



## **Proposal for New Degrees in Education**

### **Justification:**

#### Teacher Shortage

There is a current documented shortage of qualified PK-12 teachers both nationally and within the Commonwealth of Virginia. According to data from the Virginia Department of Education, the number of unfilled teaching positions in the state nearly doubled between the 2013-2014 and 2017-2018 school years causing Virginia schools to begin the 2016-2017 school year with more than 1000 teacher vacancies. In response, former Gov. Terry McAuliffe signed an executive order in December of 2017 directing the state education board to adopt emergency rules to allow colleges to again offer four-year undergraduate degrees in teaching. In 2018 the General Assembly introduced and passed, among additional changes to the teaching licensure process, legislation permitting colleges and universities to create these programs. Students can now become fully-licensed teachers after earning a four-year undergraduate degree in education.

By October of 2019, the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia approved new programs at fifteen public colleges and universities in the state. Our community partners, including Montgomery County Public Schools, have also indicated a local need for more properly licensed and qualified teachers, while undergraduate admissions recruiters have reported that high-school students are often confused about how to become a PK-12 teacher at Virginia Tech. As other colleges and universities in Virginia begin offering undergraduate licensure, Virginia Tech School of Education will need to offer comparable opportunities in order maintain current enrollment and attract new students.

#### Critical Shortage Areas

While there are teacher vacancies of all types across the state, there are specific licensure areas that have especially prevalent shortages. The Virginia Department of Education discloses annually, a list of ten *Critical Teaching Shortage Areas* to the General Assembly based on vacancies and/or a documented lack of qualified applicants for positions. Elementary Education has been near the top of this list since the 2010-2011 school year. Secondary Math and Career and Technical Education have also been in the top half for the same period. Secondary English Language Arts has been included each year and History & Social Sciences has ranked recently, as well.

Because preparation is a key factor influencing teacher recruitment and retention, Virginia Tech School of Education has an opportunity to produce capable educators and

reduce some of these shortages. Offering licensure through undergraduate majors will streamline requirements and lower the overall cost of entering the profession, while still preparing highly qualified teachers for the Commonwealth of Virginia.

### Job Market Information

According to the Virginia Employment Commission, both Elementary and Secondary School Teacher are considered high-growth occupations for individuals holding bachelor's degrees. The number of Elementary School Teacher positions are expected to increase by almost 4000 while Secondary positions close to 3000. The Bureau of Labor Statistics projects a national growth of 3% for Kindergarten and Elementary School Teachers and 4% for High School Teachers over the next 10 years.

### **Strategic Plan:**

Since fall 2018, faculty and staff in the School of Education have met with (and continue to meet with) representatives from the Virginia Department of Education and State Council of Higher Education for Virginia to determine how new regulations will affect our programs. We have also consulted with teacher preparation programs at other colleges and universities regarding their plans for transitioning to undergraduate programs.

The School of Education faculty and staff met as a group in spring 2019 to plan how our new programs would operate and collaborated with impacted departments to determine how we could build programs that would provide appropriate knowledge, skills, and dispositions for future educators while preserving the key student-centered elements of an undergraduate program. Our Science and Music Education programs will remain at the graduate level while Elementary, English Language Arts, History and Social Sciences, Mathematics, and Career and Technical Education programs will transition to undergraduate licensure.

We continue to work with appropriate departments on campus as well as our SCHEV representative and the VDOE to create high-quality undergraduate teacher preparation programs. We have met with the First Year Experience office to plan for students who will have different developmental needs than those we currently serve in our graduate programs and will continue to build relationships with high-school and community college teacher education programs that support students before they enter formal approved licensure programs.

The proposed degrees and majors will be housed in the School of Education within the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences. We are proposing two degrees, B.S.Ed. in Elementary Education and B.A.Ed./B.S.Ed. in Secondary Education, based on available CIP codes, the differences in core competencies for licensure established by the Virginia Department of Education, and professional educator standards recognized by the Virginia Tech School of Education.

