

**Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission  
of the Virginia General Assembly**



**Review of Factors and Practices Associated  
with School Performance in Virginia**

**Staff Briefing  
Hal Greer  
December 8, 2003**

# Introduction

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## Staff for this study:

**Bob Rotz, Division Chief**

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# Presentation Outline

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- Introduction and Summary of Findings**
- Background**
- Factors Linked to SOL Test Performance**
- School and Division Best Practices Used to Overcome Demographic Challenges**
- SOL Impact and Other Issues**

# Study Mandate

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- **Senate Joint Resolution 349 (2003) directs JLARC to assess best practices at high-performing public schools**
  
- **The resolution specifically directs staff to identify and examine:**
  - **Demographic and other factors that may influence academic success**
  - **Practices and demographic information regarding the best- and poorest-performing school divisions**
  - **Successful practices in high-performing school divisions with marked fiscal or other challenges**

# Study Issues

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- **How should school performance be defined and measured, and what are the best- and poorest-performing schools based on identified measures?**
- **What quantifiable factors are most strongly associated with school performance?**
- **What other factors or best practices at the classroom, school, or division level are related to school performance, and may distinguish the best- from the poorest-performing schools and divisions?**
- **What best practices do high-performing schools with marked challenges use to achieve success?**

# Research Activities

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- **Data analysis of SOL test scores and variables associated with SOL test scores**
- **Visits to 61 public schools in 35 school divisions:**
  - **High-scoring schools**
  - **Low-scoring schools**
  - **Challenged schools exceeding predicted test scores**
  - **Challenged schools with a large increase in test scores**
- **Structured interviews with superintendents and principals**
  - **Interviewed 11 superintendents**
  - **Interviewed 61 principals**

# **Research Activities**

## **(continued)**

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- **Interviews with the Secretary of Education, Superintendent of Public Instruction, and other Department of Education officials**
- **Survey of core subject teachers in 56 schools that were visited**
- **Literature and other document reviews**

# Summary of Findings

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- **SOL test scores and pass rates have increased substantially since SOL test implementation.**
- **A large portion of the variation between school divisions and between schools in SOL test performance in 2001-2002 is explained by demographic characteristics of the students and their communities.**
- **Further analysis revealed that the relationships between these factors and test scores can be partially explained by differences in teacher qualification, family support and structure, school and division characteristics, and fiscal characteristics.**

# Summary of Findings

## (continued)

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- **Some of the schools challenged by these demographic factors have used best practices that have helped them to achieve success on the SOL tests.**
- **Support at the division level has a direct bearing on the success of individual schools, and successful divisions generally provide more support to their schools.**

# Summary of Findings

## (continued)

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- In the divisions and schools visited for this review, superintendents, principals, and teachers generally indicate a belief that the SOLs have been helpful in improving the performance of their schools and students.
- However, the Commonwealth and its public schools still face a number of challenges for the future, including addressing the needs of pupils served by schools where performance is not considered acceptable, responding to issues such as high dropout and retention rates, and meeting the expectations of the federal No Child Left Behind Act.

# Presentation Outline

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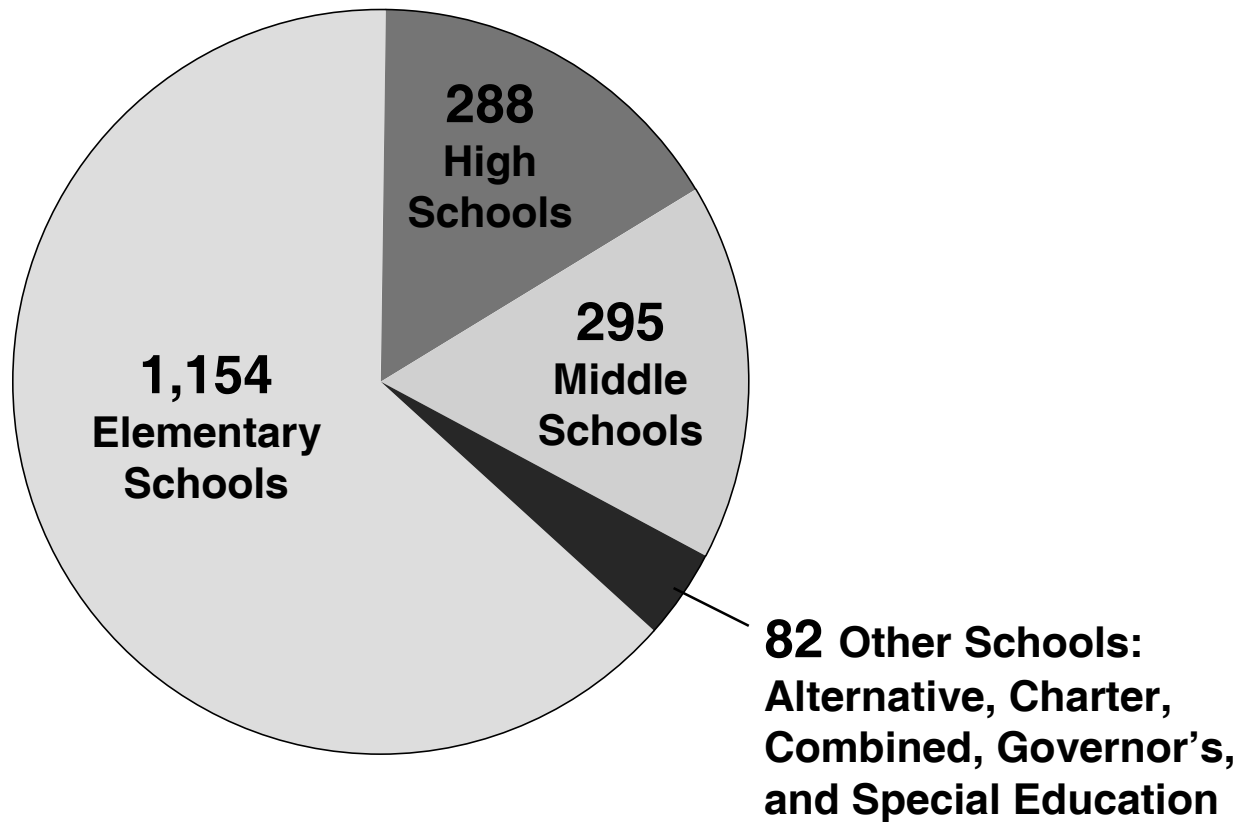
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- SOL Impact and Other Issues

