



THE COMMONWEALTH EDUCATIONAL POLICY INSTITUTE

CENTER FOR PUBLIC POLICY - L. DOUGLAS WILDER SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

2013 General Assembly Update

Week 4 Update—February 1, 2013

The 2013 General Assembly session began Wednesday, January 9, 2013. The session runs 46 days and is scheduled to end on February 23, 2013. “Cross-over day,” the last day for each house to act on its own bills, is February 5. House and Senate versions of the two-year, amended budget for fiscal years 2013 and 2014 are expected to be released on February 3.

The House Education Committee is scheduled to meet on Mondays at 9:00 a.m. in House Room C and Wednesdays at 8:30 a.m. in the Appropriations Room. The Senate Education and Health Committee meets on Thursdays at 8:30 a.m. in Senate Room B. Sub-committees will meet periodically throughout the session. Click [here](#) for the schedule of weekly meetings.

State Budget

This past week has been a very important one for behind-the-scenes shaping of House and Senate budget amendments. House and Senate budget committee members will work over weekend to meet a Sunday deadline for the respective committees to approve changes to the spending plan submitted by Governor McDonnell in December. Lawmakers have been working in their various topic area subcommittees to craft their proposals, which will be released and voted upon on Sunday afternoon.

While bills to provide for additional resource officers in schools have failed thus far, there will be budget provisions proposed to this effect. On the floor of the House of Delegates on Friday, a key budget writer outlined two proposals forthcoming in the House version of the budget to address safety at schools. One is to provide an additional \$1.7 million for the School Resource Officer Incentive Grants Fund to provide competitive grants to school divisions to employ school resource and security officers. The introduced budget contains about \$400,000 in general funds and \$1.7 million in non-general funds each year for the program, and emphasizes the employment of officers in high schools. A second item noted is to provide \$6 million per year for five years for a revolving fund backed by Literary Fund dollars, to make additional dollars available for infrastructure improvements that improve security of school buildings.

Click [here](#) for additional information about Governor McDonnell's proposed changes to the public education budget for FY13 and FY14.

Education Legislation

Again this year, the House Education Committee has approved a bill to give control of the school calendar to local school boards. [HB 1467](#) eliminates the post-Labor Day school opening requirement. It was reported on a 15 to 6 vote and awaits action on the House floor. A similar bill was approved by the full House

last year, only to die in the Senate, where the Education and Health Committee on Thursday defeated its version of the bill, [SB 1099](#), on an 11 to 4 vote.

The House approved the so-called “Tebow” bill (named for pro football quarterback Tim Tebow) on a 56 to 43 vote this past week. [HB 1442](#) prohibits public schools from joining the Virginia High School League (VHSL) if the organization does not allow participation by qualifying home school students in interscholastic activities. The Senate versions of the bill were stricken at the request of the patron. The Senate Education and Health Committee will take up HB 1442 sometime in the next two weeks.

[HB 2096](#) and [SB 1324](#) create a statewide school division called the Opportunity Educational Institution to be administered and supervised by the Opportunity Educational Institution Board. Any school that has been denied accreditation would be transferred to such statewide division; a school that is accredited with warning for three years could be transferred. Schools would remain part of the Institution until it achieves accreditation. HB 2096 was reported from the House Privileges and Elections Committee on a 13 to 9 vote, while SB 1324 limped out of committee on an 8 to 7 vote. Opponents of the measures, including the state associations for school boards, superintendents and teachers, have asserted the bills are unconstitutional. Proposals to amend the Virginia Constitution to accommodate such an institution are in the works as well. [HJ 693](#) was reported from committee on Friday on a 13 to 9 vote; [SJ 327 is on the Senate floor](#).

Several additional components of the governor’s education package are successfully moving through the legislative process, having passed their respective chamber of introduction. [HB 2084](#) and [SB 1175](#) provide for the operation of Teach for America in Virginia beginning in the 2013-14 school year. The bills create a two-year provisional license for participants in Teach for America, a program that recruits and trains the recent, top college graduates from various disciplines to accept full-time teaching assignments in hard-to-staff schools. [HB 1504](#) and [SB 1157](#) create a Commonwealth Teaching Fellows Program in which the Board of Education (BOE) or a local school division working with higher education, may create and administer intensive eight-week programs to prepare career-switchers and recent college graduates who have not completed coursework in education to teach in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) and critical teaching shortage areas. [HB 2083](#) and [SB 1185](#) establish the Strategic Compensation Grant Initiative and Fund to provide incentives for school divisions to improve teacher and school performance.

[HB 1999](#) and [SB 1207](#) require the BOE to develop a grading system in addition to the Standards of Accreditation for individual school performance; the grading system would be based on an A to F grading scale and would include the school’s accreditation rating. Both bills face floor votes early next week. Meanwhile, [SB 1167](#) requires the Department of Education (DOE) to establish a pilot program that explores the use and effectiveness of employing student growth indicators for school accountability and teacher evaluation. It is on the Senate floor.

Proposed Constitutional amendments to authorize the BOE to establish charter schools have been defeated. [HJ 684](#) failed in the House Privileges and Elections Committee on Friday on an 11 to 11 vote. On the Senate floor, [SJ 302](#) failed to garner the necessary 21 votes needed for approval, and therefore is defeated for the session.

[HB 2066](#) and [SB 1172](#) provide local school divisions with flexibility in assigning librarians, guidance counselors and clerical personnel to schools in the division. Both bills have passed their respective chamber. Also on their way to approval are [HB 2144](#) and [SB 1364](#), which allow an elementary school with a pass rate of less than 75% on SOL reading tests the previous school year to apply to the BOE for a two-year waiver from the third grade history and/or social science Standards of Learning (SOL) test.

The Senate has unanimously approved [SB 1156, which provides that](#) it is a state goal that public school teachers be compensated at a rate that is competitive with the national average teacher salary.

[HB 1871](#) defines the term "bullying" and requires local school boards to implement policies, by July 1, 2014, that prohibit bullying. The BOE is to develop model policies and procedures for use by each school board to educate school board employees about the need to create a bully-free environment. It awaits a final vote on the House floor; a Senate version of the bill was scuttled in committee.

[HB 1406](#) directs school boards to annually provide parent educational information regarding eating disorders for pupils in grades five through 12. Such information shall be consistent with guidelines to be set forth by the DOE. It has passed the House.

After a unanimous recommendation from a subcommittee, the full House Education Committee tabled [HB 1674, which](#) would have required the BOE to grant to each elementary or secondary schools the same release from policies or regulations granted to any charter school in the same local school division, and permits the such local school board to apply such release to any school in the school division. [HB 1555, which](#) establishes the Virginia State Virtual School as a statewide school division to be supervised and administered by the BOE, remains in the House Appropriations Committee.

[HB 1642](#) and [SB 908](#) assert, in different ways, the fundamental right of a parent to direct the upbringing, education and care of the parent's child. HB 1642 is on the House floor, while SB 908 has passed the Senate.

E-mail Response

Questions or More Information? Please [contact CEPI](#) if you have any questions or need additional information about the 2013 General Assembly.