



## THE COMMONWEALTH EDUCATIONAL POLICY INSTITUTE

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### 2016 General Assembly K-12 Education Update

#### **March 4, 2016**

*The 2016 General Assembly session gaveled to order on Wednesday, January 13. The session runs 60 days and is scheduled to end on March 12. During the session, legislators will consider more than 2,500 bills and hundreds of resolutions. A two-year state budget for fiscal years 2017 and 2018 also will be developed.*

*The House Education Committee is scheduled to meet on Mondays and Wednesdays during the session at 8:30 a.m. in House Room D. The Senate Education and Health Committee will meet 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.*

*During the course of the session, legislative updates will be available weekly on the CEPI website at [General Assembly Updates](#). Specific information about the General Assembly session, action on bills and resolutions, committee and subcommittee meetings, and information about legislators can be found at [2016 Session](#). If you have a question about a legislative issue during the session, contact David Blount, CEPI Policy Associate, at [dcblount2@vcu.edu](mailto:dcblount2@vcu.edu).*

#### **State Budget Update**

The House and Senate budget conferees charged with reaching an agreement on a compromise budget for the next biennium are in place and have been working to resolve differences in the competing plans. The most notable K-12 education-related items in the budget plans that must be resolved concern the following:

1. Flexibility in use of funds - Both proposals include flexibility in the use of funding for K-12 educational purposes and for local match requirements. This includes flexibility with the re-establishment of the previous General Assembly policy of distributing part of the Lottery Proceeds on a per pupil amount (House plan) as well as the Additional Support for Classroom Needs program (Senate plan); and
2. Teacher salaries--The House proposes funding for the state share of a 2% salary increase for SOQ-funded instructional and support positions in FY18 (effective July 10, 2017), with an allowance for school divisions that choose to provide a pay raise in FY17 to apply that action toward their local match for receiving the FY18 state funds. The

Senate plan proposes the state share of a 2% increase in the first year, in addition to a similar amount that was included in the introduced budget in FY18.

Earlier this week, the Department of Education (DOE) released detailed information about the House and Senate-approved budget plans. You can click [here](#) for the DOE memo.

### **Education Legislation**

On Monday, Governor McAuliffe vetoed the pair of bills, [HB 131](#) and [SB 612](#), which would have allowed homeschoolers to participate in public school activities under the Virginia High School League. He noted in his veto message, identical to that in his veto of last year's bill, that, "allowing home-schooled students to participate in interscholastic competitions would disrupt the level playing field Virginia's public schools have developed over the past century." The House failed to override the gubernatorial veto of HB 131; the Senate has yet to act of the veto of SB 612.

The governor also vetoed [HB 259](#). This bill would have prohibited the Board of Education (BOE) from replacing the Standards of Learning (SOL) with Common Core State Standards without approval of the General Assembly. In this veto message, the governor stated that "the bill is unnecessary in light of the fact that Virginia's SOL already exceed the rigor of the Common Core State Standards." The Governor also objected to the limitations the bill placed on the BOE's decision-making ability. The House will take up the veto next week.

The Senate Finance Committee (SFC) has slapped a re-enactment clause on [HB 389](#), requiring it to be approved again next year before taking effect. The bill permits the parents of certain disabled students to apply to their resident school division for a "Parental Choice Education Savings Account," to consist of state education funds that could be used for certain private school expenses. The bill is on the Senate floor after being approved on a 9-5 vote in the SFC.

The Senate Education and Health Committee referred to the SFC [HB 8](#). The bill would establish the Virginia Virtual School program to provide full-time online educational programs and services. Beginning with the 2017-18 school year, the average state share of SOQ per pupil funding for each enrolled student would be sent to the school. The Committee advanced the bill to the Senate floor on a split vote.

The governor has signed [HB 357](#) and [SB 211](#). These identical bills require kindergartners to have at least 20 minutes of physical activity per day or an average of 100 minutes per week, effective with the 2018-19 school year.

[SB 224](#) had some extensive debate this past week in the House Education Committee and on the House floor. The bill, which would require school boards to develop and implement a policy to prohibit the use of tobacco products on a school bus, on school property, or at a school-sponsored activity, slipped out of the Committee on a narrow 12 to 10 vote, but then was handily defeated on the House floor.

[SB 364](#) would establish a health insurance plan, similar to the state health insurance plan, for employees and retirees of local governments and school divisions and their dependents. It has passed the House Appropriations Committee and is on the House floor for approval.

Finally, [HJ 112](#) and [SJ 85](#) are similar bills that would establish a joint committee of the House and Senate Education Committees to study the future of K-12 education, specifically looking at

the need for revisions to or reorganization of the Standards of Quality with a particular emphasis on the effective use of educational technology. The bills are in a conference committee. The hang-up with them is related to differences in the number of House and Senate members to be on the committee.

**E-mail Response**

Questions or seeking more information? Please [contact CEPI](#) if you have any questions or need additional information about the 2016 General Assembly.