

General Assembly Report – K-12 Education

As the 2015 General Assembly wraps up, I want to provide an update on bills and issues that may be important to you.

Education is always one of the most important issues we address in Richmond. Over the last several years, the House of Delegates has made reforming and improving our schools central to our legislative agenda. In 2013 we funded a 2% teacher pay raise. In 2014 we reformed our Standards of Learning tests, eliminating five SOLs for students in grades 3-8.

Partly because of these efforts, but mostly because of the dedication of our hardworking educators, Virginia has some of the best public schools in the nation. Virginia ranks in the top 10 in five of six categories scored by *Education Week*.

We are building on these efforts this year. We outlined a legislative agenda to lay the foundation for success in the classroom. This includes:

- Providing teachers with a 1.5% pay raise – the second pay raise in three years
- Providing an additional \$60 million in funding for K-12 education compared to Governor McAuliffe's originally-introduced budget
- Making a deposit into the teacher retirement fund to ensure that it is fully solvent
- Providing local leaders with flexibility in the accreditation process
- Enacting additional reforms to the SOLs, including streamlining the retake process and promoting the use of interdisciplinary assessments
- Supporting teachers by increasing opportunities for professional development

I am attaching a full list of bills that may be of interest to you. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

HB 2238 Parental Choice Education Savings Accounts (Patron: LaRock – R – 33) Permits the parents of special needs students to qualify for a Parental Choice Education Savings Account on withdrawing the child from public school. The account will be funded with part of the state per-pupil funding that would have been spent on the child in public school. Local school district funding would remain untouched. Funds in the account could be spent on a broad array of educational expenses, including private school tuition, distance learning classes, tutoring, therapy, curriculum, and other educational expenses. The funds can also be saved for college expenses. This bill provides options to special education students who are in need of new schooling options and to schools struggling to accommodate their needs. **Status: House: VOTE: PASSAGE (57-Y 42-N), Senate: 02/25/15 Senate: Defeated by Senate (18-Y 18-N 1-A), Lt. Gov. Northam votes No**

HB 1674 School accreditation frequency. (Patron: Greason – R – 32) Eliminates the requirement for the Board of Education to annually review the accreditation status of public elementary and secondary schools and permits the Board to review the accreditation status of schools annually, once every two years, or once every three years. The bill requires the

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frequency of such review to be based on criteria established by the Board that take into consideration each school's accreditation history, most recent accreditation status, and performance on metrics contained in the School Performance Report Card. The bill provides that any school that fails to achieve full accreditation but whose accreditation status is not scheduled to be reviewed by the Board in the subsequent year may request that the Board review its accreditation status in the subsequent year. The bill requires Standards of Learning assessments scores to continue to be reported on the School Performance Report Card annually, regardless of accreditation frequency. **Status: House: VOTE: PASSAGE (95-Y 0-N), Senate: Passed Senate with amendment (40-Y 0-N), awaiting Governor's action.**

HB 1336 State Council of Higher Education for Virginia; policy on course credit at public institutions of higher education for certain examinations. (Patron: Landes – R – 25) Requires the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, in consultation with the governing board of each public institution of higher education, to establish a uniform policy for granting undergraduate course credit to entering freshman students who have taken one or more Advanced Placement, Cambridge Advanced (A/AS), College-Level Examination Program (CLEP), or International Baccalaureate examinations and repeals the current law under which such governing boards individually implement such policies. The bill requires SCHEV and each public institution of higher education to make the policy available to the public on its website. The bill has a delayed effective date of July 1, 2016. **Status: House: VOTE: PASSAGE (95-Y 3-N), Senate: Passed Senate (31-Y 7-N), awaiting Governor's action.**

HB 1672 A-F school grading system; School Performance Report Card. (Patron: Greason – R – 32) Repeals the A-F school grading system created in the 2013 Session and amended in the 2014 Session and requires the Board of Education, in consultation with the Standards of Learning Innovation Committee and no later than July 1, 2016, to redesign the School Performance Report Card so that it is more effective in communicating to parents and the public the status and achievements of the public schools and local school divisions in the Commonwealth and submit such design to the Chairmen of the House Committee on Education and the Senate Committee on Education and Health for final approval. **Status: House: VOTE: PASSAGE (90-Y 10-N), Senate: Passed Senate with substitute (35-Y 5-N), awaiting Governor's action.**

HB 1307 Public elementary and secondary schools; student identification numbers. (Patron: Landes – R – 25) Prohibits the Department of Education and each local school board from requiring any student enrolled in a public elementary or secondary school or his parent to provide the student's federal social security number. The bill requires the Department to instead develop a system of unique student identification numbers and requires each local school board to assign such a number to each student enrolled in a public elementary or secondary school. Under current law, every student is required to present a federal social security number within 90 days of his enrollment; if a student is ineligible to obtain a social security number or his parent is unwilling to present a social security number, the superintendent may assign another identifying number or waive the requirement. **Status: Passed House BLOCK VOTE (98-Y 0-N), Passed Senate (38-Y 0-N), awaiting Governor's action.**

