

About AdvancED and its History in Virginia

AdvancED is an international nonprofit organization that provides education improvement and accreditation services to over 34,000 educational institutions, employing more than four million educators and enrolling more than 20 million students across the United States and 70 other nations. AdvancED was created through a 2006 merger of the Pre-K-12 divisions of the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI) and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI); it was expanded through the addition of the Northwest Accreditation Commission (NWAC) in 2012.

AdvancED has deep roots in the accreditation of public schools in the Commonwealth of Virginia. A 1903 act of the Virginia General Assembly established the minimum requirements for high school teachers, the first step in developing standards for high school accreditation. Nearly a decade later in 1912, a comprehensive program of high school accreditation began when the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools (a forerunner of AdvancED) established the Virginia Commission on Accredited Schools. For over 80 years, SACS-CASI was authorized by the Virginia Board of Education to accredit public schools in the Commonwealth. The State Board revised its *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia* in 1997 to strengthen the Standards of Learning, which were adopted in 1995 and first administered in 1998. Thus, the State Board through the Department of Education now accredits public schools. Virginia schools are no longer required to seek accreditation from AdvancED, although more than 600 schools and divisions continue to do so. An internationally recognized accreditation signals a school and school division's quality and burnishes its reputation. School leaders use the AdvancED accreditation process as a management tool because it can help identify problems of practice and areas for school improvement.

The Virginia Foundation for Educational Leadership (VFEL) and Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals (VASSP), along with our outstanding student programs the Virginia Student Councils Association (VSCA) and Virginia Association of Honors Societies (VAHS), welcomed the addition of the Virginia Office of AdvancED to its Cutshaw Avenue building in Richmond in January 2018.

