



## Commonwealth Educational Policy Institute Virginia Commonwealth University ~ School of Education

### State Action for Educational Leadership Project (SAELP)

- Nearly five years ago, the Commonwealth joined 14 states in a multi-million dollar mission to improve leadership in public schools: the State Action for Educational Leadership Project (SAELP).
- Created by The Wallace Foundation in 2001, SAELP is a dual-phase grants initiative assisting states in the development and the implementation of policies and laws designed to enhance the capacity of school principals and superintendents to improve student performance.
- SAELP is led by a national consortium comprised of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), the National Governors Association (NGA), the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE), and the Education Commission of the States (ECS).
- SAELP is part of Wallace’s 5-year, \$150 million LEADERS Count initiative, specifically designed to “strengthen the ability of principals and superintendents to improve student learning, and to build a new field of knowledge that helps improvements spread on a broad scale.” LEADERS Count was based on the premise that “excellent leadership is a critical element for systemwide school renewal” and represents the “single largest commitment” of Wallace Foundation funds.



- The initial phase (SAELP I), supported by a three-year, \$8.9 million grant, was comprised of awards to 15 states—including the Commonwealth of Virginia, through the Virginia Department of Education.
- Having received \$50,000 for the design phase of the project, Virginia subsequently received \$250,000 for the implementation phase (SAELP I), to be applied “in cooperation with the Commonwealth Educational Policy Institute (CEPI) at Virginia Commonwealth University on behalf of the Department and the Commonwealth.”
- Supported by SAELP planning grant funds, CEPI created a state consortium, comprised of policymakers, educators, and stakeholders, to craft recommendations for SAELP implementation strategies. Through facilitated team discussions targeting leadership issues and challenges, the consortium recommended 85 items for “improvements in policy.”
- CEPI held three summits on educational leadership, embracing the input of participants from the Governor's Office, the Board of Education, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, members of the General Assembly, and educational stakeholders and practitioners.
- SAELP initiatives in Virginia resulted in the creation of a legislative commission the review study, and reform educational leadership and a Task Force to Evaluate and Redesign Preparation Programs and Professional Development for School Leaders.
  - Actions prompted by the work of the Task Force and the Commission included:
    - Passage of the School Leader's Licensure Assessment (SLLA) as a condition of initial licensure for principals and other school leaders;
    - Ongoing revision of licensure requirements, including consideration of alternative licensure of principals; mentorships, and two-tiered licensure; and

- \$1 million in state grants (\$100,000 each; five awards in 2004-2005 and in 2005-2006) for 10 leadership-preparation partnerships between Virginia school divisions, institutions of higher education, and other organizations to provide practicing and prospective school leaders with training and mentoring.
- To bolster SAELP efforts at the school district level, The Wallace Foundation created the Leadership for Educational Achievement in Districts (LEAD) initiative in 2002. Having invited nearly 100 school divisions to apply for LEAD grants, The Foundation ultimately received 39 applications and made 12 awards to primarily urban school districts—including Fairfax County Public Schools.

### State Action for Education Leadership Project (SAELP) Grantees

\* Denotes Original 15 State Grantees

Arizona	*Connecticut	*Delaware	*Georgia	*Illinois	*Indiana
*Iowa	Kansas	*Kentucky	Louisiana	*Massachusetts	Michigan
*Missouri	*Montana	*New Jersey	New Mexico	New York	Ohio
*Oregon	*Rhode Island	Texas	*Vermont	*Virginia	Wisconsin

- Announced in April 2004, **SAELP II** provided an additional \$3.6 million in one-year grants to the 15 states. Renewal of these second grants—for an additional two years—would be contingent upon implementation results.
  - In addition, SAELP II initiatives were to produce “[s]pecified, measurable results ... within one year, statewide impact within three years, and sustainable impact within five years.”
  - Virginia was awarded a \$600,000 SAELP II grant (3-years) to implement three “breakthrough” ideas:
    - turnaround specialists in struggling schools;
    - revision of licensure requirements; and
    - the creation and publication of an on-line catalog of resources for leadership development.

In 2005, Virginia SAELP conducted a statewide solicitation for programs to include in the on-line catalog, and received more than 130 proposals. The Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL) was subsequently awarded the contract for the online publication of *The School Leaders' Catalog: Resources for Leadership (va-Lead)*, as part of IEL's e-Lead initiative. Designed in a user-friendly format, the catalog entries address Virginia performance standards. The *va-Lead* catalog is envisioned as the first of 50 statewide catalogs housed at e-Lead facilitating professional development for education leaders. A field test of *va-Lead* will take place in 2006-07.

The turnaround specialist program, an initiative conceived by former Governor Mark Warner and designed to develop leadership capacity in selected low-performing or unaccredited schools, has trained two cohorts of 10 specialists in each in the past two years. Supported by resources from The Wallace Foundation, the UVa Partnership, the Commonwealth of Virginia, and Microsoft, the initiative continues in 2006, incorporating nine-day intensive summer training modules, weekly contact by peer coach and site visits, mid- and end-of-year assessment, and learning conferences. Analyses of the first and second turnaround specialist cohorts are anticipated for late 2006 and spring 2007, respectively.

Changes in Virginia’s licensure requirements are progressing through state regulatory approval processes as of spring 2006.

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- **va-Lead:** Online Professional Development Catalog <http://www.cepi.vcu.edu/onlineCatalog.html>
- Online Professional Development Catalog Inclusion Instructions <http://www.cepi.vcu.edu/pdf/SAELPImplementationPlan.pdf>
- Final Report of the HJR 124 Commission to Review, Study and Reform Educational Leadership, House Document No. 16 (2005)  
<http://leg2.state.va.us/DLS/H&SDocs.NSF/4d54200d7e28716385256ec1004f3130/c2cb0f8a232bc77985256f86004cae84?OpenDocument>
- Final Report of the Commission to Review, Study and Reform Educational Leadership, House Document No. 4 (2004)  
<http://leg2.state.va.us/DLS/H&SDocs.NSF/4d54200d7e28716385256ec1004f3130/a5773c6e30f306f085256dfa005389de?OpenDocument>
- Interim Report of the Commission to Review, Study and Reform Educational Leadership, House Document No. 14 (2003)  
<http://leg2.state.va.us/DLS/H&SDocs.NSF/4d54200d7e28716385256ec1004f3130/8dbb76e4409732bf85256ca9005217cb?OpenDocument>
- [Barriers and Gaps: Improving the Preparation of School Leaders in an Era of Accountability](#) November 2002. A report to the Virginia Regulatory Task Force on Educational Leadership by Virginia SAELP.  
<http://www.cepi.vcu.edu/Publications/SAELP/SAELP%20Report%20Fiore.pdf>
- [School Leadership in an Era of Accountability](#) Presented October 18, 2002, to the Virginia Joint Legislative Commission on Educational Leadership. <http://www.cepi.vcu.edu/Publications/SAELP/SAELP%20Report.pdf>
- CEPI's [SAELP Implementation Plan](#) <http://www.cepi.vcu.edu/pdf/SAELPImplementationPlan.pdf>