

## Virginia Plan for Higher Education: Annual Report 2018

The Virginia Plan for Higher Education provides a framework for making the Commonwealth the best-educated state by 2030 through goals, initiatives and progress measures. The summary below highlights 2018's strengths and areas for improvement, as well as 2019 recommendations. More details are available in the full report.

[www.schev.edu/2018AnnualReport](http://www.schev.edu/2018AnnualReport)

STRENGTHS	AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT
<b>Educational Attainment</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Virginia ranks 6th among states in educational attainment (those with a workforce credential or degree, ages 25-64).</li> <li>✓ Virginia ranked 1st as the “best state for higher education” and 4th as the “best states for business.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ Virginia’s overall ranking for the working age population (ages 25-64) could decline over time.</li> <li>✗ Gaps in attainment remain by region and by race/ethnicity.</li> </ul>
<b>Access and Affordability</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Student borrowing, debt and default rates remain steady.</li> <li>✓ Affordable pathway options, including those related to transfer, continue to grow and improve.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ The projected number of high school graduates between 2018 and 2030 is expected to remain flat and will become more diverse.</li> <li>✗ Affordability remains a concern.</li> </ul>
<b>Student Success</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Graduation rates increased at public four-year institutions and remediation rates improved.</li> <li>✓ Institutions continue to grow programs that support high-demand occupations and quality in education.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ Low-income, minority race/ethnicity, adults ages 25 and older and those from areas of the state with low educational attainment rates (underrepresented students) continue to complete at a lower rate than others.</li> </ul>
<b>Innovation and Investment</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Recent state investments and institutional efficiencies over the last two years have kept tuition and fee growth lower.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ While growth is lower in recent years, rising costs and tuition at institutions remain a concern.</li> </ul>
<b>Economic and Cultural Prosperity</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Graduate earnings increased slightly.</li> <li>✓ Business partnerships with higher education to support research, internships and jobs present an opportunity for students and employers to engage.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ Virginia’s ranking in annual research expenditures compared to other states remains flat.</li> </ul>

## Recommendations for 2019

### Policymakers and policy influencers

- ✓ Support funding and initiatives for higher education that make college more affordable and predictable, increase talent in high-demand areas and support institutional quality and excellence.
- ✓ Review state financial aid funding to ensure that money is aligned with the Commonwealth's goals.
- ✓ Adopt strategies that further align funding with the needs of the Commonwealth through recommendations of the strategic finance plan.
- ✓ Grow affordable pathway programs, including transfer and dual enrollment, that are proven to increase educational attainment.
- ✓ Invest in the technology talent pipeline and other high-demand areas in cooperation with institutions and business.
- ✓ Have agencies and regions set shared goals for educational attainment.
- ✓ Increase information and resources available for the new college and career graduation and accreditation requirements in secondary education.

### Institutions

- ✓ Review recruitment and retention strategies to ensure that all students have an opportunity to enroll and succeed.
- ✓ Implement strategies to increase rates of transfer and completion of students from associate to bachelor's degree.
- ✓ Grow programs and initiatives that support the technology talent pipeline and other high-demand areas.
- ✓ Continue to identify promising practices and opportunities for efficiencies while maintaining excellence in education.
- ✓ Support a study of graduate outcomes.
- ✓ Align and prioritize strategies with the state needs in the six-year plan process.

### Business and community organizations

- ✓ Increase internships and work-based learning opportunities.
- ✓ Invest in research and commercialization.
- ✓ Support educational opportunities for employees and their communities.

# The Virginia Plan for Higher Education

VIRGINIA WILL BE THE BEST-EDUCATED STATE BY 2030

Seventy percent of the working-age population will hold a postsecondary degree or workforce credential.

## GOALS



**AFFORDABLE ACCESS:**  
PROVIDE AFFORDABLE  
ACCESS FOR ALL

Expand outreach to PK-12 and traditionally underserved populations.

Improve the college readiness of all students.

Cultivate affordable postsecondary education pathways for traditional, non-traditional and returning students.

Align state appropriations, financial aid and tuition and fees such that students have broader access to postsecondary education opportunities regardless of their ability to pay.



**STUDENT SUCCESS:**  
OPTIMIZE STUDENT  
SUCCESS FOR WORK  
AND LIFE

Strengthen curricular options to ensure that graduates are prepared with the competencies necessary for employment and civic engagement.

Provide effective academic and student services infrastructures focused on persistence and completion.

Increase on-time completion of certificates and degrees.

Engage adults and veterans in certificate and degree completion and lifelong learning.



