

# **Liberal Studies – Elementary Partnership Program**

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## **A. Describe your program, including its mission, goals and key components.**

The Longwood University Liberal Studies-Elementary Partnership Program (LStEPP) is a learner-centered, standards-based, assessment-informed collaborative community committed to promoting learning that gives special emphasis to serving others: learning that prepares citizen leader professionals for the common good through active involvement in coursework and field experiences integrating theory, practice, and research throughout the program. LStEPP builds upon a strong foundation in the liberal arts and is professionally anchored in extensive pedagogical study and practice.

The LStEPP promotes 2 goals: (1) To provide a research-based teacher preparation program systematically preparing and assessing teacher candidate's effectiveness to increase all children's learning; (2) To ensure collaboration among faculty in arts and sciences, education, public school teachers, and administrators in the preparation of teacher candidates.

The key components of LStEPP include:

- Seven (7) critical elements providing evidence of a teacher candidate's ability to facilitate P-6 pupils' learning via preparation of a Teacher Work Sample (TWS);
- Two governing bodies (the Professional Education Council and the Liberal Studies Committee) that integrate education and arts and sciences faculty who teach in the Liberal Studies – Elementary program;
- An advisory panel of P-6 teachers, administrators, faculty and teacher candidates;
- A mentoring program linking arts and sciences content experts with teacher candidates, their cooperating teachers and their university supervisor; and
- A collaborative agreement between Longwood and public school divisions to provide on-site instructional and practical experiences in classrooms.

Partnership experiences offer extensive field preparation for teacher candidates and enhanced learning opportunities for public school children. Partnership schools are laboratories translating theory into practice. Teacher candidates make immediate connections between theoretical and pedagogical learning coursework with actual teaching experiences. Our rural partnership schools are forums for collaboration and exchange of ideas among teachers, candidates and professors. Partnership experiences enrich the quality of teacher candidate's preparation and simultaneously provides additional instructional assistance for P-6 students.

During their third year, LStEPP students spend a full semester (4 days a week) at the rural partnership sites. Half of each day is devoted to methodological preparation in reading/language arts, mathematics, science and social science. The remaining half day, candidates work with children in classrooms. Mornings and afternoons are alternated providing candidates with real-world experiences across the full day. Fridays, the elementary candidates return to campus for courses on classroom management and exceptional learners. All candidates' course work is inextricably linked to applications in the rural classrooms. In addition, during May of the teacher candidate's first and second years, the seven basic components of critical teaching elements needed during the partnership semester are sequentially included.

The seven critical elements measured by the Teacher Work Sample, identified by research and best practice as essential to P-12 student learning, include:

- (1) **Contextual Factors.** Teachers use information about the learning-teaching context and student individual differences to set learning goals, instruction, and assessment.
- (2) **Learning Goals.** Significant, challenging, varied and appropriate learning goals are set.
- (3) **Assessment Plan.** Teachers use multiple assessment modes aligned to learning goals, assessing student learning before, during and after instruction.
- (4) **Design for Instruction.** Teachers design instruction for specific learning goals, student characteristics and needs, and learning contexts.
- (5) **Instructional Decision-making.** Teachers use regular and systematic evaluations of student learning to inform instructional decisions.
- (6) **Analysis.** Teachers use assessment data to profile student learning and communicate information about student progress and achievement.
- (7) **Reflection and Self-Evaluation.** Teachers reflect on their instruction and student learning in order to improve teaching practice.

As a member of the Renaissance Group, over the last five years, Longwood has been a partner in the nation-wide, eleven-institution Renaissance Title II Improving Teacher Quality grant supporting the collaborative development of the Teacher Work Sample methodology and assessment rubrics. An assessment system is in place that is based on the Teacher Education Conceptual Framework, Educators as Reflective Citizen Leader, and integrates the seven critical elements measured by the Teacher Work Sample. Pre-and post-tests are included for each teaching unit, demonstrating statistically significant differences in P-6 student learning. Measures of content knowledge, classroom management, and professional dispositions are also integrated into the assessment plan.