B.S.Ed. in Elementary Education will contain the Elementary Education PK-6 major with licensure. The content covered in this major is intentionally planned to cover specific

material and practical aspects of teaching young children without much room for deviation. The Elementary Education major includes an emphasis on STEM as well as literacy.

The B.A.Ed./B.S.Ed. in Secondary Education will contain majors where licensure involves students in 6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade. While the foundational education courses are the same for all majors in Secondary Education, the specific coursework of each licensure area is unique requiring multiple majors. Both B.A.Ed. and B.S.Ed. are included as options within Secondary Education because the individual teaching areas have different professional expectations which are reflected in the required courses.

The graduation checksheets for English Language Arts and History and Social Sciences include a broader array of courses within the subject area allowing students to customize their education based on individual interests. Administrators hiring teachers in these licensure areas expect students to earn a B.A.Ed. and possess individualized specialties. Mathematics and Career and Technical Education requirements, on the other hand, are very scripted to cover the specific fundamental standards of the content area. Administrators hiring in these areas would expect all licensed teachers be proficient in the same content and possess a B.S.Ed. in Secondary Education.

The first students will be able to enroll fall of 2021 and those who are able to transfer into the major could possibly graduate in spring 2023, provided they have taken the appropriate courses. During the transition, any student who would not be able to transfer into and complete the undergraduate degree in 4 years would be allowed to continue through the 5<sup>th</sup>-year master's program as it is currently established. A transition is expected by spring 2024. Subsequently, a revised master's program will be developed for licensed, practicing teachers to further their professional competences.

### **Students Served:**

Our new education majors will serve the same audience as the graduate licensure programs with the primary purpose being to reduce the financial barrier of a 5<sup>th</sup> year of college while still producing teachers who are strong in pedagogy and content knowledge.

Between 2014 and 2019, an average of 231 incoming freshmen indicated an interest in teaching on their Virginia Tech admission applications. In 2019, of those freshmen, 35 declared *Pre-Education and Human Sciences, Undecided* as their first-choice major. While *PreEd Undecided* is not a degree-granting major, most of these students will progress to our licensure programs by way of related undergraduate degrees.

The Pre-Education Advising Program (PEAP) currently serves between 300 and 400 students, in multiple majors. PEAP is a part of the School of Education and supports undergraduate students from all majors in moving toward the goal of becoming

competitive applicants and highly qualified educators. Participating students benefit from; advising sessions on specific requirements for state endorsements and graduate school admissions, field experiences in local schools, teacher assessment preparation, professional development workshops, and leadership opportunities in pre-professional student organizations. Not all students who participate will apply to our graduate program.

There are several reasons that pre-education students choose to not continue with graduate school, including: cost, desire to move closer to home, difficulty with prerequisites, the classroom was not what they expected, and alternate licensure opportunities. Each year, graduate licensure programs in the VT School of Education produce 100-150 licensed PK-12 educators. Over the past 5 years, Elementary Education has averaged 25 students per year, while Math, English, Social Studies and CTE (combined into the category of Secondary Education) have averaged around 30.

In the short-term, we anticipate the number of incoming freshmen to mirror what currently applies to the graduate program 25-35 students per degree (not per major). We expect that number to double within the first two years and cap at 75-100 incoming freshmen. Of those, we anticipate 85-90% will complete the degree. We expect to maintain 250-350 undergraduate students in each degree program (elementary and secondary).

For students who do not complete the teacher licensure requirements but still earn the education degree, there are related career opportunities in the field, such as: teaching in private schools or online programs, hospitals providing educational services for long-term school-aged patients, professional tutoring, designing curriculum for textbook companies, developing exams for testing agencies, or working in educational outreach programs for museums/parks or agencies providing professional development to PK-12 teachers. Students who qualify may also apply to one of our graduate programs.

### Benefits to Students

Undergraduate education degrees allow a route to licensure without the added expense and time of graduate school. Having clearly visible education majors will allow high-school students, who are specifically interested in teaching, to imagine themselves at Virginia Tech. High-school and community college students who are participating in future educator programs will be able to readily transition into our undergraduate majors instead of going through other programs to be eligible for graduate study.

