, and support. Informed family and community members also have essential roles in influencing local and state policies and practices to support all learners. In addition VASCD favors programs supporting effective and efficient community schools that integrate instructional and human service delivery under one roof to best meet students' needs.

Adopted: 12/97  
Revised: 12/99  
Revised: 9/01

## Technology and Its Infrastructure

### Recommendations

VASCD recommends that adequate funding be provided to meet the technological and infrastructure needs of all school divisions in the Commonwealth.

### Position

VASCD recognizes the important role new technologies play in preparing students for future educational experiences and for successful entry into the workforce in the 21st century. VASCD supports state funding to:

- Establish technology as a separate state-funding category.
- Provide the technological resources needed for the instruction of students.
- Provide funding for technology personnel essential for the effective and efficient operation of technology in schools.
- Conduct continuous staff development for the integration of instruction and technology.

### Rationale

Student competencies in technology are an important and necessary step in the preparation of Virginia students for post-secondary educational experiences and as a prerequisite for entry into the workforce. Additionally, the ability to work with technology is a lifelong skill requiring a process of continuous learning. Research on student achievement suggests that students who have access to any type of educational technology show positive gains on standardized tests, national tests, and researcher-constructed tests.

A 1998 report commissioned by the Department of Education urged Virginia to eliminate disparities in student access to technology; to help teachers improve the use of technology; to invest in professional development; to provide more technical assistance for schools; to advance student learning across core Standards of Learning; and to increase revenue for the efficient use of technology. Currently, the responsibility for financing most of the cost of technology in schools falls to local divisions where per-pupil costs vary widely. In spite of the need for long-term funds for providing new technology, building infrastructure, and supporting staff development, most school divisions have difficulty attracting additional finances for technology. Presently, sparse funding exists for the training of personnel, maintenance of expensive equipment, and upgrading or replacement of technology in schools.

Adopted: 9/01

## Standards and Accountability

### Recommendations:

VASCD recommends that in implementing the Virginia Standards of Learning an emphasis should be placed on student learning by:

- Teaching essential concepts supported by essential facts
- Developing content understanding through relevant learning experiences
- Using information to solve problems
- Designing instruction for specific objectives
- Adapting instruction to different learning needs
- Aligning content and assessment instruments
- Providing frequent diagnostic assessment and corrective instruction
- Establishing a supportive learning environment

### Position

Virginia's schools must be held publicly accountable for the success of every student, and in turn, the public must be held accountable for creating the conditions necessary for the success of all learners. VASCD supports the use of multiple criteria for assessing individual student achievement and school success.

### Rationale

The standards movement is one step toward achieving high goals for all students. Implementation of effective strategies for learning must be foremost in assisting students to reach those goals. The standards effort must not limit learning by narrowing the curricula, nor inhibit creative teaching and learning that is grounded in effective practice and sound research. It is also critical that the accountability system used be congruent with how students learn. Student assessment should employ diverse and continuous methods of measurement in order to enhance learning.

In examining the impact of the accountability program on the individual student it must be noted that all students do not learn at the same rate, and many approaches must be used to help each student achieve. The research on retention demonstrates that retention is ineffective and almost a guarantee for continued and long-term failure. Clearly, other options to reach the high goals established by the standards must be explored.

The impact of the accountability program on schools and school divisions must be continually examined. The number of English as a Second Language students, the number of special education students, the transient nature of the student population, the resources available, and other factors in the school's profile must be considered. Improvement and progress rather than penalty without solution should be promoted as Virginia strives to extend student achievement.

Adopted: 9/01

## Time and Learning

### Recommendation

VASCD recommends that the Virginia Department of Education and local school boards establish calendars and schedules that promote student achievement and encourage professional competency.

### Position

VASCD believes the effective use of school time supports student achievement and other goals of the school. VASCD supports beginning the school year earlier, extending the school day and year, and providing effective use of time within the school day.

