

Report of the SJR 57 Commission on Educational Accountability

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



SENATE DOCUMENT NO. 13

**COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
RICHMOND
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2003 REPORT

SJR 57 Commission on Educational Accountability

First established by the 1999 Session of the General Assembly pursuant to SJR 498, the 20-member Commission on Educational Accountability was originally comprised of 11 legislative members, six nonlegislative members, and three ex officio members. The initial mission of the SJR 498 Commission was a comprehensive one; the Commission was to:

- i. Review the Standards of Accreditation (SOA) and any included accountability mechanisms;
- ii. Monitor the implementation of the Standards of Learning (SOL) and revised assessments;
- iii. Consider the work and recommendations of other recent study committees, such as the Commission on the Future of Public Education (HJR 196—1996), the Joint Subcommittee on Remediation (HJR 572—1999), the Commission on Educational Infrastructure (HJR 670—1999), the Standing Joint Subcommittee on School Dropout Prevention (HJR 241—1996), and the Joint Subcommittee Studying the Efficacy and Appropriateness of Establishing a School Incentive Reward Program in the Commonwealth (HJR 165—1996);
- iv. Develop recommendations for ways to increase the capacity of schools, teachers, and students to meet increasingly rigorous academic standards;
- v. Examine issues raised in SJR 344 (1999) regarding the effects on the Commonwealth's young people of failure to obtain a diploma pursuant to requirements of the SOA;
- vi. Evaluate the efficacy, appropriateness, and application of the Commonwealth's statutes, regulations, and policies governing the academic assessment of students who transfer into Virginia's public schools (SJR 389—1999);
- vii. Determine the feasibility and appropriateness of establishing a certificate of completion for certain vocational programs in public high schools (HJR 593—1999);
- viii. Determine the efficacy and appropriateness of the Commonwealth's system of funding the Standards of Quality (SOQ) for public schools (HJR 657—1999);
- ix. Study the instructional needs of students and teachers in the public schools of the Commonwealth (HJR 691—1999);
- x. Examine the impact of the SOL and the SOA on teachers, urban and small rural school divisions, and educationally at-risk students, giving particular attention to the preparation of teachers and time to instruct students to meet the SOL, the ability of urban and small rural school divisions to meet and maintain the requirements for accreditation, the effect of the SOL tests on grade promotion and retention of students and the awarding of high school diplomas, and the remediation of students who fail the SOL tests (HJR 721—1999);
- xi. Confer with the joint subcommittee established pursuant to SJR 447 (1999), regarding issues pertaining to overage students, adult students who are returning to school, and vocational-technical education;
- xii. Collaborate, coordinate, and receive regular reports of the Commission's special task force established pursuant to HJR 566 (1999) studying the integration of the SOL with the secondary school level curricula and workforce development skills;
- xiii. Collaborate, coordinate, and receive regular reports of the Commission's special task force studying the impact of the SOA on local school division budgets, in accordance with HJR 586 (1999) and HJR 723 (1999);
- xiv. Collaborate and confer with the joint subcommittee established to examine the efficacy and appropriateness of adjusting SOQ funding for certain small school divisions (SJR 481 – 1999);
- xv. Confer and coordinate the work of the Commission with other legislative study committees that have been charged to examine related issues to avoid duplication; and
- xvi. Consider such other issues as it deems appropriate.

Second Year of Study. Recognizing the need to pursue additional educational accountability issues, the General Assembly expanded the mission of the SJR 498 Commission in the 2000 Session by adding an additional special task force and directing specific issues for study. The passage of HJR 302 in 2000 created an eight-member special task force composed entirely of members of the Commission on Educational Accountability

to examine the need for appropriate alternative forms of Standards of Learning assessments for students receiving special education and related services and to continue the work of the Joint Subcommittee on Remediation. The special task force was to consider, among other things, current state-of-the-art testing and assessment of students receiving special education and related services; the development of appropriate forms of Standards of Learning assessments that will provide students receiving special education and related services with a range of modifications and accommodations to meet their educational needs; and such other issues as it deems appropriate.

Incorporating HJR 273 (Van Yahres--continuing remediation study) in HJR 302, the 2000 Session directed the full Commission to continue the work of the Joint Subcommittee on Remediation, and to "become familiar with the issues and policies regarding the joint subcommittee's work and its subsequent findings and recommendations throughout the course of its study so that efforts are not duplicated, and complete the objectives in the joint subcommittee's work plan for 2000."