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HB 1490 Public schools; Standards of Learning tests. (Patron: Habeeb – R – 8) The legislation would require the Board of Education to promulgate regulations to provide the same criteria for eligibility for an expedited retake of any Standards of Learning (SOL) test, with the exception of the writing SOL assessment, to all students regardless of grade level or course. Currently, expedited retake is only available for assessments that are required for high school graduation. Students who failed an SOL assessment within a specified range will have the opportunity to retake the test within the same testing window. **Status: House: VOTE: BLOCK VOTE PASSAGE (98-Y 0-N), Senate: Passed Senate (38-Y 0-N), awaiting Governor’s action.**

HB 1615 Standards of Learning; integrated assessments. (Patron: Greason – R – 32) Permits the end-of-course and end-of-grade Standards of Learning assessments prescribed by the Board of Education to be integrated to include multiple subject areas. **Status: House: VOTE: BLOCK VOTE PASSAGE (96-Y 0-N), Senate: Referred to Committee on Education and Health, awaiting Governor’s action.**

HB1304 Virginia Public School Educational Technology Grants Program; leases of educational technology. (Patron: Farrell – R – 56) Permits eligible school divisions to apply for grants to lease educational technology under the Virginia Public School Educational Technology Grants Program. Under current law, such grants are available only for the acquisition and replacement of educational technology. **Status: House: Left in Appropriations**

HB 1320 Teacher licensure renewal; college credit. (Patron: Farrell – R – 56) Prohibits the Board of Education from requiring any teacher seeking renewal of a license to satisfy professional development requirements by completing coursework and earning credit at an institution of higher education at his own expense. **Status: House: VOTE: PASSAGE (94-Y 2-N). Senate: Passed Senate with amendments (39-Y 0-N), awaiting Governor’s action.**

HB 1338 Electronic textbooks; funding. (Patron: Farrell – R – 56) Requires, for purposes of Standards of Quality basic aid funding, the hardware and software necessary to support electronic textbooks to be considered an instructional expense. **Status: House: VOTE: PASSAGE (100-Y 0-N), Senate: Passed Senate (39-Y 0-N), awaiting Governor’s action.**

HB 1351 Diploma seals; biliteracy. (Patron: Ramadan – R – 87) Directs the Board of Education to award a diploma seal for biliteracy for any student who meets certain criteria for general academic achievement and demonstrates proficiency in a foreign language through certain testing or coursework. **Status: House: VOTE: BLOCK VOTE PASSAGE (98-Y 0-N), Senate: Passed Senate with substitute (33-Y 4-N), awaiting Governor’s action.**

HB 1443 The use of seclusion and restraint in public schools; Board of Education regulations. (Patron: Bell – R – 20, Co-Patron LaRock, R-33) Requires the Board of Education to adopt regulations on the use of seclusion and restraint in public elementary and secondary schools in the Commonwealth. The bill requires that such regulations incorporate certain existing guidance documents; include definitions of terms, criteria for use, restrictions for use, training requirements, notification requirements, reporting requirements, and follow-up requirements; and address distinctions between certain student populations. The bill is a

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recommendation of the Virginia Commission on Youth. **Status: VOTE: BLOCK VOTE PASSAGE (98-Y 0-N), Senate: Passed Senate (37-Y 1-N), awaiting Governor's action.**

HB 1616 Career and technical education; alignment with national certification requirements. (Patron: Greason – R – 32) Places a requirement in the Code of Virginia that requires localities to align the curriculum for their Career in Technical Education Courses with the appropriate national certification requirements. This will codify what is already standard in many school districts and ensure students who choose a CTE career path are prepared to enter the workforce upon graduation. The bill will also help prevent CTE students from having to pay for additional coursework after graduation to prepare for national certification tests in their chosen field. Based on feedback from DOE, no fiscal impact is expected. **Status: House: VOTE: BLOCK VOTE PASSAGE (97-Y 0-N), Senate: Passed Senate with amendments (40-Y 0-N), awaiting Governor's action.**

HB 1361 Virginia Virtual School established. (Patron: Bell – R – 20, Co-Patron LaRock, R-33) Establishes the Board of the Virginia Virtual School (the Board) as a policy agency in the executive branch of state government, under the authority of the Secretary of Education, for the purpose of governing the online educational programs and services offered to students enrolled in the Virginia Virtual School (the School). The bill gives the 13-member Board operational control of the School and assigns the Board's powers and duties. The bill requires the School to be open to any school-age person in the Commonwealth and provide an educational program meeting the Standards of Quality for grades kindergarten through 12. The bill has a delayed effective date of July 1, 2016. **Status: House: VOTE: PASSAGE (62-Y 38-N), Senate: left in Committee on Education and Health**

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