Content knowledge is fostered via a mentoring program where partnership students are matched with an arts and sciences faculty member knowledgeable about learning objectives. Mentor and mentee meet regularly. In some cases the mentor comes to the school and observes in the classroom. Mentor, mentee, cooperating teacher and faculty member collaborate on the content and materials. Students and faculty report notable positive outcomes.

Additionally, faculty use TWS data outcomes to make changes in curricula and course sequences.

## **B. Describe how the program is a cooperative effort between the faculty in the college of education, arts and sciences and P-12 schools.**

In response to a legislative mandate to abolish the teacher education major, Longwood Education faculty and Arts and Sciences faculty collaboratively developed a Liberal Studies major designed to provide a strong foundation in the Liberal Arts with a focus on the four areas that elementary teachers were expected to teach: English, Math, Science and Social Studies. The Liberal Studies Committee became the governing board of the major and included both Arts and Sciences and Education faculty representatives. Arts and Sciences and Education faculty share the responsibility for curriculum development and modification, advising, and accreditation reviews. All students who wish to be licensed as elementary or special education teachers are Liberal Studies majors.

In 1999-2000, Longwood became a partner in the Renaissance Group Title II Improving Teacher Quality grant. With the support of this grant, major changes were instituted in the Liberal Studies curriculum, field experiences and assessment practices. Four partnership sites in rural, impoverished and low achieving school districts in southern Virginia were established. A Partnership Advisory Committee that includes Superintendent, Principal, teachers, faculty and students meets each semester to assess the program, recommend changes and work together to assure the preparation of high quality teacher candidates.

A Superintendent's Network of 14 rural school divisions in southern Virginia and Longwood faculty and administrators meets twice a year to share ideas and work together on numerous projects including grant production, Partnership, recruitment and retention of teachers, and professional development of high quality teachers. In addition, a Professional Education Advisory Committee of teachers and administrators meets twice a year to advise on curriculum and accreditation issues. School division representatives frequently are invited speakers in classes, and participate on college committees. Longwood faculty consult frequently with school divisions on professional development, e.g. six faculty have assisted southern Virginia school divisions in accessing over \$8 million in Reading First grants.

These partnerships truly work together to accomplish goals that could not be done alone. As one of our Superintendents told the NCATE review team recently, "Our school division could not have made the remarkable progress we have made in meeting the state standards without the partnership with Longwood. Our students and our teachers have benefited greatly from this association." This school division went from a pass rate of 40% on the state Standards of Learning tests in reading to more than 80%, an outcome cooperatively achieved by Longwood students and faculty, and the school division teachers, administrators and children.

### **C. Provide examples of evidence that demonstrate the program's positive impact on teacher candidates' learning.**

During the Partnership semester in their junior year, teacher candidates prepare a Teacher Work Sample (TWS) that documents their acquisition of the seven critical elements described earlier. Curriculum changes have incorporated each of these seven elements into earlier classes where each is introduced and practiced independently. For example, the assessment component is introduced in the Assessment course, the contextual analysis is introduced in the Behavior Management course, etc. During the Partnership semester, teacher candidates may be mentored in the content of their Teacher Work Sample unit by Arts and Sciences faculty who may come out to the school to observe the unit, work with the student via email and/or conduct face-to-face advising. The mentor, cooperating teacher, university professor and the student debrief and reflect on the lesson upon its completion sharing in the professional growth of the teacher candidate.