With the adoption of HJR 159 (Council) and SJR 248 (Hanger), the Commission, in cooperation with the Board of Education, the State Council of Higher Education, the Senate Committee on Finance, and the House Committee on Appropriations, was to study the demand for and preparation of classroom teachers. The resolutions direct the Commission to:

- i. "project the number of classroom teachers needed in Virginia over the next ten years;
- ii. review the teacher education process;
- iii. assess recruitment and retention efforts;
- iv. evaluate procedures for awarding continuing contracts, including how Virginia may retain the most capable teachers and replace teachers who do not meet the qualifications, standards, and expectations set for teachers;
- v. consider the issues associated with compensation of teachers;
- vi. determine the adequacy of pre-service and in-service professional development of teachers; and
- vii. recommend ways to attract and retain an adequate supply of teachers in Virginia."

Third Year of Study. The 2001 Session of the General Assembly continued for one year the work of the SJR 498 Commission on Educational Accountability and its three task forces by adopting SJR 385. The resolution expanded the membership of the Commission to 25 members to include 14 legislative members, eight nonlegislative members, and three ex officio members, appointed as follows: six members of the Senate; eight members of the House of Delegates; one parent of a child who is enrolled in the public schools of the Commonwealth, one public school teacher, and one school principal, to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections; one division superintendent, one representative of the Virginia School Boards Association, and three citizens at large, to be appointed by the Speaker of the House; and the Secretary of Education, the President of the Board of Education, and the Superintendent of Public Instruction, who shall serve ex officio with full voting privileges.

Although not specifically assigning additional issues to the Commission or its task forces for consideration, the resolution notes that "another year of study will enable the Commission to pursue more fully its mission and to address more effectively the myriad of educational accountability issues assigned to it...." The Commission was, however, requested by the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Education and Health to "include the concepts presented in HB 2823 in its 2001 study plan and make any recommendations or findings on this matter as it may deem appropriate."

Also continued by the resolution was the work of the Commission's three task forces: the HJR 566 (1999) Task Force on the Educational Needs of the 21st Century; the HJR 723 (1999) Task Force on the Impact of the Standards of Accreditation on Local School Division Budgets; and the HJR 302 (2000) Task Force to Examine the Need for Appropriate Alternative Forms of Standards of Learning Assessments for Students Receiving Special Education and Related Services.

Task force memberships were expanded for 2001. The HJR 566 Task Force, previously comprised of 15 members, added one member of the House of Delegates to bring its membership total to 16. The HJR 723 Task Force encompassed 10 legislative members, adding two Delegates and one Senator to its previous roster of seven legislators. Finally, the HJR 302 Task Force again consisted entirely of full Commission members, with the addition of one Delegate and one Senator, to increase its membership to 10 legislators.

The resolution provided for three meetings for each of the task forces, and four meetings for the full Commission. The Commission and task force meetings were to be scheduled consecutively on the same days, to the extent practicable, to conserve costs.

The HJR 566 and HJR 323 Task Forces did not meet in 2001; the HJR 723 Task Force met in November 2001 to review the findings of the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission study on funding for the Standards of Quality.

To date, the Commission has produced three reports: Senate Document No. 52 (2000), Senate Document No. 36 (2001); and Senate Document No. 11 (2002).

Fourth Year of Study. The 2002 Session of the General Assembly adopted SJR 57, continuing the work of the Commission for a fourth year. Assigned to the Commission for study by the Senate Rules Committee were the issues raised by SJR 13 (Puller) and SJR 75 (Ruff). The Commission met once in 2002, on November 14.

SJR 13 would have created a legislative study committee to examine the feasibility and appropriateness of providing universal, voluntary education for four-year-olds in the public schools. The joint subcommittee was to consider, among other things, (i) the work and recommendations of the Commission on Early Childhood and Child Day Care Programs; (ii) the administration, implementation, and funding of the current program for at-risk four-year-olds; (iii) current participation levels by local school divisions; (iv) relevant federal laws and regulations relating to preschool education and development; and (v) other issues as it deems appropriate.

SJR 75 would have established a joint subcommittee to study the recruitment and retention of classroom teachers. In conducting its study, the joint subcommittee was to project the number of classroom teachers needed in Virginia over the next 10 years by region and discipline; review the teacher education process and assess the need for change; evaluate the ability and progress of alternative teacher licensure paths to supply additional qualified teachers; identify the instructional staffing needs of rural and small school divisions and recommend appropriate strategies to address the shortage of teachers in these areas; assess recruitment and retention efforts among school divisions, particularly in rural and urban

underserved areas; evaluate procedures for awarding continuing contracts, including how Virginia may retain the most capable teachers and replace teachers who do not meet the qualifications, standards, and expectations set for teachers; address the issues associated with compensation of teachers; determine the adequacy of pre-service and in-service professional development of teachers; review and assess the recruitment and retention efforts of adjoining states for possible adaptation in Virginia; and, recommend ways to attract and retain an adequate supply of qualified teachers in Virginia.

