Virginia falls short of preparing all students for success

The system is not designed to close achievement gaps for economically disadvantaged children and children of color

For the future economic success of Virginia, every child should have educational opportunities that lead to graduation from high school and being college- or career-ready.
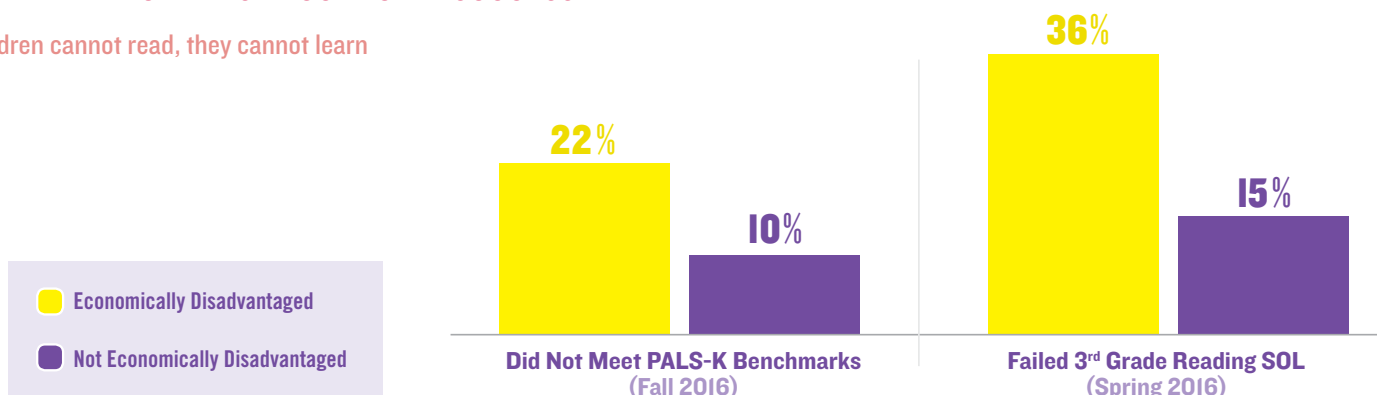
Too many children from disadvantaged backgrounds and children of color do not fulfill this goal and, consequently, are less likely to be able to contribute to the economy as adults. Without targeted intervention and resources, disparities in school start early and persist through graduation.
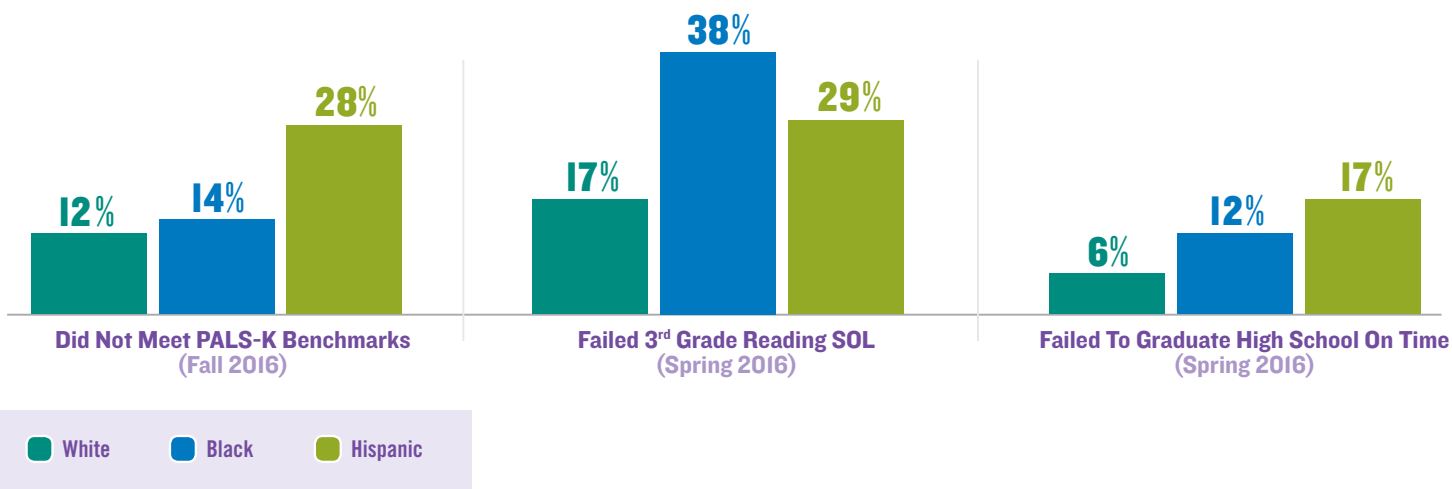
ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN TEND TO START SCHOOL BEHIND AND LAG BEHIND