A summary analysis of the performance of Partnership students on the seven critical factors in their Partnership semester concludes:

*Partnership students scored highest in Learning Goals, Assessment Plan (with noticeable gains in Technical Soundness over scores from Spring 2002), Design for*

*Instruction (with noticeable gains in Use of Technology over scores from Spring 2002), and Instructional Decision-Making.*

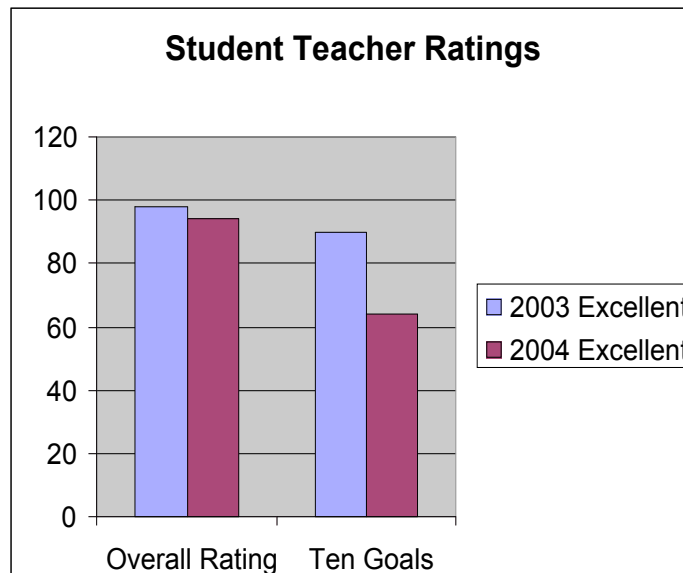
*Partnership students scored lower in Contextual Factors, Analysis of Student Learning, and Reflection and Self-Evaluation but all three showed gains over Spring 2002 scores especially Analysis of Student Learning.*

*More than 90% of the Teacher Work Samples were rated as met expectations or partially met expectations in all seven of the TWS elements.*

This data analysis not only provides evidence of student learning but evidence of the effectiveness of program modifications by the faculty in improving teacher candidate performance in five of the seven areas over the previous year.

The TWS is also required during the student teaching semester and is scored by the cooperating teacher and the University supervisor. In addition, a student teaching evaluation is completed by the cooperating teacher and University supervisor, as well as by the student. The cooperating teacher who supervises student teachers rates each student on an evaluation that includes the seven critical elements from the Teacher Work Sample as well as content knowledge, behavior management and professional dispositions. A summary of the percentage of students rated as “Excellent”, the highest of 4 levels of ratings, from 2003 and 2004 is in Chart 2.

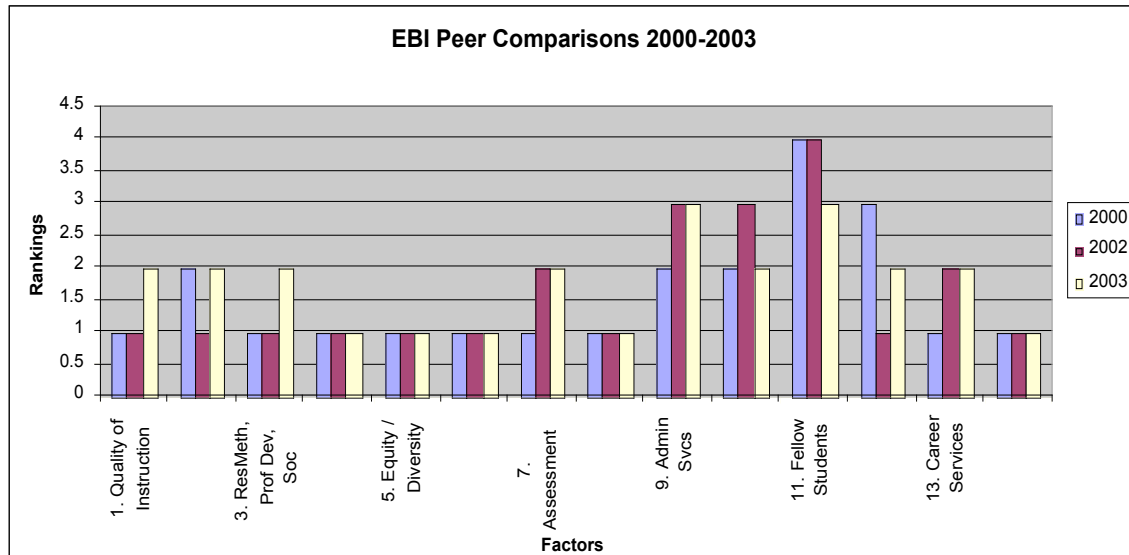
**Chart 2. Percent of Student Teachers Achieving Highest Rating of “Excellent” by Cooperating Teachers in 2003 and 2004 on the Overall Performance Rating and the Overall Rating of Achievement of the Ten Student Teacher Goals**