**INNOVATION & INVESTMENT:**  
DRIVE CHANGE &  
IMPROVEMENT THROUGH  
INNOVATION & INVESTMENT

Identify and implement public funding strategies to sustain long-term planning and responsiveness.

Cultivate innovations that enrich quality, promote collaboration and improve efficiency.

Foster faculty excellence, scholarship and diversity.

Enhance higher education leadership, governance and accountability.



**PROSPERITY:**  
ADVANCE ECONOMIC  
& CULTURAL PROSPERITY  
OF THE COMMONWEALTH  
& ITS REGIONS

Build a competitive, future-ready workforce for all regions.

Become a catalyst for entrepreneurship and a model for business incubation.

Target funding, resources and partnerships to support research and development.

Expand participation and engagement in public service & institutional service to the community.

Demonstrate the impact of higher education on state and regional economic development.

## PRIORITY INITIATIVES FOR 2018

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**Affordable Pathways:** Coordinate the development and implementation of programs that align resources from pre-K-12, colleges, universities and other public sources to ensure affordable, efficient and effective pathways for students in all parts of the state.

**Alignment and Sustainability:** Seek legislative and policy changes that support stable and sustainable funding, advance restructuring and improve quality and efficiency.

**Student Success:** Support policies and practices that improve student success and close equity gaps.

**Quality:** Collaborate with institutions to measure the quality of undergraduate education, including civic engagement of graduates and relevance to demand occupations across regions of the state.

**Communications:** Launch a communications strategy to address public knowledge and benefits of higher education, through Council reports, traditional media, social media and other means.

**Economic Development:** Promote economic development and employment outcomes by pursuing policies that enhance academic research, degree and workforce credential programs and commercialization of new products and discoveries.



# The Cost of Doing Nothing

## Educational Attainment Report: April 2019

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### Executive summary

The State Council of Higher Education's ad hoc committee on educational attainment developed nine major findings, each posited below as a need and a broad action statement. The nine statements of need derive from irrefutable evidence. If the Commonwealth commits to the nine associated actions and backs these visionary steps with resources over a sustained period, then our next generation will become the best-educated workforce in the nation and perhaps the world.

Finding 1: We need healthy development in young children.

**Action:** Advocate for improved professional development for providers of early childhood education.

Finding 2: We need recovery of past "failures" of attainment.

**Action:** Initiate a full-court press to assist those residents who have some college credits to complete their degree or credential.

Finding 3: We need alignment of funding formulas and programs.

**Action:** Align higher education funding, including financial aid, with greater access and student success, especially for first-generation students and students from low-income communities.

Finding 4: We need support services to potential and enrolled students.

**Action:** Expand and enhance outreach, advising, counseling, mentoring, work-based learning, career planning and credit transfer, especially for those at most risk of non-enrollment, non-persistence and non-completion.

Finding 5: We need investment in public institutions that serve individuals who might not ordinarily pursue education beyond high school.

**Action:** Drive additional state funding to those public institutions that meet a set of criteria such that they can lower tuition, enhance student services and provide financial aid.

Finding 6: We need alignment of pre-K-12 and postsecondary education, economic development and employment sectors.

**Action:** Ensure opportunity for all students at all levels to be ready for what comes next, by aligning program offerings with business needs and supporting innovations to recruit and retain students and talent.

Finding 7: We need fresh leadership to specific high-impact issues affecting attainment.

**Action: Challenge the Council of Presidents to be key players on a small list of top issues (i.e., early childhood, addiction crisis, entrepreneurship, rural broadband deployment).**

Finding 8: We need a vehicle for ongoing dialogue and action related to educational attainment.

**Action: Launch a “center for education attainment,” either as a new entity or part of an existing entity, to facilitate regular and meaningful conversation, monitoring, research, data analysis, goal setting, reporting, convening and advocacy.**

Finding 9: We need stable and sustainable public funding, especially funding dedicated to keeping college accessible and affordable.

**Action: Establish reserve funds and pursue dedicated funding from potential new sources, such as future multi-state settlements.**

On average, the college-completion rates among Virginia’s underserved populations are 7-15 percentage points below those of traditional students. Our low-income students complete college at rates 20 percentage points below high-income students and 12 percentage points below middle-income students. Most glaringly, the difference between the rates of educational attainment in Virginia’s highest-performing and poorest-performing localities is the widest gap in the nation.

Standing by and expecting any material gains is a dead end. If we aspire to be the best state for business, to be the best-educated state in the nation and to ensure opportunity for *all* Virginians, then we must act with urgency to address these findings. If we fail to take any new action, then we will have chosen by default the option that will prove most costly in the long run.