# Types of Schools in Virginia (2002-2003)

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Total = 1,819



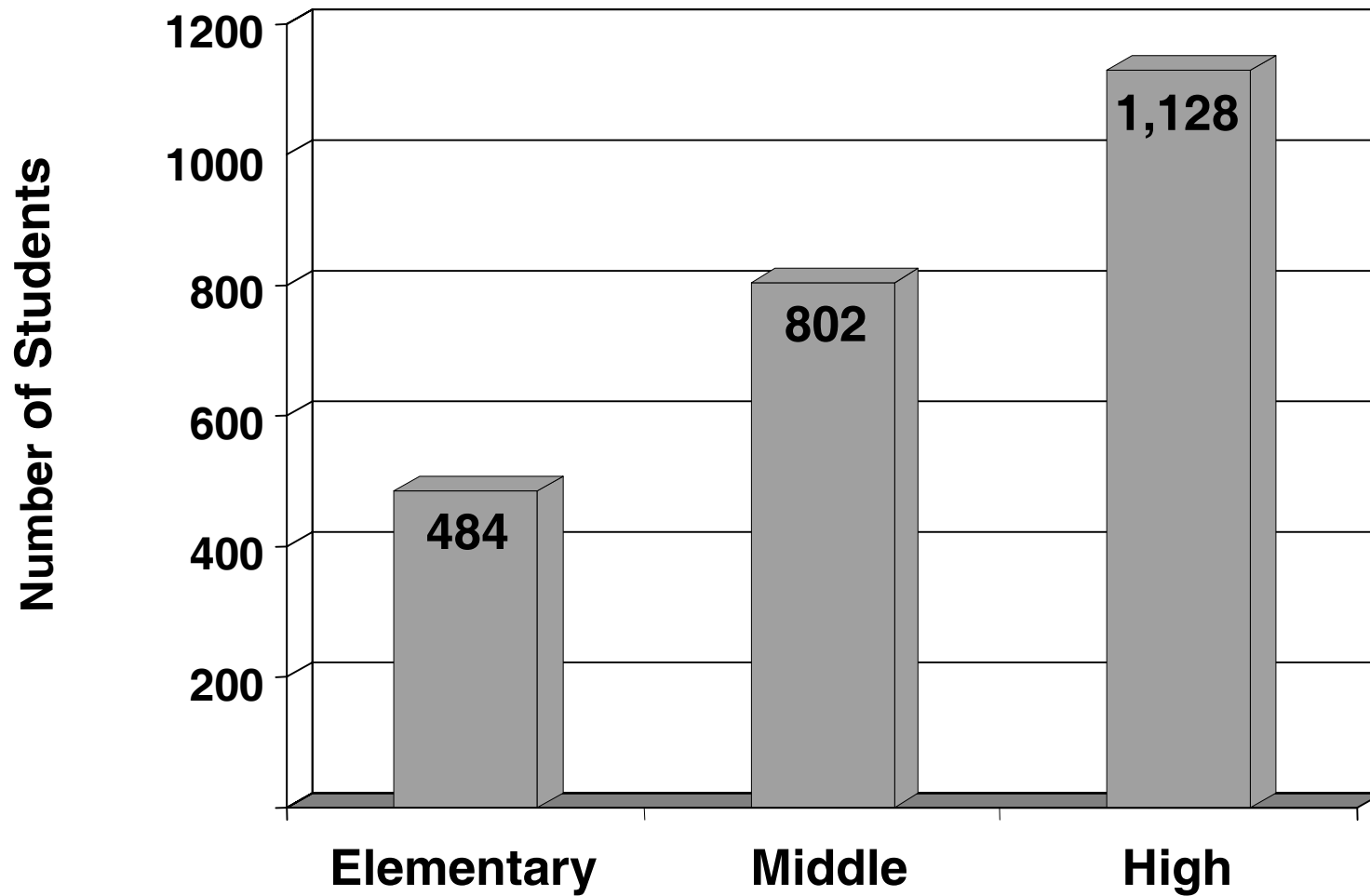
# Number of Students Enrolled in Virginia Public Schools (2001-2002)

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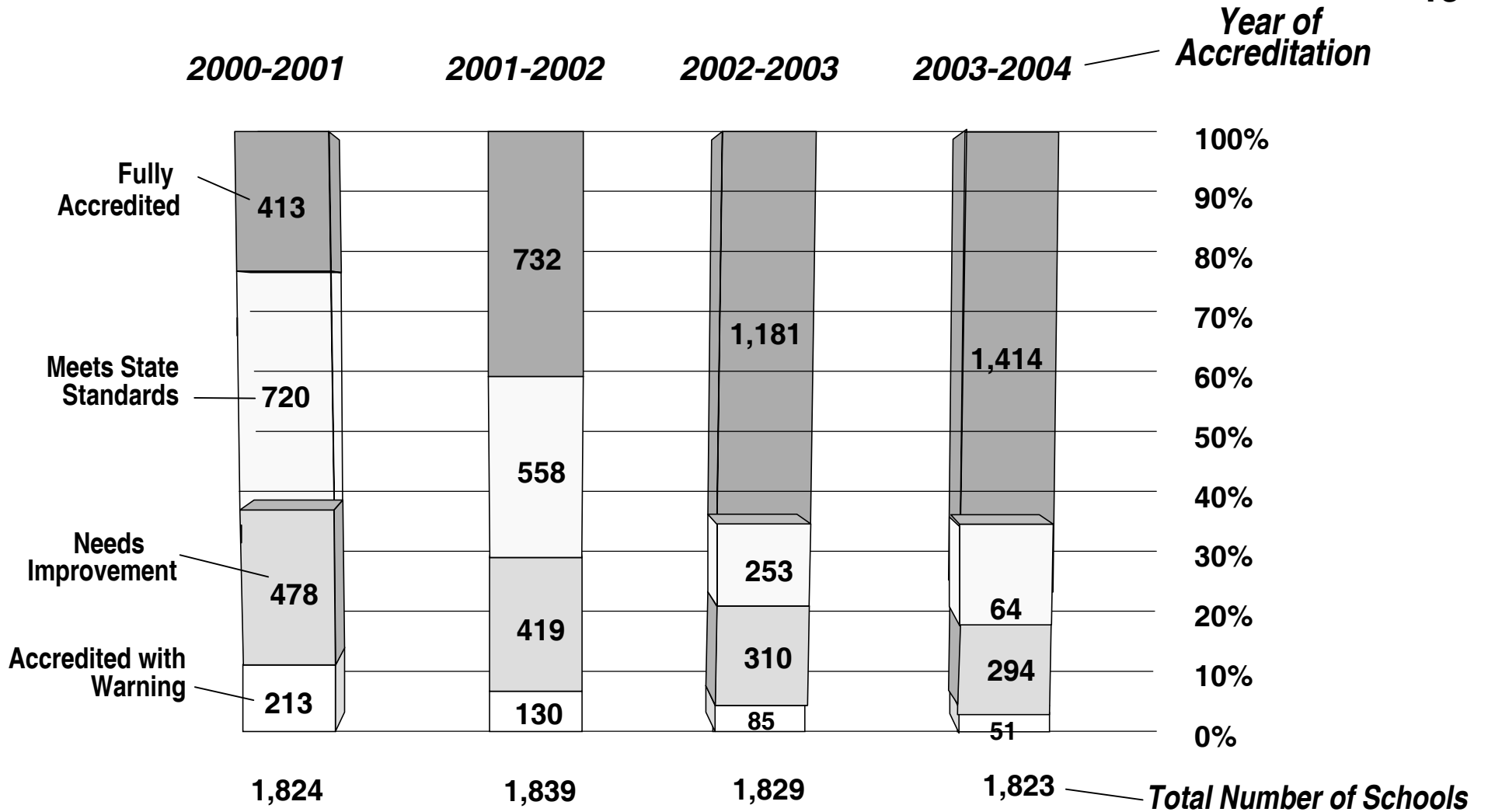
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	Total Number of Students
High Schools	324,938
Middle Schools	238,310
Elementary Schools	548,494
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,111,742</b>