At the conclusion of student teaching, teacher candidates complete the Educational Benchmarking survey (EBI). This survey measures their perceptions of their own learning and the program’s success in facilitating their learning. Comparisons are possible with past years as well as with selected peer institutions, comparable Carnegie classification institutions and all participating institutions. Results from the three years of data are reported in Chart 1 & Table 1 below. Note that student overall satisfaction with the program has ranked Longwood #1 in 7 of 9 comparisons and #2 in 2 of 9

comparisons with selected peers (N=6), other Carnegie Master's Institutions (N= 13 – 19) or with all participating institutions (N=31 – 42).

**Chart 1. EBI Peer Comparison Rankings from Years 2000, 2002, and 2003.**



**Table 1. Educational Benchmarking Survey of Student Teachers 2000-2003**

Benchmark Factor	Peers			Class			All		
	00	02	03	00	02	03	00	02	03
1. Quality of Instruction	1	1	2	1	2	2	2	2	4
2. Learning Theories, Pedagogy, Technology	2	1	2	1	2	5	5	2	6
3. Res. Methods, Prof Dev, Societal Implications	1	1	2	1	1	3	2	1	4
4. Aspects of Student Development	1	1	1	1	2	2	5	2	3
5. Classroom Equity / Diversity	1	1	1	1	2	2	5	3	4
6. Management of Ed Constituencies	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	2
7. Assessment of Student Learning	1	2	2	1	1	5	6	3	10
8. Satisfaction with Faculty and Courses	1	1	1	1	2	1	4	3	2
9. Administration Services	2	3	3	1	2	5	4	3	7
10. Support Services	2	3	2	1	2	3	4	3	4
11. Fellow Students in Program	4	4	3	1	4	5	19	15	12
12. Student Teaching Experience	3	1	2	1	4	5	11	5	7
13. Career Services	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	3	3
14. Overall Satisfaction with Your Program	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	2

(All Institutions Year 2000 N=31; Year 2002 N=40; Year 2003 N=42)

(Carnegie Classification Institutions Year 2000 N=13; Year 2002 N=17; Year 2003 N=19)

(Note: 2003 data is being corrected by EBI due to statistical errors in analysis. The corrected data should be more in line with previous year's data.)

Student teachers are rated by their Cooperating Teachers and by their University Supervisors. In Spring 2003, 98% were rated Excellent or Above Average on the Overall rating of Teaching Success Prediction. 88% of these were rated Excellent. 90% or more

were rated Excellent or Above Average on each of the ten goal areas for teacher preparation students. 94 % or more of student teachers were rated Excellent or Above Average on Planning and Instruction, Implementation of Instruction, Evaluation/Assessment, Materials and Resources, Individual Differences and Classroom Management by University supervisors.

Praxis II scores for Longwood program completers are above the national average and demonstrate a high level of competency. For the year 2002-2003, there was a 100% pass rate for program completers (N=3). In addition, there was a 97.8% pass rate when every Longwood student who took Praxis II Elementary Content (N=46) was included. (Note: the one student who failed was classified as either a freshman or sophomore and should not have attempted the examination.) Longwood’s median score was higher than the national average:

<b>Praxis II Scores</b>		
	<b>Longwood University</b>	<b>National</b>
Median	166	162
Average performance range	157-181	149-175

Longwood’s average percent correct on each category was at or above the national average, and the majority of scores were in the upper two quartiles.

