

**CONVERSION TO THE METRIC SYSTEM
IN VIRGINIA'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**REPORTED TO
THE GOVERNOR AND THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA**



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**COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
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Senate Joint Resolution No. 28, adopted by the General Assembly in 1974, reads in part as follows:

"Resolved by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That all State agencies are directed to prepare and disseminate to the applicable Governor's Secretary to whom they are responsible, a printed report outlining the effects the implementation of a metric system will have on their responsibilities. Specifically, the Board of Education shall study the textbook implementation of the metric system and the training of teachers in conversion to the new system and advise on a program to accomplish the same. Such report shall be transmitted to the applicable Secretary no later than January one, nineteen hundred seventy-five, and shall include, but not be limited to, the cost of the changeover to the metric system for each agency, effects on employee training and productivity, transition difficulties, the need for modifications to equipment and a staged plan for each agency for converting from the imperial to the metric system. Such reports should also contain recommendations for a coordinated Statewide program for conversion with educational requirements and other steps designed to minimize difficulties during the transition period."

The adoption of the metric system of measurement will involve a number of program adjustments, changes in the development of materials, and programs for training personnel of the State Department of Education as well as instructional personnel in the school divisions of the Commonwealth. To prepare for the metric system, the following recommendations should be carried out:

- (1) The adoption of the metric system will mean that textbooks which are adopted by the Board of Education must provide adequate treatment of the metric system of measurement. Although this statement is particularly applicable to mathematics and science textbooks, it also applies to a lesser extent to all adopted textbooks.
- (2) Those persons who will be training for the teaching profession in Virginia's colleges and universities must be provided with the necessary background and subject matter to enable them to understand and teach the metric system during their

teacher training programs. Program approval by the Board of Education should include evidence that the metric system has been taught at the college level.

- (3) Those persons who are teaching in Virginia's public schools must be provided with adequate knowledge and skills in the use of the metric system. It is recommended that \$15 per person be added to the scholarship fund for in-service training of personnel in the local school divisions. With a high priority on providing these in-service training funds the Department of Education can help each locality to set up in-service training classes for its teachers. The estimated cost for this program, which would be provided only one time, would be \$750,000.
- (4) A committee composed of supervisory personnel of the Department of Education should develop a plan for local school divisions to use as an in-service training guide.
- (5) One dollar per student in average daily membership (A.D.M.) should be provided for only one year for the purchase of teaching materials and equipment to be used by the teachers in the transition to the metric system.
- (6) Personnel in the Department of Education must be trained in the use of the metric system of measurement. This will be done at a nominal cost by using staff members who are familiar with the metric system to teach other members of the staff.
- (7) The metric system of measurement should be used in all guides developed by the State Department of Education.

- (8) Statewide and regional conferences sponsored by the Department of Education should devote an appropriate amount of time to teaching the metric system to those in attendance.
- (9) The staff of the Department of Education should continue to be available to work in the local school divisions to offer leadership and assistance in the transformation process to the metric system.
- (10) Local school divisions should be encouraged to include classes in the use of the metric system of measurement in their adult education programs.
- (11) The Department of Education should use all applicable materials developed by other State agencies, rather than duplicate materials and publications relating to the metric system.
- (12) Training in the use of the metric system of measurement for writing and interpreting school bus specifications should be undertaken by the Pupil Transportation Service in the Department of Education.
- (13) The planning and construction of school buildings and facilities will present some problems until those who read and interpret blueprints and specifications have been trained.
- (14) Educational television should be utilized in training teachers and pupils in the use of the metric system. Whenever appropriate other media also should be called upon for assistance.

The Committee feels that the training of personnel, both within the Department of Education and in each local school division, will constitute the greatest challenge in the change to the metric system of measurement.