At its November 14, 2002, meeting, the Commission on Educational Accountability received testimony from representatives of the Department and Board of Education regarding the Governor's Partnership for Achieving Successful Schools (PASS) Initiative, the implementation of the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act in the Commonwealth, Update on Standards of Learning Assessments and Implementation of the Standards of Accreditation, teacher shortage issues, and Universal, Voluntary 4-year-old programs.

PASS Initiative. Describing the PASS initiative, Kathleen Smith, Office of School Improvement, cited data indicating that, with appropriate curriculum alignment, students of all backgrounds can meet educational goals and improve performance on the Standards of Learning (SOL) assessments. In 1998, the first year of the SOL assessment administration, 39 schools (2 percent) of Virginia public schools achieved "fully accredited" status. In 2001, that number increased to 731, or 40 percent, with 558 schools (30 percent) meeting state progress benchmarks. However, also in 2001, 117 schools (7 percent) remained "accredited with warning"; 34 of these are Title I schools (those with a high percentage of students eligible for the free and reduced price lunch program) receiving warnings in English or mathematics, or both, for the second consecutive year. Curriculum misalignment plagued 90 percent of the schools accredited with warning; academic review teams observed that 75 percent of the warned schools do not use student achievement data to make instructional decisions.

The PASS initiative partners 26 of the 34 Title I schools facing federal sanctions under NCLB--including optional student transfers--with schools of similar demographics to assist in building teacher capacity and to promote curriculum alignment. The PASS initiative is designed to increase student achievement as well as school capacity to maintain this achievement; engage volunteers and businesses as partners in education; and encourage parents to "provide essential support in the home." Four intervention models guide the PASS program. Model I addresses 83 warned schools; these will receive an enhanced academic review. More intensive intervention at Model II targets 26 PASS Priority schools; these schools are partnered with schools of similar demographics for assistance. Model III addresses four schools: two each in Petersburg and in Richmond; a full-time assistance team comprised of a principal and two teachers will aid these schools. Finally, Model IV focuses on divisionwide intervention in Petersburg, including four PASS Priority schools. Federal NCLB and private funds, as well as some moneys from the State Department of Education, support PASS.

No Child Left Behind. Dr. Jo Lynne DeMary, Superintendent of Public Instruction, reviewed the Commonwealth's ongoing compliance with NCLB. Virginia's consolidated plan for implementing the federal statute was submitted to the U.S. Department of Education to secure funding of a total of \$275 million for 2002-2003, representing a 22 percent increase.

Updates to the plan will include Virginia's definition of the requisite Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) and starting points.

A hallmark of the federal act is its required annual math and reading testing for all students in grades three through eight. Because the Commonwealth already uses the SOL assessments in grades three, five, and eight, new tests are only needed for grades four, six, and seven. It is anticipated that existing end-of-course tests will satisfy the act's high school testing requirement. Annual testing includes students with limited English proficiency (LEP).

Adequate Yearly Progress measures performance at the school, division, and state levels in reading, mathematics and graduation and attendance rates. "Starting points" for these areas will be based on 2001-2002 data, with yearly objectives increasing over a twelve-year period toward the goal of 100 percent, with the exception of attendance rates, in 2013-2014. To address the achievement gap, the act requires all student groups--those with disabilities, identified as economically disadvantaged, or who have limited English proficiency (LEP), as well as minorities--to meet these objectives. Disaggregated data will confirm this requirement.

The 34 Title I schools receiving the accredited with warning status in English or mathematics or both for two consecutive years are identified as "needing improvement" under NCLB; these schools must offer transfers to students this school year to other schools within the division that are not identified as needing improvement. As of September 2002, nine school divisions had received 373 transfer requests. A division may request another school division to accept these transfer students; however, neighboring school divisions receiving these requests are not compelled to accept the transfers. If limited transfer spaces are available, the accepting schools are to enroll the poorest-performing and most economically disadvantaged students. If transfers are impossible, supplemental services must be provided for the affected students.

The federal act also cited "highly qualified teachers and paraprofessionals," with the 2005-2006 goal of all teachers in the core academic subjects deemed "highly qualified"; under Board of Education regulations, this would mean all teachers would hold full state licensure and be teaching in the field for which they are endorsed. Annual report cards on school performance and teacher quality will indicate percentages of classes not taught by "highly qualified" teachers, teachers with provisional credentials, disaggregated student achievement data, graduation and attendance rates, and the number and names of schools identified for improvement. The Department of Education is planning web-based report cards for the state, divisions, and schools.