<b>Average Percent Correct</b>		
	<b>Longwood University</b>	<b>National</b>
Language arts	78%	74%
Math	77%	71%
Social studies	69%	69%

**Percent of Examinees Scoring in Upper Two Quartiles**

Language arts	55%
Math	59%
Social studies	67%

From September 1, 2003 - through May 27, 2004 Longwood has a 96.88% pass rate (N=96) for first time takers of the Elementary Content Praxis II with a median score of 168.

**Thirty percent** of the examinees met or exceeded the qualifying score (175) for the **Meritorious New Teacher Candidate** designation of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Teacher Project.

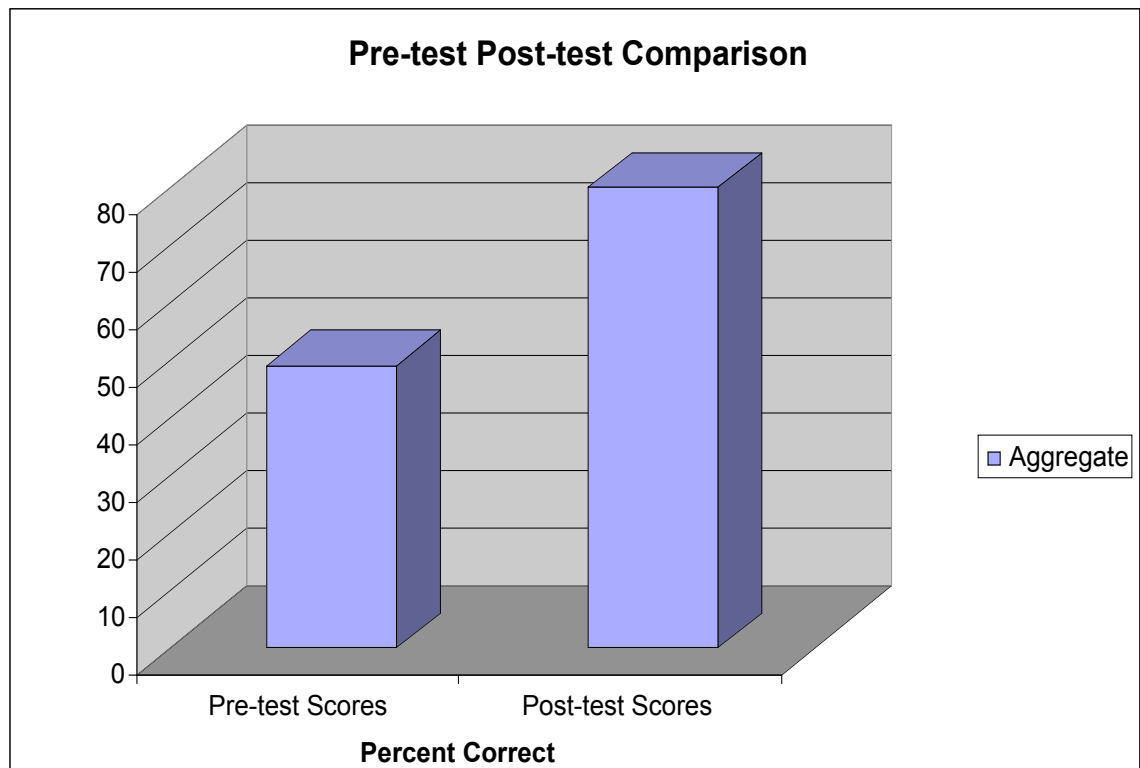
On the National Survey of Student Engagement the majority of senior Liberal Studies teacher candidates indicated that their experience at Longwood had contributed “quite a bit” or “very much” to *thinking critically and analytically* (83%), to *using computing and information technology* (88%), to *understanding people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds* (56%), to *solving complex real-world problems* (58%), to *developing a personal code of values and ethics* (65%), and to *contributing to the welfare of your community* (54%).