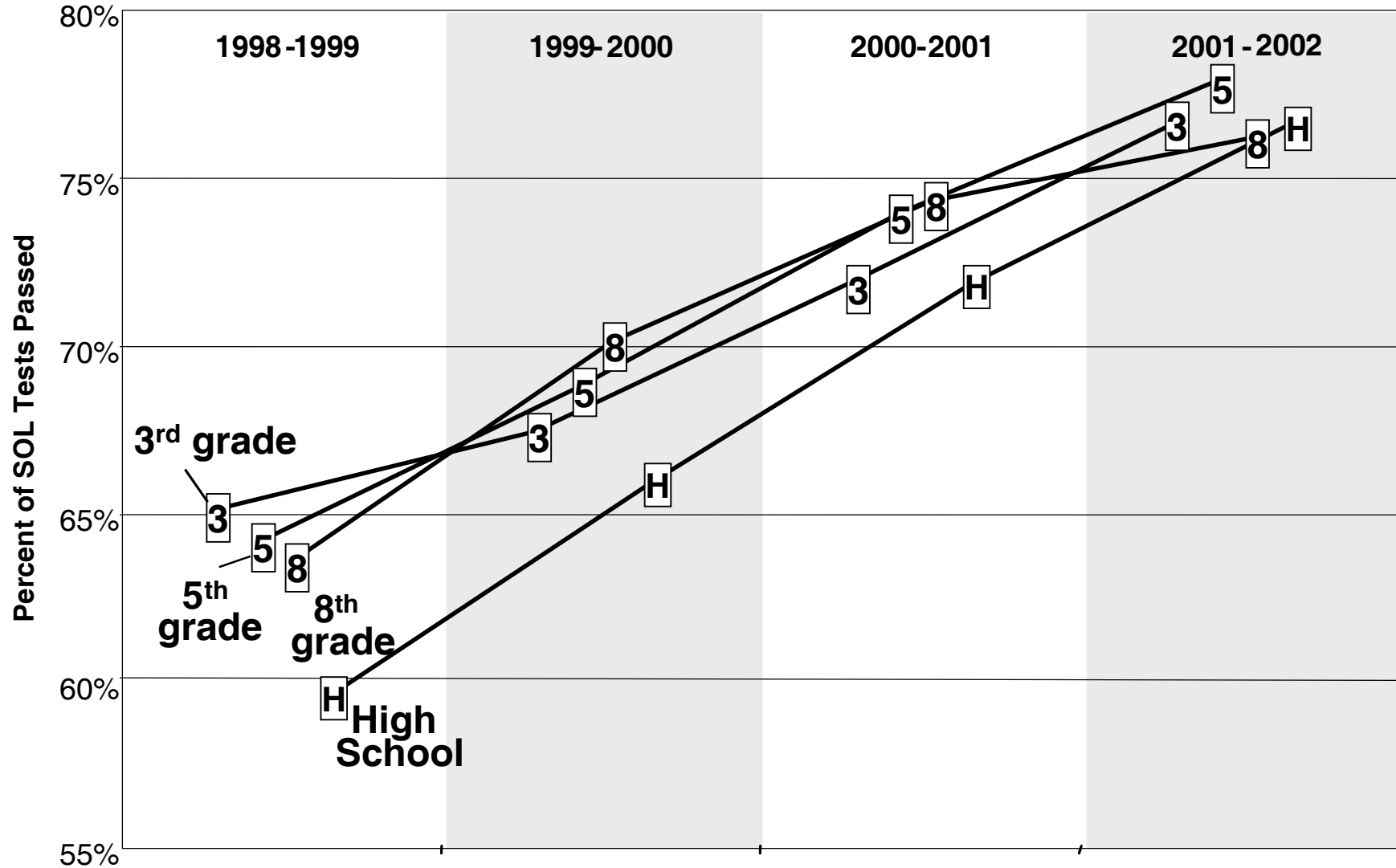
# Average Enrollment in Virginia Schools (2001-2002)



# Accreditation Status of Schools (2001-2004)



# SOL Pass Rates by Grade (1998-2002)



# Average SOL Scaled Scores (1998-2002)

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	1998-1999	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002
<b>School Divisions</b>	421	427	434	438
<b>High Schools</b>	424	424	433	439
<b>Middle Schools</b>	424	431	425	437
<b>Elementary Schools</b>	425	432	438	445

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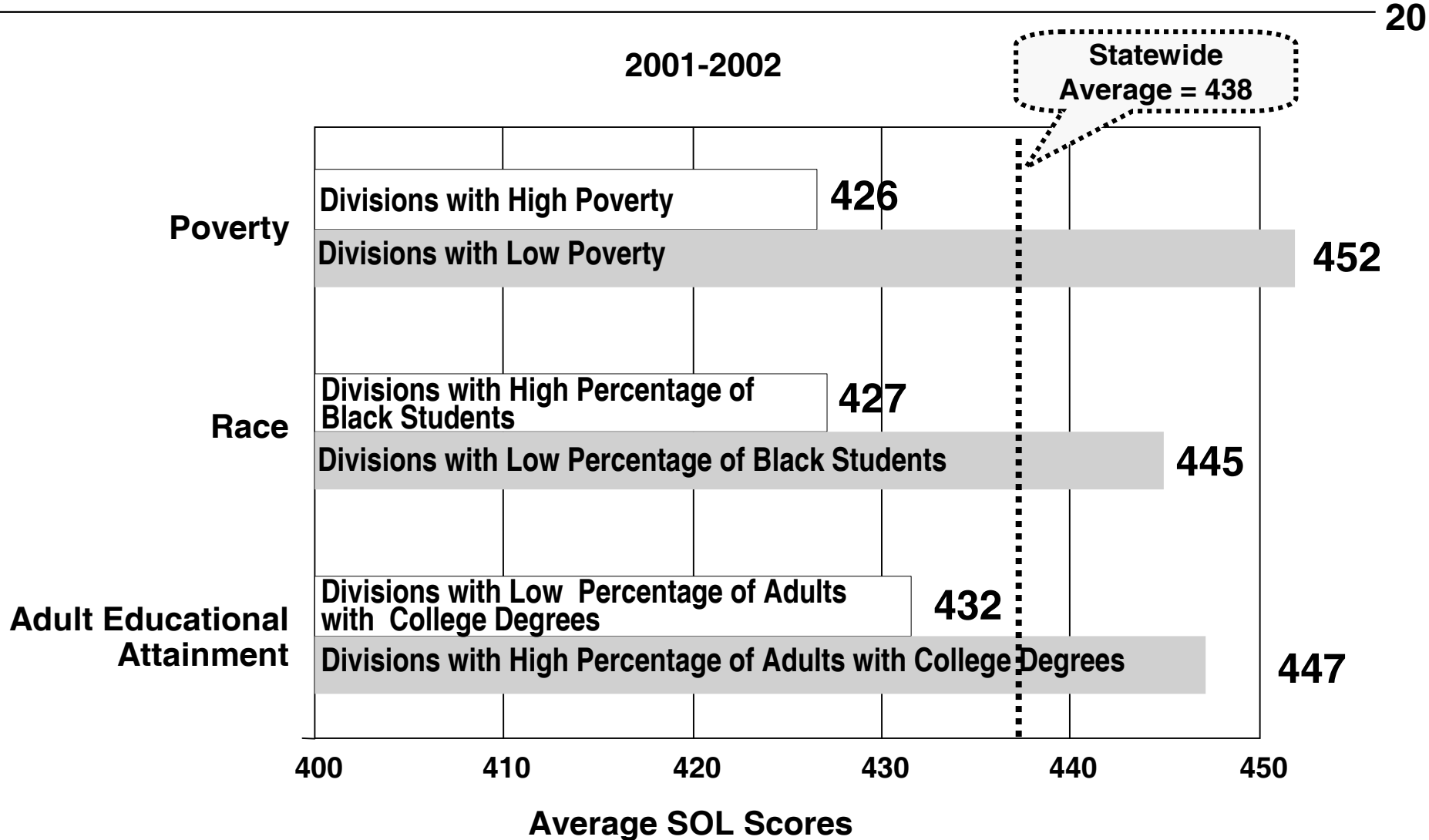
# **Quantitative Analysis of Virginia Data Shows Association Between Demographic Factors and SOL Test Scores**

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- **SOL test scores were used to measure academic performance**
- **Numerous factors were examined in quantitative analysis**
- **Poverty, race, and adult educational attainment appear to have strongest associations with SOL test scores in Virginia**