The study efforts of a Board of Education committee will facilitate implementation of the reading skill requirements (Reading First) set forth in NCLB. The committee will examine current reading instruction, teacher training, funding, and best practices. The Board's Reading First grant application includes teacher training, screening and diagnostic assessments, and scientifically-based reading programs and materials. The anticipated \$16.9 million grant will support competitive subgrants, with \$13.5 million and \$3.38 million used at the individual school and state levels, respectively.

Standards of Learning Assessments. Board President and Commission member Mark Christie reported that, after five years of SOL assessments, state scores have dramatically improved. In 1998, 55 percent of third graders passed the English assessment; in 2002, that percentage grew to 72 percent--a 17 percent gain. Similarly, the scores of African-American students increased by 22 percent; however, the overall passing rate for these third graders was 55 percent--still well below that of the overall group.

Gains in mathematics scores were generally more dramatic overall than those for reading, at the various grade levels. Algebra I scores statewide improved from a 40 percent passing rate in 1998 to a 78 percent passing rate in 2002. Significantly, the passing rates for African-American students improved from 20 percent in 1998 to 64 percent in 2002, representing great progress in closing the achievement gap. Gains in passing rates are consistent with improved performance on SAT tests by Virginia's graduating seniors. In 1997, the state average verbal score was 506; in 2002, the verbal score average was 510. Math scores increased from a state average of 497 in 1997 to 506 in 2002.

**Percentages of Students, by Ethnicity, Passing SOL Tests: 1998 and 2002
Third Graders--English and Mathematics**

Grade 3 English; Math	1998 Percent Passing (English; Math)	2002 Percent Passing (English; Math)	Percent Change (English; Math)
State	55; 63	72; 80	17; 17
Am. Indian/Alaskan Native	63; 70	78; 82	15; 12
Asian/Pacific Islander	72; 85	82; 90	10; 5
African American	33; 40	55; 65	22; 25
Hispanic	50; 61	59; 65	9; 12
Caucasian	64; 73	79; 87	15; 14
Ethnicity Unknown	45; 56	77; 83	32; 27

Results of the 2002 SOL assessments placed 1,175 (64 percent) schools in the fully accredited category. Provisionally Accredited/Meets State Standards and Provisionally Accredited/Needs Improvement claimed 257 (14 percent) and 312 (17 percent) schools, respectively. A total of 85 (5 percent) schools fell 20 or more percentage points below the annual progress benchmarks; these schools are accredited with warning.

Teacher Shortage. Addressing the various teacher shortage issues raised by SJR 75 (2002), which was referred to the Commission for study, Dr. Thomas A. Elliott, Assistant Superintendent, Division of Teacher Education and Licensure, Virginia Department of Education, reported that 132 school divisions responded to the Department's 2001-2002 annual survey addressing teacher supply and demand issues. Required by legislation enacted in 2001 (HB 1589), the annual survey is to "identify critical shortages of teachers and administrative personnel by geographic area, by school division, or by subject matter..." (§ 22.1-23). The responding school divisions (some of which responded only to selected survey questions) indicated a total of 94,236 teachers, administrators, and other instructional personnel in full-time equivalent positions (FTEs); teachers comprised 88,609 of this total. The survey indicated that 4,136 classroom teaching positions are held either unfilled or held by persons without the appropriate endorsements.

The number of reported shortages has nearly tripled since 1999; the number of unendorsed personnel largely influenced this increase. Critical shortage areas include special education, earth science, mathematics, and foreign languages. One school division alone accounted for nearly half of all reported shortages, with 2,018 positions either unfilled or held by unendorsed teachers.

Statewide Shortages by Superintendent's Regions
School Year 2001-2002 ~ Virginia Department of Education

	Region Totals	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Region 4	Region 5	Region 6	Region 7	Region 8
Total FTE positions	94,236	13,274	21,551	6,012	27,736	8,799	7,739	6,451	2,674
Filled by unendorsed teachers	3,887	193	390	156	2,457	202	213	81	196
Vacancies with ≤ 3 qualified applicants	645	61	103	172	91	79	78	29	32
Total Shortages									
2001-2002	4,136	257	454	167	2,535	205	223	97	198
1999-2000	1,408	231	182	79	290	196	75	234	121
Total increase	2,278	26	272	88	2,245	9	148	-137	77
% increase	194%	11	149	112	774	5	197	-59	63
Shortages as % of Total FTEs									
2001-2002	4.39%	1.9	2.1	2.8	9.1	2.3	2.9	1.5	7.4
1999-2000	1.67%	1.6	1.2	1.2	1.2	2.0	1.7	2.4	3.8

"Critical shortages" are identified as either the top ten subject matter shortages or as those vacancies for which a school division receives three or fewer qualified applicants.