### Rationale

The resource of time has been traditionally regarded as a constant rather than a variable to support high quality learning for all students. The traditional educational approach can be described as an industrial model delivery system based on an agrarian calendar, an approach that needs to be examined in an effort to improve the quality and quantity of time necessary to insure student achievement. Additionally, calendars must include staff time for curriculum planning, collaborative decision making, meaningful dialogue, and professional development, all needed to support the achievement of every student.

VASCD joins with ASCD in support for the reconceptualization of time as a major resource if schools are to better serve the needs of students.

Adopted: 12/97

Revised: 12/99

Revised: 9/01

## Reading

### Recommendation

VASCD recommends that resources be dedicated to improved reading achievement.

### Position

VASCD encourages policymakers to support literacy programs that identify a clearly defined K-12 literacy curriculum, provide relevant professional development, and facilitate communication between families and schools.

### Rationale

A strong K-12 literacy curriculum identifies concepts and skills in sound/symbol relationships, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, and grammar as well as applications across content areas. Professional development enhances a teacher's ability to use a wide variety of instructional strategies, flexible grouping, and diagnostic techniques designed to reach a diverse student population. Successful literacy programs include identified procedures to facilitate communication between families and schools.

Adopted: 12/98  
 Revised: 12/99  
 Revised: 9/01  
 Revised: 7/03

## Instruction and Assessment

### Recommendations

VASCD recommends use of the best instructional and assessment practices in order to provide a successful and challenging learning environment for students. VASCD further recommends use of a variety of assessment tools that support daily instruction rather than over reliance on multiple-choice practice tests.

### Position

VASCD recognizes that classroom assessment is a continuous, comprehensive process that guides instruction. Students need to have varied instructional assessments that accurately reflect performance and achievement. VASCD promotes the implementation of challenging and appropriately aligned instruction and assessment.

### Rationale

For students to achieve their greatest potential, teachers and administrators must have the resources, training, and information needed to deliver a high quality instructional program in schools throughout the Commonwealth.

Therefore, teachers and administrators must routinely use a wide array of tools for assessing student progress on a continual basis. A system for incorporating more than a single measure should be employed for a fair and comprehensive system for evaluating the achievement of individual students and the success of students in an entire school.

Adopted: 12/99  
 Revised: 9/01

# Early Childhood Education

## Recommendation

VASCD recommends that additional resources be dedicated to early educational intervention, including birth to age five programs, full-day kindergarten for all students, and small class size in the early grades.

## Position

VASCD supports increased public funding for preschool programs for all children who need such services, full-day kindergarten, and smaller class size for the early grades.

## Rationale

The groundwork for learning and successful mastery of basic skills in elementary schools is laid in early experiences with parents and other care-takers, such as preschool teachers. Longitudinal studies demonstrate that children who attend preschool prior to kindergarten are more successful in elementary school than those who do not attend. Preschool experience has an especially positive impact on inner city children's development and achievement of children of poverty or neglect. Current funding levels are not sufficient to provide these critical services. Preschool experiences that actively involve parents are important in providing children with the foundation of language and life experience which are essential to success in the elementary program. Special emphasis should be given to providing a systematic reading and language program.

Participation in a full-day kindergarten program with a carefully delineated curriculum enhances school performance. Full-day kindergarten is especially beneficial, academically and socially, to children from low socioeconomic or educationally disadvantaged backgrounds. Full-day kindergarten programs may reduce the long-term costs for special and remedial education by providing a more substantial foundation for later academic demands and expectations.

Maintaining class size of 13-17 students increases standardized achievement test scores with gains maintained over several years. Benefits of small class sizes are greatest in grades K-3, in the subject areas of reading and math, and with at-risk students. Small class groups allow teachers to moni-

tor student work more closely, increase the focus on individual student needs, provide more individualized guidance and instruction, use more small group activities, engage students in more discussion, and interact more frequently with all students. Small class sizes in early grades are necessary for teachers to provide the supportive environment and individual attention necessary in effective practice for young children.

Adopted: 12/97

Revised: 12/99

Revised: 9/01