# Poverty, Race, and Adult Educational Attainment Correspond with Lower SOL Test Scores



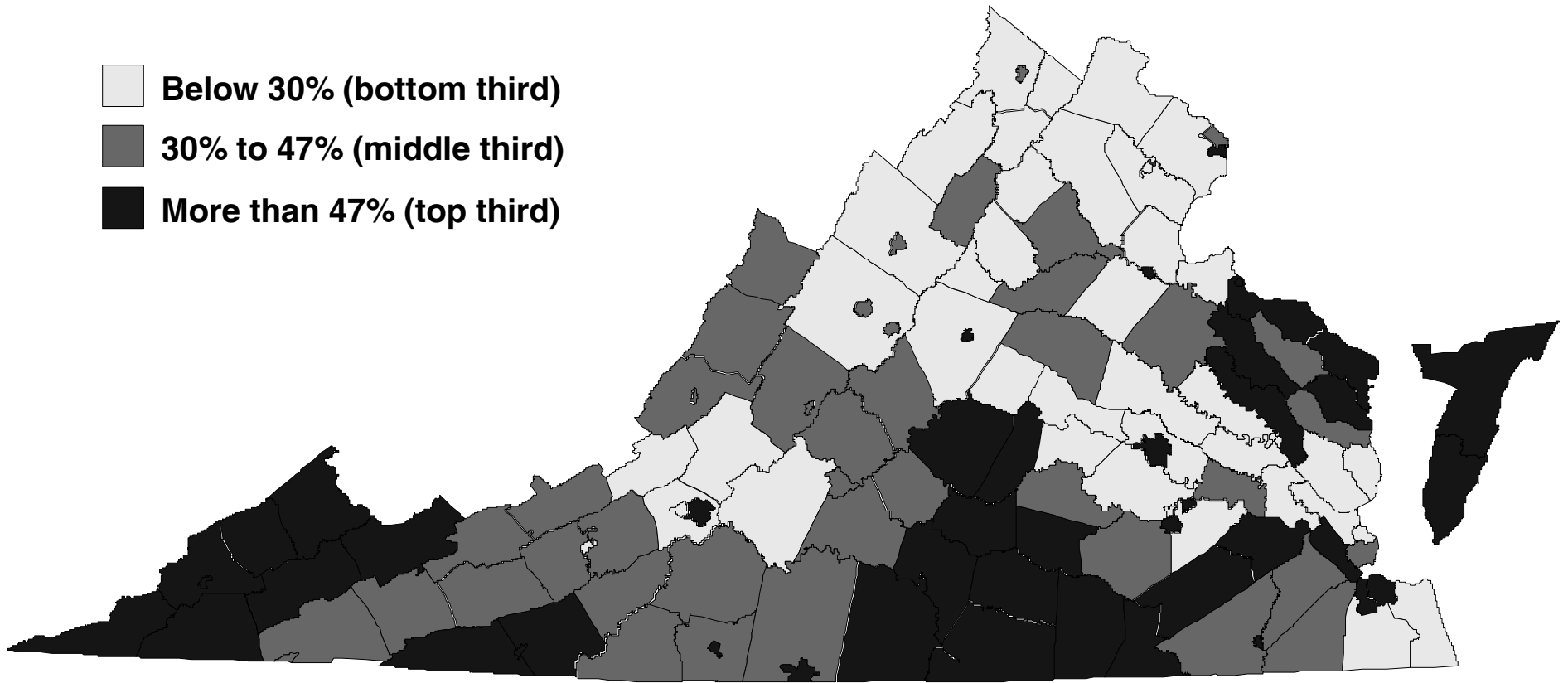
# Lowest-Scoring Divisions Have Higher Concentrations of Poverty and Black Students, and Lower Adult Educational Attainment

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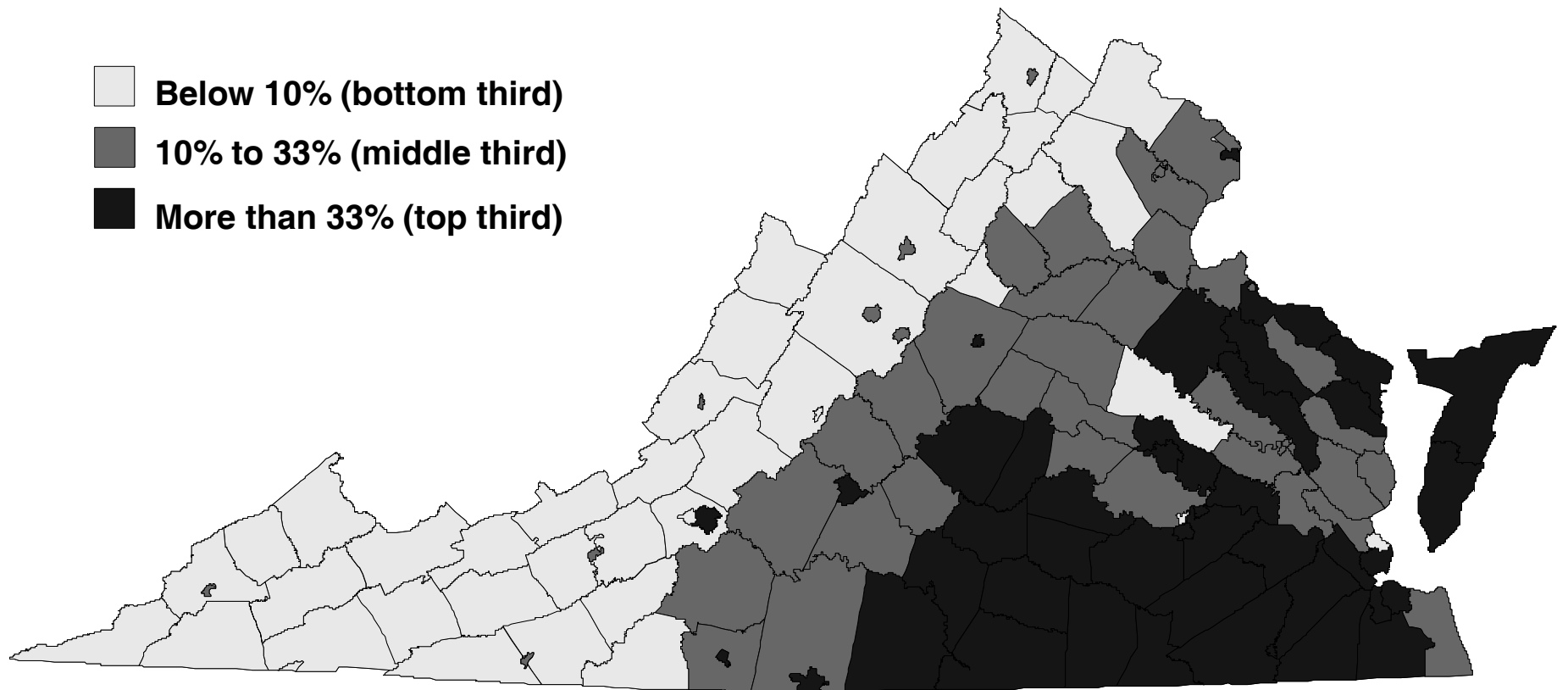
	<b>LOWEST- SCORING</b> (10% of Divisions)	<b>HIGHEST- SCORING</b> (10% of Divisions)	<b>ALL DIVISIONS</b>
<b>SOL Scores</b>	<b>410</b>	<b>463</b>	<b>438</b>
<b>Poverty</b> (Students on Free/ Reduced-Price Lunch)	<b>61%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>39%</b>
<b>Black</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>26%</b>
<b>Adult Educational Attainment</b> (College-Educated)	<b>13%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>19%</b>

# Poverty Concentration by School Division (2001-2002)

- Below 30% (bottom third)
- 30% to 47% (middle third)
- More than 47% (top third)