**D. Provide examples of evidence that demonstrate the program’s positive impact on graduates’ ability to improve P-12 pupil learning.**

Assessment of pupil learning is an integral part of the Teacher Work Sample. Teacher candidates assess the context within which the teaching and learning will take place then incorporate this information into their instructional planning, design and delivery. Pre- and post-testing is done to determine entry and exit level pupil knowledge on the content of the teaching unit. Analysis of Teacher Work Sample data provides evidence on Impact on Student Learning under the Analysis of Learning where over 85 % of Partnership students were rated as Met Expectations on this indicator.

Aggregated data have shown significant changes in pupil learning. For example, in Spring 2003, 40 intermediate-level teacher preparation majors taught lessons to 688 pupils in their Partnership experience. The 40 class sizes ranged from 6 to 25, with a mean class size of 17 pupils. Each teacher preparation major administered a pretest before the unit they taught and a post-test after the unit. The mean pretest score was 49% correct and the mean post-test score was 80% correct ( $t= 10.75$ .  $P = .0001$ ). These data are comparable to the Student Impact data collected in Fall 2002, Spring 2002 and Fall 2001 (when TWS data collection began).

**Chart 3. Pre-test and Post-test Comparisons Aggregated Across 688 K-6 pupils in LStEPP.**

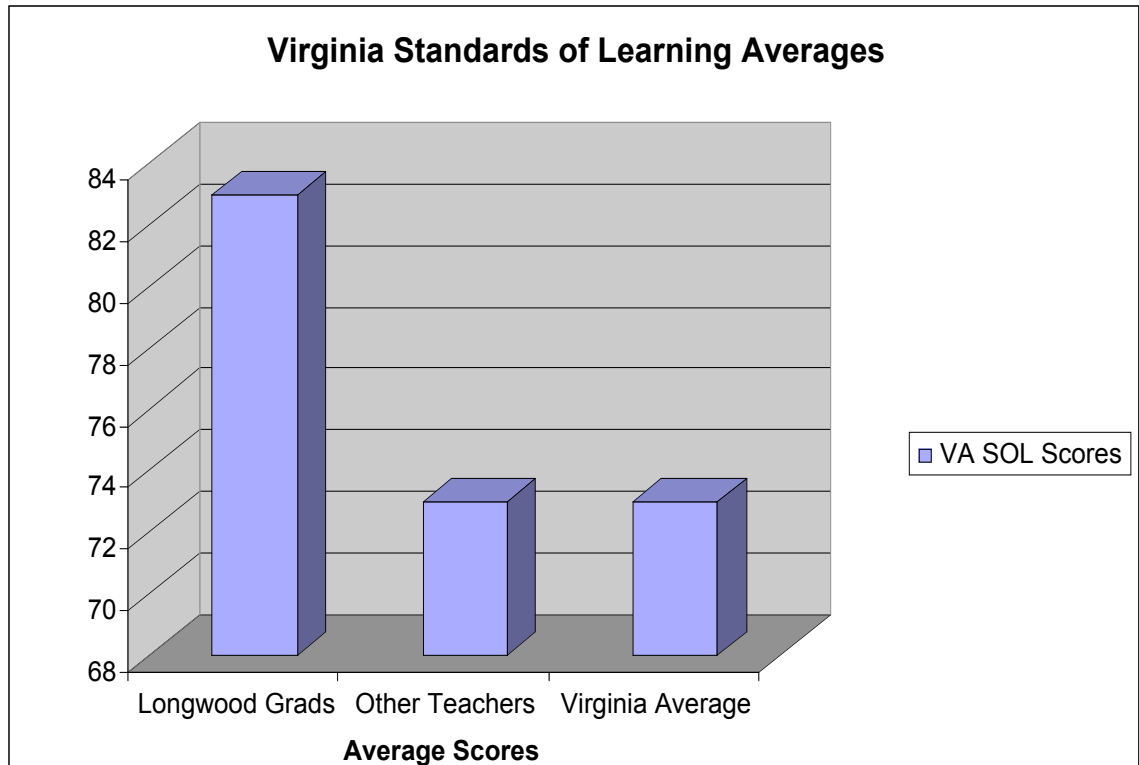


$t=10.75$   $p = .0001$

Another study compared the performance on the 5<sup>th</sup> grade Reading Standards of Learning test between Longwood Literacy and Culture graduate students and non-Longwood graduates in a rural school division. The mean for Longwood graduates was