Top 10 Shortage Areas ~ 2001-2002

*aggregated endorsements (vocational education NOT aggregated); based on 43 teaching and administrative areas
 Virginia Department of Education

1. Special Education, preK-12*
2. Mathematics
3. Reading Specialist (masters degree program)
4. Foreign Language (Spanish preK-12)*
5. Science (Earth Science, Chemistry)
6. Middle Grades, 6-8*
7. Library Media, preK-12
8. Music Education, preK-12*
9. Technology Education
10. English

Virginia will need an estimated 7,500 new teachers annually. The primary routes to licensure typically yield about 4,500 new teachers each year. In the two years following the enactment of legislation allowing teacher retirees to return to teaching, 54 such retirees have re-entered the profession, all in one of three critical shortage areas: special education, mathematics, or science.

Programs for 4-year-olds. Also assigned to the Commission for consideration were the issues raised by SJR 13 regarding universal, voluntary programs for four-year olds. Linda

Poorbaugh, Director, Elementary Instruction, Virginia Preschool Initiative, Virginia Department of Education, described the ongoing initiatives for at-risk four-year-olds in the Commonwealth. In 1994, the Commission on Equity in Public Education recommended the creation of state-funded preschool programs for unserved, at-risk four-year-olds. The 1995 Omnibus Education Act (HB 2542) and the concurrent Appropriation Act supported this concept; the 1995-96 budget provided \$10.3 million to address 30 percent of pupils not currently served by federal initiatives such as Head Start or Title I. Funding has increased in recent years, expanding to over \$31 million in 1996-98 to address 60 percent of the unserved population, and to \$38.6 million in 2002-2004. The state share is \$5,400 per child.

Projected Statewide Teaching Shortages

Virginia Department of Education <<http://141.104.22.210/VDOE/newvdoe/teached.html>>

School Year 2000-2001						
PRIMARY TEACHING AND/OR ADMINISTRATIVE ASSIGNMENT (Endorsement Areas)	Positions		Total FTEs by area	Positions		Number of Vacancies with three or Fewer Qualified Applicants
	Total 2000-2001 FTEs	Filled by Unendorsed Individuals		Filled by Unendorsed Individuals	Total FTE Unfilled Positions	
Special education - severely profound disabilities K-12	460.8	96.0	478.5	115.2	6.0	88.0
Special education - emotional disturbance K-12	1,573.8	116.6	1,899.8	164.2	23.0	53.0
Special education - hearing impairments preK-12	229.9	15.6	252.1	21.5	0.0	46.0
Special education - early childhood special education	1,066.3	75.6	1,139.6	114.0	0.0	29.0
Science - physics	266.5	10.0	289.4	23.5	0.0	26.0
Special education - speech-language disorders preK-12	1,095.7	50.0	1,250.7	76.6	9.0	26.0
Special education - learning disabilities K-12	5,271.3	341.9	6,363.4	507.1	28.0	16.0
English as second language preK-12	721.6	40.6	1,023.7	142.3	9.0	13.0
Science - earth science	824.0	49.0	875.7	56.6	4.0	7.0

Localities receiving grants of state funds must propose programs that include "quality preschool education," meeting specific curriculum, staffing, assessment, and other requirements; parental involvement; health services; social services; and transportation. Programs may be operated by public schools or community-based organizations.

In 2002-2003, 97 of 137 localities were eligible for this funding, with 75 of these participating; 7,311 children were eligible for the initiative. The 22 eligible but nonparticipating divisions may have declined to seek funding for a variety of reasons, such as inability to provide the local match, insufficient space, or minimal numbers of eligible students.

Respectfully submitted,
SJR 57 Commission on Educational Accountability

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 57
Continuing the Commission on Educational Accountability.

Agreed to by the Senate, March 6, 2002
Agreed to by the House of Delegates, March 5, 2002

WHEREAS, Senate Joint Resolution No. 498 established the Commission on Educational Accountability in 1999 to study educational accountability; and

WHEREAS, the Commission was directed to examine a plethora of issues, and was to review the Standards of Accreditation and the accountability mechanisms included therein as well as monitor the implementation of the Standards of Learning (SOL) and related assessments; and

WHEREAS, in meeting the directives of Senate Joint Resolution No. 498, the Commission was to consider the work and recommendations of other named education study committees and develop recommendations for ways to increase the capacity of schools, teachers, and students to meet increasingly rigorous academic standards; and

WHEREAS, also assigned to the Commission by the 2000 Session of the General Assembly were the continuation of the work of the Joint Subcommittee on Remediation pursuant to House Joint Resolution No. 302 and a study of the demand for and supply of classroom teachers pursuant to House Joint Resolution No. 159 and Senate Joint Resolution No. 248; and