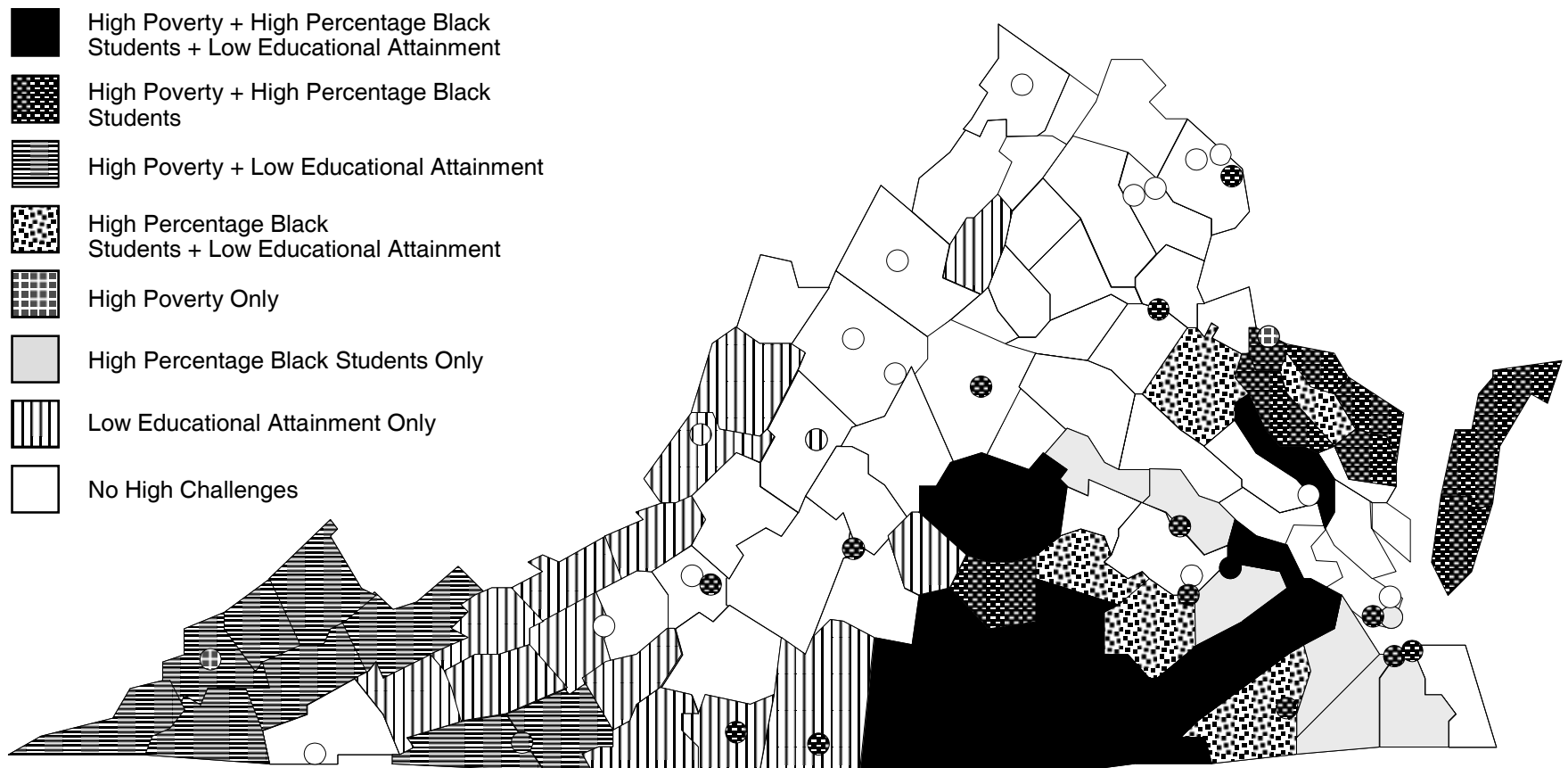


# Concentration of Black Pupils by School Division (2001-2002)





# Confluence of Poverty, Race, and Adult Educational Attainment by School Division (2001-2002)



# **National Studies and Scores on National Tests Are Consistent with JLARC Staff Findings**

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- **National literature supports the JLARC staff finding that poverty, race, and adult educational attainment are associated with performance on standardized tests**
- **Scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) have been consistently lower for students of families with challenging demographic characteristics**

# Exploring the Association Between Race and SOL Test Scores

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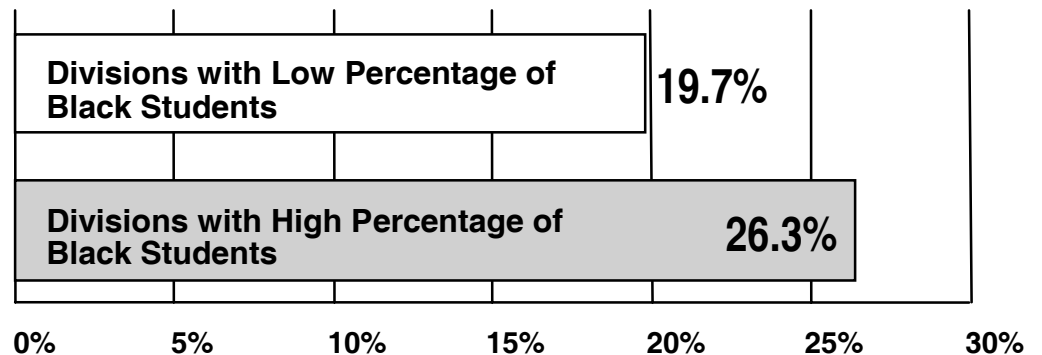
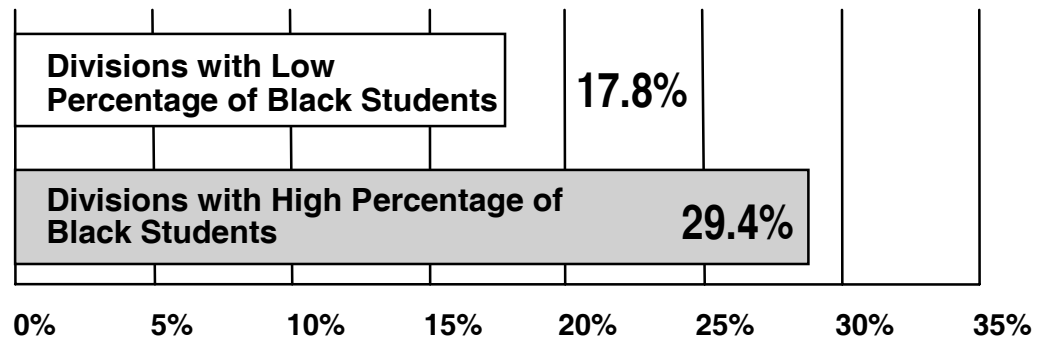
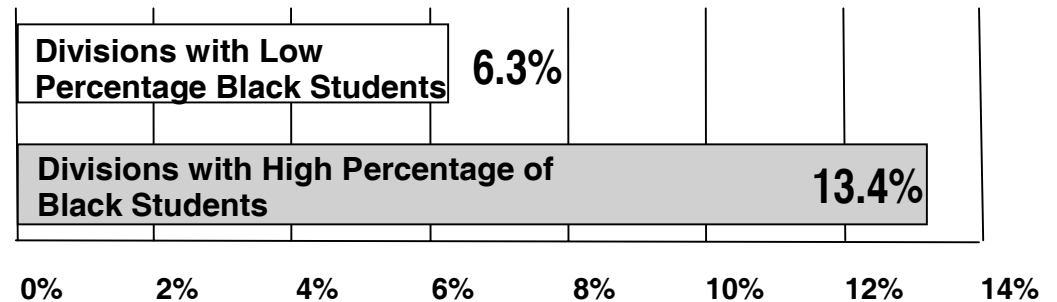
- Principals attribute lower academic achievement to high poverty and low adult educational achievement, not to race
  - Data show substantial overlap between race and poverty
- Regression analysis results are nearly as strong when using provisionally licensed teachers as a factor instead of race
- Substantial disparities in teacher qualifications and experience between localities with a large proportion of black students and other localities may help to explain why race has an association with SOL test scores

# Relationship Between Race and SOL Test Scores May Be Largely Explained by Teacher Qualifications and Experience

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Divisions with a high percentage of black pupils have:

- A higher percentage of provisionally licensed teachers
- A higher percentage of classes not taught by highly qualified teachers
- A higher percentage of inexperienced teachers



# Factors Linked to Poverty, Race, and Low Adult Educational Attainment Affecting SOL Test Performance

Children in Schools with **High % of Poverty, High % of Black Students,** and in Communities with **Low % of Adult Educational Attainment**