Undergraduate programs also allow more graduates to obtain a full teaching license upon completion of their bachelor's program.

Undergraduate programs create more opportunities for students to learn their content within the context of teaching it, creating stronger connections between pedagogy and content knowledge. The increased length of time prospective teacher candidates will spend in the program will allow us to properly scaffold their learning and provide valuable feedback throughout the degree. It will also provide students opportunities to

meaningfully reflect on their coursework and teaching experiences as they develop essential educator dispositions.

Finally, offering formal education majors will encourage a sense of belongingness and professional identity among future educators. Sense of belonging and its impact on student success has been well documented in higher education research. A college students' sense of belonging is related to several things, including engagement and retention, motivation, and academic performance. Equally important to education students, is the development of a professional teacher identity. This identity promotes effectiveness and well-being and is developed, in-part, through interactions with peers during shared pre-professional experiences.

### Benefits to Community

Maintaining the quality of our program while reducing financial barriers and expediting the licensure process advances the teaching profession, as well. Under certain circumstances, an individual with a bachelor's degree can obtain provisional licensure and teach in PK-12 settings without any formal training in the classroom. Research shows that alternatively licensed teachers, such as these, leave the profession at a much high rate than those who have finished an approved educator preparation program and we know that teacher turnover leads to significant recruitment and training costs for school systems while negatively impacting student achievement and overall teacher effectiveness. Providing teaching candidates with proper preparation and earlier and more frequent opportunities in classrooms will reduce this type of teacher attrition.

### **Resources Needed:**

The graduation checksheets for education majors are comprised mostly of redesigned courses within the existing master's program including previously required content courses. A few new courses were developed to offer additional scaffolding opportunities (such as field study and first year experience) and foundational material. By redeveloping existing courses and utilizing current undergraduate initiatives to the maximum extent possible, no new resources will be required to implement this new major at this time.

### **Program Requirements:**

In addition to the enclosed graduation checksheet, students who are planning to become licensed will need to meet requirements set forth by the Virginia Department of Education including professional licensure examinations and certifications.

College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences  
School of Education  
Bachelor of Science in Education in Elementary Education  
Major in Elementary Education (PK-6)  
For students entering under UG catalog 2021-2022

## GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Language Study Requirement - Students who do not complete two years of a single foreign or classical language or American Sign Language in high school, may do so by taking six credits of college-level foreign or classical language or American Sign Language. The six credits used to meet this requirement may not be used to satisfy the minimum number of credits required for graduation.

Credits and GPA – Completion of a minimum of 120 credits with a minimum overall GPA of 2.5; and in-major GPA of 3.0. (In major GPA includes all EDCI and EDEP courses)

Prerequisites: Some courses listed on this checksheet may have pre-/co-requisites; please consult the University Course Catalog or check with your advisor.

Additional Requirements – Students must submit passing scores on required state licensure examinations.

## SATISFACTORY PROGRESS TOWARD DEGREE

University Policy 91<sup>1</sup> requires a student to make satisfactory progress towards a degree. Additionally, licensure programs require that by the time a student has completed 72 credits, they must have passed all licensure examinations, carry an in-major GPA of 3.0, and be accepted into the educator preparation program.

## PATHWAYS TO GENERAL EDUCATION (42 CREDITS)

*\*unless otherwise indicated, all courses taken to satisfy Pathways General Education must be taken on an A-F basis*

### Concept 1: Discourse (9 credits)

#### 1F - Foundational

- \_\_\_ ENGL 1105 First-Year Writing (3 credits)
- \_\_\_ ENGL 1106 First-Year Writing (3 credits)

#### 1A - Advanced/Applied

- \_\_\_ (3 credits)

### Concept 2: Critical Thinking in the Humanities (6 credits)

- \_\_\_ HIST 1115 History of the United States (3 credits; also meets Concept 7 requirement)
- \_\_\_ HIST 1116 History of the United States (3 credits)

### Concept 3: Reasoning in the Social Sciences (6 credits)

- \_\_\_ GEOG 1014 World Regions (3 credits)
- \_\_\_ HD 1004 Human Development I (3 credits) or PSYC 2034<sup>2</sup> Developmental Psychology (3 credits)