WHEREAS, acknowledging that "another year of study will enable the Commission to pursue more fully its mission and to address more effectively the myriad of educational accountability issues assigned to it," the 2001 Session of the General Assembly adopted Senate Joint Resolution No. 385, thereby continuing for one year the work of the Senate Joint Resolution No. 498 Commission on Educational Accountability; and

WHEREAS, figuring prominently in the Commission's work in 2001 were consideration of recent legislative actions addressing multiple criteria for school accreditation, graduation, and promotion and retention; the effectiveness of remediation efforts and year-round schools; test security procedures; the efforts of academic review teams in assisting schools accredited with warning; and recent developments in career and technical education; and

WHEREAS, with the adoption of final revisions to the Standards of Accreditation by the Board of Education in fall 2000, ongoing efforts to improve student performance on the SOL assessments, and the phasing in of school accreditation and diploma requirements, the issue of educational accountability will continue to be a primary concern for legislators, educators, parents, and students; and

WHEREAS, the increasing demand for qualified instructional personnel, the effective preparation of students to enter the workforce, the instructional needs of career and technical education students within the SOL assessment structure, and other significant issues merit ongoing exploration and observation; and

WHEREAS, another year of study will enable the Commission to pursue more fully its mission and to address more effectively the ongoing concerns regarding educational accountability in the Commonwealth; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the Commission on Educational Accountability be continued. The Commission shall consist of 18 members, which shall include 10 legislative members, five nonlegislative members, and three ex officio members to be appointed as follows: four members of the Senate, to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections; six members of the House of Delegates, to be appointed by the Speaker of the House, in accordance with the principles of proportional representation contained in the Rules of the House of Delegates; one parent of a child who is enrolled in the public schools of the Commonwealth and one public school teacher, to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections; one division superintendent, one representative of the Virginia School Boards Association, and one school principal, to be appointed by the Speaker of the House; and the Secretary of Education, the President of the Board of Education, and the Superintendent of Public Instruction, who shall serve ex officio with full voting privileges.

The Division of Legislative Services shall continue to provide staff support for the commission.

All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the commission, upon request.

The direct costs of the Commission on Educational Accountability shall not exceed \$12,000 representing four meetings during the 2002 legislative interim.

The Commission on Educational Accountability shall complete its work by November 30, 2002, and shall submit its written findings and recommendations to the Governor and the 2003 Session of the General Assembly as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents.

Implementation of this resolution is subject to subsequent approval and certification by the Joint Rules Committee. The Committee may withhold expenditures or delay the period for the conduct of the study.

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 13

Offered January 9, 2002

Prefiled December 13, 2001

Establishing a joint subcommittee to study the feasibility and appropriateness of providing universal, voluntary education for four-year-olds in Virginia public schools.

Patron-- Puller

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, quality preschool educational efforts have received renewed attention in recent years as studies continue to indicate that children acquire information more effectively in the years preceding kindergarten; and

WHEREAS, educators and policymakers agree that expanding early learning opportunities may reduce the disparity in academic achievement between racial and economic groups; and

WHEREAS, at the federal level, Head Start, a program of preschool development for low-income children instituted during the Johnson administration as part of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 (Pub. L. No. 88-452), has demonstrated success in improving pupils' intellectual and emotional development; and

WHEREAS, although some studies have questioned the lasting effects of these initial positive experiences for these children, educators and policymakers have continued to revisit and retool preschool initiatives to ensure program quality and more sustained results; and

WHEREAS, preschool initiatives, like Head Start, may be especially beneficial if supplemented by parental efforts to stimulate infants and to remain involved in their children's educational endeavors throughout early elementary school; and

WHEREAS, the value of well-crafted early childhood initiatives has been borne out in recent studies indicating that at-risk children enrolled in quality preschool programs are five times less likely to become chronic criminal offenders; and

WHEREAS, several states have recently reinforced their efforts in preschool education, such as North Carolina, where the Smart Start Program targets the school readiness and social development of preschool children; and

WHEREAS, the North Carolina Partnership for Children has received a \$527,000 grant to establish the National Smart Start Technical Assistance Center to aid other states in creating early childhood initiatives; and

WHEREAS, in Maryland, legislators are examining all-day kindergarten, the accreditation of child care centers, and continuing education for child care workers; and

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth's commitment to addressing the educational and developmental needs of these students is evidenced in several initiatives, including the work of the Commission on Early Childhood and Child Day Care Programs, created "to study and provide recommendations addressing the need for quality developmental early childhood and child day care programs and services"; and

WHEREAS, the 19-member Commission was, among other things, to determine the number of at-risk four-year-olds in the Commonwealth and the number of such children who are not enrolled in developmental early childhood or child day care programs and develop a mechanism for the phased integration of and funding for quality developmental early childhood and child day care programs; and