***Challenging Student & Family Characteristics***

***Fewer Fully Qualified and Experienced Teachers***

***Unfavorable School and Division Characteristics***

***Unfavorable Fiscal Conditions***

**LOWER SCORES**



Children in Schools with **Low % of Poverty, Low % of Black Students,** and in Communities with **High % of Adult Educational Attainment**

***Favorable Student & Family Characteristics***

***More Fully Qualified and Experienced Teachers***

***Favorable School and Division Characteristics***

***Favorable Fiscal Conditions***

**HIGHER SCORES**

# Student and Family Characteristics Affecting SOL Scores

Children in Schools with **High % of Poverty, High % of Black Students,** and in Communities with **Low % of Adult Educational Attainment**



## ***Student and Family Characteristics***



Children in Schools with **Low % of Poverty, Low % of Black Students,** and in Communities with **High % of Adult Educational Attainment**

- ***Minimal Parental Support***
- ***Low Student Motivation/Esteem***
- ***Little Exposure to Learning Outside of School***
- ***High Transiency***
- ***High Crime and Violence in Community***
- ***More Female-Headed Households***

- ***Strong Parental Support***
- ***High Student Motivation/Esteem***
- ***High Exposure to Learning Outside of School***
- ***Low Transiency***
- ***Little Crime and Violence in Community***
- ***Fewer Female-Headed Households***

**LOWER  
SCORES**

**HIGHER  
SCORES**

# Lowest-Scoring Divisions Have a Higher Proportion of Female-Headed Households Than Highest-Scoring Divisions

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	<b>LOWEST- SCORING</b> (10% of Divisions)	<b>HIGHEST- SCORING</b> (10% of Divisions)	<b>ALL DIVISIONS</b>
<b>SOL Scores</b>	<b>410</b>	<b>463</b>	<b>438</b>
<b>Female-Headed Households</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>22%</b>

# Teacher Qualifications Affecting SOL Scores

Children in Schools with **High % of Poverty, High % of Black Students,** and in Communities with **Low % of Adult Educational Attainment**



## *Teacher Qualifications and Experience*



Children in Schools with **Low % of Poverty, Low % of Black Students,** and in Communities with **High % of Adult Educational Attainment**

■ **More Provisionally Licensed Teachers**

■ **Fewer Provisionally Licensed Teachers**

■ **Fewer Classes Taught by Highly Qualified Teachers**

■ **More Classes Taught by Highly Qualified Teachers**

■ **More Inexperienced Teachers**

■ **Fewer Inexperienced Teachers**

■ **Fewer Teachers with Advanced Degrees**

■ **More Teachers with Advanced Degrees**

**LOWER SCORES**

**HIGHER SCORES**

# Lowest-Scoring Divisions Employ Fewer Qualified and More Inexperienced Teachers Than Highest-Scoring Divisions

	<b>LOWEST- SCORING</b> (10% of Divisions)	<b>HIGHEST- SCORING</b> (10% of Divisions)	<b>ALL DIVISIONS</b>
<b>SOL Scores</b>	<b>410</b>	<b>463</b>	<b>438</b>
<b>Provisionally Licensed Teachers</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>Classes Taught by Highly Qualified Teachers</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>86%</b>	<b>77%</b>
<b>Inexperienced Teachers</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>24%</b>
<b>Teachers with Advanced Degrees</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>35%</b>

# School and Division Characteristics Affecting SOL Scores

Children in Schools with **High % of Poverty, High % of Black Students,** and in Communities with **Low % of Adult Educational Attainment**



## *School and Division Characteristics*



Children in Schools with **Low % of Poverty, Low % of Black Students,** and in Communities with **High % of Adult Educational Attainment**

■ *Higher* Incidence of Fights

■ *Lower* Incidence of Fights

■ *Lower* Attendance Rates

■ *Higher* Attendance Rates

■ *Lower* Teacher Salaries

■ *Higher* Teacher Salaries

**LOWER  
SCORES**

**HIGHER  
SCORES**

# Lowest-Scoring Divisions Have More Unfavorable School and Division Characteristics Than Highest-Scoring Divisions

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	<b>LOWEST- SCORING</b> (10% of Divisions)	<b>HIGHEST- SCORING</b> (10% of Divisions)	<b>ALL DIVISIONS</b>
<b>SOL Scores</b>	<b>410</b>	<b>463</b>	<b>438</b>
<b>Fights per 100 Students</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>2.3</b>
<b>Attendance Rate</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>93%</b>
<b>Teacher Salaries</b>	<b>\$36,102</b>	<b>\$42,352</b>	<b>\$37,763</b>

# Fiscal Conditions of Localities Affecting SOL Scores

Children in Schools with **High % of Poverty, High % of Black Students,** and in Communities with **Low % of Adult Educational Attainment**



*Fiscal Conditions*



Children in Schools with **Low % of Poverty, Low % of Black Students,** and in Communities with **High % of Adult Educational Attainment**

- *Lower Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) per Capita*

- *Higher Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) per Capita*

- *Lower Revenue Capacity per Capita*

- *Higher Revenue Capacity per Capita*

**LOWER SCORES**

**HIGHER SCORES**

# Lowest-Scoring Divisions Face More Adverse Local Fiscal Conditions Than Highest-Scoring Divisions

	<b>LOWEST- SCORING</b> (10% of Divisions)	<b>HIGHEST- SCORING</b> (10% of Divisions)	<b>ALL DIVISIONS</b>
<b>SOL Scores</b>	<b>410</b>	<b>463</b>	<b>438</b>
<b>AGI Per Capita</b>	<b>\$11,918</b>	<b>\$22,609</b>	<b>\$15,715</b>
<b>Revenue Capacity per Capita</b>	<b>\$894</b>	<b>\$1,553</b>	<b>\$1,190</b>

# Not All Schools Follow Statewide Trends

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- **Quantitative analysis represents only overall trends in SOL test scores**
- **Individual schools and divisions can and do exceed expectations**
- **Use of effective practices can enable schools to overcome challenges and succeed on SOL tests**

# Presentation Outline

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- Introduction and Summary of Findings
- Background
- Demographic Factors Associated with SOL Test Performance
- School and Division Best Practices Used to Overcome Demographic Challenges
- SOL Impact and Other Issues

# Effective Practices Used in Schools with Good SOL Test Results

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- **Strong and stable principal leadership**
  - **Principal serves as instructional leader, sets tone and vision, and has prior teaching experience**
  
- **Environment conducive to learning**
  - **School motivates students, sets high expectations, and addresses disruptive behavior**
  
- **Effective teaching staff**
  - **School recruits strong teachers, provides them with professional development to grow and address weaknesses, and takes action to address ineffective teaching staff**

# **Effective Practices Used in Schools with Good SOL Test Results**

**(continued)**

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- **Data-driven assessment of student weaknesses and teacher effectiveness**
  - **School uses SOL and practice test results to identify individual and school wide weaknesses, and to identify teachers who are struggling**
  
- **Curriculum alignment, pacing, and resources**
  - **School aligns course materials with SOL objectives, develops schedule for teaching curriculum in a given timeframe, and offers resource guides to supplement teaching**
  
- **Differentiation in teaching**
  - **School alters content of instruction based on students' needs, and attends to students' preferred learning style**

# **Effective Practices Used in Schools with Good SOL Test Results**

**(continued)**

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## **■ Academic remediation**

- **School provides individual tutors or small group work to offer academic assistance in addition to regular class time instruction**

## **■ Teamwork, collaboration, and vertical integration**

- **School encourages teachers to plan lessons and tests, pace, and analyze data together. Coordination is across all grade levels**

## **■ Structure and intensity of school day**

- **School maximizes time spent on instruction**

# Some Schools Face Major Challenges to Academic Achievement

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## ■ Lack of parental support

- Children come to school in need of adequate food, appropriate eyeglasses, suitable clothes, or a regular bath
- Parents lack the time or the knowledge necessary to assist their children with homework