3RD GRADE READING PROFICIENCY IS A CRITICAL MEASURE ALONG THE PATH TOWARDS EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS

When children cannot read, they cannot learn

- Economically Disadvantaged
- Not Economically Disadvantaged

22% / **10%**
Did Not Meet PALS-K Benchmarks
(Fall 2016)

36% / **15%**
Failed 3rd Grade Reading SOL
(Spring 2016)

BY 3RD GRADE, BLACK AND HISPANIC STUDENTS ARE NEARLY TWICE AS LIKELY TO FALL BEHIND THEIR WHITE PEERS

12% **14%** **28%**
Did Not Meet PALS-K Benchmarks
(Fall 2016)

17% **38%** **29%**
Failed 3rd Grade Reading SOL
(Spring 2016)

6% **12%** **17%**
Failed To Graduate High School On Time
(Spring 2016)

- White
- Black
- Hispanic

* All sources available at vakids.org/elections

Questions for Candidates
#VAVotes4Kids

1 The Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI) for at-risk 4-year-olds has grown to serve about 18,000 children a year and has demonstrated positive results: students who attend VPI are more likely to meet kindergarten readiness benchmarks than their peers. However, the state estimates that an additional 7,000 at-risk 4-year-olds do not get the opportunity to attend VPI. **If elected, how would you try to shape the future of preschool in Virginia?**

2 The achievement gap between lower income students and their higher income peers and between white students and students of color has been a persistent problem in Virginia and has worsened recently. **How would you address the achievement gap in Pre-K to 12 education?**

3 Virginia lags behind many other states in its targeted support to assist students from low-income families. Additionally, school divisions in high-poverty communities suffered deeper budget cuts from the state than other divisions during the recession and the budget has not yet returned to pre-recession levels. **How would you address the budget shortfalls faced by school divisions in high poverty areas of the state?**

4 Virginia's Board of Education has made a recommendation to ensure Virginia schools have adequate staffing for critical positions such as principals, assistant principals, school counselors, nurses, social workers, psychologists, and other support staff. **What do you think of these recommendations? How would you address the issue of school support staff?**

5 While on-time graduation rates have improved over the last 10 years, approximately 5,000 students did not complete high school during the most recent school year with their peers. **What would you do for students who struggle to complete high school?**

6 Virginia schools disproportionately suspend Black students and students with disabilities. In 2016, African American students were 23% of the student population, but were subjected to 60% of long-term suspensions. Students with disabilities were 12% of the student population but 22% of long-term suspensions. **What would you do to ensure that all children are treated equally in the school system when it comes to behavior and discipline?**

7 In the most recent school year, 42% of students participated in the free and reduced lunch program. This represents a 35% increase since the recession. While many students are provided meals through the school lunch and breakfast programs, Virginia does not participate in all available school nutrition programs. **If elected, how would you address the increase in students participating in school nutrition programs?**

8 Children in poverty, children experiencing behavioral challenges, and English language learners need additional support to succeed in school. **What efforts would you champion to ensure that children from all backgrounds succeed in school?**

Voices For Virginia's Children

kids count in Virginia