WHEREAS, the General Assembly has expressed in § 22.1-199.1 its finding that "effective prevention programs designed to assist children at risk of school failure and dropout are practical mechanisms for reducing violent and criminal activity and for ensuring that Virginia's children will reach adulthood with the skills necessary to succeed in the twenty-first century" and created a grant program for schools and community-based organizations to "provide quality preschool programs for at-risk four-year-olds who are unserved by Head Start programs and for at-risk five-year-olds who are not eligible to attend kindergarten"; and

WHEREAS, these grants are to be used to provide at least half-day services, including "quality preschool education, health services, social services, parental involvement including activities to promote family literacy, and transportation" for the length of the school year for at-risk four-year-old children who are unserved by Head Start programs and for at-risk five-year-olds who are not eligible to attend kindergarten; and

WHEREAS, the General Assembly has provided various levels of funding for this initiative, based on an allocation formula providing the state share of the grant per child, as specified in the appropriation act, for various percentages of unserved at-risk four-year-olds and five-year-olds not eligible to attend kindergarten; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Item 143 C 12 of the 2000-2002 biennial budget, funding is based on providing a state share of a \$5,400 grant for 60 percent of unserved four-year-olds in each locality, and localities desiring to obtain this funding must supply a local match, based on the composite index of local ability-to-pay; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to the Code of Virginia, local school boards may elect to serve more than 60 percent of the at-risk four-year-olds and may use federal funds or local funds for this expansion or may seek funding through this grant program for such purposes, and grants may be awarded, "if funds are available in excess of the funding for the sixty percent allocation, to expand services to at-risk four-year-olds beyond the sixty percent goal"; and

WHEREAS, Tidewater educators estimate that 15 to 20 percent of eligible students are not currently served by a local preschool initiative or by the state's program for at-risk four-year-olds; and

WHEREAS, expanding the Commonwealth's funding to provide for universal, voluntary delivery of preschool services for at-risk four-year-olds requires careful examination of a variety of educational, fiscal, and other policy issues; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That a joint subcommittee be established to study the feasibility and appropriateness of providing universal, voluntary education for four-year-olds in the public schools. The joint subcommittee shall consist of eight legislative members as follows: five members of the Senate, to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections, and three members of the House of Delegates, to be appointed by the Speaker of the House in accordance with the principles of proportional representation contained in the Rules of the House.

In conducting its study, the joint subcommittee shall consider, among other things, (i) the work and recommendations of the Commission on Early Childhood and Child Day Care Programs; (ii) the administration, implementation, and funding of the current program for at-risk four-year-olds; (iii) current participation levels by local school divisions; (iv) relevant federal laws and regulations relating to preschool education and development; and (v) other issues as it deems appropriate.

The direct costs of this study shall not exceed \$ 8,000.

The Division of Legislative Services shall provide staff support for the study. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the joint subcommittee, upon request.

The joint subcommittee shall complete its work by November 30, 2002, and shall submit its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the 2003 Session of the General Assembly as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents.

Implementation of this resolution is subject to subsequent approval and certification by the Joint Rules Committee. The Committee may withhold expenditures or delay the period for the conduct of the study.

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 75

Offered January 9, 2002

Prefiled January 9, 2002

Establishing a joint subcommittee to study the recruitment and retention of classroom teachers.

Patrons-- Ruff and Hawkins; Delegates: Abbitt, Armstrong, Byron, Council, Hogan, Hurt, Janis, Kilgore, Landes, Marshall,
D.W., Stump and Wright

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, Article VIII, Section 1 of the Virginia Constitution requires that the Commonwealth provide for a "system of free public elementary and secondary schools for all children of school age throughout the Commonwealth, and shall seek to ensure that an educational program of high quality is established and continually maintained"; and

WHEREAS, essential to meeting the constitutional responsibilities for the education of Virginia's children, the Commonwealth declares in Standard 1 of the Standards of Quality, (§ 22.1-253.13:1) that "the quality of education is dependent upon the provision of the appropriate working environment, benefits, and salaries necessary to ensure the availability of high quality instructional personnel"; and

WHEREAS, teachers are the agents by which the diffusion of knowledge throughout society is achieved to inform, equip, and sustain the present generation and the conduits through which civilization and the ethos of a nation are transmitted and perpetuated for the common good of our progeny; and

WHEREAS, teachers encourage intellectual curiosity and inquiry, nurture innate gifts and creativity, acquaint students with new ways of viewing ordinary things, and challenge students to think, imagine, and dream of possibilities beyond their horizons; and

WHEREAS, the transference of our heritage and the ability to stimulate an appreciation of learning and to provide for an educated citizenry is threatened by a severe shortage of classroom teachers; and