### Concept 4: Reasoning in the Natural Sciences (6 credits)

- \_\_\_ BIOL 1014 Introduction to Biology (3 credits)
- \_\_\_ GEOS 1004 Earth Science: Our Past, Present, and Future (3 credits)

### Concept 5: Quantitative and Computational Thinking (9 credits)

#### 5f - Foundational

- \_\_\_ (3 credits)
- \_\_\_ (3 credits)

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://policies.vt.edu/91-eligibility-for-continued-enrollment.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Pre: PSYC 1004 Introduction to Psychology

**5a - Advanced/Applied**

\_\_\_\_\_ EDCI 4244 Curriculum & Instruction in Middle School Mathematics (4-8)<sup>3</sup> (3 credits)

**Concept 6: Critique and Practice in Design and the Arts (6 Credits)**

**6d - Design**

\_\_\_\_\_ 3 credits

**6a - Arts**

\_\_\_\_\_ 3 credits

**Concept 7: Critical Analysis of Identity and Equity in the United States (3 credits)**

\_\_\_\_\_ HIST 1115 History of the United States (3 credits; also meets Concept 2 requirement)

**BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN EDUCATION IN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION COMMON DEGREE CORE REQUIREMENTS<sup>4</sup>  
(22 CREDITS)**

- \_\_\_\_\_ EDCI 1004 Professional Dispositions in Elementary Education (3 credits)
- \_\_\_\_\_ EDCI 2574 Social Foundations of Education (3 credits)
- \_\_\_\_\_ EDCI 3234 Foundations of Reading Instruction (PK-6) (3 credits)
- \_\_\_\_\_ EDCI 3244 Curriculum & Instruction in Elementary Mathematics, PK-3 (3 credits)
- \_\_\_\_\_ EDCI 3334 Teaching Language Arts in the Elementary Classroom (4 credits)
- \_\_\_\_\_ EDCI 4554 Educating Exceptional Learners<sup>5</sup> (3 credits)
- \_\_\_\_\_ EDEP 2374 Educational Psychology for PK-12 Teachers (3 credits)

**MAJOR IN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION WITH LICENSURE REQUIREMENTS (42 CREDITS)**

- \_\_\_\_\_ EDCI 3074 Elementary Curriculum: Methods in Teaching<sup>6</sup> (3 credits)
- \_\_\_\_\_ EDCI 3254 Elementary Methods in Science (3 credits)
- \_\_\_\_\_ EDCI 3354 STEM in Elementary Schools<sup>7</sup> (3 credits)
- \_\_\_\_\_ EDCI 3464 Elementary Social Studies Teaching Methods (3 credits)
- \_\_\_\_\_ EDCI 3474 Assessment & Diagnosis in Elementary Mathematics Classroom (3 credits)
- \_\_\_\_\_ EDCI 4074 Culturally Responsive Teaching in the Elementary Classroom<sup>8</sup> (3 credits)
- \_\_\_\_\_ MATH 1614 Numbers and Operations for Teachers (3 credits)
- \_\_\_\_\_ MATH 1624 Geometry for Teachers (3 credits)

Elementary Teaching Practicum:

- \_\_\_\_\_ EDCI 2004 Discovering the Elementary Classroom: Field Studies in Pre-Education (3 credits)
- \_\_\_\_\_ EDCI 3964 Field Work/Practicum (6 credits)
- \_\_\_\_\_ EDCI 4964 Field Work/Practicum (9 credits)

**FREE ELECTIVE COURSES (14 CREDITS)**

**120 TOTAL Credits**

---

<sup>3</sup> Pre: MATH 1614, MATH 1624, EDCI 3244

<sup>4</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, all courses must be taken on an A-F basis; courses satisfying degree core requirements may not be double counted to satisfy other areas of a degree.

<sup>5</sup> Pre: Junior Standing

<sup>6</sup> Co: 3964

<sup>7</sup> Pre: 3254

<sup>8</sup> Co: 4964