## ■ Lack of motivation and self-esteem

- Absence of role models who value education
- Parents and community set low expectations
- Students lack confidence and do not believe they can achieve academically

# **Some Schools Face Major Challenges to Academic Achievement (continued)**

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## **■ Lack of exposure to learning outside of school**

- Children come from homes without books or any other print materials**
- According to one principal, “many kids come to school and do not know how to talk because no one ever listens to them”**
- Some kindergarten students have vocabularies that are smaller than other students by as many as 1,000 words**
- Children are not provided with educational opportunities outside of school**

# **Some Schools Face Major Challenges to Academic Achievement (continued)**

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## **■ Transiency**

- **One school visited has more than one-third of the student population turn over each school year**
- **In one urban division, it is not uncommon for students to attend as many as four different schools in a single school year**

## **■ Crime and violence in the community are other factors that present urban schools with challenges**

- **In one urban elementary school visited, the principal indicated that virtually all of the students have witnessed a murder or seen the victim of one**

# Some Schools Are Overcoming Challenges

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- **Schools that have been academically successful despite their challenges are located in different parts of the State and have an assortment of unique characteristics**
- **Challenges refer to high levels of poverty, a high percentage of black students, or a high proportion of adults in the community with limited education, which were all strong predictors of low SOL test scores**
- **They include high, middle, and elementary schools in:**
  - **Southwestern Virginia, in areas with mostly poor students and adults in the community with limited education**
  - **Southside Virginia and the Eastern Shore, in areas with mostly poor and black students and adults in the community with limited education**
  - **Urban areas of the State, in areas with mostly poor and black students**

# Key Differences in Challenged Schools' Application of Effective Practices

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- **Schools use all of the effective practices and supplement these practices or use them to a greater degree**
- **Strong and stable leadership**
  - **Recognize and address gaps between student needs and actual support provided**

# **Key Differences in Challenged Schools' Application of Effective Practices**

**(continued)**

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- **Environment conducive to learning**
  - **Address a larger incidence of behavioral problems**
  - **Convey belief in students who are not motivated and who suffer from low self-esteem**
  - **Set high expectations for students and do not accept demographics as an excuse for low expectations**
  
- **Academic remediation**
  - **Provide more extensive and intensive remediation**
  
- **Structure and intensity of the school day**
  - **Maximize the amount of instructional time**

# Examples of Creative Practices Used by Successful Challenged Schools

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## ■ Communicating expectations

- Principal boards each bus as it arrives at school and asks students, “Why did you come to school today?” Students are expected to answer that they have come to learn.

## ■ Recognizing student achievement

- Teachers and/or principal hand-deliver trophies to the homes of students who pass the SOL tests.

## ■ Supplementing parental support

- Male students are matched with male role models who teach them life skills and provide them with learning opportunities after school.

# **Examples of Creative Practices Used by Successful Challenged Schools**

**(continued)**

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## **■ Ninth grade transition programs**

- **Programs targeted to help incoming ninth graders transition to high school that includes a freshman seminar for all ninth graders, and a summer program for at-risk students**

## **■ Emphasis on reading**

- **All students and staff participate in a “drop everything and read” time each day in order to model the importance of reading**

## **■ Video feedback**

- **Teachers are videotaped during daily observations. Videos of skillful teaching are used for staff development while videos of ineffective teaching are used to provide constructive feedback**

# Successful Challenged Schools Have Benefited from Supplemental Funding

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- **Federal Title I program provides a substantial amount of funding to schools with high concentrations of poverty**
- **State also provides supplemental funds based on poverty as well as remediation funds targeted at schools with low SOL performance**
- **Some divisions provide targeted assistance**

# All Divisions Provide Certain Basic Services

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- **Staff Recruitment**
- **Professional Development**
- **Curriculum Alignment and Pacing**
- **Attendance Services**

# Additional Effective Practices of High-Scoring and Successful Challenged Divisions Compared to Low-Scoring Divisions

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✓ Usually Present

X Often Absent

	High-Scoring and Successful Challenged Divisions	Low-Scoring Divisions
Primary Focus on SOL Goals	✓	X
Provide Strong Stable Leadership	✓	X
Address the Issues Involving Ineffective Teachers	✓	X
Provide Extensive Professional Development	✓	X
Strong Use of Data Analysis	✓	X
Encourage Collaboration Across Schools	✓	X

# Division Focus on SOL Requirements

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- **Successful divisions responded quickly to SOL requirements, provided necessary support to their schools, and have focused on SOLs as a primary objective**
- **Successful divisions have pursued continuous improvement by analyzing data and making regular adjustments to the curriculum**
- **Low-scoring divisions have not focused on SOLs**
  - **Some divisions believed that SOLs would “just go away”**

# Strong and Stable Leadership

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- **Successful divisions have strong superintendents who emphasize the importance of classroom instruction**
- **Successful divisions have a committed school board that supports the superintendent**
- **Low-scoring divisions lack effective leadership**
  - **Problems cited included lack of commitment to change, inability of superintendents to provide leadership, and instability in key leadership positions**
  - **School board members interfere in division operations and pursue their individual agendas**

# Addressing Ineffective Teachers

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- **Successful divisions have programs for identifying ineffective teachers, evaluating their needs, and dismissing those who do not improve sufficiently**
- **Divisions support principals in addressing ineffective teachers**
- **Low-scoring divisions lack resolve to dismiss ineffective teachers**
  - **Local politics may prevent dismissal of ineffective teachers**
  - **School board and teachers' association have blocked the dismissal of ineffective teachers in one division**

# Extensive Professional Development and Data Analysis

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- **Successful divisions are committed to providing necessary staff development**
  - **Create a community of learners**
  - **Compensate teachers for training time and pay tuition and other professional development costs**
  
- **Successful divisions use data analysis of test results to target and provide resources to teachers and students**

# Instructional Specialists and Collaboration

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- **Successful divisions use division-level instructional and curriculum specialists to support classroom teachers**
- **Successful divisions tend to encourage collaboration among teachers and principals across the division so that all teachers can benefit from best practices that are successfully used in particular schools**

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# Impact of the SOLs

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- **SOLs have had a profound impact on Virginia’s elementary and secondary education systems**
- **One urban school superintendent has described the change as a shift “from a process to an outcome-based system in Virginia”**
- **Most superintendents, principals, and teachers in visited divisions view this shift in focus as a positive one that has benefited their schools**
  - **Greatest positive impact of the SOLs appears to have occurred in schools that face demographic and other challenges**

# Benefits of SOLs According to Principals and Teachers in Visited Schools

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## ■ Increased focus and structure

- Provide clear targets and measurable goals
- Better ensure well-balanced instruction and reduce “hobby teaching”
- Better ensure curriculum will be completed on time

## ■ Increased accountability at all levels

- Superintendents, principals, and teachers are held accountable for academic performance, because division, school, and classroom performance can be measured through SOL test data

# **Benefits of SOLs According to Principals and Teachers in Visited Schools** (continued)

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- **Data analysis of test results enables principals and teachers to better identify individual student weaknesses as well as broader class or grade level deficiencies**
- **SOL test results are being used to motivate teachers and students**
- **SOLs appear to have led to an increased focus on teamwork and collaboration between schools and among teachers**

# Teachers' Opinions of the Effects of the SOLs on Instruction

	<b>Strongly/ Moderately Increased</b>	<b>No Impact</b>	<b>Strongly/ Moderately Decreased</b>
<b>Identify and address student's academic weaknesses</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>13%</b>
<b>Identify and address school-wide academic weaknesses</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>7%</b>
<b>Help students maximize academic potential*</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>24%</b>
<b>Complete all course subject matter</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>24%</b>
<b>Provide sufficient student enrichment opportunities</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>48%</b>