WHEREAS, the demand for teachers is most urgent in the disciplines of science, mathematics, special education, foreign language, and technological studies, among males at the elementary and middle school levels, and among minority teachers in all disciplines and grade levels; and

WHEREAS, according to the United States Department of Education, nearly three million more children in America will need to be educated by 2006, and during the next 10 years, two million teachers will need to be hired to meet the projected increase in enrollments; and

WHEREAS, the President and the Governor of Virginia have announced goals to increase significantly the number of teachers in the classrooms of the nation and of the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, sister states struggling to respond to this problem have resorted to recalling retired teachers, hiring substitutes, developing alternative paths to the teaching career, teacher induction and professional development programs for teachers, and providing generous financial and other enticing incentives to attract and retain classroom teachers; and

WHEREAS, according to recent studies concerning the need for teachers, "urban schools find it difficult to recruit qualified teachers regardless of background, and nearly a quarter of central city schools have vacancies they cannot fill with a qualified teacher; schools with high minority enrollments have the greatest difficulty finding qualified teachers; and students in inner city, high-minority schools have only a 50 percent chance of being taught by a qualified science or math teacher"; and

WHEREAS, rural and small school divisions experience problems recruiting and retaining qualified teachers in all subject areas, particularly mathematics, science, and special education, and specific strategies are needed to address the problem and enable these divisions to compete successfully with larger school divisions; and

WHEREAS, research suggests that the ideal rural teacher is endorsed to teach more than one subject or grade level, can teach students with a wide range of abilities in the same classroom, is prepared to supervise extracurricular activities, and can adjust to the community; and

WHEREAS, the demand for classroom teachers can be attributed to many factors, including retirement, low salaries, poor working conditions, school safety issues, lack of administrative support, diminished status of and respect for the teaching profession, increasing demands on the profession with very few rewards, and many options to pursue more respected, lucrative, and psychologically fulfilling careers; and

WHEREAS, in rural and small school divisions, geographic isolation, weather, distance from larger communities and family, professional reasons, and fewer social, cultural, and economic opportunities contribute to the difficulty in recruiting and retaining qualified teachers who can assimilate into the school and community and who will continue to teach in the area; and

WHEREAS, providing for qualified, competent, and gifted classroom teachers is a shared responsibility between the Board of Education and Virginia's institutions of higher education; and

WHEREAS, the ultimate responsibility for public education rests with the Virginia General Assembly, which is specifically charged with the duties of establishing a public school system and striving to ensure its quality; and

WHEREAS, assisting students and schools in Virginia to meet the new Standards of Learning and Standards of Accreditation requires a corps of skilled, compassionate, qualified, well-compensated teachers, a school environment conducive to learning, administrative support, and respect for the teaching profession, factors critical to the success of education reform in the Commonwealth; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That a joint subcommittee be established to study the recruitment and retention of classroom teachers. The joint subcommittee shall be composed of 10 legislative members as follows: six members of the Senate, to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections; and four members of the House of Delegates, to be appointed by the Speaker of the House, in accordance with the principles of proportional representation contained in the Rules of the House of Delegates.

In conducting its study, the joint subcommittee shall project the number of classroom teachers needed in Virginia over the next 10 years by region and discipline; review the teacher education process and assess the need for change; evaluate the ability and progress of alternative teacher licensure paths to supply additional qualified teachers; identify the instructional staffing needs of rural and small school divisions and recommend appropriate strategies to address the shortage of teachers in these areas; assess recruitment and retention efforts among school divisions, particularly in rural and urban underserved areas; evaluate procedures for awarding continuing contracts, including how Virginia may retain the most capable teachers and replace teachers who do not meet the qualifications, standards, and expectations set for teachers; address the issues associated with compensation of teachers; determine the adequacy of pre-service and in-service professional development of teachers; review and assess the recruitment and retention efforts of adjoining states for possible adaptation in Virginia; and, recommend ways to attract and retain an adequate supply of qualified teachers in Virginia.

Further, the joint subcommittee shall communicate and collaborate with other study committees charged to examine certain aspects of teacher education, recruitment and retention, and other related issues to avoid unnecessary duplication and fragmentation.

The direct costs of this study shall not exceed \$12,000.

The Division of Legislative Services shall provide staff support for the study. Technical assistance shall be provided by the Department of Education, the State Council of Higher Education, and the staffs of the Senate Committee on Finance and the House Committee on Appropriations.

All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the joint subcommittee, upon request.

The joint subcommittee shall complete its work by November 30, 2002, and shall submit its written findings and recommendations to the Governor and the 2003 Session of the General Assembly as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents.

Implementation of this resolution is subject to subsequent approval and certification by the Joint Rules Committee. The Committee may withhold expenditures or delay the period for the conduct of the study.