83 while the non-Longwood graduate's mean was 73, identical to the State-wide average. Pupils of Longwood graduates performed better than either of the other two groups.

**Chart 4. Comparison of Longwood Teacher Education Graduates with Other Non-Longwood Teachers in the Same Grade and School Division and with the Virginia State Average on the Fifth Grade Standards of Learning English Language Arts Test.**

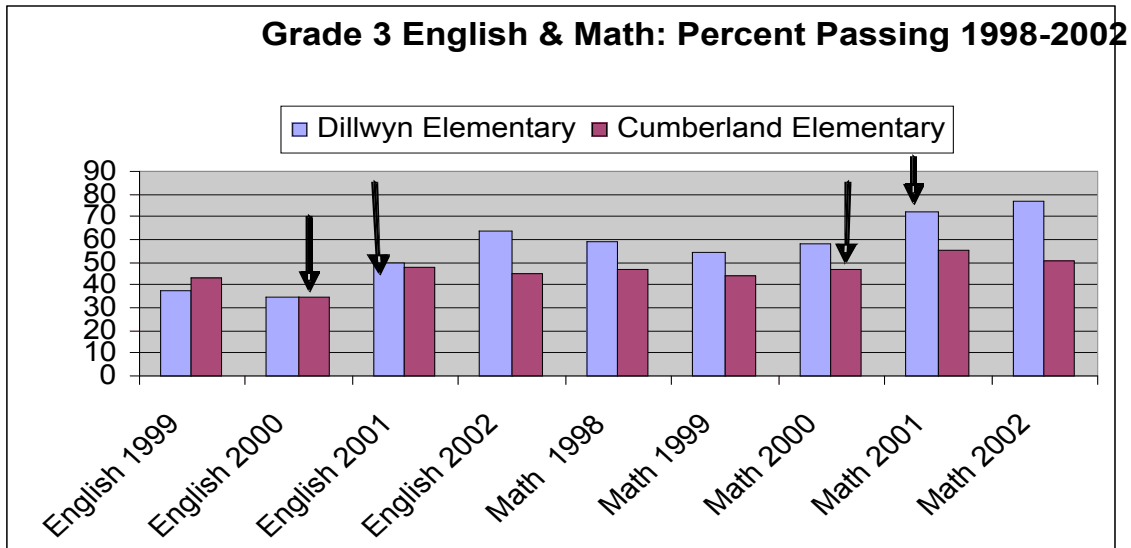


Superintendents in Southside Virginia report that the Standards of Learning (SOL) scores of their pupils have increased significantly during the time that Partnership students and faculty have actively supported their teachers and P-6 pupils. Percent passing data from the Virginia Department of Education is reported in the graphs below for Partnership schools for the last five years. Partnership began in Cumberland Elementary School in Fall 2000, in Dillwyn Elementary in Fall 2001, in Eureka Elementary and in Prince Edward Elementary in Fall 2002. The data for Cumberland and Dillwyn, who have participated for at least three years, is reported below. Similar patterns are beginning to emerge at the more recent Partnership schools.