\* Numbers do not add to 100 due to rounding

# **Some Principals and Teachers Expressed Concerns Related to SOLs**

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- **SOLs reduce the creativity of teachers**
- **SOLs reduce the opportunity for enrichment activities**
- **SOLs have created too much pressure and intensity**
- **Emphasis on facts and the amount of material to be covered limits the time available for higher-level critical thinking skills**

# Substantial Number of Students Do Not Graduate in Four Years

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- **Average on-time graduation percentage in Virginia school divisions has been 75 percent over the last five years**
  - **In 2001-2002, the average on-time graduation percentage in Virginia school divisions was 77 percent**
- **In some divisions, the average on-time graduation percentage is less than 60 percent**
- **Since 1983, average twelfth grade enrollment in school divisions has been only 79 percent of ninth grade enrollment four years earlier**

# Graduates in 2002 as a Percentage of Ninth Grade Membership in 1998



# Localities with the Lowest Five-Year Average On-Time Graduation Percentage

	<b>On-Time Graduation Percentage</b>	<b>State Graduation Rate (based on prescribed federal calculation)</b>
<b>State Average</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>83%</b>
<b>Norfolk</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>68%</b>
<b>Petersburg</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>69%</b>
<b>Caroline</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>81%</b>
<b>Roanoke City</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>71%</b>
<b>Manassas Park</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>86%</b>
<b>Colonial Beach</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>86%</b>
<b>Suffolk</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>81%</b>

# Dropouts and Retentions May Lower Percentage of On-Time Graduations

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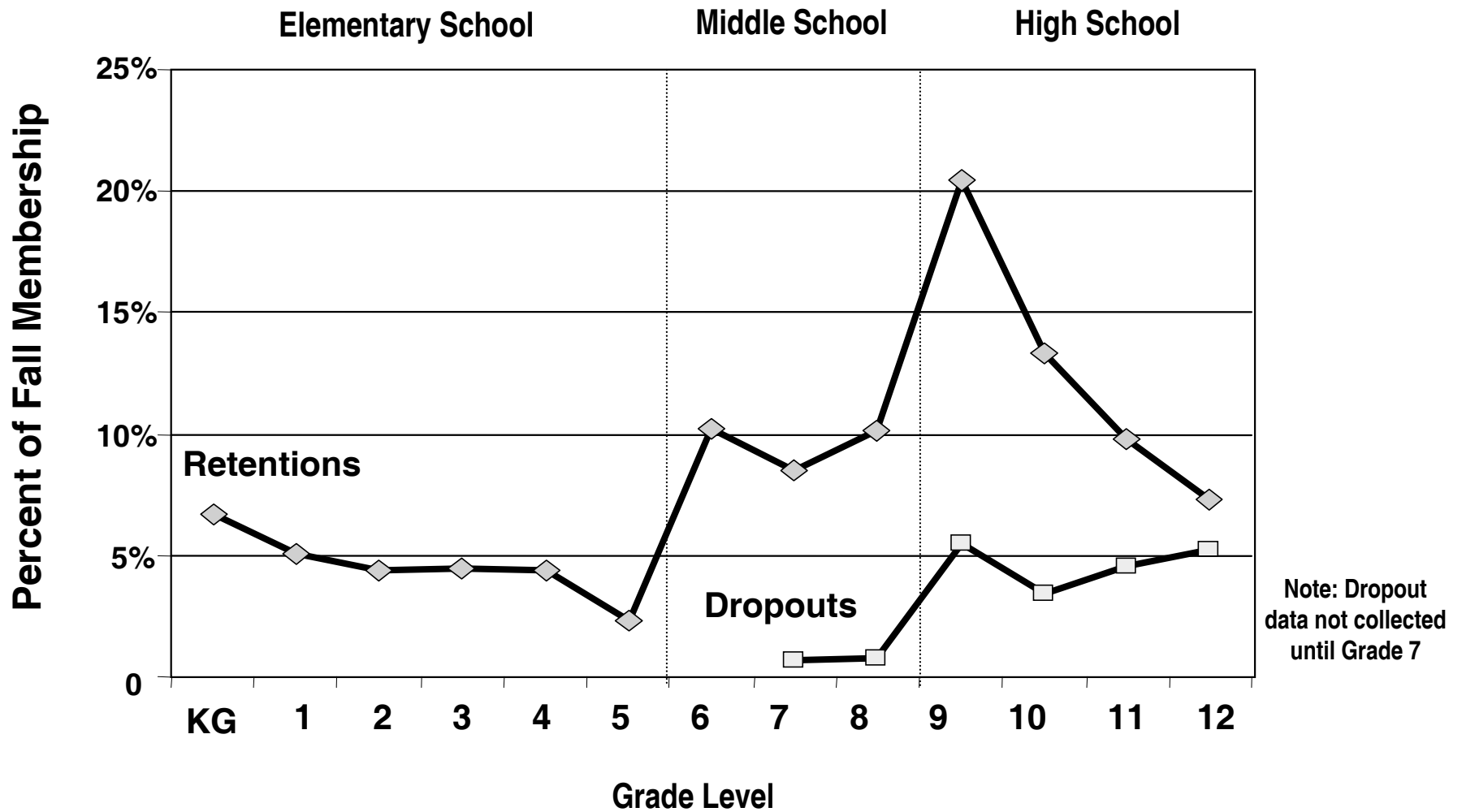
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- **Higher dropout rates than are typically reported appear to partially account for low on-time graduation**
  - **Official State dropout rate for the 2001-2002 school year was two percent. However, the method of calculating dropouts understates the dropout rate in high school grades**
  
- **Using an alternative measure, 13 percent of the State's ninth graders in 1998-99 were reported as dropouts over the following four years**
  - **In some divisions, the dropout rate using this measure is greater than 22 percent**
  
- **Retentions may also contribute to low on-time graduation percentages**
  - **In some divisions, more than 20 percent of ninth graders are retained each year**

# Dropout Rates for Localities with the Lowest On-Time Graduation Percentages (2001-2002)

	Alternative Dropout Rate	State Dropout Rate (based on prescribed federal calculation)
<b>State Average</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>2%</b>
<b>Norfolk</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>3%</b>
<b>Petersburg</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>Caroline</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>City of Roanoke</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>Manassas Park</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>2%</b>
<b>Colonial Beach</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>1%</b>
<b>Suffolk</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>2%</b>

# Average Dropouts and Retentions by Grade for Divisions with Lowest On-Time Graduation Rates (2001-2002)



# Issues Which May Affect Future Performance

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- **Changes in SOL accreditation categories and pass rates could reduce the number of schools accredited**
  - **Next year school accreditation ratings will decrease from four to two categories: (1) fully accredited and (2) accredited with warning. In addition, third and fifth grade pass rate requirements will increase from 70 to 75 percent in English, and pass rates will be instituted for third grade science and history/social science**
  
- **Beginning with the ninth grade class of 2000-2001 (graduating class of 2004), graduation from high school will be conditioned on passage of six designated end-of-course SOL tests**

# **Issues Which May Affect Future Performance (continued)**

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- **No Child Left Behind Legislation (NCLB) may force schools to continue to improve their performance beyond the State's accreditation requirements**
  - **NCLB legislation requires schools, school divisions, and states to meet annual objectives known as adequate yearly progress (AYP). Unlike Virginia's accreditation standards, which are based on a set pass rate by school, AYP requirements focus on overall improvement in test scores and by various sub-groups**
  - **As a result, it is possible that a school which meets the State's accreditation requirements may not meet the federal requirements, because it does not have sufficient improvement from year to year or one of its subgroups does not show sufficient annual yearly progress**

# Conclusion

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- **Demographic factors and their underlying characteristics create substantial challenges for schools in achieving success on the SOLs**
- **However, some schools and divisions that have adopted key best practices have been able to overcome these challenges and achieve SOL success**
- **SOLs have changed Virginia's educational system from a process to an outcome-based system, and superintendents, principals, and teachers in schools and divisions visited by JLARC staff generally have found this shift to be a positive one that has benefited their schools**