Cumberland Elementary and Dillwyn Elementary are located in rural southern Virginia. Southside Virginia is an economically depressed area with high unemployment (18%) and high illiteracy rates (25%). Southside has been negatively impacted by an economic dependence on agriculture (tobacco), textiles and furniture manufacturing, all of which have decreased production and employment significantly in recent years. Each elementary school has more than 90% of its children enrolled in the Free and Reduced Price Lunch program. An average of 52% of Cumberland Elementary students are ethnic minorities while Dillwyn has an average of 55% ethnic minority children, predominantly

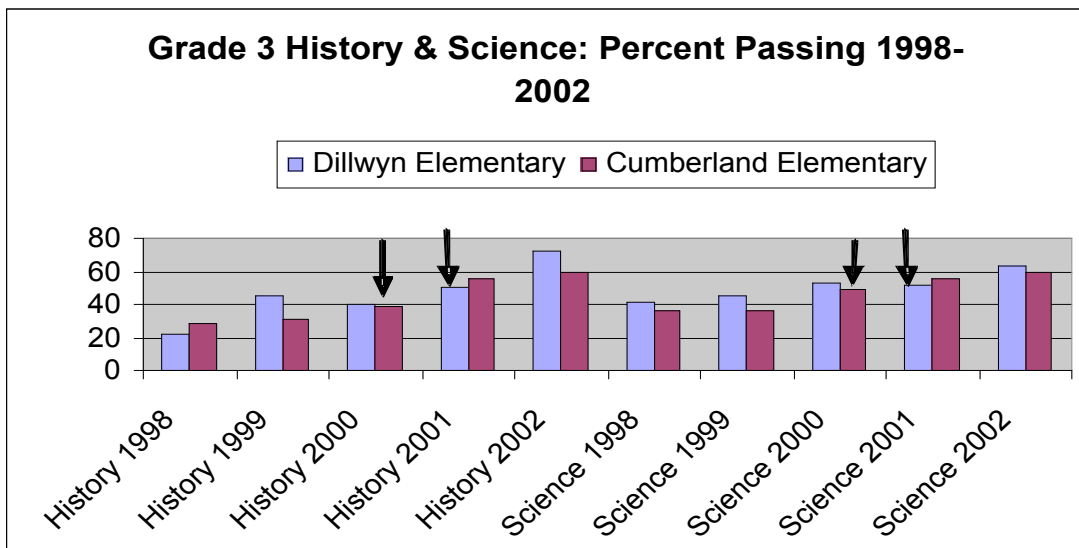
African-American. An average of 15 Partnership students have been placed in each of these schools each semester over the last three years. The Teacher Work Sample was initiated in the Partnership program in Fall 2001 after an initial pilot program in Cumberland Elementary.

**Chart 5. Partnership Elementary Schools Performance on Grade 3 English and Math Standards of Learning Tests 1998-2002.**



(Arrow indicates Beginning Year for Partnership.)

**Chart 6. Partnership Elementary Schools Performance on Grade 3 History and Science Standards of Learning Tests 1998-2002.**



While we do not claim that it was the Partnership that caused the improvement in SOL scores, it is possible to see a pattern repeating across schools and content subject areas resulting in a repeated measures design over time. The improvement in SOL scores

was a combination of cooperative and collaborative work by the teachers and administrators of the schools with the Partnership professors and students.

Data from Partnership Teacher Work Samples from Fall 2001 to Spring 2004 was aggregated (N=1307). An Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) on pre- and post-test scores resulted in significance greater than  $p = .000$ . A multiple regression of the seven critical elements with the post-test scores showed that the best predictor of the post-test scores with a beta of .356 was **Design for Instruction** in which the teacher candidate designs instruction for specific learning goals, student characteristics and needs, and learning contexts. Designing for individualized instruction is a primary component of the pedagogy instruction during the Partnership semester. Other significant predictors included alignment with goals and standards, and knowledge of diverse learning. Three of the seven processes accounted for 61% of the variance in the K-6 post-test scores, Learning Goals, Design for Instruction and Contextual Factors with adjusted R Squares of .484, .527 and .607 respectively. These three factors are central to the Teacher Work Sample, the pedagogical instruction during the Partnership semester and the student's instruction in the classroom. Their contribution to the performance of K-6 pupils is significant.